Grant-in-Aid for Transformative Research Areas（A）

Establishing the Field of “Dignity Studies”: Toward an Interdisciplinary Paradigm of Social Integration Based on the Concept of Dignity

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Research Area Information	Research Area Number: 23A103　　Project Period (FY) : 2023 - 2027 Keywords: human dignity, dignity of life, East Asian concept of dignity, death with dignity, value theory

Purpose and Background of the Research

● Outline of the Research

The goal of this research area is to **establish “Dignity Studies”** as an interdisciplinary and international academic platform for refining the concept of dignity as a new paradigm for social integration.

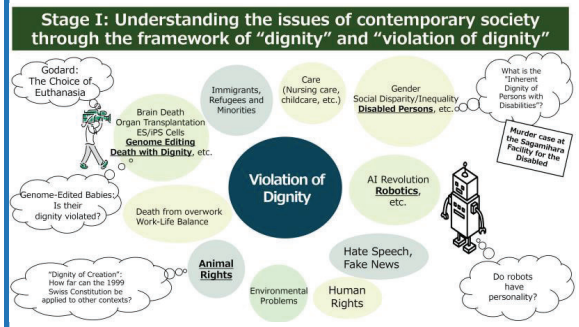


Figure 1: Relationship between Dignity and Social Problems

- In response to the destruction and horrors of the two World Wars, the concept of **human dignity** was adopted as an ideal to promote an international social order in the *Charter of the United Nations* and other documents in order to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies.
- We **focus on the category of “violation of dignity”** to explore new social issues faced by our contemporary societies including advanced medical care, elderly care, discrimination against women and people with disabilities, poverty and inequality, migration and asylum seekers, hate speech, generative AI and big data.
- We will also address issues such as **“whether non-human beings have dignity”** related to animals, AI/robots, and nature.

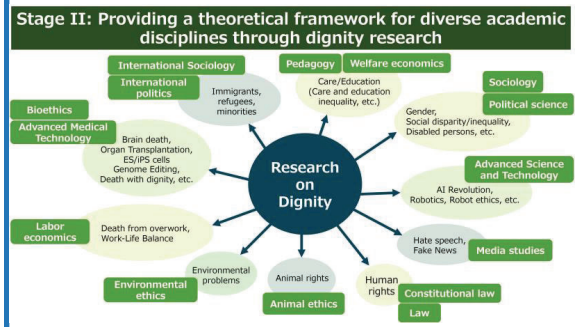


Figure 2: Relationship of dignity research to other academic fields

- Despite its important role in modern society, the concept of **dignity** is not clearly defined, and there is no common global understanding of **human dignity.**
- By studying the history of the concept of **dignity** and how it has been understood, as well as the internal configuration of **dignity** in non-Western cultures, we will clarify **what dignity means** from a cross-cultural perspective.
- The results of this research will be provided to various academic fields to offer a comprehensive theoretical framework for a deeper understanding of the problems of contemporary society and solutions to these problems.

The first and second stages are not comprehensive enough as they both are individual and could be defined as "symptomatic treatment".For this reason, a new academic discipline called “Dignity studies” is needed to discuss the various issues surrounding this concept.

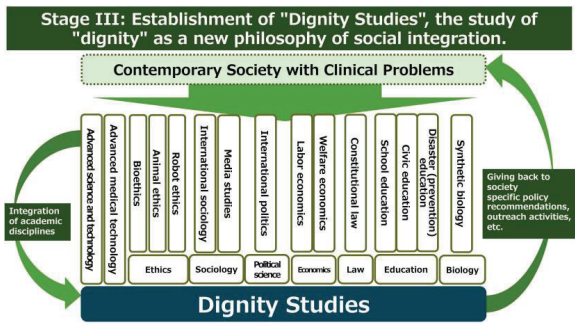


Figure 3: Establishment of Dignity Studies

- Amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic, many people are concerned about the future of society, and there is a growing interest in the question of **dignity.**
- Hence, it is urgent to establish a new academic field called **“Dignity Studies”** in order to solidify the concept of “dignity” as an ideal for new social integration and to implement it in society.
- The project aims to bridge the gap between problems that have been discussed individually by conducting interdisciplinary research from the perspective of dignity and to identify problems that have been overlooked until now. Furthermore, the results of this research will be shared with the public through lectures, school education, and care work.

Expected Research Achievements

- By conducting **theoretical research from the perspective of conceptual history and clinically applied** research on **dignity** in parallel and in relation to each other, we will build a comprehensive understanding of “dignity” and at the same time work towards resolving various social challenges.
- Based on these research results, we will implement recommendations for school education and civic education, and carry out **a “social implementation of dignity”.**

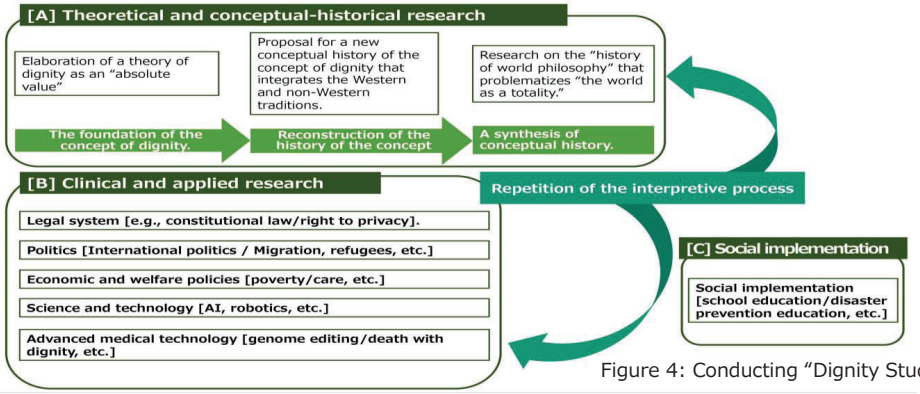
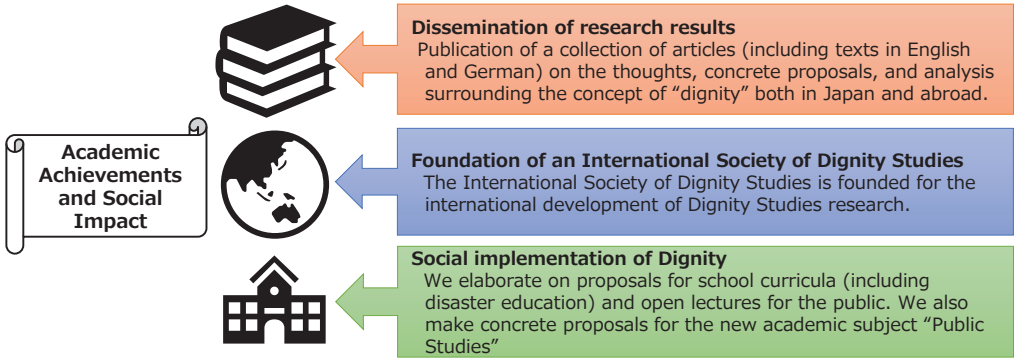


Figure 4: Conducting “Dignity Studies”



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