

Introduction to Special Issue on “Low Fertility and Social Policies in Asian NIEs, Part II”

The volume 3 of the *Japanese Journal of Population* features papers written for our FY2002-2004 research project on low fertility and social policies in Asian NIEs (Newly Industrializing Economies) including Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore (Principal Investigator: Hiroshi KOJIMA). This is the second time this journal has featured the results of the research project, following Supplement to Volume 1 (then, *Journal of Population and Social Security: Population Study*). Thus, it is designated as “Part II.”

Among the four papers on Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, Prof. Doo-Sub KIM’s paper on Korea was presented at the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (NIPSSR) on January 7, 2005 and at Kwansai-Gakuin University, Nishinomiya City on January 13, 2005 thanks to the local arrangement by Prof. Shoichi ITO. His trip to Japan was supported by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare through the travel grant administered by the Imperial Gift Foundation Boshi-Aiiku Kai in Tokyo.

Prof. Kwan-Hee JUN’s paper on Korea was presented at the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research on March 14 in conjunction with the survey results of local administrators’ survey in Korea on low fertility and policy responses. This is a significantly revised and updated version of his paper presented at the International Seminar on Low Fertility and Rapid Aging, which was hosted by the Population Association of Korean and sponsored by the Korean National Statistical Office at the Intercontinental Hotel, Seoul, October 3, 2003.

Dr. Chaonan CHEN’s paper on Taiwan and Prof. Leng Leng THANG’s paper on Singapore were specially written for the research project funded by a scientific grant from the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare. The major aims of the project were to understand social, economic, and cultural background of low fertility in Asian NIEs, to know various family policies undertaken by them and to broaden our perspectives of social policies related to low fertility in culturally similar societies.

The Part II is meaningful in relation to the Part I particularly because Asian NIEs have experienced lower fertility than in Japan in 2003, but detailed information on them is still insufficient for deriving new insights or policy implications despite their cultural similarities with Japan. Even though the total fertility rates in Korea, Taiwan and Singapore were higher than in Japan in 2001, they dropped further and became lower than Japan in 2003: 1.29 in Japan, 1.19 in Korea, 1.24 in Taiwan, and 1.25 in Singapore. The total fertility rates can go even lower in the NIEs in the near future. Some of the Governments have already launched a new set of family policies in response to their rapid fertility decline and they are evaluated by the authors as the readers will realize by reading the papers.