

Editorial

Akira MURAMATSU

Waseda University

E-mail: akira-muramatsu@waseda.jp

In November, 2014, our small association finally held its first international conference. Originally, the international conference was planned to be held in autumn, 2011. However, because of earthquakes, tsunami and the tremendous damage left in their wake, in eastern Japan, in March of that year, we were obliged to suspend the conference. We were very concerned that participants, in particular, foreign researchers and scholars understandably fearful of radioactivity, would not come to Japan, so that the conference would not come into being. Therefore, after a hiatus, in 2014, the conference “finally” took place.

All the papers in this journal are based on the presentations given at the 2014 conference. After the keynote speeches, there was a symposium of four researchers; we can see two of their presentations as the papers in this present journal issue. Johannes van Delden reports about the present situation of euthanasia in Holland. Because of some controversial points, such as the “slippery slope arguments”, the results of Dutch measures for euthanasia always capture our attention. Thomas Heinemann discusses the moral status of the embryo, which is a central ethical issue of regenerative medicine in Japan as well.

Twenty presentations in five topic-assembled sessions followed the symposium. Five of these presentations are now realized as the papers in this issue: Tobias Bauer discusses the matter of baby hatch, a topic of social concern well-known in Japan under the name of “Baby Posts”. Yasushi Ishida deals with the physician-patient relationship. Even under the widely accepted condition of patients’ autonomy, he points out realistic problems regarding patients’ decision-making in Japanese clinical situations. Franziska Kasch reports about understanding and appreciating patients’ right to privacy in Japan. According to her research, the concept of personal privacy has developed in a way peculiar to Japan. Both Toshiki Nishimura’s and Yuichi Minemura’s papers focus on the fundamental problems in bioethics from philosophical points of view. The former takes the theme of understanding illness as an existential experience of a patient, while the latter considers “animalistic” discussions on the matter of personal identity.

Our goal in realizing this journal is to help the researchers of our association communicate with researchers and scholars abroad. Hopefully, this journal is a step toward that goal.