

## Call for Papers

# What Buddhist Social Work Can Do While Western-rooted Professional Social Work Can Not

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(Director: Tatsuru Akimoto)

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Dear APASWE members:

Buddhist temples/pagodas/monasteries and monks/nuns and Western-rooted professional social work agencies and workers have been engaged in similar and same works/activities. Both have been serving for various physical and mental and social and economic sufferings of people—the poor, children, the elderly, the diseased, people with disabilities, disaster and war victims, and many others. We temporarily name those activities by Buddhist temples and monks & nuns “Buddhist social work” in this research albeit they themselves do not necessarily use the term of social work.

We would like to find out the difference between the two social works beyond the difference of players. We would like to find the “essence and features” of “Buddhist social work”.

Please (1) find out an effective or successful Buddhist social work practice whose parallel practice by Western-rooted social work did not work effectively or successfully, in a specific subfield of social work such as counseling, a recovery program for withdrawals, casework on the poverty and crime, disaster relief, and mobilization of resources,

(2) conduct close observational research to collect empirical data,

(3) describe both of the cases of Buddhist social work and Western-rooted professional social work

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in detail—how they have been practiced and functioning,

(4) analyze why and how the Buddhist social work practice worked effectively and successfully because of Buddhism while Western-rooted professional social work did not, and

(5) extract the essence and features of Buddhist social work in that specific case.

A group of monks, university professors, and NGO leaders formulated a working definition of Buddhist social work in 2018\*, which signified some “essence and features” of Buddhist social work extracted inductively and conceptually through discussion and writing. They are, however, still at the hypothetical level. They must be more rigid, being tested and refined by empirical research and data. Without documentation of those findings, Buddhist social work could neither be transmitted to the current other practitioners and the next generation practitioners nor communicable with the Western-rooted professional social work. Without this process, Buddhist social work could never improve itself to serve people better and more effectively. The empirical data collection and their accumulation are indispensable steps towards the construction of Buddhist social work.

### **Research Activities and Schedule**

1. Application: Fill out the attached application (proposal) form and send it to Josef Gohori, Coordinator, at [asiainst@soc.shukutoku.ac.jp](mailto:asiainst@soc.shukutoku.ac.jp) (cc: [akimoto@soc.shukutoku.ac.jp](mailto:akimoto@soc.shukutoku.ac.jp)). The deadline is **15 October 2019**.
2. Acceptance: Coordinator will inform applicants of the official acceptance by 20 October 2019.
3. Initiation of the research: 20 October 2019
4. Submission of the interim report (not mandatory): 30 December 2019
5. The full report paper: Approximately 6,000-10,000 words (without counting Tables and Figures) in English. The deadline is **10 February 2020**.
6. Discussion meeting may be organized in Japan depending on the research results and the fund availability. April 2020 (tentative)
7. Publication: Accepted full report papers will be published in hard copy for distribution. August 2020.

### **Fund and Expenses**

1. The research project will be entirely or partly funded and implemented by the Asian Research Institute for International Social Work (ARIISW), Shukutoku University. Other financial sources will be explored. Accepted applicant’s names will be used as research team members in research grant applications.
2. Research expenses (including travel expenses): JPY50,000
3. Honorarium: JPY50,000 will be paid after the acceptance of the final report paper.

### **Coordinator**

Josef Gohori, Ph.D., Asian Center for Buddhist Social Work Research Exchange, Asian Research Institute for International Social Work (ARIISW), Shukutoku University.

### **For further information**

Please feel free to contact the Coordinator at [asiainst@soc.shukutoku.ac.jp](mailto:asiainst@soc.shukutoku.ac.jp).

#### \* The Working Definition of Buddhist Social Work (11 May 2018)

Buddhist Social Work is human activities<sup>1</sup> to help<sup>2</sup> other people<sup>3</sup> solve or alleviate<sup>4</sup> life difficulties and problems<sup>5</sup> based on the Buddha-nature<sup>6</sup>. Buddhist Social Work always finds causes to work on in both the material, or social arena, as well as in the human, or inner arena, working on both arenas in tandem<sup>7</sup>. Its fundamental principles include compassion, loving kindness<sup>8</sup> and mutual help, and interdependency and self-reliance<sup>8</sup>. The central value is the Five Precepts<sup>10</sup>. The ultimate goal is to achieve the wellbeing<sup>11</sup> of all sentient beings<sup>12</sup> and peace<sup>13</sup>.

<Note> omitted