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その古来の民族伝承の障害者観に依拠して

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for the Handicapped in Asia

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Possibilities of Japan's International Contribution to the Rehabilitation for the Handicapped in Asia
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Hiroko NAKAJIMA¹⁾, Tomoko NAKASHIMA²⁾

最近の研究や人口調査によると、2025年までに途上国では障害者の数は現在に倍するとも言われている。もはや、障害者への支援は少数者のためのものではなく、グローバルレベルの新たな重要課題となっている。

国際連合は従来の障害者分野での援助方法を見直し、CBR(community based rehabilitation)や、コミュニティーケアという概念を用いてその効果的な援助を模索しているが未だ十分な理解を得られていない。

本稿では、アジアにおける障害者の現状と障害者分野における先進国やわが国の国際協力の現状を点検し、その難点の克服が可能であるか否かを探る。そして、今後の協力体制のあり方に示唆を与える思想でもありと考えられるCBRの基本的理念の本質は、我々が近代以前から独自に涵養してきた共生概念、ケアの思想に見出せる、という仮説を神話や民衆説話を通じて提起する。

草の根的レベルからの障害者国際協力の可能性を期待し、日本からの共生概念の発信の必要性を提起するものである。

Key words: rehabilitation, the handicapped, community care, Japanese pre-modern folklore
リハビリテーション、障害者、地域の共生概念、日本の民族伝承

Introduction

This is the era of globalization. Economic, cultural, and socio-political relations cross all borders. Poverty, environmental pollution, over-population and countless health problems cannot be solved by one country alone. In order to cope with so many international problems effectively, both international welfare assistance and functional national welfare systems are required. The welfare of the handicapped in

Asia relies specifically on international assistance.

Due to these facts, we need to re-examine the ways we assist the handicapped in order to achieve effective international assistance.

Methods

In this paper, I want to examine what is the most important essence when we assist people in the field of rehabilitation.

First, I examined the situation of international

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assistance by the United Nations and Japan, and discovered what problems presently existed.

Secondly, I assumed that the reason a project failed was that the method of assistance for the handicapped was misunderstood especially concerning rehabilitation. We have learned various ways to provide assistance from western countries. However, since almost all methods and ideas have been brought from overseas, we don't understand the true meaning of assistance for the handicapped in the field of rehabilitation. What is rehabilitation? It does not only mean physical recovery but also mental recovery and the ability to accept people as they are. We should know our history because rehabilitation is the product of human wisdom, which has been cultivated in the culture, land, and history of a people group.

Thirdly, I want to find out the essence and meaning of "rehabilitation" in the history of Japan by analyzing pre-modern folkloric images and legends of the handicapped.

And finally, I will assert that Japanese people should notice that we have a care culture and we can share the spirit of caring with other countries in the world in order to ensure further effective cooperation.

Discussion

) Present state of the handicapped

The statistics for the handicapped in the Asia-Pacific region are not clearly grasped, even by the United Nations¹⁾. However, by U.N. statistics, it is clear that the population of the handicapped ranges from 0.2 to 20.9% per nation. Such a large disparity comes from different definitions of what it means to be handicapped. The definitions vary depending on social, economic, political, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

According to the research and population censuses released by WHO (World Health Organization), it is thought that one out of every six people is handicapped. It is predicted that the number of the handicapped in the world will double by 2025.

There are various causes for being handicapped: vitamin A deficiency, infectious diseases, malnutrition, poliomyelitis, inflammation, encephalitis,

tuberculosis and so on. These causes have been contained in developed countries, but they still remain and continue to raise havoc in developing countries.

) The present state of international assistance for the handicapped

A. Assistance by the United Nations

The United Nations has developed various plans, which aim to protect the human rights and security of the handicapped throughout the world.

In order to prevent disabilities, promote rehabilitation, and allow for full equality in society, the United Nations set 1981 as the "International Year for the Handicapped" and decided on a "World Plan of Action for the Handicapped" in 1982. It also declared from 1983 to 1992 as "Ten Years for the Handicapped" and advocated welfare for them throughout the world. After that period, the ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) set another ten years "For the Handicapped in Asia and the Pacific Ocean" in 1993 to continue to promote their rights.

In this 30 year period, each developed country has contributed physical, economic, technical, cultural and educational support to the field of rehabilitation, but it is hard to say whether or not this assistance has accomplished the goal of changing a situation into a normal condition again for a person when he/she has lapsed into an unsuitable condition.

From the 1950s, it was believed that the most effective method of dealing with poverty and protecting human rights was to inject funds. The governments of developed countries, international organizations, and NGOs established funds to offer to developing countries. All too often, however, the money was used for commemorative institutions and extravagant rehabilitation centers in the cities, where the lower class people were not able to enjoy any of the benefits.

The United Nation Secretary General stated, "We cannot say that the living situation of the handicapped became better during the U.N. Decade of the Handicapped in many developing countries and 98% of them did not receive welfare services".

B. Assistance by Japan

Japan began its foreign assistance as an Official Development Assistance (ODA) country from 1954,

(Table 1) The Contents of Aid in the Field of Rehabilitation from the Japanese Government;
ODA (Official Development Assistance)

Fiscal year	Country	Issue	Amount of money (100 million yen)	Outline	Project implementation
1980	Peru	Local mental health center/ equipment	22.0	Funding, supply, and establishment of a mental health and dementia center	1980
1983	Thailand	Workmen's-accident rehabilitation center/ maintenance	10.9	Rehabilitation center for the handicapped by industrial accidents	1984
1985	China	Limb-handicapped rehabilitation research center/ maintenance	33.8	Research center constructed for limb-handicapped rehabilitation	1988
1988	Indonesia	Rehabilitation equipment/ maintenance	0.22	Rehabilitation equipment supplied for the handicapped in a farm village area	1994

Japanese International Cooperation Agency : Participation for international cooperation of a disabled person part. 2. 55. Japanese International Cooperation Agency, Tokyo, 1997.

and it became a top donor country in 1992. Around 1980, Japan began its international cooperation in the field of rehabilitation. Even though Japan is a top donor compared with other forms of assistance, Japan's ODA for the handicapped has been extremely limited.

As seen in Table 1, there were only 4 cases of Japanese assistance in 1996. 19 small-scale loans were provided in 1993 and 17 projects were carried out in 1994. The total rate of assistance for the handicapped in 1993 was 8.8%. In 1994, it was only 4.4%.

The problem is not only the amount of money but also the field in which Japan injects it. These funds were used mainly for the construction of schools or vocational institutions for the handicapped in the big cities. This resulted in providing equipment without any training and instruction.

As I pointed out above, more than 98% of the handicapped couldn't benefit from the construction of facilities centered in big cities.

Aside from Japan other donor countries want to

provide assistance in urban areas because they have infrastructure, and activities there can be evaluated efficiently and easily. The results are visible and effectively advertise what the countries have done. As a result donor countries build big gorgeous buildings in big cities.

Another problem is the contribution of new technologies to developing countries. When specialists from developed countries teach technology to developing countries, it is not suitable for the culture or economic situation of the developing country. For example, Japan provided functional training machines, but they couldn't be used due to a lack of electric power. Many wheel chairs were sent but once they were broken, nobody could fix them because of a lack of materials and skills.

What is needed is more human contribution. Presently, the rehabilitation funds are very limited in terms of human contribution.

Of the more than 400 courses offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA, only 14 courses are provided for the rehabilitation and training of

(Table 2) Human Contributions in the Field of Rehabilitation.

Fiscal year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total for five years
Total trainee acceptance	8,096	8,363	8,834	9,562	-	-
Number of people accepted for the handicapped welfare field	56	51	90	76	79	352
Ratio of the handicapped welfare field (%)	0.69	0.61	1.02	0.79		

Japanese International Cooperation Agency : Participation for international cooperation of a disabled person part. 2. 38. Japanese International Cooperation Agency, Tokyo, 1997.

the handicapped, and follow-up surveys of the courses are not being carried out.

There are many examples where assistance is provided but it is not effective.

C. New assistance theory : from charity to empowerment

Because of this ineffective assistance, the agenda of the United Nations has changed from charity to empowerment²⁾.

It is principally important to the international community that the handicapped themselves participate in international cooperative enterprises. The slogan, "equal-opportunity for the handicapped" was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993. It stated that the opinion of the handicapped community was necessary for the entire development of a project. The handicapped should participate in the project: planning, implementation, and evaluation. The United Nations General Assembly also said that governments should take up any problems the handicapped had with the projects³⁾.

There are many merits for the handicapped taking the lead in international cooperative enterprises. First of all, the handicapped can be empowered by taking part in the processes of the project. Secondly, it is easier to grasp a handicapped person's exact needs. Thirdly, it helps to reform the discriminative consciousness of the handicapped by seeing them make their own decisions. Especially in Asian countries, it is believed that the handicapped don't have their own opinion. Fourthly, it allows for self-reform and increases their self-esteem through social participation.

The importance of participation and inclusion should be recognized and emphasized in the

international community.

a) Community Based Rehabilitation

There is a method for implementing projects that looks at the problems the handicapped have, making it clear what the problems are and promoting whole improvement that focuses on the handicapped person's participation. This program was named CBR (Community Based Rehabilitation). This program seems to be one of the best approaches for empowerment for the handicapped. WHO started CBR programs and it was later adopted by the United Nations and other private organizations.

The target of CBR is to build the social structure of people living together by supporting a handicapped person's participation in society.

In order to do that, they first organize a community group. Each member of the group comes from a family that includes someone who is handicapped and they discuss what is needed for the people in the village. Many demands of the handicapped are heard when holding a discussion. Then they set priorities and put them into practice. The agenda might include paving roads, making wheelchairs by using the materials of that area or other helpful activities. CBR also provides social education by promoting an affirmative attitude toward the handicapped in an area. It is a practical means of empowerment.

In addition, physical rehabilitation is performed not only by specialists but also by family members. There is a CBR manual that was made by WHO, which family members can consult and use.

This approach fulfills the needs of the family and community. The approach can empower the whole village as a result. It is rehabilitation for and by the

community.

b) The problems of CBR programs

However, there are reports that CBR projects don't seem to work well and they cause different problems.

Mike Miles pointed out that CBR produced further discrimination and strengthened the social stratum because the needs of the healthy and the handicapped were different, the healthy tended to exclude the handicapped, and that it was difficult to change social consciousness of the handicapped⁴⁾. Johnston M Thomas pointed out that the quality of service went from bad to worse because the staff of many institutions couldn't understand the concepts and strategies of CBR programs⁵⁾. J.Kowk said that CBR was just a theory that didn't have a strategy to put into practice, and that all burdens were on the family⁶⁾.

Furthermore, M. H. Thorburn said that the reports of UNESCO and UNICEF were not credible at all though they said CBR was working well⁷⁾. Susan B. Parker said CBR seems to be propaganda⁸⁾. There are many reports that CBR is just a theory.

I think the reason of failure was a misunderstanding of the CBR concept. CBR is not an assertion to get human rights but a declaration to share the feelings and problems of others.

D. The concept of CBR : reciprocity and care

Even though many reports have shown that CBR is not an effective assistance, the idea and concept of CBR itself is worth analyzing and it should be investigated.

I want to examine the concept of CBR from another angle: "care and reciprocity".

The fundamental meaning of care is a strong concern for other's suffering, and has various semantic contents. "Care" is having mutual recognition and trust. It is related to reciprocity that both sides obtain a feeling of fullness and satisfaction. Doing for the handicapped is doing for oneself. This concept is equal to the concept of CBR.

Care and CBR focus on what individuals want by discussing it with the community and not forcing them to accept assistance. Alternatively, a theory of paternalism is material centered assistance, where

the assistance does not benefit others but the giver.

These are the common points to both CBR and the notion of care and reciprocity.

However, it is difficult to say if people actually understand the meaning of care and reciprocity. I suggest it could be found by analyzing Japanese pre-modern history of the handicapped.

) The possibility of Japan's international contribution : learning from Japanese pre-modern era

Japanese people, including researchers, seem to think that the CBR approach based on reciprocity and care is a new and imported theory. However, in Japan's pre-modern era such thoughts already existed. In fact, reciprocity was the basis for Japanese thought.

It is true that Japan intentionally formed a negative view of the handicapped in the process of building a modern Meiji Era. In forming a modern society, productivity was top priority, and Japan strove for wealth and military strength. The handicapped with limited productivity were intentionally labeled as inferior to those who were healthy. People were forced to accept this concept. Modern values justified discrimination against the handicapped. This view categorized the handicapped and defined them as people in need of assistance.

But, before the modernization of our country, the handicapped and healthy people had lived together in a reciprocal relationship.

Below, I look at a cultural atmosphere that does not classify the handicapped and healthy people in terms of wellness. By examining the notion which existed before the modern era, I believe that cooperation in the field of rehabilitation will become much more active, and Japan can play a leading role in this cooperation.

A. Religion

First, I want to state that Animism is the basis of the Japanese way of thinking. Animism is at the core of Japanese thought. It is based on the worship of nature. Nature provides food for us to live, but it also takes food away by natural disasters, drought, storms and floods. Pre-modern Japanese did not try to control nor suppress nature, even if it brought them natural disasters. Instead, they prayed to nature

with a caring and concerned attitude. In this way, they prepared the mental ground for reciprocity between nature and human beings. By providing care, they were also protected by nature. The relationship went both ways. This is reciprocity. This thought wasn't limited to the relationship of man and nature, but also healthy people and the handicapped. They noticed that caring for the handicapped was also caring for themselves.

On the other hand, European thought does not have the same notion of reciprocity between nature and human beings. Rather, Europeans attempted to control and overrule nature. The foundation of western thought is based on the Christian doctrine of a human-centered view of the world. Western people think the handicapped should be cared for. They think that the handicapped should have their own rights, because God creates all people equal. It is true that there are many western countries, which have enhanced welfare, but the basic concept is different from the Japanese one.

Japanese healthy people cared for the handicapped because they knew they were cared for by the handicapped.

In short, the meaning of caring is different between Japan and western countries. The Japanese way of thinking seems more common with the Asian view. By examining the CBR project from this point of view, the project itself might go well. So I suggest we send this message to the world and share these thoughts to live together.

B. Ancient myth

The care concept can also be found in the ancient myths of Japan. According to Japanese myth, the gods Izanagino Mikoto and Izanaminno Mikoto founded Japan. They gave birth to a handicapped baby considered to be suffering from serious cerebral palsy. The child even at 3 years old, could not control its own body nor walk or sit. The baby was named Hiruko. This story is written in the "Kojiki" and "Nihon Shoki" myths of Japan. After being born, Hiruko was passed on a ship and erased from the historical record. However she was reborn as the god Ebisu (蛭子) (the god of commerce). Ebisu is drawn with withered legs. The importance of the story is that people wanted Hiruko (蛭子) to be

reborn as a god, and not forsaken. It is interesting to note that Ebisu and Hiruko are expressed by the same Chinese characters.

There is another handicapped god in a Japanese myth that assisted Ookuninushino Mikoto (Ookuninushi), a leading figure in the make-up of Japan. His name was Sukunahikono Mikoto, and though a god of wisdom and existence, he was handicapped in stature. Thanks to this god, Ookuninushi did a great job. The man who introduced Sukunahikonomikoto to Ookuninushi is a scarecrow named Yamadanosohodo, the god of 1 leg. Yamadanosohodo knew all things under the sun, although he couldn't walk⁹⁾.

In Japanese myths, the handicapped played a great role in establishing Japan.

C. Narrative

Other popular stories in Japan tell of a handicapped person who brings good fortune. Fukusuke won a good reputation at a freak show during the Edo period. He was born the child of a farmer in Hyogo prefecture, and was only 70cm tall with a huge head that was half the size of his whole body. He was forced to perform in the show, but was successful and although the reasons are uncertain, he won his freedom. He received good luck and he became an independent pottery storekeeper. He made a mascot of pottery that was the same shape as himself. It is said that he greatly prospered because of his pottery. Even now the mascot "Fukusuke" is a symbol of prosperity and it is believed to bring good luck.

Traditional tales of the handicapped bringing good fortune can be read throughout Japan in the Blessed Child series. Transmitted from ancient times, these stories spread all over Japan as The Child Fortune, The Insect of Fortune, and The Treasure Child, etc.

There were reasons why the handicapped children were called "blessed children". First, the handicapped children often needed help so the family bonded together and worked for the child. This led to prosperous houses and unexpected fortune. Second, since the handicapped child didn't marry in many cases, he/she could work for the family. Third, they were thought to be reincarnations of Buddha.

There is also a Senryu, (a kind of Japanese poem) called Yanagitaru. A rubric says, "Of 7 gods, all

except Bente are handicapped." This is related to the tales of the Blessed Child. There are 7 gods who are believed to bring us happiness, and six of them are handicapped. The god Hotei who brings wealth is obese. The gods of wealth and longevity, Fukurokujyu and Jyuroujin, are hydrocephalus. The god who gives us power to overcome weakness, Bisamon, has an unusually rough skin and frame. The god who brings us health and wealth, Daikoku, is always laughing. It is possible that he is mentally handicapped. The god of commerce, Ebisu, (introduced above as an incarnation of Hiruko) has withered legs. Only Bente (the goddess of eloquence, music, and wisdom) is viewed as a healthy god. But the Senryu says that these handicapped gods provide people with happiness.

These stories prove that Japanese culture is based on care and reciprocity.

Result

As seen above, international assistance has been changing from material centered assistance to human centered assistance. Many programs like CBR are being put into practice. Even though theories have been developed, the real situation has not changed as much as we had hoped. One of the reasons for failure comes from a lack of understanding what rehabilitation, care, reciprocity and living together mean.

In Japan the idea of reciprocity and the coexistence of the healthy and the handicapped developed continuously from ancient times. The concept of "care", which is so important when dealing with the idea of community based rehabilitation, has prospered throughout Japanese history. By recognizing and reconsidering it, we will understand what living together truly means.

I hope Japanese people remember the basis of rehabilitation. And I hope that mindset spreads from a grass-roots level. Then, Japan will be able to play

a leading role in international cooperation in the rehabilitation field.

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