

Health Services as Voluntary Movements in Korea and Japan

I was pleased to learn that the Korean Association of Health Promotion has been in services for 40 years since the foundation of its predecessor, the Korean Association for Parasite Eradication. I extend my hearty congratulations to you on the occasion of this commemorative ceremony.

Although there is some time lag, your association and the Japanese health service movement have made similar efforts to overcome all kinds of difficulties, and both have developed to the present status. At this occasion, I would like to look back upon the history of cooperation and partnership that we have enjoyed during the past few decades.

The Korean Association for Parasite Eradication was established in 1964 when the Korean Hygiene and Animal Association(韓國衛生動物協會) was dissolved. It hoisted a slogan to lower parasite infection to zero in ten years. The Korean Daily Journal(韓國日報社) in commemoration of its 10th anniversary supported the campaign. The record says that the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry(農林部), the Ministry of Education(文教部), and the Korean Parasitology Society(大韓寄生虫學會) extended their support respectively. Your enthusiastic advocacy led to the enactment of the Parasite Disease Prevention Act in 1966. You made a plan to conduct parasite tests for 18 million people a year and requested the cooperation and assistance of Japanese organizations with experience in parasite control.

We accepted the enthusiasm of your association and your country, and cooperated with you by providing the equipment for examination and vehicles for mobile examination through the then Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency, and sent scholars and experts to your country for technical exchange. I personally visited Korea for two

weeks from November 16 in 1971 for the first time, and called upon the municipal and provincial administrations as well as universities and the branches of your association to exchange information. The two weeks I stayed in your country is memorable time that I can never forget. Since that time, I was so enchanted by your country that I have visited Korea so many times that I have lost count.

In October 1982, the 9th conference of the Asian Parasite Control Organization was held in Seoul. I still remember that many delegates from countries in Asia assembled in Seoul and had fruitful discussions at this occasion.

In the meantime, the Association has established branches on the municipal and district levels. Leaders of the Association have visited Japan, and concluded an agreement with the Expo Association to obtain its subsidy for the establishment of branches, and successfully constructed eight branch offices.

You succeeded in parasite control, thanks to the concentrated efforts made by your staff members and cooperation extended by interested people. Your extensive educational activities among your people contributed to the remarkable performance. As with the parasite prevention movement in Japan, parasite infection rates in Korea were reduced nearly to 10 percent in the latter half of the 1970s.

The Association for Parasite Eradication that had achieved a splendid outcome as a voluntary organization established a new organization in 1982, which was named the Korean Association of Health Promotion, and in 1986, the Association for Parasite Eradication merged into the new organization.

In 1984, at the commemorating ceremony of the 20th anniversary of your Association, the government of Korea awarded the National Medal "Dongbaek-Jang" to the late Kuni Chojiro, the founder of the Japan Association of Parasite Control, Japan Association of Health Services, and Japan family Planning Association. We accepted the honor with great pleasure.

In June 1984, we presented to your Association automatic electrocardiogram and phonocardiogram analysis devices (by Fukuda Electronics) with the hope of preventing sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and promoting health among small children in your country. The device was jointly developed by experts engaged for a long time in the research of child heart checkups in Korea, Taiwan, Japan and others. Great attention

was given to the device at that time, and KBS TV broadcast an interview program about it. Dr. Kim Sam Soo who was the vice-chairman of the Circulatory Organ Society of Korea(循環器學會) and director of the Association and myself talked about it in the program which was broadcast to the whole country. I can recall this with a sense of nostalgia.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, staff exchange has become a frequent feature between our two organizations. I believe that this program is effective to enhance the morale of both organizations.

The 30th anniversary celebration of your Association held in November 1994 is another unforgettable event. At this ceremony, the late Dr. Sugawa Yutaka, chairman of the Japan Association of Parasite Control, Dr. Shigeo Hayashi, director of the same, the late Mr. Inami Kazukiyo, director of Tokyo Association of Preventive Medicine, Dr. Harashima Saburo, head of the clinic attached to the same and myself were invited and had a warm welcome. The memory that we all were greatly moved by your warm reception is still fresh in my mind. There were also representatives from the World Health Organization and the government of Korea in attendance. The academic conference was very fruitful with a special lecture and a symposium. At the ceremony, honors were given to people of distinct merits. The National Medal "Mokryun-Jang" was conferred upon the late Dr. Yokogawa. Muneo from the Korean government. It gave us a great honor.

The first great event in the 21st century was the 1st academic conference that you held on April 19, 2003. Prior to this, Dr. Kim Sang-In, chairperson of your association attended the 47th National Convention of Health Services Association(予防医学事業推進全國大會) held in Okayama city in 2002. Perhaps it was Dr. Kim who conceived of the plan for a health promotion campaign in Korea mobilizing the branches of the Association, and interested parties in the government and the academic community. The 1st academic conference initiated the campaign. Dr. Kitagawa Teruo, chairperson of the Tokyo Health Service Association and myself attended the conference at your invitation. I greeted the conference on behalf of the Health Service Association in Japan, and Dr. Kitagawa gave a lecture on "The Present and Future of the Health Promotion Movement in Japan." Other lectures were on health promotion in Korea by a

government officer, and on the importance of accuracy management by an academic researcher. It was a substantial academic meeting.

You are holding a ceremony to celebrate the 40th anniversary in November this year. I received an invitation to attend the ceremony, but unfortunately, we have our program on the same day and I am not able to visit your country this time. Dr. Yoshida Katsumi, professor in preventive medicine class at St. Marianna University, College of Medicine will speak on the "Health Promotion Act in Japan and Healthy Japan 21" and Dr. Kitagawa Teruo, chairperson of the Tokyo Health Service Association will speak on "Diagnosis and Treatment of Congenital Disorders in Japan." I am confident that their lecturers will be beneficial to the audience.

I wrote this message at the recollection of my participation in your meetings. While writing, I felt tears rushing into my eyes for the memories so dear to my heart. I am grateful for the long-term warm relations that I have enjoyed with people in your organization.

In both countries, population aging and low fertility are progressing at a speed that no other countries have experienced. Both countries are faced with similar social problems such as the increase in lifestyle-related diseases due to changes in living environments and diversified diets. In order to build our societies into one where people can live healthy, bright and vigorous lives, we should strengthen our partnership and cooperation further.

In closing, I wish to pay my respects to the 40-year history of your organization and pray for your further progress. Again, I extend my congratulations.