

Inaugural Address as President

**The Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare
President**

Junko Wake (Tokyo Metropolitan University)

I am Junko Wake from Tokyo Metropolitan University, and I have been appointed as President for the 9th term (the 30th overall) during the 2024 General Meeting and the subsequent Extraordinary Board of Directors meeting held on May 26, 2024. Although I am aware of my limitations, I will do my very best over the next two years, together with the board members and various committee members, solidifying the foundation of social welfare studies and striving for its further development while adapting to the changes of the times and meeting the needs of our members.

This year marks the Society's 70th anniversary, a significant milestone. It has been approximately 12 years since I first became a board member and got involved in the management of the Society. At that time, we rented an office in Yotsuya and directly employed a few secretariat staff. However, due to concerns about the employment status of the secretariat staff, who had been hired on a non-regular basis, as well as the office's seismic vulnerability, it was decided to fully outsource the secretariat operations to ensure stable management of the Society. After a public bidding process, the administrative operations were transferred to the current International Academic Publishing Co., Ltd. and I recall being overwhelmed by the transition. Since then, I have served four terms as Treasurer and Vice President (Chair of the International Academic Exchange Committee). In light of the stable management of the Society today, I would like to once again express my appreciation for the efforts of all those involved and our members during these years.

However, several challenges that have been apparent for the past 12 years remain unresolved. The most pressing issue is the decline in membership due to a shrinking and aging population. In the field of social welfare studies, we are witnessing an increase in the number of research and educational institutions, such as universities, that are experiencing closures or shifting their focus to other fields due

to declining student numbers. In response to this situation, the Society has embarked on several new initiatives to accurately identify the diverse needs and research interests of its members and to support their research activities in an increasingly diversified society. One example is the introduction of a long-term membership system that started in 2022. This program reduces membership fees for members over 65 years of age who have retired from a full-time position due to mandatory retirement or other reasons without re-entering full-time positions and have been a member of the Society for over 25 years, encouraging them to continue their research activities within the Society after retirement. In addition, to expand research support for graduate students and early-career researchers, the Society is implementing various initiatives, including the use of digital tools to facilitate mutual exchange. Furthermore, the International Academic Exchange Promotion Committee plans to actively promote exchanges with other countries, including those in Europe and the United States, in addition to the existing collaboration among Japan, China and South Korea.

In the previous term, the Study Group on the Future of the Society was launched to discuss the future direction of the Society from the perspective of younger board members. From this term onward, we are transforming this into a permanent body as Basic Planning Committee of the Society, which will engage in more concrete discussions with a ten-year outlook in mind. Additionally, our Society is scheduled to serve as the Deputy Secretary for the Gender Equality Academic Association of Humanities and Social Sciences Societies (GEAHSS) from October this year, and the Secretary from October next year. We will strive to fulfil our responsibilities and contribute to gender equality and participation.

On the other hand, the rapid progress of digitalization triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in our research and daily lives. The Society will endeavor to further invigorate research activities by ensuring access through digitization and incorporating on-demand methods for conferences and events as appropriate, while also valuing the personal connections that only face-to-face meetings can provide.

The theme of the recent Spring Conference was "War and Social Welfare: Learning from Historical

Research.” Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been brought under control to a certain extent, there are still many disasters and wars continue to occur both domestically and internationally, and there is not a day goes by that we do not see the devastation on our television screens. These circumstances have made me acutely aware of the need to reconsider the role that social welfare studies, as a discipline, should play.

About 10 years ago, when Mr. Masami Iwata served as President of the Society, he made a motion of a presidential statement titled "On August 15, the 70th Anniversary of the End of World War II." Multiple presidents from other academic societies affiliated with the Federation of Social Welfare Academic Societies endorsed this statement, and a joint statement was issued. At the time, however, it was hard to imagine that the threat of war, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, was so close at hand. In recent years, the fear of war has become a reality not only in Ukraine but also in neighboring countries in the Middle East, China, and North Korea. In Japan, too, various initiatives born out of reflection on the last world war are also falling into disuse.

In these uncertain times, the significance of social welfare studies, which aims to support the lives of each individual and create a society where ‘no one is left behind,’ is being questioned once again. We reaffirm the significance of social welfare studies and hope to realize this through research in collaboration with you. We look forward to the active input of our members.

Announcement of the 72nd Fall Conference of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare

**The Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare
Executive Committee Chairperson
Tomoko Hosho (Nihon Fukushi University)**

We are pleased to announce that the 72nd Fall Conference will be held on October 26 (Saturday) and 27 (Sunday), 2024 at the Tokai City Arts Theater and the Nihon Fukushi University Tokai Campus. We plan to present a variety of programs under the theme "Exploring the Essence of Social Welfare in Contemporary Society." While the conference will be held in person, some programs will be available on demand. Here is an overview of the conference.

1. Conference Program

On the morning of Day 1, the start-up symposium titled "Considering the Circulation of Practice and Research" (held at the Nihon Fukushi University Tokai Campus) will address issues based on presentations by three panelists. The Research Support Committee hopes that many individuals, including early-career researchers, will participate in this program.

In the afternoon, the opening ceremony will be held at the nearby Tokai City Arts Theater. The President of the Society and the Mayor of Tokai City will address the audience, followed by the awarding ceremony of the association's prizes.

The symposium hosted by Nihon Fukushi University, "New Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations," will examine potential new safety nets for vulnerable populations from various perspectives, with the goal of delving into the essence of social welfare in contemporary society. Following a keynote speech by Mr. Taro Miyamoto (Professor at Chuo University), three panelists will give presentations.

In the evening, we will have an information exchange event at the multi-purpose hall of the Tokai

City Art Theater, where participants can enjoy local Aichi cuisine and music.

On the second day, the venue will be the Tokai Campus of Nihon Fukushi University. In between oral presentations, poster sessions, and thematic sessions, an academic symposium will be held under the theme "Questioning the State of International Academic Exchange and Research (tentative)." The session aims to explore the ideal state of international academic exchange within the Society from a global perspective, examining how research based on international exchange (such as international comparative studies) should be conducted from an academic perspective.

The final event of the second day will be a symposium organized by the Society, titled "Reconsidering 'Connection (Tsunagari)' in Social Welfare: 'Connection' and 'Anonymity.'" The symposium will explore social welfare practices and research through the lenses 'Anonymity' and 'Connection', based on presentations by four panelists.

2. Requests to Participants

We have a few requests for you.

First, regarding conference registration: The registration period is currently open, with the early bird discount available until September 19. In addition, graduate, undergraduate, and vocational school students who are regular members will be exempted from the registration fees for the Fall Conference if they complete the necessary procedures and receive approval by September 19. We encourage early registration.

Next, concerning accommodation: The nearest station, Otagawa Station, is 17 minutes from Meitetsu Nagoya Station and 20 minutes from Chubu Centrair International Airport, making it highly convenient and accessible. Therefore, in addition to hotels in Tokai City, accommodations near Kanayama Station or Nagoya Station are also recommended.

Regarding lunch, please note that we will not be taking pre-orders for bento boxes. However, there are restaurants and convenience stores available nearby. The Co-op cafeteria on campus will also be open on the 27th.

We will also make arrangements for checkrooms, bookstores, information support, childcare services, so please check our website for more information.

▼The 72nd Fall Conference Registration Guidelines

<https://www.jssw.jp/conf/72/entry.html>

We hope that this conference will provide you with an opportunity to keep abreast of the latest research findings and to form networks. The staff is dedicated to preparing this event with care, and we look forward to welcoming many participants.

Report on the 72nd Spring Conference of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare

**National Conference Steering Committee
Spring Conference Coordinator
Soshiro Yamada (Nihon Fukushi University)**

Conference Theme: War and Social Welfare: Learning from Historical Research

Date: May 26, 2024, 13:00-17:00

Venue: Meiji Gakuin University, Shirokane Campus, Main Building, Classroom 1101

The 72nd Spring Conference was held on May 26, 2024.

At the beginning of the Conference, there was an opening address by the newly elected President Junko Wake, who was appointed as the ninth President at the regular general meeting and the Board of Directors meeting held that day. Following this, we had a lecture by Mr. Kentaro Hayashi (Keio University), the recipient of the 2023 Academic Award from the Japan Society for the Study of Social Welfare, who presented his award-winning work, "A Historical Study of the Establishment of Income Security: The Formation of the 'Livelihood Security System' in the United Kingdom and the Role of Law for it." Mr. Hayashi provided a compelling account of the relationship between labor and income security, as well as how the livelihood security system for workers has been handed down from the medieval period to the present day, touching on the inspiration and development of this research. Coincidentally, this overlapped with the theme of the symposium that followed, adding depth to the overall conference.

A symposium titled "War and Social Welfare: Learning from Historical Research" followed. The panelists were Mr. Wataru Fujii (Nihon Fukushi University), Ms. Naoko Takeda (Waseda University), and Mr. Atsushi Tsuchiya (Kansai University), with Mr. Hiroaki Sugiyama (Notre Dame

Seishin University) as the discussant and myself as the coordinator.

Mr. Fujii revealed how the disabled were treated during wartime by examining the criteria for conscription that hierarchicalized the population, and pointed out that such discriminatory structures remain in place even today. Ms. Takeda carefully explained the development process of factory welfare policies by B. S. Rountree, who served as the Director of the Welfare Bureau at the British Ministry of Munitions, highlighting the ironic historical fact that the working environment for female workers improved during wartime. Mr. Tsuchiya presented life stories based on interviews with war orphans, pointing out the tragic conditions that war brought to children and the gravity of the fact that these stories remained untold for 70 years.

In response to these three presentations, discussant Mr. Sugiyama emphasized the need to recognize the continuity and commonality between wartime welfare and postwar welfare, and the importance of understanding how welfare has been used in the context of war. Based on the points raised and questions from the floor, the panelists engaged in a discussion, albeit limited by the time available. Although we regret not having enough time for discussion, it was a meaningful symposium that underscored the importance of viewing ‘war and social welfare’ not as a historical issue but as a current one. This perspective is not only relevant in the context of ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, but also within Japan.

Finally, Mr. Hidekazu Hongo, the new Vice President, delivered his closing remarks, bringing the conference to a successful conclusion. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all participants and everyone who helped organize the conference.

[Pre-Event] Report on CS-NET Salon Utilizing Gather

Siming Zhang (Hokkaido University)

On Saturday, March 30, 2024, for one hour from 14:00 to 15:00, a pre-event titled “CS-NET Salon Utilizing Gather” was held online. The theme is "Why don't we exchange opinions in the Metaverse?" In the first part, participants used Gather to interact, and in the second part, they exchanged opinions. The event saw the participation of twelve early-career researchers, who had a lively discussion about their first experience with Gather and the possibility of introducing Gather into CS-NET in the future.

First, Ms. Maki Yasuda (Associate Professor at Hokusho University), a member of the Research Support Committee of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare responsible for planning the CS-NET Salon, explained the purpose of this pre-event and how to use Gather. In the previous salons, early-career researchers faced challenges in continuing interactions with each other after exchanging opinions in hybrid formats or via Zoom. Therefore, this pre-event was organized by the research committee members to examine the possibility of introducing Gather as a venue for post-salon discussions.

In the first part, participants interacted using Gather on a trial basis. Gather is a virtual space service that allows people to gather and interact online. Users can sign with their Google accounts or email addresses, create an avatar, and move around the virtual space freely. They can converse with other users through voice, chat, and video. For this event, Ms. Yasuda pre-created a chat room with a fountain square and a chair game room. Since only 10 people are allowed in a single room free of charge, the 12 participants entered and exited as needed for interaction.

Initially, participants sat at a table and shared how they operated their avatars, set up the background of the video screen, and shared their first experiences with Gather. Afterward, they moved

their avatars freely and casually chatted with those passing by.

In the second part, participants returned to the Zoom meeting to exchange ideas about their Gather experiences, moderated by Ms. Yasuda. Because the number of participants was limited, everyone was given the opportunity to speak freely. Overall, many participants expressed that Gather was easy to use and enjoyable. Unlike Zoom meetings, Gather is like a game and allows users to move freely using avatars, which was positively received. Additionally, the use of avatars made interactions feel more approachable, and participants noted that Gather would provide a place for them to easily stay in touch after the salon. Furthermore, they felt that Gather was more conducive to free discussion than being divided into breakout rooms on Zoom, where they could even interact with people passing by. Other comments highlighted that accessing Gather in a non-work setting provided emotional support and a refreshing break, as they knew everyone was in the same room. Since there is no host in Gather, participants can repeatedly enter the same room at any time, fostering a sense of belonging where they could casually chat with peers. Through this pre-event, anticipation for Gather's future integration into the Salon increased.

At the same time, however, it also brought to light several challenges regarding Gather's implementation in upcoming salons. For instance, there are problems with avatars not moving freely on smartphones and other devices, making it less user-friendly. Since the number of free participants in Gather is limited to 10 people per room, the cost-sharing for exceeding this number poses a challenge. Addressing these issues and creating an environment where more people can comfortably use Gather will be future priorities.

After the discussion, Ms. Asako Kora (Hosei University, Research Support Committee Chair) and Mr. Minh Kang (Doshisha University) provided concluding remarks and greetings, and confirmed that future salon planning would encourage proactive participation from members. Despite the limited number of participants, the event was a great success, with participants trying new things and engaging in lively, free and enthusiastic discussions. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those

who were involved in organizing this pre-event.

翻訳

恒吉 藍（日本女子大学人間社会研究科社会福祉学専攻博士後期課程）

松尾 敬子（同志社大学大学院博士課程後期・大阪公立大学特別研究員）

Translation

Ai Tsuneyoshi(Ph.D Student, Graduate School of Social Welfare, Japan Women's University)

Keiko Matsuo(PhD Programme, Doshisha University/ Special Research Fellow, Osaka Metropolitan University)