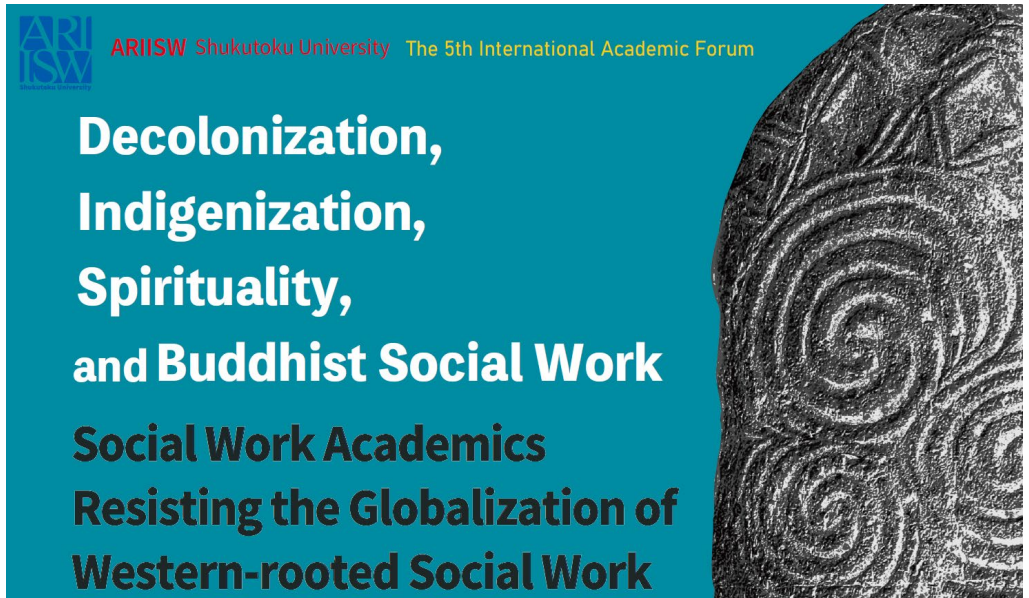


Day 1

Feb 18, 2021

Opening

Session



The Aim of the Forum (Opening Session)

18 February 2021

Thank you, but "No, thank you" to the globalization of Western-rooted Social Work. Please do not force yours onto us.

Voices of objection to Western-rooted social work have been heard from various parts of the world, and from various different angles.

In this 24-hour relay forum, we will hear from many of our colleagues. Our African colleagues will have a session on "Decolonization", which they have been discussing for many years. Our colleagues from the Pacific region (Aotearoa New Zealand) will examine the topic of "Indigenous social work", which may well be the core of their social work theory and practice and the North American team will join them on the same topic with reference to some elements of the other teams' subjects. APASWE President Zulkarnain Hatta will talk about his emphasis on "Spirituality", which has been lacking in Western-rooted social work. Finally, our Asian colleagues will introduce "Buddhist Social Work", which they have been exploring for the last several years, a first in the field.

Western-rooted social work represents a great achievement. However, it is not the only form of social work. Some people think and act as if the terms "social work" and "Western-rooted social work" meant the same thing, but in actual fact, there are various other social works throughout the world.

Not only Western people but also people all over the world, 7.7 billion in 200 countries and regions, have struggled with various difficulties and problems in their lives. Western-rooted social work cannot help them, it cannot solve their problems, because firstly, Western culture and that of other countries is different and the level of industrialization and other political, economic and social conditions are also different, from those upon which Western-rooted social work has been based. Secondly, the Western-rooted social work is not in place, it simply does not exist in the majority of countries of the world.

However, there is no need to worry. Each society has its own “social work” even though it may never have actually called it social work, otherwise, the society would not have been able to sustain itself. Recently Vietnamese, Sri Lankan, Thai and Bhutanese friends are now conducting empirical research which confirms this — people’s “social work” needs have always been filled by someone in the villages where there were no Western-rooted professional social workers.

The concept of social work was born in Europe and matured in North America, and now it is coming into a third stage in which social work becomes the whole world’s. Western-rooted social work people want to disseminate and promulgate their social work throughout the world. But it is simply the globalization of Western-rooted social work. Again, in its history, the sounds of colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism echo. A social work mutually acceptable to the whole world at this third stage can be reached only by embracing and subsuming all indigenous* social work in each part of the world, not by globalizing Western-rooted social work. Western-rooted social work is a social work among some or many.

*”rooted in each society”; used in a broader sense than the UN definition

To lead social work on to the next stage in its development is the aim of this 24-hour relay forum.