

RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN JAPAN FOR EXPANDING HUMAN SERVICE NEEDS

— Responce to Enactment of the
Certified Social Worker and
Certified Care Worker Law —

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Social work education today is facing an important phase of its development because of the legislative and administrative change in personnel policy in the human service professions.

1. Post War Trend of Social Work Practices

Social welfare services based on democracy oriented social welfare laws and legislation, developed after the second world war. In order to restore Japanese society and reduce the life risk of people in post-war Japan, seven basic laws and about 200 related laws and regulations have been established in the past four decades.

The basic seven laws are:

- Child Welfare Laws (1944);
- Revised Daily Life Security Law (1946, originally 1929);
- Law for Welfare of Physically Disabled Persons (1949);
- Social Welfare Service Law (1951, originally 1938);
- Law for Welfare of Mentally Retarded Persons (1960);
- Law for Welfare of the Aged (1963); and
- Law for Maternal and Child Welfare (1964)

As a result the Japanese social work system today embraces nation-wide social security systems and about 45,000 social work agencies and institutions.

In the past, social work practices were provided mostly through institutions. When the government controlled the quality of services through governmental and contracted non-governmental agencies, social work practices were generally

maintained at a certain standard.

As the result of an independent living movement in the 1970's popularized among the disabled and the community care movement of the elderly, the trend of deinstitutionalization appeared with the diffusion of social thought of "normalization". A vast demand for social work and care services for the elderly and the severely disabled appeared outside of the traditional social work agencies. In the 1980's charging for care services became the market for non-governmental agencies and private enterprises which employ social workers and care workers.

2. Recent Trend of the Client System of Social Work

According to the United Nations' Demographic Yearbook, the life expectancy of Japanese, as of 1987, is an average of 75.6 for men and 81.4 for women. This is the longest expectancy in the world. The majority of middle class healthy elderly (over 65) do not require nursing home care or long-term institutional care. They need only a pension to maintain a decent quality of life in the community, medical care from family doctors, home help service and attendant service when they become sick and disabled. Community based service are essential for all healthy, and some physically weak elderly and not just the economically deprived elderly.

On the other hand, the seriously disabled people used to be institutionalized. Through the civil rights movement of the disabled in the 1970's, and the independent living movement which appeared around the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981), disabled people also proclaimed the right to live in the community with a variety life support services.*

In order to meet the needs of the vast number of social work consumers (clients) who live in normal society, existing day care programs function as a part of institutions, and the home helpers service of the local government are not enough. Moving away from bureaucratic procedures, some middle class families have started to use non-profit service agencies and private companies which dispatch care workers to customers' homes for help to the aged and the disabled.

* Note: Life support services include any community based services to support their independent living, including attendant services, transportation, emergency care, health care and counselling services, etc., as well as the disability pension revised in 1987.

For the vast social service demands for the home-bound elderly and the disabled, the service provisions have never been a monopoly of the traditional social welfare agencies. So called "silver enterprise", the commercial home care and home help agencies have mushroomed by employing large numbers of attendant care workers and case managing social workers. These new private service agencies have become competitors to the traditional agencies controlled by the government and the social welfare laws.

Today, unless the government has a licensing system in social work practices, like medical doctors and nurses, for individual human service workers who work independently or within a variety of agencies, there is no way to control the quality of their services.

Based on such social needs arising from the demographic change and the government consideration of it, the newly planned personnel policy appeared as enactment of the new certification law for the human service professions.

3. Process of Law Enactment

While the national government consider the law necessary to protect the status and maintain the quality of services by the human service professions, the establishment of the social workers' legislative status was also the long-term desire of the social work professional organizations such as the Japanese Association of Social Workers and the Japanese Association of Schools of Social Work.

In fact, the roles and job requirements of social workers and care workers are distinctively different. Keeping internal professional independence for each profession, the special task force for legislation formation was organized under the Central Council of Social Welfare. This coordinated the representatives from labor administration, social welfare administration, professional representatives of care work for the elderly, and social work. These representatives were called together at the end of 1986 to yield the consensus for enacting an umbrella law to define the status of two related professions: social workers and care workers.

To draft the newly enacted "Certified Social Worker and Certified Care Worker Law", the task force discussed the contents of the law including professional roles and requirements, national qualification test, registration, short term training courses, curricula for the newly established training courses, and so on. The draft was

written in January 1987. On April 24, 1987, the Cabinet Conference approved the draft of the law. The House of Councillors and the House of Representatives also approved the draft in May 1987. The Law was officially announced on May 26, 1987 in the Japanese official gazette.

The law became effective April 1, 1988. At the same time, the ad hoc private agency* established to administer the national examination and registration was officially opened on April 1, 1988. The examination center started to work on the formation of test questionnaires and logistic preparations for the National Test to be administered simultaneously in eight cities all over Japan.

The first National Test for care workers was administered on January 29, 1989 for written test and March 5, 1989 for care performance test. The first written test for social workers was conducted on March 26, 1989. Analyzing the test scores and review of the references from universities and employers, the certified social workers started to appear at the beginning of April 1989.

4. Candidates for Certified Social Workers

As there was no certification system in the past, several thousand social workers had been working in governmental and non-governmental social welfare agencies without certificates.

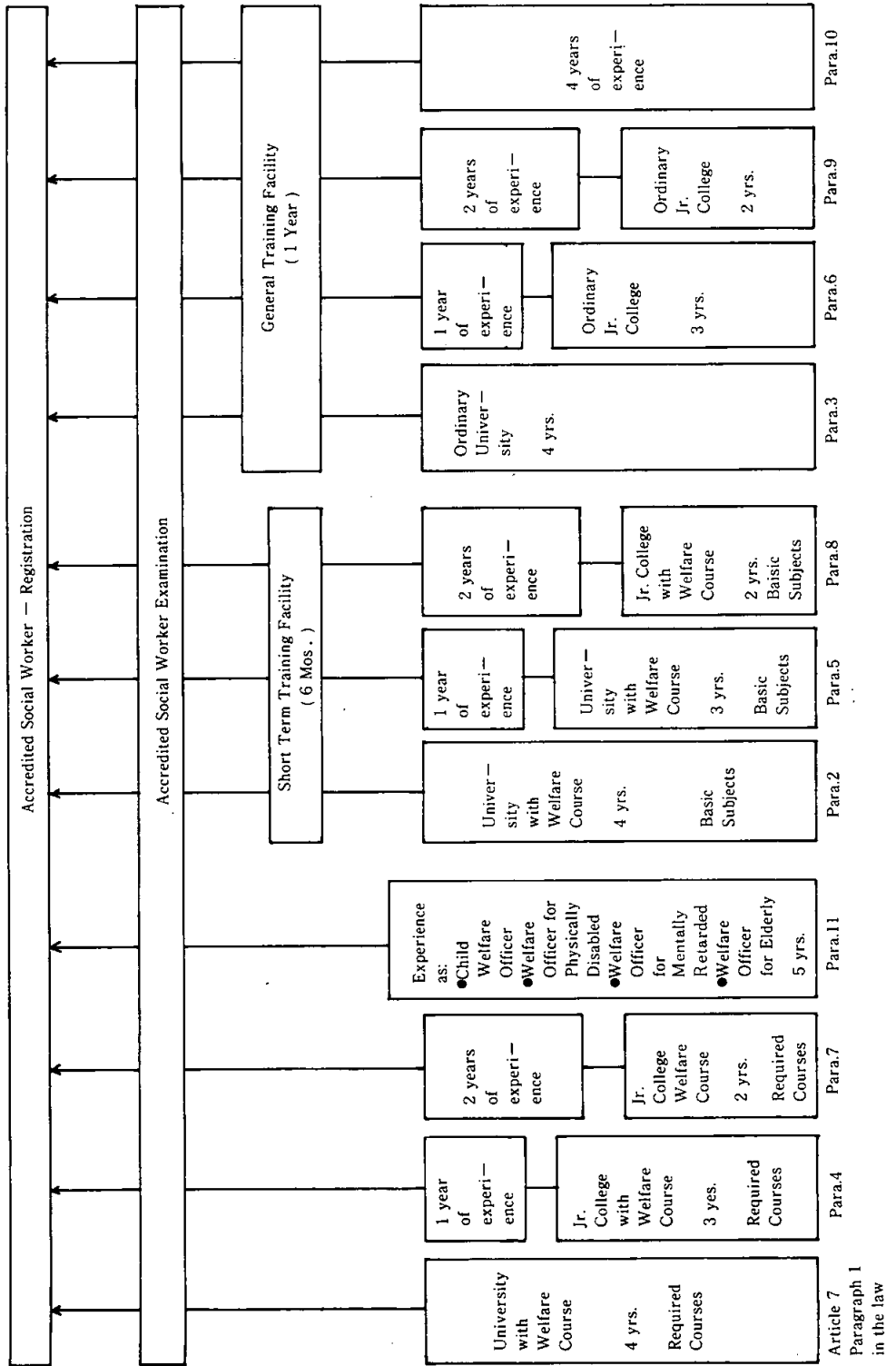
Current social workers have a variety of backgrounds, and the new social work candidates from universities and colleges will also have a variety of educational backgrounds. The National Test should open the door to various types of candidates who have different experiences and academic backgrounds.

Figure 1 indicates all possible channels of applicants taking the test.

* Note: Ad hoc private agency to administer the National Test is called "Shakai Fukushi Shinko Shiken Center"; the Social Welfare Promotion and Examination Center.

Figure 1

PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF THE CERTIFIED CARE WORKER ACCREDITATION SYSTEM



According to the newly enacted law, anyone who applies for the National Test must clear the minimum standard in the following subjects:

TABLE 1
Subjects for Certified Social Worker Examination
(Full examination is in written response style)

1. Basic Social Welfare Theory	2. Welfare for the Elderly
3. Welfare for the Disabled	4. Child Welfare
5. Social Security	6. Public Assistance
7. Community Welfare	8. Knowledge Base of Social Welfare & Social Support Skills
9. Psychology	10. Sociology
11. Law	12. General Medicine
13. Knowledge Base of Care Skills	

5. Response of Schools of Social Work to Legislative Enforcement

When the Certified Social Worker and Certified Care Worker Law passed, the minimum course requirements for four-year university graduates who apply for the National Test was also announced.

Prior to this law enactment in May 1987, the Japan Association of Schools of Social Work independently established the curriculum guidelines for the baccalaureate level of social work education in November 1985. Based on the IASSW guidelines, member schools of the JASSW have started to enrich each school's curriculum content to maintain their status as member schools of the association. At about the same time, the governmental guidelines for the National Test appeared.

The original purpose of the governmental guideline is to define the curriculum model to be used for newly established six-month or one-year ad hoc training schools for social workers (applicable to those written para 2, 5, 8, 3, 6, 9, 10 of the Law shown in Figure 1). Therefore the curriculum content the law defined is far more practical than the curriculum guideline that JASSW originally defined for self upgrading (see Table 2).

According to the rules of the new law, even social work students from the

Table 2. Comparative Curriculum Models of the Government and the Social Work Education in Baccalaureate Level Suggested by the Japanese Association of Schools of Social Work (As of 1977)

Areas	Government Requirement Courses for 4 years University Education	JASSW Requirement Sample Courses	Minimum Number of Courses	Credit
Basic theory areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basic social welfare theories ● Social security theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basic social welfare theories (including historical development of social work) ● Social welfare systems and policies ● Basic principles of social work skills and methods ● Social welfare research ● Principles of care work 	4 courses and over	16 credits and over
Method and skill areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basic principles of social work skill ● Social work helping art I ● Social work helping art II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skills of personal social services ● Methods of community organizations ● Social welfare planning ● social welfare administration ● Social welfare research methodology 	5 courses and over	20 credits and over
Practice field areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welfare for the elderly ● Welfare for the disabled ● Child welfare ● Public assistance ● Community welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family welfare ● Child welfare ● Welfare for the elderly ● Welfare for the disabled ● Public assistance ● Community welfare ● Medical social work ● Social Rehabilitation ● Welfare for women ● Probation and parole service 	3 courses and over	12 credits and over
Field Work and Seminar Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Field work ● Seminar on social work skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Field work in social work ● Field work in research 		6 credits and over
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seminars 		2 credits and over
Related Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Law ● Psychology ● Sociology ● Medical information ● Care skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Psychology ● Sociology ● Medical information ● Care skills 		

IASSW member schools (mostly baccalaureate level) cannot apply for the National Test, unless they earn the required credits for all courses defined by the governmental guidelines. Thus, the curriculum model published by the government had a great impact on the existing social work curriculum of JASSW member schools.

Most of the Japanese schools for social work education in the past were oriented toward social scientific theories or general arts rather than toward human sciences and practice skill. As a consequence, the method courses and field work practices were lightened in the total curricula. (This trend seemed to be the result of the university revolution which swept all over Japan in the late 1960's and early 1970's.) In the early 1970's the majority of social work schools in Japan minimized compulsory courses and changed to the optional courses. Field work was one of the courses affected. As a result of enactment of the Law in May 1987, however, the pendulum swung back again, and most of the schools have to bring in field work as a compulsory course to enrich the practical courses for the social work major students and prepare them for the National Test. This national action positively influenced universities' social work education in a practical way.

Table 2 compares curricula models of national guidelines and JASSW guidelines

6. Tasks of University Based Social Work Education in the Future

The national program for certifying social workers indicates there are many ways to become a certified social worker and various types of social work training programs exist particularly in the field of social work education.

At this time member schools of JASSW need to prove the unique future of social work education at the university level.

It is a controversial point that the National Test for certified social workers only evaluates the knowledge aspect, through the paper and pencil tests. Does the knowledge of thirteen varied subjects indicate a reliable factor for defining and evaluating good social workers? Keeping this issue as the question, researcher Kojima recently did a pilot survey of the clients' perception of social workers. The elements to define the social worker's integrity from the clients' viewpoint were defined as follows:

Understanding attitude to others	30.6%
Professional knowledge	30.0%
Practical skills	25.0%
Health	22.5%

The percentages shown above indicate response of the clients marked as "the most important factors" rather than "important", "somewhat important" and "less important". It was found that the clients felt the attitude factor most critical.

In the same survey, the top eight factors of favorable social workers attitude were indentified from the response of the severely disabled people in agencies, as shown in the Table 3.

TABLE 3
Factors for Favorable Social Workers to Clients

Rank Order	Characteristics	%
1	Fairness	98.3
2	Good listener	83.3
3	Honesty	68.3
4	Confidentiality	66.7
5	Frankness	51.7
6	Sense of humor	36.7
7	Sociability	35.0
8	Efficiency on business	31.6

Although these are the result of a small pilot survey with a very limited number of interviewees (N = 60), and the result cannot be generalized easily, it can be safely said that the client group do not think of knowledge by itself is the primary indicator of the desirable social worker. However personality factors (see Table 3) are not intended to be measured by these tests, but genuine interest in human beings and helping others are the critical elements of social workers for the clientele.

In order to enhance students' human enrichment, four years university social work programs including general arts education and professional training will be in a more desirable setting rather than short-term technical training to nurture the resourceful social worker. Respecting the basic knowledge of social work to be

evaluated in the National Test, the university should consider students' fullest intellectual and spiritual growth in four years instruction.

Social work today in Japan as the highly industrialized society is expanding beyond the traditional fields of practice and its new frontiers are in industry, business and international communities. At the same time, it is challenged by "diswelfare"* of the disadvantaged groups including the aged and the disabled population in an affluent society. What makes it possible for the social work graduates to work out their mission of the professional social worker is not only the certification but also their humanistic attitude and commitment as social workers with scientific knowledge, problem solving abilities and research skills. Therefore, basic practical courses for social work in universities should be supported by a wider range of subjects which stimulate further scientific, philosophical and international understanding of the students. It can be said that social work in the future will be constructed by the social work student who is working today practically with clients and thinking tomorrow's world creatively.

Note: * This word was used by the British Social Scientist,

Dr. Richard M. Titmuss in his book, Commitment to Welfare.

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