

Introduction

Activities of Japanese Sociologists and Social Welfare Researchers and Their Messages to the World

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1. To Researchers of Sociological and Social Welfare Studies from around the World and the Public interested in these studies

The academic societies comprised of groups of sociological and social welfare studies researchers from Japan would like to extend their heartfelt greetings to all of the sociological and social welfare studies researchers from around the world and the public interested in these studies. In Japan there are dozens of academic societies related to sociological and social welfare studies, including everything from the Japan Sociological Society that was established in 1924 to the Society of Socio-Informatics that was officially established fairly recently in 2012.

Of these, the major societies such as the Japan Sociological Society and the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare, formed the Japan Consortium for Sociological Societies in 2007. It was established for these academic societies to keep in contact with one another, discuss their shared challenges, and carry out any activities there might be that can be implemented jointly with one another. It has been working hard to upload not only in Japanese but also in English the history behind the establishment of the Consortium, the purpose of its establishment, its bylaws, and other information to its homepage (<http://www.socconso.com/English/index.html>).

The Consortium issues a newsletter and communications, and together with this it began to hold an annual symposium. For its first common theme it took up the issue of international exchange, which there was an overwhelmingly powerful demand for from the various academic societies that took part. The academic societies in Japan related to sociological and social welfare studies are similar to other academic societies related to culture and society in that they have been quite enthusiastic about adopting research results and research trends from other countries, particularly Western countries. Yet while they have taken these in, they have continued to suffer from intense difficulties in getting the word out on the results of their own research due to language issues.

Of those related to culture and society, in economics and psychology, which have what could be called a strong natural science-like disposition, it is becoming increasingly commonplace for research exchanges and presentations of results to be carried out in English. But even in the social sciences, in the fields of sociology and social welfare studies, whose content is closely related to the

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humanities, holding research exchanges and the presentation of results in English and other foreign languages still presents a great deal of problems. In AY2008, AY2009, and AY2010 the academic societies combined their respective experiences to hold mutual discussions over what should be done to better reach mutual understanding and thereby hold effective exchanges at various forums for exchange, such as the Consortium's symposium.

Then the Great East Japan Earthquake (hereafter abbreviated as "3/11") occurred on March 11, 2011 at the end of AY2010. Here an earthquake and tsunami of a scale said to occur only once every thousand years struck the Pacific Coast from the Tohoku to Kanto regions, dealing devastating blows to numerous cities and agricultural communities. Not only that, but this caused an accident involving a meltdown at a nuclear reactor at a nuclear power plant in Fukushima. This gave rise to victims that included nearly 20,000 dead or missing persons from the earthquake and tsunami alone, along with more than 300,000 evacuees from the nuclear accident. Moreover, the impact from this extended to all facets of Japan, including its society, economy, politics, and culture, and the country is still nowhere near to reaching a resolution.

In one fell swoop 3/11 clearly laid bare the problematic features of postwar Japan and the social formation of contemporary Japan. These include the development policies that have been promoted primarily for the major cities that stretch from Tokyo and Yokohama to Nagoya and the surrounding areas, the Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe area, and onto Kitakyushu, as well as energy policies that have boosted reliance on nuclear power since the oil crises of the 1970s. In other words, natural phenomena such as earthquakes and tsunamis have enveloped parts of Sendai, which is a major city, but this time the Pacific Coast of Eastern Japan and its generally depopulated regions also suffered a heavy toll. Not only that, but this caused a great disaster that ranks next to Three Mile Island and Chernobyl in the coastal areas of Fukushima, which are regions that had no other choice but to accept nuclear power plants by virtue of the fact that they are depopulated.

All scholarship in contemporary Japan has made efforts to investigate the causes of this great disaster and countermeasures to it. As part of this, researchers and academic societies in sociology and social welfare studies have put their concerted efforts into working on research, clinical responses, and presenting reconstruction measures for the disaster. Many of the academic societies affiliated with the Japan Consortium for Sociological Studies have readied themselves to offer a response, and have raised the problem at ad hoc and regular meetings. The Consortium itself has brought up this problem as themes for its symposia since AY2011.

At the same time, in 2008 the International Sociological Association (ISA) accepted the requests that Japan had been making for some time and decided to hold the 2014 World Congress of Sociology (WCS) in Yokohama. These circumstances were backed by the fact that the Japan Consortium for Sociological Studies selected international exchange as its first common theme. On this basis, the Japan Sociological Society wanted academic societies related to Japanese sociology and social welfare studies to submit messages to the world with a view towards this World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama. The Society also sounded out the intentions of the Consortium by asking whether it would play a coordinating role in this. Since the Consortium is an agency that handles mutual communication between these various academic societies, the aim was to see if it could make

proposals and compile together these messages from an equal footing with all of the academic societies.

After some debate, the Japan Consortium for Sociological Studies decided in AY2011 that it would compile and present the messages to the world from the various participating academic societies, and so it set up an Editorial Committee for this purpose. More than ten Editorial Committee members were appointed from among the directors, trustees, and other members of the participating academic societies that belong to the Consortium. It was decided that the Consortium's current President would simultaneously hold the post of Editorial Committee Chairperson in the interest of maintaining an impartial stance towards the various academic societies. Since it was the duty of the Editorial Committee to submit the collection of messages by the time of the World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama in July 2014, the implication was that in principle the Editorial Committee would strive to complete this duty as it was even if there were substitutions in the Consortium's directors and trustees.

By that time 3/11 had already taken place, and so given the strained conditions the Editorial Committee was under, three written requests were sent out to the various academic societies, once in September 2011, twice in April 2012. The academic societies were asked to write about the history since their establishment, the contents of their activities, how we should react to 3/11, prospects for the future, as well as their messages to the world based on these in about 4,000 words in English (10,000 letters in Japanese). As for the deadlines, these were December 2012 for the Japanese submissions because of the time needed to translate them, and July 2013 for the English submissions.

The academic societies faithfully responded to this request, and by the end of AY2012, 13 Japanese papers and three English ones had been received from academic societies. By July 2013 English papers had been received from 13 academic societies, bringing the total number of papers received from academic societies to 29. Based on this, we had the contractors that we were able to find submit estimates for translation into English, proof readings, etc. and performed a comparative analysis. We then asked a contractor that we deemed fitting to do the work and prepared 29 English papers by March 2014.

Several rounds of discussions were carried out by the Editorial Committee over the question of how these should be edited. In terms of the outcomes from this, first for the introductory and closing articles, since the Consortium President was replaced in January 2013 we had the current President write the preface, while the former President cum Editorial Committee Chairperson wrote an acknowledgment and introduction and the Secretariat penned the editorial postscript.

Following this, five main subject areas were established for the 29 papers. These are: 1) the history from the birth of sociological societies in Japan down to the present when they have spread nationwide throughout Japan and bilateral exchange has come to be carried out with particular countries. 2) The history from when mass communication studies based on the social transformations in post-war Japan took off down to the present when the establishment of the Society of Socio-Informatics was seen after an extended period of time. 3) Similarly, the history down to the present from when social welfare studies based on the social transformations in postwar

Japan took off and the Japan Welfare Sociology Association was newly established, as being distinct from the historical Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare. 4) The history down to the present from when the only sector-specific academic society, prior to the rapid growth of the Japanese economy, of Society for Rural Studies (the predecessor to the Japanese Association for Rural Studies) gave way to the establishment of other sector-specific societies from the Japan Association of Regional and Community Studies to the Japanese Association for Environmental Sociology one after another based on the transformations of Japanese society in and after the rapid economic growth. 5) The history down to the present when the establishment of the Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology and the Society for Sociological Theory in Japan were seen following that of the Japan Association for the Study on the History of Sociology, which was founded in 1960 based on these trends. The papers were each sorted into one of these categories, and generally speaking were introduced in the order of the year in which the submitting association was established. The five main subject areas themselves follow the history of the development of sociology and social welfare studies in Japan. Following along with this scheme allowed the academic societies to convey the history since their establishment, the contents of their activities, how they should react to 3/11, prospects for the future, as well as their messages to the world based on these.

Since the various academic societies affiliated with the Japan Consortium for Sociological Studies maintain positions that are absolutely equivalent to one another, their apportionment out to the five main subject areas and arrangement in the order by which they were established is completely unrelated to any intent to rank them in some sense. However, it would please the Editorial Committee beyond measure if readers were to follow along with the development of Japanese sociology from the 20th to the 21st centuries as they read into the flow of major developments in studies on Japanese sociology and social welfare studies.

Below, I will briefly introduce in my own words the contents of the messages from the academic societies in line with this flow. It is my heartfelt wish that readers will take this as a cue to directly read as many of the messages from academic societies that they are interested in as possible, and hopefully all of them if they can.

2. Japanese Sociology: Birth, Spread and Bilateral Communications

Japan had entered into a national isolation from about the middle of the 17th century onwards, with the only exception being some limited exchange with Korea, China, and Holland. But following a succession of visits and requests for commerce from the major Western powers starting about the middle of the 19th century, Japan was plunged into a state of internal turmoil, following which something like a unified nation was finally established in 1868. Japanese society then began to modernize around the basis of nation building underpinned by the central pillar of the Emperor System. Around this time the adoption of Western culture and scholarship was proactively promoted,

and therefore the sociology of Herbert SPENCER and Auguste COMTE were introduced here from relatively early on.

Since this unified country was overwhelmingly under the control of the Satsuma and Choshu domains, there is the famous account of how the social contract theories of Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU and early Spencer had been taken up as the ideology of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement that opposed this regime. But just as soon as this had happened, the social organism theories of late Spencer and Comte were taken up in order to suppress this movement and create a familistic nation under the sovereignty of the Emperor. There were some scholars who attempted to interpret Comtian sociology in a Japanese fashion, or rather in their own fashion, in order to contribute to the formation of a familistic nation that could be described as absolutist, but their theories were considerably far removed from contemporary sociology.

It wasn't until the introduction of German formal sociology and cultural sociology, as well as American pragmatism around the time of World War I that an academic-seeming sociology was at last adopted in Japan. Scholars who attempted to study and teach sociology as an academic discipline appeared, primarily in Tokyo and Kyoto, during the limited democratization that was referred to as the Taisho Democracy. Then in 1924 the Japan Sociological Society was at last established. This happened under the influence of the Russian Revolution that occurred in 1917 at the same time as the effects of Marxism began to exert an influence on not only social movements and political thought, but also started to have a powerful effect on all types of academia. Throughout all this, Japanese sociology began to set to work on empirical studies of the family and agricultural communities that formed the actual substance of Japanese society at that time. Before long it extended its reach to include urban areas and labor as well, as it survived the dark cleavages of 15 years of war.

Japan's defeat in the war in 1945 and the start of its democratization under the occupation of US forces consequently signified that an excellent opportunity had arrived for the resurgence and spread of sociology. This led to the establishment of sociological societies in each region that were set up not only by the Japan Sociological Society, but also by the sociologists who had dispersed to every corner of Japan who had been waiting for such an opportunity. On top of this, sociologists who had already been holding exchanges with France from prior to the war, as well as those sociologists who—on the basis of the establishment of exchange between a reborn China and Japan well after this—wanted to enliven exchange with China, established academic societies for bilateral international exchanges.

The **Japan Sociological Society** was established in 1924, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 3,605 people. Its history since its establishment will be discussed in detail in its own paper. The attributes of its members are explained in various manners such as by turning recent data into easy to understand graphs, so readers are encouraged to refer to the text. To summarize just the important points, 70% of the members are male and 30% are female, and since the start of the 21st century the number of members who are graduate students has increased to account for approximately 20% of all of its members. Other important points include the fact that becoming a

member of the Society is the first step for a graduate student to be a researcher and that the vast majority of its members are researchers from universities and research institutions.

Their fields of study are also described in detail in its paper, but on the whole those fields of study that are often taken up include “social welfare, social security, and medical care;” “communication, information, and symbols;” “culture, religion, and morality;” “the family;” and “social philosophy and sociological history.” Those often taken up by female researchers include “gender and generation;” “the family;” “comparative sociology and regional studies;” “ethnic problems and nationalism;” “discrimination;” and “social welfare, social security, and medical care.” Common topics among the younger generation (including graduate students) include “ethnic problems and nationalism;” “communication, information, and symbols;” and “gender and generation.” An annual meeting is held where symposia are held around a number of themes, and recently the number of presentations given in English has been on the rise, as has participation from South Korea, China, and other such places. It has a Japanese language journal called the *Shakaigaku Hyoron* (Japanese Sociological Review) that is published quarterly, as well as an English language journal called the *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* that is published annually.

In terms of theoretical trends, the 21st century has been declared the era of “post-postmodern” sociology, for which numerous developments have been pointed out. For example, these include social constructionism; the influence of Niklas LUHMANN; the expansion of the sociologies of Pierre BOURDIEU, Jürgen HABERMAS, Anthony GIDDENS, and Talcott PARSONS; the development of ethnomethodology; the flourishing of theories of the self and society; and the development of various debates concerning problems of norm.

Based on these, the society’s intention is to have the messages to the world convey the following facts. 1) The Japan Sociological Society as a whole has been impacted by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and by grasping its actual circumstances, responding clinically, and proposing plans to reform Japanese society based on this it is making itself a public sociology altogether as a whole. 2) With respect to involvement with the International Sociological Association, Japan has taken part in the World Congress of Sociology since 1950, and has submitted directors to it. In light of the success of this conference in Yokohama, the society and most Japanese sociologists would like to successfully organize sociological conferences in Asia and contribute to sociology and social reforms in Asia and around the world. 3) In order to do so, the society would like for Japanese sociology to put forth a concerted effort at the Yokohama conference and propose a new sociology geared towards the transnational world that is really coming. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/02JapanSociology.pdf>.

The **Sociological Society of West Japan** was established in 1946, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 214 people. It was the first of the academic societies that were organized regionally, and was created centered around Kyushu University. Through the reforms of the educational system in the postwar period it grew into a society that is primarily grounded in the universities and research institutes of five prefectures in Chugoku, seven prefectures in Kyushu, and Okinawa. Its members extend all throughout Japan. As for its journal, it has issued the *Journal of the Sociological Society of West Japan* since 2003. While it naturally also engages in theoretical studies,

from the very outset it set its sights on empirical studies that are aimed at communities in the West Japan region. It aims to combine both theory and survey, and seek actual verification primarily for the latter. It shares its research on the various social problems brought about by industrialization with world sociology, and it would like to harness the wisdom obtained from its research on the family, local regions, and other social issues in the West Japan region as part of this.

Generally speaking, the West Japan region has been troubled not only by peripheral problems following the formation of core and peripheral structures, but it also has regions that suffered particularly heavy losses during World War II, including Okinawa, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. It also contains Minamata, which was a major focal point for the environmental and pollution problems that came to pose major problems over the course of Japan's postwar economic growth. For these reasons the society cannot help but be enormously interested in the Great East Japan Earthquake. In a survey carried out aimed at members in 2012 (with a response rate of 42.5%), 80.0% of the respondents were interested in studying earthquake or tsunami damage, while 83.4% of the respondents demonstrated an interest in studying the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant. There was also strong interest in the volunteers that rose up on the occasion of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, which has been developing towards something that the society would like to call the world's attention to with future studies. For details, please refer to the text <http://socconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/03WestJapanSociology.pdf>.

The **Tohoku Sociological Association** was started in 1947, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 142 people. Based primarily in the Tohoku region, it was started in order for junior researchers and students surrounding a sociologist, released from public office on the suspicion that he had cooperated in Japan's wars of aggression, to gather, but it has developed by moving beyond these circumstances surrounding its creation. It has applied itself to sociological studies of earthquake-induced tsunamis in Tohoku, where such phenomena are common. They have given careful, critical scrutiny to the theory of tsunami damage and culture, which investigates the different evacuation behavior between the Pacific Coast, which is inundated with tall tsunamis, and that on the Sea of Japan side where this is not the case, as well as modalities for how urban communities should be formed concerning the Miyagi Earthquake of 1978. It has also performed a series of studies that point out the importance of giving consideration to not only hard aspects, but also soft aspects as well. As these and others indicate, it retains a store of outstanding research on damage.

It also has researchers who have been sounding the alarms about the dangers of nuclear power generation since early on. The association has continued to directly study and make social proposals regarding the nuclear power accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant that was triggered and exacerbated all the more by the Great East Japan Earthquake. In terms of the general trends of its research, the main thrust of its research consisted of research and studies on rural districts touched off by regional characteristics on par with its research on sociological theories. But since the 1980s it has drawn in experts on quantitative, mathematical research, and so research on social stratification and social mobility has come to occupy a large relative share of its research. In light of this, it has been enthusiastically appealing to global sociology for the need for factual investigations of the social damage from earthquake-induced tsunamis and nuclear accidents, the

importance of rebuilding local communities in agricultural, mountain and fishing village districts when it comes to face the reconstruction of afflicted regions, and the orientation for reconstructing modern society against the backdrop of energy problems. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/04NorthEastJapanSociologyI.pdf>.

The **Kansai Sociological Association** was established in 1950, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 876 people. Its major footholds are the Shikoku, Kansai, and Tokai regions. It has taken up all manner of Western sociologists and debated various different themes, while the major themes that have been taken up at its symposia and the like have included sociology and its applicability; community; industrialization; ethnicity, the family, and relatives; and the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Aside from this, it has been working on certifying social researchers in particular since the early days, and has succeeded in setting in place requirements for certifying them and establishing the relevant courses at major universities in the Kansai region. Lastly, it implemented a system for furnishing social researchers with certifications through the Japanese Association for Social Research by providing backing to the Japan Sociological Society, which was not necessarily being proactive in this area.

As for its message to the world, it continues to consider the significance of sociology as a discipline. It would also like to mention that even as it has emphasized the significance of social research and other empirical studies it has simultaneously debated the importance of “deductive sociology,” which is designed to enable effective explanations of all manner of social phenomena. In this capacity, when it comes to the impact from 3/11, since the Kansai region had previously suffered from the damage of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 it has held numerous debates over new forms for social solidarity and coping with risk. In light of this, the Association wants to proactively submit the need to continue to pursue transformations of the social system in Japan from both micro and macro dimensions, while also developing new subjects of research for this from various angles and new effective theories that are suited to these. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/05CenterWestJapanSociology.pdf>.

The **Hokkaido Sociological Association** was established in 1951, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 134 people. In response to the impact from the Great East Japan Earthquake and the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, its sociologists have been active in accommodating the attempts made by local regions to accept and provide support to its victims. Amidst the rising tide of globalization Hokkaido has already veered away from the path of industrialization, and has seen worsening problems such as falling birthrates, the aging of society, and a falling population. For this reason, it has been working to raise awareness of public problems and harness the results of research in order to improve local communities. It publishes a journal called *Contemporary Sociological Studies*, and issues a quarterly newsletter. It also hosts an annual conference, where recent themes have included “Risks of and Tasks for an Aging Society and Caring Relations for a Super-Aging Society: Increasing Risk and Social Countermeasures” (2012), “Trajectory of a Society with Loosening Bonds: Creating New Networks of Ties” (2011), “Local Media and Community Relations” (2010), and more. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/06HokkaidoSociology.pdf>.

The **Kantoh Sociological Society** was established in 1952, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 941 people. Since it was initially created as a branch of the Japan Sociological Society its members lacked the self-awareness that they were members, and it fell into a state of stagnation where it had few participants in panel discussions and the like. But around 1980 it worked to become independent, and began issuing journals such as the *Annual Review of Sociology* and revived itself primarily through young members. Since the 1990s its panel discussions have been energetic, and it has proactively taken up a variety of theoretical issues, issues of gender and inequality, area studies and ethnicity issues, and environmental problems, while also having vigorously debated the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Another one of its major achievements has been taking up issues related to physical health, such as death and reproduction.

Since the start of the 21st century the Society has enthusiastically debated issues such as globalization, care, culture, youth, and conservatism. In connection with the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 it has also come to debate issues for the socially vulnerable and the change to a risk society. In addition, it has also actively carried out panel discussions and the like that include sociologists from other countries. As for challenges with a view towards contemporary society, in relation to the ethnic communities that have formed in the Kantoh region it has been making efforts to actively get the word out on the formation of “glocal” viewpoints, the difficulties of gender equality, and issues of multiculturalism. It has also debated everything from problems with an Asian bent whereby difficulties in living and environmental destruction have arisen amidst advancing globalization as well as techno-centrism, to problems that have given rise to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant despite the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki having been bombed. Through this the Society will continue to move beyond an outlook of Japanese exceptionalism and continue to pursue theories for sustainable, just, and controllable social development based on a globally shared outlook. More and more members of the Society are becoming to consider this to be its most important task. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/07CenterEastJapanSociology.pdf>.

The **Tohoku Sociological Society** was established in 1953, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 238 people. Its main regional footholds consist of Aomori, Iwate, Akita, Miyagi, Yamagata, Fukushima, and Niigata, but its members are spread out throughout Japan. Since 1963 it has issued the journal *Annual Reports of the Tohoku Sociological Society*, and has been putting together annual special features since 1991. One of its conventions is theoretical studies, in which it has taken up everything from Karl MARX and Émile DURKHEIM to Bourdieu and Giddens. Another one of its conventions has been community studies ranging from rural districts to urban areas. In addition to education and information, since the 1980s it has been actively involved in mathematical approaches and also came to enthusiastically carry out research on social stratification and social mobility.

In terms of its message to the world, it should be mentioned that it is contributing to the internationalization of Japanese sociology. This is evidenced by the fact that its research on rural communities is spreading to China and Indonesia, and that it is contributing to the growth of sociologists who have come from the Asian region. It has also offered up Directors to the

International Sociological Association and the Organizing Committee Chairperson for the World Congress of Sociology. As for the impact on it from the Great East Japan Earthquake, while nobody from among its members lost their life, there were some among its ranks who suffered damage to varying degrees. As for the damage that will extend over a long period of time into the future consequent on the occurrence of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and rebuilding from this, the Society will surely continue to deploy extended studies in the future and practices that sociologists can undertake. It has started to pull together earthquake studies under the leadership of a researcher working at Fukushima University, and so moving forward it will continue to spread the word about and call for research related to the serious and various social impacts of earthquakes, tsunamis and nuclear accidents to the world. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/08NorthEastJapanSociologyII.pdf>.

The **Société Japono-Française de Sociologie** was established in 1959, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 100 people. It was actually established in 1936 and featured the participation of many major French sociologists from back then, but its activities were suspended on account of World War II. When it was launched in 1959 the Japanese side set forth comparative studies on both Japanese and French societies that were on par with the comparative research done by French sociology on French and Japanese societies. After a preparatory phase, it began to hold Japanese-French dialogues (Les Colloques Franco-Japonais) alternately in Japan and France roughly every three or four years starting in 1982. A variety of different themes have been debated at these, and following the Great East Japan Earthquake it has held debates about it which served as an extension of the “Building Safe and Secure Societies (or On Unsafe Societies): A Japanese-French Comparison” theme that had been held since 2007.

Since it is an academic society whose goal is bilateral exchange, in 2011 it held an assembly for trilateral debate that included Brazilian scholars. Together with this, it gives profound consideration to modalities for structuring international exchange in sociology from the experiences of the International Institute of Sociology and the like. In the natural sciences holding international exchanges via English has come to be par for the course, but there are issues and realities when it comes to a society that can only be perceived through the language that is used there. Perhaps what is needed is to expand this approach of having scholars from each of the two countries mutually understanding one another’s society as perceived through its own language out to trilateral and multilateral forums, as seen with this Society. It would like to continue posing the question to the world concerning a need for such efforts, particularly in Asia. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/09JapanFranceSociology.pdf>

The **Japan-China Sociological Society** was established in 1980, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 236 people. Immediately following the start of the adoption of “reform and open” policies by China a delegation of Japanese sociologists visited the country, with the Society having been created from the leadership of FUKUTAKE Tadashi, who served as the head of the delegation. Though there are troublesome problems between Japan and China like those surrounding the Senkaku Islands, the Society strives to calmly ascertain the history of the two countries and of the relations between them, including such issues. It also works to discover new themes by deploying

sociological discussions, while also seeking out ways to resolve them. By utilizing the scholarship of the sociology that was created in the West, it performs comparative studies between Japan, which achieved its modernization just a step ahead, and China, which is currently treading a path of rapid modernization following its “reform and open” policies. As such, it has attempted to discover a sociology that surpasses those that have come before it by directly confronting social transformations that were not witnessed in the West. The Great East Japan Earthquake further boosted the need for mutual understanding and mutual cooperation between Japanese and Chinese sociologists. For this reason, starting from debates surrounding this matter it has aimed for risk management and social capital geared towards sustainable societies, the humanistic universalization of values through mutual understanding between Japan and China for these, and the strengthening of transnational networks of academic exchange. The Society would like to develop various activities in order to convey the ingenuity and utility of East Asian sociology to the world. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/10JapanChinaSociology.pdf>.

3. Mass Communication Studies and Socio-Informatics in Postwar Social Changes

After Japan’s defeat in World War II, the country was democratized under the control of the allied forces (effectively US forces). Japan reflected back on its past modalities for newspapers and broadcasts, which had mobilized the nation for militarism and the war effort, and used these to cooperate with democratization in postwar society. National papers like the Asahi, Yomiuri, and Mainichi drastically altered their page content, and NHK Radio, which had begun broadcasting in 1925, completely revamped its programming. Private radio broadcasts began in 1951, and in 1953 the NHK, which had continued with its experimental broadcasting up to that point, began its core television broadcasts, with commercial broadcasting also beginning to be televised at the same time as well.

Japanese society, which fell into a condition approaching that of a state of nature due to the war, achieved rapid postwar reconstruction. It attained tentative independence through the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951, then from 1955 onwards it forged ahead towards rapid economic growth. It attained independence and economic revival that was framed by its military alliance with the United States even as the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was beginning in 1948. An opposition movement led by the Socialist Party of Japan and others in the vanguard had firmly taken root, but the drastic move to mass society of Japanese society together with its economic growth proceeded apace. In the midst of all this, studies on broadcasts and mass communication signifying a self-recognition of society were actively carried out, and academic societies that served as forums for researchers continued to develop.

Broadcasting and mass communication have been some of the greatest social phenomena, and are related to the majority of humanities and social sciences such as political science, economics, law, and psychology. But since the prewar days they maintained the deepest connection with sociology, and have turned out leading researchers in great numbers, some of whom eventually took a broader and deeper focus in socio-informatics. They have also given rise to movements pursuing a paradigm

shift in not only humanities and social sciences, but also in sciences in general.

The **Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication** was established in 1951, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 1,236 people. Before the war there were moves to learn from German journalism studies, but after the war studies were carried out and academic societies were formed under the overwhelming influence of the United States. At first it was named the Journalism Society of Japan, but in 1991 this was changed to the Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication. The name of its journal was also changed from the *Japanese Journalism Review* to the *Journal of Mass Communication Studies*. Its major mainstays were theoretical studies, journalism studies, and broadcasting studies, but following in the wake of the diverse expansion of the media its fields of study have also been diversifying. From out of this there has begun to emerge a predilection towards socio-informatics and cultural studies.

It was the influence of Marxism and the theory of Japanese-style mass society pioneered by SHIMIZU Ikutaro that offered independence to Japanese mass communication studies even as it was under the overwhelming influence of the United States. Under their influence the results of studies of the Japanese constitution were harnessed, reporting was critically brought into question as a system, and studies that surveyed and analyzed viewers' attitudes were deployed. The existing efforts to create databases on reporting for newspapers and the like have proceeded apace, and so moving forward studies on mass communication will continue to be deepened. This made progress, despite insufficient, exchanges between Japan and South Korea, Japan and China, and Japan and the Western countries. Since the Great East Japan Earthquake shook Japanese society down to its roots and thrust forth major problems regarding the structure and content of its mass communication, research on matters like disasters and mass communication and the role of mass communication during crises will be vigorously carried out by various members in the future. For details, please refer to the text <http://socconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/11MassCommunication.pdf>.

The **Society of Socio-Informatics** was established in 2012, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 668 people. It was created out of a merger between the Japan Association for Social Informatics (JASI) and the Japan Society for Social-Information Studies (JSIS). There are no small number of people who have joined on account of their studies in journalism and mass communication, while there are many people there who think about information (particularly the role of social information), as well as comprehensive reappraisals of society and the world that use this as their key. It aims to investigate comprehensive questions without being beholden to the social sciences, humanities, or any of their individual sciences, which it does based on Norbert WIENER's way of thinking regarding the importance of taking in and using information when living within an environment or the world. The bearers of socio-informatics are researchers, with these including not only those people who belong to universities and research institutes, but also the common public as well as corporate and public entities. From this perspective, it has played a variety of roles following the Great East Japan Earthquake, including getting a grasp of the situation and supporting the victims, as well as opening up prospects for reconstruction. The society would like to draw the world's attention to the significance of socio-informatics. For details, please refer to the text <http://socconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/12SocioInformatics.pdf>.

4. Social Welfare and Health and Medical Care Studies in Postwar Social Changes

Following World War II Japan on the other hand tread the path towards becoming a welfare society by adopting a welfare state. The 25th Article of the Constitution of Japan explicitly mentions the public's "right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living" and the duty of the state to work for the "promotion and extension of social welfare and security, and of public health." As such, from 1946 to 1949 three welfare-related laws in the form of the Public Assistance Act, the Child Welfare Act, and the Physically Disabled Persons Welfare Act were enacted. Then from 1960 to 1964 to these were added the Act for the Welfare of the Socially Vulnerable (later the Act for the Welfare of Mentally Retarded Persons), the Act for the Welfare of the Aged, and the Act for the Welfare of Fatherless Families (later the Act for the Welfare of Fatherless Families and Widows), thereby adopting a six welfare-related law structure. Immediately following Japan's defeat in the war almost all of its citizenry were in a state of starvation, but the people's lives improved due to the economic growth from the middle of the 1950s. This law structure was due to the consideration given to the fact that the vulnerable must not be left behind during the course of this continued improvement.

Against this backdrop there was a rapid rise in people newly starting up initiatives in the social welfare field who joined the scholars and practitioners who had been working on social work and social policy since before the war. Relevant school departments, subjects, courses, and so on were created one after another at universities, junior colleges, and vocational schools, while academic societies came to be formed by people involved in the study, teaching, and practice of social welfare. The largest academic society related to social welfare was formed and later two related academic societies were organized to follow it. And along with the emergence of social contradictions from Japan's economic growth, the number of people studying health and medical care and welfare in a sociological sense from within sociology has increased, and so-called specialized sociological associations that are focused on this have been formed. Before long, the rise in living standards in Japanese society from the rapid economic growth was followed by economic stagnation, during which falling birthrates and the aging of society began to advance, thus leading to the need for the universalization of social welfare. Throughout this, these academic societies have continued going about responding to this state of affairs.

The **Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare** was established in 1954, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 5,047 people. Since it only had 196 members when it was formed, this number has ballooned upwards 25-fold over these 60 years. It holds conferences twice annually, and since 1960 it has published the *Japanese Journal of Social Welfare* as its journal. The Society has developed under the influence of British social welfare studies. But the influence of Marxism was also strong, and an enormous amount of effort was needed in order to surmount both this and the Japanese-style social welfare theories presented by the Liberal Democratic Party administration in the 1980s, which attempted to harness the power of the Japanese family. It is currently trying to move forward with structural reforms of the welfare system centered mainly

around the nursing care insurance system and others that began at the end of the 20th century. It has also been putting its efforts into applying contemporary social work theories into practice, as well as rounding out regional welfare systems. As far as contemporary issues are concerned, it has been placing emphasis on addressing matters such as the abuse of children and the elderly, domestic violence, solitary deaths, and the new type of poor caused by widening social inequality.

In one fell swoop the Great East Japan Earthquake laid bare the various problems of Japan's social welfare system and held up the numerous urgent challenges facing its social welfare researchers and practitioners. The Japanese Association of Academic Societies for Social Welfare has created joint committees in order to deal with these, but numerous challenges still remain. It is of the opinion that Disaster Welfare Assistance Teams (DWAT) must be set in place and day-to-day research and drills of personnel must continue to be carried out. In order to do this, it will be necessary to evaluate welfare practices from the victims' (recipients') viewpoint, study systems and structures for social policies and their control, and devise methodologies for studying social work. More specifically, the Society must put its concerted efforts into fostering and maintaining the level of the 134,000 social welfare workers there were as of 2010 and connect this in with various types of social welfare studies which members of this society have been trying to explore. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/13SocialWelfareStudies.pdf>.

The **Japanese Society of Health and Medical Sociology** was essentially established in 1974, but in 1989 it changed its name to its current one and became an official academic society. As of March 2014 its members numbered 658 people. The Society began as a small research group that focused on US medical sociology in the 1950s, and has increased its membership through such processes as incorporating sociology into medical faculties all over Japan. Later on pollution-derived illnesses like Minamata disease that accompanied Japan's rapid economic growth and drug side effects such as subacute myelo-optic neuropathy (SMON) broke out. It was against this backdrop that 60 researchers created the Society to serve as a forum where they could meet in 1974. Around this time health and medical care problems began to be taken up even at meetings of the Japan Sociological Society, and based on these discussions the Society published a considerable number of books and translations from the 1970s to the 1980s. It also held international conferences in Yokohama and Urayasu in 1980 and 1986.

Its activities as an academic society grew more energetic from 1989 onwards, and starting in 1990 it began issuing its journal entitled the *Japanese Journal of Health and Medical Sociology*. In the 1990s papers appeared most frequently in the order of research on theories and literature, quantitative and statistical research, qualitative and descriptive research, and case study research. Starting in the 2000s qualitative and descriptive research and case study research became more frequent, with research on theories and literature and quantitative and statistical research falling behind these. In terms of content, research related to the quality of life (QOL) of patients and their families has become more common, and investigations into health and medical care theories and thanatology have been trending upwards. Following the Great East Japan Earthquake, the number of various studies concerning the social impact of the disaster has been constantly rising. Moving forward, the expectation is that studies from the point of view of the health problems of the general

public of the more and more aging society with a low birth rate will continue to rise. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/14HealthMedicalSociology.pdf>.

The **Japanese Society for Historical Study of Social Welfare** was launched in 1973 as the Japanese Society for Historical Research on Social Welfare, but in 1999 it changed its name to its current one and became an official academic society. Currently as of March 2014 its members numbered 314 people. Its objective is to go about setting in place the history of social work in Japan and overseas through international cooperation for the sake of democratic social welfare. In order to do this it holds annual conferences and general meetings, issues annual reports and other publications, uncovers and preserves historical records, promotes interdisciplinary studies, and carries out other tasks necessary for the achievement of its objectives. Ever since its 22nd conference in 1994, at its conferences it has come to hold discussions by setting forth a clear theme, with the theme for its 41st conference in 2013 being “Historical Developments in Social Welfare in the Far East.” It currently features three standing committees: one on historical education for social welfare, one on preserving historical records and assets, and one on research into international history, and it also established an ad hoc committee in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, among others.

In East Asia there are difficult questions involving historical recognition when it comes to historical studies of social welfare. As such, in order to promote dialogue between countries issues such as the social policies in the regions that Japan formerly occupied and the people’s resistance to them should be made the subject of debate as people go about checking to confirm the facts. It is the Society’s intention to undertake historical analyses of the East Asian model of social welfare through these sorts of processes. Furthermore, with respect to the Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan has numerous precedent cases of natural and man-made disasters stretching from the droughts and famines of the Edo Period to the earthquakes, tsunamis, and typhoons from the Meiji Period onward down to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. For this reason, the Society must perform research from a historical point of view in this sort of context. It must also conduct debates from a similar outlook on the connection between the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Through such efforts it will continue to aspire towards the achievement of a welfare-oriented world through international solidarity. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/15HistorySocialWelfare.pdf>.

The **Japanese Society for the Study of Nursing and Social Work** was established in 1987, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 422 people. It was launched and has acted as an academic society that aims to combine nursing and social work in order to underpin people’s lives and lifestyles and to help them achieve happiness. It has held 26 conferences as of 2012, where it has debated a variety of different themes. The goals of the society are to perform research on nursing and social work, promote mutual cooperation between researchers and practitioners, and to maintain close ties with related academic societies in Japan and overseas. It publishes its journal *Nursing and Social Work Studies* twice annually. A look at opinion polls on its members reveal representative themes such as quality of life, nursing, coordination, and care, while other conspicuous items that stand out include an ethical and philosophical predilection, an emphasis on practical activities, and a desire to improve useful knowledge and technical skills. It has held discussions to the effect that in

order to improve nursing and social work it is important to not only have the sciences in a narrow sense, but that a literary sense is also crucial, and therefore nursing and welfare (studies) that serve as liberal arts and sciences will conceivably be needed.

The Society has made efforts for the Great East Japan Earthquake by mobilizing its full strength, of which it will refer you to its activities to collect and dispatch relief supplies carried out in Saga, as well as the activities to support victims that it performed in Fukushima. One senses a number of things through these, such as the level of maturity of Japanese social welfare demonstrated by such nursing and social work activities during emergencies, as well as the need for holistic care that extends over psychological, intellectual, and social care in addition to medical and nursing care. On top of this, the Society intends to continue thinking about nursing and social work that do not harm the “body’s natural recuperative powers” spoken of by Florence NIGHTINGALE. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/16NursingSocialWork.pdf>.

The **Japan Welfare Sociology Association** was established in 2003, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 460 people. As opposed to the West, where welfare economics was established and questions of welfare sociology are rarely taken up, in Japan research plans bearing the name of welfare sociology have been carried out since early on. It was against this backdrop that the Association was established. It has particularly high hopes for the success of the younger generation, and so in addition to an annual report entitled the *Journal of Welfare Sociology* it also publishes a series of books. The concept of public sphere has been the target of a number of its debates, but oftentimes in Japan the term public is taken to mean the government. Therefore, as demonstrated by the nursing care insurance system and the like, when it comes to the democratic system produced by the mutual cooperation between government, civil non-profit and for-profit organizations, and the general public, perhaps the term welfare society is more fitting than that of civil society. In connection with this, the role of for-profit enterprises and the role of the general public, which carries strong connotation of the “relational self” as opposed to the “individualistic self” in the West, have been debated.

The Great East Japan Earthquake was not just a major turning point for Japanese society itself, but for Japan’s welfare society as well. This is because following the change of administration the brakes had been put on Japan’s social welfare—which had been dependant on the internal welfare systems in families and private companies—by the efforts of the Democratic Party, which had attempted to convert this to a more universal system. The direction of the shift in energy policy hammered out due to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant has also grown murky as a result of the further change in administration. The earthquake laid bare vulnerabilities in Japanese society with respect to its public spaces, homes, local regions, and communities. It has become apparent that soundly surmounting each one of these will not only be conducive to rebuilding Japan’s welfare society, but also to rebuilding Japanese society itself. Through attacking these problems and the issues, the Japan Welfare Sociology Association will attempt to draw the world’s attention to the significance of Japan’s welfare society. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/17WelfareSociology.pdf>.

5. Villages, Regions, Cities and Major Social Phases in and after the Rapid Economic Growth

The rapid growth in the Japanese economy that continued from 1955 to 1973 significantly transformed Japanese society. Japanese society, which as of 1950 was still nearly half comprised of workers in primary industries such as agriculture, was rapidly industrialized and converted to a service society while also turning into an information society. Living standards improved, and issues such as the appearance of the “new middle mass” came to be debated. But over the course of this the problem of environmental destruction grew severe, as exemplified by pollution and the harmful effects of drugs, while the opposition of labor movements, neighborhood movements, and citizen’s movements to the conservative party that had been running the central government intensified. As such, progressive local governments were created one after another in places like Kyoto, Tokyo, and Osaka.

Throughout this, regions which could no longer be distinguished by the concept of villages had become a huge problem, and the method by which cities were built of swelling up by means of siphoning off the population of rural districts was more and more being questioned. Throughout these major social transformations the problem of discrimination that had existed in Japanese society since long ago was once again brought to light. In addition, with foreign influence playing a factor, everything from discrimination concerning women and ethnic groups to, before long, discrimination against physically disabled persons, the elderly, and sexual minorities came to present a major social problem. Modalities for labor and the family also came to be questioned in this new context, and through the spread of different types of sports and Olympic fever issues of sports began to draw the attention of a great many people.

In response to such social transformations, contemporary Japanese sociology gave rise to specialized academic societies, or so-called “hyphenated sociology” associations, in fields other than mass communication and social information, welfare, and health and medical care.

The **Japanese Association for Rural Studies** was established in 1952, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 412 people. Back at the time when more than half of Japanese society consisted of villages, research activities that put the focal point on not only agricultural villages, but also mountainous villages and fishing villages, were begun, with the popular term “*Sonken* (rural studies)” becoming widespread for this. It has switched publishers for its annual report on rural studies four times thus far, which has roughly corresponded to a period covering the first half of Japan’s rapid growth, a period covering the second half of its rapid growth, a period of stable growth, and a period from the bursting of the bubble down to the present as the country gradually became deeply enveloped in Japanese capitalism. The Association has performed research by pursuing the circumstances by which traditional *ie* (families) and *mura* (villages) have been transfigured. It has been interdisciplinary in nature from the very beginning, with no small number of members in areas like economics, anthropology, and history, though sociologists have consistently been the most commonly represented. From the fourth period onwards the number of people who have expanded their field to overseas such as in Asia and Europe has been on the rise as well. In terms of its future

orientation changeovers in perspectives—from the group to the individual, from productivity to sustainability, and towards villages as part of society as a whole—have been pointed out.

The Great East Japan Earthquake was overwhelmingly a rural disaster. The fishing villages in the Tohoku region in particular have a history of suffering tsunami damages. Yet leaving aside the psychology and culture of those people who attempt to return to the seashore with its abundant bounty despite suffering massive damage, this cannot tell us anything about rebuilding villages or Japanese society. What is more, a major feature of this recent great earthquake is the fact that it gave rise to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. But without directly facing up to the history of building facilities that cover the electricity needs of major urban areas in rural villages, and the fact that once accidents occur they cause massive, widespread destruction to people's way of life in the villages, then we will be unable to get a grasp of not only Japan's villages but also Japanese society itself. From this perspective, the Japanese Association for Rural Studies would like to continue to hold research exchanges with people from overseas. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/18RuralStudies.pdf>.

The **Japan Association of Regional and Community Studies** was established in 1976, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 409 people. To the people who emerged from rural sociology and urban sociology in the pre- and postwar eras it has added young people, and has made efforts to perceive the major transformations in Japanese society following its rapid growth. As for its research methods, in addition to structural analyses Marxism also has a strong influence, to which has been added the influence of the Chicago school and theories of community power structures. To this was added the impact of the new urban sociology starting in the 1980s, giving rise to a phenomena that could be deemed a "spatial turn." Following the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995, due to the impact of globalization, issues of citizenship that focused problems of foreigners came in for a close-up view. From the 21st century onwards, reconsiderations of the public sphere and issues of governance, problems with inequality and disparity at the local level, the problem of competition between cities at the global scale, and other issues have begun to be taken up in a big way. In addition, issues of municipal mergers and the redistribution of power and authority between national and local governments have also become the subjects of debate. The Japan Association of Regional and Community Studies publishes a journal called the *Annual Report of the Japan Association of Regional and Community Studies*, series of books, and other materials on these issues, and gives presentations of its research results.

The Great East Japan Earthquake laid bare the grave contradictions found in the developmental structures of postwar Japan. It called into question Japan's hierarchical governance system that extended from the national government to the local regions, as well as its quasi-colonial regional structures. In order to tread the slow path to recovery we must fundamentally reconsider the various different existing frameworks, which include those of the national and local governments, urban and rural areas, and everyday life and communities. In relation to the victims, the epistemological premise that divides up subjects and objects must also be reconsidered. Through reconstruction we must discover a symbiotic path for erecting sustainability and surviving within a risk society. In light of the reality that during the "lost two decades" the number of municipalities fell from 3,200 in 2000

to 1,700 in 2013, the Japan Association of Regional and Community Studies would like to ramp-up its activities, including international exchanges, for the sake of future social development. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/19RegionalCommunityStudies.pdf>.

The **Japan Association for Urban Sociology** was established in 1982, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 278 people. Studies on urban society in Japan existed from before the war, and through the efforts of a number of pioneers these bloomed into urban sociology in the postwar era. Against the backdrop of precipitous urban expansion during the period of rapid economic growth, research was carried out on the conflicts between those people flowing into cities and the existing residents as well as on community formation, which were influenced by the Chicago school. Research was also carried out on urban development and neighborhood measurements that were influenced by Marxism, and on the actual conditions of urban control that were influenced by the new urban sociology and theories of community power structures. These led to the establishment of the Association and were conducive to its development. Research has been thriving on everything from problems of urban poverty and social exclusion, which have been growing in severity since the start of the 21st century, to community formation and classification in cities, which has been a holdover from the 20th century, to issues of morals and norms and network formation among urban residents.

A viewpoint of ethnicity issues was lacking in Japanese sociology in the past, but since the 1980s experimental research has been carried out in addition to theoretical research, and surveys and research on foreigners residing in Japan have expanded. As part of this, a reappraisal was done which found that in fact issues with South and North Koreans residing in Japan already existed. It is believed that the population of Japan will fall by 41 million people over the next 50 years, and so it is believed that issues of coexisting with the foreigners that arrive in Japan will grow larger and larger in the future. Moving forward, urban sociology must grapple with questions such as: How should we deal with the inexorable march of individualism? How should urban infrastructure and communality be connected with one another? How should we deal with the declining population and aging of society? The Great East Japan Earthquake and the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant laid bare such problems in a single fell swoop, primarily in regions where depopulation has already advanced. Together with people from around the world, the Association must consider the question of how should the current fixed scale that goes from cities to prefectures and then onto nations and the international community be remade, and how should the role of cities not only the megalopolis but also local towns be again invigorated as part of this? For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/20UrbanSociology.pdf>.

The **Japanese Association of Sociology for Human Liberation** was established in 1985, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 113 people. Even those progressive people who have been influenced by Marxism or the like among the teaching faculty at Japanese universities have tended to be reluctant about getting involved in issues of conventional discrimination in Japan, which are typified by the burakumin areas. Even among the personnel on university teaching faculties there is a tendency to prefer not to hire researchers on issues of discrimination if they can avoid it. At Saitama University such a researcher finally made it through the faculty council at the urging of a visually

impaired teacher at another university. Many people are reluctant to touch upon the Sayama Case, in which a person originating from a burakumin area was taken to be the suspect, and the trial is still ongoing. It was in the midst of these that 36 people got together in March 1985 to start this Association. Its goal is to contribute to people who have faced discrimination through specific scholarly studies, and to mutually perform critical evaluations and share research with one another for this in order to thereby obtain results.

In 1995 five teaching faculty member were dismissed from Hiroshima Shudo University, which was one of the central bases of the Association, on the grounds that they had misused research funds. Voices of support came from a researcher in the United States and others during the lawsuit appealing it as an unjust disposition. While the appeal of those teaching faculty who were dismissed was rejected in court, the major plaintiffs have continued on with their activities thereafter. Even overseas there was a case of a report at an academic conference in Australia, which a member of the Association happened to attend and hear, that the related organizations had fallen into a state of deadlock without any consistent policy regarding the issue of burakumin areas. But when the person who gave the report was questioned about these so-called “condemnation meetings” to ascertain his knowledge of the actual state of affairs it was revealed that in fact he had not attended such meetings even once. The Association emphasizes international exchange, and has provided support to foreigners studying issues of discrimination in Japan. The issues surrounding burakumin areas are still far from being resolved, discrimination against South and North Koreans residing in Japan is still ongoing, and the long-standing discrimination against lepers has yet to be swept away. Discrimination against sexual minorities, day laborers and the homeless, Okinawa, and physically disabled persons still persist. The Japanese Association of Sociology for Human Liberation will continue to consider how it can play a critical role in order to amass knowledge for a harmonious society in which peoples’ differences are accepted for all to live together. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/21HumanLiberation.pdf>.

The **Japanese Association of Social Problems** was established in 1985, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 195 people. Its goals are to popularize and promote research on social problems, hold meetings and research seminars, promote the research activities of its members, publish a journal and other publications, and hold exchanges with other academic societies in Japan and overseas. It publishes a journal called the *Journal of Social Problems* as well as a newsletter. When it comes to research on social problems there have been two opposing standpoints; one of which has been to aim for improvements by researching the social pathologies of capitalism and which has been influenced by American sociology, while the other has aimed for revolution through research on the problems of capitalism. When the Association was created those in the former camp formed the main core, with those in the later camp being half-hearted and passive. But soon afterwards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union collapsed, and the opposition between the two camps disappeared. Since the latter half of the 1990s micro clinical sociological tendencies following in the wake of the strengthening of psychological tendencies occurred, as did a transition away from a constructionist standpoint towards a macro-structural outlook.

These tendencies have continued on since the 21st century as well. When it comes to these psychological tendencies, a move that could be termed a “switch to clinical sociology” is occurring in the fields of delinquency, crime, deviancy, and others. In the courses that have been offered since the start of the 21st century, the macro social problems referred to as the “avaricious society” and the micro problems of ailing human relations have been contrasted against one another, and a path for overcoming these through the use of constructionism and clinical sociology has been pursued. This is a problem with a major connection with criminology, and conflicts between deviance theories and labeling theory have persisted. Japan, which has had a strong Marxist tradition, regards social problems rather as problems of social structure, and a tendency to try to perceive this by surmounting constructionism has been gaining ground. With regard to international exchange, at the 2008 International Society for Criminology meeting it was decided that the 2011 World Congress would be held in Japan. Many of the former leaders of the Japanese Association of Social Problems participated in the Organizing Committee for this, and debate was held on the theme of “Global Socio-Economic Crisis and Crime Control Policies: Regional and National Comparison.” Discussions were held over issues surrounding the growth of a surveillance society, with the discussions here serving to contribute to the academic conference in Yokohama. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/22SocialProblems.pdf>.

The **Japanese Association of Labor Sociology** was established in 1988, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 250 people. Japanese labor sociology started from out of the occupational sociology from during the war. But in the postwar era it passed through studies on the cohabitation of miners and management familism to hold spirited debates that focused on the special characteristics of Japanese management and labor relations. There were numerous studies in which foreign scholars took part that evaluated the stability and efficiency of these factors, but on the other hand there were reports from worksites of workers being forced to engage in harsh labor and the like. The Association was established over the course of this and attempted to reinvigorate research on this which had stagnated within Japan’s “affluent society” by issuing the *Annual Journal of the Japanese Association of Labor Sociology*. It was its criticisms of corporate culture and company unions that provided a breakthrough and, as non-permanent workers have been on the rise in the midst of globalization, debates over a new labor movement to reform this state of affairs has begun. Modalities for how female employees should be handled in the midst of powerful sex discrimination have also been discussed. As the Japanese-style employment system has been collapsing and non-permanent workers have continued to increase, the employment of young workers has grown insecure, and the future of social security and other systems that stably maintain Japanese society over the long-term have been thrown into question.

As globalization has advanced, the adoption of foreign workers has come to pose a major issue. Newcomers other than the North and South Koreans and Chinese people residing in Japan have been on the rise, while issues such as how unskilled laborers should be accepted have become the focus for debate. A number of questions were raised following the Great East Japan Earthquake that will continue to be debated on into the future. These include: How should employment issues such as the increase in non-permanent workers in relation to the reconstruction be addressed? How should the

outlook for new labor unions and labor movements that surpass company unions be viewed? How should an attitude of accepting foreign workers who essentially must be welcomed in every region of a rapidly aging society with a low birthrate like Japan be forged, including foreign workers who at one time returned home on the orders of their home countries or the like? For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/23LaborSociology.pdf>.

The **Japan Society of Sport Sociology** was established in 1991, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 400 people. Following World War II, the military training and calisthenics designed to produce subjects of the Emperor of Japan were replaced with physical education (athletics) designed to produce citizens who would underpin democracy. In the wake of this, the Society got its start as a part of the Japan Sports Association that was established in 1950. It grew through the popularization of sports in everyday life and the holding of mega-events like the Tokyo Olympics and National Sports Festival of Japan, and developed to the point of issuing the *Sociology of Physical Education* in 1972 and the *Sociology of Sport and Physical Education* in 1982. It was against this background that the Society was established in 1991, and with the participation of a vast number of sociologists it debated matters like traditional sports, modern sports, civil participation, and the potential for media sports. The World Congress of Sociology of Sport was held in Kyoto in 2008 in which 280 people from 32 countries took part. In 2013 the *Japan Journal of Sport Sociology* was published twice a year.

The Great East Japan Earthquake occurred when its 20th conference was scheduled to be held in Tokyo in March 2011. The Society considered suspending the conference, but given the rising swell of numerous voices emphasizing the “power of sports” the conference was held after being pushed back three months. Since then, in line with the remark that “sports are a microcosm of society,” a variety of different debates have continued to be carried out over sports within Japanese society, which was forced into an irreversible turning point by the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident. Against this general bearing, the Society feels that for the continuation of sports it must contribute to local communities, society, and the world through research activities and organizational activities with an awareness of the connection between sports and peace, democracy, and human rights. It must make appeals to the people of the world concerning club models for community formation through sports and ties with the media that must not be allowed to grow inert as it calmly draws out lessons from the roles played by sports even amidst the damage from the great earthquake and nuclear accident like the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Fukushima Daiichi Accident. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/24SportSociology.pdf>.

The **Japan Society of Family Sociology** was established in 1991, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 713 people. Family research in Japan existed from prior to the war, where studies were carried out on rural households and clans of blood relations, while conversely it has also tried its hand at quantitative research through the use of census data. Following the war, research that took over the tradition of the latter type of studies came to be carried out in earnest, and the Japanese Council on Family Relations was organized in 1955. In 1965 the Ninth International Seminar on Family Research was held through the joint sponsorship of the Japan Sociological Society and the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. In 1975 the *Annals of Family Studies*

began to be published, which became *Japanese Journal of Family Sociology* in 1989, and then the Society was established in 1991. This publication has been issued twice annually ever since 2000. In terms of research themes, a paradigm shift occurred in the 1980s as a result of gender studies, family history studies, and so forth, which saw an increase in studies that perceived of the family as a network of individuals in relation to social institutions and the like. There has also been an increase in research focused on care for the elderly, children, and the disabled. Concurrent with this has been rising interest in family policies owing to the increase in family issues and family problems. Methodologically speaking, quantitative research that makes use of the National Family Research of Japan (NFRJ) has been thriving. But qualitative research has also been on the rise due to the growing difficulties with individual and small group studies for reasons such as the protection of personal information.

In response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, given the experiences with the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake there have been calls to get a firm grasp of the actual conditions of the victims and families that suffered damage, and to offer proposals concerning what family research can do for them. For this reason, the Society has further expanded the paradigm of family research and carried out research that can accommodate the diversification of families, and based on this it is attempting to further develop “social techniques” so that the results of this research can be applied to both aiding the victims and for the reconstruction. While it has undertaken a variety of different efforts thus far to accomplish this, moving forward it must hold exchanges and cooperate with overseas researchers in an even more proactive manner. The hope is that everyone from overseas will proactively approach the Society and the databases indicated within this volume. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/25FamilySociology.pdf>.

The **Japanese Association for Environmental Sociology** was established in 1992, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 600 people. It was established in light of the fact that from the 1960s to the 1970s victims of pollution arose in vast quantities in Japan, and today it is the largest academic society for environmental sociology in the world. Its journal, the *Journal of Environmental Sociology*, was launched in 1995 and was the world’s first journal in this field. The Great East Japan Earthquake has posed the question of how we are to study and overcome the “3/11 System”—which in other words refers to contemporary Japanese society itself—that caused this major calamity, which was a man-made disaster rooted in a natural disaster. Environmental sociology first asserts that examinations of this should proceed from the standpoint of the victims (disaster victims). To date environmental sociology has debated a number of matters, like the fact that damage is not just a physical problem for the victims themselves, but that it is a problem for communities and social structures, and that since the afflicted regions tend to be limited relative to the regions that receive the benefits the suffering of the victims tends to be forgotten. In addition, consideration should be given to how some people’s lives fall in the gap between the natural environment and modern technology. It has also debated how we must pursue task sharing systems that strive for coexistence without falling into the individualism that gives rise to the “tragedy of the commons,” and how we must erect social linkages premised on *namami* (nature in a holistic context) instead of *kirimi* (nature that has been severed from its element).

Challenges that we must take into consideration moving forward include: How do we make the victims themselves aware of the structures that have largely extended the damage? To what degree can we say that environmental sociology itself understands the harmful structures that have spread to the point of becoming global environmental problems? Is the assailant-victim relationship that has been taken to be the underlying premise thus far something that needs to be fundamentally reconsidered? And must not we as sociologists from the first country in the world to suffer from the harm of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki offer truly effective solutions to the problems of nuclear power generation and alternative renewable energy? For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/26EnvironmentalSociology.pdf>.

6. Historical Reflections on and Theoretical Investigations of Japanese and World Sociology

Through the activities of its various academic societies Japanese sociology has continued to reflect back on its own history while also giving thought to its modalities, particularly theoretical and methodological issues. Concurrent with the results of this, academic societies have been formed that debate the history of sociology itself, that question modalities for social analysis from a local viewpoint, that introduce bold theories and methods into sociology, and that pose questions to themselves over sociology's theory and methodology in a phenomenological sense.

As was mentioned at the outset, sociology is an academic discipline that was introduced to Japan from the West when Japan's modernization got underway, and so it has been dogged since the very beginning by questions of how Japan should assimilate this to create its own sociology. Yet by this point in time we have seen what sorts of results this research has produced, even as it is dogged with such questions, and so finally the book will inform readers of how Japanese sociology itself has looked back and reflected upon these results, its prospects for the future, and its attempts to speak to people throughout the world.

The **Japan Association for the Study on the History of Sociology** was established in 1960, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 263 people. When a meeting of the Japan Sociological Society was held in Tokyo in 1960, major sociologists who were interested in Japanese sociology and the history of sociology itself got together, thus forming the core of the Association. It then began issuing its journal *Studies on the History of Sociology* the following year. From the outset the Association had three approaches to reflecting back on history, which included a way of thinking that places the relationship between Western sociology and Japanese sociology front and center, a way of thinking that places the relationship between contemporary sociological studies and the history of sociology front and center, and a way of thinking that places the meaning in the contemporary societies of a sociology which we makes the subject of history-of-sociology research front and center. During the Association's initial stages Japanese sociology kept following behind in terms of the introduction and application of Western sociology, and so it was something of a "moonlight sociology" in the sense that even when it was brilliantly illuminated it was not emitting any light of its own. As such, some were of the opinion that Japanese sociology would have to break

away from this. This is not merely a problem of an underwhelmingly small number of exports versus imports, but rather it is a problem of the “universe of discourse” spoken of by George Herbert MEAD which raises questions about how sociologists from Japan should structure their viewpoints if they are speaking in the Republic of Korea, by way of example.

There was also an argument that asked if those people who debated the history of sociology were not sociology scholars who debated society, but “sociology-logists” who debated sociology more than society. Through this debate many young sociologists came to take up “present-oriented” research, which emphasized modernistic significance, more so than “historicist” research on the history of sociology. In light of these trends, two challenges for the future will be to emphasize methodologies for studying past sociology by contrasting it against modern-day sociology, as well as advancing theory forward without losing sight of the connection between theoretical studies (including historical studies) and social realities in and of themselves. For details, please refer to the text <http://socconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/27HistorySociology.pdf>.

The **Japan Sociological Association for Social Analysis** was established in 1985, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 153 people. Sociologists originating from Kyushu University had formed its core, but since 1996 onwards it has spread to all over Japan and throughout Asia. It has continued to hold research seminars around a variety of different themes, with major ones being regional studies led by rural village studies, studies on globalization extending from Asia to the world, applied studies on things like social problems and social welfare, studies on sociological theory and doctrine, and studies that converge from various different themes to analyses of modern society. It has vigorously engaged in international exchanges as well, and has held numerous research seminars on a variety of different themes in which scholars from places like the United States, Germany, China, Sri Lanka, and South Korea have given reports. It has a strong desire to work to contribute to global sociology by setting bases intentionally in local regions. Its research seminars have also spread out to Asia, and have been held in places like Taiwan. It has also amassed research on the sociology of disasters and the environment, and has presented its research results related to the eruption of Mount Fugendake. It is also working to promote research on the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunamis. For details, please refer to the text <http://socconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/28SocialAnalysis.pdf>.

The **Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology** was established in 1986, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 306 people. It got its start through a confluence of sociologists specializing in mathematical and statistical studies in the Kansai region with sociologists who had been performing research on social stratification and social mobility in the Tokyo region, and also incorporated social psychologists and economists as well. Its objective was to assemble together researchers performing mathematical research both within and outside of sociology in order to develop deductive theories through the use of mathematical models. But from the very outset people realized that this differed from performing quantitative studies through the use of statistical techniques. This problem still persists to this day, as dialogue between mathematical sociology and quantitative sociology has become increasingly difficult, even as dialogue between the two of these and other types of sociological research has also grown difficult. In order to overcome this state of

affairs, sociologists and sociological education must be suffused with education and training in mathematics. The Association carries out ample international exchanges, and it holds combined seminars with sociologists from the United States in particular. It also raises understanding of the capabilities and research results of Japanese mathematical sociologists, and provides opportunities for young people to give presentations. Despite the young age of the Association, it has issued numerous volumes of its journal *Sociological Theory and Methods* with the number of English-language papers found therein on the rise. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/29MathematicalSociology.pdf>.

The **Society for Sociological Theory in Japan** was established in 2006, and as of March 2014 its members numbered 254 people. The Society for Contemporary Social Theory, which served as its original incarnation, was established in 1990, and so counting from then it has been around for more than 20 years. As for its take on sociological theory, it pursues a theory that is a combination of the three areas of verifiable middle range theories, base-line theories with their foundations entrenched in the life world, and idealistic theories that are focused on an ideal image of society. A look at the research trends of members of the Japan Sociological Society reveals that whereas some sociologists have consistently referenced the likes of Max WEBER and Durkheim there has been decreasing number who have referenced Marx, with references to Alfred SCHÜTZ, Habermas, Luhmann, and others having risen. There has been an increase in research that deals with globalization around the 21st century. Throughout the course of the Society's changeover from its former journal *Studies in Contemporary Social Theory* to its current journal *Studies in Contemporary Sociological Theory* research on the sociology of meaning, phenomenological sociology, the theory of symbolic interactionism, and critical theory has become more commonplace. Ethnomethodology and related studies have also been on the rise. Even when members have referenced the classics or quasi-classics it has served to strengthen moves to pursue an Asian style of social theory that raises questions about the nation state and globalization.

Since the Society was established, it has placed its focus more so on sociological theory rather than theoretical sociology, and has worked to create an open forum for debate and discussion for not only Japan, but also the world. It holds thriving exchanges with sociologists from Asia, the West and Australia, and it invites major scholars to each one of its conferences and has arranged it so that their speeches are printed in its journal. It plans to continue dealing with the Great East Japan Earthquake as an issue for sociological theory. Through its research activities to date it has made people poignantly aware of the limitations of the Hegelian notion of society as a society operating within the framework of the nation state. It has also strengthened moves that aspire to surmount "methodological nationalism" in aiming for a more universal social theory. In order to get people from not just Asia but all around the world involved in building up social theories in the future, it aspires to become multilingual by surmounting the advancing English-ization of language. For details, please refer to the text <http://soconso.sakura.ne.jp/message/30SociologicalTheory.pdf>.

7. Working Together towards a Truly Global Sociology!

Thus far we have taken a look at how Japanese sociology has taken root through the process of sociology having been introduced to Japan during its time of modernization in the latter half of the 19th century and the formation of academic societies following World War I, as well as how regional academic societies were then established all over Japan following World War II. We have seen the process whereby bilateral exchanges with France and China were promoted, as well as that by which societies from the Japan Society for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication to the Society of Socio-Informatics were established in response to the digitization of postwar society. We have also looked at the process through which the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare, the Japanese Society of Health and Medical Sociology, and the Japan Welfare Sociology Association came to be established in response to the growth of social welfare in the postwar era. We have also seen the process by which various academic societies for everything from villages, local regions, cities, discrimination and liberation, social problems, labor, sports, the family, and on to the environment were established in response to the social transformations brought about by Japan's rapid economic growth. Moreover, we have also looked at the process through which the Japan Association for the Study on the History of Sociology and the Society for Sociological Theory in Japan were established in order to reflect on the development of doctrine and theory through these efforts. The papers from the various academic societies found in this volume that were briefly introduced in this introduction discuss the history and current state of Japanese sociology with the utmost eloquence, and so I urge you to read as many of them as you can, and preferably all of them if possible. In that sense, here I would like to conclude by pointing out a few things.

The first is how severe a shock the Great East Japan Earthquake of 3/11 posed to Japan's researchers in sociological and social welfare studies. There have been academic societies such as the Tohoku Sociological Association and the Tohoku Sociological Society, as well as the Sociological Society of West Japan and the Kansai Sociological Association which have done research since early on regarding the enormous impact that not only war but also natural disasters have on societies. But in one fell swoop the Great East Japan Earthquake laid bare the problematic nature of the structures that had been built up by Japanese society prior to its occurrence; or what in other words the Japanese Association for Environmental Sociology called the "3/11 System". It also instantly revealed matters like how the reconstruction and development of postwar Japan have been carried out, and how the social formation that had taken on an extreme central-peripheral structure inflicted a heavy toll on certain people. Other revelations on top of this include the sort of arrangements by which the use of nuclear energy had been structured, and to what extent the political structures, that would quickly recover from the systematic damage of the 3/11 structures, make new social policies, and implement these, had been formed. It also revealed the extent to which members of Japanese society had been growing as sovereign people in order to resolve all of these problems.

Back when the Tokyo metropolitan region was almost completely destroyed by the Great Kanto Earthquake that occurred in 1923 it threw into question the history of Japan's modernization over the

more than half a century leading up to it. At the same time the damage from this great earthquake was compounded by the impoverishment of rural villages and financial crises, which led Japan down the path of augmenting its military forces and expanding its incursions into the continental mainland, and ultimately set it on a course from its war in China to its crushing defeat in World War II. Following the war Japan was to reflect on this course from the bottom of its heart and set about building a new society, but the result of this was the 3/11 System. Not only that, but even since prior to 3/11 Japan has been criticized by South Korea and China for not having reflected upon its past aggressions. The fact that its politicians and others visit Yasukuni Shrine and act in other ways that irritate these countries makes it impossible to take an optimistic view of the situation in East Asia. Japan's sociological and social welfare researchers think deeply on such matters, and will continue striving to attend to them in the future in both their research and practices.

The second is that Japanese sociology has continued to make the utmost efforts in each of its respective fields to assimilate the sociology introduced primarily from the West and produce its own theories with which to carry out analyses of contemporary society that are as realistic as possible. But this fact has not been successfully conveyed to other countries because of the language barrier. Owing to the candid reflections from such efforts, serious reflection continues on questions like whether Japanese sociology is nothing more than a "moonlight sociology," as was asked by the Japan Association for the Study on the History of Sociology, and does it engage in nothing more than a "sociology-logy"? In the end, as stated by the Society for Sociological Theory in Japan, we have become clearly aware of the limitations of the "Hegelian notion of society as a society operating within the framework of the nation state" as it has incorporated all manner of social theories from the West and held repeated exchanges with foreign scholars against the backdrops of Asia and other locales.

SHOJI Kōkichi, the author of this introduction as one of the editors of this compilation of messages, already felt since back in the 1970s under the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union that we must perceive the world itself as society. I have been advocating for the need for a "sociology of world history" and a "world sociology" with reference to ideas such as the world society concept of TAKATA Yasuma, and have stated the need to enhance these to the point of a "global sociology" in response to the increasing severity of global environmental problems in the 1990s (Shoji, 2009; 2010; 2014). This is because of the consideration that surely it is still nation states that most strongly bind our societies altogether, and so in order to surmount these limitations sociology must be ahead of the curve in perceiving of the world and the globe itself as society. First off, in response to this I have received criticism to the effect that since our efforts for international society are not enough yet I am getting too far ahead of myself. But since the dawning of the 21st century the rapid advance of globalization has started to broaden the horizons of a great many sociologists, and to my feeling their opposition to terms like world society and global society has been weakening. In light of this course of affairs, I feel that the fact that the Society for Sociological Theory in Japan has clearly pointed out the limitations of the notion of society within the framework of the nation state represents a major step forward for Japanese sociology. I would also like to seek the true bearers of society, who will continue to surpass the constraints of the nation state, from

among the true sovereign people who have surmounted citizenship in the “state and civil society” and who have liberated themselves from global colonial structures.

As the final issue in this regard, I would like to point out two Japanese sociologists who have developed creative theories that are truly worthy of being introduced to the world, yet who have gone largely unreferenced in the papers of this collection of messages due to the size of the scale of their theories. They are YOSHIDA Tamito and MAKI Yusuke (the pseudonym of MITA Munesuke).

Yoshida was a sociologist who served as a driving force for the creation of the Society of Socio-Informatics. He got his start in the 1950s with structural functionalism, overcoming the opposition between this notion and Marxism through the universalization of a concept of information that had expanded from molecular biology to studies on mass communication and the like, then expanding and universalizing this until it had reached a cosmic scale. He has advocated for a reorganization of the sciences with the focus extending out to the natural sciences, which put another way was a theory for a “second scientific revolution” (Yoshida, 2008). There were no specific places to preserve and process information in the universe that was born from out of the Big Bang, but when life developed these appeared in the form of genetic information (with genes as its vehicle), and as human society emerged this appeared in the form of universities, mass communication, and so forth. Life information before humans arrived essentially consisted of information with signal-like properties, but with humans and their societies this made rapid strides to develop into information with symbolic properties. He argues that nowadays the world of electronic information exemplified by the Internet that covers the entire globe, for example, is forming a fourth layer of cosmic evolution following the one of materials, energy and the laws that regulate them (first layer), the world of living things through signal-like genetic information (second layer), and the human societies that use symbol-like genetic information (third layer). According to this, the task of sociology clearly lies in reading into the complex programs that form society, which leads to getting inside of this and reforming the programs and altering the modalities for social formation. Cooperation between sociology and the natural sciences as well as the humanities and social sciences will become conceivable within this context.

On the other hand, Maki perceived of contemporary society as a structure that exists as an accumulation of alienation and reification from a perspective that adds Jean-Paul SARTRE’s Critique of Dialectical Reason to Marxism, and restores a “symphonic commune” in opposition to this. In order to do this, he investigated society from before it was corrupted by scientific and technical civilization via the results of one’s own experiences and cultural anthropology, and thoroughly relativized contemporary civil society through a unique comparative sociology (Mita, 1998; 2014). He argues that as opposed to contemporary civil society, which has endlessly pursued rationality along a directional arrow of time that moves from beginning to end, there is also a form of society where people live in accordance with a flow of time that blends in with nature, moves slowly at a leisurely pace, or is circular, and that we should once again take a hard look at the modalities of such a society. Moreover, in response to remarks that directly correlate the selfishness of modern people with the selfish genes spoken of by Richard DAWKINS, Maki argues that a society in which egoists battle with one another is not necessarily advantageous to the continuation

of selfish genes. He asserts that the development of human society down to the present would have been impossible without societies with altruistic dimensions that tolerate the vulnerable such as children. To put this in Yoshida's terminology, Maki acknowledges the equal coexistence of as many programs as possible that form human society, and relativizes the neurotic and one-sided rationalism of contemporary civil society. He also asserts that we should acknowledge the variegated and flexible forms of society that are to come now that we have entered an era of global computerization. In order to resolve the numerous challenges besetting contemporary society we must adopt this sort of expansive outlook and flexible conceptual capabilities as we give thought to future modalities for sociology. This is something that I would like to express at the national session to be chaired by Japan at the World Congress of Sociology that will be held in Yokohama.

Those of us who are researchers on Japanese sociological and social welfare studies have an accumulation of research that we have built up thus far, and moving forward we would like to make the greatest contribution possible to the creation of society for not only Japan, but also the world. In order to do this, we would like to have as many opportunities for exchange as possible with people who study sociology and social welfare around the world, researchers in other fields whose interest is drawn to sociology and social welfare studies, and the general public. For the future, every society will have to open up to other societies and accept different people, information, and goods. Japanese sociological and social welfare studies can make the utmost contribution when it comes to having every society maintain their own individual qualities even as they accept other societies to create a diverse and open-minded world. I would like to ask that people around the world accept our messages, and offer my heartfelt hope that you will communicate and work together with us through our contact information.

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