

Field Trip Report: [4月27日]

京都大学文学研究科社会学専修 M1 SHEN RUIYI

病棟で
希望手探り
春の闇

It was a piece of Japanese haiku(俳句) we saw in the welfare center of Nishinariku. I felt as though I was drawn into the narrator's inner world, where there was the struggle of someone lying in a sickbed, evoking a sorrowful sigh. Yet, the warmth of spring intertwined with this anguish, bringing both Melancholy and joy. Such feelings accompanied today's field trip.

At 10 AM this morning, we arrived at Osaka Central Building and met with Professor Asato. We also met Mr. Arimura for the first time and listened to his brief introduction to the history of the Kamagasaki area. Mr. Arimura is a man who has worked in Airin welfare center for over forty years. His hair has turned white, he has a beard, and wears a very old brown hat. Despite his age, he appears to be agile and very energetic. There were many chairs and two large tables in the small classroom, indicating that Vietnamese and Japanese language classes are usually held here.



The sign quickly conveys that this used to be a gathering place for day laborers.



“さわるな” “SOS”
“労働相談” “技能講習相談”

The slogans and posters that catch the eye create an atmosphere of accusation, danger, and warning mingled together. Strong feelings of discontent are expressed through the words. However, the neatly arranged signboard in the upper right corner, with polite language and illustrations, aims to inform job seekers that they have the opportunity to obtain "unstable" employment.



Here, facing some cluttered old sofas, chairs, dolls, and umbrellas. "冷たいわ" looks very aggressive, and I think this reflects the mood of the people living here. Mr. Arimura mentioned that some people are unwilling to move out of here to live in a shelter because they can continue to receive welfare benefits.



This "mini toilet" is quite eye-catching. The black plastic sheeting serves as rain protection, making it appear as a base for wanderers and homeless.

In stark contrast to strict requirements for bulky waste recycling, here, discarded furniture and appliances are piled up like small mountains.

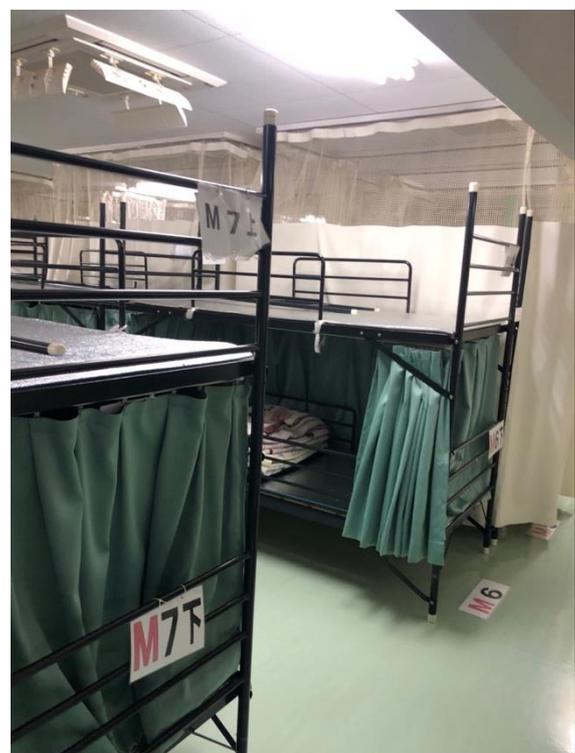


The notice board at the Nishinari Labor Welfare Center lists people who are currently being sought. Most of them are being sought by their families, which means that those who have lost close contact with their families or those without families will find it even more difficult to be located by formal institutions.



What surprised me was the detailed instructions for heavy machinery work in the construction department, and conversely, a manual was clearly provided for switching to other job categories. This may offer hope and training avenues for day laborers engaged in "light work" that is non-mechanical in nature, seeking to change jobs. Additionally, we also noticed that their wages do not include national pension. This may pose some potential risks for their future livelihoods.

Next, we visited the shelter area. There were many beds, enough to accommodate at least dozens of people. The beds were equipped with blankets and sheets to keep warm. The white curtains served as both ventilation while protecting the users' privacy. Despite being a communal living area, I did not detect any unpleasant odors and could sense that the ventilation system here was well-maintained.





Heading to the next shelter area, we encountered an elderly man sitting on the ground near the entrance of another building. Two cats appeared to be living with him, both of them slightly chubby, indicating they were well-fed. Therefore, I speculated that the elderly man also provided care for the cats in his life. Unfortunately, we didn't engage in further conversation with him, and by the time we returned, both he and the cats were gone.

These activities are very rich. Similar to the bookshelves we saw filled with books in the first-floor room, the content of Nishinarishiminkan is very enriching

4月 西成市民館イベントのご案内

3日(水)	ラジオ体操	桜之茶屋北公園	4時~
4日(木)	100歳体操	市民館3階	3時~
6日(土)	お口の健康相談会	市民館2階	2時~
10日(水)	ラジオ体操	桜之茶屋北公園	4時~
11日(木)	100歳体操	市民館3階	3時~
	ポッチャ写真	市民館3階	3時半~
	ふれあい喫茶	ひと窓センター	1時~3時
12日(金)	認知症学級会	市民館3階	2時~
17日(水)	ラジオ体操	桜之茶屋北公園	4時~
18日(木)	100歳体操	市民館3階	3時~
19日(金)	映画会	市民館3階	1時~
	舞踊の大家	市民館2階	1時~
20日(土)	カラオケ	市民館2階	1時~
24日(水)	ラジオ体操	桜之茶屋北公園	4時~
25日(木)	100歳体操	市民館3階	3時~
	ポッチャ写真	市民館3階	3時半~

【図書貸出・おうち情報】 毎日9時~17時、市民館 2階事務局までどうぞ!
26日(金)・27日(土)は休日の取り替え工事のため、館内に入ることができません
※印刷・複製(盗版)の行為は元気で対応させていただきます

2024 落語会 4/24

第一部 落の樹歌 19時
第二部 落の樹歌 19時

11時 4月24日(水) 14:00~16:00

During conversations with two elderly Japanese individuals, we learned that they had both experienced homelessness in their lives. One of them had been homeless for three years. When asked about the most painful experience, they expressed that it was the lack of food, and each day spent without it was very distressing. However, they considered the most significant thing to be able to live in the welfare center in Kamagasaki. One of them enjoys writing haiku, and he used the word "lucky" to describe his experience of being able to lead a stable life here. The other person, before we took a group photo, took off his jacket to reveal his T-shirt, which had the character "街" and the cartoon pictures drawn by Mr. Arimura. From their smiles, I seized a genuine sense of happiness emanating from heart, or perhaps, a gentle vitality of life.

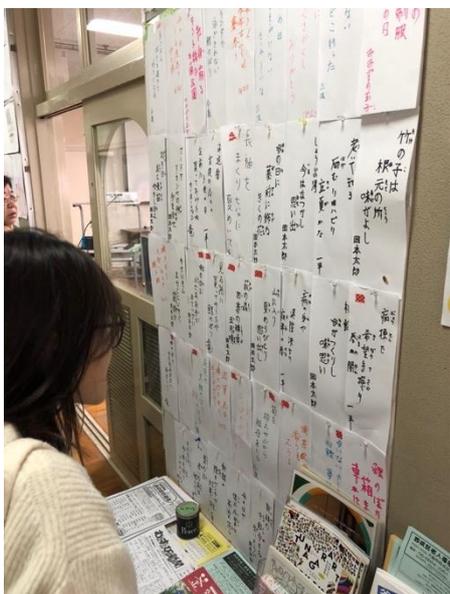


“覚醒剤の売人は、西成から出て行け！”

The yellow signs are very amazing. They reminded me of the issue of stimulant abuse that used to exist here. Nowadays, Nishinari has been actively campaigning against the blatant sale of stimulants.

As we were walking, a man in his 50s to 60s rode by us on a bicycle. He quickly approached us, smiling, and said in a Kansai accent: "Osaka! Center! Japan!" It seemed like he wanted to say: "Osaka is the center of Japan."

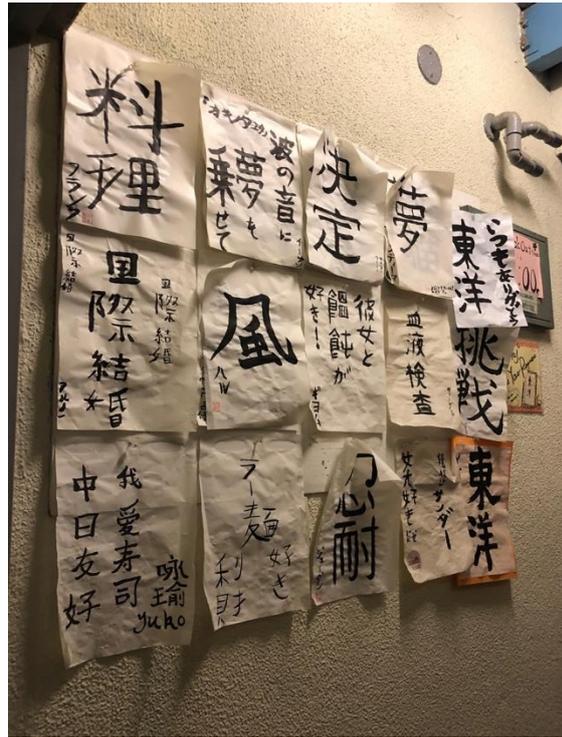
Arriving at the next welfare center, the walls were covered with haiku written by people, and the sketches in the hallway were truly remarkable.



The combination of wrinkles and smiles at the corners of the mouth, along with the "OK" hand gesture, gives this black and white painting a gentle touch, evoking a sense of reassurance the moment you see it.



On the way back to the Central Building, we saw colorful graffiti.



The welfare pension apartments offer low fees and convenient facilities for bathing and cooking.



TOYO Hotel is a hotel where international and artistic elements converge. The murals here are exquisite, and we encountered a young girl with blue hair who was painting murals. The Chinese characters here are also interesting.

Finally, we returned to the Vietnamese language classroom and interacted with a social worker there, learning about the support work they do for the homeless. As it's not an easy job, some students asked if the social worker receives a salary, to which she replied affirmatively, stating that she is paid and not a volunteer. Therefore, financial support is also important for the implementation of social work.

Mr. Arimura mentioned that female homeless only make up 4% to 5% of the total homeless population, which perhaps reflects the societal expectations and norms regarding gender, where women are less inclined to become homeless. For homeless individuals, particularly in East Asian societies emphasizing familism values, if the family's role as a safety net fails, they may lose both economic support and housing. Therefore, I am also curious about the "complex family environments" of some homeless people mentioned by this social worker.

On the way back, I passed through the Yodoyabashi Station. The street scene there was starkly different from Kamagasaki. Tall buildings lined the streets, the roads were wide, and people hurried along without casting a glance around, paying no attention to unfamiliar strangers. This enormous contrast immediately plunged me into a strong juxtaposition. On one side were the towering buildings and suited salarymen symbolizing the highly developed capitalism, the rationality and efficiency of modern society.

On the other side, there were the green small buildings and wall graffiti of Kamagasaki, along with welfare center, grassroots organizations and social workers. Both coexist, and although they may seem contradictory, they represent different aspects of reality. The vast web of modernity seems to engulf every individual in a tide of "self-responsibility" or "pursuit of prosperity (or rich) as justice". The market and capital do not care who will leave with their luggage before the late-night station closes, only to return the next day to wander here again; nor do they care how unemployment, like a punishment, will impact the fragile individuals. However, along with the formal institutions, many people invest their efforts in patiently, long-lasting supporting some marginalized, "left behind" individuals. This reminds me of the haiku we saw, isn't this welfare practice akin to the warm spring in darkness?

