

Prospectus

Start up of the Musical and Cultural Normalization Project by Music Fans !

To fully enjoy the entertainment is our mental food for the daily life. However, when we reconfirm whether if everybody is benefiting from such opportunities and enjoy a cultural life, it comes to our mind that the reality in Japan is lagging behind from the situations in overseas yet. The deep-rooted barrier still confronts in social system, the facilities and the consciousness in people's mind.

In order to improve these situations and to lead to a way out, we are to promote the movement of spreading the concept of the normalization and to enhance barrier free, especially by gathering the physically-challenged people, the artists and the physically able-bodied people who love variety of entertainments, especially the music lovers who has the will of doing what little one can, in our favorite places such as concert halls and "live houses" (places with live music in Japan).

We will look at this issue from three different points of views. That is also the characteristic of our group; we consist of physically-challenged people, artists, and physically able-bodied people.

It is our opinion that it is possible to make a proposal for improvement to institutions and organizations by not only focusing on the perspectives by the physically-challenged people, but also including the aspects by the musician, the artist who actually provides the entertainment and the physically able-bodied people who approves and supports this movement. We will study problems multi-dimensionally and suggest an adaptable solution respecting each position. So, we devote all our energies to obtaining more artists' approval of our movement.

We start from what we can do to remove the barrier. When looking at the current situation of the barrier free movement in entertainment and cultural facilities from the point of views of the physically-challenged people, we face a couple of situations. For example, in spite of having wonderful physical facilities, the use of the facilities is not very convenient. Also there is a lack of awareness of the providers of the facilities in general. These are: low awareness of the staff towards the physically-challenged people and the circumstances that shows lack of the education in assistance. One would still carry restless feelings of encountering a risk and dissatisfaction caused by not being able to fully enjoy the exhibition even if they go out and try to have a wonderful experience. There are quite a few physically-challenged persons who share the same feelings. (Please refer to the note.) The artists who stand on the stage are also wishing to have everybody, no matter physically-challenged or physically able-bodied, enjoying and being touched by their music. Depending on the organizers and the concert halls, there is a big difference in awareness of such situations that make the musician feel lost. Also, there are physically able-bodied people who understand about the physically-challenged people and who try to help people who have problems and

share the enjoyment together. They wish to be a help somehow. We start our activity from places where we enjoy the music by summarizing all the ideas and wishes from these three different aspects and aiming to get rid of the barrier from entertainment and cultural facilities.

The goal of our organization is the Cultural Maturity. Our movement is not only to promote the barrier free movement from the perspective of the physically-challenged people but also to release the music and culture to truly spread out to the whole Japanese society. In deed, it is to deepen awareness among the whole Japanese nation so that music and cultural activities can be enjoyed as equal as possible by all the members of the society in terms of environment and condition. In future, we wish to appeal this movement not only within the concert halls and places with live music but also for any means of places of entertainment such as: sports facilities, theatres, cinemas, art museums, museums, amusement parks, and parks so that everyone can live a pleasant and civilized life.

Contents of activities

We will try to look for problems by researching and doing comparative analysis of the conditions of the measures towards physically-challenged people in the cultural and recreational facilities -- we will start with concert places -- in Japan and in other countries. We will take into consideration of the realities in Japan and other countries and bring up possible remedies to event organizers and site owners with our supporters. We will build up the number of artists who support this movement: in future, actors, players, talents, etc. Under the present system that challenged pays his attendant s fee, we demand the special discount for challenged. We will organize the publicities in order to make this movement familiar to everybody.

We look forward to hearing reports from physically-challenged persons and opinions from everyone. Let s make the environment where everybody can share excitements and sensations together.

December 10th, 2004

Challenged On The frontStage ~ COTS ~

<http://cots.gozaru.jp/> (Japanese Only)

Founder : NAKATA Yasuhiro

Note: Barriers and problems in the concert and event halls.

We introduce some report from physically-challenged people after experiencing dissatisfaction using concert halls. You can probably see the reality that even in some of the most popular concert halls in Kansai area are hardly perfect in sense of barrier free.

Physical problems

- Physically-challenged persons accessible bathroom... There are stairs, and it is necessary to have a support for those who use the wheelchair.
- Stairs on the way to the seat in the concert halls... It cannot be avoided since its architecture of the halls; however, it is very dangerous since the passage stairs are steep. It is the same for the all-weather-baseball domes and large halls where seat more than 10.000 people.
- Location of the seats (for wheelchairs) ...It is located where there will be no sight when people gets on their feet. It is not convincing to pay one class higher price when the seat is located in the cheaper area.
- Dissatisfaction in the treatment of the staff in places with live music... In many places, it is originally not built with the facilities for physically-challenged people; therefore, inconvenience in such places may be expected often. It is necessary to remind them to corporate in advance.

Mental problems

- The barrier of no-food policy... In some cases, intake of water is necessary for physically-challenged person to avoid becoming dehydrated. Sometimes, they are asked to leave to the area where serves food due to be thorough about the rule.
- Many staff lack in experience and knowledge to assist physically-challenged people ... There is a risk of provoking accidents due to an inappropriate reception by staffs that never pushed a wheelchair. Attention in directing persons with paralysis as well as vision-impaired persons is also necessary, however, it seems, there is very few staff with such experience.

Is Japan less-developed country in welfare ?

The difference is obvious just by comparing the laws about disabled from abroad and from Japan. For example, in the USA, if there are stairs in front of a store or a public facility, it can be sued for lot of compensatory damages. There was such case saying that the fact that the place has the entrance with stairs means that it is structurally eliminating the entrance of physically-challenged, and it is the discrimination. (Disabilities Act (ADA): *The Americans with Disabilities Act*. This Federal law was established in 1990)

In spite of having tried to formulate the Legislation that bans discrimination against disabled people, which is Japanese version of ADA, it still remains in partly revising the existing legislation: *Disabled Persons Fundamental Law*. Also, there is a law that promotes the barrier free in the public facilities: the *Hart-Build Law*¹ (Enactment 1994, legal revision 2003) that increased the range of facilities. Although, it will still take more time for physically-challenged people to be able to move, to utilize, and to stay without having inconvenience situations anywhere they go to because it still, in some instillation categorization, reminds with encouraging the remediation by the “duty of effort.”

What has to be improved with those barriers is the social awareness. There is a pressing need to change the world by eliminating ignorance and discrimination towards physically-challenged people and by avoiding creating the barriers by them as a result of receiving such attitude.

Reference:

Merriam-Webster Online <http://m-w.com/>

¹ Japanese English meaning to build **Buildings** with **Hart**. English translation is *Law for Buildings Accessible to and Usable by the Elderly and Physically Disabled Persons* (DINF <http://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/japanese/law/etc/z00003.htm>)