

## **Ninth Recipient of the International Observership in Hepato-Biliary-Pancreatic Surgery**

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It is a great honor and privilege for me to study in the United States as a recipient of the International Observership / Research Fellowship program of the Japanese Society of Hepato-Biliary-Pancreatic Surgery (JSHBPS). I completed a rotation at St. Luke's Boise Medical Center in Boise, Idaho, and in December 2014, I moved to Rochester, Minnesota where I am beginning a new rotation at Mayo Clinic. I would like to report my experiences at St. Luke's in Boise, where I spent 1 calendar year.

Since October 2013, I have been working under the supervision of Dr. L. William Traverso, a world famous pancreatic surgeon. He moved to Boise from Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle, Washington in 2010 and there established the Center for Pancreatic and Liver Disease at St. Luke's. He works with Dr. Joshua G. Barton, a surgeon at the Center. I was the first traveling surgeon to work with Dr. Traverso at St. Luke's. In the beginning, I had some difficulty settling into life and work in a new environment. However, I soon came to love this cozy, safe town full of warm people and surrounded by natural beauty. I was able to enjoy my work there.

St. Luke's is a tertiary referral hospital with a huge capacity, but it does not have a teaching program and does not usually train residents or fellows. However, Dr. Traverso was very instructive to me. Every morning after checking the patients' statuses via electronic medical records, I followed Dr. Traverso, making rounds for 3-4 hours starting at 6:30 AM. We had extensive discussions with radiologists on a daily basis regarding the radiologic findings in inpatients and outpatients with pancreatic disease. Dr. Traverso performs surgery 1 or 2 days a week and sees outpatients on the remaining days. He allots sufficient time (30-60 min) to each patient, visits patients in the hospital several times a day, and communicates often with the patients and their families. Dr. Traverso and Dr. Barton perform a total of 30-40 pancreatectomies per year, and I was allowed to observe these operations. Dr. Traverso uses a microscope for pancreaticojejunostomy anastomosis after pancreaticoduodenectomy. Regarding therapy for patients with pancreatic cancer, Dr. Traverso seemingly emphasized detecting pancreatic malignancies in their early stage, as well as resection after

neoadjuvant chemotherapy for advanced pancreatic cancer. I also communicated with Dr. Barton often and learned a lot from him.

During my visits with Dr. Traverso, I saw many patients with severe acute pancreatitis. A number of patients with severe disease had been hospitalized for as long as 3-6 months. In the care of patients, Dr. Traverso worked with doctors and colleagues in various fields, including general internal medicine, gastrointestinal endoscopy, infectious disease, diagnostic radiology, and interventional radiology. At the weekly, multidisciplinary Pancreas Care Conferences, I learned from doctors in different fields and from the personal experiences Dr. Traverso shared. I pursued clinical research in the afternoons, but I had opportunities to discuss my project with Dr. Traverso each morning, while we took breakfast together. I felt the spirit of a real clinician, seeing his closeness with patients and coworkers and his efforts to derive answers from the mysteries of clinical practice.

For my first assignment, I worked on making a database of all inpatients and outpatients of the Center for Pancreatic and Liver Disease. Then I proceeded to my own projects regarding “percutaneous drainage for severe acute pancreatitis,” “long-term complications in patients with acute pancreatitis,” “surgical outcome after pancreatectomy and its relationship with epidural anesthesia,” and “survival analysis for patients with pancreatic cancer.” I ran analyses for these projects and presented our works at several meetings, including the 2014 Pancreas Club meeting in Chicago, the 2014 Idaho Gut Club meeting in Sun Valley, and the 2014 American Pancreatic Association meeting in Hawaii. I am also writing papers from these investigations and am especially excited about our percutaneous drainage protocol for severe acute pancreatitis. By achieving effective drainage, no patients required necrosectomies in their clinical course and we have not encountered any mortality, which I consider a breakthrough. A paper on this study was published by Surgical Endoscopy (Epub Jan 29, 2015).

I enjoyed the great outdoors in Idaho by trekking and fly-fishing during the summer. I was able to travel locally to explore the Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park, places also loved by Dr. Traverso. I deeply appreciate Dr. Traverso, Mrs. Traverso, and their family for their hospitality. They were always warm and kind. I also developed friendships with some patients and their families. Thanks to Dr. Traverso, I learned how to establish good relationships with patients and their families in the United States. I am also grateful to the staff of the Center for Pancreatic and Liver Disease and their family members. They were very helpful to me, and I really enjoyed life in Boise due to their tremendous support. I was very happy and had a great time in Boise with all of the people I met.

I am realizing that my senior doctors, directors, and founders have established a wonderful program and what great relationships have developed between hepato-biliary-pancreatic surgeons of Japan and

the United States. It is a pleasure to be part of this community. I am grateful to Prof. Takada, Prof. Kawarada, and Prof. Hanyu, the founders of this program. I also wish to express special thanks to my senior doctors, Prof. Sano and the previous directors, members, and office workers of the JSHBPS. I will do my best to learn as much as possible and contribute to the medical field both in Japan and worldwide.

January 2015, Rochester, MN



St. Luke's Health System  
Regional Medical Center, downtown, Boise.



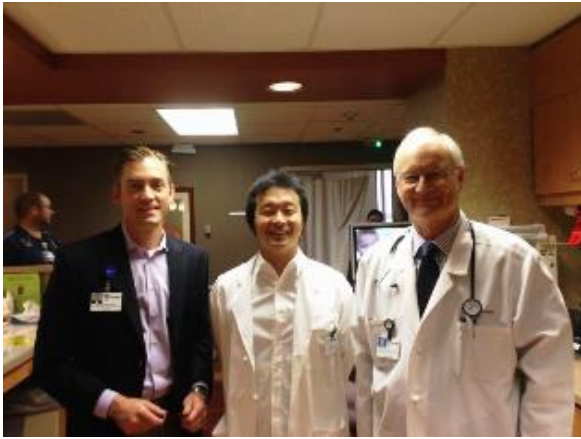
View of downtown Boise from the historic Depot.



With Drs. William and Adele Traverso,  
at the 2014 Panreas Club meeting in Chicago.



With Dr. Traverso and great staff at the  
Center for Pancreatic and Liver Disease.



With Dr. Traverso and Dr. Barton.



With Ms. Shedd, PA-C, and Dr. Traverso