

Abstracts

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Caring for the Next Generation

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Caring for the Next Generation

Akihiro Yoshida, Ph.D.

Professor of Psychology, Shukutoku University

Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo

There is a time for everything: A time to be born, a time to die; A time to plant: A time to harvest;(Ecclesiastes, 3)

This is the time for us all, at the opening of the 21 st Century, to gather together in Tokyo, at the corner of Asia in a sense, a place remote from Europe and North America, to celebrate the 20th International Human Science Research Conference: around the main theme; Caring for the Next Generation.

We are living here and now, while reflecting upon the past and seeing into the future; the present, the past and the future not only of ourselves, but also of others, of the next generation, of humankind, and of the universe.

With the words "Caring for", some of you might recall M. Heidegger's "Sorge", in particular "Fuersorge" in distinction from "Besorge". Others may think of "caring" in counseling, nursing science, education, and/or other domains. However, let it be left to your own choice and judgement as to what to read into the term "caring for", avoiding any external restriction on the scope of its implications.

The words "the Next Generation" may rightly be understood in at least four distinct ways.

First, "the Next Generation" may be understood as the "Children around us in the present historical period, society and culture". Children may be mine, yours, theirs, and/or ours. "We care for our children".

Second, "the Next Generation" could mean the society in general of the future, in which case these words would mean almost the same as the future society, with emphasis on people, and/or mankind. "We care for the future of mankind".

Third, "the Next Generation" may be read as the Next Generation of "Human Science Researchers". So far as our conference is concerned, this reading may be a very intrinsic one for us all as we confront the important task of letting our research movement, which is significant also for the future of mankind, continue to develop further into the future. "We care for our future younger researchers of Human Science". This may invite us to discuss "Caring for" even from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge.

Lastly, the word "the Next Generation" could open up another new perspective. While cognates of "generation" are "generate", "generative", "generator", "genesis", "regenerate" and so on, "Generation" means "production" and "giving birth to". Thus, "the Next Generation" could mean the Generation of the "Human Science Research". In this case, our concern will perhaps be focused upon what and how to learn from the past experiences of generating "Human Science Research" up to now, and from the history of the successes and failures of preceding generations, on the approaches, the objects and the methods, for the purpose of generating "Human Science Research" of ever new nature, both in our own generation and in the next generation. What would be the teachings, to be learned and to be told, for an original "next Generation" of Human Science Research. "We care for how to generate original Human Science Research". This caring will take place, of course, in the context of the deeply thought out caring for the next generation of our children, people, younger researchers.

Taking into consideration at least all of these four possible distinct meanings indicated above, "Caring for the Next Generation" itself could be thematized also. In the context of our "Caring for the Next Generation", who are the ones that care for and the ones that are cared for? We have been cared for by our preceding generations and we care for our succeeding generations. We even care for the next generation as the one that is caring for their own next generation. We, as grand parents, care for our children as parents who care for their own children, who, in turn, are our own grandchildren. We were cared for in the same ways by our grand parents and our parents. Here, the various ways and modes of "Caring for the Next Generation" emerge. The being of "Caring for the Next Generation" may thus be thematized and explicated in its four distinct meanings.

At any rate, we all are excitedly looking forward to the sparks generated from the encounters of diverse people, thoughts and ideas, from all over the world, from many cultures and societies, and from a variety of disciplines, in our truly international and interdisciplinary Conference.

Our Japan Planning Committee, sponsored by Counseling Institute of Taisho University, will sincerely make efforts to care for the success of our Conference at National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo.