

The History of the Movement of Persons with Disabilities in Japan and the Establishment of JDF

- from Separation to Friendship, Friendship to Cooperation, and
- Cooperation to New Future -

Japan Disability Forum, Board Chairman
Japan Council on Disability, Executive Director
Katsunori FUJII

1. Movement of Persons with Disabilities and Myself

1) Various contradictions that I witnessed in the local community

- i. Some doubts I felt while I worked as a teacher at a special school for students with orthopedic impairments
 - a. Why is there a "school-entry screening procedure"? Why is the school-entry of children with more severe disabilities rejected?
 - b. Why don't children with disabilities like summer/winter holidays?
 - c. Why is there no place for students with disabilities to go after school graduation?
- ii. My early 20s and my devotion to the local movement of persons with disabilities
 - a. Established a local cross-disability organization (June 1973)
 - b. Conducted a thorough fact-finding survey (340 cases in the fields of medical care, education, daily living and employment)
 - c. Submitted an open letter to political parties (at the time of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly Election in June 1973)
 - d. Organized the first campaign calling for the installation of elevators at train stations (September 1973)

2) Participation in the movement for the establishment of joint community workshops

- i. Establishment of joint community workshops in local communities through trials and errors
 - a. "Will to work" of persons with disabilities as the starting point of the movement for the establishment of joint community workshops
 - b. Necessary conditions to open joint community workshops inspired by knowledge and experience
 - c. Joint community workshops that serve as a base for the local movement of persons with disabilities
- ii. Spread of joint community workshops and establishment of a nationwide organization "Kyosaren"
 - a. Initial members: 16 workshops (in 1977); current members: 1,850 workshops (in 2006)
 - b. The roles of joint community workshops for persons with disabilities
 - c. The present situation of "Kyosaren (national liason of joint community workshops)"

2. History of the Movement of Persons with Disabilities in Japan

1) Disability organizations before World War II

2) Full scale development of disability organizations after World War II

- i. Persons with disabilities caused by the war and the disability organizations
- ii. Development of organizations for persons with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities lagged behind

3) The International Year of Disabled Persons (1981) brought about qualitative changes in the Movement of Persons with Disabilities

- i. The International Year of Disabled Persons and its significant influence on the aspects of policy-making and movements

- ii. Establishment of the Japan Council for the International Year of Disabled Persons
 - a. The first meeting of organizations representing different types of disabilities
 - b. Establishment of the Japan Council for the International Year of Disabled Persons (present Japan Council on Disability) and its activities
 - c. The present situation of the Japan Council on Disability which comprises 70 organizations
- 4) The final year of the “UN Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992)” and the movement of persons with disabilities
 - i. The nationwide campaign commemorating the final year of the UN Decade of Disabled Persons, and the cooperation amongst the related organizations
 - ii. Proposal of the “Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons” to the Japanese Government
- 5) The “Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002)” and the network with the disability organizations in the Asia Pacific region
 - i. Annual campaign meetings held every year in Asian Pacific countries
 - ii. The Decade’s influence on each country’s policies in cooperation with projects led by ESCAP and other international agencies
 - iii. Development towards the “Second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (2003-2012)”
- 3. Outputs of the Movement of Persons with Disabilities
 - 1) Disability related laws and systems
 - i. National laws and systems (Fundamental Law for Disabled Persons, Basic Plan for Disabled Persons, etc.)
 - ii. Local governmental systems (47 prefectures have their own systems)
 - 2) Change of awareness of the society by:
 - i. Appealing to the mass media
 - ii. Organizing various events and campaigns
 - iii. Publishing magazines and journals of related organizations
 - iv. Publishing books (as organizations and/or individuals); and
 - v. Filing lawsuits (only a small number of cases so far)
 - 3) Projects
 - i. Establishment of community workshops, group homes and local counseling centers
 - ii. Establishment of organizations of persons with disabilities (self-help groups)
 - 4) International exchange
 - i. By affiliating with international organizations
 - ii. Through own exchanges and support activities
 - 5) Empowerment of persons with disabilities and their organizations
 - i. Learning what educational institutions do not offer through campaigns and movement of persons with disabilities
 - ii. Improving skills of strategy
- 4. Ten Requirements to Strengthen the Movement of Persons with Disabilities
 - The Movement of Persons with Disabilities should;
 - 1) have clear principles,
 - 2) build a clear organizational structure,
 - 3) organize conferences which are appealing,
 - 4) appoint young board members,
 - 5) establish a solid fiscal foundation,

- 6) organize innovative activities and projects,
- 7) set mid- to long-term plans,
- 8) disseminate a lot of information,
- 9) interact with external bodies (including international exchanges), and
- 10) have a stable administration.

5. The New Phase of the Movement of Persons with Disabilities in Japan

1) Establishment of the Japan Disability Forum (JDF)

- i. Background of its establishment
- ii. Process to its establishment and the “JDF Preparation Committee” (October 31, 2004)
- iii. Significance of its establishment

2) Present activities/objectives of the JDF

- i. Two international issues
 - a. Adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
 - b. Success of the “Second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons”
- ii. Two domestic challenges
 - a. Improvement of the Law Concerning Self-Reliance Support for Persons with Disabilities
 - b. Promotion of the enactment of the Disability Discrimination Act

3) Difficulties that the JDF faces

- i. Consolidation of its fiscal foundation
- ii. Establishment of the administrative structure

6. Challenges of the Movement of Persons with Disabilities in Japan

- 1) Demonstrate sound and strong commitment as a non-governmental organization
- 2) Enhance policy-making capacity (including research ability)
- 3) Secure stable revenue sources
- 4) Develop its organization towards an internationally recognized NGO