

## Laboratory / Center profile

### The Universal Design Laboratory

**Representative:** Professor Hidekazu Nishimura

**Research Area:** universal design, barrier-free, accessibility, environmentally friendly

**Members:** Professor Yasushi Nakano, Faculty of Economics, Mr. Hideki Tsuboi, Toshiba Design Center, Mr. Kyoichi Ikeda, Toshiba Elevator and Building Systems Corporation, Mr. Kiyoshi Kobayashi, Toshiba Elevator and Building Systems Corporation, and others

The Universal Design Laboratory aims to make facilities and products friendlier to seniors and people with disabilities. Currently our research focuses on barrier-free transportation for people in collaboration with the Mobility System Management Center. When the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics take place in 2020, many people are expected to use public transportation and facilities in Tokyo including foreign visitors. As part of our joint research with Toshiba Elevator and Building Systems Corporation, we are trying to improve elevator accessibility from the mobility point of view. In this regard Professor Yasushi Nakano (The Faculty of Economics) is guiding the laboratory based on his rich experience in universal designs and barrier-

free research. We are also incorporating the voices of wheelchair users and people with visual impairments, who kindly cooperate with us and provide comments. More concretely, we focus on how the universal elevator design should be. Is the layout of buttons on the operating panel appropriate for wheelchair users? What is an easy-to-use operating panel for an amblyope? Are elevator cars designed to ensure safety for wheelchair users? What should the relationship be between the operating panel and handrail? Through fieldwork and prototyping, we pursue designs that are truly universal based on these grounds. We would also like to further explore how the elevator hall should be set up and the accessibility up to the elevator hall.

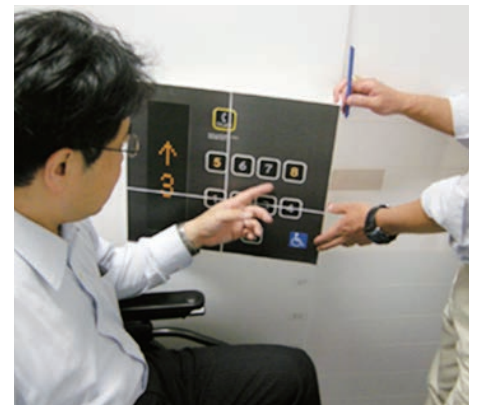
#### Examples of Universal Design



Elevator hall inside the Eighth Building on Mita Campus



Experiment: prototyping inside an elevator car



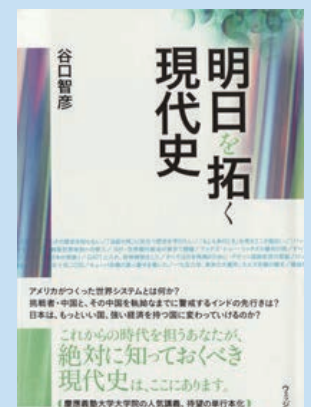
Exploring operating panel for wheelchairs



### Modern History Offers a New Avenue for Tomorrow (SDM Lectures Transcripts)

The year 2011 was one that made us think about many things. We had such a horrifying experience that we are no longer certain whether Tokyo tomorrow would be the same as Tokyo today. When the catastrophe happened, the government did not function; instead they said prevaricating things. Macroeconomics worsened day by day. It almost felt as if there was no exit. It was around then that a senior trainer for the incoming Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force invited me to accompany a distant voyage, so I went onboard with a training squadron. While cruising on the Atlantic Ocean, I thought about what young people who will be in the front line of national defense need to know today, which led to the idea of writing this book. First I tried speaking about the ideas in my lectures – I organized my ideas into scripts for each class. This book is basically a collection of scripts with an introduction added to it.

I noticed most students at Keio SDM have a so-called history complex – they regret coming to Keio SDM without knowing or having interests in certain things. This book attempts to spur such readers to gain an awareness of various issues. The modern history of Japan and that of India are laid out in parallel. This book is what I call a “history for this generation” as it aims to cater to the needs of this generation. Apparently, my students found it interesting. Although this book has been treated as a kind of textbook now and then, no student seems to have become bored with my class because of my habit of not wanting to tell the same story twice - fortunately or unfortunately. People sometimes tell me that I should write about the dark side of the administration and the scene of speech preparation. However, a tell-all has never been my style and I will probably not write about those things.



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Publisher: Wedge April 1, 2013



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