

The Rise and fall of professional social work in Japan : Evolution, devolution and neo-liberal turn?

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Introduction

The social work and its education in Japan in the 21st century is a complicated and contradictory picture. Since the introduction of 'the Long-Term Social Care Insurance Act' ('Kaigo Hoken Hou') in 2000 especially, there has been a continuous stream of new policies in almost every area, based on the new legislation and major organizational changes. These have included the introduction of 'the Child Abuse Prevention Act' ('Jido Gyakutai Boushi Hou'), 'the Social Welfare (amendment) Act' ('Shakai Fukushi Hou') in 2000, 'the Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act' ('Jiritsu Shien Hou') in 2005, and other related policy/legislative programs in areas as diverse as homelessness, single-parents with children, the elderly, pensioners, mental health treatment recipients, those who have heavily suffered from 'developmental disabilities', the vulnerable younger generation who have suffered from mass unemployment and so on. Within the field of social work, new regulatory legislation established and enacted in 2007 has given rise to a new social work educational curriculum that has created new directions for the future of social work, especially with regards to its recruitment and professional 'certification'. It has been said that many progressive programs and innovations described here in social work (education) have offered us new substantial investments to promote the social status of the social work(er) on the one hand. Similarly, however, new legislative programs also have encouraged a commercial ethos and business practices within social work on the other. Now social work and social care with a business ethos has become the central theme in questioning how social work looks and what social work should do in the 'liquid society' (Ito, 2008; 2009).

This paper will focus on recent developments and trends in social work policy and social work education. Before looking at some of the backgrounds of policy developments and what

contemporary social work progress is, however, it is necessary to locate social work in Japan within the historical context as *social change* and in order to understand and evaluate social theory as to what the new social work and its education policies underpinned by 'neo-liberal' arrangements mean for social work today.

1 An overview of specific features of the social welfare and social work in Japan since modernization

In this section, we shall briefly introduce and look at the specific features of traditional Japanese social work in order to clarify the core background of contemporary 'neo-liberal' social work.

The prewar period (1868-1945)

After the collapse of the feudal social structure (the TOKUGAWA period 1603-1868), the new Meiji government of Japan (1868-1912) had been forced to become a 'modernized' nation state to catch up with many western industrialized imperial nations. Historically speaking, the road to modernization can be described not so much 'welfare-led' as 'warfare-led'. This kind of road was somewhat different from that of western countries because of its socio-economic environment.

The government had a strong will to establish a plan for enriching the nation and building up its defenses due mainly to the threats of European imperialism. As Japan was always committed to important wars against the Chinese Empire (1894-95), the Russian Empire (1904-05) and the German Empire in the World War I (1914-18) every 10 years in order to maintain its national interests as the nation states, there had been little resources for the 'welfare' fields. The social status of welfare for ordinary people was always residual at best.

It was in 1874 that the first governmental circular was issued with regards to the paupers who could not take care of themselves. Since then, the basic line of governmental welfare policy was that state welfare should be the last safety net. The government always encouraged people to rely firstly on mutual help from family, relatives and neighbors. In other words, this policy emphasized that the first priority of mutual help was the idea of 'self help' and that one-sided relief from the state led the poor to idleness. It was not until 1929 that state responsibility to give relief (assistance) to the poor was declared when the new Poor Law ('Kyugo-Ho' in Japanese) was enacted.

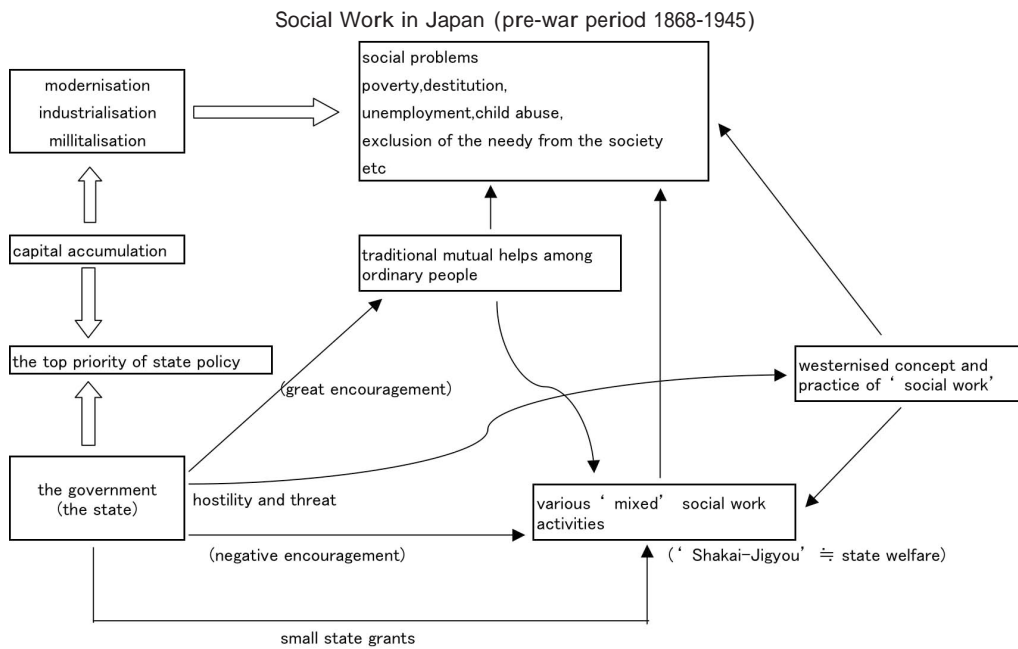
The modernization of society had inevitably produced a lot of social problems and had divided society into the rich and the poor. Since the latter half of the 19th century, there were

many progressive individuals who imported and introduced the *English term (and the concept) of 'social work'* (pronounced as '*Shakai Jigyō*' in Japanese) and its practices to deal with the many social problems created by modern capitalism. Especially in the 1920s, these reformed 'social work' practices created a series of very unique and voluntary actions aimed at enhancing the well being of their clients. Over accepting the term and concept of 'social work', there were two main streams. The first was to utilize the framework of western modernized 'social work' for the solution of social problems and for the establishment of the necessary social institutions in the construction of a modern society. The second was, at the same time, to functionally mix both western style social work and the traditional Japanese style of mutual assistance from family and neighbors. Obviously, the ruling classes favored the latter. It was the most basic element of social order in relation to relief of the poor in Japan.

The former policy therefore was gradually ignored and the latter became increasingly stronger. This traditional style was the basis of the Japanese solution for the 'state welfare'. The theorizing western progressive social work, hence, gradually came to be under the scrutiny of government policies and eventually came to cooperate with the governmental welfare policies in the 1930s. Consequently, the meaning of '*Shakai Jigyō*' was drastically changed.

It can be pointed out here that the government had an ambivalent attitude towards social work. The government had to face this dilemma due mainly to the introduction of capitalism and modernization. This was because rapid modernization inevitably created many conflicts and frictions between modernized progressive social thought and Japanese traditional norms in which things are 'taken-for-granted', things such as the norms of tradition whereby Japanese people are expected to take care of family and help others. Japan found it necessary to keep up the pace of industrialization and militarization to compete with western imperialism at the expense of welfare budgeting for households. The traditional norms of family in Japan were seen as first in priority to fill in for the reduction of 'state welfare'.

Though Japan in the prewar period had cultivated its social work to some extent, the reason why the state welfare was allocated to a secondary status needs another explanation. As ordinary Japanese people were seen in the position of subjects of 'Royal Majesty' under the Constitution of Imperial Japan, various welfare provisions were paternalistically provided from 'above' (Tata & Yokoyama et al., 1991: chapter 1; Takashima, 1995: chapter 13). Therefore, the term 'social' was considered to be a very dangerous one that was linked directly to the overthrow of social order as underpinned by the justice of Majesty (Ichinokawa, 2006: chapter 2). Because of this, a series of 'social work' activities, which had originally been transplanted from western society, were also imagined to be a direct threat to Japan's



governance. The government always had an objective aimed at doing surveillance against voluntary social work activities (in a broader sense) and encouraged them to be a more 'moderated' administration in line with government's guidelines (Arizuka, 2009: Chapter 1). It can be said that 'social work' in Japan before the war period in general was understood as 'mixtures' of social enterprises in terms of various ventures pioneered by progressive volunteers with governmental subsidy.

The post war period (1945-1973)

After the end of the Pacific War against the UN countries (especially China, the USA and the UK), the General Head Quarters (GHQ) as the occupational army undertook to punish and clear out many ex-top administrators such as politicians, bureaucrats as well as military and industrial conglomerates ('Zaibatsu') who had forced ordinary Japanese people into the terrible war in order to set up an Americanized democracy. In the field of social policy and social work, the GHQ ordered the government of Japan to introduce American style values and methods of professional social work and its education to make Japanese social work ('Shakai Jigyou') more 'modernized' (promoting the establishment of powerful responsibility of 'state welfare' and its expansion, that is to say, the reconstruction of state welfare schemes including personnel policy as public servants).

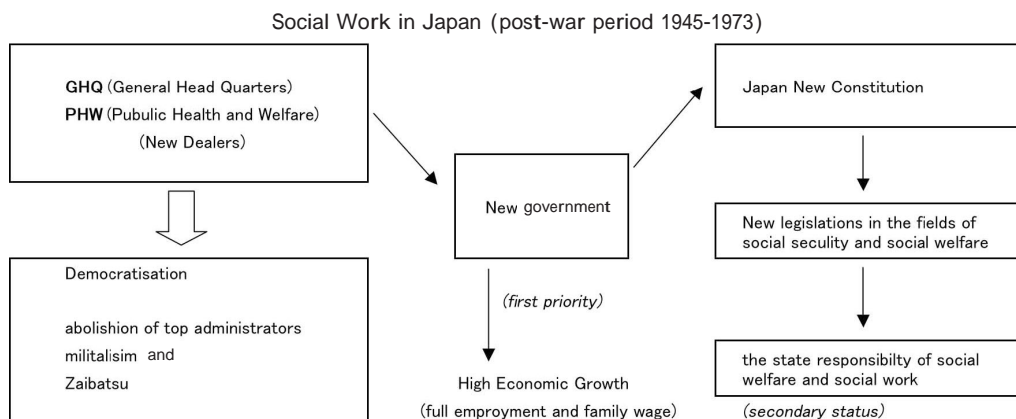
Japanese social work began to change dramatically. The reformers from Public Health

and Welfare (PHW) , which was one of the divisions of GHQ in charge of public welfare planning and training, were composed of many 'New Dealers' who were positively committed to do 'social reform' in the US in the 1930s as social workers. Their experience as social workers contributed to the sense of the establishment of an 'ideal' system in Japan (Tatara in Suganuma et al. 1997: chapter 2; Suganuma, 2005; Koike, 2007).

The main reason why PHW strived to introduce American 'modernized' social work was due mainly to their view that Japanese social schemes in the past were anti-democratic, an militaristic and hot beds of 'Imperial justice of Majesty' that preserved the low status of state welfare. The modernization of social work supervised by PHW led the framework of Japanese social work to the conclusion that the basic principle of the state that assumes responsibility for welfare should be connected with better-regulated social administrations and the recruitment of waged professional staff and was to be maintained under the supervision of the state. At the same time, new social welfare legislations (Public Assistance Act ('Seikatsu Hogo Hou') in 1946, Child Care Act ('Jido Fukushi Hou') in 1947, and the Handicapped Persons Act ('Shintai Shogaisha Fukushi Hou') in 1949) were enacted and supported by these kinds of principles.

However, the new 'democratic transformed' government of Japan gave the first priority to restore its economic forces in the transition of political and economical circumstances due mainly to the emergence of 'the cold war'. The construction of social security and social services were consequently seen as secondary for the reason that full-employment underpinned by high economic growth was regarded as a very important precondition of making the 'welfare state' from the ruling classes. In addition, many enterprises ('Kaisha') were likely to pay crucial attention to improving 'occupational welfare' (some fringe benefits including rent allowance, child supporting allowance, and commutation allowance etc distributed from the companies) to assure the 'family wage', which intended to integrate their employees without collective bargaining in the industrial relations. Because of strong influence of the principle of family mutual help and occupational welfare from 'Kaisha', state welfare was seen as relatively 'definitive'. In other words, there had been no positive political consciousness that the labor classes did not hope to need the welfare state as a result of the relative fulfillment of occupational welfare. This fact enabled the subjects of social welfare to limit 'non-laborer' classes such as the elderly, the handicapped and children who did not work. This led the governmental expenditure on social services to the minimum in comparison with that of the UK.

In spite of this, there has been a common consensus with regards to 'constructing the welfare state' like western European countries among Japanese political parties irrespective



of right and left ideology by the emergence of the Oil Shock in 1973 (Okada, 1987: chapter 6; Watanabe, 2008: additional chapter).

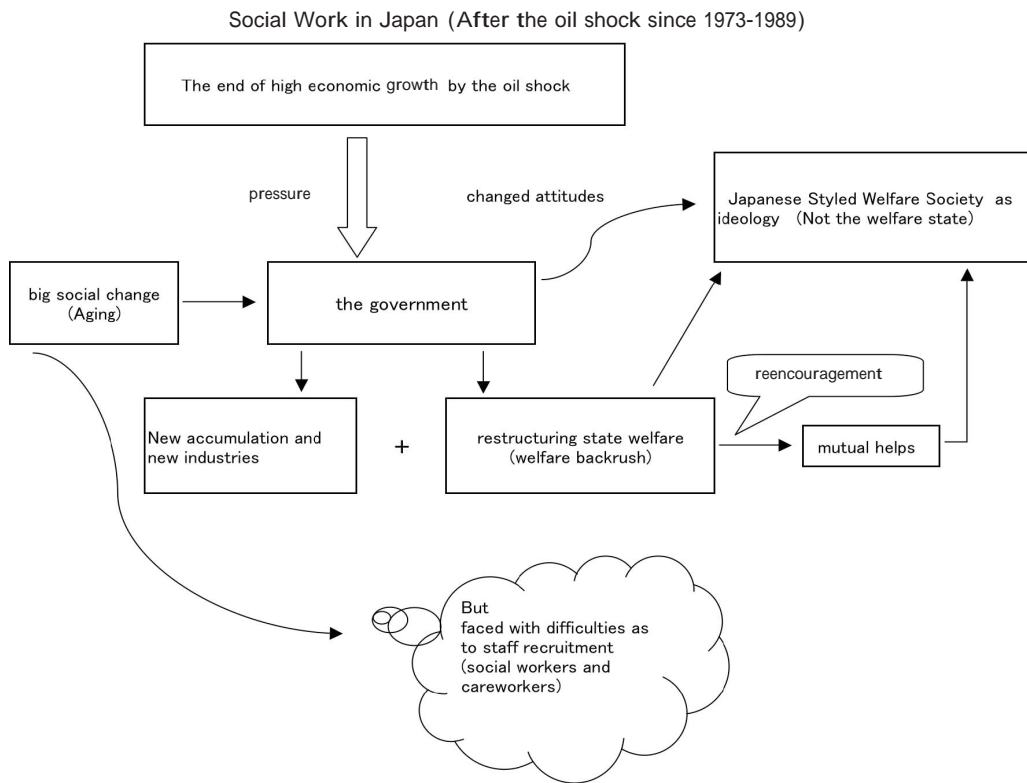
The social work, more specifically speaking, the welfare provision through occupational officers and other related staffs in state welfare at that time was located as a mere part of legislative processes measured. This process was that the administrative procedures introduced by both central and local authorities whose task was the assessment of the application as to who the client was. That is to say, coping with welfare clients was paraphrased as an expression of state responsibility of the needy, once the needy were approved by the state as a subject, they were likely to be cared for until they died (This process is called the 'Sochi Seido' in general). Many residential care programs were certified as sublime social welfare enterprises by the state and were administrated by state grants.

This kind of administration followed almost the same style in the pre-war period. The number of clients was limited to non-laborers and it was not increased in the invisible situation of 'aging' in general. However, the process of selecting clients between 'the deserving' and 'the undeserving' was so complicated and limited that public expenditure for state welfare was relatively small in the budget.

After the Oil-Shock in the mid of 1970s

The end of high economic growth in the mid 1970s impacted deeply on the western welfare state. The government of Japan and ZAIBATSU also faced difficulties in the sense that they were urgently had to change their attitudes to discover new methods of accumulation. Since then, the government of Japan had gradually pursued their original course for to the reconstruction of a Japanese styled Welfare Society ('NIHONGATA FUKUSHI SHAKAI'). The main content of its originality was based upon the 'capability' of family (especially

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women as housewives) to take care of the needy (their children and older parents) as an 'asset' to maintain social structure. The traditional ideology characterized as old-fashioned and thereby as the subject of abolishment by PHW was manifestly reinvented. In other words, the government clearly had one intention and that was to reduce public expenditures for state welfare as opposed to the former times.

At the same time, however, Japan also began to face an unexpectedly big social change in the form of a 'growing aging society' that western industrialized countries had never encountered in the past. Japan had to commit to address both the problem of new economic growth and of improving welfare expansion in the 1980s to meet the needs of service users. Practically, in the 1990s the social expenditure on social services to the elderly mainly (the residential care services) had a dramatic tendency to increase in comparison with that of the past, the government imposed a new consumption tax in exchange for the introduction of expanded social services. Even if so, the basic line of the welfare policy was so dependant on the principle of traditional family ideology and 'family wage' that social services were partially provided for the needy for things which the family was not able to provide. These trends in Japan teach us that the provision of social services insistently remained as the result of the

concept of 'mutual help' for each individual and the framework itself was kept to the present day regardless of the many demands of the expanding social services.

Nevertheless, under the severe situation of the weakening ability of government to secure social services because of low economic growth, fiscal crisis and the ratio of rapid aging in the whole population, the government was worried about the problem of 'man power' to recruit staff to maintain social service schemes, they seek immediately to recruit not only voluntary work forces but also a lot of 'certified' care workers and social workers that were better trained.

2 The rise and fall of professional social workers in Japan

The development of the social workers' movement

As pointed out in section 1, though the professional education of social work began from 1946 supervised by PHW, on the one hand, Japanese social workers committed historically to the cause of peace and democracy and to the establishment of their professional social work values and education both quantitatively and qualitatively in order to meet the needs of their clients regardless of the contradictory governmental policies, on the other. Since the establishment of both the Japanese Association of Schools of Social Work (JASSW) in 1955 and the Japan Social Workers Association (JSWA) in 1960, there have been vigorous arguments among them on how professional social work and its educational scheme to define and what social workers should do while they studied some role models from foreign countries, especially the US and the UK. One of them had already experienced sending delegates to the International conference on social work in 1928 (Ohashi et al., 2007: chapter 4 and chapter 9).

In spite of the longstanding efforts and because of the division of opinions among them, their ideal goal that the establishment of original 'professional qualifications' awarded by themselves was not successful. Their movement with regards to awarding professional qualification to social workers was discouraged and not realized by the economic recession and change of the government's attitudes towards them. This can be explained partly because the political power of social workers was so weak that they were not able to persuade the government in comparison with that of medical doctors and nurses. The government, especially the Ministry of Welfare, did not change its attitudes in the sense that the issue of certifying social workers remained apolitical one. This was because the Ministry of Welfare knew the fact that they suffered a lot of political damage from professional doctors and nurses. If professional qualifications of social workers become a reality, the Ministry has to face a big concern that 'certified' social workers would also put a lot of political pressure on the Ministry

and demand big rewards in line with their status like medical doctors and nurses.

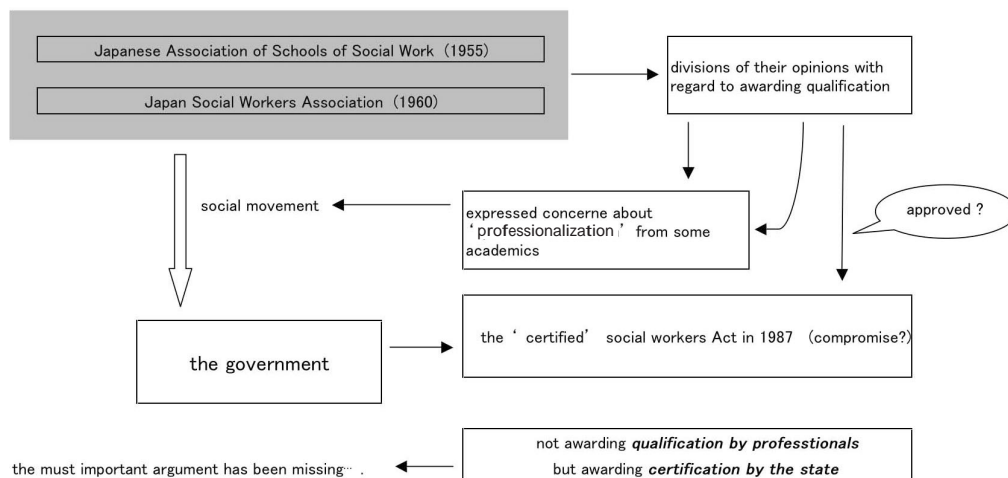
All associations of professional social workers had seriously thought about awarding professional qualifications to social worker by professional associations, and yet their ideal objective has continued to be substantially modified because of their divisions of opinion and their relative political powerlessness. Either the Ministry of Welfare or the political-left wing academics that had been committed to social work were very critical of awarding professional qualifications to some extent. In 1971, the central council of social welfare (one of deliberative bodies of the government) had issued a report entitled 'regarding the tentative proposal of 'certified' social workers', yet this report was welcomed on the one hand by some professional social workers and was considered very dangerous from point of view of some left-wing academics who had given influence to social work and its education on the other. The major criticism from the latter was as follows. Firstly, professional social workers are manifestly 'laborers' even if their mission has some special tasks. Secondly, awarding professional qualifications compelled their position to be divided into two classes despite performing the same work (Washitani, 1973; Sanada et al., 1975; Sanada et al., 1984). Some left-wing academics cautioned against this trend in terms of the labor movement. In other words, some on the left saw this kind of movement regarding the professional qualifications of social workers as only one social movement and they insisted that the attainment of professional qualifications should be enriched with in the wider social movements only.

The position of 'certified' social worker as the result of compromise

Some political attempts by trial and error proposed by all the associations of professional social workers led to the enactment of 'the 'certified' social worker and care worker Act' in 1987. In comparison with that of the 1970s, the enactment of professional certification greatly relied on the growing political awareness of the government that intended to allocate many better-trained professional staff to prepare for 'the aging society'. A new social work education scheme and professional certification in foreign countries, such as CETSU in the UK, were referenced to in comparison and introduced in the preparation of this new act.

This new act, however, was substantially authorized 'certification' to social workers by the state, not the associations of professional social workers. The 'certified' social worker in this act is defined as 'those who are expected to do practices including giving consultations, advice, support and other related help to welfare clients who can not maintain their normal life due mainly to the causes of physical, mental and environmental difficulties by using the official name of "certified' social worker' with your professional knowledge and skills' (the article of 2). However, *the most important argument with regards to certification always*

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had been missing: the essential deference between the fact 'what is the nature of social worker' and 'what 'certified' social workers should do as professionals'. This argument was deeply discussed but did not reach any satisfactory agreements. After all, the proposed comprehensive arguments with regards to how social workers should show their commitment and what of their actions and responsibilities are covered did not concretely achieve the conclusion. The state, therefore, summed up the results of the questionnaires from professional associations and acted through the intercession of disagreements (Ichibangase et al, 1998: part 3). It might be said that this new certification was born of political compromise. In terms of the definition of social work adopted by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in 2000, it might be evaluated that this 'certification' was set up not so much to assure autonomous social work activities (which based on the principle of human rights and social justice) but rather to offer the minimum standard of requirements to perform the task of a state welfare agency as an obedient technocrat.

3 The neoliberal workfare policy as a political rhetoric and its relationship with social work practice: the symbolic obligation of 'new' social work?

In case of thinking about acceptance of neo-liberal ideologies and practice in Japan, it is very important to remember David Harvey's comments that '[T]he role of the state in neoliberal theory is reasonably easy to define. The practice of neoliberalization has, however, evolved in such a way as to depart significantly from the template that theory provides' (Harvey, 2007: 64). 'How was neoliberalization accomplished, and by whom?' (ibid. : 39) and

its relevance of changing role of social work which can be described from 'generous' to 'more punitive' in Japan?

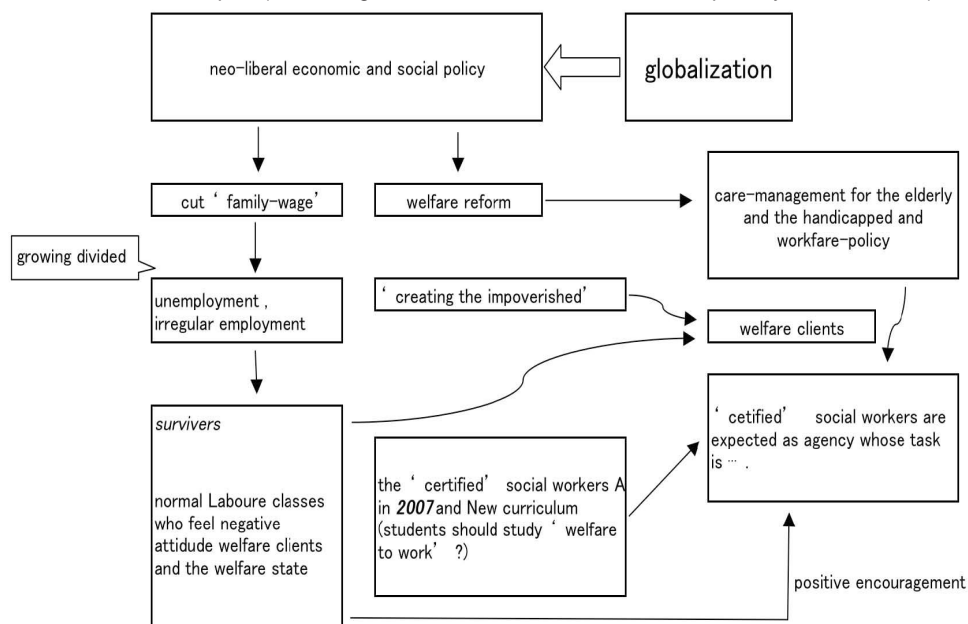
Neo-liberalism and restructuring the state welfare

It was under the KOIZUMI administration of the LDP from 2001 that the unquestioning acceptance of neo-liberal capitalist rationality for social services and social work in Japan found legitimacy. This administration emerged with public great supporters on the grounds that many voters expected him to tear down the complicated social structure filled with vested interests and political corruption and to reestablish clear moral politics. Nevertheless, this administration decided to take a series of drastic measures in important fields including education, medical care and welfare that people need seriously.

However, it is worth noting that the groundwork for the adoption of the new report about the future of the whole social security system was laid to accept the neo-liberal ideology and its policies before the emergence of the KOIZUMI administration. The new report issued by the central council of social security scheme in 1995 proposed somewhat obscure answers about the future of social security. This report insisted strongly that the evolution and development of the social security system was greatly dependent upon making efforts through the mutual help and cooperation of ordinary people with each other. In other words, if you need universal social services with a satisfactory standard level of social security, you are expected to pay more taxes to improve it. In short, this report insisted that the amount of state welfare depended greatly on our contributions both economically and politically. It is true to accept these remarks in general but the most important thing was that the relationship between this remark and 'the right to live' of article 25 in the Japan New Constitution was not clearly stipulated. The remarks of this report can be assessed as just an adaptation of past events directed by TAGO ICHIMIN (one of top administrators in the Home Affairs department), who imported and introduced the concept of 'social solidarity' from French ideology in the 1920s to raise 'mutual help' as a moral of the term to integrate people as an expedient measure in the construction of social welfare and social work in those days.

Why was the dominance of the neo-liberal policy by the LDP since 2001 successful irrespective of many objections? It can be pointed out in the context of Japan as follows. Firstly, the government of Japan has consistently encouraged many enterprises to pay a 'family wage' to breadwinners to maintain the social order in the circumstance of the non-maturity of the welfare state that was connected with redistributive function. A long economic recession compelled many companies to reject the policy of paying all employees' expenses and

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rapidly turned their direction to adapting to globalization. The government has undertaken their role as an agent of 'the enabler' to support companies' free economic activities. This means that the government tries to set out to reduce occupational welfare that is synonymous as an income distributive function and finance structure to prepare for the big wave of rising globalization. This was concretely based on the arrangement of extracting surplus labor forces from the unprofitable sectors in order to promote the changing method of capital accumulation. Secondly, a series of adjustments and adaptations increasingly forced many laborers, who lost the advantageous benefits of occupational welfare to perform, to do 'self-help' in their life. The basic structure of state welfare was so vulnerable and fragile that occupational welfare from commercial companies had substituted for it and this brought about a state of 'hunting down' laborers who had lost a source of 'another income'. These tendencies initiated the relative decline of laborers identified as the middle class in the last four decades. Under the risky circumstances of shrinking of a social class, they faced huge burdens such as caring for their old parents and children as their own obligation. Thirdly, despite the fact that the financial corroboration that sustains staff recruitment in social care is largely depend on public expenditures (tax), this trend reveals one central point that the government tried to deal with the growing number of welfare clients including the elderly, person with disabilities and the unemployed without having the expense ready. Many political attempts aimed at restructuring the state welfare both rationality and effectively are

proceeding through the outsourcing of government resources to the third sector in the name of privatization.

Nevertheless, the basic line of state welfare reform has principally not changed and there has not been a political objective attack from ordinary people. The new administration of the Democratic Party of Japan (2009-) has tried to reassess the series of state welfare policies since the Koizumi administration (the establishment of child allowance, the free-high school system and the abolition of the Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities Act) but they must face the finance problems that aimed at sustaining the state welfare schemes.

The introduction of workfare policy to the non-laborers as rhetoric:

the political implication of 'neo-liberal' workfare policy and social work

Unemployment and irregular employment has spread in Japan since the KOIZUMI administration especially (which had intended to do 'Structural Reform' to accept and adjust to globalization) and the employment situation has rapidly deteriorated under the influence of the world economy crisis. The growing population of the unemployed and underemployed has created many vulnerable people who face 'social exclusion'. In order to tackle social exclusion, the government has introduced a series of social inclusion policies and new acts related to the disabled and were enacted in 2005. This new act clearly requested them to encourage the contribution through work performance to include the all members of society in general. A new task of social work has been a reflection of this kind of workfare policy.

As pointed out above, we described briefly the government attitudes towards a series of structural adjustment policies to introduce companies to cut off occupational welfare schemes instead of subsidizing direct support by the state. Similarly, state welfare also has effectively been restructured from the viewpoint of managerialism. These policy developments have revealed one very curious fact: the encouraging of people, especially the elderly and the disabled to engage in work in spite of the fact that they have been regarded as 'non-laborers' and 'poor welfare clients' in the past. It might be true that mass unemployment has allowed the unemployed (aged 15-60) to accept job seeker allowances instead of seeking jobs but it is very strange why the elderly and the disabled have been categorized as 'workmen' as well and thereby become the subjects of the workfare policy?

Generally speaking, it is said that laborers in Japan are very industrious and they hope that they are willing to continue to work even after retirement. It might certainly be assessed as a good trend but the problem here suggests that people are expected to accept the importance of maintaining the standard of living through what people earn from their labour instead of relying on state welfare. The great eagerness to continue to work by the

elderly reflects laborer's guaranteed small amount of public pension after retirement and the great trend of imposing work on the disabled implies that there has been a growing negative awareness of laborers who have gradually lost their relative advantageous social status under the influence of restructuring for the disabled. This is partly because the disabled have not been the subject of fair work policies but the subject of social protection while ordinary laborers were guaranteed a 'family wage' to continue to work successfully until they retired. However, the social status of persons with disabilities as the subject of social protection is not the same as before when the standard of living of ordinary laborers rapidly declined thorough the reduction of occupational welfare and of small state welfare. The 'structural adjustment policies' forced the middle classes, including laborers, to become aware of the crisis. That is to say, many laborers have come to accept that they 'might be next' and this is a big psychological pressure (the fear of their stratification falling) because of an absence of a standard of living condition which was 'taken-for-granted' (the stability of income and work, the stability of marriage, the common imagination that the more making efforts, the more increasing well-being in the whole life) in the past. This 'taken-for-granted' guaranteed life cycle in the future has now disappeared. The reason why it is necessary for the disabled to continue to work mirrors the times that laborer's hostility to them was due to the relative decline of their status on the one hand and thereby its jealousy of the disabled, who always have been the subject of social protection from state welfare, comes to the surface. In other words, there has been great flowering of 'demonization' and 'stigmatization' to the disabled and other welfare clients from the ordinary people (Ito, 2009).

It is for this reason that it is very difficult to build a consensus which cuts across class boundaries (or class interests) to construct *the welfare state* in Japan. The restructuring of state welfare to allocate social goods has been greatly shifted from the lower classes to the middle classes and has directly been linked to the interests of the middle classes who paid much tax to maintain social services as well as feeling a decline of their social status. Therefore the basic structure of enriching state welfare should be directly connected to the taxpayer.

The comfortable situation of the lower classes and the disabled who had been the direct subject of social (minimum) protection from the state welfare is going to shrink as the hostility towards the disabled and other welfare clients posed by the middle class is getting worse. The disabled have historically been alienated from society in general but at the same time they were expected to live by the quasi-performance of doing 'job' or 'work' as the will to work which all members should do so as an obligation. The situation, however, became totally different from the past since the middle class has no room to care for 'the others'

including welfare clients. To persuade the middle classes who reluctantly pay tax as a burden to maintain social services, the new policy developments gave a new dramatic stage direction to change the position of the disabled and other related welfare clients from the subject of social protection to the subject of 'independence'. It can be said that this was the vital bulwark of introducing welfare policy.

4 What is the result of neo-liberal social work reform?

Losing professional social work autonomy and changing meaning of professionalism

As explained earlier, the administration had decided to impose more de-regulation policies that were clearly marked as the marketization of social services, contracting out of public resources and a greater emphasis on the role of the private sector as care-provider (the emergence of private residential special nursing homes for the elderly has greatly enlarged since 2000), the introduction of a job seekers allowance, and of a long-term social care-insurance system based on the care-management approach.

Before the emergence of structural adjustment for neoliberalisation and its close relationship with care-management approaches to social care, social worker was not merely mouthpiece of government policy but someone who used scientific knowledge and social work training to analyze, understand and confront the problems facing clients utilizing a range of method and approaches to improve clients' lives and liberty. It is this notion of clear values and independence that is at the heart of conceptions of social work professionalism. In other words, social workers had their important autonomy and discretion to realize clients' lives and liberty.

Under this kind of neo-liberal trend, not only social policies but also social work have rapidly been changed and dominated but by the rather concept of 'rationality' and 'contract', rather than the notion of social justice, led by (care) 'managers whose primary task is often to manage budgets rather than to meet the needs of clients, often staffed by demoralized practitioners who feel increasingly alienated from their organization' according to Ferguson (cited in Ferguson, 2004:1). In Japan this also has led eventually to 'the growth of what John Harris has described as "the social work business"' (cited in Ferguson, *ibid.*). Manifestly it can be said that social work lost its direction because of its business ethos, of the mass burden of caseloads with complicated bureaucratic regulations. As the strict financial budget of the long-term social care insurance has increased, this regulation would be more manifest in that various autonomy and discretion of social workers has been lost.

Furthermore, many professional social workers had expected their treatment to

correspond to their mission by the establishment of professional 'certification' in 1987 but their real annual income has not been so good and one recent survey of them in 2007 reveals that over 55% of them are paid less than 4,000,000 yen a year. This outcome implies that their income is clearly an insufficient reward regardless of their serious day-to-day frontline practice (Chunichi News Papers, 2007) .

The emergence of educational confusions in social work

It is manifestly true that the expectation to social workers from the public has gradually been higher. Behind these policy developments, new regulatory 'certified' social work education has been implemented since 2007. One of the vivid educational curriculums is based on the introduction of 'job helping performance' by 'certified' social workers. Though educational change in social work is very complicated this new task was not included before. The certified social worker is expected now as the new agency for promoting workfare policy. Social work students should study this workfare policy and care management with relevant skills and methods before embarking on their practice in the higher education definitely in accordance with social work policy arrangements.

The background of this educational change is that the government has started to do 'outsourcing' of the role of social service provision to the certified social workers, which are not directly employed in the public sectors (many 'certified' social workers are employed in the quasi-public sectors and because of it, there are few number awarding the certification of social work in the public sector). Generally speaking, this trend ('outsourcing') is evaluated as good things not only because of its effectiveness and efficiencies in rational allocation of social resources but because 'certified' social workers' professional skills are more dependable than public servant in the state welfare section. However, this kind of evaluation distorts the truth and it can be characterized as synonymous with reducing state welfare budget. In case of outsourcing of state welfare, for example, if welfare clients get a job after workfare social work, certified social workers will earn more credits from the state as rewards. The association of 'certified' social workers, therefore, has positively welcomed this policy. We can evaluate this trend, suggesting that the government has an intention to reduce the state welfare budget by outsourcing on the one hand and that 'certified' social workers have a clear political aim that makes promoting their social status higher than before on the other. It can be evaluated that they share the same direction but different objectives. These trends, however, would mean that professional social workers would be subordinated to the authority of the state policies and regulations.

Moreover, we should carefully pay attention to the fact that recently many universities

and colleges whose primary task is to educate students to become social workers also encounter another serious educational problem. Recent trends of social work with business ethos have gradually begun to erode and destroy the traditional style of 'knowledge-based' and 'value-based' social work education. For example, it is the common sense for us to study the history of social welfare as a precondition to become social worker but social work students in Japan are able to obtain entitlement to become a certified social worker without studying the history of social welfare. My university is no exceptional case. Before the establishment of the certified social work Act in 1987, my university had offered students the history of social welfare for western countries and Japan respectively. Each subject was offered to them with 4 credits and they were obligatory subjects to graduate. Put differently, students who wished to become social worker were not able to graduate from university without studying the history of social welfare. Unfortunately, historical study of social welfare therefore has been on the defensive because of unquestioning acceptance of neo-liberal policy developments. Now many students can graduate from university without credit for studying the history of social welfare. The episode is a very cynical example in that educational curriculum is reflection of mirroring of attitudes and expectation of the government.

Owing to this kind of ill phenomena, many social work teachers including me are facing a lot of educational dilemma to overcome after introducing the so-called care-management approaches and 'contract culture' in social work. My colleagues also have a big concern and dilemma when we teach social work theory and practice to students. I have received many questions from students that they are not able to understand differences between the process of social work and that of care-management. When you look at various social work textbooks accounting for 'social work process' and 'care management process', it is very difficult to distinguish between them. This is because there is almost the same explanation of these processes.

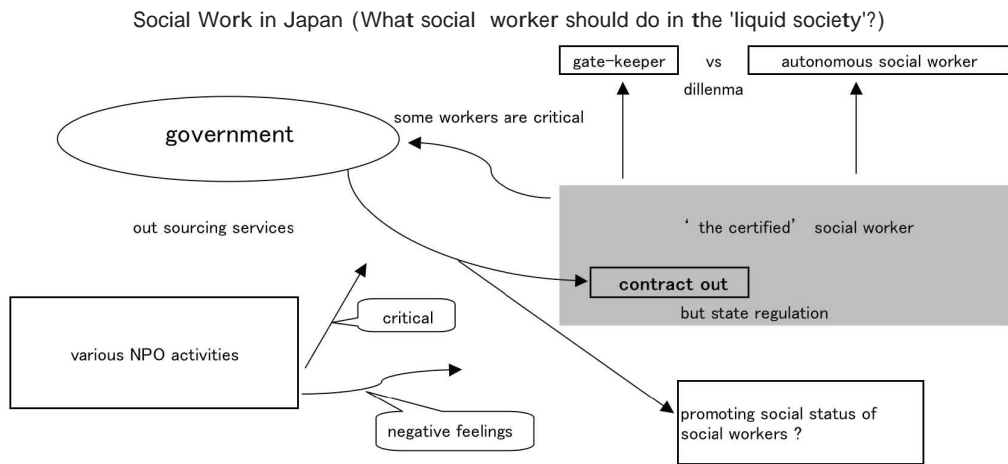
This students' confusion implies as follows. Firstly, though it is true that they study social work process formally but they try substantially to understand how social work process is established and realized without backgrounds of knowledge and values of social work. Put differently, it is seemed that many students are realizing that they regard social work processes by how existent social services applying for clients *mechanically*. We are afraid that many students seem to believe in making a set of 'care package' means 'a good performance of social work'. They seem to believe that the fulfillment of social work is (mere) *an allocation of social services*. This is because a series of care-management encouraged by the governments has shown social workers (and/or care-managers) the rigid method as performance as to how they apply to the package of social services *within the service resources and*

the budget. However, students are expected to re-think and re-evaluate their assistance action before applying social services to their clients but they are likely to ignore the most important questions that why clients' needs are not approved, what are social barriers which greatly influence clients and why this social service is not useful and unhelpful for clients now? Secondly, this point is just the observe side of first point, social work educators also has confusions in teaching social work and care-management. Theoretically at least they differ very sharply. Care-management can be one of approaches in social work practice in broader sense but the former has gradually become to be strong main element of social care. These tendencies would more undermine the principle of traditional social work ethos and principles: human rights and social justice (Ito, 2008).

Summary and concluding remarks

To sum up: firstly, Japanese social work has traditionally been formed and composed of social enterprises with state subsidies and administrated from 'above'. Secondly, GHQ changed the basic administrative structure of Japanese social work after WWII drastically but its characteristic feature has gradually been restored. Thirdly, professional social workers and their social work education has struggled with the day-to-day practice to meet the needs of their clients but their ideal objective had always been modified and been under the scrutiny of government policy. Fourthly, 'certified' social workers are persistently positioned as the minimum requirement for performing the procedure of state welfare as technocrats, not autonomous agencies that was underpinned by the principle of human rights and social justice. There have been growing political divisions of opinion among social workers. Fifthly, many social workers had faced the dilemma between 'mere service provider (and gatekeeper)' and 'genuine' social worker by the influence of managerialism and workfare policy. Notwithstanding, sixthly, some 'certified' social workers have the opinion that their political position greatly relies upon the fact of whether or not they accept the state workfare policy with successful rewards when they perform loyally in line with the government's guidelines. Seventhly, recent trends of 'neoliberal' policy arrangements in unquestioning of business ethos in social work have created much educational confusion over the acceptance of care-management approaches. This trend has ironically contributed to the number of educators and students who are not able to distinguish between the concept of social work and care-management.

In spite of the increasing number of people who wish to become social workers, there have been divisions of opinions among professional associations with regards to how they perform with their clients as mere providers of service (as mere 'gatekeepers') or as 'an



ethical career'. Their attitude can be divided into two types. One is that social workers should do welfare practice as an agent in meaning of provider. The other is skeptical of these trends. While professional associations have divisions of opinions and ideas about their role, other voluntary actions, especially various types of NPO that have engaged in activities for the unemployed and homeless have criticized for 'certified' social workers' almost non-reaction against this 'big issue'. It seems that professional social workers that belong to the associations abstain from their own actions because of government demands of them. Of course, each social worker individually may commit to the big issue but it is not easy to evaluate what a professional 'certified' social worker is and how free they are from any regulations and guidelines of the government. How do professional social workers understand these complicated situations and dilemmas surrounding them and how will they show us a new blueprint for the future of social work? This confused trends named as 'the rise and fall of professional social work' would continue till the establishment of their strong commitment to the notion of social justice and human rights as an ethical career.

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