

# THE MEANING OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH AND AGING AMONG THE JAPANESE ELDERLY

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## INTRODUCTION

In Japan trend of preparation for one's own death is called SHU-KATSU. One of the popular tools with SHU-KATSU is called ENDING-NOTE, which is a booklet to write one's nonleagal will about aging and death. This study focuses on writing ENDING-NOTE.

## QUESTIONS

What is the meaning of this preparation among the elderly who are proactive to prepare for their own deaths, and the influence on themselves?

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### ① ORGANIZE ACTIVITIES OF PREPARATION

Activities of Preparation are organized by listed items on 14 ENDING-NOTES. Notes are selected by following 4 rules.

- 1) Variation of autors (Municipality, Nonprofit company, Private company, Personal)
- 2) Variation of prices (Free, Under ¥1000, Over ¥1000)
- 3) Published year (After 2010)
- 4) Accessible (Booksotre, distribute by municipality, etc.)



### ② PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION OF 10 COURSES ABOUT SHU-KATSU AND ENDING-NOTE

### ③ INTERVIEWS WITH THE SPONSORS AND TEACHERS OF THE COURSES



| No. | Area and Sponsor       | Date           | Number of People | Lecture time (min) | Sponsor interview | Teacher interview | Fee                            |
|-----|------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1   | Kanagawa, area K (1/4) | March 2013     | About 30         | 90                 | ○                 | ○                 | Free                           |
| 2   | Kanagawa, area K (2/4) | Jun 2013       | About 30         | 90                 | ○                 | ○                 | Free                           |
| 3   | Kanagawa, area K (3/4) | July 2013      | About 30         | 90                 | ○                 | ○                 | Free                           |
| 4   | Kanagawa, area K (4/4) | August 2013    | 29               | 150                | ○                 | ×                 | Free                           |
| 5   | Kanagawa, area M       | March 2013     | About 30         | 90                 | ○                 | ○                 | Free                           |
| 6   | Kanagawa, area T       | July 2013      | About 20         | 90                 | ○                 | ○                 | Free                           |
| 7   | Tokyo, area U          | Jun 2013       | About 25         | 70                 | ○                 | ×                 | ¥1000 (include an ENDING-NOTE) |
| 8   | Kanagawa, area I       | September 2013 | 89               | 120                | ○                 | ×                 | Free                           |
| 9   | Tokyo, area S          | November 2013  | 28               | 100                | ○                 | ○                 | Free                           |
| 10  | Kanagawa, area F       | January 2014   | 72               | 120                | ○                 | ×                 | Free                           |

Methods of analyzing

- \* Observations : Considered by field notes and handouts
- \* Interviews : Coding and Categorizing

### ④ INTERVIEWS WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO ARE PREPARING THROUGH ENDING-NOTE.

| Person | Age | Gender | Recording Time(min) | Family Living Together | Religion  | Financial Condition | Health Condition | Life Satisfaction | Bereavement   |
|--------|-----|--------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|---|
| a      | 65  | F      | 70.2                | None                   | —         | Neutral             | Good             | Very good         | Father, Mother, Sibling, Close friend                           |
| b      | 64  | F      | 102.4               | None                   | —         | —                   | Very good        | Good              | Father, Mother, Grandfather, Grandmother, Sibling, Close friend |
| c      | 60  | F      | 64.1                | None                   | —         | Good                | Neutral          | Neutral           | Father, Mother, Grandmother                                     |
| d      | 64  | F      | 48.6                | None                   | Christian | Good                | Good             | Good              | Child, Father, Mother, Father-in-law, Mother-in-law, Sibling    |
| e      | 84  | F      | 45.0                | Son's family           | Buddhist  | —                   | —                | —                 | Husband, Father   |
| f      | 66  | M      | 111.0               | Wife, Child            | —         | Neutral             | Neutral          | Neutral           | Father, Mother, Mother-in-law, Sibling, Close friend            |
| g      | 72  | M      | 49.6                | Wife                   | —         | Neutral             | Good             | Good              | Father, Mother, Sibling, Close friend                           |
| h      | 63  | F      | 114.3               | Child                  | —         | Good                | Neutral          | Neutral           | Husband, Close friend   |

Methods of analyzing

- \* Mix method of SCAT and Text mining (KH Coder)

## SUGGESTION

These are suggesting subjects for future analysis, how to transmit one's experience about death, how to make it easier to talk about death and preparation, and how to support them to make their future image of aging and death.

## CONCLUSION

Their motivation is consideration of other people so as '**not to cause people trouble**', not to make unusual requests.

The influence of preparation are **to know and organize one's actual condition**, and **releases them from the anxiety about giving somebody trouble**, not about death itself.

## RESULTS

### ① ORGANIZE ACTIVITIES OF PREPARATION

Listed items on the ENDING-NOTES are categorised. Eventually, 9 activities are extracted.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Decision-making in medical and nursing care | Decision-making in funeral ceremony and grave |
| Messages for the relatives                  | Life story                                    |
| Personal profile and career                 | Inheritance and Will                          |
| Contact list                                | Listing personal estate                       |
| Organizing belongings                       |   |

### ② & ③ PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEWS OF 10 COURSES

- 1) Ages 60~70's
- 2) Thoughts about death and dying  
People tend not to want Life-prolonging treatment.  
People tend not to stick with details of their own funeral.
- 3) About writing ENDING-NOTE  
People participate the courses with enthusiasm so as to use ENDING-NOTE effectively. Although, People feel that continuing to write ENDING-NOTE is not easy.

### ④ INTERVIEWS WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE

- 1) Experience of intimate people's death is very influential in their preparations
- 2) Talking or interacting with people about death is a difficult matter; therefore, preparation is based on and rather promoted from this premise.
- 3) Motivation of preparation is consideration of other people so as 'not to cause people trouble', not to make unusual requests that will cause problems for others.
- 4) Preparation releases them from the anxiety about giving somebody trouble, not about death itself
- 5) Decision-making, particularly in medical care and caregiving, could become difficult by the substance of their future image of aging and death.