

International Academic Activities of Kokoro Researcher of Kyoto University

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC EXCHANGE »»

Culture and Clinical Psychology Perspectives for the KOKORO Well-Being Studies



On June 14, 2015, Kyoto University's Kokoro Research Center held an international workshop titled "Culture and Clinical Psychology Perspectives for the KOKORO Well-Being Studies" at the university's Inamori Center. Organized by Dr. Toshio Kawai and Dr. Yukiko Uchida, this closed international workshop focused mainly the Japanese sense of agency, and brought together the two fields of cultural psychology and clinical psychology for in-depth discussions among researchers from the United States and the Kokoro Research Center.

In the first part of the workshop, cultural psychologists shared the results of recent research that strongly underlines the importance of taking culture into consideration in clinical research. Dr. Yulia Chentsova-Dutton from Georgetown University, JSPS postdoctoral fellow Eunsoo Choi, and Dr. Andrew Ryder from Concordia University discussed the significant cultural differences in negative emotions such as depression. Dr. Yukiko Uchida from Kyoto University and Dr. Vinai Norassakunkit from Gonzaga University

examined how cultural change in Japan is affecting the Japanese sense of agency and adjustment by examining the rather neglected topic of *hikikomori* (social withdrawal).

The second part of the workshop consisted of presentations by clinical researchers from the Kokoro Research Center. Dr. Toshio Kawai examined a recent increase in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Japan, and suggested that a lack of sense of agency

may be accountable for this phenomenon. Dr. Yasuhiro Tanaka gave insight into the unique characteristics of Japanese ASD patients by analyzing their drawings of landscapes, which are associated with a traditional Japanese way of relating to nature. Finally, Dr. Chihiro Hatanaka compared Rorschach and Room-Drawing tests across two different cohorts of Japanese college students (2003, 2013), providing evidence to support the assertion that today's Japanese youth have a relatively weak sense of agency.

In addition to the main presentations, graduate students and a visiting scholar also presented their



work in a “data blitz” session, which added diversity to the workshop. Discussions among presenters from cultural and clinical areas throughout the workshop were constructive, presenting opportunities for collaboration in promising new

research topics. The success of the event has led to the planning of another workshop for researchers from the Kokoro Research Center and the United States to be held in the near future.

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HAPPINESS STUDIES >>

Kokoro Studies on Happiness

Report of the International Conference of GNH.

The 6th International Conference on Gross National Happiness (GNH) was successfully held in Paro (Bhutan) 4th-6th November 2015. H.M. the Fourth King of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuck first advocated the concept of GNH, which is a basis of Bhutanese policy and culture, and appreciated by many countries. Since 2004, six conferences have been hosted in several countries in collaboration with the Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research (CBS). During the 6th conference, more than 100 eminent scholars, officially invited by CBS, presented their papers



Discussion during the session of Dr. Uchida (left) and Dr. Kumagai (center)

in front of an audience of 700. From the Kokoro Research Center (KRC), Dr. Seiji Kumagai (*Uehiro* Assoc. Prof.), Dr. Yukiko Uchida (Assoc. Prof.) and Dr. Shintaro Fukushima (Collaborative Research Associate; Assist. Prof. at Aoyama Gakuin Univ.), as invited speakers, gave oral presentations from the points of view of religious psychology, cultural psychology and social psychology. It was thus a good opportunity to introduce KRC’s *kokoro* (mind) studies to international academism.



Group photo of Dr. Uchida (center), Dr. Kumagai (center), Dr. Fukushima (right), and young researchers with Bhutan's Prime Minister

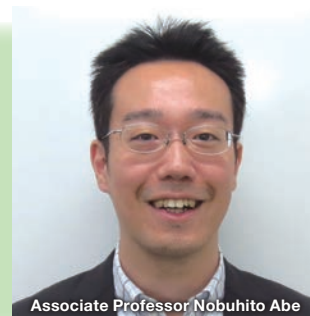
AWARDS & HONORS >>

Professor Shinobu Kitayama and Associate Professor Nobuhito Abe Honored by JPA

Professor Shinobu Kitayama of the University of Michigan, a Specially Appointed Professor at Kokoro Research Center at Kyoto University, received a JPA (International Contribution) Award for Distinguished Research. Professor Kitayama received his BA (1979) and MA (1981) from Kyoto University and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan (1987). He was formerly an associate professor at Kyoto University (1993-2003). Professor



Professor Shinobu Kitayama



Associate Professor Nobuhito Abe

Kitayama is a pioneer in cultural psychology and cultural neuroscience. His research on cross-cultural differences in the self, emotion and social cognition has had an enormous impact in social and behavioral sciences. He has authored more than 110 peer-reviewed research articles and 50 book/chapters, and his work has been cited over 30,000 times. Most notably, his paper with Markus on culture and the self, published in *Psychological Review* in 1991, is one of the most frequently cited papers in the long history of this journal. He received a John Simon Guggenheim award in 2010, and a Scientific Impact Award from

the Society of Experimental Social Psychology in 2011. He was also inducted into the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2012.

Associate Professor Nobuhito Abe at Kokoro Research Center is this year's winner of the JPA Awards for International Contributions to Psychology Award for Distinguished Early and Middle Career Contributions. This award is given in recognition of excellence in research that contributed to international communities of research in psychology. Nobuhito Abe has made major contributions to the cognitive neuroscience of human honesty and dishonesty.

COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK »

Learn, no matter how old you get and be active throughout your entire life! From Kyo-machiya

Getting back mutual aid and relationships of the good old days! Finding a coordinator for various consultations regarding town life!



1. State of activities

In October 2014, the “project for the development of a mutual aid and self-help improvement program for the prevention of isolation,” a life-learning retreat, was held for the citizens of Kyoto. This study aimed to prevent poor health and disorders and activities associated with residential isolation and improve education for mutual aid, neighbor support, and self-help. The learning program is provided in a three-step system (beginner, intermediate, and advanced course), with the beginner's course offered from 2014 to 2015. Each course is provided as a three-week program consisting of six lectures. One program includes approximately 25 participants. The beginner's course aims to enable participants to think independently regarding a better life for themselves and plan behavioral changes. The

program contains the following six points: rehabilitation according to physical pain (the orthopedic surgery field), nutrition, thinking from frail until end-of-life care (the geriatric medicine field), mindset to lead a healthy life (psychology), saving, asset management, and inheritance (finance and law), and necessities to receive care (welfare). Lectures are conducted by various institutions within and outside the university such as medical, psychology welfare, financial, and legal centers using inter-facility and multidisciplinary cooperation. Following lectures, participants and lecturers can intermingle and obtain advice regarding daily life. In this project, interaction between lecturers and participants is considered important, and the creation of new interpersonal relationships through an interactive learning style is considered important. To date, three beginner's course programs have been completed by approximately 70 graduates. The mean age of graduates was >70 years of age.

2. Background, social significance, and ultimate goal

Japan is first in the world to enter into an unprecedented super-aged society, which has caused major changes to communities and the family unit. In the past, there was sufficient

interaction among multi-generational cohabitants and residents who lived near one another. The means to solve the issues of daily life concerning caregiving through mutual aid and self-help could be found within the community. However, presently we find elderly-elderly households, single households, and elderly parent and single child households with a smaller family unit. Such households have fallen into a financial crisis because of difficulty finding employment. Furthermore, they appear reclusive and characterized by loneliness, poverty, and self-enclosure. For example, these families are isolated without any relatives. Therefore, when issues arise in daily life with health, finances, or caregiving, the issue is locked away without resolving it, after which it worsens. The worst-case scenario, where an individual dies alone, is occurring more often. Briefly, mutual aid in local communities and self-help is limited. This results in a vicious circle with three aspects including the body, the mind, and social activity (social participation), which causes



Staffs

Project leader: **Sakiko Yoshikawa, Aya Seike**

Project member: **Tomoki Aoyama (Dr), Kenichiro Shide (Nutritionist), Hidenori Arai (Dr), Satoshi Tanaka (Bank clerk), Tatsuya Takagishi (Bank clerk), Shuji Koyama (Lawyer), Atsushi Kubo (Administrative post), Takaaki Gomi (Administrative post) and Eisuke Kumano (COE of Amita Holdings), Taiga Suzuki (Assistant) and so on.**

Learning program of a life-learning retreat

Lecture style : Classroom lecture and roundtable discussions

Domain	
Medical science	maintain strength through exercise that can be done every day
Medical science	be unaffected by disease through nutritional management that can be done everyday
Medical science	maintain good condition through the prevention of aging and sickness
Psychology	wisdom in living with a healthy heart
Saving	preparation for old age?
Welfare	what is caregiving?



Various discussions (one stop service consultation in the field of medical care, psychology, law, and welfare)

difficulty in living a happy life with good mental and physical health.

In Japan, in the past, there were strong ties in the local community, and mutual aid was strongly rooted in daily life. In such communities, individuals maintained their own health and daily life while helping others, and numerous people were happy to help. These were so-called town leaders. In the present project, under the concept of “remembering the good old days in Japan,” we will provide education on how to lead an autonomous life, how to be watchful and attentive to others, and how to be happy to help while learning regarding the three aspects involving the body, mind, and social life. If permitted, I also hope that the graduates will become counselors for local residents. Although such local resident counselors will receive an informal position, they will cooperate in the coordination of interpersonal relations and individual and social resources (informal and formal). They will also function as a human resource close to the hearts of local residents, providing advice with regard to daily life. Furthermore, I believe that it will also help improve the elderly individuals’ sense of self-efficacy and purpose in life, thereby creating new values for elderly individuals.