

Report on the 72nd Autumn Conference

Japan Society for the Study of Social Welfare
The 72nd Autumn Conference, Chair, Organizing Committee,
Tomoko Hosho (Nihon Fukushi University)

1. Program content

The 72nd Autumn Conference of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare (JSSW) of 2024 was held last between October 26 and 27 in Aichi Prefecture at the Tokai City Arts Theater and the Tokai Campus of Nihon Fukushi University (NFU) under the theme of *Exploring the Essence of Social Welfare in the Contemporary Era*. Held both in person and via on-demand delivery, the conference was a great success with 722 participants (including five free presenters from mainland China and South Korea). I would like to take this opportunity to thank all participants, speakers, Board Members, and other related parties. The program content was as follows.

On the morning of the first day, a start-up symposium was held at NFU's Tokai Campus. With the topic of *Considering the Cyclical Relationship between Practice and Research*, three speakers (Etsuko Kisanuki, Daiki Matsumoto, and Ayako Yamamoto) presented and Yukiko Taniguchi made comments with moderation by Noriko Yamano.

In the afternoon, the opening ceremony was held at the Tokai City Arts Theater. There, Junko Wake (President of JSSW), Katsushige Hanada (Mayor of Tokai City), and Masaki Harada (Conference Chair and President of NFU) delivered opening remarks. At the following award ceremony, the JSSW Academic Awards (Single Author Division) were presented to Shinpei Osawa and Katsunobu Kihara, and the JSSW Encouragement Award (Paper Division) to Koh Hatanaka. Congratulations!

This was followed by a symposium planned by the host school. The topic was *New Safety Net for People with Precarious Livelihood*, and the keynote speech by Chuo University Professor Taro Miyamoto was followed by presentations from three speakers (Kuniko Ishikawa, Yusuke Kakita, and Yuriko Kawashima) with coordination by Soshiro Yamada. Afterwards, Prof. Taro Miyamoto was asked

to act as commentator too.

In the evening, an information exchange gathering was held at NFU Tokai Campus Co-op Cafeteria. 123 people attended the gathering, which featured speeches by overseas participants, by faculty from Doshisha University (the next host school), and live music performances by NFU faculty, namely Etsuko Yuhara and Fumito Ito.

The second day of the conference was held on NFU's Tokai Campus throughout the day. There were 157 oral presentations during the morning and afternoon sessions, 75 poster presentations, and three special topic sessions.

An academic symposium was coordinated by Hong Suo, Chino Yabunaga, and Kosuke Kajiwara, with presentations by Yueqin Cui from China, Hisayo Katsui from Finland, and Yasuhiro Kuroki from Japan.

The special topic session was coordinated by Hiroshi Takagi on the topic of *How is (has been) Japanese social work dealing with contemporary politics?*

Finally, a session planned by JSSW was held on the topic of Reconsidering '*Connecting*' in Social Welfare: '*Connecting*' and '*Anonymity*' coordinated by Kayoko Ito with presentations by four speakers (Eunhwa Kang, Naoyuki Kakegawa, Akihiko Ozawa, and Yoshinobu Matsuoka), and comments from Fumiharu Yamagata.

All sessions had lively discussions, and although approaches differed, it seems that they provided opportunities to examine the essence of social welfare in the present day.

2. Impressions from the host school's standpoint

In organizing this conference, our biggest mission was to 'hold a conference in a way that will serve as a template for the future'. As we enter an era of declining birthrates and faculty are busier than ever before, establishing a sustainable way to run conferences is an urgent issue at JSSW. In fact, the members of the Organizing Committee were quite busy too. Since the conference was also positioned as a 70th

anniversary event for the university, the conference was chaired by the NFU President, and I, while acting as Chair of the Organizing Committee, serve as Dean of our Faculty of Social Welfare; other members too were almost exclusively from the management both from the faculty or graduate school levels with not a single person having extra time on their hand.

During preparation and organization, these members decided on the keywords of good location, organic collaboration, and hospitality, therefore our impressions based on these perspectives are described below.

The first is good location. NFU has four campuses, but this time we held the seminar at the Tokai Campus, which is 17 minutes from Meitetsu Nagoya Station and 20 minutes from the Central Japan International Airport. While there are many advantages in terms of transportation, accommodations, and dining options, we had to make many meetings with the Tokai Campus and Tokai City because we were not familiar with the details of the campus buildings, since we do not use it on a daily basis. Thankfully, we received positive feedback from visitors who said that the location was indeed good.

The next is organic collaboration. The most significant feature in terms of organizing was the inclusion of a local academic conference support company, YuPia Inc. NFU had held the JSSW Autumn Conference in 2010 as well, but the situation and members were different from those days, and it was almost like holding a large conference like this one for the first time. We had no idea who should act how according what schedule, and what equipment we would need. However, with the help of YuPia Inc., we were able to prepare and manage the event without wasting any time or other precious resources. Particularly, student staff were divided into teams led by three faculty members, each with their own time schedule and detailed manuals, thereby we managed to eliminate issues related to duplication of work and lack of time. In this way, I believe that outsourcing the outsourceable could also be one direction to go in the future.

The last one is hospitality. First of all, whenever there was a problem, information was gathered at the conference head office, where the secretariat was standing by, and we set up a system that allowed

us to immediately respond to problems. There were a few minor incidents, but fortunately we were able to prevent any major troubles. Also, we placed tea and snacks in the rest areas for the participants to enjoy, and played live music at the information exchange gathering, which provided a homemade atmosphere. This gave us an opportunity to realize that hospitality can be provided without spending a large amount of money.

We plan to make a comprehensive summary and pass it on to next year's host school. We hope that this will lead to sustainable conference management for JSSW.

Receiving the 2024 Awards by the Japan Society for the Study of Social Welfare

As a result of review by the Japan Society for the Study of Social Welfare (JSSW) Awards Evaluation Committee, the 2024 JSSW Awards were given out, and Shinpei Osawa and Katsunobu Kihara were selected for the JSSW Academic Award (Single Author Division), and Koh Hatanaka was selected for the JSSW Encouragement Award (Paper Division).

The award ceremony was held on Saturday, October 26, 2024, the first day of JSSW's 72nd Autumn Conference, at the Main Hall of the Tokai City Arts Theater, following the conference opening ceremony.

Below are some words of joy by the awardees.

Award-winning work: "The Experience of Poverty for Children --Structural Inequality in Agency and Life Chances."

**Academic Award (Single Author Division),
Shinpei Osawa (Sapporo Gakuin University)
(Published by Horitsu Bunka Sha on May 30, 2023)**

I am truly grateful for the honor of receiving the JSSW Award. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Evaluation Committee who took the trouble to undertake the review. I would also like to thank all those who were involved in the publication of this book.

This book attempts to clarify the subjective experiences of children and youth living in poverty, based on the structural dimensions of poverty. At the same time, we believe that the hidden theme of this book was to question how people are viewed in poverty research. In qualitative research on people living in poverty similar to this book, it used to be common to utilize the Culture of Poverty theory by Oscar Lewis and, since Bourdieu's influence has been significant in Japan, the theory of Cultural Reproduction as frameworks of reference. However, as I learned more from the works of Rawls, Sen, Nussbaum, and others, which form the background of this book, I came to value the fact that how we

live and what kind of things we cherish are matters of individual freedom. Also, I wrote this book because I believe that the core of the problem of poverty or inequality is to respect the values and way of life of all children, since I had worked in a high school for eight years before becoming a researcher, where I tried to respect each and every child I came to contact with, as well as their values and ways of life (including their failures) that are important to them, so that I can create a foundation for them so that they are able to live their own lives. I wrote this book with this in mind. I am not sure how well I have conveyed this message, but this book is based on the premise of such a view of people.

By the way, on a quite personal note, my wife was awarded the JSSW Award last year. For our family, this is the second consecutive year that we have received this prestigious award from JSSW. During this time, my wife and I have taken turns going on childcare leave while raising our three children together. I think it probably took us longer than usual to carry out our research. Even so, I am proud that both my wife and I managed to produce reasonable research results. I hope that the future generation of young researchers will be able to maintain a good work-life balance and that they do not need to feel rushed when pursuing their research.

Finally, I would like to thank the many children and young people I have met so far and every person who have agreed to be interviewed. I would like to give back what I have received from all of them to help create a social environment in which children and youth can realize their own lives as much possible.

Award-winning work: " George Müller and the Source of Christian Social Welfare

**Academic Award (Single Author Division)
Katsunobu Kihara (Doshisha University)
(Published by Kyobunkwan on February 22, 2023)**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for awarding me the JSSW Award. As a former JSSW President, I was not without hesitation in accepting this award, thinking that I should have been in a position to identify outstanding research from among members and recommend them for the award. However, as someone who wishes to remain an active researcher for the rest of my life, I am honestly pleased to receive this award and respectfully accept it. My research is quite specialized and the book can be considered somewhat maniac on historical research; it will hardly be read by the general public and may not be directly useful for contemporary social welfare policy and practice. Yet, I am especially grateful that JSSW has recognized such a book.

It was 40 years ago, when I was a freshman in college, that I came to know about the subject of the reasearch in this book, namely George Müller, the father of the Bristol orphans. At the time, someone recommended the book "A Man of Faith: George Müller" (Word of Life Press Ministries), and that was my first encounter with Müller. The person who recommended the book to me later became my wife. At the time, I was simply impressed by how Müller lived and had only a vague yearning to become a Christian and social welfare practitioner like him.

Later, as I deciphered the journals of Ishii Juji, the autobiography of Yamamuro Gunpei, and the letters of Niijima Jo, I came across Müller's name again and again, and felt that dots in history were being connected. It was an experience that brought a kind of surprise and excitement to me. It also became clear that Müller's influence on Japanese social activists like Ishii and Yamamuro was greater than that of Jane Addams and Richmond. Later, as I began my academic life for real and pursued historical research based on cold empirical principles, I began to look at Müller's "too good to be true"

biography with a skeptical eye. Gradually, I developed an ambition to irreverently and critically examine the historical facts, and this became another motivation for my research. As a result of intensive historical criticism and document analysis over the past seven or eight years, it has become clear that the historical facts can withstand historical criticism and cannot be denied.

I was also very surprised to learn that Müller was a member of the same Plymouth Brethren-affiliated "Christ Assembly" as myself, and that he himself was one of its early leaders. This made it relatively easy for me to obtain internal documents that would otherwise have been unavailable. Curiously, the process of exploring the sources of the Brethren movement and tracing its roots was, in the words of Kinya Abe, the very process of "reading history in myself". There were many moments of empathy and "revelations" as I delved into the history of the Brethren movement through Müller, feeling an overlap with my own roots.

It is indeed a strange encounter that led me to read a biography recommended by my wife about 40 years ago, which has now come to fruition as a book of research. This book was born out of the support of many people, and I am deeply moved by the thought that each of them may have been guided by an "invisible hand".

Award-winning work: "The Shinko Hotoku Movement and the Shinko Seikatsukan in Shizuoka Prefecture of the 1930s".

**Encouragement Award (Paper Division)
Koh Hatanaka (Fukui Prefectural University)
(Published in Social Welfare, Vol. 64, No. 3 on November 30, 2023)**

It is my great pleasure to receive the prestigious JSSW Encouragement Award. I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Evaluation Committee for their recommendation of my paper, which is about a modest study on a single locality. In the JSSW Award Guidelines it is clearly

stated that "further development of research is expected". I am aware that my research is still in its infancy, and I humbly intend to continue my efforts.

I have been working on unearthing historical documents on social welfare with specific local field settings. This is because I have a vague desire to delve into the local practice activities of social welfare so that I can provide a diversity of historical facts that cannot be covered by general historical research. The selection of Shizuoka Prefecture as the subject of our research was also an extension of this desire, and as I began the research, I was not aware of the influence of the Hotoku Movement from the outset. It was an encounter with the Washiyama family documents in the collection of the Shizuoka Prefectural Historical and Cultural Information Center that made me aware of the movement's influence on social activism. The documents were owned by Kyohei Washiyama, the mayor of Hijikata Village in Ogasawara County, and contain a wealth of materials related to the Hotoku Movement, the Prefectural Social Services Department, and the Social Activist Association, which led me to also begin research on the Shinko Seikatsukan. As pointed out in the review, it is difficult to evaluate the modern Houtoku Movement, including the Shinko Seikatsukan, and we cannot help but end up evaluating it as having played a role in the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement. On the other hand, it is also true that at a time when the social security system was not fully developed (while it is easy to criticize looking back from now), the movement created opportunities for the people to proactively address the challenges they faced in their daily lives through educational measures. I would like to continue my research while recognizing of the critical balance and tensions in the conflicting evaluations.

Many people supported me in the course of this research. I cannot mention every name, but I received especially generous support from Prof. Konomi Imai (my academic advisor), Prof. Katsumi Yagami (my senior in local regional historical research), and Prof. Hisanori Maeda (my senior in historical research on the Hotoku Movement) for their especially generous support. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them. Finally, I would like to let my late mentor, Prof. Kunijiro Tashiro, know about the award. His life as a dignified researcher who devoted his life to the realization of ensuring the

"right to peaceful existence" is a goal of my own that I will never be able to reach. While I feel that I can almost hear his voice scolding me and saying "Quickly write it up in a book and pose the question to the world! ", I will keep on proceeding diligently step-by-step.

Supporting Early Career Researchers: Being Conscious of Links to the Future

**Member, the Research Support Committee,
Tsuyoshi Shimazaki (Kurume University)**

The Research Support Committee is currently organizing start-up symposiums as part of its research support for early career researchers. These symposia are held during the Autumn Conferences of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare (JSSW) and by addressing various issues faced by early career researchers function as a hub between various early career researchers and the social welfare studies academic community, regardless of whether they have membership at JSSW or not.

The 72nd Autumn Conference of JSSW was held at Nihon Fukushi University (NFU) on October 26, 2012 and featured a symposium under the all-encompassing theme of Considering the Cyclical Relationship between Practice and Research. With 102 participants (including 20 non-members and excluding organizers etc.), the symposium gathered greater attention than in previous years.

The symposium commentator was Yukiko Taniguchi of Nagoya City University's Graduate School and three speakers presented, namely Etsuko Kisanuki (Chief, Reporting Response Group, Mental Health Promotion Office, Health Bureau, Aichi Prefecture) as an early career researcher in a practice position, Mr. Taiki Matsumoto (Master's Program in Social Welfare, Graduate School of Social Welfare, NFU) as early career researcher with no practice experience, and Ayako Yamamoto (Acting Head, Community Health Section, Health and Sanitation Office, Matsusaka Public Health Center, Mie Prefecture) as a social welfare practitioner with experience as a research subject. The following discussion was coordinated by Noriko Yamano (Osaka Public University), Chair of the Research Support Committee.

The cyclical relationship between practice and research has an important significance for social welfare studies, which is oriented toward enabling more science-based practice. Therefore, it is important for researchers to have an opportunity to recognize the significance of this in the early stages of their careers, and to be aware of their responsibilities as researchers. Consensus about this issue was

at the root of choosing the theme of the symposium.

On the other hand, many early career researchers who aspire to do research in the academic field of social welfare studies hold positions as practitioners or have a certain degree of practice experience, rather than enrolling straight to Master's courses. They each have their own aspirations to pursue research, such as proving effectiveness of practice, theorizing practice, or practicing with scientific evidence. However, there are some early career researchers who struggle in the process of starting basic research and find it difficult to follow through on their initial aspirations. In various former events organized by the Research Support Committee, people have shared about many such difficulties and worries of early-career researchers. We believe that this symposium provided an opportunity to stimulate the research aspirations of early-career researchers in various positions, as expressed in a message that summed up the symposium, namely "being conscious of links to the future".

The Research Support Committee will continue to propose projects for research support and to encourage early career researchers to participate proactively in our events, thereby enhancing activities. As an early initiative, the 5th CS-NET Salon on Would you like to organize a salon? is scheduled for December 21. It will be held on-site at Doshisha University's Imadegawa Campus and be accessible in a hybrid format too. Information is posted on the JSSW website, so we would be happy if you could join us or promote the event.

Finally, with regard to holding the symposium, I would like to take this opportunity to thank NFU faculty for their various preparations and considerations as the host school for the 72nd Autumn Conference, as well as student staff for their active support.

We appreciate JSSW members' continued understanding and cooperation regarding the activities of the Research Support Committee.

翻訳

ヴィラーグ ヴィクトル(日本社会事業大学社会福祉学部 准教授・福祉計画学科学科長)

Translation

Viktor Virág (Ph.D.Associate Professor & Head, Department of Social Administration, Faculty of Social Welfare, Japan College of Social Work)