

Foreword

Tenshin Okakura (1863-1913; a.k.a. Kakuzo Okakura) was one of the foremost internationally-minded thinkers of the Meiji Period (1868-1912). Amidst a tumultuous anti-Buddhist movement at the beginning of the period, Okakura began a study of traditional Japanese art and culture from the old capital of Nara, also visiting the U.S. and Europe to view Western art. Noting in his visits that pushes at the time for modernization equated to westernization, he was determined to promote a resurgence in Japanese art. Okakura then taught at Senshu University in 1882, just two years after its opening in 1880, going on to be founding of the School of Fine Arts. His travels also took him to the Korean Peninsula, China and India. Along with befriending Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and other noted authors of the day, his trips culminated in the "Asia is one" concept presented in the opening paragraph of his 1903 book entitled *The Ideals of the East: With Special Reference to the Art of Japan*. The traces of Asian influence, both tangible and intangible, were apparent in late 19th century Japan and persist even today in being stronger than the modernization and westernization of the 20th century. Thus, the insights of Okakura remain alive to this day.

This research project for FY2014-2018 is entitled the Center for Social Well-being Studies and chaired by Hiroo Harada. This project picks up where Harada's previous FY2009-2013 Center for Social Capital Studies left off, both having received grants within the MEXT-Supported Program for the Strategic Research Foundation at Private Universities. Both of these projects are to gather information and perform basic research on the similarities and differences between the social awareness of people in Asian countries and regions which have experienced rapid economic growth and made remarkable civil and social progress. In both cases, this knowledge is then sorted and finally is meant to be reflected in policy planning and implementation. Above all, the aim of the current research project is 'Forming a Social Well-being Research Consortium in Asia.'

In order to achieve these aims and to serve as a global platform for social well-being studies, these journals (*The Journal of Social Well-being Studies* (in Japanese) and *The Senshu Social Well-being Review* (in English)) look to leave the door open wide for both project research members and those with an interest in the project intents to deepen the dialogue on social well-being from a broad range of perspectives. As such, we warmly welcome related discussion from any parties so inclined.

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