

International Contributions and Volunteer Activities

(Sharing Happiness)

Mitsuhiro Saotome, Former Adviser for MOFA, First Ambassador for NGO



Why should Japan make international contributions, when its economy has not been so flourishing these days? We often hear these questions. My answer is that Japan should make contributions worldwide.

One of the reasons is that Japan has received so much contribution from the international community, more than any other country has. We must show our gratitude.

After the Second World War, the impoverished Japan received an extensive support from the international community. From the United States, it received grants (Government Appropriation for Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA) and Economic Rehabilitation in Occupied Area Fund (EROA)) amounting four times the country's budget, while the World Bank extended low interest rate loans for construction of the Tokaido Bullet Train and Kurobe Dam.



Tokaido Bullet Train Financed by World Bank started operation in 1964



UNICEF Friendship Ambassador Audrey Hepburn

Thanks to its first Executive Director, Maurice Pate, UNICEF, the United Nation's organization to support the children in the Allied nations, extended untied support to the children of Germany and Japan. Despite objections to support the children of these two countries, Mr. Pate convinced the UN members that the children were not responsible for the war and the civilized nations should be ashamed of not helping the hungry children.

In 1965, recognized for its humanitarian activities, UNICEF received the Nobel Peace Prize as the first international organization to be awarded the prize.



ケアの親善大使イングリッド・バーグマン
(1949年アメリカ)

Furthermore, CARE USA, an international non-governmental organization, extended package supplies, and Licensed Group for Relief in Asia (LARA) sent foods to save 15 million hungry children in Japan. The scale of these supports was equivalent to half the national budget of Japan at that time. Ingrid Bergman, well-known for her roles in movies titled “Casablanca” and “For Whom the Bell Tolls”, became the CARE ambassador and contributed greatly in raising funds for the children in Japan.



(本日 840) さよふ当千る類付要きにーでセハ ても

The second reason is for our national security. Japan has not cultivated friendly relations with many member countries in the international community. On the other hand, Germany, another defeated country, established European Union (EU) with the former enemy country, France, and succeeded in establishing a unified currency for Europe and forming friends. Japan should support poor developing nations with true concern and compassion and form friendly relationship with many countries that will trust us and share values and ideas with us. Having friendly neighbors leads to enhance our national security.

The third reason is the noblesse oblige (an obligation of noble, prosperous, and fortunate people to help the weak, poor, and unfortunate people.) When you are going to help a person in pain or difficulty, do not ask why you have to help. Compared with the people in developing nations, even under the present economic conditions, we are far more prosperous than them. If such prosperous country does not help hungry people in poor countries, the world community would question about the nobility or dignity of the country.

At the end of the Second World War, Japan’s GNP was lower than that of Ghana in 1957 when it became the first independent country in Africa. When we were suffering from such poverty, international organizations and NGOs extended precious supports to us. Today many countries in Asia and Africa are in the same conditions as we were a half century ago. It is our turn now to show our gratitude to the world community.

I would like to call your attention on a story of UNICEF, the first international

organization that extended support to Japan in the postwar period. Many famous individuals have served as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors. One of them was Audrey Hepburn. In 1988 she ended her career of actress at the age of 59, and accepted to become the UNICEF ambassador. She did not want to receive any salary but to be an official staff, she had to receive some payment. So she signed an agreement to work for the organization at one dollar per year. However, she spent one million dollars of her own money to help children. In January 1993, she suffered a serious illness and passed away in Somalia.

Why did Audrey accept the physically strenuous and hard job of the UNICEF Ambassador? When one of her friends asked this, Audrey said: During the Second World War, I joined Nazi resistance activity and faced many difficulties. I thought I would have died many times. Somebody helped me out and so I survived. After the war, I went to London and enrolled at Marie Rambert Ballet School to become a ballerina. During one of the trainings, a Hollywood director, William Wyler scouted me for a movie. Thus I became a movie actress. The movies such as “Roman Holiday” and “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” in which I played a main role turned out to be great hits. I was fortunate to have many fans around the world and had an exciting life. However, I do not intend to continue acting. I wish to spend the rest of my life doing what I should do or help the children suffering from war and poverty. I have had a wonderful and happy life. I wish to share a part of this happy life with these children.

About the author:

- Former Ambassador to Zambia and Malawi, former Consulate General of Auckland, Lecturer of Waseda and Sacred Heart Universities, St Paul University Graduate School
- Published Textbook on USA, International Volunteer Activities of Japan, Introduction for Senior Citizens on International Cooperation, and many other books.
- Received 1995 Bungei Shunju Best Essayist Award

Social Responsibility of Pharmaceutical Companies



Toichi Takenaka, PHJ
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Since 1997 Project HOPE Japan has extended such health and medical support to Asian countries as found essential during field investigation. In 2006 the NPO was reorganized as PH-Japan or People's Hope Japan (PHJ). The Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association of Japan (FPMAJ) has participated since January 1997 in the PHJ Board of Directors by appointing its chairman to the Board. I am its sixth representative to serve at the Board.

Among the PHJ activities, FPMAJ took leadership in raising funds for heart operations for Thai children and for hepatitis diagnosis education and training of Indonesian medical staff. Starting this fiscal year we will support medical and health services to developing nations in Asia. It is our privilege to take part in the PHJ activities. We have confidence and faith in the compassion and devotion of the PHJ staffs. Not only the Chairman, President, and Steering Committee members but also the staffs stationed in regional offices are conducting truly valuable activities. Especially, we admire the efforts of the regional office staffs. Despite difficult environments such as weather and living conditions, they are stationed in rural areas experiencing the lives of the people who are receiving the health and medical supports. This is the best way to ensure that donations from the PHJ members are used as intended.

World community is trying to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are an epoch-making undertaking approved by many nations and focused on human factors and the due date is set at 2015. Although significant progress has been achieved in various sectors at the half milestone of this undertaking, further efforts are certainly required to clear the goals in 2015.

Who is responsible for the achievement of the MDGs? While the responsibility of states is noted, individual companies and industry organizations must take responsibility also. Speaking of corporate social responsibility (CSR), each company conducts these activities depending on its capabilities and environment. PHJ has been conducting activities related to three goals of eight MDGs, namely, Goal 4: reduce child mortality;

Goal 5: improve maternal health, and Goal 6: combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. By supporting the PHJ activities, the pharmaceutical companies are positively contributing to the achievement of the MDGs.

Representing FPMAJ, I wish further success and growth of PHJ and we will continue supporting your operations.

Indonesia: Activities in Banten Province

I visited Kepaksan Area, Alang-Alang Village, Tirtayasa Subdistrict, Banten Province to see the current status of the Maternal and Child Health Support Program. The area is located seaside and you can notice from the smell that there are many fish farms.

Since the rainy season was over, the weather that day was fine and the sky was blue. About 20 pregnant women were gathered at the residence of a village midwife. They came to receive a periodical check. Taking this opportunity, a health education class was organized before the practical checking. Under the supervision of the district health center midwife, village midwives clearly and effectively explained important health care items during pregnancy using visual tools and gestures. The instructors covered not only the need to get periodical checks but also to pay attention on critical signs during pregnancy. While explaining useful exercises that would ensure a healthy pregnancy and smooth delivery, the instructors asked the expectant mothers to try these exercises. At the end of the class, the participants reported what they learned. It was useful to confirm the effectiveness of education.

Considering the clear role definition of village midwives in this program, I found that this health education class is well established and recognized and operated effectively. PHJ will continue to support this kind of local level maternal and child health improvement programs.
(Masahiro Ishizeki)



Left: Health education before checking



Right: A participant reporting

We hope that the children with walking difficulty would receive rehabilitation training with these walkers and enjoy going out to schools and play with friends soon.

Among the 260 walkers, 235 were donated to 12 rehabilitation centers while 25 were donated to three hospitals in Kampong Thom Province where PHJ is carrying out maternal and child health support program.

Please note that the subsidy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, was applied for the sea freight of these donated walkers from Japan to Cambodia.

(Masaru Yokoo)

Thailand: Cervical Cancer Prevention Education Project

This is a report on the expansion of the project which was successfully conducted from 2002 to 2006 in Suphan Buri and Chaiyaphum Provinces in central Thailand where the main industry is agriculture. In 2007 PHJ Thailand, using these experiences, expanded the project to Mae Tang and Mae Rim districts of Chiang Mai Province in cooperation with the provincial health office, and district hospitals and health centers. The project consisted of providing cervical cancer prevention education, pap-smear test, and assessment study toward women in poor households.

In 2008 the project conducted cervical cancer and pap smear awareness sessions. Also the project team together with local trained nurses, health officers, and PHJ Thailand staffs conducted orientation workshops on education and pap smear screening services for health service providers.

Also to improve pap screening skills effectively and efficiently, the project team provided training to local nurses and health service providers as well as health volunteers. The support included provision of educational materials, recording books, medical equipment and supplies to 30 health stations and two hospitals in Mae Tang and Mae Rim districts.

Sirorat Sinthupong is a registered nurse and head of the cervical cancer prevention program for Mae Tang Hospital. She is a member of the planning team for the project.



Sirorat said: “The cervical cancer prevention program with support from PHJT has contributed greatly to the success of the project in Mae Tang and Mae Rim districts. The pap smear screening coverage rate has increased 54% and by the end of 2009, we are targeting the coverage rate to increase to 60%. We have a very good relationship and work closely with PHJT staff. Thank you very much for your help and support.”

(Nanharakamon Kadmessam, Manager, Cervical Cancer Education Project)

Member’s Voice: Yokogawa Rokumaru-kai School in Cambodia

Yoshiyuki Watanabe is a PHJ individual member and leader of Yokogawa Rokumaru (60) Kai. Seven years have passed since some of the Yokogawa 60-kai members, retirees of Yokogawa Electric Corporation who joined the company back in 1960, constructed a Rokumaru-kai School in Cambodia to commemorate their retirement.

The members together with other persons interested in the program are visiting the school every year to continue the exchange from material and spiritual viewpoints.

The school is located in a remote village 200 kilometers south east of Anchor Wat, Siem Reap. Even today electricity, city water, and telephone services are not available and road is not paved. Since we are not able to speak the Khmer language, it is difficult to communicate with the people there. However, thanks to the help of Nakata-san, the head and other staffs of PHJ Cambodian Office in Kampong Thom located 18km from the school, we are able to communicate with the school master and continue the exchange with the school.

In 2008 we donated a kitchen and well so that the children who come to school without breakfast could have meals at school. We also organized an arts class to draw paintings.

We are pleased that three paintings from the art class were selected for the PHJ 2009 calendar. The children who produced these paintings and their families as well as the teachers were really happy to be able to contribute to the calendar.

During our annual visit, we cook curry and rice for 300 persons. Last year the curry lunch was prepared at the new kitchen with children's mothers. Children and teachers liked the meal and many asked for second plates.

This year we organized a sports event which is quite new for Cambodia schools as music and physical exercise are not included in their curriculum. We brought red and white headbands, red and white flags, other materials for cheering from home while the school prepared bamboo rods and others. Each person's function such as physical exercise leader, program leader, and emergency staff was defined in advance.

The day before the sports day, we explained why it is important to have a sports event, and tried radio gymnastic exercise and cheering, prepared a sports ground with lines and marks. On the sports day, school children were divided into a white team and red team, and both teams competed in radio gymnastic exercise, cheering game, ball throwing, tug of war, running race, and four relay races. The event was completed with radio gymnastic exercise and all participants joined in clearing and cleaning up. We were happy that there were no accidents or injuries.

The children really enjoyed the event. We were happy to see them actively competing in the games and to join them in the competition despite our age.

The 60-kai members are determined to continue the support to and exchange with the school so that the children will become valuable human resources of Cambodia and request PHJ's continued assistance and cooperation.



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