

-Prefatory note-

- The Importance of Academic Association Activities Rooted in the Community
Potentials of regional block activities to learn, cultivate and disseminate –

Tomoko Hosho, Nihon Fukushi University
Vice President, JSSSW

For the past year, I have been active as the vice-president of Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare on the Regional Block Committee. Through my experience, I would like to share my reflection on regional block activities.

I think that Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare is one of the few social welfare academic associations that actively engages in regional block activities. Seven regional blocks (Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kansai, Chugoku/Shikoku, and Kyushu) carry out their own activities, and the directors in charge of the blocks are also elected (<https://www.jssw.jp/district/>). I believe that regional block activities have their own significance, not only simply dividing up large-scale national academic conference activities into regions. Given that the global definition of social work profession states that it may be developed in each country and region of the world, it can be said that the activities in each regional block embody the global definition. Activities rooted in the region are essential to promote regional revitalization efforts. Therefore, I will give an overview of the potentials of regional block activities from the perspective of learning, cultivating, and disseminating information.

First is about learning. Academic associations are “communities of knowledge” and develop activities centred on learning. Research meetings and competitions are actively held in each block. Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare Forum has also been held on a rotating basis in each regional block. At the general meeting held on May 28, 2023, it was decided that from 2026 onwards, the autumn conference will be held in rotation among regional blocks. Having a place to learn close by for the members of the association will make it easier for them to gain the latest knowledge and increase opportunities to present their research. Particularly for those who feel intimidated to present their research at the national conference may be able to take on the challenge somewhat more easily at the regional blocks. It will also increase opportunities to learn and research issues of that regional context. I believe that this will be an opportunity to create and disseminate 'region- and ethnicity-specific knowledge', which is the very foundation of social work.

Second is on cultivating. Activities to nurture young researchers are being developed in each of the regional blocks. Each block has its own originality and ingenuity, such as setting up a budding research

section at research conferences, an incentive award system for early-stage researchers, longer discussions after research presentations and study groups and information exchange meetings for graduate students and early-stage researchers. In the training of researchers, I believe that it is important to have both elements that are handed down from one generation to the next, such as the 'apprentice system,' and elements that form a certain systemic foundation, as in the 'school system.' These elements are contained in diverse relationships. For example, if the relationship between postgraduate supervisors and their students is a 'vertical relationship,' then the relationship between graduate students and early-stage researchers is a 'horizontal relationship.' Also, connections with researchers from other universities who have different careers in the regional blocks can be described as "diagonal relationships." All these relationships - vertical, horizontal and diagonal - are important for a researcher's development. The 'diagonal relationship' is particularly important for cultivating a broad perspective that is not limited to one's own research field, creating a broad network with people of various ages and fields, and sometimes acting as a buffer against issues that cannot be resolved within one's own organisation. In this sense, regional block activities play an important role.

Last is the aspect of disseminating. All regional blocks publish news and journals and disseminate information on their websites daily. Nowadays, academic articles are archived, and the contents of the journals published by the block are open to the public. This helps to make people aware of the existence of the association and its research findings. It can also function as a platform for the association to express its opinions and make proposals on current social welfare developments and regional issues. It could be said that it is truly a place for community-based social action. Thus, the more actively the association disseminates, the more opportunities for the public to study and research social welfare, and a much stronger drive for cultivating an academic climate in the region and within Japan.

As described above, the regional block activities of the association have significance in three aspects: learning, cultivating and disseminating. In the future, we will strive to develop more substantial regional block activities in cooperation with other committees of the JSSSW (Research Support Committee, Research Committee, Public Relations Committee, and so on). We will also aim to work in close cooperation with each other so that the revitalisation of the national conference leads to the revitalisation of the regional blocks and the revitalisation of the regional blocks becomes the driving force behind the national conference. We would be grateful for any feedback from our members.

Invitation to the 71st JSSSW Fall Conference

Yuichi Watanabe, Musashino University
Chairperson of Executive Committee

We are pleased to announce that the 71st Autumn Conference of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare will be held on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th October at Musashino Campus of Musashino University.

I would like to express my sincere respect to all those involved in the association and the organising committee of the conference host, who have kept the lights shining to hold the Autumn Conference of Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare despite the many restrictions imposed by the spread of the coronavirus since 2020. In particular, last year's 70th Autumn Conference, under the leadership of Koichi Tsuda from Kansai University of Welfare Sciences, Chairperson of the Executive Committee at the time, was managed in the form of "face-to-face meetings as the basic format, with some programmes being delivered live or on-demand via zoom webinar and online poster presentations," taking every possible measure to prevent infection, providing an invaluable opportunity to confirm the importance of "connections" between people. I was relieved to be able to attend the conference myself and reconnect with colleagues I had not been able to meet in person for years. I was also able to meet some whom I only had the opportunity to meet online for the first time in person in that conference. Some were surprisingly tall, and with some, I had the impression: 'I can't believe this is the first time I'm meeting you' experiences.

Preparations for the 71st Autumn Conference are underway with the aim of holding a 'full face-to-face' meeting, while taking measures against various infectious diseases. Please think back again to "face-to-face symposia," "face-to-face oral presentations," "face-to-face poster presentations," "face-to-face information exchange meetings," and so forth. For example, in the 'face-to-face poster presentations,' we would like to resurrect once again such occasions as graduate students presenting at a conference for the first time nervously explaining the content of their posters to veteran professors, collaborators chatting in front of their posters, and discussions starting spontaneously. We will also take on new challenges, such as projecting slides for oral presentations (prior registration required) and going paperless (no handouts). The organising committee and staff look forward to welcoming you all to the conference. Please register here.

<https://www.jssw.jp/conf/71/entry.html>



We have also set up a twitter account (@jssw71_musw) for the 71st conference, so please follow us.

The theme of the 71st Autumn Conference is "The Challenge of Social Welfare Studies to Shape Happiness in the World". The world in which we live is currently experiencing wars, conflicts and disasters in many parts of the world, and is affected by coronavirus. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to realise a sustainable, diverse and inclusive society where 'leave no one behind' by 2030, comprise of 17 goals and 169 targets. The SDGs have become well known to many people, as they have been incorporated into education in various aspects, but it is undeniable that reaching the goals by 2030 will be difficult, and there are many different opinions on the goals themselves.

It goes without saying that the contribution of social welfare studies is indispensable to realise a true form of happiness for all people. In Japan in particular, it has been pointed out that efforts around human rights are weak. It is necessary to critically examine the current situation from the standpoint of social welfare studies and to consider specifically how to bring about change in this situation.

Therefore, on the first day of the conference, we will have a keynote speech titled 'Critical Examination of the SDGs and the Future of Human Rights Issues' by Kohei Saito, Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo, at the symposium organised by the conference host university titled 'Verification of the Response to Human Rights Issues in the SDGs and the Challenge of Social Welfare Studies.' The symposia will have symposiasts from within and outside the academic community. In addition, the start-up symposium (Research Support Committee) on Day 1 (14th) will focus on 'How to support early-stage researchers to meet their needs', while the workshop for international students and international comparative research will focus on 'Multicultural Conviviality in Social Welfare Research and Education (2): Current issues of acceptance and responses towards diversity among international students, ethnic minorities and cultural minorities in Korea and China (tentative title).' In the international academic symposium on the second day (15th): "What is required of social welfare to support happy lives (tentative title);" in the conference planning session: "Considering International Joint Research in Social Welfare Studies;" and many oral/poster presentations, and sessions on specific issues are planned.

We will continue our efforts to reconstruct the 'connections' taking on the baton from the 70th Autumn Conference. We sincerely hope that researchers, practitioners and others involved in social welfare studies will gather at Musashino University's Musashino Campus for lively discussions with the aim of creating a society in which everyone can shape their happiness.

Report on the 71st JSSSW Spring Conference

Soshiro Yamada, Nihon Fukushi University

Member of Steering Committee for National Conferences (Spring Conference)

Conference theme: The wavering families and social welfare - how to create a nurturing environment for children

Date and Time : 28 May (Sun), 2023 13:00-17:30

Venue: Room 1305, Building 1, Hakusan Campus, Toyo University

On 28 May 2023, the 71st Spring Conference was held in a face-to-face format for the first time in four years.

The conference opened with an opening address by President Hiroto Kuga, followed by lectures by Masami Iwata (Emeritus Professor, Japan Women's University, prize-winning work "Dismantling the Welfare System: Re-weaving the Safety Net") and Yu Nagata (Doshisha University, prize-winning work "Governance of the Comprehensive Support System: Development of Municipal Welfare Administration Linking Practice and Policy") as the 2022 Academic Award Laureates of Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare. Member Iwata gave an easy-to-understand explanation of the contradictions in the welfare system behind the exciting proposal to dismantle public assistance, and also proposed the issues required to be addressed after the dismantling of welfare. Member Nagata also explained what was raised in the award-winning work and gave a wide-ranging talk on how he came up with the idea for his research, the characteristics of his research methods and the meaning of research contributions to the field.

This was followed by a symposium on the theme of "The Wavering Families and Social Welfare: How to Create a Nurturing Environment for Children." The three symposiasts were Hazuki Naganuma (Tokyo Metropolitan University), Shinji Nozawa (Meiji Gakuin University) and Toshiko Yokoyama (Sapporo Gakuin University), with Kayoko Ito (Osaka Public University) as commentator and Yamada as coordinator.

Ms. Naganuma reported on the life challenges and needs of children living with parents with mental illness and the institutional challenges of social welfare that are not adequately addressed. Ms. Nozawa pointed out that the paradigm of Japan's unique divorce system, in which when a couple divorces, children are left with only one parent, forms one of the difficulties that step-family children face in their lives. Ms. Yokoyama pointed out that the difficulties single mothers face in their lives are created

by maternal and family norms. Therefore, social work that can relativise maternalism is necessary to reach the root problem.

In response to the three reports, commentator Ito asked what society has forced women and mothers to do and be, what it means to use keywords to describe problems such as young carers and step families, how to respond to children's negative expressions of opinion towards their families, how to care for children's sense of loss, and how to respond to the various problems reported. What is the need for social welfare to respond to the various issues reported? Based on these issues and questions from the floor, the symposiasts engaged in a discussion, albeit limited in time. Although it was regrettable that not enough time could be allocated for discussion, the symposium was a meaningful one, as it helped to illustrate that our society's family norms commonly lie behind the difficulties that children and their parents face in their lives.

The conference came to a successful conclusion with a closing address by Vice-President Koichi Kaneko. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all participants and to all those involved for their cooperation in organising the conference.

Report on 2nd CS-NET salon

Yosuke Masuda, Health Science University/ Ritsumeikan University Graduate School
Research Support Committee Member

The 2nd CS-NET Salon was held online from 14:00 to 16:00 on 3 March 2023 (Saturday). Under the theme of 'Writing papers - the pains and strategies from submission to publication.' Participants exchanged opinions in groups in the first part. In the second part, Dr Yoichi Akutsu (Tokyo Metropolitan University), Chair of the Editorial Board of the Society's journal, was invited to give a special lecture.

There were 66 participants, who ranged from those who had not yet had any experience of submitting papers to peer-reviewed journals to those who had passed and failed peer review many times in their careers. One person who had just failed a peer review and was feeling discouraged, found out that the salon on this theme was going to take place, and attended the event in the hope of finding courage once more.

During the exchanging opinions section in the first part of the session, participants expressed a variety of 'anguish', such as difficulty in writing and presenting an engaging paper, not knowing how to express their intentions, being perplexed by the different ways in which different reviewers read their work, and not knowing how to pass peer review while maintaining their originality. Some of them felt as if their research had been fundamentally rejected by the peer review comments and were driven to the point where they wondered whether they could really continue as researchers. On the other hand, there were also positive comments, such as that the peer review gave them specific comments, an opportunity to brush up their research, and an opportunity to acquire skills in what to say and how to say it. Other opinions were expressed in each group, allowing the participants to empathise with each other and be exposed to ideas that they did not have before.

After a short break, several groups presented their reports and then moved on to the second part, the special lecture. In his lecture, Dr. Akutsu spoke about the various 'struggles and strategies' on the editorial side of the journal. What I found particularly instructive was a talk based on the results of an editorial board member survey conducted in 2018. Here, advice was given on the importance of being aware of the reader, following the manner of research and choosing the most suitable submission for your paper. He also said that it is important to clarify the position of your research so that you can pass the baton to other researchers, and to take mental care so that you do not get depressed when you receive harsh peer review comments. He also gave humorous advice such as importance of showing "a gesture of coherence" to the reviewer's persistence and of conveying "a sense of struggle".

During the Q&A session, in response to a question from a participant about what to do if there is a point in the reviewer's comments that you cannot concede, he assured us that it is better to make a good argument. I used to have a strong negative perception of peer review, but now I realise that it is something necessary for the researchers to respect and enhance each other's work, and this has changed my perception a little. I had felt that peer review was like a wall standing in front of me and thought of it as something that opposed me, but I also reflected on the fact that this attitude was wrong.

This year's salon had more than 20 more increased participants compared to the previous salon. The coronavirus pandemic has brought us many constraints, but it also became the driving force for the rapid spread of online conferencing tools. In the group I joined, we had people from Hokkaido and Okinawa together. Online methods allow us to get together across physical distances. I also feel that holding events online lowers the psychological hurdle to participating in a gathering of many people. I am ashamed to admit that when these events were held in person, I tended to shy away from them, thinking that the participants would be highly sociable people, but the CS-NET Salon has become an at-home place where even a shy person like me can easily participate. I encourage all early-stage researchers to feel welcome to attend. I am sure you will find empathy, healing, energy and reassurance.

翻訳

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