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# Interview with Junji Noguchi

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# Junji Noguchi

(Interviewed on 16 March 1992, Tokyo, Japan)

## Video Roll # 3

*Q: When we put the tape together, we will have many people on camera, how shall we spell your name and what shall we have your title, so that people know who you are?*

NOGUCHI: Mr. J-U-N-J-I N-O-G-U-C-H-I.

*Q: And your title?*

NOGUCHI: Executive Director of the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers.

*Q: This is a very distinguished organization.*

NOGUCHI: Really?

*Q: Yes. That goes back a very long way. What has been the relationship between the Union and Dr. Juran?*

NOGUCHI: We invited him, in 1954, the first time.

*Q: Would you rather speak in Japanese? Do that.*

NOGUCHI: It was 1954. We had invited Dr. Juran from the United States to Japan. And this has been the first sort of contact with Dr. Juran -- between Dr. Juran and our organization.

*Q: How was Dr. Juran known back in 1954 to your organization? How did you know about him?*

NOGUCHI: First, managing director, Mr. Koanagi, had -- in 1952 -- gone to the United States and met Dr. Juran. And ... and started negotiating, inviting Dr. Juran to Japan. The objective of that invitation was, in order to promote quality control in Japan, management and -- managers and top management of corporations need to attend and participate in quality control improvement.

And in order to do that, to invite Dr. Juran to Japan, introduce him to these people, and to ask him to give lectures. And to promote quality control in the Japanese various industrial circles.

*Q: In 1954, what was Dr. Juran's reputation?*

NOGUCHI: In the Japanese industrial circle, be it management people of all corporations in Japan, who participated in this series of seminars, had really been deeply impressed by the philosophy of Dr. Juran.

This philosophy and his talk consisted of concrete measures as to what management people should do for quality control. And this had proven to be very significant for the Japanese management people.

*Q: But in 1954, America was way there, and Japan was way here. The planes didn't fly as fast, and the telephones weren't as good. How did people in Japan know about Dr. Juran in America?*

NOGUCHI: Quality control in Japan had been introduced in 1950, by Dr. Deming. It was more of a statistical quality



control. And this statistical methodology is used mainly by engineers.

And so SQC is done by engineers. But then what would the management people do. Of course, the efficacy of SQC is very big. But the management could not utilize SQC. But, in those days, we people of the Japanese industrial circle should also be aware of quality, which would contribute to the Japanese industries.

And, therefore, we were really concerned as to how we should get the management people get involved. This has been our issue -- after the introduction of SQC.

*Q: How did Dr. Juran help get management people involved in quality?*

NOGUCHI: Well, we are -- our objective has been accomplished, due to his visit. Because, in 1954, we invited Dr. Juran and the management listened to his lecture. And the following year, in 1955, we had a 12-day training course for the management people. We started this training course, which is continued to this day.

And the content of this training course was in accordance with Dr. Juran's curriculum.

Moreover, two years after that, in 1957, we had started a course for the management people, company managers. And this is also according to Dr. Juran's curriculum. And this training course is also continued even to this day. And every year we have increasing participation.

And these management course, the administration course, and the engineer's course -- these courses have proved to be the driving force for the economic growth of Japan.

*Q: That's a very big statement. What are things covered, what is taught in this course, that has helped the Japanese economy improve?*

. NOGUCHI: Japanese quality control and quality control in other countries, when we compare that, and trying to decide and compare which quality control has contributed to the growth of economy of those respective countries, I think it's very obvious.

Dr. Juran's philosophy, due to his philosophy, we were able to come up with a total quality control, what is called Total Quality Control, with a participation of everybody. We were convinced that this TQC -- everybody's participated Total Quality Control, is something that convinced us when

Dr. Juran came to us. And Dr. Juran gave us this conviction.

*Q: I believe that in 1954, it would be a large honor for anyone to be invited to speak in front of this group. And yet you selected Dr. Juran. Why was Dr. Juran given this honor in 1954?*

NOGUCHI: As I mentioned, our first managing director, Mr. Koyanagi, had selected Dr. Juran, in 1952, when Mr. Koyanagi went to the United States.

He had met the various authorities on quality control in the United States. And amongst all these different people, he had pinpointed Dr. Juran, that Dr. Juran's philosophy is the most appropriate for quality control in Japan.

*Q: About how many people have now gone through this course that was started by Dr. Juran? How many Japanese engineers and management people have been trained?*



NOGUCHI: With Dr. Juran's course, you're talking about? In 1954, Tokyo, Osaka, the administration management, courses were held and I think the number added up to a total of about 200, I think.

But since then, in 1960, we invited him again to Japan, and also six years after that, in 1966, we also invited Dr. Juran to Japan.

And every time we invite him, we asked him to give these courses for the management and administration people. Of course, ruSE's unique course also have been conducted in '57. Since then, and has been continued on an annual basis. And, in 1962, we introduced a senior management course, and this is also continue to this day.

But the initiatives have been taken by Dr. Juran. I mean, the content of the courses that we have been conducting on our own is based on Dr. Juran's course.

*Q: In total, when you add up all of the people, how many have gone through this course, have studied this course?*

NOGUCHI: Dr. Juran's?

*Q: Yes.*

NOGUCHI: Well, even after that, in '69, he came back to Japan. It was the first international conference, and we asked him to join us there. And also the international conference in Japan taken place in --

I'm sorry, I couldn't get the dates.

And every time we invited Dr. Juran for all these international conferences that were held in Japan. And every time he came to Japan, of course, we held a symposium and a training course.



And so maybe two to 3,000 people had already directly listened to Dr. Juran speak.

*Q: What have been the most important things about the lessons that Dr. Juran has taught? The most important lessons, most valuable lessons.*

NOGUCHI: The top management, particular, the role of top management, I'd say.

*Q: Could you speak a little more about that for me, please?*

NOGUCHI: Dr. Juran's philosophy is that quality control is the issue to be addressed by the management. Next is the technical issue. And in 1954, when he came to Japan, he had made these points. And I think this really had appealed to the Japanese management.

And these senior management people, in concrete terms, had to think for themselves as to what they should do. First of all, they told themselves, they should come up with a quality policy. And to audit quality.

All of these things had been taught to us by Dr. Juran. And we had put all these things into action. All what we learned from Dr. Juran into action.

*Q: Dr. Juran is an American. But America started to listening to Dr. Juran almost 40 years after the Japanese started listening to Dr. Juran. Why did the Japanese listen so early and the Americans listen so late?*



NOGUCHI: Is often mention this point, but maybe I should share this with you here. 1990, at an international seminar, this is what ... is conducting October every year. Senior management of overseas corporations are invited to Japan to take part in this five-day course in Tokyo. And, in 1990, we had invited Dr. Juran. Well, he was in Japan at that time, and so we had specifically asked him to give a lecture. And while Dr. Juran was there, he had mentioned to the participants of the seminar that in 1969, the first international conference in the world had been held in Tokyo. Well, the first international conference had held in Tokyo in that year and Dr. Juran and Dr. Deming, both of them were invited to Tokyo.

And this had proven to be very, very popular in all of Japan. And this first -- in commemoration of this first international conference to be held in Tokyo, we had decided to introduce meaningful award. We already had a Deming

Award by then. And, at that time, we considered the next one should be the Juran Award.

And who should be the recipient. And would it be somebody even more superior to the recipient of a Deming Award, or what kind of awards should be granted. And all these things were considered at that time.

And in the following year, in 1970, when I went to the United States, I had mentioned to Dr. Juran about this plan that we had in Japan.

And at the time, Dr. Juran said that you already have a Deming Award or Deming Prize in Japan. It's probably not necessary to have another one. And the reason for that, he said, was because, be it Dr. Deming or myself -- talking about Dr. Juran -- that they have not taught anything special to Japan. That they'd been talking about the same things in the United States and in Europe, too.

And why is it that Japan, only Japan had proven to be successful. He continue to say that two Americans are considered as Japan owing a debt of gratitude to these people.

But he said that that's not right. Because the fact that Japan, only Japan succeeded was because of the Japanese people.

And this is how he had refused our suggestion. And that award today is known as the Japan QC Medal, the Japan Quality Control Medal. And we were not able to give it the title of Dr. Juran, unfortunately.

And this award is given to a company, a recipient of the the Deming Award, who had continued to maintain its level for the next five years after receiving the Deming Award.

*Q: We are (INAUDIBLE) for Dr. Juran, using many different paintbrushes held by many ... in the United States and Japan. Family members and colleagues. If you were holding the paintbrush, and you are now, what would your portrait of Dr. Juran be like?*

NOGUCHI: That's a very difficult question. But in the adjacent room, I think you've already seen a picture that's put up on the wall. On his left breast, he has a decoration presented to him by the Japanese government. And if I was to paint him as an artist, I probably would paint him something similar to that photograph on the wall.

*Q: And if you were a writer or a poet, what would you say about Dr. Juran?*

NOGUCHI: Well, I personally feel is that Dr. Juran is the authority of quality control in the entire world. He is the

philosophy of quality control. And I think he deserves that title.

Probably, in the 20th Century, quality control activity in the entire world, in the 20th Century; from that perspective, he is the authority, the greatest authority.

*Q: The time that you have spent with him, in his company, what are your fondest memories of the time you've spent with Dr. Juran?*

NOGUCHI: I have many memories of him. When Dr. Juran came to Japan, I usually accompanied him to different places. And he certainly is a strict professor. But, on the private level, away from work, he is a very humane man.

Of course, not only in Japan, be it in Europe or the United States, I met with Dr. Juran. But, as a personal friend, I'd say that he is a very, very good grandfather. That's my impression of him.

Particularly when I took him to Japanese tourist sites. There were some children from a kindergarten, a group on a tour. And Dr. Juran's, the way he talked to these kindergarten children -- you know, the expression on his face as he was talking to these children. When I saw his expression on his face at that time, I really felt that I really saw Dr. Juran as a person.

Unfortunately, Quality Control Circle in Japan generally feels Dr. Juran as being a strict professor. He doesn't drink.

He doesn't smoke.

But Dr. Deming, on the other hand, he likes to drink very much. And he also really enjoys going to drinking places, he likes parties and so forth. Therefore, the people involved in quality control in Japan consider Dr. Deming as being a person easy to get along with.

And Dr. Juran not so easy to get along with.

But, true, Dr. Juran is not like that. I think Dr. Juran is much more humane.

*Q: We see it all of the time. When he is with his family and when he's with us. And people do ask those kinds of questions about him. Years from now, people will look back, in history books, and they'll say: what were the real contributions? What did Dr. Juran really do? What do you think the history books should say about what Dr. Juran did for the people and the economy and the companies here in Japan?*

NOGUCHI: The economic growth of Japan today was greatly contributed to by quality control activities. And I think is a generally known fact, not only in Japan but in the entire world ... And this quality control in Japan had been, at least, the person who had suggested quality control in Japan is Dr. Juran. And this is how his contribution is greatly appreciated. This is the reason why it is so much appreciated.

Of course, Dr. Deming had taught us statistical quality control. But today's total quality control, participated by all the employees of an organization, is based on Dr. Juran's lessons.

*Q: In Japan, do you have a think called a radar detector in your car? Is there radar for speeding? No? Yes? Japan is almost 40 years in front, down the road, from the United States. You are our radar detector for quality. What can we in America learn from you, our radar detector? What do we have to look forward to when we have been doing what you've been doing for 40 years?*

NOGUCHI: In reality, in February of this year, the U.S. air force had asked for our two experts to be sent to the United States for ten days. They visited eight bases, air force bases, by a jetliner. And had made a diagnosis of these bases.

The U.S. air force, within the United States, have 49 bases and 711,000 employees working for them. So it's a really big organization. And this U.S. air force is conducting, promoting total quality management. And the method of this has been introduced to them from Japan.

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Mr. Foreman, had visited JUSE two times. And she had requested us to make the diagnosis of their bases.

Or the Environmental Agency, the people from the Environmental Agency also came to introduce the Japanese TQC and asked for our suggestion.

And also, very recently, Friday last week, the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii also had requested for the instruction of Japanese TQC.

On the one hand, one of the big three car manufacturers, the chairman, I think, has been mentioning it. But. on the other hand, in reality, there are efforts made. One of the big automobile manufacturer, the chairman of that company, is saying different things. But, on the other hand, in United States there are also some other people who are trying to learn from the quality control of Japan.

And this kind of activity, to contribute to the economic growth of the respective country, is not only pursued in the United States, but in other countries as well, be it in Latin America or Europe or the recently disintegrated Soviet Union, too. They also come to us. Southeast Asia, Mid-East, African countries. Utilizing the financing of World Bank.

They come to us. And we also are requested from the World Bank or I.L.O, the International Labor Organization, also ask us for instructions and advice.

And this kind of quality control activity, in Japan, in this way, does not only contribute to the development of corporations, but is able to contribute to the growth of economy of a country.

And I think this quality control that we promote in Japan is this methodology that can contribute in this way. Of course, we don't have an attitude as to just teach something to somebody. But I think we feel that this kind of methodology that we've been using in Japan should be introduced in different parts of the world. And really would want all these different other people to promote activities as we are promoting in Japan.

(END OF TAPE NUMBER THREE)



# Junji Noguchi

## Video Roll # 4

NOGUCHI: We don't have a special method. The quality control activity in Japan is nothing but cooperation and harmony of the people. The cooperation of the people working at the same work place is the basis for everything. If you have this, then be it quality control or any other thing, based on the harmony of the people, would be able to succeed.

*Q: A dangerous question: your Prime Minister Liasawa said: The people of America don't want quality, bad workers, lazy. As a quality professional, what is your evaluation of what's going on in America?*

NOGUCHI: Well, Japan learned about quality control from the United States. And the United States, the Americans, are trying to learn from Japan now. But we are all human beings -- same. This is not something that was introduced to us by an extraterrestrial being.

In reality, the Florida Power and Light Company had received a Japanese Deming Award.

The Taiwan Phillips, last year, also had received the Deming Award.

And so this is not something that only Japan can do. We have the Japanese way of thinking, or way of doing things. And this Japanese way can be materialized with the harmony and cooperation of all the workers. And there are companies outside Japan doing the same thing.



Of course, there are certain people with the opinion doing something totally different from what we are doing, but we are all same human beings. It doesn't mean that a person, people of specific country can do, and people of some other country cannot do. It's nothing of that sort.

*Q: Japan today has been practicing quality 40 years.*

*When you look to tomorrow, what are Japan's biggest challenges in quality, looking forward?*

NOGUCID: The Japanese quality control activity or quality improvement activity is an endless thing. From the initial start, we have been promoting this activity as an endless activity.

The countries that cannot succeed as Japan, or be it a corporation, if we analyze such a corporation or a country, there are maybe five reasons.

And one of those reasons is not to continue the activity. Maybe they would promote the activity one or two years, or maybe three years, and don't find the effect. And so stop doing it. But Japanese quality control activity proves its efficacy only after five years of promotion.

But the Japanese quality control is introduced to certain companies and they stop promoting such an activity. And when we analyze such corporations, they usually stop the activity after two or three years because they are not able to enjoy the effect.

But the improvement of a quality is an endless activity. Just because you cannot enjoy the effect, to stop the activity, you cannot call that an activity.

*Q: Thank you.*

(END OF TAPE NUMBER FOUR)

