

- New Year's Message-

A Year of Hope for Social Welfare in this era

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It has been a difficult start to this year.

The Noto Peninsula earthquake that occurred on January 1st has caused tremendous damage. It was heart wrenching to think that people in the affected areas have welcomed the new year in such an environment but still with hope for the new year. As the extent of the damage gradually became clear, I was overwhelmed by the power of nature and could not help but to think why it had to happen on New Year's Day.

I would like to express my deepest condolences to those who have deceased and to convey my deepest sympathies to all those affected by the disaster. I would also like to extend my deepest respect to those who are working hard to help the people in the affected areas and to restore the area. My heart is with the people in the affected areas who are living each day with tremendous effort. I pray from the bottom of my heart that their safety and security will be secured as soon as possible, I would like to do what I can and should do.

In addition, as in the past year, news of war is continuing since the beginning of this year. Four months have passed since the start of the attacks in the Gaza Strip of the Palestinian Authority, with no solution in sight, and the war in Ukraine is entering its third year. Many children and civilians continue to be the victims. I feel that there is a long way to realize a society where people respect each other regardless of nationality, religion, culture, and language, and where conflicts are resolved not by military force but through dedicated dialogue. While keenly feeling the folly of human beings who destroy peace themselves, and remembering that I am also a human being, I never give up faith in humanity and the possibility of a solution. Every day I pray that this situation will somehow be brought to an end as soon as possible through the collective wisdom of human beings.

Our lives have been under various restrictions since the spread of COVID-19 in 2020. Last year, we have finally regained our pre COVID-19 life. However, it is not all good news. Problems of loneliness, isolation, and deprivation that have emerged in Japan in the wake of COVID-19 are becoming more serious. Breakdown of the number of suicides in 2020, which reportedly increased for the first time in 11 years, shows a marked increase especially among women and children. As this trend continues, the number of suicides among elementary, junior high, and high school students is reported to have exceeded 500 in 2022, the highest number in statistical history. The problem of loneliness and isolation is now a life-threatening issue. The foundation of living as a member of society, that is, as a member of a community, workplace, school, or family, in connection with people and places, is threatened, and many people are forced into deep loneliness and isolation.

We are being asked what it means to live, what life is, what life and livelihood are, and what it means to be supported. I believe that social welfare studies, which is our research, education and practice, must be a discipline which creates new values for people and society, and promotes solidarity and action based on such values. I believe it must be a discipline which values interaction

and dialogue among people and contributes to the maintenance and restoration of the well-being and tolerance of people and society. It must be a discipline which discusses the systems and policies that guarantee people's well-being, and at the same time, it must be a discipline of practice which is aware of the suffering and difficulties of those close to us, sincerely listens to their voices, and continues to engage with them. I believe that social welfare must be a discipline that creates and disseminates many words that connect and include different people, rather than words that build walls and divide people. I believe that this is the responsibility and mission of those of us involved in the research, education, and practice of social welfare studies.

This year marks the 70th anniversary since the establishment of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare in May 1954. The theme of the 71st Fall Meeting held last year was "The Challenge of Social Welfare Studies to Shape Happiness in the World". Our lives are in the midst of social changes occurring at tremendous speed, such as disasters in various regions, life-threatening climate change, and the progress of ICT and AI. In these complex and unstable times, social welfare studies, this academic society, and each of us involved in it are called upon to take on a variety of challenges. I hope that this year will be an opportunity to reexamine the *raison d'être* of the Society, "What is social welfare studies and what is the Society for?"

Human beings and the lives of the people have dignity. I believe that social welfare studies must strictly resist various situations in which that dignity is violated. Therefore, I would like to return once again to the principles of social welfare studies as a discipline and renew our stance toward social welfare studies. I also hope that this conference will become a platform for the generation of social welfare "knowledge" required in this era, a place that will lead to the questioning of existing knowledge, the development of social welfare studies, and the creation of new practices. We also hope that social welfare studies, as a system of "living knowledge" that contributes to the happiness of people and society, will be shared, refined, and passed on to many, including the members of the society.

I also believe that the existence of the discipline of social welfare studies, its members, and the people who are involved in its research, education, and practice are important hopes in today's situation of various social and life challenges. Together with you, I would like to find as much hope as possible for this era in social welfare studies, which never gives up on people's dignified lives.

I sincerely wish all the members of the Society good health in the year ahead.

I look forward to your continued support and cooperation with the various projects of the Society in 2024.

Korean Academy of Social Welfare

Report on Research Presentation at 2023 Korean Social Welfare Joint Academic Conference

Takashi Sasaki

Tokyo University and Graduate School of Social Welfare

A Study on the Use of Origami and the Creation of *Ikigai* in Day Care Services in Japan

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the board members of the Japanese Society of Social Welfare and the many professors involved in the organization of the Korean Academy of Social Welfare for providing this valuable opportunity to present this research.

The presentation at the Jeju International Convention Center in Korea on October 20th, 2023 was one of the most memorable experiences in our long research lives.

【Motivation】

Firstly because I wanted to disseminate my research on “Origami Rehabilitation” to the global community. Secondly, I wanted to contribute to the prevention of the condition which needs long-term nursing care by using familiar materials (origami) to improve the quality of life of the elderly.

【Overview】

In this study, elderly people with dementia who use day care services were divided into two groups: a group that used origami (N=129) and a group that did not use origami (N=108). A questionnaire survey was conducted on 11 items related to their physical conditions before and after using origami. The survey was conducted upon signing the industry-academia collaboration agreement between three stakeholders: a company which has day care services all around Japan, an origami company, and Sasaki Research Laboratory of the Junior College of the University of Shizuoka.

【Findings】

The group was divided into two groups: those who performed origami, those who did not perform origami, and a corresponding t-test was performed on the questions before and after origami was performed. Out of the 11 questions, only "Do you have opportunities to talk with others" in the Origami group was statistically significant at 5% level. This question was also significant in the positive direction. In the group that used origami, the number of "opportunities to talk with others" was greater after origami, compared to before. The fact that the group that did not do origami also engaged in day care service activities other than origami, but that statistically significant results were only obtained for the group that did origami, was a significant finding.

【Q and A】

The professor from Namseoul University sent us questions in advance via e-mail: 1. about the number of people who participated in the origami activity; 2. about the questionnaire tool; 3. about the independent variables (duration and frequency of origami use, details about the level, etc.); 4. about the measurement method. During the research period, there were elderly people who had been hospitalized, those who no longer used day care services, and those who had various illnesses other

than dementia. We regret that we needed to provide more details about the survey situation, the process of making origami, the degree of difficulty, and the duration of the survey, based on the content of the questions. Professor Jang Dong-Ho of the Department of Social Welfare at Namseoul University fully agreed with the author's statement that "In the future, we will need programs that recognize the existence of the elderly as they are and utilize their residual functions. He added, "I hope that more programs will be developed in the future that are relatively inexpensive and at the same time effective, like origami.

This work is part of the results of "Study of End-stage Care Management in Japan," published by Chuo Houki Publishing [Specific Academic Book] PP1-237 (2014)., and is supported by JSPS KAKENHI (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research) Grant Number 255161.

Korean Academy of Social Welfare

Report on Research Presentation at the 2023 Korean Social Welfare Joint Academic conference

Yuko Kadoshita

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I was fortunately selected as a presenter for Korean Academy of Social Welfare's 2023 Korean Social Welfare Joint Academic Conference held at the Jeju International Convention Center on October 20 and 21, 2023, and was given the opportunity to make a presentation in the international free presentation section. The title of the presentation was "Learning about 'sex' among people with intellectual disabilities: A comparison of easy-to-understand publications between Japan and Korea. This research was conducted in collaboration with Shinsuke Hayama (Slow-Communication.jp). Mr. Hayama was also present on the day of the presentation, and Korean interpretation was provided by Kim Young-Kwang. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Kim for his various efforts leading up to the presentation on the day of the event.

The purpose of the research was to investigate the contents of the publications and the extent to which norms related to "sex" are addressed, and to examine the nature of learning about "sex" among the intellectually challenged. The results showed that Japanese publications comprehensively described topics related to "sex" (menstruation, masturbation, love, sex, parenting, etc.), while Korean publications focused on "love" and showed how to build a relationship with a partner. Although both publications mainly assumed heterosexuality, the Japanese publication was more likely to present a fixed life course and encourage behavior that adheres to norms. Based on these results, we suggested the need for supporters and educators to critically examine the characteristics of each publication and the ideas and norms behind them. After the presentation, the designated discussant, Professor Jang Dong-Ho of the Department of Social Welfare at Namseoul University, asked, "Why did you dare to be interested in the publication when there are other options such as videos?" What is the definition of 'easy-to-understand publications'?" In Japan, I think that people with intellectual disabilities do not get married even if they are in love. "I think that in Japan, even if people with intellectual disabilities fall in love, it does not lead to marriage. Furthermore, I have heard that there is opposition to their self-determination regarding their sexuality. I would like to know the opinions of those who agree or disagree with this point in Japan. After the session, I received comments and questions from a researcher from the Graduate School of Hokkaido University and a graduate student from Seoul National University, who presented in the same section, and was able to gain important insights.

During the conference, I heard presentations on the current state of social welfare education in South Korea and issues in supporting people with developmental disabilities in rural areas, which gave me ideas for my next research, and provided me with an opportunity to increase my motivation for my research. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare for providing such a wonderful opportunity, and to the Research Center for Social Welfare and Social Development, Toyo University for supporting my research presentation.

Based on this experience and the network I have been connected to, I intend to continue to deepen my research in the future.

Korean Academy of Social Welfare

Report on Research Presentation at 2023 Korean Social Welfare Joint Academic Conference

Zhang Siming

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I have been selected by the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare to present at the free research presentation session at Korean Social Welfare joint Academic conference held in Jeju Island (October 20-21, 2023). I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for giving me this opportunity.

At the conference, I received valuable comments from Korean researchers on my research in Japan, which was interesting and stimulating. As a Chinese person, I thought that exchanges between Japan, China, and Korea will become very important in the future. In addition, I was introduced to research from Western countries that are addressing similar issues, which helped me to broaden my international perspective on future theoretical development and research methods.

In addition to experiencing the atmosphere of international research, I also had the opportunity to meet other excellent Japanese researchers who were also presenters at the conference, which was a very enriching and positive experience.

The theme of my presentation was "Economic Disadvantage of Elderly Widowed Households in Japan: Livelihood Strategies to Address Poverty in Single Mothers' Retirement" (KAKENHI; Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research Grant Number 23K18823).

The study's target population was elderly widowed households in Japan, who are single parents, female, and elderly. Factors that increase the risk of poverty and are likely to fall into poverty. The research collaborators for the interview study were a total of 16 elderly widows belonging to a mother-child welfare organization Y in X City who were at least 65 years old at the time of the study, receiving pensions, and not in need of nursing care. The study revealed the reality that while elderly widows adopt strategies to cope with their economic disadvantage, such as working, supporting adult children, and receiving public assistance, they are forced to endure in terms of expenditures when this is not enough to solve their income shortfall. Finally, I analyzed that the poverty of elderly widows was the result of the most rational choices possible in the face of scarce resources, but that these choices were made in the face of economic disadvantages and constrained options, and thus did not lead them out of poverty.

Based on the above presentation, Professor Park Jung min of the Department of Social Welfare at Seoul National University commented that the survival strategies of elderly widowed households in Japan are not significantly different from those of the elderly in Korea, and he also introduced some studies in Western countries. I recognized that my research has important value as a common issue not only in East Asia but also around the world.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to Professor Ichiro Matsumoto, Professor Tomoko Tsuji, and Associate Professor Madoka Toriyama, Graduate School of Education, Hokkaido University, and Associate Professor Maki Yasuda of the Junior College of Hokusho University, for their guidance on this research. I would also like to thank An Xin Dan for translating the manuscript, to Qi Xiao hang for interpreting onsite, and many other people involved in the conference of Korean Academy of Social

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翻訳

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