

Greetings and the Outline

We would like to welcome all of the sociologists, social welfare scholars, researchers, and interested civilians from around the world to Japan on this occasion! We would also like to offer a heartfelt greeting to everyone who was not able to come this time around.

There are about 30 academic societies for sociology in Japan, the major ones of which joined together with the primary academic societies in the field of social welfare studies to create **the Consortium**. The reason the Consortium was created in 2007 was to facilitate communication between the various different academic societies and to work to address shared challenges. Even back then it already appeared as if **the 2014 ISA World Congress of Sociology** was going to be held in Japan, and so the primary concern of many of the academic societies resided in the significance of and methods for **international exchange**. Therefore, the Consortium set this as its theme for the symposium that was carried out at the beginning of each year from in 2008, and discussions were held on this four times from various different angles.

Sociology was introduced into Japan from relatively early on in the second half of the 19th century. The **Japan Sociological Society** was founded in 1924, and following World War II it had spread to all over the country and Japan had accumulated considerable reserves of sociological research and education. Throughout the course of this, those of us in Japan learned languages like English, French, and German as we voraciously absorbed **the achievements of Western sociology**. Most studies that assimilated these and set to work establishing their own hypotheses and theories were presented in Japanese, and so to this day there have only been **limited opportunities to transmit the results of these studies overseas**. Questions over what should be done to increase the number of opportunities for this, and by what manner presentations should be given have posed major challenges for Japanese sociology, and still do so to this day.

Then on March 11, 2011 **the Great East Japan Earthquake** occurred. The region along the Pacific Coast of Eastern Japan was struck by what has been described as a once in a millennium earthquake and tsunami, which left some 20,000 people dead or missing. But it was the accident at **the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant** that occurred as a result of the earthquake and tsunami that amplified the damage by several orders of magnitude over. Those victims who escaped death at the hands of the earthquake and tsunami but who lost their homes and the like number in the hundreds of thousands, and there are hundreds of thousands of disaster victims who were forced into an emergency evacuation to avoid the radiation from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, and who still continue to take refuge all over Japan.

The earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident inflicted a heavy toll on **the under-populated regions** along the Pacific Coast of Eastern Japan, which includes the major city of Sendai. These disasters laid bare the problematic features inherent in **the social system itself** that had been built up by Japan over 60-some years following World War II in its entirety. In one fell swoop it exposed problems such as the **depopulation** of rural villages, which advanced in counterpoint to the **concentration** of the population in major cities, and how influence peddling was directed at people seeking economic stimulus for the depopulated regions. It also exposed the dangers of **the nuclear**

power plants that were built in coastal regions, and conversely **the instability of life in the major cities** that had secured their own comfort through the energy produced in this manner.

Japanese sociology and social welfare studies have been making a concerted effort to confront and address these problems. It was around this time that the Japan Consortium for Sociological Societies sent out a request to the academic societies affiliated with it asking them to deliver **their messages to the world** for the 18th World Congress of Sociology. Despite being busy with their initiatives for the recent great calamity on top of their day-to-day activities, the academic societies thoroughly grasped the essential tenor of our request and responded to it with great drive and enthusiasm. These were then edited to become this collection of messages.

We would like to ask that everyone please start by accessing **the site found on the front cover**, where the Contents of this collection of messages will appear before you. From there, you can go to any location that you are interested in simply by clicking on it.

We encourage you to start by opening up and viewing **the Preface** by YOSHIHARA Naoki, the current President of our Consortium. Next, if at all possible we would encourage you to view **the Introduction** written by SHOJI Kôkichi, who is both the Chairperson of the Editorial Committee for this collection of messages as well as the Editor-in-Chief. There you will learn (albeit briefly) about Japanese sociology's extensive history and the problems facing it, as well as its points of contact with world sociology. You will also take away from it an overview of **the messages from the 29 academic societies** that supplied messages for this collection. From there you can leap to any of the messages from the academic societies that you are interested in.

Part I features messages from the Japan Sociological Society and the **academic societies that have taken root all over Japan**, as well as from bilateral exchange societies that have been active **with France and China**. Part II features messages from academic societies on **mass communication studies and socio-informatics**, to which sociology has made significant contributions in postwar Japan. Part III features messages from **academic societies in the social welfare field**, to which sociology has contributed while maintaining close ties with it in postwar Japan. Part IV features messages from the academic societies for sector-specific or hyphenated sociology that sprang up one after another in response to the complexity of Japanese society, which had grown affluent and begun diversifying as a result of its rapid economic growth. This includes messages from academic societies specializing in **villages, local regions, cities, discrimination and liberation, social problems, labor, sports, the family, and the environment**. And finally Part V features messages from academic societies working in fields such as **sociological history, mathematical sociology, and sociological theory**, which developed in order to deepen the theoretical and methodological reflections in and of themselves that Japanese sociology has carried out through this. Links have been pasted by the names of each of the academic societies in the Contents, and so we encourage you to access any of them that may interest you.

Finally, there is an **Editors' Postscript** that discusses the launch of our Editorial Committee and the course of its activities, while expressing its myriad difficulties. As is written there, our desire has been to spark dialogue with all of our readers and continue developing sociological studies that give rise to communication all around at the global scale through this collection of messages. **The**

contact information for the academic societies is listed with each of the messages, and we would be greatly pleased if you used it to proactively get in touch with them.

Moving forward, we must join forces in working to develop sociology in each country, and at the global level!

(SHOJI Kôkichi,
Chairperson of the Editorial Committee for “Messages to the World”,
Japan Consortium for Sociological Societies)