

A study on the Components of 'Kodokushi (Solitary Death) Phenomenon'

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“Kodokushi (solitary death) phenomenon” is not one type of the “death” but phenomenon that is related to a wide range of social context. In order to understand the “kodokushi (solitary death) phenomenon”, it is necessary to have comprehensive perspective about the social situation in which an individual has been placed until the “death” and the situation occurring after the “death”. In this perspective, this paper reviews several controversial issues on the existing definitions of “kodokushi (solitary death)”, and discusses about the components that constitute the “kodokushi (solitary death) phenomenon”. As a result, this paper shows that the “kodokushi (solitary death) phenomenon” consists of elements which is not only the phenomenon of the “death” as a “social thing”, but also related to individuals before the “death” and the surroundings of individuals after the “death”. These elements correspond to “individual”, “community” and “society”—major agencies of modern society. And it suggests that the “kodokushi (solitary death) phenomenon” could be reduced to problems related to the position and the function of those agencies in modern society.