

## Roles and Issues of Asian Society for Adapted Physical Education and Exercise (ASAPE)

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### ***Establishment and Activities of ASAPE***

In Asian countries, the lack of relevant facilities, materials, and physical education teacher training programs is a major obstacle to the implementation of effective physical education for children with disabilities. In order to provide educators and teachers in these countries with information on adapted physical education/activity, the Asian Society for Adapted Physical Education and Exercise (ASAPE) was established in 1986. ASAPE also aims at advancing and developing scientific research on adapted physical education and exercise among disabled and elderly persons in Asia. In 1986, before the opening of the Olympic Games of 1988, an international Sports Competition and Sports Science Conference was held in Seoul, Korea. As is customary in these cases, the Sports Science Conference opened with separate sessions for physical education and exercise research fields, such as exercise physiology, sport psychology, sport sociology and so on. One such session was devoted to "Adapted Physical Education and Exercise." At that time, since the usual approach for a conference of this kind was to group presentations around research methods, it was rare for the subjects of a session like this, in this case disabled and elderly persons, to be the focus of research, as one among the other sessions held. The research presentations on the physical strength of disabled persons centered around research in exercise physiology, sport psychology, and physical development science. The presentations on how sports meets for physically handicapped persons were changing public awareness focused on psychological and sociological studies, and lectures were usually delivered in separate rooms. While this setting admittedly encourages discussion of research methodology at a deeper level, on the other hand studies dealing with disabled persons with broad-ranging themes foremost in mind (e.g., their independence, social rehabilitation, and happiness) are many, as individual researchers pursue these issues, one by one, in order to achieve these specific goals. Thus, at the 1986 conference, the majority of participants agreed to the proposal put forth by Professor Hong Yang-Ja of Ewha Women's University calling for a research organization to help realize the aspirations of disabled persons to develop their possibilities and achieve happiness by means of adapted physical education and

exercise. Thus, ASAPE came to be, and its first president was Dr. Kyonosuke Yabe of Nagoya University.

The First ASAPE Research Conference was held in 1989 in Nagoya. As indicated in Table 1, the Society ever since has convened every other year for research presentations. ASAPE activities center around these biyearly conference presentations and the publication of the "ASAPE NEWSLETTER" in English for exchange of information among members. Volume 19 is the most recent issue. The Society also has a website (<http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/asape>) open to members and nonmembers alike. Proceedings of ASAPE Research Conference in 1998, 2000, and 2002 respectively have been published (Nakata, 1999; Lin, 2001; Chow and Sit, 2002).

Table 1 Previous Symposia of ASAPE

1989 Nagoya, Japan
1991 Miyazaki, Japan
1994 Taipei, Taiwan
1996 Seoul, Korea
1998 Tsukuba, Japan
2000 Taipei, Taiwan
2002 Hong Kong, China
2004 Bali, Indonesia
2006 Nagasaki, Japan (To be held)

ASAPE made initial contact with other countries in Asia at the 1993 International Symposium on Adapted Physical Activity (ISAPA; Chairperson: Dr. Kyonosuke Yabe of Nagoya University) held in Yokohama. ASAPE served as the Secretariat. This Symposium not only provided a window on the world for ASAPE members in terms of global trends in research on adapted physical education and exercise, but at the same time it was a giant step in networking for and among researchers in Asia. It was this Symposium which brought ASAPE to establish official ties with the International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity (IFAPA), the matrix of the ISAPA. Its proceedings were published (Yabe, Kusano, and Nakata, 1994)

While maintaining their ties with ASAPE, members also endeavor to promote research on adapted physical activity within Japan. Research organizations in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Indonesia do the same in their respective countries. In Japan, annual meetings of the Japanese branch of ASAPE are held to provide a venue for research presentations mainly by Society members. The 9<sup>th</sup> such meeting is to be held in December of this year in Sendai. The ASAPE Japan Meeting held in 2003 published the "Japanese Journal of Adapted Sport Science" in both

Japanese and English. In future, it will hopefully be published only in English as the official organ of the ASAPE. Submissions are welcomed from researchers at home and abroad, whether members or nonmembers. The 9<sup>th</sup> ASAPE Meeting is to be held August 1-3 in 2006 in Nagasaki (<http://www.kwassui.ac.jp/~asape2006>).

### **Relations with IFAPA**

The IFAPA is a worldwide organization for research on adaptive physical education and exercise, with branches in North and South America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Oceania and Asia. ASAPE joined IFAPA in 1996, when it was presided over by Dr. Claudine Sherrill of Texas Women's University, USA. Two directors have been duly elected from Asia (Dr. Lin, Man-Hway, ASAPE President, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan R.O.C., and Dr. Hideo Nakata, ASAPE Vice President, University of Tsukuba, Japan) to help conduct IFAPA affairs. Key Federation activities include conference hosting and the publication of its journal and Newsletter. The biannual major conferences (ISAPA) held by IFAPA are shown in Table 2. The 14<sup>th</sup> ISAPA Conference was held in Seoul in 2003, and the 15<sup>th</sup> was held in Italy in 2005.

The IFAPA's "Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly" has been well received around the world as a leading scientific journal in the field of adapted physical education and exercise.

Table 2 Previous International Symposia on Adapted Physical Activity

1977 Quebec, Canada
1979 Brussels, Belgium
1981 New Orleans, U.S.A.
1983 London, Great Britain
1985 Toronto, Canada
1987 Brisbane, Australia
1989 Berlin, Germany
1991 Miami, U.S.A.
1993 Yokohama, Japan
1995 Oslo, Norway
1997 Quebec, Canada
1999 Barcelona/ Lleida, Spain
2001 Vienna, Austria
2003 Seoul, Korea
2005 Pavia / Verona, Italy
2007 Saõ Paulo, Brazil (to be held)

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### **Networking in Asia**

As can be seen from the countries in which ISAPA Conferences have been held, research in the field of adapted physical education and exercise has moved forward mainly in developed countries such as the USA and Europe. And most of the participants have been from developed nations as well. Although the activities and information have spread worldwide via the Internet, Newsletter and journal, the good news has hardly reached the people involved in Asia. Even when the information reaches Asian shores, in most cases the professionals, facilities, equipment, knowledge, directive skills or educational materials are not available to make the most of it. This is a problem faced not only by Asia but developing countries as a whole around the globe (Eleweke and Rodda, 2002). Moreover, invitations to ISAPA and ASAPE conferences often must be declined because would-be participants cannot afford to attend without financial assistance. Therefore, due consideration must be given to inviting individuals involved in adapted physical education and exercise in Asian nations to ASAPE Conferences on a biyearly basis for vigorous exchanges of opinion and research networking. Much more extensive networking can gradually be brought about in this way.

### **Encouragement of Research on Adapted Physical Education and Exercise Rooted in Asian Culture**

Even a cursory look at Asian countries reveals peoples ravaged by wars, turmoil and poverty of a kind that allows few to attend schools. Disabled persons find themselves in an especially unfortunate environment, teeming not only with poverty but prejudice as well. And although all of these nations are called Asia, each of them faces a different set of conditions. Asia has a cultural and social background different from the West, and a different lifestyle, so its research focus and methods are also obviously different. The "Japanese Journal of Adapted Sport Science," published by the Japanese branch of ASAPE, respects these national differences and cultural diversity and seeks to hold up the mirror to Asia as it is in its pages. With its commitment to the culture of Asia, the journal hopes to publish more and more papers grounded in Asian culture.

Just as most Asian countries are in the developing stages, their studies in the field of adapted physical education and exercise are also in the early stages of development. The ASAPE house organ thus seeks to stimulate research in the various countries of Asia and to enliven and encourage the give-and-take among its researchers, while at the same time playing the role of information provider to these countries. With the promotion of ongoing joint studies in these nations, the "Japanese Journal of Adapted Sport Science" hopes to publish the forthcoming results of their research in days to come.

### **Encouragement of International Cooperation in Education**

Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Indonesia are five ASAPE member countries. As these nations develop closer ties and the

information on adapted physical education and exercise reaches more and more Asian regions, efforts should be made to increase ASAPE member countries. In this sense, ASAPE has a great responsibility to close the information gap with such countries and share with them world trends as well as news on the relevant existing conditions in each of them.

In December of 2005, a lesson study (Fernandez and Yoshida, 2004) program supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology in Japan was held by ASAPE Japan branch members at a school for mentally disabled persons in the city of Bandung in Indonesia. Japan has long conducted such studies to improve teacher capability. The classes were based on the guidance plan made by the teachers themselves. Other teachers observed the classes, then discussed the class content and methods at the close of the Program. As a result of several attempts of the kind in Bandung, the Program was highly appreciated from teacher participants, administration officials, parents and university educators. One reason is that there has been no custom of peer classroom observation or of exchanging opinions like this among teachers in Indonesia. This Teaching Program brought a breath of fresh air that fostered free exchanges of opinions at participatory-type Study Sessions. Moreover, a Japanese physical education teacher in charge used old newspapers for teaching materials. Teaching materials are in short supply in developing countries, and the complaint is often that satisfactory teaching is impossible without them. The use of old newspapers was thus welcomed by the participants. Physical education classes in Indonesia include traditional games which children are delighted to participate in. After the Teaching Program, Study Sessions addressed the issue of "What a good physical education class is." With teachers of both countries observing each other's classes, they were able to discover the good points in the teaching approaches used in each other's country. But above all, this was an excellent opportunity to ponder what indeed is a "good physical education class" in no matter what nation. Furthermore, what could be more significant than joining hands internationally to together share the meaning and joy of actually putting in place adapted physical education and exercise? Is it not this kind of ongoing international educational cooperative effort that ASAPE members seek through their physical education classes? A movie capturing this kind of Indonesia-Japan joint classroom lesson study project is available on the URL below.

<http://www3e.emc.tsukuba.ac.jp/other/indonesia-e.aspx>

### **Conclusion**

This article has traced ASAPE activities since its establishment until now, while attempting to throw into relief three forthcoming issues: greater networking throughout Asia, promotion of research on adapted physical education and exercise based on Asian culture, and furtherance of international cooperation in education.

### References

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