

Postscript

Once more, welcome to Japan! “Messages to the World” is a modest present to everyone from the world, of Japanese sociological and social welfare researchers. This is an appeal to the world that is rooted in the culmination of research in Japanese sociological and social welfare studies as of July 2014, and represents an overture for dialogue with your colleagues in Japan in your own areas of expertise. Our intent is not to have these messages serve as nothing more than one-sided statements; rather, it is our sincere hope that you all will furnish us with your candid opinions so that these may serve as a starting point in initiating meaningful academic exchanges for both parties.

The objectives of the Japan Consortium for Sociological Societies have already been discussed in the Preface and Introduction. As such, the unique opportunity to hold the ISA World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama has been granted to us by the efforts of KOSAKA Kenji, who was Japan’s representative to the ISA Conference of the Council of National Associations, and other sociologists. Following this, when this project was proposed by former ISA Director YAZAWA Shujiro in January 2010, the Japan Consortium for Sociological Societies established a Preparatory Committee comprised of SHOJI Kôkichi, NOMIYA Daishiro and others which undertook numerous considerations of the managerial approach and feasibility of the project.

The first “Messages to the World” Editorial Committee was held in March 2012 under a structure with Shoji serving as Chairperson. Since then the Editorial Committee has held numerous debates over what should be done to make a single completed volume under the shared objective of accurately conveying the contents of research in Japanese sociology and social welfare studies to everyone who visits Yokohama from overseas, as well as to the world at large. But at the end of the day it was decided to be the various academic societies that would serve in the leading role in terms of getting these messages out. This was because forging an agreement that was compelling to both sides was an issue of the utmost importance.

One specific point that the Editorial Committee focused on was what sort of requests should be sent out to the academic societies that would handle the writing and how much discretion should be entrusted to them. The guidelines in the *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* were specified as the format for annotations of people’s names and the reference literature and so forth in order to ensure a certain degree of uniformity. Moreover, for the themes we asked that these consist of messages to the world that covered the history and present state of the various academic societies, as well as issues in different fields following the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11, 2011, as well as their contact information. The Great East Japan Earthquake inflicted an enormous amount of damage, but by drawing on the lessons from this it has given each of the Japanese academic societies for sociology and social welfare studies messages that they must convey to the world.

One issue of particular importance in this process of respecting the judgment of the various academic societies was the interpretations concerning how the messages to the world within the manuscripts should be expressed. After the original manuscripts were received in January 2013 the Editorial Committee engaged in impartial but spirited discussions over this matter. On the one side opinions were presented to the effect that: “I feel that the most important thing is that the messages and presentations of new problems to world sociologists be clearly defined, yet in some cases the focus has been placed on the history of the academic societies and where their challenges lie” and “How about we have them play up the message qualities in their papers?” While on the other side statements were heard to the effect that: “You can’t necessarily make the claim that their messages are weak, as the history of the academic societies itself constitutes the message from those organizations, rather than from individuals” and “What they choose to lay emphasis on in their writing is up to their discretion.”

After a variety of different opinions had been conveyed from the Editorial Committee over the matter of what means of expression should be used to get out the messages to the world, ultimately the conclusion was reached that it would firmly commit to respecting the judgment of the various academic societies. The final outcome of this was comprised of 29 different “messages” rather than one single “message,” and so therefore the overall title is expressed in the plural form of “messages.” This serves as an expression of the basic underlying spirit of the Japan Consortium for Sociological Societies.

In addition to how the messages were to be expressed, other matters that were left to the judgment of each of the academic societies were the writing style and whether English or Japanese was used as the language for the original manuscript. As a result, the manuscripts came to be comprised of multiple writing styles in that they ranged from papers written by individuals to ones written by committees composed of several people based on the considerations of each of the respective academic societies. Therefore, those manuscripts that were written in Japanese were translated into English via a translator who was selected by the Editorial Committee, and final English versions of the papers that were acceptable to both sides were completed through a process of repeated confirmation by the academic societies and Editorial Committee. Likewise, for the manuscripts that were written in English, final English manuscripts that were acceptable to both sides were completed by having the same translator perform native checks and make minor modifications for consistency in terminology.

The editing process throughout all of this was truly trying. To begin, both the papers translated into English and those originally in English were given a careful reading by the Chairperson of the Editorial Committee, who would then send the papers along with the draft of a letter, meant to convey problems that they noticed to the author(s), to the other editors. After this, Chairperson of the Editorial Committee would revise the letters by incorporating the opinions received from the other editors, and return the English translations and English papers together with the letters to the authors. The English translations and English papers returned to the authors were then revised with reference to the letters and sent back again, before once again being carefully checked by the Chairperson of the Editorial Committee who included new letters with them to hear the opinions of the other editors. These were once again returned to the authors, who performed a final check. This sort of back-and-forth exchange was repeated several times for a considerable number of English translations and English papers.

Over the course of this the Editorial Committee Chairperson held numerous exchanges with the translator and checker concerning problems with the English, and also with the writers and editors in charge concerning problems with the content. ISHIDA Sachio from the Secretariat provided full-scale support for these back-and-forth exchanges, without which the Chairperson would have been unable to successfully complete his duties.

This project was also meant to blaze a trail through the darkness obscuring the way forward and to also take up the challenge of dispelling the clouds hanging around Japanese sociology. That they were able to see this project through to completion by forging ahead and refusing to give up is something that the Editorial Committee under Chairperson Shoji and everyone involved from the academic societies can look on with pride. We would consider it an honor if sharing the fruits of our cooperation with all of you served to make the world just a little more cooperative. “Messages to the World” interweaves the light from each individual academic society to give off various different brilliant radiances depending on how they are read. It is the heartfelt desire of Japanese sociologists and social welfare scholars to take great strides forward with all of you.

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