

# Volunteer Sector facing the Super Aged Society in Japan

Ozawa Wataru\*

## Abstract

The ageing problem is one of the most important social issues in all of East Asian countries, which are sooner or later to face the issues of aging/aged society. It will be difficult for these countries to develop an adequate social welfare system due to financial or economic constraints. We should therefore consider alternative ways of overcoming the ageing society issues. In this report, we will examine the role of a voluntary sector in Japan, aided by our survey data analysis. We expect that our study of Japan's case could serve as a useful reference for other countries in East Asia.

**Keywords:** super aged society, Integrated Community Care Centre System, Minsei-Jidou-in, community volunteer system

## 1. Introduction

In Japan, the percentage of residents over the age of 65 has reached 24.1%—the highest percentage ever—, and is still rising, thus leading Japan towards a super aged society. This situation has never occurred throughout modern human history. The elderly people make up 30% of all Japanese households. Even more striking is the fact that elderly people living alone constitute 24.2% of all households, and this rate is on the rise as well (Japan Cabinet Office 2013:13-14).

The ageing rate is proceeding at a much faster pace in Japan than in other developed countries. It took Japan 24 years to increase its ageing rate from 7% to 14% (this rate is a criterion of 'Ageing Society' in UN papers). However it took Germany 40 and UK 64 years to achieve the same rate (Japan Cabinet Office 2013: 8-11). In case of other Asian

---

\*Ritsumeikan University

countries, it is estimated by UN that it will take Hong Kong 29, Taiwan 23 and South Korea 19 years (U N “World Population Prospects: the 2012 revision”). The ageing speed in East Asian and East South Asian countries is also very fast. They will soon face an aged society or a super aged society by the middle of this century at the latest. In this area the ageing problem will inevitably become a big social problem.

Professor Toshimitsu Shinkawa claims that East Asian or the South East Asian countries' Welfare Regime is different from the European or North American model' (Shikawa, T. 2005). It could be called 'Family Welfare Regime'. The function of a mutual assistance and caring within one family is very prominent for both the aged members and babies or children in these countries. In this area, there are two country groups with different approach towards the ageing problem. One group of countries is able to deal with the ageing problem once they have developed and built up the welfare system. The other group, however, is forced to deal with the ageing society problem within the constraints of their developing economic and social welfare systems. Japan, South Korea and Taiwan belong to the former group while China belongs to the latter (Karikomi, S. 2008).

In any case, Japan is a good example for considering the possible ways of overcoming the ageing problem. Just as UK, USA and South Korea, the neo-liberal welfare policy has an overall negative effect on the community care system of the aged people in Japan.

Japan has adopted the Long-Term Care Insurance Act. Simultaneously, the Integrated Community Care Centre System has been introduced so that the elderly can continue to live at home within their community <sup>1)</sup>. Before the enactment of the Long-Term Care Insurance Act, government agencies found residential placements and determined social welfare services for the elderly who needed care. However, since 1998, under the influence of neoliberal social welfare policy, the recipients of care themselves have been able to choose the services they need via a direct contact with the welfare service providers. This social welfare policy aims to strengthen the reciprocity within the community and quasi-market care services for the elderly <sup>2)</sup>.

In Kyoto City, in 2010 we conducted a survey among the aged people and in 2012 conducted a survey of the Minsei-Jidou-Iin (hereafter referred to as Minsei-Iin) who provide informal social welfare support within their communities. Based on the analyses of these data, we will examine the following questions..

- 1) Can we expect the democratic power and social creativity which relies on the traditional community system?
- 2) What are the obstacles for the mutual caring among community members within such a system of civil society?

- 3) How can university researchers empower the voluntary or volunteer sector to overcome the ageing problem in the community?

Firstly, we shall explain the community care system in Japan.

## 2. Community Care for the Aged People and Community Voluntary Support in Japan

Figure 1 shows us the diagram of the community care relationship system in Japan. Minsei-Iin is a group of Japanese social work volunteers or 'persons commissioned to promote and stabilize the lives of people' (Goodman 1998:143). Although Minsei-Iin system is a traditional one, their activities become very important to keep the welfare quality level in Japan. Focusing on this kind of community volunteer system, we will examine the potential power of civil society in Japan based on our survey data analysis.

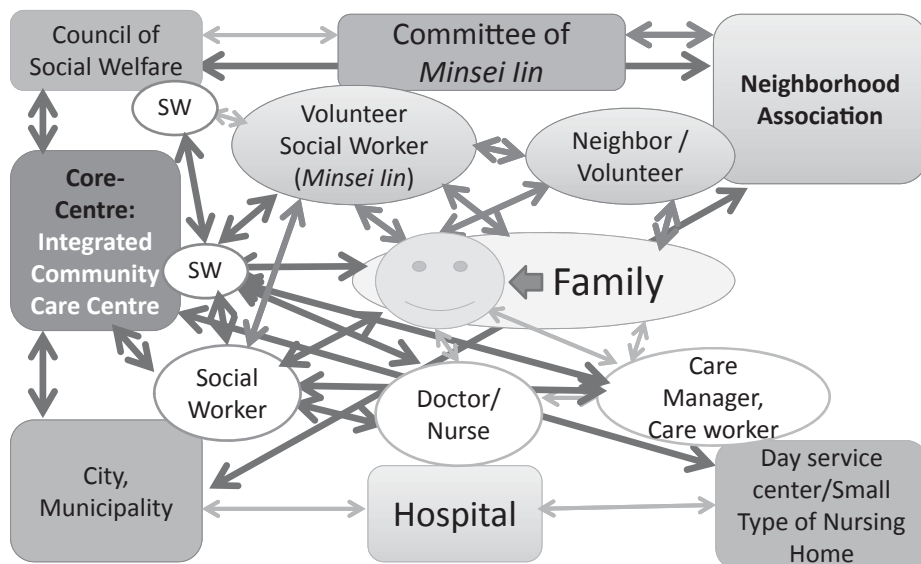


Figure 1 Community Care System for the Elderly in Japan

## 2.1 Results of the Analysis of Minsei-in Survey (Kyoto, 2012)

We conducted a survey of all the members of Minsei-lin in Kyoto City from August to September 2012, using a structured questionnaire to obtain detailed information on these volunteers' working conditions. We could get data from 2140 respondents, and the response rate was more than 90%. Before explaining results of the analysis, it would be fitting at this point to explain the history of the Minsei-lin system in Japan.

The history of Minsei-lin goes back to the period before the early days of 20th century. The predecessor to the Minsei-lin system is said to have been the Homen-lin system (1918), developed by Shigejiro Ogawa (1863–1925) and established in Osaka prefecture. He divided Osaka City into sixteen areas and commissioned approximately three hundred residents as Homen-lin. These people compiled information to identify and record the level of poverty to overcome the community problem systematically.

This system spread nationwide in a short time and was eventually legislated by the government in 1936. This legislation marked the beginning of the current Minsei-lin system. The initial activities of Minsei-lin were performed to grasp the level of poverty problems and monitor residents' activities. In addition, they gave counselling on household finance issues to families and individuals living in poverty. In some cases, Minsei-lin themselves offered financial support on a personal basis. Before the Second World War, members of reputable families within the community were commissioned as Minsei-lin. The post was legally designated as an honorary position that played a supplementary role in administering poverty relief.

After the Second World War, amidst the democratization of various systems, Minsei-lin activities were entrusted to volunteers who assisted in implementing the administration's social welfare policies supporting families, children, handicapped and the elderly in need. Local administration officers made recommendations for the post of Minsei-lin, and the nominee was commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for a three-year term (with a possible extension). Currently, Minsei-lin are unpaid posts, although before the amendment of the Minsei-lin Act in 2000, a small fee had been included. Their main role was to seek out people in need, provide them with volunteer aid and assist the local government's administration. The status of this position as an honorary post was maintained until 2000.

Since the end of the 1990s, social welfare policies for the elderly and the activities of Minsei-lin changed drastically. Japan's social welfare policies for the elderly continued to shift towards neo-liberalism. However, the limitations of relying too heavily on family members' support were becoming apparent. To promote the utilization of various social welfare resources, the Long-Term Care Insurance Act was enacted in 1998. This policy called for a transition from care services designed by welfare administrators to market-oriented services. Currently, the policy focus is on long-term care for the elderly living at home. The main policy initiative implements the Integrated Community Care Centre system for delivering preventive services for the ageing, and it gives great importance to the support and monitoring provided to the elderly by community volunteers. In 2000, the Minsei-lin Act was revised and the honorary post clause was abolished. Minsei-lin are now considered as volunteer social workers <sup>3)</sup> who support Japan's Integrated Community

Care Centre system by taking care of the community, supporting food delivery and operating other community services tailored to the needs of each community.

Minsei-Iin have been continuously working towards the needs of their communities long before the Second World War. Although they are not professional social workers, they are residents living within the community who possess an understanding of the characteristics of their locale and can thus offer effective community support in a volunteer capacity.

The activities of Minsei-Iin vary widely, because they cover community care in general. Their four main emphases are support for the elderly, helping poor residents gain eligibility for public assistance and support for children and people with disabilities. How is the workload of each Minsei-Iin determined? The multivariate analysis shows that the workload of Minsei-Iin is determined by the number of problematic cases they handle, the length of time working as a Minsei-Iin, the reciprocal relationships between the Minsei-Iin and other agencies or volunteers, and the age of Minsei-Iin. Please refer to Table 1.

There was no correlation between the workload and the proportion of the elderly members in the community, which might typically serve as an approximation of the level of social welfare needs in each community. In addition, the coefficient between the workload and percentage of welfare recipients, which can also reflect the level of social welfare need in each community, is small and negative, indicating that the workload of a Minsei-Iin is not correlated with the overall social welfare needs of the community. On the other hand, the workload depends on the volunteer spirit of a Minsei-Iin. Enthusiastic

Table 1 Multiple Regression Analysis of Workload of Minsei-Iin

	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>
Age	.232 **	.076 ***	.075 ***
Period of Work of Minsei-Iin	.306 **	.211 ***	.215 ***
Number of Seriously Problematic Cases	.419 **	.327 ***	.327 ***
Reciprocal relationship between Minsei-Iin and other agencies/volunteer	.335 **	.219 ***	.219 ***
Interest in watching over the elderly	.168 **	.089 ***	.089 ***
Rate of welfare recipients	-.086 **	-.065 ***	-.065 ***
Dummy(women)	.043 **		0
Number of years living in the community	.041 *		-.010
Adj. R Square		.309	.308

StdYX Estimates, \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001 N = 2140

Minsei-Iin tend to have greater responsibilities, and the workload also becomes heavier with increased work experience and is positively correlated with the extent of reciprocal relationships with other agencies and volunteers.

Minsei-Iin who handle many problematic cases tend to be very active in both personal support and group support activities. This finding indicates that either the encounters with problematic cases raise awareness in the Minsei-Iin and foster enthusiasm about fulfilling their responsibilities, or a Minsei-Iin encountering a problematic case during their involvement in community activities may trigger their involvement in further community work.

When asked about their most problematic cases, 44% of Minsei-Iin said that they had at least one such case and 9% had more than three problematic cases. It can be said that Japanese community care is well supported by Minsei-Iin who possess enthusiastic volunteer spirit. This confirms the significance of human resource development in terms of volunteer networking that supports community care. In line with the society's needs, the role of Minsei-Iin has clearly changed from an honorary post in earlier times to a core community volunteer post in the present.

Table 2 summarizes the outcomes of the networking questions in our survey. It indicates how the Minsei-Iin are working together with other concerned individuals and organizations. The Minsei-Iin in Kyoto City have created a network with their colleagues and district volunteers, Roujin-Fukushi-In, who are in charge of watching over the elderly. The networks formed among volunteers are supported by officials such as staff of the Integrated Community Care System, ward offices and the Council of Social Welfare.

Kyoto City introduced the system of Roujin-Fukushi-In more than forty years ago. These local resident volunteers frequently visit the homes of the elderly. The results of their personal services are reflected in Table 2. In Kyoto City, support for the elderly living in the community has been implemented through well-coordinated efforts among community volunteers, including the Minsei-Iin and others involved in elderly care.

We asked Minsei-Iin about their coordination activities with various groups. We found that they have high levels of trust in Integrated Community Care System support staff, fellow members of Minsei-Iin and community volunteers including Roujin-Fukushi-In. These individuals and organizations are nearby and easy to consult with. In some local communities, regular meetings are held among different organizations and Minsei-Iin. These volunteer workers consult each other on a regular basis, and when a problem occurs, ordinarily they tend to consult Integrated Community Care System staff.

The largest categories of the most problematic cases handled by Minsei-Iin are as follows: 1) dementia, 17.4%, 2) problems with neighbours, 15.6% and 3) clients who refuse

to accept visits from Minsei-Iin, 9.8%. Currently in Japan, the estimated rate of cognitive dementia among the elderly over age 65 is 15%. This high frequency of dementia cases underscores the importance of watching over the elderly within the community.

In their free-response answers, some participants described systematic and institutional problems that impede support for people in need. In recent years, most of the apartment entrance doors in Kyoto City have been fitted with automatic locks. A great number of isolated elderly persons reside in such apartments. The elderly are increasingly dropping out of the neighbourhood association. However, the Personal Information Protection Law prevents individuals from sharing with Minsei-Iin any personal information about the isolated elderly or others in need. This situation is making Minsei-Iin's activity

Table 2 Networks of Minsei-Iin in Kyoto City (%)

	<i>Minsei-Iin</i> consulting other specialists	Other specialists consulting <i>Minsei-Iin</i>	<i>Minsei-Iin</i> and other subjects consulting each other
<i>Minsei-Iin</i>	83.1	43.0	38.6
<i>Roujin-Fukushi-In</i>	59.5	45.6	33.5
Neighbourhood association staff	34.5	33.8	16.8
Landlord/apartment manager	10.9	10.8	3.5
Ward office–social welfare section	61.3	21.9	18.0
Ward office–health care centre	15.3	4.4	2.7
Ward office–others	11.5	3.4	1.6
Police/fire station	16.2	6.5	3.5
Consumer affairs centre	5.7	1.2	0.4
Integrated Community Support Centre	66.3	27.9	24.2
Home Care Support Centre	10.7	4.5	2.5
Medical staff	10.1	4.1	0.4
Council of Social Welfare	33.1	19.4	13.2
Home care providers	11.9	7.3	3.6
Other social welfare organizations	4.9	3.4	2.2
Neighbours	25.7	44.0	15.2
Volunteers	10.1	12.4	4.8
Non-Japanese social worker ( <i>Gaikokujin-Fukushi-Iin</i> )	0.6	0.3	0.0
Others	2.3	2.2	0.9



extremely difficult. Under such circumstances, Minsei-Iin themselves point out the importance of networking among those in community care.

GIS (Geographical Information System) map Figure 2 shows the level of reciprocal relationship between Minsei-Iin and Integrated Community Support Centres in various shades. The figure indicates a large variance in the level of reciprocal relationships across jurisdictions. The reasons for this variance may include factors related to Minsei-Iin as well as to the centers. On the one hand, the Minsei-Iin may perceive the centers as having a low level of social capital, i.e. being short of trust within the community thus forming ineffective partnerships with community residents and workers. On the other hand, the Integrated Community Support Centers may not see networking with community volunteers as their priority. We intend to conduct further analysis of these factors in the future.

Another important point can be seen in Tables 2, namely the absence of non-profit or non-governmental organizations (NPOs and NGOs) in supporting the community care. For example, the non-Japanese social worker system was built in Kyoto City by the volunteer organization known as 'More Network', the aim of which is to support the foreign aged residents. However, it plays a minimal role in the community care in Kyoto City. This point highlights a difference in community care delivery between Japan and other developed countries, especially the UK.

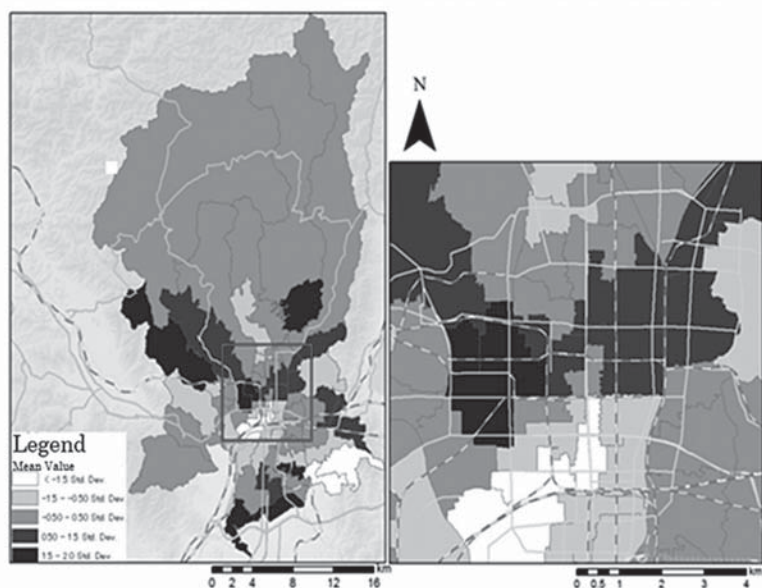


Figure 2. Mutual networks between Integrated Community Support Centres and Minsei-Iin (within Integrated Community Support Centres' jurisdiction)



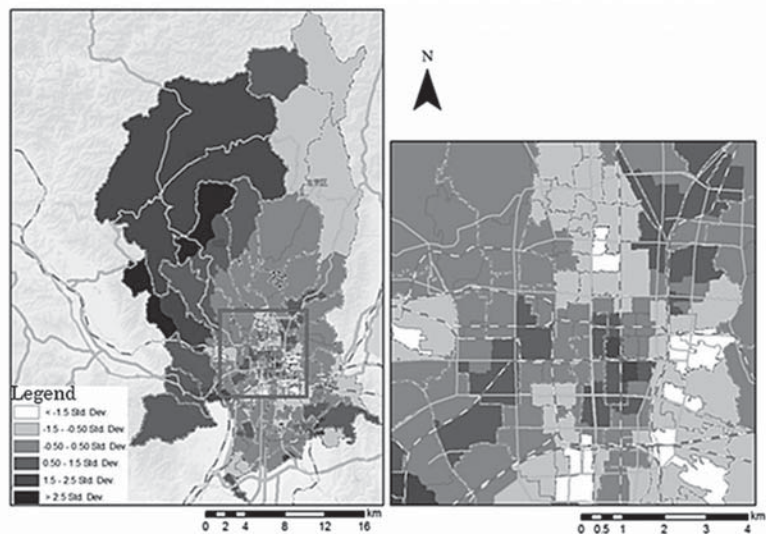


Figure 3. Minsei-Iin with fewer than six years of work experience (within Kyoto's local school district)

The Minsei-Iin system is now in crisis, because it has difficulty maintaining its current level of service in some communities. Figure 3 indicates the percentage of Minsei-Iin with fewer than six years of experience in each local area. Some areas (shown in white) are experiencing difficulties in recruiting new Minsei-Iin. Currently, the gender balance of Minsei-Iin residing in Kyoto city is overwhelmingly female ; 71% female compared with 29% male. As for the age, 44% of Minsei-Iin are over 66 years old, indicating that the average age of Minsei-Iin has been consistently on the rise. This presents a serious problem with regard to finding replacement for older members.

Various problems persist, such as lack of interaction between veteran and younger Minsei-Iin, the recruitment of younger volunteers in the community and the overall ageing of the population. The baby boomers have reached retirement age, and therefore it is important to consider how to involve them, especially retired people, in community activities.

The survey results show that Minsei-Iin are highly enthusiastic about and dedicated to their work, but that they are facing challenges due to the increasing need to assist elderly people with psychological problems, especially dementia. Minsei-Iin identified barriers to finding out about people in need because of the provisions of the Personal Information Protection Law as their most common systematic or institutional problem. They generally report having a strong support network, but many of them believe that they could benefit from additional training.

## 2.2 Results of the Analysis of the Aged People Survey (Kyoto, 2010)

About 41,000 foreign residents live in Kyoto City and more than half of them are Korean long term residents. The percentage of the foreign resident population of Kyoto City aged 65 or older is 15 %. Kyoto City is the most suitable location in Japan to focus on the problem of the aged foreign residents as well as the aged Japanese. In 2010 we conducted a survey with the aged residents living in the south area of Kyoto.

Having received cooperation from NHAs (Neighborhood Association) in Sannou school district and Touka school district in Higashi-Kujou and NHA of Ogurisu Public apartments in Daigo, we targeted the individuals over 70 years old in the former two areas and over 65 years old in the latter area by random sampling from the member list of each NHA. Our research targets consisted of Japanese elderly residents, Korean residents and elderly returnees from China. The total number of collected data was 588. 427 of them are Japanese, 141 are Korean or Koreans who have been naturalized in Japan, and 20 are returnees from China <sup>4)</sup>

In our questionnaire we asked about the level of subjective feeling of happiness using a scale of well-being which is divided into seven degrees from level 1 (Extremely Unhappy) to level 7 (Extremely Happy).

We categorized the answers into level 1 to level 3 as 'Unhappy', level 4 as 'Middle or Average', and level 5 to level 7 as 'Happy'. Most of the answers fall into Middle or Happy categories. However 20% of the Korean elderly answered that they were 'Unhappy', and around 5% of the Korean elderly and the aged returnees from China answered that they were 'Extremely Unhappy', whereas none of the Japanese answered in this way. Only 10% of the aged returnees from China answered that they were 'Happy'. As we explained before, because of their difficulty in communicating in Japanese, it is hard for the aged returnees from China to obtain community information. They have few opportunities to make intimate relationships with their Japanese neighbors. Their isolated daily lives might affect their judgment of unhappiness. The Korean elderly who have communication problems because of aging are suffering from the same predicament.

We analyzed the determinant factors of the elderly residents' sense of happiness by multivariate analysis using the cases in Touka and Ogurisu school districts. From the models in Table 3, we can understand which factors affect the level of sense of happiness with the elderly people. We can easily infer that the economic condition of the elderly people, possession of house, healthy lives, having a home doctor, grandchild and a hobby are essential factors which determine the elderly people's subjective well-being. However, it is also surprising that depending whether an elderly person knows the Rojin-Fukushi-In in charge of him or her, it strongly affects their level of happiness.

The system of Rojin-Fukushi-In had been introduced about 40 years ago in Kyoto

City. Rojin-Fukushi-In visits isolated elderly people periodically. This voluntary support system has taken root in Kyoto City (this system is unique to Kyoto City, ).

Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis of Subjective Well-Being

	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Nationality: Korean	-.139 **	-.221 **	-.085	
Region: Touka	.027	.123	-.015	
Region: Sanno	.017	.144 *	.062	
Economic living conditions	.293 **		.252 **	.189 **
Knowing the person who is her or his Rojin-Fukushi-In	.244 **		.204 **	.146 **
Owning her or his house	.242 **			.125 *
Being healthy	.180 **			.128 *
Having a home doctor	.104 *			.120 *
Meeting with her or his grandchildren	.153 **			.128 *
Having her or his hobby	.148 **			.110 *
Adj. R Square		.027	.122	.175

StdYX Estimates, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ ,  $N = 319$

The elderly people may have peace of mind by having some connection with Rojin-Fukushi-In. Another understanding is that elderly people can be happy because they are highly sociable or are part of a wider human network.

Table 4 shows us the difference of determinants of subjective well-being between Japanese elderly residents and Korean elderly residents.

In the case of elderly Japanese, recognition of the person who works as Rojin-Fukushi-In, condition of health, own house and having a home doctor affects their subjective level of happiness. By On the other hand, in the case of elderly Korean, the main two factors, namely recognition of the person who works as Rojin-Fukushi-In, and meeting with his or her grandchildren, affect their level of happiness. This is because a large proportion of elderly Koreans tend to live alone It is worth noting that for both Japanese and Koreans, their recognition of the person who works as Rojin-Fukushi-In is an important determinant for their level of subjective well-being.

Table 4 Multi-Group Analysis of Subjective Well-Being

	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>Korean</b>
Economic living conditions	.122	.186
Knowing the person who is her or his Rojin-Fukushi-In	.224 **	.221 *
Owning her or his house	.262 **	.126
Being healthy	.198 *	.013
Having a home doctor	.222 **	.011
Meeting with her or his grandchildren	.005	.204 *
Having her or his hobby	.072	.100
N	124	98
R Square	.308	.164

StdYX Estimates, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ 

Incidentally, elderly Koreans seem to be disinterested in becoming a part of the NHA management staff. We sometimes hear about this situation from Japanese residents in a particular area. This recognition encourages the discrimination toward Korean people in the local community. We have examined this problem by multiple regression analysis.

Table 5 shows us the determinants of willingness to be a management staff of NHA. From this data, we can deduce that residents' willingness differs from one NHA to another. In Ogurisu case, the management staff of NHA is shared by rotation. A returnee from China is given a chance to participate in the management of NHA. In contrast to such a democratic way, in both Touka and Sanno, a term of the management staff is very long and greater responsibility is allocated to fewer people. Consequently, willingness to be a management staff of NHA is lower than in Ogurisu case. The determinants of willingness to be a management staff of NHA are: condition of health, ability to read and write (literacy), house ownership, and age.

Table 6 shows us the result of multi-group analysis of willingness to be a management staff of NHA. Comparing this data with the data in Table 6, there is no difference in the case of elderly Japanese, however we can observe that the ability to read and write is an important determinant for elderly Koreans. This is because many of the first generation of Korean residents could not receive basic education.

Volunteer Sector facing the Super Aged Society in Japan

Table 5 Multiple Regression of Willingness to be a Management Staff of NHA

	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Nationality: Korean	-.194 **	-.151 **	-.049	-.062
Region: Touka	-.139 **	-.196 **	-.195 **	-.222 **
Region: Sanno	.001	-.138 *	-.121 *	-.158 *
Being healthy	.254 **		.194 **	.165 **
Able to read papers	.264 **		.186 **	.156 **
Owning his or her house	.074 *			.163 **
Age	-.221 **			-.137 **
Adj. R Square		.051	.126	.157

StdYX Estimates, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ ,  $N = 515$

Table 6 Multi-group Analysis of Willingness to be a Management Staff of NHA

	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>Korean</b>
Region: Sanno	.041	.140
Being healthy	.186 **	-.005
Able to read papers	.129 *	.213 *
Owning his or her house	.222 **	.055
Age	-.222 **	.045
Gender: women	-.089	-.179 *
N	297	121
R Square	.192	.115

StdYX Estimates, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 7 Logistic Regression of Having an Experience as a Management Staff of NHA

	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>Model</b>
Nationality: Korean	-.178 **	-.134 *
Region: Touka	.085	-.280 **
Region: Sanno	-.340 **	-.619 **
Being healthy	.138 **	.026
Able to read papers	.172 **	.166 *
Owning his or her house	-.032	.196 **
Age	-.170 **	-.046
R Square (McFadden)		.179

StdYX Estimates, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ ,  $N = 526$

In addition to this analysis, we have checked the experience level as a management staff of NHA. Table 7 shows the result of a logistic regression of having an experience as a management staff of NHA. From this data, we can conclude that ethnicity is an important determinant for the level of experience to becoming a management staff of NHA. Korean residents lack experience in such positions.

Table 8 shows us the result of multi-group analysis of having an experience as a management staff of NHA. Comparing the data between Japanese and Koreans, we can conclude that the literacy ability is a decisive factor for experience of managerial position for Korean aged people.

From these analyses, we can conclude that Korean residents could not gain experience in the managerial position even though they were willing to assume responsibility that comes with it.

Table 8 Multigroup Analysis of Having an Experience as a Management Staff of NHA

	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>Korean</b>
Region: Touka	-.368 **	-.174
Being healthy	-.007	.139
Able to read papers	.284 *	.242
Owning his or her house	.241 **	.012
Age *	-.156 *	.193
Gender: women	-.010	.118
N	309	119
R Square (McFadden)	.182	.047

StdYX Estimates, \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , N = 526

To get a clearer picture of the respondents' recognition of the welfare staff we asked them the following question : "Do you know who Minsei-In, Rojin-Fukushi-In and Care-Manager are in your local community?". It turned out that the level of awareness of Minsei-In is lower in the case of the Korean elderly and the aged returnees from China, compared to the Japanese elderly. 31.5% of Japanese knew who Rojin-Fukushi-In were, whereas only 10 % of the Korean elderly and the aged returnees from China did . Figure 4 shows us the coverage of welfare support by volunteers and welfare organization staff in Touka School District. Based on this figure, we can observe that the Korean elderly are inclined to depend on the professional welfare workers and not on the community volunteer.

Under the serious condition of the budget deficit and an aging society, it is very

difficult for every country to solve the elderly welfare problems. In particular the welfare of the foreign elderly is usually neglected by government. Focusing on this kind of “minority of minorities” problems, we can do well to conduct studies on our way to an Inclusive Society.

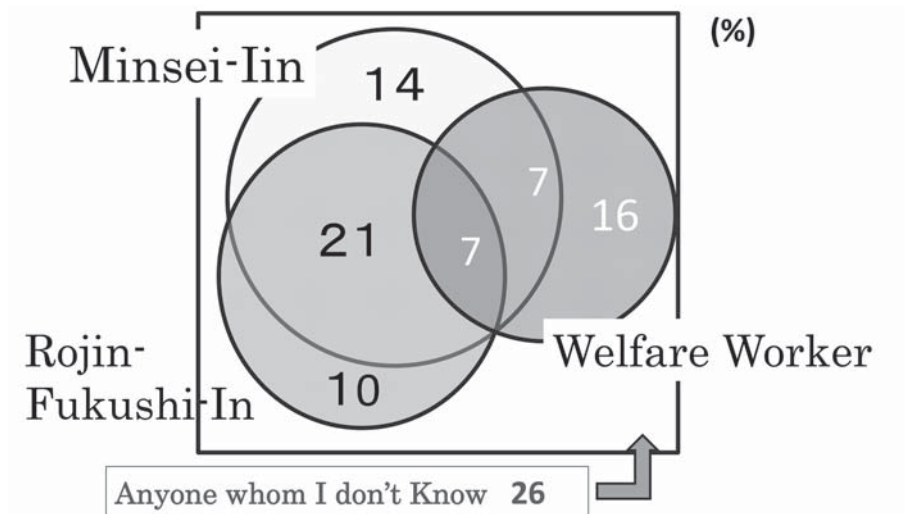


Figure 4 Ben's Map of Residents' Network with the Welfare Staff and Volunteers in a School District in Kyoto (Touka's Case)

In our survey, we have found that there are a lot of cracks in the local community. There is lack of communication between Japanese residents and Korean residents, between NPOs and NHAs, between official welfare staff and volunteer staff, and between the Korean communities.

It is important for us to repair these cracks by creating the network of voluntary association. To promote such a project, the university can work as a kind of “middleman” for new networking.

### 3. Conclusion: a New Research Scheme for Creating the Powerful Community toward overcoming the Ageing Problem.

We think that the potential for building healthy, creative and democratic civil systems within the aging/aged society is very high. J.J.Rousseau insisted that both “Pursuit of Self-interest” and “Pitié” (namely “Compassion” or “Sympathy”) should be the moral base of civil society. Social Science has been overly dependant on “Self-interest” as a social criterion. Reciprocal relationship among citizens should also depend on the sense of “Pitié”



for another person.

No one can avoid ageing. Human beings are born as powerless weak babies and die as powerless and weak. The nature of human existence works as the common base toward empowering the sense of “Pitié” for other person’s state of unhappiness. From this point of view, the ageing society will help us develop our civil society.

In this paper, we have examined the possibility of Voluntary Sector focusing on Japanese Traditional Community System. In recent years, various roles of the local volunteer network within the community care system have been re-evaluated in Japan. Based on the analysis of our survey, it has been verified that the active community volunteers underpin the community care in Japan.

The three basic standards for Minsei-Iin activities specified under the Minsei-Iin Act are Spirit of Social Volunteerism, Respect for Fundamental Human Rights and Prohibition of Abuse of their Status for Political Purposes. In addition, on its fiftieth anniversary in 1967, the National Minsei-Iin Association set forth three guiding principles for its activity: Residency, Continuity and Comprehensiveness, along with five operating principles: Survey, Consultation, Information Provision, Communication, Advocacy. Furthermore, on its seventieth anniversary in 1987, two additional principles of operation, Coordination and Support for Residents’ Livelihood, were added. The above-listed three basic standards, three guiding principles of activities and seven operations are considered the foundation of Minsei-Iin activities. Based on our survey, it was reconfirmed that the members of Minsei-Iin adhere faithfully to this mission and play a key role in the promotion of community social work as volunteers.

The relevant collaborators and networks surrounding Minsei-Iin have been identified. Among them in Kyoto Rojin-Fukushi-In system is found to be very useful. In order for these community volunteers to deal with the problems and barriers, their mutual network is very important. Community care systems must be set up, with Integrated Community Support Centers being the focal point so that other various community social welfare actors can network with each other and remain in close contact.

There is, however, sharp criticism coming from certain scholars. These scholars point out that the voluntary sector will substitute the welfare service of the governmental sector and support neo-liberal policies. Neo-liberalism often pursues a policy toward mobilizing people to do volunteer activity so as to support the government. The critics underestimate the potentiality of volunteerism by insisting that this mobilizing system does not empower the active citizen.

When we examine this objection, we must look into the ability of initiative and advocacy in the voluntary sector. Our research implicitly assessed the effectiveness of Minsei-Iin’s advocacy function. Advocacy, or representing the voice of the residents, is

among the seven operating principles of Minsei-Iin, and how to strengthen their function as advocates has been an issue of concern. Although the scope of this survey is limited to a few cities, it was certainly significant that a university research project involving all the members of Minsei-Iin in this area could be conducted with the cooperation of the Minsei-Iin Association and that it could achieve an impressive response rate of more than 90%. The enthusiasm of Minsei-Iin was evident in the returned questionnaires, as the outside margins of the forms were filled with comments. This response shows that they are sincerely trying to fulfil their role as advocates.

However, bearing in mind that this survey is the first one to include all members of Minsei-Iin, the weakness of the advocacy power in Japanese voluntary sector is evident. Moreover, based on our survey, we have identified the obstacles in Japanese society for developing the volunteer support network in the community. From the open-ended answer comments written in the questionnaire, we have been able to identify the barriers created by the implementation of the Personal Information Protection Law. These barriers present the largest single obstacle to the community volunteer work. This law has been enacted to protect individual rights, but is having a negative effect on the community care support. Therefore, the application of this law needs to be reviewed.

How can we overcome these problems and repair the cracks in the community in order to create the network of voluntary associations or groups? The process of our survey was designed as a kind of Action Research to be a good education program for survey participants as well as the community volunteers. As Kurt Lewin indicated, a trinity circulation – Action- Research -Training – is essential for us to develop the community (Lewin,K. 1946). We believe that analysis and classification of the survey data based on action research is an effective way of empowering the social welfare actors in the community. We intend to continue conducting action research in order to encourage social welfare actors (containing community volunteers) themselves to become aware of existing concerns that are illuminated by the results of such data analysis. The significance of this action research lies in the collaboration between university researchers and the community actors in order to shed new light on the development of community care.

We are now challenging and conducting the enhanced version research project using the Geographical Information System as a core tool for sharing the necessary information among community actors and for analyzing the community problems. Kyoto City government has been conducting the interview research of the aged residents over 65 years old living alone for the past two years. We could fortunately get the approval from the Kyoto City Personal Information Committee for using this kind of data obtained from 4 school districts in the period from 2014 to 2017. This approval for using personal data of the aged by university researchers is the first such case, bearing in mind the potential

damaging consequences to an individual's privacy. In this project, the Integrated Community Centre is identified as a core organization to be a node of the community actor network. Our wish is to involve the welfare governmental officers as well in this project, with a view to improving. Their interview research of the aged living alone. Will this new scheme of action research, facilitated by the university, work well to develop the community building? Can the university work as a kind of "middleman" for new networking within a community in order to promote such a project? We aim to answer these questions as our next step.

### Acknowledgements

This study was financially supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) (No. 22530663) and MEXT-Supported Program for the Strategic Research Foundation at Private Universities from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan.

**Note:** This paper is a rewritten version of the following two papers of our project, and Prof. Ozawa takes full responsibility of this revised paper.

Ozawa, W. Makita, Y. Higuchi, K. Nishimura, K. Ishikawa, K. Ogawa, E. Kato, H. 'The Local Community Volunteer Social Worker System in Japan: Analysis of Survey' *Ritsumeikan Social Science Review* , 50 (3), 1-20.

Ozawa, W. Makita, Y. Higuchi, K. Ishikawa, K. Yamada, H. Mensendiek, M.Ogawa, E. & Kato, H. (2012) 'Volunteer Support Network for Elderly Foreigners: A New Movement of Korean Residents in Kyoto', *Ritsumeikan Social Science Review* , 48 (3), 19-40.

- 1 ) The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in Japan is promoting the Integrated Community Care System so that 'in 2025, when the baby boomers reach the age of 75 or more, they will be able to continue living in their own community until the end of their lives with dignity, even if they require high-level, long-term nursing care'. The Integrated Community Care System refers to 'the provision of housing, long-term nursing care, preventing services and livelihood support in their community as a whole'. To implement this system, 'community-based services' were introduced in 2005 within the partial revision of the Long-Term Care Insurance Act.
- 2 ) In January 2013, The Special Committee on the Security Council for Needy Persons issued a report stating that 'in order to formulate a new system to support the people in need, the role of Minsei-lin, who are to grasp the real condition of each community and to provide support based on community needs, will become increasingly important. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare issued this report by 'The Special Committee on the Security Council for Needy Persons' in January 2013.
- 3 ) The Minsei-lin system, as a group of volunteer social workers composed of local residents, is unique to Japan. Goodman, who positions Japan's social welfare policy as a model for East Asia, analyses Japan's Minsei-lin from a cultural point of view. He describes *Minsei-lin* as social workers with social welfare views distinctive to Japan, with heavy emphasis on self-help within the family and mutual assistance among neighbours.

- 4) The problem of Returnees from China is very complicated. Returnees are Japanese supported by the "Returnees Assistance Act". They strongly identify themselves as Japanese, even though their culture is completely Chinese and they cannot usually speak Japanese. On the contrary, most of their relatives, who come from China, identify themselves as Chinese and they do not obtain Japanese nationality. There is a difference of interests between Returnees from China and their relatives. There is also much difference of interest between Returnees from China and Korean residents who are not protected by any Assistance Law.

## Reference

- Bavelas, A. & Lewin, K. (1942) 'Training in Democratic Leadership', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 37 (1), 115-119
- Lewin, K. (1946) 'Action Research and Minority Problems', *Journal of Social Issues*, 2, 34-46.
- Ben-Ari, E. (1991) *Changing Japanese Suburbia: A Study of Two Present-Day Localities*, Kegan Paul International, London and New York.
- Goodman, R. (1998) 'The 'Japanese-Style Welfare State' and the Delivery of Personal Social Services', Roger. Goodman, Gordon. White & Huck-ju. Kwon. (eds.), *The East Asian Welfare Model: Welfare Orientalism and the State*. Routledge, 140-158.
- Lie, J. (2004) *Multiethnic Japan*, Harvard University Press.
- Wu, Y. (2004) *The Care of The Elderly in Japan*. London and New York Routledge.
- Shinkawa, T (2005) *Japanese Type of Welfare State Regime: its Development and Change*, Minerba Shotbou (in Japanese)
- Moon J.S. and Mikami H. (2007) Difference in subjective well-being between ethnic Korean and Japanese elderly residents in an urban community in Japan, *Geriatrics and Gerontology International* Vol7, No4.
- Graburn, N.H.H. & Tierney, R.K. (ed.) (2008) *Multiculturalism in the New Japan: Crossing the Boundaries Within*, Berghahn Books.
- Karikomi, S. (2008) 'Aging in the East Asia and Policy Implication' *Mizuho-Souken-Ronshu* 2008 No.4 (in Japanese)
- Ozawa, W. (2009) Foreign Citizens' and Public Sphere in Japan, *Ritusmeikan Sansha-Ronshu* Vol45, No3.
- U N "World Population Prospects: the 2012 revision"
- NaikakuFu. (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan) (2013) *Korei Shakai Hakusho* (Ageing Society White Paper). Tokyo, Gyousei Press.
- Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare (2013) *Shakai Hoshou Shingikai Seikatu Konkyuusya no Seikatu Shien no Arikata ni Kansuru Tokubetu Bukai Houkoku* (The Special Committee on the Security Council for Needy person). <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/shingi/2r9852000002tpzu.html>

