

What is the picture of our future society?

Though the number of single household in Europe is bigger than in East Asia, it is a great social concern in Japan and in Korea more because increasing single household number in two countries has close relation to serious social problems such as the unidentified suicide, the lonely death, Hikikomori ¹ etc.

Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK, Japanese Broadcasting Corporation in English) reported on 31 January 2010 that thirty-two thousand people a year died lonely and that the local governments buried them. This news triggered a rapidly growing interest in "disconnected society" or the social circumstances that the bonds were reduced in family, community and workplace respectively.

In South Korea, single household number is not so high than other OECD countries. But the main problem is the increasing speed of the number. It has been increased three times faster than other countries for 20 years.

A South Korea newspaper article "too sad lunch" about the story of an isolated student was a big social issue in 2012.

She was a first year student in a University. Although many students went to lunch together, she didn't have any friend to go with. She felt uncomfortable when she had lunch in cafeteria alone. For avoiding other's eyes, she began to have lunch in a toilette in an empty building. She uploaded some photos and her story in Internet.

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According to a survey in Japan, there are about 25% students in a University had their lunch in a toilet at least once.

Psychiatrist and author Shizuo Machizawa proclaimed discovery of the "lunchmate syndrome," used to describe the stress felt by school newcomers who, finding it so troublesome or stressful to make new friends with whom they could sit together for lunch in the dining hall or cafeteria began taking their meals in toilet cubicles. The Japanese term for this activity is "benjo-meshi"

According to Korean Statistics' survey, citizen answered that the trend of disconnected society is resulted from the individualism resulting from high competition (46.2%), the decreasing of family value (39.3%), being ignorant of neighborhoods (37.9%), the increasing of single householders (21.6%), nuclearized family (21.6%), population aging (11.6%), unemployment (11.4%), low marriage rate (7.8%), low birthrate (4.5%)

The goal of this art project is to find a way to improve reconnecting and rebuilding social relationship strongly and to make people have interest in social problems arising from the trend of disconnected society.

¹ Hikikomori (引きこもり or 引き籠もり、literally "pulling inward, being confined", i.e., "acute social withdrawal") is a Japanese term to refer to the phenomenon of reclusive adolescents or adults who withdraw from social life, often seeking extreme degrees of isolation and confinement.