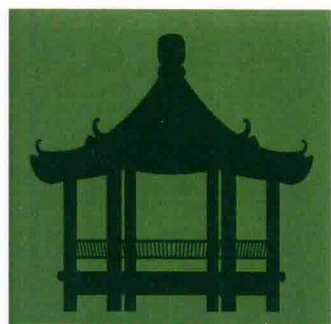# SOCIAL WELFARE IN
EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

EDITED BY SHARLENE B.C.L. FURUTO

Social Welfare in East Asia and the Pacific

EDITED BY

SHARLENE B. C. L. FURUTO

Columbia University Press *New York*

∞

References to Internet Web sites (URLs) were accurate at the time of writing. Neither the author nor Columbia University Press is responsible for URLs that may have expired or changed since the manuscript was prepared.
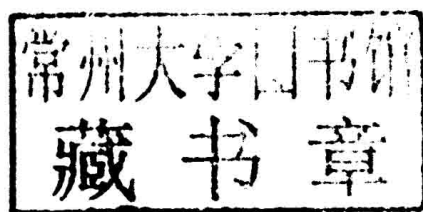
Social Welfare in East Asia and the Pacific

Foreword

It is a great privilege and honor to write a foreword to *Social Welfare in East Asia and the Pacific*. This book is important in many respects and a welcome addition to the existing literature on social welfare. It greatly appeals to me because its conceptualization and development were based on the need for it, identified during Sharlene Furuto's time spent teaching social work/welfare/development students. As development occurs across the Asia Pacific region in a highly varied manner in every sense, the need for welfare provisions and programs is growing. In response, programs in social work, social welfare, and international social development are expanding rapidly in much of the region, along with student numbers. For both reasons, this book is timely. Although welfare services, provisions, and practices in different forms, both formal and informal, exist in almost all Asia Pacific countries, very little has been written on them. Thus knowledge about welfare and its operation, strengths and weaknesses, adequacies and inadequacies, and unique features has remained undeveloped. This book breaks that barrier and opens up the welfare practices of many countries for readers to learn about.

The sample of countries selected for this volume is both insightful and interesting. It reflects a great variation in the trajectory of development, poverty levels, political systems, struggles, level of freedom experienced by people, and social and cultural practices in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific—from the emerging world power of China to small islands in Micronesia. The book discusses the formal and informal social welfare systems in these countries and how the systems are evolving. In the contemporary divided, unequal, and diverse world, people's welfare and adequate

mechanisms to ensure it are vital. The unfortunate reality is that welfare is closely linked to and often dependent on national and international politics, economic development, war, and defense, disregarding the needs of local people.

To understand the welfare conditions of the countries selected for this volume, it is necessary to understand their past. Therefore, historical contexts, different forms of colonization, sociocultural values and social problems rooted in socioeconomic and political structures, and the way states and civil society respond to the needs and problems of people do significantly matter. Without gaining that understanding, it is difficult for the social work profession, social workers, and welfare officials to effectively intervene and work with people in their respective contexts. The authors have firsthand experience in their respective countries and have authoritatively unearthed historical and current conditions and future challenges for social welfare. Their analysis and discussion of the issues engaged me and helped me to be better informed about social welfare in Cambodia, China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Micronesia, the Samoan Islands, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. Shrinking or stagnating welfare systems in some developed countries in the Americas and Europe and emerging social welfare in Asia and the Pacific provide an interesting contrast for international scholars and social workers.

The book is a gateway for exploring and understanding social welfare in Southeast and East Asia and the Pacific, and I highly recommend it to educators, students, and practitioners in the field of social work, social welfare, social and community development, and human services, and for that matter, to anyone interested in the issue of welfare of people.

Manohar Pawar
Professor of Social Work, Charles Sturt University, Australia
President, International Consortium for Social Development Asia-Pacific

Preface

The undergraduate Social Work Department at Brigham Young University–Hawaii is unique for its high concentration of international students from Asia and the Pacific, a characteristic that is reflected in the overall university population. In 2011, of the total population of university students, 60 percent were from the United States; 23 percent were from Asia (predominantly South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region [SAR], the Philippines, Taiwan, and China but also Mongolia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, India, Singapore, Vietnam, Macao SAR, Myanmar, Laos, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan); 12 percent were from the Pacific (predominantly Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, New Zealand, and Australia but also American Samoa, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, French Polynesia, Federated States of Micronesia, Cook Islands, New Caledonia, Northern Mariana Islands, Tuvalu, Niue, Palau, and Vanuatu); and 5 percent were from other nations.

It is not surprising, then, that social work majors are required to pass courses in International Social Welfare in Asia and the Pacific and Social Work Practice with Asians and Pacific Islanders. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of teaching these courses is locating a textbook that provides the needed content. For a while, we used international textbooks that focused on Europe from a U.S. perspective along with journal articles specific to Asian and Pacific Island nations. About two years ago I finally decided to do what was right: to edit a book about social welfare in Asian and Pacific Island states. Everyone I talked with—academicians, publishers, students, practitioners—strongly encouraged me to fill this void in the social work literature.

As I began to conceptualize the book, I knew I wanted to make it somewhat broad so that it could be used not only in social policy, social work practice, and diversity courses on the baccalaureate and master's levels but also for practitioners living in Asia and the Pacific or living anywhere and practicing with Asians and Pacific Islanders. It seemed logical to start each chapter with the history of social welfare, values and culture, current social issues, government and not-for-profit social welfare programs, the social work profession, and education, and to end with a look at future challenges.

In contemplating contributors for this book, several thoughts were at the forefront: my gratitude to Kenji Murase for helping me, as a junior faculty member, edit my first book and my desire to help others publish also; a preference for contributors from Asia and the Pacific who understand not only the profession but also the people and programs; and my intention to tap the knowledge and expertise of my own BSW Asian and Pacific Island graduates, many of whom have become academicians or practitioners themselves.

The result is this book, *Social Welfare in East Asia and the Pacific*—ten chapters that focus on political entities that are not usually visible in the social work professional literature—Cambodia, China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Micronesian region, Samoa and American Samoa, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand—preceded by an introduction and ending with a chapter that contrasts social welfare in that part of the world.

The contributors are all from the countries they write about or have lived and practiced or interned there. Some contributors are well-published academicians while others are practitioners publishing for the first time. Five have attended or graduated from BYU Hawaii. All contributors are highly regarded by their peers and are very familiar with social welfare in their respective political entities.

My support system over the past two years has been my husband, David, and our children, Linda, Matthew (and his wife Leah), Michael (and his wife Solaen), and Daniel; John Reeves, my social work colleague who has been a knowledgeable Pacific Islander consultant; and John Bailey, the College of Human Development dean, who has been instrumental in fiscal support. My *mahalo* (thank you) and *aloha* to all.

Social Welfare in East Asia and the Pacific

Contents

Overview of Social Welfare in East Asia and the Pacific

SHARLENE B. C. L. FURUTO

The part of the world known generally as Asia and the Pacific contains rich and geographically beautiful lands, but it can also be desolate and have few or untapped natural resources. Together, Asia and the Pacific (including Australia) comprise about half of the world's landmass and 60 percent of the world's population. Australia and New Zealand, two more developed countries in the Pacific, are notably different from other Pacific political entities in terms of population, landmass, and social welfare services and so are not examined in this book. Without them, the Pacific nations have a population of about 9.5 million and a landmass about the size of France in a water mass that encompasses 46 percent of Earth's oceans.

This chapter gives an overview of eleven East Asian and Pacific states. (Throughout this and the final chapter, the words *state* and *nation* are used interchangeably and refer to various types of political entities.) The Pacific nations consist of Samoa and American Samoa and islands in the Micronesian region, including Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia (namely, the four states of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae), the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. These island nations have diverse forms of government, resulting in a noticeable difference in availability of social services. American Samoa and Guam are unincorporated territories of the United States and benefit from most of the U.S. federal social welfare programs. The Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau have constitutional governments in free association with the United States and are eligible for some federal social welfare programs. In this book, the social welfare system in the sovereign

East Asia and the Pacific

INDIAN OCEAN

0 ____ 400 mi
0 ____ 1000 km
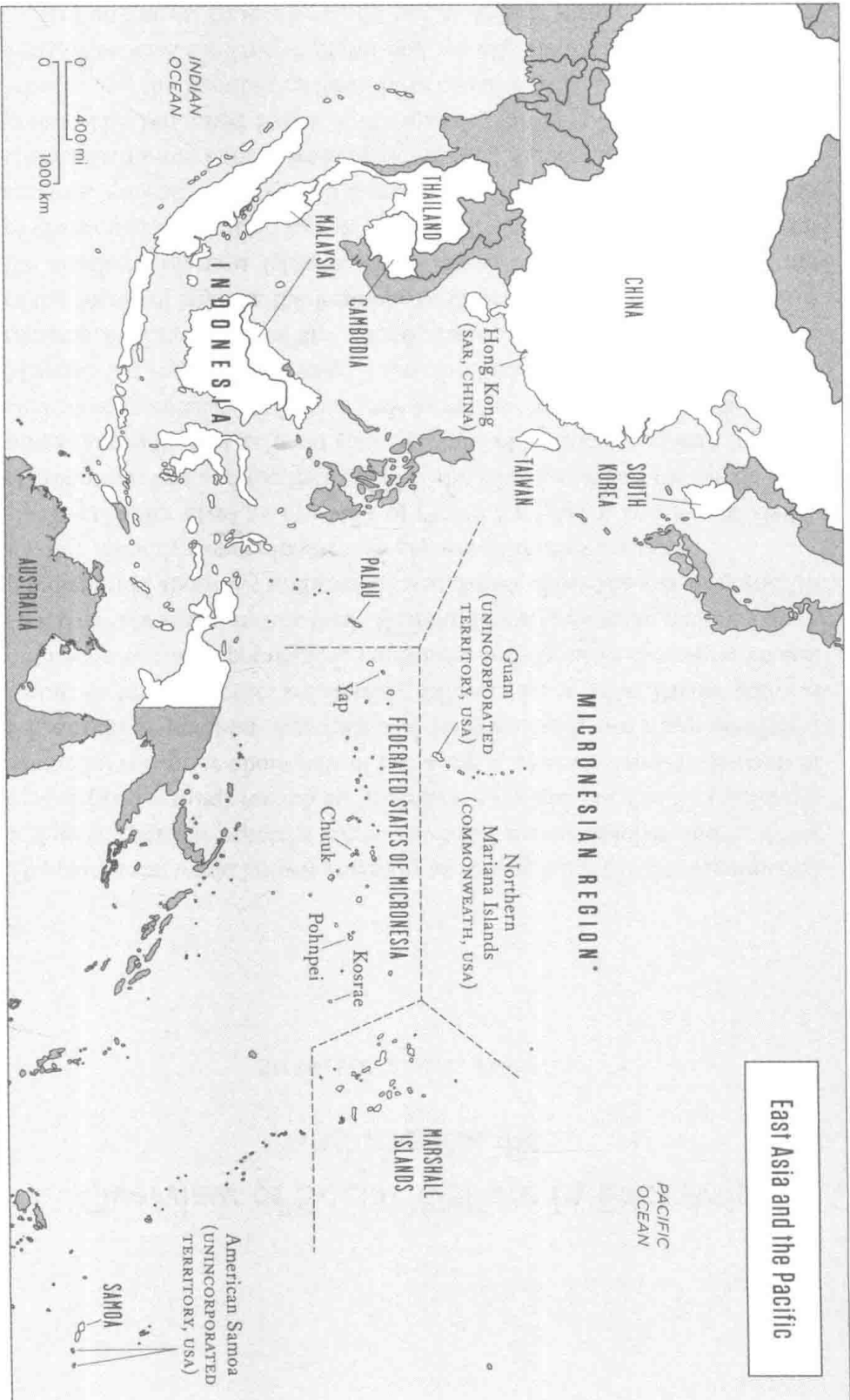
THAILAND

MALAYSIA

INDONESIA

CAMBODIA

Hong Kong (SAR, CHINA)

CHINA

TAIWAN

SOUTH KOREA

AUSTRALIA

PALAU

Yap

Guam (UNINCORPORATED TERRITORY, USA)

Northern Mariana Islands (COMMONWEATH, USA)

MICRONESIAN REGION*

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Chuuk

Pohnpei

Kosrae

MARSHALL ISLANDS

PACIFIC OCEAN

American Samoa (UNINCORPORATED TERRITORY, USA)

SAMOA

*INCLUDES THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (USA), UNINCORPORATED TERRITORY OF GUAM (USA), PALAU, MARSHALL ISLANDS, AND THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

nation of Samoa, a parliamentary democracy, is contrasted with that of American Samoa.

Asia, meanwhile, is the world's largest and most populous continent, located primarily in the Eastern and Northern Hemispheres. Asia covers 30 percent of Earth's total land area, and its population, now at four billion, nearly quadrupled in the twentieth century. Asia comprises fifty-three states in four areas: North, South Central, West and Middle East, and Southeast and East, or simply East. The Asian countries discussed in this book include, in Southeast Asia, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Kingdom of Thailand, and, in East Asia, the Hong Kong SAR, which is a territory of China, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan (or the Republic of China), and South Korea (or the Republic of Korea). The states in the Southeast and East are part of the greater East region and are referred to as such in this book.

There is wide diversity in the forms of governments of these lands in East Asia as well: Taiwan has a multiparty democracy, Cambodia has a multiparty democracy under a constitutional monarchy, and Hong Kong SAR has a limited democracy. Malaysia and Thailand have constitutional monarchies, Indonesia and South Korea are republics, and China is a communist state. Recently China has had a stable government, while Thailand has been in the midst of a political conflict that has already cost a number of lives. Transparency International (2010) claims that "corruption remains an obstacle to achieving much needed progress," as is evidenced in Cambodia, Indonesia, China, and Thailand. The form of government, its leaders, and the level of corruption in government all affect the growth or stagnation of political and social development in each of these nations (Seyf 2001).

Social welfare is an integral aspect of the well-being of a population, and the development of social welfare is based on multiple factors, including geography and physical features of a country, government and political leadership, the economy, and culture and traditions. Each state has unique and yet universal social issues.

Social Challenges in East Asia and the Pacific

In general, while most East Asian and Pacific political entities discussed in this volume have made developmental progress in the recent past, some

continue to battle a number of challenges in government leadership, economic stagnation, environmental fragility, unmet basic human needs, and social depression. There is a wide discrepancy in the average income of people in East Asian and Pacific nations. Many families in the tiger lands of Hong Kong SAR, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan live comfortably, while their counterparts in rural Cambodia and farming communities in China are steeped in poverty. Many Pacific Islanders rely on remittances for daily livelihood from family members working abroad. Global climate changes and major earthquakes are also taxing the well-being of nations and are suspected reasons for sinking atolls such as Caberet Island, Tuvalu, Kiribati (Alley 1998), the two Samoas, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands as the sea level rises. Since much of the land in the Pacific is inherited rather than purchased, farmers who leave their ancestral lands for another island are homeless and unable to farm and support themselves on arrival.

Universal human rights as declared by the United Nations are not preserved when child sex-trafficking flourishes, a growing elderly population lives in squalor, and free speech, employment, primary education, and fundamental health care are lacking. From human-rights violations in China and accusations of misuse of power by the Cambodian, Indonesian, and Thai governments to the democracy in Guam and the economic boom in South Korea, Hong Kong SAR, and Taiwan, there is indeed much diversity in how East Asian and Pacific nations are governed and how social welfare has developed.

Global Impact of Social Welfare in East Asia and the Pacific

For many readers, East Asian and Pacific nations are on the other side of the world. So why do we need to know about the social welfare conditions of these global neighbors? Mapp (2008:v) cautions us, "While it is easier to prioritize the needs of those who are close to us over those who are further away, this approach will hurt us all in the long run." Indeed, with the globalization of our world, the social, economic, and political forces in one region do affect other parts of the world, and injustices experienced in local communities can be caused or affected by forces beyond national borders (Diaz, Mama, & Lopez 2006).

In addition, East Asia and the Pacific Islands encompass ancient civilizations that have been historically at both the peak and the abyss of worldly

achievements. They have gained wisdom throughout the centuries that we can profit from today. China, Hong Kong SAR, and Taiwan, for example, are ancient enough to actually be celebrating their lunar year 4711 in 2013! These nations, at the vanguard of social issues, could also be the leaders of social solutions as they share their social welfare knowledge and models beyond Asia.

Residents of many East Asian and Pacific states depend on family, clan members, and fellow villagers for help using traditional and indigenous methods, in large part because government services are unavailable. An impressive number of Pacific families have members who have migrated to New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, or the continental United States for employment and who regularly and frequently send remittances home to help support their families (Ware 2005). Perhaps the rest of the world and particularly those in the field of social work could consider revisiting the power of the family, clan, and village as initial resources to cope with social problems on the micro level. All local social problems can end up having a global impact: problems in villages affect a country, a country influences the status of a region, and eventually the well-being of the world is affected. Global social issues can best be addressed through international social welfare collaboration—learning about and learning from the social welfare problems and solutions of other countries.

International Social Development Theories

The terms *underdevelopment* and *development* were initially used in the 1950s and 1960s to reflect the emergence of newly independent countries in Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, and South America. Several social development theories came to light at that time.

In the more recent past, several authors have described social work theories. Payne (1997) promulgated three categories of social work theories and models: reflexive-therapeutic, socialist-collectivist, and individual-reformist. These three categories are helpful in organizing social work theories and approaches. Mapp (2008) and Healy (2008) discuss two development theories: the neoclassical approach, or modernization theory, and the dependency theory. When introduced about fifty years ago, the modernization theory viewed development as an end result, and the dependency theory viewed development as a process of impoverishment, although

both espoused that development is dependent on economic growth and development.

Modernization theorists believe that underdevelopment and poverty in a nation are due to internal causes, including the state's lack of democratic institutions, capital, technology, and citizen initiatives. Furthermore, modernization theory supports the idea that an increased gross national product (GNP) will eventually trickle down and benefit the entire population, despite evidence that this has not been the result in Costa Rica and Brazil (Healy 2008). Mapp (2008) argues that capitalism and a freer market economy specific to a country's culture are basic to economic development. Wealthier nations can help less wealthy nations in various ways, such as limiting population growth, increasing food production, providing foreign aid, and increasing technology (Macionis 2006).

Dependency theory posits that development is a struggle between the have and have-not nations, where the wealthier nations, perhaps initially through colonization, have taken advantage of the less wealthy states (Healy 2008; Mapp 2008). Today financially poorer nations continue to be dependent on industrialized nations for markets, imports, technology, and information. These less powerful states often suffer from lack of infrastructure and lack of control over prices, trade conditions, and currency valuation. To change this unequal status, radical reforms are needed in the relationships between the have and have-not political entities. Wealthy nations, understandably, maintain this dependence imbalance to preserve their financial self-interests, and poor states have little recourse in opposition. Instead of internal conditions, dependency theory focuses on the external causes of underdevelopment, such as war, corruption, natural disasters, or noncoastal borders.

Meanwhile, Cox and Pawar (2006) discuss international social welfare using a comprehensive integrated-perspectives approach with global, human rights, ecological, and social development perspectives. The global perspective suggests the unity of one world, or the global village. The human-rights perspective consists of the values, ethics, and rights inherent to all human beings. The ecological perspective looks at the environment in terms of holism and unity in complex interconnecting relationships, diversity, equilibrium, and sustainability through astute management of natural resources. The social development perspective depends on intervention that is value based, proactive, multidimensional (not only by developing economic, social, political, cultural, legal, and ecological dimensions