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Restoring honor: Japanese Pacific War disabled war veterans from 1945 to 1963

Tetsuya Fujiwara
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Fujiwara, Tetsuya. "Restoring honor: Japanese Pacific War disabled war veterans from 1945 to 1963." PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) thesis, University of Iowa, 2011.
<https://doi.org/10.17077/etd.rkfbq99z>

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“RESTORING HONOR”:
JAPANESE PACIFIC WAR DISABLED WAR VETERANS
FROM 1945 TO 1963

by

Tetsuya Fujiwara

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in History
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

December 2011

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Stephen G. Vlastos

ABSTRACT

My dissertation “Restoring Honor: Japanese Pacific War Disabled War Veterans from 1945 to 1963” examines the lives of Japanese disabled war veterans and the activism of the Japanese Disabled Veterans Association (JDVA: *Nippon Shōigunjin kai*) in the early postwar period, beginning immediately following the Allied Occupation in the summer of 1945 and ending in 1963, when the National Diet passed the “Act on Special Aid to the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldiers” (*Senshōbyōsha Tokubetsu Engo-hō*). Established in 1952, the JDVA would play a leading role in securing welfare for Japanese disabled war veterans.

In Japan as everywhere in the modern era, war exacted a huge price quantified in the death and maiming of soldiers. Victories in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) came at the cost of significant numbers of Japanese casualties. After the Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan’s prestige rose remarkably as it came to be recognized as a major power. Simultaneously, the government had to address the pressing issue of war injured soldiers. The government responded by establishing a series of welfare provisions for disabled war veterans. By providing generous support for disabled soldiers, the government sought to bolster the morale of its citizens. The basic policy for disabled war veterans remained in place until the conclusion of the Pacific War. The Allied powers led by the U.S. initially aimed to extirpate wartime militarism in all its forms and as a consequence, virtually abolished preferential treatment for disabled war veterans. Experiencing the loss of the privilege that they had enjoyed and drastic changes of social status from the prewar to the postwar period, the disabled veterans engaged in organized efforts in quest of life security and recovery of honor after the end of the Allied occupation.

This dissertation explores the reintegration of Japanese disabled veterans into civilian life in the shadow of war. In examining Japanese disabled war veterans, it is

indispensable to include two viewpoints: the relationship between the Japanese government and disabled veterans on the one hand and on the other, between Japanese society and disabled veterans. Disabled veterans sought to find their legitimate place in the postwar society by asking the government for national recognition for the sacrifices they incurred in service to the state. Meanwhile, Japanese citizens routinely encountered them in their daily lives as a reminder of a war many wanted to forget. Because disabled veterans were keenly aware of how they were viewed, they claimed that as ‘*Shōigunjin*’ (disabled soldier) they did not belong to any other disabled groups. Hence, the historical significance of Japanese disabled war veterans, I argue, lies in a group identity molded by their interactive relations with both the government and postwar Japanese society.

Abstract Approved: _____

Thesis Supervisor

Title and Department

Date

“RESTORING HONOR”:
JAPANESE PACIFIC WAR DISABLED WAR VETERANS
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
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December 2011

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Stephen G. Vlastos

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Graduate College
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Tetsuya Fujiwara

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the
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To my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is no doubt that my dissertation would not have been completed without the encouragement and support of many individuals.

My sincerest appreciation and gratitude is dedicated to my Ph.D. supervisor, Dr. Stephen Vlastos. With conversations with him in Iowa City, Fukui, Kyoto, and London for the past thirteen years, I have learned not only history writing but also professionalism as a historian. Throughout my thesis-writing process, he provided invaluable comments, clear direction, and good sense of humor. My dissertation simply could not have seen the light without his support.

I am deeply grateful to the people who have taught me. My undergraduate advisor, Hideyuki Ōtsuka at Kobe City University of Foreign Studies taught me the importance of history, and inspired me to become a historian. My graduate advisors at Hiroshima University, Tadao Kano and Masaru Okamoto also introduced key aspects of American history, and encouraged me to study in the United States. In pursuing my graduate study in the U.S. Dr. Amy Iwasaki Mass and Dr. James H. Madison gave me helpful advice and warm support. My graduate work at the University of Iowa trained me as a historian. Special thanks also go to Dr. Shelton Stromquist and Dr. Douglas Baynton whose opinions and comments have substantially helped me throughout the production of this dissertation. The responsibility of any errors is of course mine.

I also would like to thank those individuals while working on this dissertation. Reba McDonald has greatly influenced my perspective on the world and the English language. I also received generous language support from Edmont C. Katz and Catherine Schaff-Stump. I appreciate the feedback offered by Christopher Gerteis, Jennifer Anderson, and David Tobaru Obermiller. I have significantly benefited from the members of Research Group of Disability History: Mai Yamashita, Akihito Suzuki, Tomoyo Nakano, Makoto Otani, Toshitaka Nagahiro, Toru Imajo, Takehiro Kobayashi,

and Kōjiro Hirose. My gratitude also extends to the secretaries in the Department of History at the University of Iowa. While my graduate work in Iowa and after I left Iowa City, they have helped me in many different ways. Mary Strottman, Jean Aikin, and Patricia Goodwin deserve special mention. I would also like to express my gratitude to Toshio Tatematsu and Hideyo Kondo from the Mie Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association for providing me with invaluable historical documents and chance to have interview with disabled war veterans and wives.

Lastly, and most importantly, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to my family for their moral support and warm encouragements. My parents, Kenji and Kayoko Fujiwara have unfailingly provided support and assistance throughout my life. My brother Toshiro Fujiwara and my sister Mayuko Tanaka also have tremendously supported me. I owe a great deal of love and appreciation to my wife, Miki, and our daughters Mitama and Kirara. To them I dedicate this dissertation.

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INTRODUCTION

***Caterpillar*: A Movie about a Japanese Disabled War Veteran and his Wife**



Figure 1. *Caterpillar*: A poster from *Caterpillar*
Source: official website of *Caterpillar*

In a distant land, the Sino-Japanese front of the Asian-Pacific War draws to a shameful end. Kurokawa Kenzō hopelessly contemplates his son Kyuzō's alive but war-ravaged body. Limbless, nearly voiceless, and face terribly burned, Kyuzō has been discharged as a highly decorated Lieutenant from the army and sent home to his stunned family. With no idea of what to do with what is left of Kyuzō, his father and sister parade Kyuzō's decorations before Shigeko, Kyuzō's wife. "Look how highly our Emperor has honored Kyuzō! For the sake of our country, we beg you, please take care of him." The immobilizing sight of Kyuzō's disfigurement leaves Shigeko no alternative but to declare at a patriotic town meeting, "I am Kurokawa Kyuzō's wife. I solemnly swear to carry out my patriotic duty to him as a war god's wife."

Caterpillar (2010) vividly portrays the story of a Japanese couple at the home-front in the Asian-Pacific War. Publicly, Kyuzō is trumpeted as a “war god” in the Japanese press propaganda and is almost compulsively revered by the villagers. Privately, however, the demands of his care, including his constant desire for sex, generate intense emotional undercurrents between Kyuzō and Shigeko.

Prior to his service, Kyuzō brutally mistreated Shigeko because of her infertility. However, after his discharge and return home, the balance of power between the two tips in quite the other direction. Shigeko takes full advantage of her new-found public respect as a dutiful war god’s wife and behind the closed rice paper doors of home she exploits Kyuzō’s loss of speech by verbally taunting him with her revelations of her mixed feelings about both her war god and his war.

This intensely private depiction of war enjoyed worldwide acclaim as evidenced by the award of the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the 60th Berlin International Film Festival to Terajima Shinobu, who plays role as Shigeko. Terajima has explained the reason *Caterpillar* achieved international fame in saying, “(Director) Wakamatsu, who experienced the war, portrays war not simply as the killing of others on the battlefield but as a tragedy actually occurring in family homes. I guess that appeals to people around the world.”¹

The popularity of *Caterpillar* rests principally on not only a meticulous portrayal of wartime Japanese people but also a sense of crisis over a fading memory of the war’s brutality. Those who experienced the Asian-Pacific War are vanishing, and with them vanish any remnants of war’s visible or invisible scars in the souls of younger generations. *Caterpillar*’s success is in capturing those miseries of war that are difficult for young viewers to imagine and difficult to either ignore or forget. The movie’s director, Wakamatsu Kōji expresses his objective as follows:

¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, February 21, 2010.

In this movie, I was intent on depicting war as it is and what the human destruction of war truly means. Moreover, I wanted to achieve these goals by presenting the people of war not solely in action-packed battle scenes... (With this movie,) I hope to infuse young, war-innocent, people with war's horrible immediacy. I want this presence to say to them, 'Please don't forget such a horrifying war, and please don't destroy others' lives even for your country. In any way you can, please run from being a victimizer.' In truth, all that I am has gone into this movie.²

Certainly, the visual imagery of *Caterpillar* is so intensely self-evident and compelling that the viewer hardly has room to question war's misery. However, once seen through historical eyes *Caterpillar* confronts its viewers with another important underlying theme: war's business of manufacturing disabilities. The very sight of war-ravaged Kyuzō provides us with a wrenchingly different perspective on disabled persons. Indeed, the social presence of disabled soldiers is easily, perhaps adaptively, forgotten. Although disabled persons tend to be marginalized or isolated from the rest of society, the movie communicates how one disabled soldier was honorably treated as long as the war raged on and how his circumstances change with the war's end. This duality of anonymity-heroism illustrates how our mental images of disability are painted upon socio-historical canvases.

My Interest in Japanese Disabled War Veterans

This dissertation originated from an odd experience in my childhood. In the late 1970s, when my late grandfather, an ex-soldier serving in Manchuria, took me to a shrine during a local festival, we encountered a peculiar scene: a group of white gowned men in front of the shrine. Bowing, with loud martial music playing from speakers, they appeared to be eliciting sympathy from visitors, and soliciting money from them. At that time, I was an elementary school student and naturally curious. In consternation, my

² Kōji Wakamatsu, *Caterpillar* (Tokyo: Yūgakusha, 2010), 8.

grandfather just snapped at me, “Don’t ever look at them!” However, he gave me no reason at all for his stern command. The extraordinary spectacle and his confused expression prevented me from asking any questions about the men in the white gowns. After that jolt, whenever I saw them on special occasions including festivals and New Year’s visits to shrines, I consciously avoided looking at the white gown beggars. Before long, I vaguely understood that they were veterans of the Asian Pacific War. Not surprisingly, I simply took the war to be a negative and unpopular topic to bring up. My questions about my grandfather’s reaction and the vision of white gown beggars lingered untouched in my mind for a long time.

My graduate work at the University of Iowa returned my eyes to Japanese disabled war veterans. Come to think of it, it was a long gradual process that wove my childhood experience and my Japanese identity into an intellectual pursuit. Prior to my arrival in Iowa City in 1998, I had little consciousness of my own nationality or ethnic background; once abroad, however, I found myself with no choice but to face the Japanese me vis-à-vis my American surroundings. Prior to my arrival in Iowa City, I had developed an interest in Japanese history and US-Japanese relations as a graduate student in Hiroshima. In my first year of graduate study at Iowa, I took a seminar on disability history offered by Professor Douglas Baynton, who stirred my academic interest in the subject. In hindsight, disability history was something I had been looking for. After taking the seminar, I was fascinated by the potential of disability history. More importantly, I felt an irresistible force to research the lives of people with disabilities.

In choosing my dissertation topic, I sought to fit pieces of my research interests into a single framework. Professor Stephen Vlastos’ graduate seminar reminded me of the multiple impacts of the Pacific War on Japanese society. The Allied occupation produced new political and social arrangements in the aftermath of the war that had considerable repercussions on life in Japan. But it first appeared that previous historical research into the Allied occupation was so abundant there would be little room for yet

another dissertation. While I was feeling I had run into a brick wall, I suddenly recalled my childhood experience of witnessing disabled war veterans. Thinking about the occupation period in relation to Japanese disabled war veterans led to a series of questions: How did they survive in this period? How did the Japanese government treat them? More critically, why did there appear to be a chasm between Japanese war disabled veterans and the general population of disabled Japanese? I began to believe that answering these questions could give me a sense that my dissertation might make a contribution to disability history and perhaps eventually justify my long journey from Japan to the U.S.

Disabled War Veterans as a Historical Subject

War has historically been an instrument for producing persons with disabilities. In particular, modern warfare in the twentieth century, characterized by weapons of mass destructions and new weapons with the power to maim, combined with medical advances, resulted in a drastic increase in the number of war-injured civilians and soldiers. Remarkable progress in military medicine and post-traumatic care have saved countless soldiers but simultaneously left many of them to live with permanent physical and mental impairments. It is doubtless that the presence of combat-injured veterans in society has produced profound changes in the perceptions of people with disabilities. Following their demobilization, disabled veterans could not return to their prewar lives. While they sought to adjust to postwar society, they frequently encountered prejudice and discrimination from nondisabled persons. This situation continues to the present everywhere in the world.

Historically, one sees that governments could not afford to disregard the difficulties of disabled veterans' readjustment to their society. With the birth of the modern state, social policies addressing injured soldiers and disabled veterans began to

emerge. Previously, the state's responsibility for the reintegration of disabled veterans was so limited that these veterans relied upon charity and local communities or begged money on the streets to make ends meet. However, the creation of standing armies and unprecedented numbers of casualties soon forced governments to expand their role as the ubiquitous presence of injured soldiers became a potential threat to social order. Governments' concerns over disabled veterans' disruptive influence combined with a sense of obligation to provide them with various benefits in compensation for their defense of the country. Since the nineteenth century, western countries have provided disabled veterans with a wide array of entitlements, including medical care, vocational rehabilitation, and pension plans. In doing so the state also responded to growing jingoism of this period.

To be sure, states' providing for the needs of veterans contributed to the development of the modern welfare state. In contrast to the pejorative concept of 'welfare' for the poor, benefits for wounded soldiers and disabled veterans came to be understood as a 'right' that was deserved by these worthy citizens. By giving special treatment to war returnees, the government demonstrated its recognition of these citizens as being entitled to such benefits. Such legislation became a marker for distinguishing unique groups of citizens and a crucial component of the development of a social welfare policy.³ As a result, the emergence of an interest group such as disabled veterans has shaped the contours of the modern welfare state.

Disabled veterans created a distinct group identity that differentiated them from able-bodied veterans and the general disabled population. Having sacrificed their bodies for the country, disabled veterans, not surprisingly, claimed their right generous treatment. In a sense, the disabled veterans' interactions with the state critically determined their social identity. Disabled veterans' groups often encouraged their members to look on the

³ David A. Gerber, "Disabled Veterans, the State, and the Experience of Disability in Western Countries, 1914-1950," *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 4 (summer 2003), 899-900.

civilian disabled as members of a separate (and suspect) class of disabled citizens.⁴ Yet, disabled veterans have not been simply satisfied with receiving benefits; they have believed that the purpose of their state benefits should be directed at creating the foundations for achieving independence and normalization of their status. In the United States, for instance, disabled veterans' groups such as the Blind Veterans Association and the Paralyzed Veterans of America were concerned that dependence on government benefits could devitalize the will of disabled veterans to lead ordinary social lives.⁵ Therefore, disabled veterans occupied an unstable middle ground between seeking privileged access to government assistance and encouraging reliance on self-help and avoiding becoming socially dependent.

It is also undeniable that disabled veterans' groups have had a tremendous impact on the disability rights movement. Disabled veterans represent a small segment of the disabled population; however, their groups have been politically vocal and notably visible. Not all groups were united: Some disabled veterans' groups framed their demands in terms of the 'state's responsibility' while others evoked 'human rights.' Occasionally the two groups opposed to each other on policy issues. Despite these differences, in combination disabled veterans became a driving force of the disability rights movement.

Until recently, disabled war veterans have received little scholarly attention. In *Disabled Veterans in History*, David A. Gerber argues, "Disabled veterans are neglected figures in the histories of war and peace, and the historical scholarship about them at present is fragmentary."⁶ In fact, disabled veterans have been examined in numerous fields such as the history of medicine and the history of military. While historians of

⁴ John M. Kinder, "War," in *Encyclopedia of American Disability History Volume III*, eds. Paul Longmore and Susan Burch (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 946-47.

⁵ David A. Gerber, "Veterans," in *Encyclopedia of American Disability History Volume III*, 926-28.

⁶ David A. Gerber, *Disabled Veterans in History*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 1.

medicine deal with disabled veterans as part of the history of rehabilitation, military historians view them as one of war's awkward outcomes. In both fields the disabled veteran is a figure of marginal importance.

Historians' increasing attention to disabled veterans results from the shift toward full acceptance of their presence in society. This change of viewpoint is inextricably associated with the development of the civil rights movement, which has been historically accompanied by the re-interpretation of minority history. Once the concept of minority rights was set at the center of historical analysis, categories of gender and race as social and cultural constructs gained saliency. The history of disability as a late comer to minority history has greatly benefited from the academic heritage of these fields. As mentioned above, active engagement in social movements by disabled veterans in the context of the emergence of the modern state steadily increased social awareness of their long-term presence.

Additionally, this rising awareness of the history of disability posed a question about historical singularity of disabled veterans that differentiates them from other disabled population. Although both the disabled veteran and other disabled civilians commonly are included in a single social category of 'disabled persons,' differences between them obviously exist and the differences point to how the concept of disability was constructed in relation to civil society and state. Historical examination of disabled war veterans reveals how interaction with the modern state they secured their own place in society.

The Dissertation's Thesis, Purpose and Significance

This dissertation examines the lives of Japanese disabled war veterans and the activism of the Japanese Disabled Veterans Association (JDVA: *Nippon Shōigunjin kai*) in the early postwar period, beginning immediately following the Allied Occupation in

the summer of 1945 and ending in 1963, when the National Diet passed the “Act on Special Aid to the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldiers (*Senshōbyōsha Tokubetsu Engo-hō*).” Established in 1952, the JDVA would play a leading role in securing welfare for Japanese disabled war veterans.

In Japan as everywhere in the modern era, war exacted a huge price quantified in the death and maiming of soldiers. Victories in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) came at the cost of significant numbers of Japanese casualties. After the Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan’s prestige rose remarkably as it came to be recognized as a major power. Simultaneously, the government had to address the pressing issue of war injured soldiers. In reality, the presence of disabled war veterans was a double-edged sword for the Meiji government. If the government left them untreated or uncared for, they would have fallen into poverty, and, more importantly, might have vented their frustration against the government for their sacrifices in serving the country. The government responded by establishing a series of welfare provisions for disabled war veterans. The primary thrust of the war-disability provision was not monetary compensation but rather physical and vocational rehabilitation and the reintegration of disabled veterans back into society as productive citizens. By providing generous support for disabled soldiers, the government sought to bolster the morale of its citizens. The basic policy for disabled war veterans remained in place until the conclusion of the Pacific War. Given the historic impact of Japan’s wars after the Meiji Restoration on the development of a welfare state in Japan, it may not be unreasonable to state that historians have underestimated the role that disabled veterans played in this socio-political aspect of history in Japan.

Japan’s defeat in the Pacific war, however, not only left disabled war veterans with permanent physical impairments, but also altered how they were perceived. The Allied powers led by the U.S. initially aimed to extirpate wartime militarism in all its forms and as a consequence, virtually abolished preferential treatment for disabled war

veterans. Many Japanese citizens accordingly viewed disabled former soldiers in a derogatory light. Poverty and discrimination caused intolerable levels of hardship during the occupation period. Experiencing the loss of the privilege that they had enjoyed and drastic changes of social status from the prewar to the postwar period, the disabled veterans engaged in organized efforts in quest of life security and recovery of honor after the end of the Allied occupation.

This dissertation explores the reintegration of Japanese disabled veterans into civilian life in the shadow of war. In examining Japanese disabled war veterans, it is indispensable to include two viewpoints: the relationship between the Japanese government and disabled veterans on the one hand and on the other, between Japanese society and disabled veterans. Disabled veterans sought to find their legitimate place in the postwar society by asking the government for national recognition for the sacrifices they incurred in service to the state. Meanwhile, Japanese citizens routinely encountered them in their daily lives as a reminder of a war many wanted to forget. Because disabled veterans were keenly aware of how they were viewed, they claimed that as ‘*Shōigunjin*’ (disabled soldier) they did not belong to any other disabled groups. Hence, the historical significance of Japanese disabled war veterans, I argue, lies in a group identity molded by their interactive relations with both the government and postwar Japanese society.

Theoretical Framework of the Dissertation

This dissertation contributes to the examination of the presence and identity of Japanese war veterans as disabled persons. Disability has long been regarded as an exclusive subject of medicine or rehabilitation. Until recently, historians have disregarded or underestimated disability as a historical inquiry. Joan W. Scott’s *Gender and The Politics of History* (1989) defines gender as “a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes” and “a primary way of

signifying relationships of power.” The application of Scott’s argument to disability has also had tremendous impact on the historical study of disability. *The New Disability History* (2001) edited by Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky presents a collection of essays on the history of disability, and opens up the possibility of disability history. In the collection, the essay “Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History” by Douglas Baynton convincingly presents disability as a category of inquiry on par with race, class, gender, sexuality, gender, and ethnicity. As with gender, disability is an analytical concept that can be utilized to conceptualize how social relationships based on disability are constructed. *Disabled Veterans in History* (2000) edited by David A. Gerber provides a historical overview of disabled veterans in western societies. Gerber introduces three analytical categories: representation, public policy, and the experience of disability, which contributes to our understanding of how a disabled veteran’s identity and status are embedded in his culture and society.

These works have provided a theoretical framework for analyzing policy toward Japanese Asian Pacific War disabled veterans and how they were perceived in Japan. Based on the notion that disability is an analytical device that reveals the relationship between war and society, the dissertation will demonstrate how the Pacific War and the following decade shaped the identities of Japanese war disabled veterans and the greater society’s perceptions of them in the context of postwar societies particular social and political characteristics.

Methodological and Source Approach to the Dissertation

This dissertation is primarily based on archival research which was carried out mostly in Tokyo from 2003 to 2008. In 2003 and 2004, I visited the Kensei-shiryō shitsu (Modern Japanese Political History Materials Room) in the National Diet Library to obtain documents of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers and the Prange

Collection directly related to the lives and welfare of disabled war veterans under the American occupation. In 2007 and 2008, the Library of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the Yasukuni Kaikō Bunko Library, the Shōkei-kan (the Historical Materials Hall for the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldiers, etc.), and the Japan College of Social Work Library provided further sources concerning local activities of disabled war veterans. Intensely interested in the individual experience, in 2009 I visited the Nara Prefectural Library and Information Center to examine disabled veterans' personal accounts and records.

In 2004, during my tenure at the Mie University, School of Medicine, I was extremely fortunate to meet Mr. Toshio Tatematsu, secretary-general of the Mie Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association (the MPDVA). Mr. Tatematsu graciously granted me several interviews at the MPDVA and allowed access to the *Nisshō Gekkan* (monthly paper of the JDVA) and the *Mie-ken Shōigunjin kai Gijiroku* (The Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Mie Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association). The kindness shown me by Mr. Tatematsu proved to be indispensable to the development of my dissertation research.

The use of both the *Nisshō Gekkan* and the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the MPDVA enables my dissertation to provide an extensive account of the lives of Japanese disabled war veterans and the activities of JDVA. In 1953 since the first publication following the foundation of the JDVA in November 1952, the *Nisshō Gekkan* has been exclusively distributed to members of the JDVA and the Japanese Disabled Veterans' Wives Association (JDVWA). The monthly paper covers a variety of topics, which range from announcements, articles and reports from local branches to editorials and letters to the editor, that collectively provide a great deal of information and insight into the objectives of the JDVA and the concerns of disabled veterans and wives. In addition, I had access to the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the MPDVA, 1953-57, generally not made available to non-members. Previous research on Japanese disabled war veterans

has rarely employed the *Nisshō Gekkan* and has not made use of the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the MPDVA. This dissertation is the first to makes systematic use of these primary sources.

Additionally, Mr. Tatematsu was instrumental in opening the door to interviews I conducted with several disabled veterans and their wives in Mie prefecture in the summer from the summer of 2004 to the spring of 2005. Each interview with a disabled veteran and his wife provided me deeper insight into the issues explored in my dissertation, and above all, reminded me of how the war profoundly impacted their postwar lives.

Discovering a particular Internet auction site provided me with a unique portal for obtaining relevant primary and secondary sources, thus augmenting the official documents that I gathered at libraries and archives. Several publications that I purchased at the auction site were so rare that they were not available in any libraries or archives. In particular, these publications provided stunning snapshots of how disabled war veterans survived in the postwar chaotic years.

Relevant Historiography to the Dissertation

The dissertation represents a merging of two vital Japanese war veteran issues: their social welfare and experiences as severely injured soldiers during and after the war. New histories of the Allied occupation of Japan and war memories in the postwar period provided the conceptual cornerstones of the work. In particular, John W. Dower in *Embracing Defeat* (1999) thoroughly explored the experiences and emotions of the defeated Japanese in the aftermath of war as they sought to redefine their identity and values.

Inside GHQ (2002) by Eiji Takemae provides a comprehensive picture of the Allied Occupation of Japan. Takemae examines welfare reform for disabled persons from

the viewpoints of both the occupiers and the Japanese bureaucrats. He does not, however, specifically differentiate disabled or wounded soldiers from the general disabled population.

Lori Watt, in her *When Empire Comes Home* (2009), delves into the experiences of the repatriates who had returned to Japan from its former imperial colonies after the war. Watt pays specific scholarly attention to the reintegration of the repatriates into postwar Japanese society. However since Watt's analysis folds the substantial numbers of disabled former soldiers into the more general category of war veterans, they are left beyond the reach of analysis.

Recently, a broad concern has stirred scholarly efforts with regard to collective memory of Asian-Pacific War and the bodies of Japanese war veterans. Yoshikuni Igarashi, in his *Bodies of Memory* (2000), analyzes the imagery of human bodies as portrayed in Japanese popular culture in the 1950s and 1960s, to examine how war memories lingered among the Japanese during the period of their country's recovery from the defeat of the war. In one instance in his work, panhandling disabled veterans become the target of police who crack down on them as part of a campaign to clean up public spaces.

James J. Orr, in his *The Victim as Hero* (2001) provides a historical analysis of how Japanese war memories were molded in the postwar decades into a victim consciousness which tends to neglect Japanese wartime aggressions in Asian countries. Orr focuses on various aspects of the Japanese sense of victimization, one of which is the Japanese government's compensations to groups of war victims such as the bereaved families of war dead and atomic bomb survivors. Yet Orr's exclusion of disabled war veterans as a distinct group of war victims once again leaves them beyond the reach of historical analysis.

Franziska Seraphim, in *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945-2005* (2006) traces the shaping of Japan's social political discourse by public memory of the

Asian-Pacific War. In examining five prominent civic organizations Seraphim argues that the organizations played leading roles in shaping the social political war memory of postwar Japan. Yet, in selecting organizations for study Seraphim bypasses disabled war veterans as a collectively significantly influential social force.

As observed above, then, in English sources, historical scholarship applied to Allied occupation of Japan and Japanese war memories while opening new topics of research has not yet expanded to the point of embracing within its analyses the welfare of disabled war veterans and their postwar lives.

Previous Japanese language researchers, too, have largely bypassed examining the lives of disabled war veterans in Japan during the postwar period. A few notable historians, however, have accorded these forgotten warriors some well-deserved attention. Akira Yamada does distinguish between the general populations' disabled citizens and disabled war veterans in describing how the movement initiated by veterans illustrates a significant postwar pioneering activity of Japanese disabled populations.⁷

Kimiko Murakami analyzes the treatment of disabled veterans in the formulating process of the Law of Welfare for Handicapped Persons of 1949 (*Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō*).⁸ Masumi Ueno added an examination of the conditions of white gown beggars in the context of postwar Japanese society.⁹ Still, the activities of Japanese disabled war veterans during the post-occupation have yet to be investigated to an extent that truly honors these broken patriots.

The paucity of scholarly work on World War II disabled veteran readjustment

⁷ Akira Yamada, "Shintai Shōgasha Undō no Rekishi to Taisaku Rinen no Hatten," in *Shōgaisha to Shakaihoshō*, eds. Mitsuko Kojima, Naoshi Sanada, and Yasuo Hata (Kyoto: Hōritsu bunkasha, 1979), 200-243.; –"Nihon ni okeru Shōgaisha Fukushi no Rekishi," in *Shōgaisha no Fukushi to Jinken (Kōza Shōgaisha no Fukushi I)*, eds. Yasuko Ichibangase and Susumu Sato (Tokyo: Kōseikan, 1987), 43-128.

⁸ Kimiko Murakami, *Senryōki no Fukushi Seisaku* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1987).

⁹ Masumi Ueno, "Hakui-bokinsha Issō-undo nimiru Shōigunjin no Sengo" *Nihongakuhō* 23 (2003), 95-116.; –"Hakui-bokinsha toha Dareka: Kōseishō Zenkoku Jittaichōsa nimiru Shōigunjin no Sengo," *Machikaneyama Ronsō* 29 (2005), 31-59.; —"Sengo Nihon no Shōigunjin Mondai: Senryōki no Shōigunjin Engo," *Mishūshi kenkyū* 71 (2006), 3-12.

might lead one to believe that these discharged men simply took off their uniforms after the War and reintegrated into society without any difficulties.

The dissertation investigates initial efforts of war veterans and activities of the JDVA during the post-occupation period. Formed on November 16, 1952, the JDVA played a pivotal role in organizing the disabled veterans' movement to attain their political goals. To veterans, the obligation they fulfilled of having served their country should be accompanied by the right to receive military pensions. In particular, they drew a distinction between pensions for disabled veterans and general welfare policies. The Act on Relief of War Victims and Survivors (*Senshōbyōsha Senbotsusha Izokutō Engo-hō*) of 1952 indicated at the end of the Occupation an increasingly favorable climate for veteran initiatives, and the JDVA aimed to put pressure on the government to establish preferential provisions for disabled war veterans and their families. Taking this period into consideration within a broader historical context, I will argue that disabled veterans themselves responded by mounting their own efforts to pursue honor and secure their livelihoods to immediately following the end of the Pacific War.

Chapter Descriptions

The dissertation is composed of six chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of Japanese disabled war veterans from the early Meiji period to the end of the Pacific War. Following the Meiji Restoration, disabled war veterans increasingly received national attention, as Japan experienced wars with China and Russia from the mid-1890s to the early 1900s. Particularly after the Russo-Japanese War, inappropriate and insufficient treatment for them prompted the government to provide them with services worthy of their sacrifices. After 1930, military protection for them became a national agenda to sustain war efforts. Preferential treatment for disabled war veterans ranged from rehabilitation and vocational training to social role model education.

Chapter Two examines the lives of Japanese disabled war veterans during the Allied occupation from 1945 to 1952. Treatment for disabled veterans became a thorny issue because American occupiers envisioned them as a legacy of Japanese wartime imperialism and militarism. With the abolition of preferential provisions for disabled veterans from 1945 to 1946, the General Headquarters (GHQ) steadfastly took a stern stance on them. However, as American authorities proceeded to reconstruct postwar Japan, they gradually recognized that the special needs of disabled veterans. While maintaining the principle of demilitarizing Japanese society as part of the democratization process, the GHQ allowed the Japanese government to introduce the Physically Disabled Persons Welfare Act of 1949 (*Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō*). In the wake of the 1950 eruption of Korean War and with the international complexities of the cold war, the GHQ made a pragmatic shift on war victims including disabled war veterans toward the conclusion of the Allied occupation.

Chapter Three investigates the initial years of the Japanese Disabled Veterans Association (JDVA) from 1952 to 1956. Restoration of Japan's sovereignty in 1952 opened up doors allowing Japanese disabled war veterans to organize around their own interests. Created on November 16, 1952, the JDVA played a pivotal role in mobilizing disabled veterans to restore their rights and honor. The JDVA's initial efforts focused on revival of military pensions, eradication of white gown beggars, and promotion of comradeship with their foreign counterparts. To the veterans, the obligation to serve country and their right to receive a military pension were two sides of the same coin. In particular, disabled veterans drew a distinction between general welfare and the pensions they were entitled to as disabled veterans. Thus, becoming a recipient of the military pension meant the government's recognition of their sacrifices. White gown beggars on the street vexed the JDVA members since many Japanese citizens falsely identified disabled war veterans as panhandlers. This substantially hurt their reputation. The JDVA placed eliminating the white gown beggars at the very heart of their national agenda.

Moreover, this was seen as essential as the JDVA members pursued international recognition. The JDVA considered a close relationship with the World Veterans Federation and the Disabled American Veterans to be key for elevating Japanese disabled veterans from a status of inferiors to one of equal partners to their foreign counterparts.

Chapter Four explores local activities of Japanese disabled war veterans utilizing the case study of the Mie Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association (MPDVA) from 1953 to 1957. On January 17, 1953, immediately following the creation of the JDVA in 1952, disabled war veterans in Mie prefecture organized the MPDVA to promote the welfare of their local members along with fostering comradeship among themselves. The MPDVA's first efforts focused on issues relating to qualifying for military pensions under the Military Pension Law in July, 1953. The leadership urged its members to seek medical evaluations to receive the military pension certificate. Another effort made by the MPDVA was to firmly establish their organization in local communities. Whenever local and prefectural elections were held, the MPDVA lobbied the candidates to grant favors for their members in exchange for support from their voting bloc. While maintaining a strong presence in Mie prefecture, the MPDVA also needed to strengthen its economic foundation by collecting unpaid membership fees and by cooperating with *Nippon Seimei Company*, a major Japanese life insurance company.

Chapter Five portrays the postwar lives of Japanese disabled war veterans' wives. A significant number of disabled veterans started their own families. They mostly married with able-bodied women. These women became talented multitasking homemakers, care givers, and in some cases, primary breadwinners. The daily interweaving of these couples' lives unveiled to the wives the shocking extent of the war scars borne home by their husbands. Wives told of their husbands' battles with dominant gender norms and social roles in postwar Japan. At the same time, wives recounted their husbands' appreciation for all their family members. The support given by these women did not stop short of politics: These determined women made their dedication to their

husbands felt well beyond their front doors. Their concerted political sorties into local and prefectural organizations led to the creation of the Japanese Disabled Veterans' Wives Association (JDVWA) in October, 1961. Restoration of their husbands' privileges and honor in accordance with the JDVA's agendas became the sole objective of the JDVWA members. However, their selfless devotion on the political front also gave birth to the recognition of their unique social niche accompanied by a battle-tempered pride in themselves as true Japanese citizens. Such couples may well have become as much comrades-in-arms as much as they were matrimonial partners.

Chapter Six traces the enactment of the Law for Special Aid to Retired Wounded and Sick Soldiers (*Senshōbyōsha Tokubetsu Engo-hō*) of 1963. Since its creation the JDVA held as its long-term goal independent legislation specifically for disabled war veterans. Following the termination of the GHQ's occupation, the Japanese government maintained comprehensive support for them through a variety of laws. Yet, for each law the objectives and scope were different and were implemented by different governmental agencies, which appear to have caused the intended beneficiaries considerable inconvenience. While the JDVA sought to promote the welfare of their members, particularly to raise the military pension after the revival of 1952, whenever the opportunity presented itself, they argued for the necessity of an independent law for the welfare of disabled veterans. In 1962, at the ceremony of JDVA's tenth anniversary, the JDVA confirmed that implementation of the law was a top priority. Disabled veterans enthusiastically supported passage of such a law, and supported the combined efforts of the JDVA and its influenced Diet members and bureaucrats of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) to draft the bill. During the legislative process, the JDVA urged its members to participate in a Diet lobbying operation to pass the bill. Over its history, the JDVA's activism reached its culmination in the passage of the Law for Special Aid to Sick Retired Wounded and Sick Soldiers.

CHAPTER I
MILITARY RELIEF FOR DISABLED SOLDIERS
FROM MEIJI PERIOD THROUGH THE PACIFIC WAR, 1868-1945

Military Relief in the Meiji Period

The origin of relief measures for disabled soldiers and veterans in Japan dates back to the early Meiji period when Japan's modernization was accompanied by the strengthening of military power. When the Meiji government adopted the policy of universal military service with passage of the Conscription Act in 1873, they acknowledged the necessity of providing for the welfare of military personnel, including some form of military pensions (*gunjin onkyū*) in order to protect the livelihood of soldiers' and their families after their discharge or death. The implementation of military relief was intended to increase the motivation of civilians to make the sacrifices that military service would entail. The introduction of military pensions followed the abolition of the feudal hereditary samurai stipend, and can be seen as an extension of the emperor-centered bureaucratic state as the feudal conception of the warrior class was transformed into a modern professional army.¹⁰

The prototype of military pensions for disabled soldiers was announced after the 1874 Saga Rebellion and the dispatching of the military forces to Taiwan in 1874. The Meiji government immediately recognized the need to provide financial support to soldiers who sustained disabling injuries and their families.¹¹ On April 5, 1875, the Army adopted "The General Rules for Assistance of Injured Soldiers, Offering for Deceased Military Personnel, and Assistance for the Soldiers' Families (*Rikugun Bukan*

¹⁰ Yoshimasa Ikeda, *Nihon Shakai Fukushishi* (Kyoto: Hōritsu bunkasha, 1986), 228-29.

¹¹ Prior to the application of these military relieves, the government provided meager and irregular forms of stipends for soldiers between 1869 and 1874. Bureau of Pension, Ministry of Finance, *Onkyū Seido Shi* (Tokyo: Printing Office, Ministry of Finance, 1964), 13-16.

Shōi Fujo Oyohi Shibo no Monosaishi Narabini Sonokazoku Fujo Gaisoku.” On August 24, 1875, a similar law “The Order of Retirement of Naval Force (*Kaigun Taiin-rei*),” was proclaimed for injured and dead marines. The new policy provided lump sum cash payments to injured soldiers and marines predicated on their military rank and degree of injury.¹² The policy was formulated without full-scale deliberation, and the measures proved to be inadequate for the injured soldiers and their families. For instance, soldiers’ parents were excluded from qualifying as family recipients,¹³ even though in many rural and artisan families their sons’ labor was essential to the functioning of the household economy. Despite some differences between the orders, both the Army and Navy pensions were premised on the notion of compensation for soldiers’ sacrifice to the country and more as a reward for soldiers’ military performance rather than as an entitlement.¹⁴ These payments provided the basic structure for military relief. Other aspects of military relief, such as job placement, played a complementary role in supporting retired soldiers and their families.

On October 23, 1876, the General Rules for Assistance of Injured Soldiers was revised and enacted as “The Order of Military Pensions for the Army (*Rikugun Bukan Onkyū-rei*.)” The text of the new law remarkably included for the first time the term ‘military pension (*onkyū*),’ which implied a greater obligation on behalf of the government to provide protection of soldiers’ livelihood upon retirement. Nevertheless, the government did not adhere strictly to the concept of military pension as an entitlement right.¹⁵ In effect, beginning in 1879, soldiers injured while performing military service in the 1877 Satsuma Rebellion, which resulted in about 16,000

¹² Ibid., 21-22.

¹³ Takatomi Ninomiya, “Kindai Nihon no Gunji Fujo Rippō to Kazoku,” *Journal of Tokyo University of Economics*, 96 (1976), 56-58.

¹⁴ Hideo Doi, “Meiji Zenki ni okeru Gunjin Onkyū,” *Shisō, Nihondaigaku Shigakkai* 23 (May 1975), 34.

¹⁵ Ōkurashō, *Onkyū-kyoku*, *Onkyū Seido Shi*, 30-31.

government casualties, only received temporary stipends as compensation for their injuries, as did the families of the deceased.¹⁶

The 1875 Order of Retirement of Naval Force and the 1876 Order of Military Pension for the Army were amended and reissued on September 11, 1883. The two amended orders created for the first time a unified system of stipends to retired soldiers. The plan was comprised of a lump sum payment to all soldiers, stipends for war widows, and an additional one-time payment for wounded soldiers, including those of lower rank. The most salient difference was the adoption of an increased payment (*zōka onkyū*). In revamping the military pension system, the Meiji government was aware that wounded soldiers needed extra financial support to sustain their families. Based on military rank and six degrees of severity of injuries, the government offered a permanent military pension for disabled soldiers.¹⁷

Under the slogan of “strong army, rich nation,” financial provisions for veterans and wounded soldiers came to be taken for granted by soldiers by the mid-Meiji period. Nevertheless, direct government provision of relief remained circumscribed. Although the military relief laws guaranteed the provisions of financial assistance after discharge, the government failed to provide an adequate level of financial support for disabled veterans and the families of deceased soldiers, who still had to rely on local charity and private benevolence. As the numbers of Japanese men under arms rose, the Meiji government increasingly orchestrated the provision of local assistance to disabled and retired soldiers. Drafted Japanese men generally bore the burden of playing dual roles as both soldier and their family breadwinner. In 1883, each prefectural government began to organize military affairs sections (*heiji ka*) under which officials in local communities established affiliated associations. The associations provided a variety of services to

¹⁶ Akira Yamada, “Gunji Engo Taisaku no Rekishi to Nichū Sensōka no Gunji Engo Jigyō,” *Gunji Engo Jigyō Gaiyō, Senzenki Shakai Jigyō Kihon Bunkenshū, Vol. 6* (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 1995), 4.

¹⁷ Ōkurashō, *Onkyū-kyoku, Onkyū Seido Shi*, 39-41.

soldiers: send-off ceremonies for soldiers leaving for military services, campaigns to raise the morale of soldiers in the field, and assistance to their families during service. With the revision of the Conscription Law in 1889, local communities assumed the primary burden of providing military assistance for soldiers.¹⁸

New provisions were announced the following year. On June 21, 1890, the Meiji government introduced the Army and Navy Pension Law (*Gunjin Onkyū-hō*). Although not a pension in the sense of lifetime payments, this law specified the legal right of anyone serving in the military to receive a financial assistance upon leaving service. Moreover, the law provided detailed schedules of payments based on military ranks and length of service, also allowed legal challenges when disputes over entitlements arose. Under the new law disabled soldiers received both increased lump sum payments and temporary stipends (*shinjutsu kin*). This law would serve as the Military Pension Law would serve as the fundamental legal code for military pensions for the next 34 years until a new bill, the 1923 Pension Act (*Onkyū-hō*) was passed.¹⁹

The number of wounded soldiers increased dramatically after the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). In the Sino-Japanese War, it was estimated that the death toll was about 17,000, which was the equivalent to 7.5% of all soldiers serving. Meanwhile, in the Russo-Japanese War, among all serving soldiers, about 8.6% of them were dead and 40.3% were injured. Particularly after the Russo-Japanese War, the government noticed that urgent measures were needed to solve the economic difficulties faced by retired and discharged soldiers regardless of their physical conditions.²⁰

The application of the Military Pension Law to veterans of the first

¹⁸ Kazuyuki Iizuka, "Nisshin Nichiro Sensō to Nōson Shakai," in *Nisshin Nichiro Sensō, Kindai Nippon no Kiseki*, vol. 3, ed. Kazuki Iguchi (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbundō, 1994), 122-25.

¹⁹ Ōkurashō, *Onkyū-kyoku*, *Onkyū Seido Shi*, 76-82.

²⁰ Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu Iin, *Kōseishō 50 nenshi, Kijutsu-hen* (Tokyo: Chuōhōki Shuppan, 1988), 76-77.; Yamada, "Gunji Engo Taisaku no Rekishi to Nicchū Sensōka no Gunji Engo Jigyō," 4-5.

Sino-Japanese War exposed the gap between the reality experienced by soldiers and the ideal of military relief. After the outbreak of the war on August 1, 1894, on September 7, the government announced military benefits (*teate kin*) for injured and dead soldiers according to the provisions of the law. However, the benefits were too small to support the recipients because the government's order emphasized support for job placement rather than income replacement. The soldiers that qualified for benefits were limited to those who could not depend on relatives and neighbors. In addition, the Meiji government continued the policy of reliance on new procedures for obtaining the benefits, which made them more difficult to apply for.²¹ Therefore, private efforts and local assistance played a pivotal role in maintaining military relief due to the structural intent of the law.

Immediately after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, the government realized that providing a safety net that would extend to even soldiers of the lowest rank was a compelling issue. Significant numbers of drafted soldiers were their families' breadwinners and officials saw the need to stabilize the lives of soldiers' families during their military service. On April 4, 1904, the government declared "the Order of Assistance for families of Lower Rank Soldiers (*Kashiheisotsu Kazoku Kyūjo-rei*)."²² As in the case of the 1890 law, assistance stopped short of a life pension system, and the new law did not substantially change the policy. Instead, the government emphasized job placement; payment of stipends to soldiers was only available as a last resort. In addition, the stipend was still so limited that the wounded soldiers and their families had to rely on local charity.²² Thus, the 1904 order squarely put the economic burden for providing for retired soldiers and their families on relatives and neighbors.

Bureaucrats, financial leaders, and noblemen voluntarily organized the Imperial

²¹ Doi, "Meiji Zenki ni okeru Gunjin Onkyu," 31-34.; Akira Yamada, "Nihon ni okeru Shōgaisha Fukushi no Rekishi," in *Shōgaisha no Fukushi to Jinken*, ed. Ichibangase Yasuko (Tokyo: Kōseikan, 1987), 58.

²² Kyūichi Yoshida, *Gendai Shakai Jigyoshi Kenkyū* (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1979), 96.; Iizuka, "Nisshin Nichiro Sensō to Nōson Shakai," 126.

Military Personnel Assistance Association (*Teikoku Gunjin Engo kai*) because the 1904 order virtually mandated reliance on philanthropy. The Association set itself the goal of providing for the welfare of family members whose men were serving in the military. They asked for donations from urban middle class civilians and distributed the contributions to 42 prefectures. By doing this, they sought to play a complementary role to public military relief.²³ In addition, the Patriotic Women's Association (*Aikoku Fujin kai*) engaged in helping injured soldiers and their families. Disabled soldiers called 'invalid' (*haihei*) lived in poverty. The Patriotic Women's Association introduced vocational aid programs and a center for invalid soldiers' wives.²⁴

In reality, even with aid from private charities, scant governmental allocations for military relief failed to support families in need. Local private assistance continued to provide the prime source of aid. Members of the community sent letters to enlisted soldiers and visited their families with hopes of raising their morale. They also offered money and necessary daily commodities, particularly to those in destitute circumstances. When servicemen were killed, they sent condolence money for funeral expenses.²⁵ Therefore, these private commitments played a significant role in providing a large portion of available military relief during the Russo-Japanese War period.

Issues related to injuries of ex-servicemen rose to the surface soon after the Russo-Japanese war. More than 55,000 soldiers were seriously injured in the war.²⁶ Private efforts and philanthropy for the soldiers' families supplemented insufficient assistance from the government. On June 12, 1905, observing the predicaments of disabled soldiers and their families, Marshal Yamagata Aritomo proposed "Establishing a

²³ Mutsuo Yamamura, "Teikoku Gunjin Engo kai to Nichiro Senji Gunji Engo Katsudo," *Nihonshi Kenkyu* 358 (1992), 58-59.

²⁴ Tetsuya Ōhama, *Shomin no mita Nisshin Nichiro Sensō* (Tokyo: Tōsui shobō, 2003), 90-97.; Yamada, "Gunji Engo Taisaku no Rekishi to Nicchū Sensōka no Gunji Engo Jigyō," 10-11.

²⁵ Iizuka, "Nisshin Nichiro Sensō to Nōson Shakai," 127-28.

²⁶ Yoshida, *Gendai Shakai Jigyoshi Kenkyu*, 96-97.

Special Agency to Address the Needs of Invalid Soldiers (*Haihei-in*)” to Terauchi Masatake, the Army Minister. In the proposal, Yamagata emphasized the country’s responsibility to war casualties. The Portsmouth Treaty, whose terms fell short of the high expectations of public opinion when Russia failed to pay a war indemnity, resulted in strengthening the dissatisfaction with the government. Yamagata’s proposal was calculated to take into account how the agency would alleviate such criticisms toward the government.²⁷ In addition, he assumed that socialists, who had only recently appeared in Japan, would take advantage of disabled soldiers’ frustrations regarding their sacrifices.²⁸

Accordingly, in April 1906, the Meiji government founded the Agency for Invalid Soldiers. The government planned to create facilities for disabled soldiers in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kokura. Each facility provided service for approximately 200 to 300 men, which represented only 0.3% of all wounded ex-soldiers.²⁹

The new medical facilities represented only a modest step toward governmental provision of comprehensive care for disabled veterans. Only a limited number of wounded soldiers could utilize the Agency. Their institutionalization was restricted according to the severity of their physical conditions. Only injured soldiers who lacked family support were allowed to enter the facility, and their military stipends were suspended as long as veterans were institutionalized. While the objective was to provide for severely injured veterans, for those who had suffered moderate injuries, the government repeatedly emphasized the limited nature of direct economic assistance, and instead promoted vocational assistance. Support from neighborhoods and local governments was still necessary for the wounded soldiers’ families to continue with their

²⁷ Akira Yamada, “Nichiro Sensōji no Haihei no Seikatsu Konkyu to Enjo Keikaku,” *Nihon Fukushi Kyōiku Senmon Gakkō Kenkyū Kiyō* 4, no.2 (1995), 78-79.

²⁸ Hiroshi Ishii, “Tokyo Haihei-in no Sōsetsu to sono Tokushitsu,” *Nihon Rekishi*, 693 (2006), 79, 82-83.

²⁹ Akira Yamada, “Wagakuni Shōigunjin Mondai to Shōkugyohogo no Rekishi,” in *Shōigunjin Rōmuhō*, (*Senzenki Shakai Jigyo Kihon Bunkenshu*, Vol. 58), Susumu Makimura and Yasuo Tsujimura (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 1997), 1-2.

lives. The establishment of the agency primarily illustrated the Meiji government's political priority, which were to assuage criticism at home and impress the West that Japan deserved great power status.³⁰ Hence, the government's quite low level of financial commitments to ex-servicemen persisted even after the Russo-Japanese War.

Military Relief from the Taisho Period to the Manchuria Incident

The public's sympathies with and support for wounded soldiers and their families did not last for a long period of time after the end of the Russo-Japanese war. Soldiers and their families barely survived on the aid they received from neighbors and private philanthropy. Even so, the support provided by local communities steadily declined. As a consequence, some disabled veterans descended into dire poverty. A vicious cycle of debt and poverty emerged as military pension certificates were mortgaged in order to borrow money to live on. Others turned to peddling pharmaceuticals under false identities and often ran into legal trouble.³¹ Living under strained circumstances and in deplorable conditions, disabled veterans had to face harsh realities and lost pride as those who sacrificed to the country.

As the lives of disabled soldiers deteriorated after 1905, measures to expand relief were widely discussed in the mid-1910s when the government considered introducing a military service tax (*heiki zei*) aimed to help wounded soldiers' families. The proposed tax would apply to affluent Japanese men who were to receive exemption from military service. However, the exemption would have violated the principle of the national draft system that all Japanese men must serve in the military, regardless of their social status, when they reach a certain age. The idea of the military service tax was

³⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

³¹ Ibid., 4-5.

never put into practice. Still, it was widely believed that the maintenance of the conscription system required some sort of a national relief system. Moreover, the public realized that it was almost impossible to help invalid soldiers through the relief efforts of local and private organizations that emerged during the war.³²

The discussion of military relief was premised on the idea that that such assistance was inevitable in order to maintain the support and morale of the soldiers in military service. Indeed, the military relief law was necessary for soldiers to fulfill their military duty without experiencing anxiety over their family livelihood. Muto Sanji, an executive of *Kanebo* Cooperation as well as a powerful advocate for military relief who had lost his brother in the Russo-Japanese war, claimed that the weighty economic burdens placed on draftees and the families of disabled soldiers would undermine the morale of the armed forces. In reality, as Muto suggested, discussions surrounding the process of implementing the law were based on the recognition that the poor economic treatment of families might cause demoralization and a low commitment to national defense on the part of soldiers who received more sympathy than assistance.³³ Therefore, the Military Relief Law (*Gunji Kyugo-hō*) was expected to play a complementary role as part of the conscription system.

In introducing the Military Relief Act, the government aimed to provide comprehensive measures including life assistance, medical services, and assistance to natal care, and employment for the soldiers' families. In July 1917, Muto introduced a bill to the Diet to expand assistance to soldiers and their families. In addition to the comprehensive measures, the Military Relief Law targeted needy disabled veterans, families who sent their men to war, and the families of deceased soldiers. The law identified four types of assistance in order to prevent these populations from falling into

³² Toshiya Ichinose, "The Civil Argument of Military Relief Expansion after the Russo-Japanese War," *Bulletin of the National Museum of Japanese History*, 90 (March 2001), 2-3.

³³ Jun Gunji, "Gunjikyugo-hō no Seiritsu to Rikugun," *Nihonshi Kenkyu*, 397 (1995), 3-4.

poverty: job placement, medical treatment, provision of daily necessities, and military pensions. In providing assistance, the law also set restrictions for those who were idle or were leading disrespectable lives.³⁴ To facilitate the implementation of the law, the Bureau of Local Affairs (*Chihō kyoku*) was created as part of the Department of Assistance (*Kyugo ka*) under the Ministry of Interior (*Naimu shō*) in order to promote the welfare of soldiers.³⁵

As a consequence, the Military Relief Law made provisions for disabled veterans and lower rank soldiers and placed them into a single compressive military assistance program. In fact, the basic structure of the legislation borrowed from its British counterpart. Even before implementing the act, the Ministry of Interior researched western countries' military relief legislation as possible models for national legislation. Western countries such as Britain identified two types of aid to servicemen: support for families of deceased soldiers and assistance to disabled soldiers. What differentiated the Japanese law conspicuously from western models was that the governments of western countries provided lifetime pensions to disabled soldiers as opposed to temporary financial support.³⁶

Soldiers were required to apply for assistance under the Military Relief Law, and the complexity of the application process hindered their efforts to receive financial help. Moreover, ex-soldiers hesitated to apply for aid since the recipients frequently were regarded with condescension.³⁷ From the implementation of the Act in 1918 to its revision in 1931, the total budget increased from 770,000 yen to 1,384,000. Meanwhile, the numbers of recipient households increased from 3,187 to 22,604. The average benefit

³⁴ Yoshida, *Gendai Shakai Jigyoshi Kenkyu*, 97-101.

³⁵ Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu In, *Kōseishō 50 nenshi, Kijutsu-hen*, 77.

³⁶ Yamada, "Gunji Engo Taisaku no Rekishi to Nicchū Sensōka no Gunji Engo Jigyō," 18-19.

³⁷ Kazushige Yamamoto, "Manshu Jihen-ki no Rōdosha Tōgo," *Ōhara Shakai Mondai Kenkyujo Zasshi*, 372 (November 1989), 33-34.

per household grew from 43.17 yen to 76.61 yen during this respective period.

In the aftermath of economic depression of 1930-1932, the budget was reduced. However, despite expansion in services and increased direct government support, many disabled veterans could not maintain an acceptable standard of living on the benefits they received, and some found it difficult to qualify for any aid at all. Such restrictive and inadequate treatment of disabled veterans soon gave rise to the invalid soldier's movement in the late Taisho period. Dissatisfaction with the Military Relief Law prevailed among disabled soldiers, who claimed that their sacrifices conferred the right to be rewarded since they had served the country and received injuries. In 1920, a group of disabled veterans brought a petition to the Diet. The appeal called for revisions of the Military Relief Law and the Act of the Agency for Invalid Soldiers. In 1922, the movement intensified their activities with the goal of winning prioritized military assistance, raising military pensions, and obtaining free passes on the National Railway.³⁸

The dispatching of soldiers overseas during World War I and the economic depression of 1920 also provided impetus for the government to take new steps to cope with the disabled veterans' issues. Increasing attention to disabled soldiers and their families brought about larger payments and a rise in the number of recipients in the 1920s. As a result, the Military Relief Law served an estimated 30,000 ex-servicemen, whose military pensions mounted to around 1,000,000 yen in total per year in the mid-1920s. The Agency for Invalid Soldiers took in approximately 100 men every year. However, inflationary prices put upward pressure on the budget for military relief. In 1929, the minister of interior decided to increase the amount of individual benefits from 20 *sen* to 60 *sen*. The number of recipients rose to about 40,000. The revised law extended the scope of recipients and kinds of assistance including medical service, birth, and funeral assistance.³⁹

³⁸ Yamada, "Gunji Engo Taisaku no Rekishi to Nicchū Sensōka no Gunji Engo Jigyō," 20-21.

³⁹ Ibid., 22-23.

As attention to the issue of military relief heightened, opinion in support of a national pension system, including military pensions, gained ground among the Japanese people. In reality, reform of the entire pension system was discussed as early as the Taisho period. The government initially hesitated to modify the military pension system owing to the technical difficulties of redefining benefits to recipients, yet inflation caused by World War I led Japanese leaders to overhaul the system. Consequently, on April 14, 1923, the government published the Pension Law. For the first time, the 1923 law instituted a lifetime system of financial support in the form of what was called standard pension (*futsū onkyū*), a supplemental pension, and one-time disability payment (*shōbyō shikin*). Those who had served in the military for eleven years qualified for the standard pension. In addition to the standard pension, a supplemental pension was paid, if claimed, within five years after discharge. The yearly amount of one's pension was based on the degree of injuries and military ranks. Moreover, wounded soldiers who had not met the required eleven years of service and belonged to a lower rank than noncommissioned officer could receive the disability gratuity.⁴⁰

The social isolation of disabled soldiers in society induced the government to address their vocational issues. After World War I, western countries faced issues regarding the treatment of disabled veterans. These countries shifted their views on relief measures from focusing on providing minimal levels of financial relief to the poor towards providing long term assistance such as vocational reeducation. The Japanese government followed this international trend. Military leaders advocated for soldiers' job security, following their discharge. Many soldiers were confronted with the dilemma that they had to quit their jobs when drafted into the military. When they returned from service, they had no guarantee of reemployment at their previous workplace. Thus, in 1931, the government sought early implementation of soldiers' readjustment to society by initiating the Law of Vocational Security for Soldiers (*Nyueisha Shokugyo Hoshō-hō*)

⁴⁰ Ōkurashō, Onkyū-kyoku, *Onkyu Seido Shi*, 113-15, 132-36.

on November 1, 1931. This legislation obligated companies hiring more than 50 workers to reemploy returning servicemen. The Department of Social Affairs (*shakai kyoku*) in the Ministry of Interior, the main body of law enforcement, rationalized the rehiring returning soldiers as a “national moral obligation.”⁴¹ Indeed, most of the military personnel returned to the workplace where they had previously been employed. However, the policy excluded disabled soldiers from the guaranty of reemployment. The Law permitted employers not to reemploy workers who were not able to perform work duties, which made it harder for disabled soldiers to sustain their lives.⁴²

The standard pension that all soldier received upon retiring from military service was never intended in itself to provide adequate life support. Rather, its intent was to support income for employed. This created special problem for disabled veterans who needed a stable military disability pension system because of the difficulty of securing employment. For instance, a 1931 survey on disabled soldiers revealed that in Okayama prefecture 82% of disabled veterans had served in the Russo-Japanese war, nearly 80% of them were between the ages of 49 and 59, and the majority of their income came from the military disability pension rather than from wages.⁴³

Military Relief from the Manchuria Incident to the Pacific War

The eruption of the Manchuria Incident on September 18, 1931, combined with the ensuing military expansion into China, provided impetus to the Japanese government to increase support for disabled veterans. These efforts to address the needs of disabled

⁴¹ Kim Nan-gu, “Senzen no Shōisha Koyō Seisaku ni kansuru Ichikōsatsu,” *Sogō Shakai Fukushi Kenkyū* 17 (October 2000), 149-50. ; Kazushige Yamamoto, “Guntai to Minshū: 1930 nendai no Gunjikyūgo Seisaku kara,” *Jinmin no Rekishi* 156 (June 2003), 4.

⁴² Yamada, “Wagakuni Shōigunjin Mondai to shōkugyohogo no Rekishi,” 26.

⁴³ Yamada, “Gunji Engo Taisaku no Rekishi to Nicchū Sensōka no Gunji Engo Jigyo,” 23-24.

soldiers eventually produced a more comprehensive system of relief. In 1934, new legislation, the Law of the Agency for Injured Soldiers (*Shōheiin-hō*), was passed. The new law was more narrowly focused on recipients who were poor and those who needed high levels of assistance due to their physical and mental disabilities. As increasing numbers of soldiers were dispatched to China, more received their discharge for contracting tuberculosis. Therefore, Japanese military leaders had to reconsider the main scope of military relief.⁴⁴

Japanese disabled soldiers and veterans were under the control of the state. The various disabled veterans' groups were localized, poorly funded, and in competition with each other, which limited their effectiveness. The Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of War, and the Ministry of Navy placed pressure on numerous disabled veterans' groups such as Imperial Disabled Veterans Association (*Teikoku Shōigunjin kai*) and National Disabled Veterans Association (*Zenkoku Shōigunjin Rengō kai*) to dissolve. The ministries re consolidated them into the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association (*Dai Nippon Shōigunjin kai*) in December 1936.⁴⁵

As the number of casualties in China rose substantially after 1937, Government officials recognized the need to integrate the various existing measures addressing the needs of desirable soldiers into a unified policy. In March 1937, the Military Assistance Law (*Gunji Fujo-hō*) was enacted to replace the Military Relief Law. Subsequently, the Japanese government proceeded with relief measures for disabled veterans through the military pension system under the Pension Law, and the Law of the Agency for Injured Soldiers, and the Military Assistance Law.

After the Military Assistance Law was implemented, the Japanese government needed to establish a specialized agency for disabled soldiers. On November 1 1937, the Ad Hoc Bureau of Military Aid (*Rinji Gunji Engo-bu*) was formed under the Social

⁴⁴ Ibid., 25-26. ; Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu Iin, *Kōseishō Gojunenshi, Kijutu-hen*, 263-64.

⁴⁵ Yamada, "Wagakuni Shōigunjin Mondai to Shokugyōhogo no Rekishi," 17-19.

Branch of the Ministry of Interior. In essence, assigning responsibility for protecting the livelihood of disabled soldiers to a single agency represented the first effort by the government to cope with the needs of the disabled as a special category of aid recipients. Thus, in early 1938, the Bureau asked opinion for leaders and professionals to investigate the status quo of disabled soldiers.⁴⁶ When the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW: *Kōseishō*), was created to oversee people's health during wartime emergency on January 11, 1938, the Ad Hoc Bureau of Military Aid was included under the MHW as wounded soldiers returned to Japan.

The Council of Protection for Disabled Veterans in January 1938

The all-out war in China that began in July 1937 provided renewed impetus to support wounded returnees. The government understood the urgency of assisting not only disabled soldiers but also their families. On January 15, 1938, the Ad Hoc Bureau of Military Aid was reorganized as the “Council for Protection for Disabled Veterans (*Shōigunjin Hogotaisaku Shingi kai*)” under the Ministry of Health and Welfare. In January 1938, the Council held seven meeting sessions to develop a concrete direction for policies for disabled veterans. At the beginning of the meeting, the Minister of Health, Kido Koichi, explained the objective as follows: “After the eruption of the Manchuria Incident, the situation has been changing minute by the minute. Significant number of disabled soldiers will be discharged and will be coming back home soon. The circumstances compel us to create facilities for disabled veterans.”⁴⁷ Also, the Council declared “we should express gratitude toward disabled soldiers.” The purpose of new

⁴⁶ Shun'ichi, Koga, ed., *Honjo Sōsai to Gunji-hogoin* (Tokyo: Seishukai, 1961), 214-15.

⁴⁷ “Shōigunjin Hogo Taisaku Shingikai Gijironku, the 1st Meeting Memorandum, 2 (1938)” in *Chiteki Shintai Shōgaisha Mondai Shiryō Shusei*, 12 (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2006), 2.

measures was to restore the soldiers' lives to what they have been before serving the country. Considering the psychological issues faced by disabled soldiers, the Council voiced the concern that the provision of government assistance could in the future result in the general public losing interest in supporting injured soldiers. Finally, they emphasized that the protections should be permanent.⁴⁸

The proposals that were circulated among participants at the meeting consisted of a list of five items: preferential treatment, medical service, education, vocation, and cultivation to citizens.⁴⁹ The council members, primarily consisting of military leaders and officials of the MW, were summoned to exchange opinions on the problems they had confronted. At the morning session of the first general meeting of the council held on January 17, 1938, Hirose Tadahisa expressed his opinion. "Considering the current condition, the measures for disabled veterans were not sufficient. In particular, management of facilities for them should be improved." As it was expected that war casualties would increase, the Council of Protection for Disabled Veterans realized that the existing relief measures did not respond to the needs and interests of returning soldiers.

Several members pointed out the flaws of current relief policy for disabled soldiers. Yamazaki Iwao, chair of social bureau at the MW, stressed the mental and spiritual aspects of preferential treatment: protection of disabled soldiers and their family members, an allowance for those given home care, more social engagement of disabled soldiers with citizens.⁵⁰ Yoshida Shigeru warned that all measures, including military pensions and medical facilities, should be in accordance with the fundamental principles of military relief that disabled soldiers should not take these measures as entitlements or

⁴⁸ Kimiko Murakami, *Senryōki no Fukushi Seisaku* (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1987), 155-56.

⁴⁹ "Shōigunjin Hogo Taisaku Shingikai Gijironku," 21-22.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-11.

rights.⁵¹ Kaba Atsushi, president of the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association, countered that disabled veterans earnestly appreciated the government's effort to renew a series of provisions for disabled veterans because they believed the government would not take responsibility unless pressured by veterans.⁵²

Participants presented various ideas for the revision of current provisions for disabled veterans. Koizumi Rokuichi explained why disabled veterans had been viewed unfavorably. "It is commonly believed that people tend to regard disabled soldiers with disdain. This view might be rooted in the fact that many nondisabled people such as pharmaceutical peddlers imitate disabled soldiers. Therefore, the imposters should be punished. If this is implemented immediately, I believe true disabled veterans would receive more hospitable treatment from citizens."⁵³ Hoshijima Jiro, a member of the House of Representatives, brought up the idea that disabled veterans' dependency on the state could result in a lowering of morale. Instead, Hoshijima suggested the following. "Even if the government prepares complete facilities for disabled soldiers, they should not rely on them first, but ask for help from family, friends, and the local community. This is a natural way to solve the problem."⁵⁴

The committee members exchanged opinions on a draft document "Principle Outline of Measures for Disabled Veterans (*Shōigunjin Taisaku no Kisogaiyō*)" at the First Special Committee Session held on January 17, 1938. The outline was comprised of seven sections. Explaining each section, Yamazaki Iwao prioritized that veterans' return to their previous vocational status. For effective implementation of the measures for disabled soldiers, Yamazaki, citing article 7 of the outline,⁵⁵ requested that such costs

⁵¹ Ibid., 12-13.

⁵² Ibid., 13-14.

⁵³ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁵ The article 7 declares, "Measures for disabled soldiers are not included in social welfare service, but

should not be accounted for under the public welfare service (*shakai jigyo*) but under part of military expenditures.⁵⁶ Yamazaki's remark invited a discussion of how welfare for disabled soldiers should be defined.

Another important issue that participants vigorously discussed was the role of private efforts in supporting disabled veterans in relationship to the role of the government. Sekiya raised a provocative question about the role of private endeavors in providing for the welfare of disabled soldiers. "Could we utilize judicial foundations such as Keiseisha (institution for the care of disabled soldiers) or ask the managers to donate their facilities for efficient care to soldiers?"⁵⁷ This question stirred up the issue of who should take the initiative in implementing measures for soldiers? Yamazaki warned, "There is no objection that private facilities, in expressing their sympathy and thankfulness, would supplement what the government cannot satisfactorily provide. More importantly, I am concerned about how these facilities would be sustained as years go by. It is necessary that the facilities will not be temporary ones."⁵⁸ As a result, Fujiwara Ginjiro concluded, "The initial issue is to decide who would be in charge of measures for disabled soldiers and veterans to avoid inciting disarray between the government and private efforts. Therefore, while in theory the government takes the initiative, in practice it is convenient that the government should declare that it will cooperate with private efforts for effectual execution of the measures."⁵⁹

Preferential treatment for disabled veterans was considered a necessary part of the new policy. Horita Takeo, a secretary of the MW, provided an overview of the preferred treatment: military insignia, priority seats for disabled veterans at special events

they should be constituted for segment of military expenses." Ibid., 24.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 30-31.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 36-37.

and on the National Railway, compensation for life after discharge. The purpose of issuing military insignia was to accord veterans' public recognition. Horita explained, "Military insignia for disabled veterans proves their status in society, which should be widely recognized."⁶⁰ Provision of priority seats for disabled veterans at various social events was rare. Hence, it was important to arrange for special seating. When veterans visited public cultural institutions, the admission fee should be waived. Meanwhile, Horita posed the question of the government's role in private facilities. "Providing good service or expressing gratitude to soldiers is better than simply free admission at private facilities for the reason that disabled veterans can maintain their pride."⁶¹ Under the current situation, priority seating on the National Railway was designated for higher ranked military personnel, but Horita suggested expanding this service to all soldiers regardless of their military status.⁶²

Another serious concern for soldiers after being discharged was the question of marriage. Horita posited the marriage issue, especially among unmarried young disabled veterans, to be "a delicate matter." Horita suggested that disabled veterans' groups, such as the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association, establish consultation centers for younger followers. It was believed that the association would be the most effective forum for communicating about this issue.⁶³ Horita also petitioned for a revamping of the current Agency for Wounded Soldiers. Although disabled soldiers qualified for making use of the Agency for Wounded Soldiers, military pensions were suspended as long as they were institutionalized. Thus, many of them would hesitate before accepting institutionalization as this would deprive their families of important source of income.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁶¹ Ibid., 39.

⁶² Ibid., 40.

⁶³ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 40-41.

The receipt of a military pension after discharge was a crucial issue greatly affecting the post-military lives of soldiers. Takagi Saburo, chief of the Pension Bureau, commented on the ongoing military pension system. He responded to complaints that those receiving relatively minor injuries would receive smaller military pensions than seriously injured soldiers “All in all, the military pension is compensation for the loss of the ability to work. Hence, the Pension Bureau believed that the military pension should be paid in accordance with the actual situations of disabled soldiers. Even if well compensated financially, they could not be satisfied with their lives spiritually. Therefore, the country should make sure that they do not contribute to their material troubles.”⁶⁵

Participants pointed out that the provision of medical services after discharge did not adequately address their actual physical condition. As a rule, disabled veterans were to use military medical facilities. However, it was inconvenient for them to commute to the facilities. Horita suggested that, “in the case of an emergency, they should be allowed to see their local medical doctors for care.” Citing French disabled soldiers as example, Horita explained the importance of spiritual indoctrination during their hospitalization. “In France, disabled soldiers are heroes for the time being, but soon after they become beggars until they die. Thus, it is inevitable for them to counsel and receive vocational training during their hospitalization. As substantial and practical plans, they should receive lectures on uplifting morale, a program where patients watch documentary films on the issue of disabled veterans, and reading assignment focusing on disabled veterans’ success stories. With these preparations during hospitalization, their transition back into society could be smoother.”⁶⁶

On January 18, 1938, the Second Special Session was held. In the beginning, the revision of the Agency for Disabled Veterans was treated as an issue that would need to be changed over time. Yamazaki Iwao pointed to the problems inherent in the current

⁶⁵ Ibid., 42-43.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 48-50.

system involving the military pension and the Agency for Disabled Veterans.

Under the current law, as you well know, those who are hospitalized at the Agency suspend their eligibility for the military pension. After the suspension, half of the ordinary military pension (*futsū onkyū*) is transferred to their family, while half of the increased military pension (*zōka onkyū*) is paid to the hospitalized disabled soldier. In short, such suspension should not be applied to them, for it made them reluctant to utilize the Agency.⁶⁷

Horita Takeo also pointed out another reason that they avoided the Agency, “It is so coldhearted that when disabled soldiers are hospitalized, they are separating from their families. As a result, substantial numbers of them would refuse to enter the facilities.”⁶⁸ Thus Yamazaki and Horita asked the Agency to implement more flexibility.

Meanwhile, some argued that military pensions and tax payments were separate issues among disabled veterans. Yamazaki insisted, “Disabled soldiers should pay taxes because it is a citizen’s fundamental obligation, and they already receive preferential treatment in many ways.”⁶⁹ In order to fulfill their national duty, disabled soldiers were expected to be role models to other citizens.

Keeping up disabled veterans’ morale was one of the important topics among participants at the meeting. Horita was concerned that some lowly motivated veterans or fake disabled veterans could negatively affect the public’s perception of the majority of their colleagues. “Misuse of badges by fake disabled veterans is widespread. Some disabled veterans pass their badges to nondisabled citizens. Due to such a few numbers of irresponsible veterans, it is a pity that the majority of veterans, who are admirable, receive shameful attention from ordinary people due to the existence of a few imprudent veterans.” Horita suggested preventive measures to help disabled veterans maintain their

⁶⁷ Ibid., 60-61.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 64.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 84-85.

pride: indoctrination during hospitalization and participation in the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association after discharge.⁷⁰

Then, Horita addressed the topic of vocational training for disabled veterans. In principle, they should return to the workplace where they had previously been employed. However, if he could not return to the same job, he would receive vocational training for related work.⁷¹ Moreover, a campaign to promote hiring disabled soldiers was needed, and would require governmental and public support. Horita claimed that the government should employ them voluntarily, as should public organizations. The government's initiative in taking responsibility for their employment was considered to be a necessity for life security.⁷² Yet, Fujiwara Ginjiro warned that the role of the government and public organizations in forcing employers to rehire of returned soldiers should only be a last resort. "Under the current situation, small or middle size companies have difficulties in hiring even nondisabled citizens." Hence, Fujiwara begged the participants to reconsider this final measure.⁷³

The agenda of the discussion was extended to ordinary citizens' efforts to understand the situation of disabled soldiers. Horita believed that an awareness-building campaign for disabled veterans should be orchestrated in various forms: a national movement to demonstrate gratitude to disabled soldiers and veterans, a special description of disabled veterans in a government-designated school textbook and strict implementation of preferential treatment for them. In addition, numerous annual events for expressing gratitude to disabled soldiers should be held in accordance with maintaining people's thankfulness to their sacrifice.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Ibid., 66-67.

⁷¹ Ibid., 69-70.

⁷² Ibid., 71-72

⁷³ Ibid., 91-92.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 73-74.

The main discussion in the Third Special Session focused on three subjects: preferential treatment, indoctrination, and facilities and institutions. Preferential treatment raised critical issues regarding how disabled veterans were perceived by society. Maeda Tamon recommended that an attractive military insignia should be provided for their psychological benefit. “I think they prefer wearing the insignia wherever they go, so the color of the badge should be a brighter one rather than a dark heavy one.”⁷⁵ Maeda also pointed out that some disabled veterans gave the insignia to nondisabled citizens, which caused the wounded retiree serious trouble. Due to the fear of appearing unpatriotic and unsupportive of those who became disabled in military service for the country, citizens were coerced into purchasing goods and services from these fake disabled veterans. Maeda asked the committee members to legally restrict the ability of disabled veterans to peddle goods in order to protect their honor. Nevertheless, Kaba Atsushi responded, “It is difficult to revise the law for disabled soldiers in order to merely crack down on the actions of some imprudent fellows.”⁷⁶

The creation of a new institution for disabled soldiers was intensely debated in the third session. In order to provide more comprehensive implementation of relief for disabled soldiers, the committee members discussed potential organizational structures of the proposed new institution. Horita presented the viewpoint of disabled soldiers, “We fight for the country, therefore, expenditures for the new organization should come from the government.” Nonetheless, most of the participants thought that the operation of the new institution should be split equally between the government and private groups. Horita suggested establishing corporate or governmental foundations to as preferable to reliance on an uncaring bureaucracy.⁷⁷ In addition, Horita suggested why such a management style would work well for disabled soldiers. Taking the Italian example, he

⁷⁵ Ibid., 112-13.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 117-18.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 128-30.

explained that its national organization for disabled soldiers worked effectively in the first five years of operation by the mixed efforts of the government and private efforts, then it changed to a fully governmentally managed organization.⁷⁸

Their discussion led to the drafting of the proposal of the Agency of Protection for Wounded Soldiers (*Shōhei Hogo-in*). Several members raised the issue of the status of the main body of the new organization. Although Horita insisted that it should be like a private corporate body and granted juridical status from the government, Fujiwara claimed that it was supposed to be a governmental entity, and not accept donations from private groups or individuals⁷⁹ Meanwhile, for flexible operation of the organization, Maeda proposed that the agency would assume the responsibilities of the government as well as play a facilitating role governmental and private efforts to support disabled soldiers.⁸⁰ Fujiwara commented on the difficult part of the agency's operation: budget negotiation with the Ministry of Finance including the amount, the division, and the legal aspect of the budget.⁸¹ Despite several unsolved concerns about the operations, the committee members generally endorsed the idea of the agency.

Discussion of the Agency for Disabled Soldiers was also carried over into the Fourth Special Session. Kaba Atsushi asserted that it was in the best interests of disabled soldiers to create an agency that was operated by the joint efforts of the government and private efforts. "Please consider the purpose of this agency from a practical rather than an ideological perspective."⁸² Then numerous members argued over substantial issues relating to the agency. Horita proposed that the agency should accept tubercular patients and mild mentally disabled patients if they could adjust themselves to group living.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 131-32.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 133-34.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 134.

⁸¹ Ibid., 138.

⁸² Ibid., 144-45.

Moreover, it would be beneficial for the agency to accept elderly disabled veterans for morale reasons.⁸³ Issues over jurisdiction also commanded the attention. Whereas there was a consensus that the government should play a leading but not exclusive role in implementation, opinions on the agency's jurisdiction were divided; Taniguchi Koji claimed that the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association should have jurisdiction over the agency,⁸⁴ while Fujiwara proposed that the military would be the proper administration to control the agency. As a compromise, all members agreed that since the agency would deal with military personnel after discharge, the Ministry of Welfare would be the appropriate agency.

Creation of the Agency of Protection for Wounded Soldiers

In the interest of promptly responding to the needs of wounded soldiers, the government thus created the Agency of Protection for Wounded Soldiers on April 18, 1938. Honjo Shigeru, Imperial Japanese Army General, was appointed as Director-General of the Agency. The agency provided medical protection, vocational security, and spiritual tutoring. The supporting system for veterans was divided into two categories: the Ad Hoc Bureau of Military Aid (*Rinji Gunji Engo-bu*), which supported uninjured soldiers, and the Agency of Protection for Wounded Soldiers, which administered service for disabled soldiers.⁸⁵

As the war with China continued and intensified, the government found it necessary to streamline these two efforts. On July 15, 1939, the Japanese government integrated the Ad Hoc Bureau of Military Aid and the Agency of Protection for Wounded Soldiers into the Agency of Military Protection (*Gunji hogo-in*). Honjo took over the

⁸³ Ibid., 149-50.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 163-64.

⁸⁵ Murakami, *Senryōki no Fukushi Seisaku*, 156-57.

position of Director-General. The Agency of Military Protection was assigned four responsibilities: 1) assistance to disabled soldiers including care and vocational protections 2) assistance to the families of soldiers and to the families of the deceased 3) a comprehensive plan for military assistance 4) facilities for assistance 5) guidance to prefectural facilities. As part of the project, the Agency proceeded to create several national sanitariums for disabled soldiers.⁸⁶ This drastic restructuring of governmental agencies demonstrated that the government understood the desperate situation of disabled veterans and their families, and were aware that failing to address their needs would be detrimental to soldiers' morale.

During the war, the objective of military relief for disabled soldiers concentrated on how they could be restored to productive activity. The government saw a need for efforts to prepare disabled soldiers for reentering the labor market. Vocational training and education were essential for the integration of soldiers back into the labor force, and focused on four areas: 1) vocational guidance and assistance 2) assistance for those self-employed 3) vocational reeducation 4) work prosthesis.⁸⁷ Although the disability policy during the war was limited to disabled veterans, it is noteworthy that the war increasingly forced consideration of concrete measures for addressing the needs of disabled people.

Instruction and Raising Morale for Disabled Soldiers after the Outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War

Disabled Soldiers commonly confronted many difficulties after discharge from their military unit or the hospital. The Japanese government realized that their problems

⁸⁶ Yamada, "Gunji Engo Taisaku no Rekishi to Nicchū Sensōka no Gunji Engo Jigyo," 26-27.; Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu Iin, *Kōseishō 50 nenshi, Kijutu-hen*, 483-88.

⁸⁷ Yamada, "Wagakuni Shōigunjin Mondai to Shōkugyohogo no Rekishi," 26-28.

would put substantial demands on other citizens. After creating the Agency of Military Protection in 1939, the Agency released numerous publications on military relief. These books demonstrated how veterans and administrators could cope with the issue of disabled soldiers.

As the number of wounded soldiers returning from China increased, the government recognized that the disabled soldiers needed guidance after their discharge. The circulation of stories and public appearances by veterans disabled in the Russo-Japanese war were promoted, particularly for the benefit of disabled soldiers returning from China. These publications were intended to have a large impact on newly injured soldiers and their families. In February and March 1938, “*Success Stories of Disabled Veterans (Shōigunjin Seikō Bidanshu)*” and “*Dedication to Disabled Soldiers (Shōigunjin ni Sasagu)*” were successively published. *Success Stories of Disabled Veterans* covered the anecdotes of how disabled soldiers reintegrated themselves into society after their discharge.

The stories told in *Success Stories of Disabled Veterans* suggested that disabled soldiers from previous wars shared the same thoughts and concerns regarding their injuries and how their lives were affected after their dismissal from the military. The sharing of their experiences in this book was intended to offer guidance and moral uplift for recent wounded war returnees. In the preface to the book, the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association, the editor remarked, “Though it may not be necessary, let me give you a success story of your senior soldiers. It would be more than someone can dream of if this book might give you some guidance.”⁸⁸ Thus, the collection of essays played a helpful role among disabled soldiers and their families.

Success Stories of Disabled Veterans explores the initial concerns of soldiers who had suffered injuries and expressed uncertainty about the future. Miyamoto Uichiro,

⁸⁸ Dai Nippon Shōigunjin kai (Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association), *Shōigunjin Seikō Bidanshu* (Tokyo: Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association, 1938), ii.

a Russo-Japanese war veteran from Kumamoto who was unable to move his fingers, confided his worries after hospitalization, “What can I do with these fingers? I will come apart at the seams with these fingers?”⁸⁹ Suzuki Junji, a veteran from Hiroshima who lost his right arm, stated after discharge “How can I support myself and take care of my old parents?” Suzuki thought that he could not work as he used to.⁹⁰

Concurrently, injured soldiers expressed remorse to their fellow citizens and fallen comrades. Hayashi Keiji, a veteran from Kagawa, recalled his return home. He painfully regretted when his villagers and children warmly welcomed his repatriation. “When I left here, I swore I would win fame in the battlefield. Or if not, I swore I would not see you again. Regrettably, I return home with this miserable figure before the war is over. It is most embarrassing for me.”⁹¹ Takeuchi Otosuke, a one-legged ex-serviceman from Hokkaido, recalled his fellow soldiers, “I was ready to die at that time. I never even dreamed I could return to my home. Fortunately or unfortunately, I survived only losing my leg. Come to think of it. I feel remorse for leading an idle life. I can’t explain it to my dead colleagues.”⁹² Such regrettable feelings persisted among injured soldiers.

Disabled soldiers also faced the harsh realities of ordinary citizens’ sentiments. Yoshizawa Nonezō, a veteran from Saitama who injured his right shoulder, observed that the people in his village gradually revealed their real feelings. Although they initially felt sorry for him, they began to look blankly at him and talked about him behind his back. One village resident complained “In spite of being a handicapped man, he is so stubborn that I cannot feel sorry for him anymore.”⁹³ Okamura Mikizō, a veteran from Tokyo who lost his left leg, experienced a sudden change in people’s attitudes towards disabled

⁸⁹ Ibid., 73-74.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 85.

⁹¹ Ibid., 100.

⁹² Ibid., 121.

⁹³ Ibid., 41-42.

veterans. At first the village people cried, “You did a great job! You gave up your leg to our country! We all are responsible for supporting you in order to compensate you for your crippled body.” Nevertheless, it was not long before such exuberant welcome disappeared, and they gave him pathetic and disrespectful looks.⁹⁴ The anecdotes intended to give them a realistic sense of how they would be viewed as a kind of warning.

Many of the stories showed how dedicated family assistance buttressed the soldiers’ return to social life. Watanabe Tsurusaburo from Yamanashi, who was unable to move his right shoulder, started a career as a rice dealer after hospitalization. His wife worked hard all day long without making any complaints. He appreciatively said, “I am sorry for the troubles I have caused. Once my body is completely recovered, I won’t give you any burdens.” She cheerfully replied to him, “It is more than I deserve! It came as no surprise.”⁹⁵ Amahiki Kitaro, a veteran from Gunma with an injured right hand, suffered from post-duty pain and could not find a job after undergoing a major operation in Tokyo. He asked his wife to work hard in order to sustain the household. She responded, “Yes, I will work like hell on behalf of your impaired right arm.”⁹⁶ In the essays, family member’s dedication to disabled soldiers was shown to be essential to lead a decent social life. This implicit message in these stories, however, was that the assistance of non-kin could not be counted on.

In its stories, *Success Stories of Disabled Veterans* also provided examples of various forms of governmental military assistance. Obayashi Kanesaburo, a discharged soldier who was wounded at the end of the Meiji period and received a temporary stipend (*shinjutsukin*), was awarded a medal for his valor in battle, and received 100 yen after

⁹⁴ Ibid., 110-11.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 69.

becoming unemployed in 1912⁹⁷ The story of Nakamaru Tomekichi from Kanagawa, who was severely injured during the Russo-Japanese War, encouraged disabled soldiers to provide for their own welfare by seeking out whatever employment they were still physically able to perform. After several operations, his family was so impoverished that they could not take care of him; instead he was institutionalized at the Agency for Invalid Soldiers in Sugamo, Tokyo. His hospitalization gave him the opportunity to think about his future. As a result, he was hired as an apprentice of needlework.⁹⁸ Muta Sakuichi from Saga, expressed appreciation for a prosthetic device granted to him by the emperor. After having his left leg amputated, he worried that his prosthetic leg might no longer work. His military doctor confidently said, “The Imperial Household will provide for you. So, you don’t need to worry about money. The emperor has eternally felt concerned about the welfare of brave victims like you.”⁹⁹ Stories extolling the gracious assistance of the Imperial Household encouraged wounded soldiers and their families. It also virtually prohibited them from complaining that it was not enough and they needed more.

In addition to direct military assistance, the Japanese government gave preferential treatment to disabled soldiers. Yokoyama Keitaro from Aomori used to work as a carpenter. However, his injuries made it impossible for him to return to his previous work. After his discharge, he was granted the privilege of selling stamps, a government designated occupation for disabled soldiers.¹⁰⁰ Morita Senjiro, a veteran from Yokohama whose left arm was amputated, had difficulties returning to his previous job as a kimono retailer. Using his temporary stipend and military pension, he opened a tobacco retail store, a type of business whose operation the government provided preferential treatment to disabled soldiers. Thus, the government encouraged them to participate in productive

⁹⁷ Ibid., 16.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 130-32.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 136-38.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 37.

employment and reserved business for them.¹⁰¹

The collection of stories carried tales of their success in finding a niche after discharge. Ito Sadashichi, a soldier from Fukushima who lost the lower part of his leg, became the village mayor. His motto was “If you work as you did during military life and uphold the military spirit, you will be sure of success in your civilian life.” He began his career as a secretary at the village office. The people of the village recognized his outstanding ability to manage village finance. When he reached the age of retirement in 1913, the people of the village highly encouraged him to be mayor. Since then, he contributed to the development of the village.¹⁰² Nakamura Nobuo from Fukuoka returned to his former employment as an elementary school teacher. After discharge from the army, his previous colleagues sought assistance from him to provide a good education to local children. After the completion of his military service, he initially turned down employment offers to teach again because of his disabilities. He only accepted work teaching after his colleagues begged him to return because his presence at the school had such a positive influence on students.¹⁰³ These success stories illustrate that disabled soldiers were utilized as a symbol of dedication to the country

While *Success Stories of Disabled Veterans* focused on personal accounts of disabled soldiers, *Dedication to Disabled Soldiers* was a collection of lectures given to institutionalized disabled soldiers. Numerous veterans, including successful disabled veterans, gave lectures on post-discharge living. They dealt with several facets of disabled veterans’ issues.

Some lecturers emphasized the invaluable presence of disabled soldiers in Japanese society. Showing a positive public face to ordinary citizens was important to encouraging public support and understanding their wartime efforts. Agegarasu Toshi, a

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 78-79.

¹⁰² Ibid., 94-96.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 125-26.

blind monk, encouraged institutionalized wounded soldiers by preaching, “The wounds you have received are a military medal. You may or may have not received an actual medal; however, you all have already gotten a medal printed on your body. Whether the military holds your record or not, your body is a record. You are the object of prayer by others who see you out in society”¹⁰⁴ Goyumi Yasujiro, a professor at military school, asked disabled soldiers to congregate on the front lines of a new battle for spiritual national mobilization. He stressed that returned disabled soldiers had the ability to encourage ordinary citizens to get involved in national defense. Moreover, Goyumi was impressed with their success stories, “What I have discovered is that even if you lose your sight, the eyes in your heart still open. If you become handicapped, your spirit remains unblemished. We all see light in their own way and earn spiritual comfort. I have high esteem for them.” Wounded soldiers were reminded that they were not isolated from society.¹⁰⁵

Most lectures were intended to uplift the morale of disabled soldiers. Shibauchi Kaizō, a blind veteran, encouraged veterans to contribute to the country, “If you are unfortunately an invalid and want to be in my company, please do something with your remaining abilities. A man with no right arm can still do something with the left arm!”¹⁰⁶ From the disabled person’s perspective, Nakayama Kametaro, whose arms and left leg were amputated after an accident, insisted that “Although I used to lead an unhappy life, now I don’t think I spend anytime unhappily...One’s mindset determines whether we are happy or not. If you have the right mindset, you will be free from unhappiness.”¹⁰⁷ Emphasis on spiritual uplift was a powerful tool to be utilized for disabled soldiers.

Some experienced disabled veterans gave them practical advice in preparing for

¹⁰⁴ Koseishō, *Shōigunjin ni Sagagu* (Tokyo: Dai Nippon Insatsu, 1938), 17.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 66-69.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 125-26.

their repatriation. Iwakura Masao, a veteran disabled during the Russo-Japanese War, discussed the reasons why disabled soldiers were unpopular with the public after discharge. “1) After the war, the government could not afford to give them sufficient financial support, which restricted their choice of vocation. As a result, most of them had to choose jobs such as pharmaceutical peddlers, which were inadequate compensation for their honorable wartime injuries. 2) There were no disabled veterans groups calling for mutual help and moral culture, which gave the public impression that disabled veterans’ were vagabonds.”¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, the creation of the Ad Hoc Bureau of Military Aid by the Ministry of Health and Welfare properly cared for disabled soldiers. Although the veterans should be respected as a “white gown brave men (*hakui no yūshi*),” Iwakura recommended that they should not boast about themselves. “If you think of solely as an invalid, you will lead an unhappy life for the rest of life... Since only disabled veterans understand their afflictions, it is impossible for nondisabled people to understand the same pains.”¹⁰⁹ Consequently, Iwakura concluded, “Even if you are a disabled veteran with will power, you could be leading a successful life. Without exception, the successful disabled veterans that I have seen are people who have invested in serious efforts.”¹¹⁰

Finding a job was a crucial concern among disabled soldiers. In *Dedication to Disabled Soldiers*, Seino Takazō, a retired disabled colonel, gave numerous suggestions on seeking a job. He insisted that only disabled soldiers who appeared capable of providing for themselves would succeed in their new lives. “Jobs allowed young people to see the light at the end of the tunnel.”¹¹¹ Seino put emphasis on the importance of having a hobby in order to maintain good job performance, “Not only for disabled

¹⁰⁸ In those days, some drug sellers falsely called themselves disabled veterans, and forced to sell people drugs. For the reason, people tended to despise disabled veterans. Ibid., 28-30.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 34-35.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 38.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 46-47

veterans but also for nondisabled people, I think hobbies are a necessary part of their lives.”¹¹² Thus, Seino believed that disabled veterans like ordinary citizens should lead a balanced life. Baba Toru, a disabled veteran and a professor emeritus of Gakushūin University, recommended that returning to one’s previous employer works best based on the experience of other veterans that he has witnessed. “Although it depends on the degree of your injury, it would be better to return to your previous workplace. If you exercise patience with your handicap, your body will adjust to your work.” Hence, the common Theme was that work will enable them to regain their former status as productive citizens. In addition to the issue of employment, family life was another crucial concern for disabled veterans. Miyagi Michio, a blind professor of music at Tokyo University, shared their anxieties, but asserted that they should not worry about finding their partner. “I’ve observed many young women when I teach the koto. Many of them don’t necessarily hope for materialistic prosperity. On the contrary, they are eager to meet trusted people. In order to be up for their expectation, disabled people should cultivate their minds.”¹¹³ As Miyagi’s lecture suggests, disabled veterans faced particular difficulties when looking for a partner to share their life with.

The more disadvantageous the war situation became, the worse disabled soldiers and veterans were treated. In part, such morale uplifting demonstrated the government’s inability to distribute jobs to them sufficiently. Furthermore, ordinary citizens gradually lost their willingness to support disabled soldiers as the war came to the end.

¹¹² Ibid., 48

¹¹³ Ibid., 184.

CHAPTER II
JAPANESE DISABLED WAR VETERANS
DURING THE ALLIED OCCUPATION, 1945-1952

Disabled war veterans led extremely difficult lives following the conclusion of the Pacific War. The prohibition on granting preferential treatment to disabled veterans during the occupation years stripped them of what privileges they had enjoyed prior to 1945 and forced many of them to fight for survival. Yuzuru Imamura, an official of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW), reflected on two characteristics of disabled veterans in his essay titled, “Can Disabled Veterans be Saved?” (*Shōisha ha Sukuwareruka?*)

One sees examples on city streets and on trains of disabled veterans soliciting money. One also sees organizing activity in the formation of local patients associations and organizations that are nationwide in scope such as The National Hospital Patients League. The appearance of these organizations is open to various interpretations. But the case of the white gown beggars (who are not necessarily hospitalized patients) reveals a moment of individual despondency. While the organizational activity reveals the despair and resentments of patients over government policy. . . . Viewed together they are twin responses to the objective situation produced by [the failure of] social policy in the postwar period.¹¹⁴

Imamura’s remarks mentioned policies regarding disabled veterans initiated by both the Japanese government and the Allied Forces that drove them to begging on the streets and trains and the activities of patients’ groups in the national hospitals. He concluded that it was virtually impossible for disabled veterans to provide for their most basic needs unless relatives were capable and willing to do so. Disabled veterans were caught between the harsh economic realities of Japan following surrender and the Allied

¹¹⁴ Yuzuru Imamura, “Shōisha wa Sukuwareruka?” *Kōsei Jihō* 4, no.8 (August 1, 1949), 7.

occupation policy, which as we shall see obstructed the development of policies that specifically addressed the needs of disabled veterans.

This chapter examines policies that affected disabled veterans as well as the conditions of their lives during the occupation period, with the aim of explaining how they began to mobilize to address their pressing needs.

Initial Measures of the Allied Occupation for Disabled Soldiers and Veterans from 1945 to 1946

The system of preferential treatment for disabled soldiers and veterans that had started after the Russo-Japanese war was completely abolished after Japan's surrender. Following surrender, two principal objectives of the Allied countries, democratization and demilitarization, decisively shaped the status of Japanese disabled veterans. Under the Allied mission, the Public Health and Welfare Section (PHW) of General Headquarters (GHQ) formulated a new framework for disability policy in cooperation with officials of the MHW that forbade the privileged treatment of veterans: a policy that extended to disabled veterans despite their obvious special needs.

After the conclusion of the war, the Japanese government initially sought to offer essential assistance to disabled veterans and war returnees.¹¹⁵ Numerous newspapers urged the government to support these soldiers and families. On August 22, 1945, a front page article in the *Asahi Shimbun* called for expression of gratitude to military personnel and expansion of protective measures even after the conclusion of

¹¹⁵ The Japanese Government on 15 September 1945 reported 2567 hospitals and sanitariums having 101,509 patients with a total bed capacity of 155,654. According to reports received from the Imperial Japanese Army approximately 78,000 with and wounded veterans were being treated in 268 hospitals in Japan and 9 hospitals in Korea on 15 August 1945. BOX 9447- Public Health & Welfare Section (PHW) -01991(Hereafter, 9447-PHW-01991), Memorandum for Record, Subject Brief Summary Japanese Hospital Status.

war.¹¹⁶ The government accordingly set up a judicial foundation that would support disabled soldiers, war veterans and war bereaved families.¹¹⁷ However, the policy of providing benefits that targeted war veterans conflicted with the goals of demilitarization and democratization prioritized by Allied Forces.¹¹⁸ Immediately after signing the instrument of Japan's surrender on September 2, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur's first order was to freeze all former military facilities and properties until new policies were issued.

From November 1945 through February 1946, GHQ issued successive mandates to the Japanese government that abolished preferential treatments for veterans. On November 19 1945, GHQ sent a memorandum regarding the former military hospitals to the Japanese government. The order specified that the Imperial Japanese Government should relinquish supervisory authority over all hospitals, sanatoria, and other medical facilities of the former Imperial Japanese Army and Navy. Restricting hospital care and medical treatment in these institutions to veterans and their families was prohibited. On December 1, former military hospitals became national hospitals serving all citizens. In practice, 119 former military hospitals and 53 sanatoriums and related facilities under the Agency of Military Protection (*Gunji hogo-in*) were converted to national hospitals and sanatoriums to be administered by the newly created Bureau of Medicine (*Iryō-kyoku*) under the MHW.¹¹⁹ On December 28, the Ministry published new set of guidelines, "Regulations on National Hospitals (*Kokuritsu Byoin Kitei*)," which established categories that gave priority to the needs of returning soldiers over civilians and repatriates.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, August 22, 1945.

¹¹⁷ *Asahi Shimbun*, August 24, 1945.

¹¹⁸ *Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu Iin, Kōseishō 50 nenshi, Kijutsu-hen*, 581.

¹¹⁹ *Kōseishō, Kokuritsu Byōin 10 nen no Ayumi* (Tokyo: Kōseishō, imu-kyoku, 1955), 5-7.

¹²⁰ Murakami, *Senryōki no Shakai Fukushi*, 164.

GHQ also ordered the abolition of military pensions for all former Japanese military personnel as part of the demilitarization effort. On November 24, 1945, “SCAPIN 338: the Memorandum on Pensions and Benefits” announced that all military pensions should be suspended.¹²¹ As part of the effort to democratize Japan, a “fair social security scheme” initiated by the MHW was supposed to provide for all citizens, including ex-military personnel, as a substitute for the former military pensions.¹²² Following the GHQ order, on February 1, 1946, the military pensions were terminated except in the case of severely injured ex-servicemen.¹²³ The suspension of these benefits resulted in a critical loss of support that affected an estimated 5.7 million ex-military pension recipients.¹²⁴

The SCAPIN 775 titled as “Public Assistance” issued on February 27, 1946, marked one of the watershed moments on public welfare policy with major consequences for the treatment of disabled veterans and their families.¹²⁵ The SCAPIN 775 declared

¹²¹ Ibid., 165-66.

¹²² Instead of abolishing military pension, the Japanese government requested the change to a welfare pension from GHQ as compensation. Kimiko Murakami, “Senryōki ni okeru Shōisha Taisaku no Dōkō: Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō Seiritsu made,” *Shakai Fukushigaku* 6 (1982), 53-54.

¹²³ The Japanese military disability pension system set three prime categories *kōshō*, *kanshō*, and *mokushō*. Special *kōshō* is the severest disability due to military service, while second degree *mokushō* is the slightest one. *Kōshō* divides into eight subcategories (special, one through seven). *Kanshō* divides into four subcategories (one through four). *Mokushō* separated two subcategories. A Special provision of the Pension Law was introduced for injured ex-soldiers; those who had received the sixth degree *kōshō* by the Pension Law kept the same payment, those who had from less than the seventh degree *kōshō* received a temporary stipend, and the government stopped the pension for those who were only slightly injured. Masuro Takashima, “Gunjin Onkyū ha Donoyōuni Fukkatsu Suruka,” *Toki no Hōrei* 108 (1953), 5-11. ; Sōri-fu, Onkyū-kyoku. *Onkyū-kyoku 100 nen*. (Tokyo: Ōkura-shō, Insatsu-kyoku, 1975), 299.; Risaburō Sano, “Shōigunjin Shogū no Kaizen ha,” *Shakaijigyō* 35, no.1 (1952), 26.

¹²⁴ *Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu Iin, Kōseishō 50 nenshi, Kijutsu-hen*, 583-84.

¹²⁵ Before GHQ announced SCAPIN 775, GHQ advanced poor relief efforts through negotiation with the Japanese authorities by the end of 1945. GHQ released on “Affair on Stockpile of Rationed Goods for Relief” on November 22, 1945. Then GHQ announced SCAPIN 404 “Affair on Outreach Program and Welfare Relief” on December 8. On the other hand, Japanese government declared “Memorandum on Outline of Urgent Life Support for Needy People” on November 22, and “Affair on Relief Welfare” on December 31 (answer to SCAPIN404) successively. Thus, SCAPIN775 was consequently deemed as official response to “Memorandum on Outline of Urgent Life Support for Needy People.” Murakami “Senryōki ni okeru Shōisha Taisaku no Dōkō,” 52.

three new principles of public assistance: 1) operational responsibility of the state, 2) no discrimination or preferential treatment in provisions of public assistance, and 3) no limitations on the amount of aid furnished. In fact, the nondiscriminatory clause was primarily intended to terminate the legal status and privileges of war veterans, their families, and the families of deceased soldiers.¹²⁶ Rather than a special population classified by their service to the country, disabled veterans henceforth were to be treated simply as disabled persons. Citing SCAPIN775, GHQ and PHW subsequently intervened when they suspected Japanese policy makers might violate the tenet of fairness by making special provision for disabled war veterans.

Despite the GHQ's strict control, the MHW cautiously attempted to maintain some of the functions of the prewar system for disabled veterans, while respecting the GHQ's directives on demilitarization. In early 1946, the MHW took over the operations the Agency of Military Protection had performed during the war period. The Ministry reassigned the various functions of the support system for disabled veterans, placing vocational guidance in the Bureau of Labor (*Kinrō-kyoku*) and medical treatment in the Bureau of Medicine (*Imu-kyoku*).¹²⁷ The MHW also issued instructions to abolish the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association (GNDVA) in accordance with the occupiers' instructions.¹²⁸ In the following month, the newly founded the *Kyojokai* took over the GNDVA's property.¹²⁹

As alternative to the preferential assistance to disabled veterans, the Japanese

¹²⁶ Shakaihoshō Kenkyūjo, *Nihon Shakai Hoshō I* (Tokyo: Shiseido, 1975), 7.; Murakami, *Senryōki no Shakai Fukushi*, 166.

¹²⁷ Murakami, *Senryōki no Shakai Fukushi*, 167.

¹²⁸ Toshikatsu Kuroki, *Nihon Shakaijigyō Gendaika-ron* (Tokyo: Zenkoku Shakai Fukushi kyōgikai, 1958), 355-56.

¹²⁹ The Kyojokai aimed to help disabled veterans' life securities such as mutual friendship, benefit package, and consultation. In fact, the Association could not fully support their lives owing to meager budget and donation. However, the connection with the GNDVA terminated activity of the Kyojokai on February 1, 1948. Since then, the government banned organizing national association for disabled veterans. *Ibid.*, 356-57., Sano, "Shōigunjin Shogū no Kaizen ha," 28.

government adopted more inclusive welfare policies that provided relatively equal assistance to veterans and non-veterans. The essential concern of GHQ and the PHW was whether the MHW's proposals violated the nondiscriminatory principle outlined in the SCAPIN 775. In response to concerns over the implementation of SCAPIN 775, the Diet passed the Daily Life Security Act (*Seikatsu Hogo-hō*) on September 9, 1946.

Nevertheless, the Daily Life Security Act did not adequately provide for the livelihood of disabled veterans and their families. The main recipients of the law were the families of deceased soldiers, including widows and their children. Moreover, the payments under the Daily Life Security Act also did not properly support families faced with soaring commodity prices. Furthermore, the enactment of the Law of Welfare for Handicapped Persons did not necessarily meet the demands of disabled veterans. The MHW assumed that welfare laws would cover the majority of disabled persons including disabled veterans. Due to the limited benefits offered and restrictive provisions, disabled veterans did not gain much from the new law. Although disabled veterans expected respect and adequate welfare measures, few veterans benefited owing to language of the legislation.

Disabled Veterans and Patients' Associations since 1946

Hospitalized disabled veterans experienced drastic changes during the occupation period. The GHQ's order on November 19, 1945 relating to former military hospitals announced that hospitals should be open to all citizens, and injured ex-servicemen should be deprived of prioritized hospitalization and free medical services. Some of the effects of the new policy were reported in the national press. On August 5, 1946, the *Asahi Shimbun* published an article titled "The Cold World, the Abandoned Disabled Veteran (*Tsumetai Seken Misuterareru Shōigunjin*).” The article reported that the government's budget of around 180 million yen was grossly inadequate to provide for

the 55,000 patients in 199 hospitals. Severe food shortages forced some inpatients to sell their last personal belongings on the black market in order to feed their families. The article ended by posing the question, “Is this how to treat the soldiers whom used to be honored in the slogan ‘Protect the wounded soldier who protected the country!’?”¹³⁰

In response to the dire situation in the spring of 1946, local patients’ associations began to form in the national hospitals among disabled veterans who capitalized on the GHQ’s democratization policies to protest their treatment. The hospitalized former soldiers organized under the banners of ‘life protection’ and ‘opposition to militarism.’ Disabled veterans in the Sagamihara National Hospital in Kanagawa prefecture and the Second Tokyo National Hospital in Tokyo played a central role in organizing what would develop into a national movement. Patients’ associations at the hospitals initially aimed to expand and improve local self-help programs for the rehabilitation of patients. However, shortages were so pervasive that hospitals even lacked sufficient fuel to meet their energy needs. These shortages increasingly limited the medical services provided, which denied even the possibility of providing adequate treatment for patients. Thus, the movement became increasingly politicized and took positions strongly critical of both GHQ and Japanese government.¹³¹

Some of the patients associations fell under the influence of the Japanese Communist Party. Communist-affiliated patients at the Sagamihara National Hospital started a dispute with hospital authorities to protest against the hospital’s policy of discharging old patients to accommodate new patients returning from overseas. In December 1946, the Sagamihara National Hospital forcefully discharged an estimated 200 inpatients under the by-law of the Medical Affairs Bureau of the MHW. Since few of the discharged patients were capable of surviving without hospital support, the patients condemned the hospital’s decision as unlawful compulsive discharge. A leader of the

¹³⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*, August 5, 1946.

¹³¹ Sumie Tanaka, “Sagamihara no Shōigunjin tachi,” *Chuōkōron*, 768 (Fall 1952), 150.

patients' association commented, "Not all the patients have a house they can go to. It is unfair to discharge them forcefully by December 27 on the basis of an arbitrary diagnosis by the hospital."¹³²

Patients at national hospitals demanded that hospital authorities treat them properly. On December 20, 1946, under the leadership of Hamaguchi, a patient connected with the Japan Communist Party, the patients' association in Sagamihara held a meeting to call for the improvement of hospital administration and services. They passed the following resolutions addressing patients' rights:

- absolute opposition to compulsory discharge of patients.
- democratization of the hospital, purge of Misugi, the chief of the General Affairs Section of the hospital.
- life assistance for discharged patients, free distribution of artificial legs.
- establishment of employment office for the sick and wounded veterans.¹³³

Although there is no record of how many patients were active members of the patients' association, such local mobilizations expressed the urgent demands of injured veterans following the loss of preferential treatment in veterans in hospitals. On March 1947, patients at the national hospitals organized the National Hospital Patients League (NHPL: *Zenkoku Kokuritsu Byōin Kanja Dōmei*),¹³⁴ prompting GHQ and the Japanese authorities to keep a watchful eye on increasing communist sympathies among patients.¹³⁵

In May 1947, the MHW opted to charge patients for their medical expenses

¹³² *Asahi Shimbun*, December 21, 1946.

¹³³ About one hundred patients out of one thousand six hundreds of which were classified as ex-soldiers. BOX 8696- Civilian Intelligence Section (CIS)-03407 (Hereafter, 8696-CIS-03407), Confidential: Communist-instigated Patients of Sagamihara Hospital Start Disputes with Hospital Authorities.

¹³⁴ At its peak the NHPL enrolled about 53,000 patient members from 130 national hospitals.

¹³⁵ Akira Yamada, "Shintaishōgaisha Undō no Rekishi to Taisaku Rinen no Hatten," in *Shōgaisha to Shakaihoshō*, eds. Mitsuko Kodama, Yoshi Sanada, and Yasuo Hata (Kyoto: Hōritsu bunkasha, 1979), 200.

regardless of their physical and financial conditions.¹³⁶ One rationale for ending medical care was the Ministry's assumption that the newly enacted "the Daily Life Security Law of 1946" would protect injured veterans by providing a stipend for living expenses. The MHW announcement alarmed the estimated 20,000 veterans hospitalized in the national health system, and some patients appealed to MHW for the exemptions from paying medical expenses and asked for increased stipends.¹³⁷

Charging fees for hospitalization put patients in a predicament. On July 31, Umeki Keiji, Chair of the Kyushu branch of the NHPL, and his colleagues argued in opposition to the new policy of charging fees for hospitalization. Umeki earnestly pleaded, "Please understand that we are truly troubled ... Jobless people like us cannot possibly pay hospital charges of 35 yen per day." Contrary to the MHW's assumption about the Daily Life Security Law, the Patients League estimated that the budget allocated under the Law would only cover two out of every hundred patients.¹³⁸ The first general meeting of the NHPL in December 1947 set the following four goals for patient welfare: assistance in patients' lives, establishment of a program for medical services, creation of special dormitory, and creation of vocational guidance.¹³⁹

In response to political pressure from hospitalized veterans, efforts were made to revise the "Law of Payment for the Undemobilized" (*Mifukuinsha Kyūyo-hō*) to solve the problem of charging patients medical expenses they simply could not afford to pay. In December 1948, the Diet passed a new law to provide, in addition to medical expenses, a lump-sum disability payment to veterans who had not recovered from wartime illnesses

¹³⁶ This policy was implemented in a manner that required patients to be responsible for charges dated back to April, 1947.

¹³⁷ *Asahi Shimbun*, June 14, 1947.

¹³⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, August 1, 1947.

¹³⁹ Yamada, "Shintaishōgaisha Undō no Rekishi to Taisaku Rinen no Hatten," 200.

and injuries two years after discharge.¹⁴⁰

Yet, the disabled veterans had no other choice but to stay at the hospitals. In fact, there were still about 5,000 disabled veterans in the national hospitals as late as the summer of 1949. A considerable number of hospitalized patients desired to live independently, but lack of housing and jobs kept them dependent on in-patient hospital care. Several attempts to provide vocational counseling for veterans sponsored by the MHW and prefectural agencies met with little success. Over time, some patients lost all hope of finding employment.¹⁴¹

GHQ's Intervention in the Coverage of Japanese Disabled Veterans

As inadequate as the care for disabled veterans was, GHQ continued to scrutinize the state subsidized coverage of treatment for disabled veterans. In the summer of 1947, when Japanese newspapers repeatedly published articles on the dire predicament of disabled veterans, the PHW proposed censorship of the media as one means of disseminating 'correct' information to Japanese public, and subsequently the occupation authorities made liberal use of these powers.

On August 13, the *Jiji* News Wire Service released a news article on relief allowances provided under the Daily Life Protection Law to the families of soldiers who had not yet been repatriated. At the House of Representatives Special Committee for Repatriates, Minister of Health and Welfare, Hitotsumatsu Sadayoshi stated,

Former Japanese military personnel, including civilian employees of the army and navy, who fell sick or were injured after the end of the

¹⁴⁰ Sano, "Shōigunjin Shogū no Kaizen ha," 30.; Shunji Hirose, "Sensō Giseisha Taisaku no Shinten," *Meisō* 3, no.1 (1952), 84.

¹⁴¹ Imamura, "Shōisha wa Sukuwareruka?" 7.

war in performance of duties, are being accorded the same privileges as in the cases of government and public officials... We know it will be some time before relief measures are taken for aged and destitute former military personnel who were deprived of their pensions.¹⁴²

He also announced, “The Tokyo metropolitan government was pushing ahead with a relief program with an annual budget of 3.6 million yen for wounded former soldiers.”¹⁴³ As innocuous as Hitotsumatsu’s statement would appear, the Minister of Health and Welfare hastened to head off censure from GHQ. Few days later on August 23, Kasai Yoshisuke, Vice Minister of the MHW, wrote to Nelson Neff of PHW explaining that mistranslations in Hitotsumatsu’s speech had given rise to misunderstandings concerning the nature of these relief programs.

Minister of Health and Welfare, Hitotsumatsu and members of the Committee are well aware that the protection of the needy must be undertaken fairly and without discrimination and especially that the former servicemen and civilians employed by army or navy should not be given preferential treatment... They (Tokyo Metropolis) understand perfectly that they are not to extend preferential protection only to wounded or sick veterans, and they have no intention of doing so.”¹⁴⁴

In response to Kasai, Neff apparently decided to accept the face-saving explanation offered rather than pursue the complaint, undoubtedly satisfied that MWH was bending over backwards to comply with the policy.

It would appear that the *Jiji* Press story of August 13, 1947 was most misleading as only a part of the excerpts from the Welfare Minister’s statement were included in the story. It further appears that the Minister’s understanding of the Daily Life Security Law and its operation is adequate and in accord with the principle of SCAPIN

¹⁴² 9349-PHW-01068-3, News Article from the *Jiji* Press.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ 9349-PHW-01068-3, To: Mr. Nelson B. Neff, Chief, Welfare Division Public Health and Welfare Section, SCAP, From Yoshisuke Kasai, Chief, Social Affairs Bureau, Subject: Article of *Jiji* Press.

775.

Neff also asked that Kasai take action to fully inform local officials of the government's policy. Responding to Neff, Kasai reassured him, "To avoid any misunderstanding on the part of prefectural welfare officers or governors, a communication is once again being forwarded to the governors advising them that preferential treatment will not be countenanced by the Ministry of Welfare."¹⁴⁵

Soon after, on August 22, the *Mainichi Shimbun* carried an article on pensions being provided to disabled veterans. "A Diet member stated in an interview regarding 'pensions' to disabled ex-soldiers that pensions are too small compared with today's average wages; that the present system was adopted at the behest of the Allied Forces; and that a raise in the pension is desired. He advocated a ten-fold increase of the present rate." Neff immediately recommended to the Civilian Intelligence Section of GHQ that it act to suppress any future mention in the press of veterans' pensions. Denying that disabled veterans were receiving special pensions, Neff insisted that they were receiving welfare payments which covered daily needs but that these were not special grants given to them because they were ex-soldiers. Moreover, he reiterated the point that mistranslations misrepresenting these payments as pensions.¹⁴⁶

One sign of the inadequate provisions of assistance to wounded veterans was the proliferation of 'White gown soldiers,' who had been respected figures prior to and during the war, but had been reduced to begging for change on the street or on trains under the occupation. They eventually came to be regarded with scorn by the public. The veterans put on white gowns and military badges to elicit sympathy from the public, even though the government prohibited public solicitations.¹⁴⁷ In reality, the police rarely

¹⁴⁵ 9349-PHW-01068-3, MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD, SUBJECT: Jiji Press News Release.

¹⁴⁶ 8643-CIS-01023, Press Pictorial, and Broadcast Division: Mainichi 18/22, Pensions.

¹⁴⁷ It was reported that the white gown beggars earned about 10,000 yen per day in their prime, from 1946 to 1948. However, since then, as the citizens got used to seeing their solicitation and felt uncomfortable

cracked down on such violators probably due to the veterans' distress. Rather, policemen and railway security guards were generally sympathetic to their plight. One railway security stated, "While the government bans donations, the law makes no provision for such people. So, we tend to ignore their solicitation unless they get carried away."¹⁴⁸

GHQ expressed concerns over the badges worn by the white gown former servicemen. Some American officials voiced the opinion that the displaying of Japanese military badges might violate the goal of the occupation of extirpating militarism. On August 16, 1948, the General Douglas MacArthur issued the following clarification of GHQ policy,

The Japanese make a clear distinction between "decoration" (*kunshō*) and "badges" (*kishō*). The latter are not awards in recognition of valor, merit or services, and do not entitle the recipient to special benefits or privileges. Badges bestowed on wounded soldiers and on bereaved families, which the demobilization and welfare agencies have been awarding, belong to this latter category...It is considered that the continued conferral of these two types of badges will do no harm and does not conflict with the objectives of the Occupation. The Japanese authorities will therefore be permitted to present these badges, although they are not to be encouraged to do so."¹⁴⁹

Two days later, on August 18, the PHW and the MHW held a meeting to resolve the issue of display of military badges. The PHW issued the advisory, "These badges or medals are not to be publicly displayed or worn in connection with public and/or private welfare fundraising or for the purpose of street solicitation or begging. The Japanese authorities will take appropriate measures to prevent and suppress the wearing or display

about their 'professional' manner, the amount of donations subsequently decreased. Shin Aochi, "Shōigunjin: Sensōgiseisha no Jittai," *Fujin Kōron* 36, no.10 (October 1951), 107.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 105.

¹⁴⁹ 9348-PHW-02015, To Commanding General, Eighth Army, By command of General MacArthur.

of these badges for such purposes.”¹⁵⁰

The occupation authorities were concerned that the public display of badges such as was being done by the white gown beggars might elicit public sympathies and served as an unwelcome reminder of Japanese militarism. Yet as much as they would have liked the issue to go away, Japanese newspapers continued to publicize their plight. Not surprisingly, GHQ was concerned with any criticisms of the U.S. occupation that were implicit in sympathetic reporting on the dire condition of disabled veterans. However, while newspaper reporters were constrained by GHQ censorship in what they could write, editors did not hesitate to publish letters from readers that portrayed the actual living situations of disabled veterans at this time.

Japanese Citizens' Views on Disabled Veterans

During the occupation period, while GHQ strictly controlled official information distributed by the Japanese government, Japanese citizens expressed their opinions on disabled veterans in letters to the editor in newspapers and magazines. In fact, these views on disabled veterans provide unique insight into Japanese society and its relationship with disabled veterans during the occupation.

For disabled veterans, newspapers offered one of the few opportunities for them to publicly convey their opinions regarding their situation. In a letter published in the *Asahi Shimbun*, Yatsu Hiroshi, a disabled ex-serviceman, wrote, “We cannot survive merely on the cash we receive benefit for our disabilities.” Since disabled veterans were not able to depend on the government, Yatsu argued that the soldiers should unite to overcome their plights, “We should organize the League of Assistance for Wounded

¹⁵⁰ 9348-PHW-02015, Memorandum for Record, Subject: Bereaved Families and Wounded Soldiers’ “Badges.”

Soldiers (*Senshōbyōsha Engo Dōmei!*)”¹⁵¹ Two months later the *Asahi Shimbun* published a letter from Takada Ban’o who confessed that the general public’s attitude toward disabled veterans was so negative that it intensified his depression after his discharge. Public expressions of sympathy for disabled veterans must have been rare, judging from Takada’s highly emotional response to the following incident. He wrote that when he visited a theater at Asakusa with his friends, the attendant politely returned his admission fee and found seats for them. After her touching kindness, he resolved to abandon his self-destructive feelings and to begin life again with a new attitude.¹⁵²

Letters to the editor provide evidence of the compassionate responses of some citizens in their daily contacts with disabled veterans. In a letter published in the *Asahi Shimbun* 27 July, 1947, Kato Kitarō expressed shock at seeing that white gown disabled veterans were forced to buy food on the black market. He also stated his astonishment that hospitalized veterans were not able to receive pensions, which compelled him to question the adequacy of the relief provided by the government. “Is this the best the government can do in providing relief to those who served in the war as representatives of people and as a consequence suffered with illnesses and injuries?”¹⁵³ Abe Tadayuki, a junior high school student, was surprised that white gown veterans were still standing in the street and begging for money. Abe asked, “Why can’t the rich save such people? Employers such as toy companies should give them preference in hiring. They deserve our sympathy.”¹⁵⁴

Other letters reveal that street solicitation by veterans provoked antipathy among a large number of Japanese. The following anecdote provided by a letter to the editor reflects another common attitude toward white gown ex-servicemen at this time.

¹⁵¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, February 15, 1946.

¹⁵² *Asahi Shimbun*, April 16, 1946.

¹⁵³ *Asahi Shimbun*, July 27, 1947.

¹⁵⁴ *Asahi Shimbun*, December 10, 1950.

Making introductory remarks, ‘you may say ‘comes again!’ I understand white gown donation has come so often and give you trouble, but...,’ white gown men strolling in the train almost pathetically and forcefully asked donations to passengers, which made them mixed feelings.¹⁵⁵

Meanwhile, some hospitalized disabled veterans professed their feelings of resentment at having to solicit on the train, “I hate it. I look like a beggar. I did it while ignoring the dirty looks of passengers. I did it while also fighting with the relentless railroad security officer and conductor.”¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, in June, 1948, fearing a backlash against all veterans, the NHPL accordingly proposed “strict enforcement of prohibitions on street solicitations.” This, however, stirred up debate among the members. While the main office of the League received letters of complaint on a daily basis calling for a crackdown on such solicitation, it was difficult for them to completely oppose the practice considering the fact that the white gown beggars depended on this income to survive.¹⁵⁷

Articles on “fake wounded veterans” such as the following report published in the *Asahi shimbun*, contributed to the public’s suspicions. On November 20, 1948 in Ginza, Tokyo, three elderly white gown veterans with canes and badges solicited donations from citizens on the street in the name of a “fund for rehabilitation of disabled veterans.” When a newspaper photographer tried to take pictures of them, they resisted, whereupon the photographer questioned them about their real status. They eventually admitted that they were only posing as disabled veterans.

In response to the fake wounded veterans, a patient at the First National Hospital

¹⁵⁵ Aochi, “Shōigunjin: Sensōgiseisha no Jittai,” 105.

¹⁵⁶ Tanaka, “Sagamihara no Shōigunjin tachi,” 151.

¹⁵⁷ As the Hospital Patient League weakened, it was nearly impossible to control the patients’ solicitation. Yamada, “Nihon ni okeru Shōgaisha Fukushi no Rekishi,” 104.

expressed mixed feelings about street begging. “Indeed, some patients solicit donations on the street, but it does not help all of us. We are told that we are not allowed to beg for money. I do urge the government to take care of us, so we are not forced to do so.”¹⁵⁸

The emergence of fake disabled ex-servicemen put those who were truly disabled in an even more difficult situation. Thus, street solicitation widened the chasm between Japanese citizens and disabled veterans. While not unsympathetic, the general population increasingly showed skepticism toward them.

Protective Measures for Disabled Veterans from 1947 to 1948

It was after the summer of 1947 that protection for disabled veterans was separated from measures for civilian disabled people, which surfaced as a noteworthy subject in the social welfare policy of Japan. The MHW began to search for a means to address the needs of disabled veterans consistent with the directives of the GHQ. The negotiation process between GHQ and the MHW demonstrates that both parties did not necessarily pursue the same objective in providing assistance to disabled people.

On August 1, the Ministry forwarded to GHQ the text of draft legislation to aid the disabled. After pointing out disabled people’s predicaments, the Ministry stated the necessity of adopting proactive measures, “While the application of the Daily Life Protection Law provides benefits, it simultaneously requires that special measures be taken according to the conditions of the individuals’ physical defects.”¹⁵⁹

Receiving constructive feedback from American authorities on August 8, the

¹⁵⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, November 22, 1948.

¹⁵⁹ The MHW clarified the method of assistance that would be made available to each candidate. (1) blind: installation of vocational education for a national accommodation institution (2) quadruple amputee: vocational counseling about method of independent self-management, (3) diseased and brain injured persons: an accommodation institution, repair of limb or replacement with artificial limb, work placement. (4) all of candidates: medical supplies, an implement to keep warm with, work place in accordance with their injuries (6) all of candidates: public assistance, a measure for independent self-management. Murakami, “Senrōki ni okeru Shōisha Taikau no Dōkō,” 57-58.

Ministry replied to GHQ on August 15 soliciting reactions to key elements of the proposal. After the conclusion of Pacific war, Japanese government agencies did not play an active role in supporting the war-wounded since GHQ might have construed their actions as equivalent to the prewar system of preferential treatment for disabled veterans. However, now the Ministry realized that the war wounded were almost entirely from the lower ranks of the military or were army civilian employees. Based on the principle of Article 25, the Ministry concluded that the government had legitimate reason to implement new provisions for such people. In essence, the Ministry insisted that the limited financial support offered would not support lives of the disabled, and disabled veterans need vocational guidance.¹⁶⁰

Both the GHQ and the MHW sought to find a middle ground for adoption of new measures. GHQ replied to the second proposal of the Ministry on August 23, asking that the Ministry submit detailed data in seeking the authorization of senior GHQ officers. Neff, Chief of the PHW, showed that he was amenable on the issue of disabled persons, “I understand that ignoring disabled veterans would create negative psychological effects. It is important to take action to help such injured persons.”¹⁶¹ In addition, Neff suggested that the MHW submit legislation to cover all disabled persons in drafting the plan. On the contrary, the MHW rejoined, “We don’t think we need another law for the implementation.”¹⁶² Notwithstanding Neff’s enthusiasm for the related legislation, the MHW was still concerned about the violation of SCAPIN 775, and took a more cautious approach for the treatment of disabled veterans.

In September 1947, in the third proposal, both the MHW and PHW made concessions on practical measures to help disabled persons. While the Ministry defined

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 58-59.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 59-60.

¹⁶² Rie Yashima, “Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō no Seitei Katei, sono 1,” *Jinbungakuhō* 281, (March 1997), 48.

the main recipients of the measure to include blind, quadruple amputee, and tuberculosis patients, it expected to cope with the situation of all disabled people within the existing provisions. Interestingly, disabled veterans were not specifically mentioned in the proposal at all. PHW went out of its way not to alarm GHQ in its instructions for implementation of the program, explicitly stating “preferential treatment is not to be given to veterans and disabled veterans.” Although GHQ had in fact altered its stance by approving a policy that primarily benefited disabled veterans, it continued to insist on the principle of government responsibility, as opposed to relying on charities, in dispensing aid.¹⁶³

The fourth correspondence between the MHW and GHQ involved the creation of an advisory committee for disabled persons. On October 18, the Ministry restated the urgent need for new measures to address the needs of disabled persons,

The degree of their poverty has increasingly worsened lately, which cannot be allowed from a humanitarian point of view. If the government leaves their situation as it is, we cannot be oblivious to the fact that they may hold a grudge against the government or become radicalized. As public opinion also shows a keen interest on the issue of disabled persons, the government is strongly motivated to actively engage the program.¹⁶⁴

In effect, MHW framed its appeal to GHQ for immediate action not only from a humanitarian point of view of the plight of disabled persons but also in terms of the maintenance of security in Japan. In response to the Ministry’s appeal, Neff confirmed the MHW’s original plan based the principles of SCAPIN 775. At the meeting on November 8, 1947, Neff proposed to create a special committee for disabled persons comprising professionals such as medical doctors, psychologists, educators, and caseworkers. In reply, the MHW submitted “Committee of Protective Measure for

¹⁶³ Ibid., 60.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 62.

Disabled Persons” (*Shōisha Hogo Taisaku Iinkai Yōkō*) to the GHQ on November 13.¹⁶⁵

In its efforts to provide protection to disabled persons, MHW did its utmost to comply with the SCAPIN 775. On February 21, 1948, the government urged caution in the handling of assistance to disabled persons. In fact, prior to this on November 14 1947, the Bureau had published an advisory titled “On Protection of Disabled Persons (*Shōisha no Hogo ni tsuite*),” which warned that “Protection for needy persons including injured persons should be prepared under nondiscriminatory principles regardless of their causes of poverty. In particular, it is stressed that preferential treatment of ex-soldiers would be in violation of GHQ instructions.” Also, it noted that, “Preferential treatment for disabled soldiers is still considered to be commonly practiced in some public facilities and hospitals. They do not necessarily intend to prioritize disabled veterans but the consequence is giving such treatment to them.”¹⁶⁶ The announcements indicated that the Ministry was seeking to transition injured veterans into independent living as an alternative to relying on poor relief, while they were also highly sensitive to the need to strictly follow SCAPIN 775.

The MHW proceeded with the creation of new facilities for disabled persons in accordance with the mutual understanding reached between GHQ and the MHW. On December 9, the Social Bureau of the Ministry sent a detailed plan titled, “Facilities for Disabled Persons (*Shōisha Shūyōshisetsu no Keikaku ni tsuite*)” to the GHQ. Officials explained that disabled persons regardless of the cause of their disabilities faced obstacles above and beyond nondisabled citizens in securing employment and housing. Therefore, the facilities they proposed would take care of such people with the aim of enabling them to transition to independent living at the earliest possible opportunity.”¹⁶⁷ The plan explicitly designated facilities that would provide services for disabled persons,

¹⁶⁵ Murakami, *Senryōki no Shakai Fukushi*, 186-87.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 187-88.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 189.

regardless of the cause of the disability in accordance with the nondiscriminatory principle. However, they expected that most recipients would be war victims or disabled veterans. While GHQ apparently understood the dire situation of Japanese disabled soldiers and the need to provide some remedy, they accepted the Ministry's proposal because it did not openly prioritize treatment of veterans and thereby violate SCAPIN 775.

The wording of the Ministry's proposal demonstrated its shifting attitude toward protective measures for disabled persons. The Ministry initially brought up social unrest and the threat of Communism as reasons for proceeding with protective measures for disabled persons, including wounded ex-soldiers, in order to counter GHQ's opposition to preferential treatment of ex-soldiers. Nevertheless, once the Ministry understood that the GHQ had agreed to the basic plan, they straightforwardly explained the rationale for the introduction of such protective measures as providing disabled persons the chance to lead independent lives.¹⁶⁸

On January 2, 1948, the PHW sent a new report on "Measures for Disabled Persons" to the Government Section of the GHQ that drew attention to how Japanese disabled people perceived the policy. "Therefore inpatients in the national hospitals whose condition is almost identical to disabled ex-soldiers. Disabled veterans feel they have received reverse discriminations from the GHQ and subsequently hold a grudge against them." Simultaneously, these benefits would reduce the prospect of social unrest.¹⁶⁹ Notwithstanding the GHQ's positive attitude, it is clear that PHW was still concerned not be seen by GHQ as violating GHQ orders on preferential treatment for

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 189-90.

¹⁶⁹ In this report, THE PHW identified 490,597 disabled people: 324,622 disabled ex-soldiers, 9,222 disabled by non-military activities, 66,997 disabled by natural disasters, 8,144 civilian wounded, 81,614 disabled by accidents. Shakai Fukushi Kenkyujo, *Senryōki ni okeru Shakai Fukushi Shiryō ni kansuru Kenkyū Hōkokusho* (Report on Studies of Social Welfare Documents & Date during the Occupation of Japan), (Tokyo: Kyōbunsha, 1978), 173-74.

veterans.¹⁷⁰

Meanwhile, on February 13, the MHW issued “Directive on Life Assistance for Disabled Persons (*Shintaishōgaisha no Seikatsu Enjo ni kansuru Shiji*)” to prefectural governors, which outlined a program for full implementation of the plan. The purpose of the new facilities was to support the efforts of seriously disabled persons to live independently while persons with less severe disabilities would receive vocational training at conventional vocational schools. Moreover, still concerned that GHQ might object to the project, the Ministry provided cautionary instructions, “Concerning the selection of those who are admitted to the facilities, it is emphatically reiterated, that we must adhere the nondiscriminatory principle. Moreover, veterans and army civilian employees must receive exactly the same treatment as ordinary citizens.”¹⁷¹ Although it is not clear how local governments reacted to this directive, the Ministry clearly was aiming towards total compliance with SCAPIN 775. Responding favorably to the directive, the GHQ authorized on February 18 prompt constructions of twelve facilities in nine prefectures.

However, preferential treatment remained a controversial issue between the MHW and GHQ. On March 12, the PHW released “The Outline of Program for Disabled Persons” to evaluate whether the ongoing project for disabled persons was appropriate. The report confirmed that the program aimed at giving material assistance to disabled persons regardless of how they became disabled. Nonetheless, the statistics submitted to the PHW showed that the number of former military servicemen would substantially outnumber civilians who were disabled in the postwar period. The PHW pointed out that

¹⁷⁰ THE GHQ ordered Kyojo-kai, which took over assets from the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association, and consisted of a quarter of the previous members to be dissolved on January 31, 1948. THE GHQ successively ordered the government to abolish disabled veterans’ benefit of A “Free ride on the National Railway,” which meant the end of preferential treatment. Yashima, “Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō no Seitei Katei, sono 1,” 50.

¹⁷¹ Shakai Fukushi Kenkyujo, *Senryōki ni okeru Shakai Fukushi Shiryō ni kansuru Kenkyū Hōkokusho*, 174-76.

the excessive numbers of disabled veterans would be assumed to constitute preferential treatment, “This is likely to produce a warning from the GHQ.” The PHW suggested that the Ministry should reassure GHQ on treatments of veterans and civilians. With the exception of cases where special permission was granted by the GHQ, the PHW cautioned that the facilities created under this program should admit equal numbers of ex-soldiers and civilians. The PHW also insisted that priority for receiving rehabilitation training should be directed towards those most likely to recover from physical impairments.¹⁷²

On March 31, Kimura Chūjiro, Chief of the Social Bureau, took issue with the plan to allot services to disabled ex-soldiers under the program. Kimura asserted that it would not be desirable to establish quotas for ex-soldiers and citizens in the program.

The allocation of quotas for veterans and citizens reversely enshrines the distinction between former soldiers and civilians for people involved in the rehabilitation program. I am afraid the effect runs counter to the 775 SCAPIN principle of non-preferential or equal treatment. If the allocation is forced to be introduced, distinctions among disabled persons that might otherwise be forgotten to be maximized rather minimized.”¹⁷³

Moreover, citing the data on institutionalized disabled persons currently enrolled in the rehabilitation centers, Kimura argued that the ratio of veterans to civilians among disabled persons was much higher; hence a policy of admitting equal numbers to new facilities would constitute a reverse discrimination.¹⁷⁴

The PHW and the MHW held a meeting to discuss the allotment issue in the new facilities. Kimura pleaded that the same criteria be applied to ex-soldiers and civilians alike, rather than imposing quotas on the two groups. In particular, Kimura

¹⁷² Ibid., 178-80.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 182.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 182-83.

restated that “the administrative procedure for dividing the allocation may have the opposite effect of fostering consciousness of disabled soldiers as a distinct social class.”

The PHW took a hard line and did not accept the argument against the quota system. The intention, the GHQ insisted, was to establish a fair rational administrative policy that provides equal opportunities to all the citizens including veterans in the program for disabled persons. The PHW concluded, “The government’s verbal promise that non favorable treatment and nondiscriminatory principle in this program will be followed cannot perfectly guarantee the principle, and we are not satisfied with it.” Thus, the American authorities instructed implementation of the program as planned and submission of a precise report on persons selected for admission to the institution for disabled persons to the MHW.¹⁷⁵

The Ministry disclosed data on disabled persons qualifying for the rehabilitation programs in the GHQ-MHW meeting on June 1 1948. Following the suggestions of the GHQ, in May 1948, the Ministry requested that all prefectures investigate the number of people who would qualify for admission. The Ministry’s survey revealed that 82% of the candidates for admission to the institutions were former soldiers. The PHW emphasized, “The program is designed for disabled persons aged twenty to forty. Unless this principle is defended staunchly, we will not approve the program no matter what the type of institution.” The PHW proposed that the Ministry reduce by 10% of number of institutionalized veterans and that these spaces be allocated to civilians. In the end, the PHW took a tougher stance than the Ministry. “This program must start correctly. In the case it does not fulfill the prerequisite condition, the delay will be justified.”¹⁷⁶

The Ministry’s concession to the PHW’s request paved the way for implementing the program. While inspecting newly created institutions for the handicapped in Tokyo on June 6, the PHW confirmed that non-military disabled citizens

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 181.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 183-84.

had been included in the program.¹⁷⁷ Also, on June 17 by Brigadier General Crawford F. Sams, Head of PHW, gave a speech at the opening ceremony for the first institution for disabled persons in Tokyo. This speech mindfully demonstrated the Ministry's acceptance of the allotment system and the principle of nondiscriminatory treatment. Sams declared, "This facility is a rehabilitation institution from which the first-aid center for the poor and needy differs in character... This facility should not be used for particular factions or priority groups."¹⁷⁸

The 1949 Law of Welfare for Disabled Persons

The Central Committee of Protective Measures for the Disabled under MHW put forward the policy of reintegrating disabled persons into Japanese society. At the first meeting of the Committee, the GHQ called for four principles in preparing programs for handicapped people.

- 1) Handicapped persons should be treated fairly regardless of the cause and degree of injury, and regardless of gender.
- 2) The government, not private organizations or semiprivate ones, should be responsible for the protection of disabled persons.
- 3) The measures for protection should be implemented substantially and effectively.
- 4) The measures for protection should be promoted in cooperation among concerned bureaus including welfare, labor, education, and economics.¹⁷⁹

On July 2, 1948, the second meeting focused on the development of balanced programs for disabled persons' vocational training and employment service without preferential treatment. The committee members watched an American film about

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 184-85.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 185-86.

¹⁷⁹ Yamada, "Senryōka no Shintaishōgaisha Undō to Shintaishōgaisha Fukushi-hō eno Sanka," 205.

American vocational rehabilitation called “Comeback.” The film helped the committee members lay out the basic steps needed for rehabilitation: routine health examination, guidance and counseling on medical procedures, training, employment services, and a follow-up assessment. The conference also confirmed that the programs should provide services for disabled persons designed to allow them to lead independent lives within a specified time limit. The main recipients for the program would be expanded from the physically handicapped such as the deaf, blind, and amputees, to include tuberculosis patients and persons with diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.¹⁸⁰

To be sure, the newly created “Rehabilitation Bureau” (*Kōsei-ka*) in the MHW cleared the ground for the passage of welfare for disabled persons. When Neff and Kimura met on July 22, they agreed on the creation of a new agency to be called the Rehabilitation Bureau, to achieve the goals of the program. On August 11, the Ministry officially established the bureau.¹⁸¹ Kuroki Katsutoshi, the first chief of Rehabilitation Bureau, visited the United States from September 1948 to March 1949 for the purpose of collecting documents on welfare laws for handicapped persons.¹⁸²

A favorable climate for creating programs for the handicapped emerged in the summer of 1948. In July, legislation creating a system of residential facilities for rehabilitating blind persons went into effect. Under the 1948 fiscal budget, the MHW created vocational aid centers for seriously injured persons. It also transferred management of the Dormitory for Blind Veterans, which had previously been operated

¹⁸⁰ Shakai Fukushi Kenkyujo, *Senryōki ni okeru Shakai Fukushi Shiryo ni kansuru Kenkyu Hōkokusho*, 186.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 186-87.

¹⁸² In the U.S., Kuroki collected documents of the following three acts. 1) Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1943: Provision concerning vocational rehabilitation for the disabled 2) Wagner-O'Day Act: Provision that the federal governmental purchase of goods crafted by the blind 3) Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Act: Provision that grant a right to the blind to set up shop in federal government buildings. Yashima, “Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō no Seitei Katei, sono 1,” 52.

by the private sector to this agency.¹⁸³ Neff regarded the shift as a ‘breakthrough’ on provisions for disabled persons after his visit to the dormitory strengthened his conviction that projects for the blind should be executed under the government’s authority. He consequently urged the MHW to pass welfare legislations for disabled persons.¹⁸⁴

Talks in November 1948 between the PHW and the MHW played a key role in finalizing the framework of the comprehensive rehabilitation programs for disabled persons. On November 3, the PHW and the MHW held a meeting on how the law for disabled persons should be implemented. Kasai Yoshisuke proposed that the bill for the rehabilitation programs should be prepared by the Social Bureau of the MHW. Kasai added, “The basic development of the program will largely depend on the national budget.”¹⁸⁵ At the following meeting on November 30, they decided on a timeline for the bill. By the end of December, they agreed that all government organizations, private sector, and professional organizations related to the bill were to meet to reach a consensus of the contents of the bill. Finally, they set the date for submitting the bill to the Fifth Diet for March 1, 1949.¹⁸⁶ However, uncertainty over funding for the legislation caused a postponement in the write-up of the bill.¹⁸⁷

In October 1948, the MHW organized “the National Council for Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped” (*Shintaishōgaisha Fukushi-hō Seitei Suishin Iinkai*) to draft the comprehensive disability provision. The Council discussed the new legislation from December 1948 to April 1949. Five members of the Council offered proposals to

¹⁸³ Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu Iin, *Kōseishō 50 nenshi, Kijutsu-hen*, 587.

¹⁸⁴ Murakami, *Senryōki no Fukushi Seisaku*, 198-201.; Yashima, “Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō no Seitei Katei, sono 1,” 52.

¹⁸⁵ Shakai Fukushi Kenkyujo, *Senryōki ni okeru Shakai Fukushi Shiryō ni kansuru Kenkyū Hōkokusho*, 187.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 187-88.

¹⁸⁷ Yashima Rie, “Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō no Seitei Katei, sono 1,” 53.

define the purpose for the bill. All the plans submitted specified the government's prime responsibility in providing for the welfare of disabled persons.¹⁸⁸ Both the MHW and the PHW repeatedly confirmed that the principle of equal treatment of the Japanese citizens under SCAPIN 775 denied the possibility of preferential treatments of ex-servicemen by other government agencies. No contrary opinions were voiced in the ensuing discussion.

After the initial meetings, the Council invited officials to contribute ideas. On August 5, 1949, after further revisions, the Council came up with the final version of the bill. The draft of the Law for Welfare of Disabled Persons defined its purpose as follows, "This law shall aim to make the state and local public bodies assist the rehabilitation of disabled persons, give relief necessary for their rehabilitation and seek for the welfare of disabled persons."¹⁸⁹

The bill as submitted elicited debate over the purposes of the law and the concept of rehabilitation in the Sixth Special Diet session held in November 1949, when the Upper and Lower Houses jointly held deliberations on the bill. Article II of the bill stated: "All physically handicapped persons should strive to overcome their handicaps and integrate themselves into society." However, Ito Ken'ichi, a Lower House member from the Japan Communist Party, denounced the proposal, "The bill is just a sermon. I believe it is ridiculous to preach a sermon without providing secure funding for the government to implement the plan for physically handicapped persons."

Meanwhile, Kuroki, the chief of Rehabilitation Bureau in the MHW, interpreted Article II broadly, "I am not saying that the government guarantees solving the issue of providing protection for physically handicapped persons or their economic problems, but

¹⁸⁸ The remarkable change was recognized in naming the Council. The Council used "physically handicapped" instead of "injured" or "wounded." In general, the injured or wounded presumably referred to disabled veterans or war victims. Nevertheless, by using "physically handicapped," the officials intended to imply that the scope of this legislation would extend to general disabled persons. Ibid., 56-59.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 61.

I am saying that it supports them in discovering and maximizing their abilities, which is why we include this article.”¹⁹⁰ Kuroki’s remark indicated the planned provision would stress disabled persons’ economic independence through rehabilitative measures.

Rehabilitation for physically handicapped persons was a point of contention in enactment of the bill, as different concepts of ‘rehabilitation’ between the U.S. and Japan surfaced. To accomplish the goals of Article II, the MHW placed importance on providing assistance to physically handicapped persons who would be likely to acquire vocational skills and eventually be able to adopt a profession.¹⁹¹ By comparison, the PHW defined rehabilitation as “restoration of the handicapped to the fullest physical, mental, social, vocational and economic usefulness of which they are capable.”¹⁹² Kuroki recognized that the Japanese narrow definition of ‘rehabilitation’ differed from the American counterpart as the Japanese definition only referred to ‘return to work.’ However, limitations on the budget and facilities available restructured the scope and number of recipients.

On December 26, 1949, the Law of Welfare for Disabled Persons was enacted. Both the GHQ and the PHW assumed that the two legislative branches would be satisfied with a bill that was consistent with GHQ’s priorities and at the same time addressed the desperate needs of disabled Japanese citizens during this chaotic period. The Law was finally implemented on April 1, 1950.

¹⁹⁰ Rie Yashima, “Shintai Shōgaisha Fukushi-hō no Seitei Katei, sono 2,” *Jinbungakuhō* 300 (March 1999), 40.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁹² This definition was presented by Ferdinand Micklantz, official of the Rehabilitation and Organization Branch of the PHW, at the In-Service Training Institute for Directors of In-Service Training in the Prefectural Welfare Departments of Tokyo, October 1949. The Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Japan Social Work School, *Basic Papers on Social Work*,. Reprint, in *Gendai Shakai Jigyō no Kiso* (Sengo Shakai Fukushi Kihon Bunken Shū 3) eds, Yasuko Ichibangase, Tsutomu Ioka, and Kōichi Endo (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 2000), 152.

The Assistance Law for the War-Related Casualties and the Deceased Families of 1952

Toward the end of the occupation, the GHQ discreetly allowed the Japanese government to address the needs of veterans as well as civilian war victims. During the latter phase of the occupation, the burgeoning cold war, including the outbreak of the Korean War, transformed the initially democratic reform agenda of GHQ into the so-called “reverse course,” which emphasized Japan’s economic and political stability. In addition, the holding of the San Francisco Peace Conference in September 1951 gave the Japanese responsibility for post-occupation policy. Hence, measures for disabled war veterans and war victims were altered in tune with Japan’s international relations and the restoration of Japan’s sovereignty.

The disabled veterans’ frustration over their treatments led to protests in Tokyo in 1951. Even as the restoration of Japan’s sovereignty approached, assistance to disabled veterans showed little sign of improvement. The Central Committee of Disabled Veterans’ Organizations (*Shōisha Dantei Chūō Rengo kai*) took up the cause. The Committee petitioned the Chief Cabinet Secretary, Okazaki Katsuo, on ameliorating living conditions and treatments for disabled veterans. Okazaki replied to their requests as follows.

The Allied Forces prohibit giving preferential treatment to disabled veterans. So far, there is no room for discussion. We are considering measures to assist you after reaching a peace treaty with the Allied, but now some countries including the Philippines demand war compensation. If the government prepares a special budget for you, we are afraid that it may stimulate international criticisms.¹⁹³

Takahashi Kiyotake, the chairman of the Central Committee quickly rebutted,

¹⁹³ Aochi, “Shōigunjin – Sensōgiseisha no Jittai,” 107.

They are just making excuses. Considering the restorations of pensions and rearmament of Japan, I can't imagine such compensation would affect the social security of disabled veterans. Also, I can't accept the Allies' opposition to a government pension since West Germany, a defeated country of WWII, has paid the disabled veterans a maximum of 172,840 yen and at least 22,640 yen.¹⁹⁴

More than 200 disabled veteran protesters marched from the Sukiya Bridge to the Office of Prime Minister on June 25, 1951. As it turned out, the Prime Minister and the Chief Cabinet Secretary were absent at the time. Participants in the demonstrations including veterans who had been blind and/or lost limbs were surrounded by a number of armed police officers, which further invited the attention of passing citizens.¹⁹⁵

On October 13, 1951, about 80 hospitalized patients who were mostly from the Sagami-hara National Hospital presented a written petition including demands for abolition of prioritized military pensions favoring higher rank soldiers and opposition to forced discharge from the national hospitals, appealed to the Office of the Prime Minister and the MHW. When they did not receive a satisfactory response, six inpatients resolved to go on a hunger strike in Sukiya Bridge Park by the Imperial Palace.¹⁹⁶ The hunger strike lasted until October 21. As a result of agreement on a budget between the Welfare vice Minister, Hirasawa, and chairman of the Health and Welfare Committee in the Upper House, Umezu, the disabled veterans ended their vigil and they were all sent to the Red Cross Hospital in Tokyo.¹⁹⁷

Their protest bore instant results for war injured persons and families of the deceased soldiers. Immediately after the strike, on October 26 officials from the MHW,

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 107-108.

¹⁹⁶ Tanaka, "Sagami-hara no Shōigunjin tachi," 147-48.; *Asahi Shimbun*, October 14, 1951.

¹⁹⁷ *Asahi Shimbun*, October 21, 1951.

the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance, and the National Personnel Authority, organized the Preliminary Meeting on Treatments for War Casualties and Deceased Families.¹⁹⁸ The disabled veterans' protests also prompted the Diet to adopt a "Resolution for Protection of War Casualties (*Senshōbyōsha no Engo ni kansuru Ketsugi*)" and the "Resolution for Protection of Deceased Families (*Senbotsusha Izoku Engo ni kansuru Ketsugi*)" for all war victims in November 1951.¹⁹⁹

While the government generally recognized the need for comprehensive legislation for all war victims, particularly in the post occupation period, conflicts between the Pension Bureau and the MHW intensified over the issue of recipients. The Pension Bureau advocated revival of the prewar pension system for families of the deceased soldiers and military pensions based on military rank for disabled veterans. Yet, the MHW's plan was predicated on the principle of safeguarding the social security of all citizens in accordance with SCAPIN 775; considering the national budget and people's feelings toward preferential treatment to specific recipients, the ministry insisted that compensation and benefits should be distributed to the needy regardless of their military class. Even after six sessions of the Preliminary Meeting, the parties failed to reach an agreement. Nonetheless, they instinctively understood that reintroduction of the prewar pension system might incur GHQ's intervention.²⁰⁰

As a consequence, the government decided to choose the MHW's plan for the upcoming bill in late December 1950.²⁰¹ The final plan issued in January specified the categories of recipients. Injured ex-servicemen would receive an annual disability

¹⁹⁸ Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu Iin, *Kōseishō 50 nenshi, Kijutsu-hen*, 614.

¹⁹⁹ Hiroshi Inoue, "Shōigunjin no Sengo: Kokuritsu Ryōyōjo Hakone Byōin Nishi Byōtō no Shōigunjin," *Odawara Chihōshi Kenkyū*, 21 (2000), 101-102.

²⁰⁰ *Asahi Shimbun*, December 17, 1951.; Kōseishō 50 nenshi Henshu Iin, *Kōseishō 50 nenshi, Kijutsu-hen*, 614-15.

²⁰¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, December 24, 1951.

pension from 39,000 to 56,000 yen according to the degrees of their injuries.²⁰² In response to the planned bill, representatives from the MHW's officials, welfare workers, and disabled veterans reached an agreement to halt white gown donations on April 8, 1952.²⁰³ The National Diet passed the Assistance Law for the War-Related Casualties and the Deceased Families, (*Senshōbyōsha Senbotsusha Izokutō Engo-hō*) introduced on April 30, 1952, which stipulated that war veterans and their families will again receive preferential treatment. Despite flawed provisions, it is historically significant that the Japan's government differentiated war victims including disabled veterans from general disabled populations. The law set the standard for a two-tiered disability policy (veteran and non-veteran) that stands to the postwar Japan.

²⁰² *Asahi Shimbun*, January 16, 1952.

²⁰³ *Asahi Shimbun*, April 9, 1952

CHAPTER III
INITIAL YEARS OF THE JAPANESE DISABLED
VETERANS ASSOCIATION, 1952-1956

Restoration of the Japan's sovereignty in 1952 paved the way for reintroduction of military pensions. While the American authorities denied military pensions under the occupation, war veterans heightened calls to resume the system as the occupation came to an end. To the veterans, the obligation to serve country and the right to receive military pension were two sides of the same coin. In particular, disabled veterans drew a distinction between the pensions they were entitled as disabled veterans and general welfare. Disabled veterans mobilized to restore their rights and reputation in the post occupation period.

This chapter investigates the activities of the Japan Disabled Veterans Association (JDVA: *Nippon Shōigunjin kai*) as a lobbying group on behalf of their members created on November 16, 1952. The JDVA played a pivotal role in organizing disabled veterans' movement and reaching their political goals. In an increasingly favorable climate for veterans as the enactment of the 1952 Assistance Law for the War-Related Casualties and the Deceased Families indicated, the JDVA aimed to put pressure the government to establish preferential provisions for disabled veterans and their families. I will argue that for disabled veterans, the campaigns to secure full-fledged military pensions was also as much about restoring their place in society and honor for sacrifice for the country as material benefits.

Birth of the Japanese Disabled Veterans Association

The end of the American occupation allowed Japanese veterans to associate freely for the first time since 1945. During the occupation years, GHQ monitored

organizations associated with the prewar and wartime military, and severely restricted veterans' activities. The Japanese government adopted a similar law that imposed many restrictions on former servicemen. While the Japan War-Bereaved Association (*Nihon Izoku kai*) was permitted to organize under the government's guidance on November 17, 1947, the League of Revival of Military Pension (*Gunjin Onkyū Fukkatsukisei Renmei*) and the JDVA were only formally established in July and October, 1952, respectively.²⁰⁴ In spite of various interests and goals, the veterans association united around restoration of their honors and rights.

Local disabled veterans became increasingly organized after the mid-1952. On August 15, 1957, disabled veterans in Yamanashi prefecture formed the prefecture-wide organization, which gave an impetus for national organization for disabled veterans. Tanaka Teruo, an executive officer of the Yamanashi Branch, issued the call to create a nationwide body for disabled veterans. Veteran's associations in Ishikawa, Kochi, and Yamaguchi prefectures immediately responded to Tanaka's appeal. In response, the MHW presumably intended to integrate their request to create national organization into a comprehensive organization for disabled people, and subsequently organized a preparatory meeting of formation of "the Japan Physically Disabled Persons League (*Nippon Shintai Shōgaisha Renmei*)" on September 10.

The first preliminary meeting of the Japan Physically Disabled Persons' League at the head office of the Japan Red Cross in Tokyo faced an unexpected event. To disabled veterans, the creation of the league was different from what they originally envisioned. When Fuji Tatsumi, a delegate from Chiba prefecture, delivered the opening speech, a representative from Yamanashi prefecture suddenly circulated a manifesto on creation of independent disabled veterans' groups to the participants. The veteran's protests brought deliberations halt for a while; however, the participants eventually

²⁰⁴ Takuji Kimura, "Senshōbyōsha Senbotsusha Izokutō Engo-hō no Seitei to Gunjin Onkyū no Fukkatsu: Kyugunjin Dantai eno Eikyo wo Chushin ni," *Jinmin no Rekishigaku* 134 (1997), 5-6.

decided to hold the first preliminary meeting of the JDVA on the following month. Thus disabled veterans manifested their will to establish their own domain for their rights and honor.

On September 11, representatives from twenty two prefectural disabled veterans associations met to discuss their objectives at the first preliminary meeting of the JDVA. Their prime concern was how the newly created JDVA could reinsert the reintroduction of military pension into the government's political agenda. As a consequence, three resolutions were announced; 1) revival of military pension from the seven degree *kōshō* to seven degree *kanshō*; 2) pegging pensions to the price index; 3) formation of a national organization for disabled veterans. They also decided to petition for immediate implementation of military pensions at the meeting of the Council for Special Provision of the Pension Law on September 19.²⁰⁵

The JDVA convened its first National Convention on November 16. Approximately 350 disabled veterans from thirty seven prefectures assembled to celebrate the birth of JDVA in the auditorium of Nagata elementary school in Chiyoda ward, Tokyo. Nomura Kichisaburo.²⁰⁶ The newly elected DJVA's president, opened the meeting with the following declaration,

In beginning Japan's reconstruction after seven years of the Allied occupation, the government should immediately compensate war victims in the name of the state. Bearing numerous burdens and enduring financial difficulties, we, disabled veterans and army civilian employees have been waiting for this day since the end of the war. Assistance providing for all war victims including disabled veterans does not inevitably measure up to endurance and realities of our lives for the seven years. Now we hold the first convention with the hope of achieving this original goal, and contributing to the reconstruction of

²⁰⁵ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Nippon Shōigunjin kai 15 nenshi* (Tokyo: Chiyoda Shōji, 1967), 10-11.; *Nisshō Gekkan (Monthly Paper of the JDVA)*, Vol.1, May 20, 1953, 2.

²⁰⁶ Nomura Kichisaburo was a navy admiral with five degree *kōshō*. The organization and structure of the JDVA were similar to the prewar disabled veterans association (The Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association).

an independent Japan and world peace. So, be resolved by the Japanese Disabled Veterans Association!²⁰⁷

The JDVA members were asked to act as a role model for the country. Kaba Atsushi²⁰⁸, the chairman of the JDVA, emphasized that disabled veterans should demonstrate their means of contributing to society. The JDVA encouraged them to nurture the idea of patriotism as well as respect of foreign countries. Members were also required to work hard for the good of society. Religious faiths were to be cultivated for self-reflection. It was critical to absorb knowledge from the world to understand where Japan's place in the postwar world.²⁰⁹ The JDVA considered their disabilities as strength in reconstructing the postwar Japan.

The JDVA's political agendas revealed the gaps between the harsh realities of disabled veterans and inadequate provisions in the post occupation period. The resolutions introduced by JDVA urged recovery of prewar status for disabled veterans: revival of military pension, preferential treatment in using national railway, preferential quotas in employment for disabled ex-servicemen, free medical expenses in the case of recurrence of sickness, and exemptions of national and local taxes. The JDVA also requested enactment of legislation specifically for disabled veterans. In addition, the JDVA demanded to solve the prolonged war issues such as return of the confiscated property of the Great Nippon Disabled Veterans Association, immediate release of war criminals and repatriation of Japanese detainees from abroad, and resolving the issue of white gown veterans.

The momentum generated by the first convention inspired disabled veterans to hold a rally at the Hibiya Park on the following day. The spectacle of the JDVA members, including men with crutches and amputated arms, caught the attention of the people

²⁰⁷ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.1, May 20, 1953, 1.

²⁰⁸ Kaba Atsushi was an army lieutenant general with five degree *kōshō*.

²⁰⁹ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.1, May 20, 1953, 1.

walking around the park. Despite inclusion of welfare supports for white gown beggars in the resolution, white gown beggars' sudden intrusion onto the platform while the committee members lined up impressed exposed conflicts between the JDVA members and the beggars.

After the convention concluded, the members organized groups of petitioners to hand over the written resolution of the first convention to five concerned government ministries including the MHW and the Pension Bureau, and the Prime Minister's Official Residence. Then, they returned to the Upper House hall to give reports on their contacts with the ministries. They concluded with a chorus of three loud cheers.²¹⁰

In response to the JDVA's communiqué, the MHW recognized the JDVA as the official association for Japanese disabled veterans. At the same time, the MHW urged the JDVA to work together with other disabled persons' organizations.

It is expected that the organization will be formed in every prefecture. We earnestly ask you to pay special attention that formation of this organization should interfere with other organizations of disabled persons, but, rather, contribute to promote the welfare of all physically handicapped persons including disabled ex-servicemen each other.²¹¹

Thus, the MHW expected that the JDVA would play a leading role in promoting welfare of disabled veterans, while the MHW was also concerned about their relations with other disabled persons.

The Revival of the Military Pension

The passage of the Assistance Law for the War-Related Casualties and the

²¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

²¹¹ Ibid., 1.

Deceased Families in April 1952 added impetus to reintroduction of the military pension. After GHQ terminated the military pension on February 1, 1946, war victims including disabled veterans and their families forcibly led difficult lives. The comprehensive compensatory law aimed to cover a wide range of war victims, from widows and their families to disabled veterans. Nevertheless, given the fact that the War-Related Casualties and the Deceased Families virtually postponed the payment of the military pension, the law was deemed as a tentative legislation until the military pension would be reintroduced. In addition, the expected recipients mostly from members of the Japan War-Bereaved Association expressed dissatisfaction over limited amount of compensation.²¹²

The Japanese government cautiously waited for an opportunity to reintroduce the military pension. On May 20, 1952, the Japanese government set up the Council for Special Provision of the Pension Law (*Onkyū-hō Tokurei Shingi kai*) to study revival of military pension.²¹³ Meanwhile, provisions added to the Assistance Law for the War-Related Casualties and the Deceased Families, on June 20 the government decided to postpone discussion until March 31, 1953.²¹⁴ The invitation to Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru to attend the first meeting of the Council on June 25 is evidence of the high expectations and interest in the revival of military pension.

The Council for Special Provision of the Pension Law subsequently sought to replace the old pension scheme by drafting new legislation to redress disparities among pension beneficiaries. The gap between civil officials and military personnel widened during the occupation period. While the military pension was suspended, civil officials

²¹² Kimura, “Senshōbyōsha Senbotsusha Izokutō Engo-hō no Seitei to Gunjin Onkyū no Fukkatsu,” 4.

²¹³ Of the fifteen council members, five members were former military personnel or civilian personnel, who represented the expected beneficial groups of military pension. Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Nippon Shōigunjin kai 15 nenshi*, 9-10.

²¹⁴ The extended suspension of the military pension also meant not to reintroduce the prewar military pension system. Kimura, “Senshōbyōsha Senbotsusha Izokutō Engo-hō no Seitei to Gunjin Onkyū no Fukkatsu,” 4.

kept receiving the pension. Moreover, commissioned officers received larger pensions and favorable conditions than non-commissioned officers.²¹⁵ Considering the postwar financial difficulties and public opinions, the Council focused on three points: the issue of prioritizing recipients, method of payment (regular payment or one-time payment), and issue of additional pension system.²¹⁶

On November 22, 1952, the Council finally submitted draft legislation on reintroduction of military pension to the government. While the proposal essentially recognized the necessity of military pensions, it also stressed the need for numerous modifications of the pre-1945 military pension system. The Council explained the main idea of the revised system, “After many years of public service, they become older, or suffer from sickness and wounds, or die, and in the end, lose the means of earning their own livings. The payment and savings under military service would not cover such inability to work sufficiently. Therefore, the state as an employer should compensate for the concerned loss of their inability to work.”²¹⁷

The draft prepared by the Council took into consideration military rank and length of service in determining the amount of military pensions.²¹⁸ Considering the difficult lives of noncommissioned disabled veterans, however, the revised pension plan

²¹⁵ For the entitlement of military pension, commissioned officers (*shōkō*) and noncommissioned officers (*kashikan*) needed thirteen years and twelve years respectively. In addition, salaries for commissioned officers reflected a military rank-based pay scale. Nobuo Yamamura, “Gunji Onkyū ha Dōnaruka,” *Jinjyōsei* 3, no.7 (July 1952), 22.

²¹⁶ Military officials regardless of military rank received additional benefits such as military service benefit (*senmu kasan*), *Ibid.*, 21.; Kimura, “Senshōbyōsha Senbotsusha Izokutō Engo-hō no Seitei to Gunjin Onkyū no Fukkatsu,” 4.

²¹⁷ Kazumasa Yoshihara, “Gunjin Onkyū Fukkatsu no Kōsō: Onkyū ho Tokurei Shingikai Kengi no Gaiyō.” *Toki no Hōrei* 82 (1952), 31.

²¹⁸ Although the prewar pension system covered soldier other than commissioned and noncommissioned officers, the new system would cover draftees who served more than seven years in the military regardless of military rank. The Council calculated that the estimated budget of 65 million yen for the expected 1.83 million recipients would divide into survivor’s benefit payable to his families (*kōmufujoryo*) (85.4%), increased military pension (*zōka onkyū*) for injured or sick veterans (4.7%), conventional military pension (*futsū onkyū*) for elderly veterans (7.2%), and benefit payable to his families of those died after discharge (2.7%). *Ibid.*, 32-34.

for disabled veterans stressed degrees of severity of injuries over military rank. Under the new plan, in addition to conventional military pension, severely injured veterans and mildly injured veterans received increased military pension, and lump-sum payment respectively. Not surprisingly, the allotment of military pension attempted to address the realities of lives of veterans and financial predicament.

Yet, many Japanese remained suspicious of the revival of military pension system immediately after the Council's proposal. A report submitted by the Council of Social Security System (*Shakaihoshō Seido Shingi kai*) under General Administrative Agency of the Cabinet on December 23, pointed out that military pension might only enhance preferential treatment to specific citizens, "The renewal of military pension gives preferential treatment to certain groups of military personnel. The argument that they deserved this, which is predicated on vested rights, has a weak foundation. Considering the balance of social security expenditure for the general population, and in consideration of the fact that the sacrifices of this war influenced the entire nation, we cannot find valid reasons."²¹⁹

In addition, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation's (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*) survey on November 25, 1952 also revealed that the majority of the respondents reject reintroduction of the prewar system. Although they expressed sympathy toward the families of deceased soldiers, including orphans and widows, and toward war disabled veterans, the main objection to the prewar military pension system was the preferential treatment of career soldiers over draftees.²²⁰ Thus, the Japanese citizens were concerned that the revival of military pensions would lead to uneven distribution of financial benefits.

Since its foundation in October 1952, the JDVA engaged in lobbying at the Diet

²¹⁹ Shunji Hirose, "Gunji Onkyū no Fukkatsu: 28 nendo Yosan no Shōten," *Meisō* 4, no. 5 (August 1953), 121.

²²⁰ Yoshihara, "Gunjin Onkyū Fukkatsu no Kōsō," 32.

for the legislation for the revival of military pension. The JDVA instantly created the Diet Affairs Committee (*Kokkai Taisaku Inkai*) for effective mobilization of its constituents. The bill for the revision of the Pension Law was submitted to the Fifteenth Diet in early 1953. The basic strategy was to actively lobby key figures in both the Upper and Lower Houses. As the result of extensive interviews with national Diet members, eight regional groups lobbied in succession at the Diet from January 12 to March 11. The JDVA utilized numerous strategies such as face to face meetings with the Diet members, submissions of petitions, appeals and questionnaires, observing the proceedings of the concerned committees and the Diet sessions, testimony at the hearings. On March 1, presenting actual cases of disabled veterans, Kuroda Akira, representative of the JDVA, explained the reasons for revival of less than the seven degree *kōshō* of military pension at the Hearing of Lower House.²²¹ In spite of the all-out campaign of the JDVA members, dissolution of the Lower House on March 14 resulted in the failure to pass the bill. At the same time, the government decided to prolong the suspension of the military pension until the end of July.

The JDVA raised three goals for the Sixteenth Diet: 1) revival of increased military pension for the seven degree *kōshō* ; 2) revival of disability pension from the first to the fourth degree *kanshō*; and 3) payment of additional family pension from the special degree to the seven *kōshō*.²²² At the hearings of the Lower House, Kuroda Akira agreed to the plan for general plan for the revised pension law with two exceptions. The Council for Special Provision of the Pension Law agreed on the suspensions of the seven degree *kōshō* of military pension and disability pension from the first to the fourth degree *kanshō* for the three reasons: public sentiment, national budget, degree of injuries. Nevertheless, Kuroda countered the Council's concerns.

²²¹ For the campaign of the Fifteenth Diet, about 300 members from thirty one prefectures involved. *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.1, May 20, 1953, 2-3.

²²² *Ibid.*

As for public sentiment, we regret that citizens discuss military pension issue to disabled persons only from perspective sentimental or legal argument...In the second issue of national budget, we have never asked the amount of compensation...In the last hearing, the Council said that mildly injured persons such as those who lost one thumb would be excluded from the final report. The decision makes us furious because the chart of disability does not mention anything about it. I protest such irresponsible words.²²³

The Diet subsequently passed the revised Pension Law on July 31. The revised law aimed to fill in the gap in the national pension system in treatment of public official and former military officials, particularly to aid lower rank ex-soldiers. Moreover, mildly injured veterans would receive increased military pension.

Nonetheless, the primary goal proposed by the Council plan was not incorporated into the bill that was enacted based on the idea of equal treatment between military personnel and civil public officials. The finalized plan provided that pensions of lower ranking soldiers would be lower than for officers. Also, the planned amount of pension would be reduced due to budgetary restrictions.²²⁴ Despite these changes, it was a significant step that the military pension system was once again part of the national pension as it has been before 1945.

The Problem of the White Gown Veterans

Veterans who wore white gowns and solicited money on streets were recognized as a social problem after the war. White gown veterans did so to sustain their lives. To the newly created JDVA, they stained on the organization's reputation because Japanese citizens frequently identified them as JDVA members. Accordingly, the JDVA regarded

²²³ Ibid., Vol.3, July 30, 1953, 3.

²²⁴ Hirose, "Gunji Onkyū no Fukkatsu no Kōsō," 120-21.

them as an obstacle to promote the welfare of its members. The declaration concerning the white gown beggars proclaimed at the JDVA Second National Convention on October 21, 1953 firmly condemned the practice.

We have seen disabled veterans asking donations on the streets or in the trains after the war. The suspension of military pensions and inadequate public assistance made us think they had no choice. However, with the reinstatement of new support services provided by the government, we now believe that 300,000 disabled veterans should practice self-restraint, stop asking for donations, work to improve lives of members, and act as honorable role models in accordance with the JDVA charter.²²⁵

Alarmed by the seriousness of the problem, the MHW conducted a national survey of the white gown beggars on October 22 and 23. Three hundred and eighty seven of the white gown beggars responded to the survey. According to the finding, their average age was thirty nine years old, had 2.5 dependent family members, solicited donations for an average, six hour & forty minutes per day, seventeen days per month. Nearly eighty percent of respondents engaged in begging to meet survival needs. About ninety percent of beggars answered that they would quit if employed or self-employed. Surprisingly, more than half of beggars were now receiving military pensions or disability payments, which suggests that obstacles remained even after the revival of military pension system. The MHW recognized the need to adopt new cooperation with prefectures. On the other hand, the JDVA announced that they would continue efforts to support unfortunate injured ex-servicemen under the guidance of the MHW.²²⁶

The JADV's statement ignited a host of criticisms of the white gown beggars from its members. As the result of a survey of its members, the Nagano Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association eventually advocated a complete ban on their activities.

²²⁵ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.7, November 20, 1953, 1.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol.10, February 20, 1953, 2.

They found that most of the beggars were from outside of the prefecture, mostly from Tokyo and Kanagawa. In addition, some of them appeared to become professional beggars, who controlled their ‘market’ for collecting donations and appeared to fake or exaggerate their disabilities. The Takinokawa police Station in Tokyo, which had conducted an undercover investigation, ordered the *Hakuyu kai* Foundation for Welfare of Disabled Veterans (*Shōisha Kōsei Jigyōdan Hakuyu kai*) to present themselves for questioning regarding fraudulent charity activities. In the interview with the Sangyo Shimbun Newspaper, Takahashi Kiyotsune, secretary of the Committee of Rehabilitative Assistance for White Gown Donation (*Hakui Bokinsha Kōsei Engo Iinkai*) found fault with the JDVA’s recommendation. “The military pension is not paid as it planned. If the country were to provide adequate life support, we are always ready for quitting. Who dares to wish to stand on this wintry sky?”²²⁷

Several local disabled veterans’ organizations took more active measures for eliminating white gown beggars. On January 28, 1954, about hundred members of Katori District of Disabled Veterans’ Association in Chiba prefecture engaged in an all-out campaign for eradicating white gown charity. White gown beggars primarily collected donations at shrines where large number of visitors came to pray. They chartered three buses and hung white banners on the buses saying “Please help us put an end to white gown charity!” and headed for numerous destinations in Tokyo including the National Diet, Pension Bureau, and the Yasukuni Shrine. When the group of Katori District of Disabled Veterans’ Association arrived at the Yasukuni Shrine, Kaba Atsushi, the JDVA president, and members of the secretariat welcomed them heartily. The members were genuinely impressed with their hospitality. They recalled when they walked under the big archway to the shrine.

Under the archway, five white gown beggars were soliciting donations

²²⁷ Ibid., Vol.8, December 20, 1953, 4.

from visitors. They exposed their ugly features to visitors whose loved ones may have once been comrades of these drifters, even sharing cigarettes... Since the restoration of Japan's sovereignty, the bereaved family who come to Tokyo from the provinces as well as other people, are surely pleased to meet the spirits of war dead. When they pass through under the big shrine gate, they should hear the voice of the spirits of the heroic dead and embrace the spirits of war comrades... Nevertheless, bands of ungracious white charity panhandlers disturb what should be a profoundly spiritual moment! We, disabled veterans, can't tell you how sorry we are.²²⁸

Ordinary people in the shrine gave mixed reactions to the presence of disabled veterans group in the precinct yard. A peddler said, "Why does the Disabled Veterans Association crack down the white gown beggars?" Another worker shoveling snow pondered, "They gave us lots of troubles... Well, and the Disabled Veterans Association has nothing to do with them? If so, the donations would go into their pockets..." An old lady resting at a restaurant sighed, "Oh, they have received pensions while soliciting donations..." These observations demonstrated that as the JDVA feared, the general public did not clearly distinguish JDVA members from the beggars.

The Katori District Disabled Veterans Association officially stated, "White gown solicitors engaged in begging. As injured persons in the same war, we cannot ignore this fact anymore. If one has a will, he should rehabilitate himself." They distributed printed statement to white gown beggars and visitors to the shrine. In the statement to the white gown beggars, they demanded the beggars stop asking charity.

We profoundly sympathize with your handicaps as we do with all other injured veterans. However, you cannot be allowed to solicit donations publicly since it causes the general public considerable discomfort. If you make the most of your abilities, you can survive one way or another. Our comrades everywhere have demonstrated this.... You should stop begging immediately. Why don't we join together and work for rehabilitation!²²⁹

²²⁸ Ibid., Vol.10, February 20, 1954, 3.

²²⁹ Ibid.

At the same time, the statement circulated to shrine visitors expressed appreciation and favor for disabled veterans' participation in society.

We feel very grateful for the sympathy you have shown to white gown solicitors and kindness in giving your charity. However, this does them more harm than good... Even if you still feel sorry for them what they need is tough love. At the same time, I would like you to encourage the government to provide adequate support to war victims. Moreover, we ask for your deep understanding and cooperation in addressing the problems of physically handicapped persons.²³⁰

In March 1954, Shimane Prefecture Disabled Veterans Association also launched a campaign to eliminate white gown charity. White gown beggars at the Izumo Shrine were an irksome problem to the Shimane tourist association. The Taisha town division of the prefectural association distributed fliers to the beggars in cooperation with local authorities and police. The fliers, titled "A Request to Gentlemen in White," pleaded with them to stop donation.

Dear gentlemen soliciting money! Have you heard the statement on elimination of white gown donations in the Second National Convention of the JDVA? We, disabled veterans in Shimane Prefecture, particularly disabled veterans living in Taisha town, cannot overlook such acts any more when we think how these activities trouble and disgust many visitors to the shrine.... Now we, in the name of the Taisha town division, appeal to gentlemen to have white gown fundraising stopped.²³¹

One white gown beggar coldly received the fliers. Contrary to the members' expectation that he would act remorsefully, the beggar adamantly retorted. "I never thought that soliciting money was a good thing to do. However, who on earth would

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., Vol.11, April 1, 1954, 3.

employ me even if I wish to find a job? I have neither a house to live nor relatives. Actually, I am still in a hospital inpatient.”

Then the beggar told the members about his difficulties and finally asked them to give a couple of days for grace. Since the members did not have the authority to grant permission, they left the final decision up to him.²³² Contrary to the reports that beggars lived extravagantly, in reality many of them led hard lives. The JDVA member felt they were menace to society. Meanwhile, their experience with charity panhandlers made them realize the actual condition of how important the charity they received was to their lives.

Revival of the Free Transportation on the Japan National Railways

Another goal for the JDVA was reinstatement of the free transportation on the Japan National Railways. Disabled veterans prior to the Pacific War were entitled to ride trains for free, which was considered to be part of the system of preferential treatments. This privilege was both an economic benefit and a symbolic entitlement identifying themselves as honorable veterans. In reality, disabled veterans in the prewar period frequently used this system for going to hospitals and sanatoriums. Nonetheless, the GHQ ordered the Japanese government to halt the entitlement in 1947. After the abolition, they faced many difficulties when traveling.

Since the first National Convention, the JDVA petitioned the Diet members to submit a bill to provide free ride for disabled veterans. The campaigns to the revival of military pension and free train rides served a test of recuperating their honor and rights. Based on the prewar system, the JDVA suggested that those who would carry certificate issued by the JDVA should be provided priority seats regardless of veterans' military

²³² Ibid.

rank.²³³ From May 21 to July 31, 1955, the JDVA mobilized a total of 1,305 members to lobby in favor of passing the bill granting free rides on the national railroad. The JDVA headquarters called on the support of its local affiliated organizations. They sent directives by telegraph to each prefectural disabled veterans association. Initially, the central leaders asked that local members write petition letters to their local Diet members. Then, following a new directive, members adopted the tactic of coming to Tokyo to make direct appeals.

Frequent contacts with local members of the Diet enabled the JDVA members to understand the legislative process. Since it seemed almost impossible to expect an increase in the military pension, which was another priority of the JDVA, they set themselves the single goal of obtaining free rides for disabled veterans. The JDVA recognized that the Liberal Party would cast the deciding vote for the bill. In his talk with a local JDVA member in early June, Kimura Toshio, lower house member of the Liberal Party from Mie prefecture, revealed that the bill would be unlikely to pass the House of Representatives. Kimura's remark was immediately reported to the JDVA headquarter. Then they urged the JDVA members in Mie to petition Kimura and soon received an affirmative reply. As the case of the Mie prefectural association indicated, the central and local organizations of the JDVA worked closely together in the lobbying effort.

Although the bill passed without difficulty in the House of Representatives, the unexpected opposition arose in the House of Councilors. Since the JDVA realized that the prospect for passage of the bill was uncertain after the enactment of the bill in the lower house on July 19, the text of the petition was widely circulated to each lawmaker just before the vote of upper house.²³⁴ Just before the end of deliberation in the Diet on July 29, a group of the JDVA determined to launch a hunger strike in front of the Upper

²³³ Ibid., Vol.23, June 1, 1955, 1.

²³⁴ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Nippon Shōigunjin kai 15 nenshi*, 39.; *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.24, August 1, 1955, 3.

House building until the bill was passed. While some Diet members asked them to stop it immediately, others encouraged the hunger strikers, which demonstrated the divided political stances on the bill.²³⁵

However, governmental officials of public transportation strongly dissented. The Japan National Railway (JNR) presented the main objection to the bill, “JNR bears the burden of providing various kinds of contributions to national welfare. Until now we have incurred 1,200 million yen loss per year. You can count JNR out for such unfair burden.”²³⁶ Officials of the Finance Ministry also commented on the reason for objection, “It is a highly questionable that the country should grant the favors that amount to expenditures of the national budget to a select people. We should proceed slowly, taking into careful consideration social policy involving ordinary physically handicapped person.” Moreover, the Finance Minister, Ichimada Hisato emphasized the unfairness of sharing the cost, “It is not appropriate to pay the JNR for the expenses of disabled veterans. It is unfair as a social policy to in effect tax the country as a whole to mitigate a disabled veteran’s travel expenses.”²³⁷

In contrast, Hara Kenzaburo, chairman of House of Representative Transportation Committee and the author of the bill, expressed his view of the bill stressing the distinction between the general population of physically handicapped persons and disabled veterans, which led the free ride issue to be treated not as an operating policy of JNR, but as a national policy. Moreover, Hara considered that the enactment of the bill while representing the country’s appreciation to disabled veterans’ sacrifices would also have a negative impact on the finances of Japan.

Although the JDVA members almost gave up hope of passage in the upper house in the 22 Special Diet session, Hara decided to make a last-minute effort. He directly

²³⁵ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.24, August 1, 1955, 1-3.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol.22, May 1, 1955, 1.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol.24, August 1, 1955, 2.

appealed to the Ministers of Finance and Transportation, and they responded positively. Their consent to the bill dramatically changed atmosphere of the upper house. The lower house transportation committee reopened the deliberation on the bill. As a result, the upper house unanimously passed the bill on July 30. Just before the close of the Diet session, the JDVA's goal came to be embodied.²³⁸

The JDVA's Relation with Disabled American Veterans

Communications with foreign disabled veterans played a key role in strengthening JDVA's reputation and organizations. In particular, the JDVA's relation with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) was crucial to participating in the World Veterans Federation (WVF). Their first contact with the DAV took place by chance in June 1952. Representatives of the DAV traveled to Korea for the purpose of showing sympathy to wounded American soldiers. On their return trip to the United States, they paid a courtesy visit to the headquarters of the JDVA in Tokyo. The Japanese veterans were struck by their magnanimous attitude. Yasui Fukuzo, a JDVA member in Osaka, remembered their solemn but warm demeanor.

Americans in the delegations that greeted us expressed the warm friendship that is the bond of disabled veterans in their gracious deportment and speech. When we arrived, the party stood up and shook hands with us, and we kept shaking hands for a long time. Heartful feelings of that silent eye and eye communication were enough to make us choke up.²³⁹

The JDVA members reiterated their wish to cooperate with the DAV as a partner organization dedicated to rehabilitation.

²³⁸ Ibid., Vol.24, August 1, 1956, 1.; Vol.29, March 1, 1956, 3.

²³⁹ Ibid., Vol.9, January 20, 1954, 2.

The DAV's second visit to Japan gave the JDVA an opportunity to develop a close relationship. On December 12, 1953, when the JDVA held board meeting, three representatives of the DAV visited the JDVA office. The Japanese members were impressed with the advanced technologies of the American's prosthetic hands. On the other hand, the American veterans were staggered by the meager military pensions the Japanese veterans received. When Mr. Jackson, a lieutenant commander who lost his eyesight, told them that he had been wounded in the battle of Bougainville Island, Tanba Keiji, Japanese veteran who lost arm immediately responded, "I was injured there too! So, we fought each other in the war?" *The Nisshō Gekkan* (The monthly paper of the JDVA) reported this anecdote, "The mutual enemies at that time are friends in the present which is evidence of the spirit that unites disabled veterans around the world."²⁴⁰ In this way, Japanese veterans established rapport with their American counterparts.

The DAV advanced several proposals to promote the friendship between them. To JDVA's surprise, the DAV's offers included financial assistance to sustain JDVA's activities. Although the JDVA expressed their appreciation, they demurred on the grounds that it would have an impact on their management as a whole.²⁴¹ The exchanges also led to an invitation to the JDVA President, Nomura Kisaburo, for the National Convention of the DAV in the summer of 1953. Nomura was pleased to accept.²⁴²

As a result, the JDVA decided to delegate Yasui Fukuzo, an executive adviser of the Osaka Prefectural Disabled Veterans, to visit the US for the National Convention of the DAV from August 11 to September 19, 1954. His primary purpose was to introduce the JDVA to American disabled veterans to enhance communication and friendship, and to petition them to release Japanese war criminals who were still serving prison

²⁴⁰ Ibid., Vol.8, December 20, 1953, 1.

²⁴¹ Ibid., Vol.8, December 20, 1953, 1.; Vol.9, January 20, 1954, 1.

²⁴² Ibid., Vol.9, January 20, 1954, 1.

sentences.²⁴³ Yasui delivered the JDVA chairman Kaba Atsushi's message to American colleagues, "It is an honor to declare myself at the National Convention of DAV... Those have directly experienced horror of war are disabled veterans. Countries should establish world peace by respecting each other and cooperating together. In this regard, I long for creating alliance between American and Japanese disabled veterans."²⁴⁴ In his speech before the DAV Convention, on behalf of the president, Nomura Kichisaburo, Yasui explained the rationale for immediate release of war criminals,

Considering the fact that the present international situation, and particularly, the situation in the Far East has drastically changed, and that in the Far East Japan is only independent country that can defend from threat of communism, it is against national interest of the United States to prolong resolving this problem.²⁴⁵

DAV Member gave a thunderous applause to Yasui's remark. Despite of the fact that release of Japanese war criminals was a politically charged issue, the JDVA aimed to take advantage of fear of communism for mutual benefits. In addition, Yasui cited their families' predicaments in the postwar Japan in order to elicit sympathy among American veterans.

Nevertheless, the problem of Japanese war criminals overshadowed relations between both countries' veterans. A major stumbling block was the adamant opposition from hard-liners in the American Legion. Yasui reasoned that political consideration toward the members of the American Legion who lost their family members and friends in the Pacific War largely explained the DAV's negative posture. The wartime atrocities of the Japanese Imperial Army such as the vivisection practiced on American soldiers at

²⁴³ The first and second convention of the JDVA reached a unanimous decision on release of war criminals. Then, the JDVA repeatedly demanded their release. *Ibid.*, Vol.17, November 1, 1954, 3.; Vol. 23, June 1, 1965, 3.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol.15, September 1, 1954, 1.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol.24, August 1, 1954, 4.

Kyushu University remained very much a live issue in the minds of American veterans.²⁴⁶

As a disabled veteran from a defeated country, Yasui was overwhelmed by the rehabilitative program available to American disabled veterans. During his stay in Cincinnati, where the DAV's headquarter was located, Yasui inspected a factory managed by the DAV that was producing license plates. With air-conditioned factories and well-equipped facilities, about five hundred employees, the majority of whom were disabled veterans, appeared to work comfortably.²⁴⁷ After he observed American rehabilitation and vocational reeducation programs, he admitted Japanese disabled veterans could learn from their American counterparts. "I cannot say whether this can be adopted as is; application of this system to Japanese disabled veterans is too different due to a problem of scale between the countries."²⁴⁸

On the way back to Japan, Yasui visited Japanese living in Hawaii to ask support for the JDVA. He reported activities of the JDVA and conditions of Japanese disabled veterans to Japanese and second generation of Japanese Americans in Hawaii. Many of the old Japanese cried over predicaments Japanese disabled veterans had faced including white gown donation. An old man lamented contradictory situation between disabled veterans and Japan's reconstruction,

Although the roads in Japan was fully restored after the war and the splendid building appeared in front of the the Osaka train station, unless people who got injured for the country are truly consoled and the country provide generous assistance for them, we, the Japanese residents abroad never think that these are signs of true recovery or national prosperity.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Ibid., Vol.26, October 1, 1954, 3.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., Vol.26, September 1, 1954, 3.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., Vol.17, November 1, 1954, 3.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

The JDVA's Participation in World Veterans Federation

In line with promoting friendship with DAV, the JDVA expanded its interest in disabled veterans' groups in foreign countries. After World War II, among war participating nations, the establishment of international disabled veterans' organization gathered momentum. The World Veterans Federation (WVF) was founded in January 1950 in France. The JDVA believed that their contact with foreign disabled veterans would stimulate their activities and elevate their status as an acknowledged veterans' group. In fact, in the Second National Convention, the JDVA raised participation in the WVF as one of prioritized agendas. Considering burgeoning interest in foreign affairs and steady friendship with DAV, the *Nisshō Gekkan* explained to the JDVA members that it would be very significant to participate in the WVF in order to strengthen organizational power.²⁵⁰

Despite the JDVA leaders' eagerness to join the WVF, many members felt concern about how they would be treated as a member of the WVF once they were accepted. As a vanquished nation, they feared they might be accorded second class citizenship. However, *the Nisshō Gekkan* denied such apprehension. "The present member nations are all equal. Of course, there is no discrimination as to voice or voting rights. The same rule applies for Germany. The reason we venture a remark here is that inferiority complex originating from our experiences as a citizen of defeated nation would be a needless concern for us."²⁵¹ Thus, the JDVA urged its members to support admission into the WVF for promotion of their welfare.

The JDVA underscored the merits that they would receive by joining the WVF.

²⁵⁰ French Disabled Veterans Association asked several countries including the United States, Italy, and Turkey. By March 1953, more than thirty countries and about sixteen thousands members participated in the WVF. *Ibid.*, Vol.7, November 20, 1953, 3.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vol.8, December 20, 1953, 3.

Advanced knowledge of foreign medical practices would benefit Japanese disabled veterans; in particular, prosthetic technology, including artificial eyes produced with specialized material and long-term care for patients of spinal cord disease and tuberculosis would promote medical care of the Japanese disabled veterans.²⁵²

With the support of the membership, the JDVA decided to send an application of affiliation to the WVF in February 1954. Senior officials of WVF paid a number of visits to Japan to investigate eligibility for membership. In August, 1954, Robert H. Yorkom, an American representative of WVF, visited Japan to observe the JDVA and holding talks with the leaders. When investigating actual conditions of Japanese disabled veterans, he was surprised at the small amount of military pension and benefits. His talks with the MHW and the Ministry of Labor inspired both ministries in no small measure.²⁵³ After inspecting Japanese disabled veterans' lives and welfare policy towards them, Yorkom candidly observed,

The Allied occupation policy has greatly affected the Japanese people. The public did not mind expressing antipathy and hatred towards ex-servicemen, even after the conclusion of the occupation, and veterans hardly dare declare themselves, "We are ex-servicemen."...The Japanese government has taken over the occupation policy that lumps together disabled veterans who have honorable injuries for the country with other disabled citizens. Considering the fact that Japanese men aged 30 or over are almost all ex-servicemen, it is so strange that there are no veterans' organizations other than Japanese Disabled Veterans Association.²⁵⁴

Yorkom's remarks reinforced the JDVA resolve to affirm pride in themselves as well as to strive to enact legislation specifically targeting the welfare of disabled veterans. Nevertheless, the WVF also perceived the problem of Japanese war criminals as a

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid., Vol.15, September 1, 1954, 1.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., Vol.16, October 1, 1954, 1.

formidable barrier for the JDVA's membership. On October 24, 1954, Van Ranchot, finance manager of the WVF, suddenly visited Japan to inquire about the problem.

Ranchot explained his objective to visit Japan,

When investigating opinions on the JDVA's application to the WVF, many of the twenty-five national affiliates countries expressed objections solely because the JDVA promotes the movement to release war criminals. On this occasion, I would be willing to help the JDVA's participation in the WVF, if the president and chairman of the JDVA were to address that the problem, which is of miniscule importance, and the JDVA pursues world peace.²⁵⁵

Despite the welcoming spirit of Ranchot's remarks, the JDVA replied it would postpone joining the WVF. "We cannot stop the movement [for release of war criminals] immediately. If this keeps us from being approved, we don't dare to ask membership to reconsider."²⁵⁶ This event reminded the Japanese disabled veterans of the deep chasm between Japan and former enemy nations.

It was not long before the stalemate between the JDVA and the WVF was solved. As a result of WVF's further investigation, they urged the JDVA to resubmit their application to the WVF, which it did on January 6, 1956.²⁵⁷ On May 28, the JDVA was officially accepted as a WVF member at the Convention of the WVF in Brussels.²⁵⁸ *The Nippon Times* reported that Rufus H. Wilson, an American representative who was injured in Saipan at the Pacific War, proposed the JDVA's affiliation, "We, representatives of the WVF genuinely welcome the JDVA's participation. Indeed, we did have hard feelings about Japan. Now, it is time to understand and corporate each other."

JDVA's affiliation to the WVF gave a chance to reaffirm Japan's status in the

²⁵⁵ Ibid., Vol.18, January 1, 1955, 3.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., Vol.28, January 1, 1956, 1.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., Vol.32, June 1, 1956, 1.

postwar period. Okino Matao, JDVA's representative who met with representatives of affiliated countries at the Convention felt ashamed of Japan's current situation. They firmly believed that Japan should have taken well care of disabled veterans. However, they were stunned by the insufficient treatment towards Japanese veterans. Meanwhile, representatives from newly independent Asian countries pointedly asked him to give suggestions about protective measures for disabled veterans. Okino recalled, "While European countries gave encouragement, Asian countries do not."²⁵⁹ In addition, he expressed concern that expansion of protective provisions to disabled veterans was simplistically connected with Japan's remilitarization or the so-called reverse course.²⁶⁰

Communications with foreign countries made the JDVA realize the necessity for expansion of provisions for disabled veterans. As a consequence, early enactment of independent legislation for disabled veterans became an urgent subject of the JDVA.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., Vol.32, June 1, 1956, 1.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., Vol.34, August 1, 1956, 1.

CHAPTER IV

LOCAL ACTIVITIES OF DISABLED WAR VETERANS:

MIE PREFECTURAL DISABLED VETERANS ASSOCIATION,

1953-1957

This chapter focuses on the Mie Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association (MPDVA). Before the creation of the Japanese Disabled Veterans Association in 1957, local disabled veterans groups already began to organize for securing their livelihood. However, the local activities of Japanese disabled veterans remain largely unknown. Based on the memorandum of monthly board meetings, this chapter depicts local activities in Mie prefecture. The MPDVA played an active role in promoting the welfare of its local members as well as comradeship among them. Initial efforts of the MPDVA from 1953 to 1957 are roughly classified into three aspects: privilege, politics, and organization.

Diagnosis for Military Pension Recipients

Revision of the Military Pension Law in July 1953 led to an increase in the number of pension recipients. In particular, mildly injured veterans from the seventh to the fourth degree *kanshō* were granted benefits by the revised pension law. The MPDVA accordingly began preparations to accommodate new military pension recipients. The new recipients needed to get a medical diagnosis certifying their injuries and qualification before the implementation of the law on April 1, 1954.

The leaders of the MPDVA took aggressive measures to support the lives of their local members. Initially, the MPDVA attempted to strengthen cooperation among local welfare authorities. During the war period, only medical doctors at national hospitals were allowed to issue medical certification for military pensioners. In order to

facilitate the expansion of benefit coverage under the 1953 revisions, the MPDVA asked prefectural officers to handle the situation promptly and other public hospitals were also permitted to issue medical certification.²⁶¹ In addition, the MPDVA was apprehensive about the evaluation process for degrees of individual injuries. Since army surgeons familiar with diagnosis for pension qualifications at national hospitals no longer practiced in the postwar period, the MPDVA feared that applicants with less severe injuries might be treated unfairly or diagnosed disadvantageously. Thus, the MPDVA hoped to meet with doctors and administrators at national hospitals to explain the conditions of disabled veterans in relation to the revised military pension law, which they hoped would ensure favorable treatment.²⁶²

Before starting full-fledged evaluations for qualified pension recipients in April 1954, the MPDVA deliberately prepared a number of steps to facilitate evaluation process. In Mie prefecture, an estimated three thousands disabled veterans would receive the diagnostic evaluation. Based on the capacity of the five designated hospitals and clinics, the MPDVA designated five corresponding regions. They also asked the welfare department of Mie prefecture to start evaluations prior to April 1 to avoid problems caused by the expected influx of examinees. Simultaneously, the president of the MPDVA and leaders of local disabled veterans visited assigned medical facilities to ask for favorable considerations of any disabled veterans.²⁶³

The concentrated efforts of the MPDVA resulted in an agreement with the prefecture on arrangements for carrying out the preliminary examination of military pension. The MPDVA ordered municipal organizations to monitor the present status of the ongoing diagnosis. In cases where hospitals were inconvenienced by the

²⁶¹ *Mie-ken Shōigunjin kai Gijiroku* (The Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Mie Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association), Mie: *Mie-ken Shōigunjin kai*, September 6, 1953, 1.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, November 15, 1953, 12-13.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, January 17, 1954, 18-19.

implementation, MPDVA members in the five regions provided volunteers to address shortage of manpower at hospitals. To ensure effective enforcement of the diagnosis, the MPDVA announced to its members that they would be responsible for certifying the results of the preliminary examination with officers of the medical facilities.²⁶⁴

In spite of all of the preparations for the preliminary medical examinations initiated by the MPDVA, the process was only partially successful. Mashima Shinpei, the executive officer of the MPDVA, reported that only approximately one-third of the applicants had received a diagnosis by April 15, 1954. Meanwhile, some local hospitals had not completed issuing certificates to applicants who had been examined. The MPDVA asked prefectural authorities to transfer the recipients to other assigned hospitals. Here they were successful and Mie prefecture officials agreed to implement the MPDVA's proposal once they figured out how many recipients would be accepted at the assigned hospitals.²⁶⁵

The MPDVA paid particular attention to prevent the rejection of members' applications for military pensions, while impressing on the prefectural authorities the need to expedite the process. The Japan Disabled Veterans Association (JDVA) disclosed that the Pension Bureau rejected a few thousands application forms for military pension submitted in 1954 due to various irregularities. In some cases the MPDVA deleted forged documents. The MPDVA found that several members helping to fill out application forms expressed excessive sympathy to pension claimants, which might have caused exaggerated or false claims. To retain credibility, the MPDVA ordered local members to end this particular misconduct.²⁶⁶ The MPDVA's investigation revealed numerous cases of forged documents and exaggerated claims of inquiries by members who assisted injured veterans with their applications.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., February 21, 1954, 26-27.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., March 20, 1954, 38-39.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., January 16, 1955, 117-18.

Exemption from Prefectural High School Tuition

Gaining exemption from paying prefectural high school tuition was one of the MPDVA's early initiatives to lessen the financial burden of disabled veterans' families. Among disabled veterans who supported a family, providing higher education to their children was a critical issue. In January 1954, the MPDVA began to collect data from local divisions,²⁶⁷ and in the spring of 1954, the MPDVA began to negotiate with the education board of Mie prefecture on the issue of tuition waivers. Without any particular opposition, the petition for high school tuition waivers was adopted by the prefectural assembly in June, and the MPDVA was asked to prepare a draft plan for the bill. However, some board members wanted to write some exemptions from the waiver into the bill that would exclude dependents of mildly injured veterans and high-income earners. The MPDVA, however, feared the exemptions might diminish the principle behind the bill. While expressing agreement with the MPDVA's goal for the bill to compensate for lack of national redress, the chairman of the prefectural education board asked the organization to compose a compromise proposal to save the bill. In response, the MPDVA agreed that those persons whose annual incomes exceed 500,000 yen might be excluded, but they did not waiver on the criteria of qualification for the severity of injuries or sicknesses.²⁶⁸ The MPDVA's limited compromise was accepted, and the bill for supporting high school tuition waivers for students whose fathers were disabled veterans was passed in June 1954.

However, time was needed before the bill could be implemented and families of disabled veterans could receive their tuition waivers. In January 1955, the MPDVA recognized that the Mie prefecture education board had delayed introduction of tuition

²⁶⁷ Ibid., January 17, 1954, 20-21.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., July 25, 1954, 72.; September 12, 1954, 77-78.

waivers in the fiscal year of 1955. In the following month, The MPDAV board members made appointments to meet important bureaucratic figures including the chairman of the education board and the prefecture governor.²⁶⁹ At a March 11 meeting, the chairman of the education board explained that the budget for tuition waivers had not yet been finalized by the prefectural assembly, but that the budget would be confirmed by the assembly in June.²⁷⁰ Nevertheless, failure to secure a budget in the fiscal year of 1955 caused the deferment of tuition waivers until 1956.

The budget for tuition waivers was finally approved by the prefectural assembly in March 1956. In implementing a tuition waiver system, however, the assembly broadly stipulated a special rule for needy persons. Instead of specifying students whose fathers were disabled veterans, regulations stipulated that students from families of disabled veterans and the war deceased were simply expected to be preferentially treated. In the fiscal budget for 1956, Mie prefecture created a budget of 600,000 yen for qualifying students.²⁷¹ While not as firm a commitment as initially envisioned, the MPDVA's endeavor for supporting disabled veterans' families was one of the remarkable successes of their activities.

The Problem of Medical Cost for Recurrence

Disabled veterans frequently faced health problems. Unstable physical conditions and varying degrees of disability interfered with everyday activities. In some cases, disabled veterans experienced that worsening conditions of illnesses and injuries that required additional medical treatment. The MPDVA responded by planning to send a petition calling for free medical care for recurrence to the Mie prefectural assembly that

²⁶⁹ Ibid., February 20, 1955, 143-44.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., March 21, 1955, 157-58.

²⁷¹ Ibid., March 21, 1956, 272.

would convene in September 1955. In July of that year, they compiled data on the health conditions of their members, asking local chapters to investigate cases of recurring illness and aggravation of old injuries. The data disclosed follows,

Number of War Casualties who Need Medical Intervention for Recurrence

(1) War Injuries:

Number of those who need further surgery: 20

Number of those who need other outpatient treatments: 90

(2) War Sickness:

Number of those who need immediate hospitalization: 50

Number of those who need hospitalization at an appropriate time: 45

Number of those who need other outpatient treatments: 60

(3) Approximate Medical Cost for Recurrence: 18 million yen

(4) Medical Cost Sharing at Prefectural Hospitals: 1.8 million yen.²⁷²

In addition to the petition, the MPDVA directly talked with key persons on the recurrence issue. While the prefectural and local governments hesitated to cover the medical cost on the grounds that the standpoint that the Japanese government should be responsible for the welfare of disabled veterans, the MPDVA asked Matsumoto, welfare section chief of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, about the government's stance on recurrence in January 1955. In response to the MPDVA's request, Matsumoto replied, "I will negotiate with Mie prefecture to apply for 50% exemption from medical treatment."²⁷³ Furthermore, in February 7, the president of the MPDVA met with Tanaka Satoru, the Mie prefecture governor to appeal for adequate measures. Referring to a special budget for recurrence of war casualties being prepared by Matsusaka city for the next year, the president strongly urged the prefecture to give thoughtful consideration to disabled veterans in need of medical intervention. Tanaka answered, "Since such regional problems should be solved promptly, please consult the chief of public welfare at Mie

²⁷² Ibid., September 18, 1955, 194-95.

²⁷³ Ibid., December 18, 1955, 231-32.

prefecture to create a necessary budget for such veterans.”²⁷⁴ Thus the MPDVA president successfully brought about an agreement, and the petition introduced by the MPDVA was accepted at the prefectural assembly in September 1955.²⁷⁵

Despite the acceptance of the MPDVA’s petition, several problems hindered the implementation of free medical care. Therefore, the MPDVA successively met with the prefecture governor and officers responsible for the budget. On May 12, 1956, the MPDVA president visited the governor and asked him to implement the petition without delay. He explained, “Although the social welfare department of Mie prefecture and the hospitals are discussed in the petition, it is too difficult to enforce on procedural grounds. Now I am not in a position to intervene it properly.” Then, the president met with the chief of the social welfare section to remedy the situation. The chief answered, “The problem is not a matter of success or failure, but whether the department of general affairs covers hospitals’ financial burden. There is no alternative to meeting with the chief of the department at an appropriate time.” Following the governor’s direction, the MPDVA president promised the board members an opportunity to talk with the chief in the near future.²⁷⁶ Moreover, personnel changes in chiefs of the department of social welfare and the department of labor delayed a solution for allocating budget.²⁷⁷ Their contacts with prefectural authorities indicated that the decision would depend upon concerned officers responsible for the budget rather than the budget itself.

As a result, the MPDVA’s efforts to allocate a budget for free medical care came to nothing. In September 1956, the MPDVA president met with influential prefectural officers and assembly members to find a way to break the deadlock. Their talks confirmed that the funds for providing free medical care for recurrence medical problems

²⁷⁴ Ibid., February 19, 1956, 254-55.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., March 21, 1956, 273.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., May 27, 1956, 291-92.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., July 1, 1956, 306-307.

disabled veterans would be allocated in the fiscal year of 1957.²⁷⁸ However, the allocation for a budget took a dark turn when the MPDVA president met with the governor on January 29, 1957. The MPDVA president asked the governor to find a way to solve the stalemate. Meanwhile, the governor would not accept the MPDVA's sympathize with the MPDVA's plea, emphasizing the difficulties with a concrete method of securing the budget. Also, the MPDVA sought to settle the problem through prefectural assembly members who had close relations with disabled veterans, but they could not extract a positive response from the governor.²⁷⁹ In spite of every effort made, including personal contacts with prefectural officers and meeting with prominent figures, the MPDVA failed in their goal of obtaining free medical care for injured war veterans.

The MPDVA's Relations with Local Politics

Political engagement was a critical activity for the MPDVA to ensure their rights as disabled veterans. Whenever the MPDVA had opportunities to present their agenda to politicians and local government officials, they took advantage of them. While elections held out little promise of gaining electoral power, they made good use of the connections with the cultivated politicians to secure support for welfare of disabled veterans. In other words, they obtained greater success as a special interest lobbying group. For the 1955 elections of the Mie prefecture governor and prefectural assembly members, the MPDVA prepared six questions that they presented to all the candidates. The questionnaire was designed to test the extent of the candidates for interests in disabled veterans and the degrees of their support on major issues of concern to veterans. In addition, the inquiry represented the MPDVA's political goals.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., October 14, 1956, 320-21.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., February 24, 1957, 373-74.

- 1) With the exception of Japan, there is no other country where disabled veterans are only entitled to the same treatment as ordinary physically handicapped persons. Considering the causes of disabilities, we believe that proper legal measures should be taken specifically for veterans of war. Could you explain your opinion about this?
- 2) Under the present income tax system, the war casualties are allowed to deduct 6,000 yen from the national tax. We hope to obtain commensurate deductions of local taxes such as the resident tax and business tax in accordance with the income tax. Do you agree with this?
- 3) We believe that national hospitals or public hospitals should offer medical care for recurring illnesses to war casualties for no cost. Do you agree with this?
- 4) We hope that war casualties will be given special consideration for job appointments in the hiring of new public officers at government and municipal offices. Do you agree with this?
- 5) It is essential that everyone seize the opportunity to claim military pensions because the application procedure is complicated and often requires more than one application. We hope that every city or town should create a permanent consultation center in order to facilitate success. Do you agree with this?
- 6) Given that in current situation the national government is not adequately addressing the needs of war casualties, we hope to exempt students whose parents are victims of war from tuition for prefectural school. Do you agree with this?²⁸⁰

Some MPDVA committee members insisted that the circulation of questionnaire results did not provide sufficient information to decide the best candidate for disabled veterans. A representative from Suzuka city proposed that the MPDVA should nominate and support preferred candidates who fully understood the stance of the MPDVA, and promised to support their requests. In response to this proposal, all committee members agreed to call an emergency session on the upcoming general elections.²⁸¹

The emergency session held on January 30, 1955 was an opportunity to debate

²⁸⁰ Ibid., January 16, 1955, 121-22.

²⁸¹ Ibid., January 16, 1955, 107-108.

strongly on general elections among the MPDVA members. In practice, the MPDVA sought to create a political organization called “the League of Wounded and Sick Soldiers (*Senshō Byōsha Renmei*)” for advancing their political agenda. In the session, they argued how to approach the elections: they could choose which candidates actively support or they could respect individual decisions to vote based on the leaflet that included the candidates’ positions on disabled veterans. Initially, the president of the MPDVA suggested a moderate position. With the aim of preventing splits in the organization and presenting its political neutrality, he expressed his personal belief that the MPDVA should merely distribute information about the candidates and leave individual judgment.

However, opinion within the MPDVA was starkly divided into two camps. Some members aggressively argued for endorsing candidates who wholeheartedly supported their cause. “As long as we raise requests that disabled veterans believe correct and follow through with our original intentions, we should recommend and support candidates from political parties that endorse our agenda and promise to vote accordingly. Unless we try to find a way to realize our legislative aims by winning seats, we cannot know when our requests will be realized.”

The opposing camp argued against imposing a litmus test. “Position as a disabled veteran should not be a determining factor in casting a ballot; the vote of each member should be cast from a broader perspective that takes into consideration his position as a community member. In addition, the objectives disabled veterans have raised essentially transcend the platform of individual political parties. Therefore, we should approach the election with an unbiased, fair-minded attitude. We should leave the decision on which party to support to individual members.”

The majority of the members were inclined to be independent voters rather than endorse and support specific candidates as an organization. The MPDVA believed that their goals could be attained by releasing information about each political party’s stance

on measures of importance to disabled veterans and encouraging the local chapters to deliver the information to their members, and asking all members who would cast their ballot accordingly.²⁸² Consequently, taking into consideration the differences between the general and local elections, the MPDVA carefully summarized its opinions about each. As for the general election, they confirmed that they should maintain neutrality, since they would get into trouble if the party they support failed. Meanwhile, with respect to local elections, they decided to support their recommended candidate because individual politicians rather than the political party exercised greater influence in local politics.²⁸³ In a sense, the MPDVA prepared for the worst case scenario; they chose to lessen the risk of losing their connections with political parties and politicians to voice their interests.

As elections for the prefectural assembly members and Mie prefecture governor approached, the MPDVA had to decide what concrete directions should be sent to their members. In preparation for the election for prefectural assembly, the committee confirmed that the local chapters might want to recommend candidates based on answers the questionnaire they had distributed.

By contrast, committee members were in disarray over the nomination of a candidate for governor. Several members strongly opposed the idea that simply asking candidates to fill out the MPDAV prepared questionnaire would result in the election they could count on for support. They insisted that unless the organization should pick a candidate, they would eventually lose their advantage in negotiations with Mie prefecture. Nonetheless, the president of the MPDVA continued to urge caution in the face of on the hard-liners' opinions. The president repeatedly warned, "If we endorse a candidate just because he expresses a deep understanding of the issues of disabled veteran without considering the general political climate, it is as clear as day that the MPDVA would be

²⁸² Ibid., January 30, 1955, 123-25.

²⁸³ Ibid., January 30, 1955, 129.

treated unkindly for the next four years if he fails to be elected.” After the debate, the president offered the committee members a compromise. In addition to the questionnaire filled out by the candidates, the president would seek for an interview with them to ask about preferential treatments for disabled veterans and make their meanings clear. Their final decision would be made by the president’s report on the interviews in the next committee meeting on April 10.²⁸⁴

The MPDVA confirmed the basic policy on the gubernatorial election after presenting the president’s interviews to the candidates on April 10, 1955. Some of the committee members still believed that the MPDVA should take the risk; they claimed, “Even if we may encounter an unfavorable situation for the coming four years, we should recommend a candidate who has a good understanding of veterans, which would lead to further development of the MPDVA.” Yet, many of the members considered that choosing a candidate would be too risky for MPDVA’s policy. Instead, as the president originally proposed, they concluded that their local chapters would independently decide their policy based on the questionnaire. Accordingly, the MPDVA refrained from endorsing a candidate for the gubernatorial election.²⁸⁵

While the MPDVA adopted a cautious stance on elections, they stressed steady ties with influential politicians on the welfare of disabled veterans. The MPDVA considered that the Diet members from Mie prefecture contributed greatly to the revision of the pension law in 1953. They made great sacrifices such as supporting petitions assisting disabled veterans’ agenda and meeting frequently with the MPDVA members. As a token of gratitude for their support of the organization, the MPDVA sent a letter of appreciation in its name to the Diet members.²⁸⁶

Supportive Diet members deepened their relationship with the MPDVA. The

²⁸⁴ Ibid., March 21, 1955, 153-55.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., April 10, 1955, 166-68.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., September 6, 1953, 3-4.

House of Representatives members from Mie, Kimura Toshio from the Liberal Party and Tanaka Hisao from the Reform Party were deeply sympathetic to disabled veterans and consequently accommodated the MPDVA's special needs. At the board meeting on February 21, 1954, the board members endorsed both Kimura and Tanaka as advisers to the MPDVA. The proposal was unanimously approved.²⁸⁷ As it turned out the following month the MPDVA needed political support of both advisers to hold the annual meeting of the MPDVA in 1954. Because of a delay in approval of prefectural budget, they got into trouble for holding the meeting. Although Tanaka was absent when they consulted, Kimura promised to take appropriate steps after mutual agreement with Tanaka.²⁸⁸

In short, Both the MPDVA and the Diet members shared mutual interests. The MPDVA utilized the political resources of Kimura and Tanaka for the organization's benefit. In return, the Diet members looked at the MPDVA members and their families as a reliable voting bloc during elections. Considering the fact that Kimura and Tanaka were from different political parties, the MPDVA paid more attention to their commitment to support for veterans rather than the party's agenda.

MPDVA's Lobbying Activities at the National Diet

As a prefectural chapter of the JDVA, the MPDVA was assigned to play a role in lobbying activities at the National Diet. Through the activities they engaged in, the MPDVA aimed to improve the welfare of disabled veterans, as well as to promote their presence to colleagues nationwide. The *Nisshō Gekkan* included articles about their organizational activities. However, the paper hardly mentioned how such local chapters got involved in the JDVA's national movement. In this regard, it is significant to review the MPDVA's lobbying activities at the Diet.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., February 21, 1954, 27-28.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., March 20, 1954, 36-37.

The initial engagement of the MPDVA's lobby activities dated back to spring of 1954. The JDVA assigned them to lobby from April 8th through 10th, 1954 for the revival of free transportation for veterans on the Japan Railway. The vice president of the MPDVA, Kikuno Matao, and the executive director, Mashima Sanpei, went to Tokyo for the passage of the bill reinstating this benefit. They visited Diet members from Mie prefecture to ask for support of the bill.²⁸⁹

The MPDVA members took turns traveling to Tokyo for lobbying, paying their own travel expenses. The JDVA asked them to send members to lobby for the passage of an increased pension for ex-soldiers and free passage on the JR for disabled veterans. Since Mie prefecture had two electoral districts, they chose members based on which local chapters they belonged to. As for the First District of Mie prefecture, the MPDVA asked the Yokkaichi chapter to send a member since they had not yet done so. Meanwhile, because of weak connections between the MPDVA and the Diet member from the Second District, the board members believed that the president of the MPDVA should meet with them to ask support for the organization's agenda. However, due to the executive director, Kikuno stood in as a substitute.²⁹⁰

In July 10, 1955, the board meeting discussed the selection of members for lobby activities at the Diet from July 14 to 16, because all local chapters had already fulfilled their duty. In view of the fact that lobbying entailed a financial burden, some board members proposed that the MPDVA cover the costs. Opinions were markedly divided on this issue. Opponents of this proposal insisted that local chapter representatives who were not experienced as lobbyists would fail to get results. Therefore, members with experience should take charge. In contrast, other members contended that it did not matter who went to lobby. Rather, they firmly believed that participation from local chapter representatives in lobbying activities would remind them how difficult and

²⁸⁹ Ibid., April 16, 1954, 49.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., May 22, 1955, 173-74.

important such activities could be. In an effort to negotiate a solution, a MPDVA member proposed that an experienced member and one or two inexperienced members should be sent to lobby the Diet. There was no objection to this alternative plan.²⁹¹

A detailed report on lobby activities by Mashima revealed the degree of engagement by the MPDVA. Mashima, serving concurrently on the MPDVA lobby committee, submitted the report to the board at the meeting on January 20, 1957. During his lobbying activities on January 16 and 17, he vigorously pursued meetings with concerned politicians to press for passage of the bill on the JNR for disabled veterans and the increased pension for disabled veterans. In addition to persuading Diet members to pass the bill immediately, lobbyists were expected to collect information on what the Diet members thought about the bill and what position political parties took.

Along with the JDVA and members from 27 prefectures, Mashima met with Kimura Toshio, a member of the House of Representatives from the first district of Mie prefecture. Kimura explained the ongoing situation of the bill for JR free transportation to Mashima. In effect, the bill was already passed in the Diet in July 1956, but it had not yet been funded for the fiscal year of 1957. The JDVA sought a practical solution on how to secure funding in the next budget. Kimura, one of the Diet members who played an important role in passing the bill, explained the situation to Mashima.

The other day, an officer in charge of the Finance Ministry asked me to rescind the law. I furiously retorted, “Why can’t you make a budget for it? As long as the bill was passed, the government should create a budget for the bill. In the case that the Finance Ministry can’t prepare it, we will convene the Committee for Finance promptly and summon the Finance Minister!” The Ministry immediately responded to my request. Please feel at ease.²⁹²

Moreover, Kimura promised to secure funding for free transportation on the JR bus for

²⁹¹ Ibid., July 10, 1955, 179-82.

²⁹² Ibid., January 20, 1957, 362.

disabled veterans.²⁹³ As this interview indicates, the JDVA's lobbyists knew key persons to talk to for solving their concerns.

Unlike the bill for free transportation on the JNR, the lobbyist discovered that the prospect for an increased pension was gloomy. Mashima concluded that public opinion generally opposed an increased pension because veterans' repeated demands had created a negative reaction in some sectors of public opinion with regard to disabled veterans. Nonetheless, Mashima energetically pursued contacts with various Diet members. In the afternoon of January 16, 1957, he asked Ōhira Masayoshi from Kagawa prefecture, a Liberal Party Dietman, to support the bill. Ōhira, who was a former pension officer for the Finance Ministry, provided inside details about the issue.

In this session, the Diet will focus on pension for families of these killed in the war, as well as raising the pensions of public officials. Thus, diet members cannot afford to discuss other pension issues including military pension. Although they seem to understand the necessity, they think it's difficult for reasons mentioned above.²⁹⁴

When Mashima explained how meager the current military pensions were to Ōhira, Ōhira showed sympathy with disabled veterans, "Please give an explanation on the content of pension system and military pension to each Diet member. Not many Diet members know the system. In spite of that, I will give it my best efforts."²⁹⁵

The JDVA considered that further discussion with Ōhira would not draw positive results. Throughout the negotiations, they realized that a firm bond of trust with influential politicians including Ōhira was more important than obtaining a firm commitment of support. Thus, the disabled veteran lobbyists learned to be good diplomats to keep balance between their objectives and connections with politicians.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., January 20, 1957, 364.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

The MPDVA's Partnership with *Nihon Seimei*

Since its foundation, the MPDVA sought partnership with *Nihon Seimei Company* (Nippon Life Insurance Company) to strengthen its financial foundation. The Mie branch of *Nihon Seimei Company* expressed profound sympathy for disabled veterans and proposed financial assistance to the MPDVA. Disabled veterans and their family members were attractive to *Nihon Seimei Company* in that they could be potential insurers. Meanwhile, board members of the MPDVA endorsed a partnership with *Nihon Seimei Company* whereby the company provided some special economic incentives and job offers to the members.

At the board meeting on November 15, 1953, the board members decided on the partnership with *Nihon Seimei Company*. In the planned contract between the MPDVA and the company, the MPDVA was to receive funding on the basis of the number of insurance contractors sold to the members of MPDVA. The leaders of the MPDVA planned to distribute the dividend in accordance with the participation of each local chapter. Considering the benefits they would receive through their contract with the insurance company, the board members agreed to it without amendment.²⁹⁶

To cement relations with *Nihon Seimei Company*, the MPDVA changed the location of its monthly board meeting from the prefectural building to the Mie Branch of *Nihon Seimei Company*. On January 17, 1954, the president of the MPDVA explained the reason the meeting was held at the company's building.

The MPDVA regards its relationship with *Nihon Seimei Company* as important for our future economic foundation. However, local branches of the MPDVA are not yet ready for such concerted efforts. Now, presidents of each branch should be familiar with insurance services from *the Nihon Seimei Company*. It will be beneficial for

²⁹⁶ Ibid., November 15, 1953, 10-11.

the MPDVA that several visits to the building could urge us to understand insurance services, and consequently to establish self-reliance of our organization.²⁹⁷

The MPDVA and *the Nihon Seimei Company* continued to cooperation. On February 21 at the monthly meeting of the MPDVA, Tamura, president of the Mie branch of the company, mentioned cooperative relations with the MPDVA and future prospects on municipal disabled veterans' efforts for insurance contracts.²⁹⁸ Throughout their talks, the MPDVA demonstrated positive attitudes to their relationship with the company.

The renewal of the contract with *Nihon Seimei Company* caused dissension within the MPDVA. By the end of April, 1954, the contract with the company was scheduled to expire. Although the number of subscribers fell well short of the goal, the president of the MPDVA insisted that the contract should be renewed on the grounds that insurance business was an appropriate enterprise as well as part of the MPDVA's annual plan.

However, some executive members were reluctant to renew the contract. A board member from Uji-Yamada city suggested the MPDVA should declare the suspension of its contract because the special status of disabled veterans would make little progress in promoting business with *Nihon Seimei Company*. In addition, a MPDVA member from Suzuka city confessed to receiving pressures from the company, "The company assigned sales quota for insurance. The more we feel a responsibility to fulfill these, the more we suffer from psychological pressures. I am willing to give up our relationship with the company if they ever force us to get the renewal of contract."

However, the president of the MPDVA still insisted that the organization renew its contract with *Nihon Seimei Company*. He explained that the relationship with the company would positively affect their organization.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., January 17, 1954, 21-23.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., January 17, 1954, 21-23.

You don't need to feel such responsibility. The more we can get contracts, the more the company profits. Why don't we work together as much as we can? In spite of the limited success to date, suspension of the partnership will throw away a precious opportunity since we have already received about 1,000 yen as reward.

As a consequence, the president proposed an extension of the contract for another six months, providing another chance to reconsider their relationship with the company.²⁹⁹ Such regular extensions of the contract set the course of the MPDVA's stance towards the company. From time to time, the MPDVA encouraged their members to purchase insurance for *Nihon Seimei Company*. In reality, only a few city branches of the MPDVA actively solicited member on behalf of *Nihon Seimei Company*. Whenever the MPDVA faced expiration of the contract, they renewed contracts for the following reasons, "It is fact that we have made some profits for the company. Unless the company rejects the renewal, we don't need to propose halting the contract."³⁰⁰ While the insurance business was not a key resource for the MPDVA's financial foundation, they welcomed the constant revenue it supplied.

The Issue of Unpaid Membership Fees

The MPDVA considered its financial foundation as crucial for strengthening the organization. Due to financial difficulties during the postwar period, board members of the MPDVA struggled to sustain a sound budget. While they discussed fair distribution of their limited budget for annual budget planning, the issue of unpaid membership fees vexed the MPDVA.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., April 16, 1954, 56-59.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., July 7, 1957, 422-24.

Concern over unpaid membership fees surfaced at the board meeting held on December 12, 1954. Ishikawa, vice president of the MPDVA, proposed a solution to the issue, “According to the annual financial report, unpaid membership fees from local members to the MPDVA have reached a considerable amount... The creation of something like a special committee for ensuring prompt payments should be resolved. If the special members investigate local veterans’ groups that have not paid and urge payment, they will make some progress in collecting unpaid fees.” In response, the president asked Ishikawa and other board members to wait until the MPDVA could send a letter requesting payment. His proposed that a special committee be formed only if local groups failed to respond. Accordingly, the board members agreed his proposal without opposition.³⁰¹

On the following month, some board members brought up the unpaid fees issue again. Based on the decision from the previous meeting, the MPDVA was supposed to wait another month for responses to the letter requesting payment. Considering the fact that most of the board members from local chapters that had not paid fees for a long time were absent from the monthly board meeting, several hardline members insisted that the MPDVA should take proactive action against them. They urged the MPDVA to set up a special committee for unpaid fees immediately. The board members accepted their proposal and subsequently installed a special committee. In addition, they reached the consensus that the committee members would directly notify local disabled veterans’ groups that had not paid fees.³⁰²

The investigation of the special committee revealed serious financial difficulties of local disabled veterans. The Disabled Veterans Association of Inabe County, Anou County, and Minamimuro County all found it difficult to pay the membership fee. The Inabe association admitted that they found it difficult to arrange the fee issue in their

³⁰¹ Ibid., December 12, 1954, 93-95.

³⁰² Ibid., January 16, 1954, 112-14.

group. Minamimuro County understood the MPDVA's intention and was willing to solve the unpaid fee issue. Meanwhile, unless the reconstruction of the Anou Country Disabled Veterans Association would proceed, the MPDVA considered that calling in the unpaid fee could be difficult. In the wake of their willingness to pay the unpaid fee, the committee planned to give another chance to pay the unpaid fee.³⁰³

The unpaid fee issue created internal conflicts between board members and local representatives in early 1956. At the meeting on January 22, 1956, a representative from the Ayama division posed a question, "What measures would the MPDVA take to solve the unpaid fee issue? What is the future prospect?" Majima, an executive officer from the Anou county division explained that they would be unlikely to provide fee payment. Since the summer of 1954, Majima employed every possible means to reconstruct the Anou county division. Nonetheless, Majima concluded that there was little chance of payment unless the local members were willing to reorganize the division and elect the new local president.³⁰⁴

The Inabe county division was caught between their reality and new goal. The division was initially involved with the MPDVA, but they suddenly suspended their activities. Inspired by other local disabled veterans' groups, Muto Shiro, a blind veteran from Inabe country sought to reorganize the local division as early as the summer of 1955. Although Muto wished to start it sooner, the newly organized division had to solve the unpaid fee issue, which led the local members to lose their incentive to reorganize their division.³⁰⁵

Yet, many board members of the MPDVA took a hard line toward the Inabe county division. By receiving military pensions and winning free passage on the National Railway, for example the hardliners insisted that the MPDVA members had made many

³⁰³ Ibid., March 21, 1955, 158-59.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., January 22, 1956, 234-35.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., January 22, 1956, 237-38.

sacrifices including fees and manpower. They believed that it was unfair that some local divisions paid fees but other divisions that formed later did not do so. Thus, canceling the unpaid fee of several county divisions did not make any sense to them. Considering these precedents, the Inabe division was not an exceptional case. The board members decided that the division should pay its unpaid balance. When the president of the MPDVA proposed that paying in installments would ease the Inabe division's burden once their financial situation was ameliorated, the board members agreed on it without opposition.³⁰⁶

The MPDVA eventually took more proactive measures regarding the issue of unpaid fees. In response to a resolution proposed by a representative from Ise city at the prefectural convention on February 1956, the MPDVA sought a solution to the issue at the board meeting on March 21. Some board members remarked that the MPDVA members who had not paid fees without explanation should be expelled from the MPDVA regardless of specific reasons. Meanwhile, others pronounced the moderate opinion that the MPDVA should find a way to let them pay the unpaid balance because their removal from the MPDVA would not harm them at all.³⁰⁷ At the monthly meeting in May 1956, the MPDVA came to amend terms on the membership fee, "Each affiliated local disabled veterans' group shall pay their share of the membership fee in the corresponding year."³⁰⁸

The issue of unpaid fees reemerged in early 1957. Numerous representatives who belonged to the local divisions that paid their fees insisted that "Payment of the membership fee is obligatory in managing voluntary groups like the MPDVA." Then, a list of local divisions who were delinquent was circulated among board members. Local divisions that had accumulated an enormous unpaid balance were asked to deal with the

³⁰⁶ Ibid., January 22, 1956, 238-39.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., March 21, 1956, 270-71.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., May 27, 1956, 285-87, 299.

matter in a timely manner. Of the local divisions, Nabari, Anou, and Inabe were the main target of criticism.³⁰⁹

The local divisions that failed to pay the membership fee reacted strongly. In April 1957, in response to the MPDVA's request for payment, the newly organized Anou division explained, "We are not responsible for the past unpaid fee." Yet some board members disagreed, "The rationale that former Anou division has nothing to do with the new members cannot convince us." To reconcile the Anou division with the board members, the MPDVA president proposed that "We are not asking for paying the past burden. However, you may want to express your appreciation for the achievements won by your colleagues' activities. I am willing to take some actions to save your honor if you respond immediately." After giving 2,000 yen to the MPDVA, the Anou division asked, "It is an expression of our gratitude to the MPDVA, and our members hope you to accept this as the basis for reconciliation" They virtually asked the MPDVA to intervene for the unpaid issue. In response, the board members finally accepted their offer and cleared the unpaid dues."³¹⁰

Meanwhile, the MPDVA's conflict with the Nabari division resulted in a bitter outcome. Under the resolution adopted by the board meeting on February 24, 1957, the MPDVA sent an inquiry letter to Ueda Zen'ichi, the president of the Nabari division, on the current situation of fee payment. However, the Nabari division furiously protested the letter since it violated laws and infringed upon Ueda's fundamental human rights. Although the Nabari division rejected the payment, they dare to ask the MPDVA to issue disabled veterans' certificates for their members without paying commission charges. The board subsequently held a meeting on May 27. Adamant opponents proposed a total rejection of the Nabari division. On the other hand, some moderate members insisted that

³⁰⁹ Nabari division had not paid the membership fee since 1954. Meanwhile, after the suspension of their activities, Anou and Inabe divisions had not solved the unpaid fee issue. Ibid., February 24, 1957, 367-78.

³¹⁰ Ibid., April 21, 1957, 381-84.

Ueda should be summoned to the next board to present an account of the Nabari division's stance. The members consequently supported a compromise plan. Depending on Ueda's explanation of the whole issues at the next session, they would decide what measures to take.³¹¹

Nevertheless, Ueda did not show up at the board meeting on June 1957 and ignored the MPDVA's proposal. The board meeting in July aimed to cope with the problems posed by the Nabari division. Taking the situation seriously and feeling sorry for the majority of members who fulfilled the obligation, the President of the MPDVA proposed that the communication to the Nabari division would halt until payment for membership was completed. The board members unanimously agreed on the president's proposal.³¹²

In the formative years from 1953 to 1957, the MPDVA strove to become self-reliant while keeping in line with the JDVA's objective. The MPDVA urged its members to receive a medical diagnosis to qualify for a military pension, which was equivalent to national recognition of their disabilities. At the same time, the MPDVA made demands on local and municipal governments to provide free medical care for those who suffered recurrences of illnesses. In the postwar period, the scope of disabled veterans' activities was extended to family issues; the MPDVA took the initiative in this area in its campaign to obtain exemptions for the children from prefectural high school tuition. There were similarities as well as differences with the JDVA in terms of political strategy. Like the JDVA, the MPDVA committee members regarded local and national elections as an opportunity to advance their interests in exchange for their vote; however, within the MPDVA opinions were sharply divided over whether specific candidate should be recommended or nominated. As one of influential prefectural branches, the MPDVA actively engaged in lobbying activities at the Diet. Meanwhile, financial

³¹¹ Ibid., May 27, 1957, 401-404.

³¹² Ibid., July 7, 1957, 416-19.

problems including the partnership with *Nihon Seimei* and the issue of unpaid membership fees substantially interfered with the autonomy of the MPDVA, and revealed disabled veterans' various degrees of commitment and engagement to the organization.

CHAPTER V

WIVES OF JAPANESE DISABLED WAR VETERANS

The daily lives of Japanese disabled veterans cannot be adequately portrayed without consideration of the support they received from their families, particularly their wives. A large number of disabled veterans led marriage lives in the postwar period. The wives literally became their husbands' 'leg' or 'hand' as they struggled to cope with daily life. Wives provided crucial financial support and in some cases were the family's principal breadwinner. But that was not all; their support extended into the realm of politics. Wives of disabled veterans vigorously supported their husbands' campaigns to restore the honor due them for having served their country at great personal cost and gain medical care, income supplements, and other benefits and social services. The wives' experience of having worked closely with their husbands in the JDVA's campaigns prompted them to organize their own associations by the end of the decade. Before long wives in every prefecture of Japan had formed a prefecture-level associations and in October of 1961 they founded a national organization, the Japanese Disabled Veterans' Wives Association (JDVWA).

This chapter examines the experiences of wives of disabled veterans. At first glance it may appear surprising that nearly all wives were able-bodied women. However, since state support for all disabled persons was meager, it is not really surprising that most wives were able-bodied; otherwise the couple could not easily survive. By exploring wives' perspectives on their lives we gain insight into gender identities and roles for this population of women and men. Their story also serves to remind us of the diverse family structure in Japan in the aftermath of defeat that was one legacy of the war.

Marriages with Disabled War Veterans

It is an interesting fact that a large number of able-bodied Japanese women married disabled veterans. Numerous wives' testimonies and memoirs provide insight into why able-bodied women married disabled husbands and reveal three distinct cohorts depending on when the marriage took place: prior to 1941, between 1941 and 1945, and after 1945. Not surprisingly, most women who married prior to or during the war did not anticipate that their husbands would become disabled during the course of military service. During the Pacific War 1941-45 against the Allied Powers, in the context of the ideological fervor on the home front some women chose to marry disabled veterans out of a sense of obligation to men who had sacrificed so much for their country.³¹³ Wives who married after the war did so knowing full well their husbands' disabilities and at a time when the wartime ethos of sacrifice for the nation was officially in disrepute. Most women who married disabled veterans did so as a matter of free choice.

With respect to the first cohort, who married prior to their husband's disabling injuries, encountering their husbands' disfiguring or disabling injuries after discharge from active service came as a shock. A member of Tottori Prefecture Disabled Veterans' Wives Association confessed her feelings after seeing her husband return with a severe disability. Her husband had been sent to Manchuria immediately after their marriage in 1931. When she learned that he had suffered a severe injury in the abdomen resulting in paralysis of his legs, she recalled "see[ing] nothing but darkness ahead of me." Meeting for the first time after repatriation to Japan, with tears in his eyes her husband tightly held her hands and plaintively asked: "With such my body, I have to begin a new life, walking a thorny path. Will you take care of me despite all the hardship living with me will impose?" Even now, she still remembers renewing her commitment to their marriage:

³¹³ Katsumi Namase, "15 nen Sensō-ki ni okeru 'Shōigunjin no Kekkon Assen'undo Oboegaki'" *Momoyama Gakuin Daigaku Ningenkagaku*, 12 (1997), 325-342.; Momoko Takayasu, "Senjika ni okeru Shōigunjin Kekkon Hogotaisaku: Shōigunjin to Sonotsuma ni Motomeraretamono," *Gender Shigaku* 5 (2009), 51-65.

“When so many soldiers died in the war, I must be grateful that he returned at all. For the sake of our children we need to work together and make every effort to make a good life together.”³¹⁴ As her confession indicates, she was initially shocked by his injury but was moved by his sincerity and the realization she was grateful he had returned at all.

Nagamine Chiyoko’s account of marriage to her husband Yoshimasa exemplifies cases where social pressure provided the initial impetus for marriage. Nagamine recalled having always been shy around men; her father died when she was a child and she was raised in a family only of women. In October, 1940 when she was in her late teen years, she was suddenly approached about entering into an arranged marriage with a discharged soldier who had been blinded in battle. Although bewildered by the prospect, she reported deciding to proceed with the marriage out of a sense of duty and obligation. “For reasons I can’t put into words, I was deeply moved by his condition as a veteran blinded in both eyes. Someone has to take care of him, I felt, or he will have a difficult life.” When she told her family of her determination to accept the marriage proposal, she faced stiff opposition from her mother and sister. “You’re just eighteen,” they warned her, “and when you’re that young one doesn’t know anything about life and the real world. You may feel the way you do now on the impulse of the moment, but life is long and you may only make him unhappy in the end.” However, she persisted in expressing her determination to proceed, and her family finally gave their blessings to the marriage.³¹⁵ Part of Nagamine’s motivation, we can surmise, was being recognized by society as an adult responsible for managing a household with a disabled husband and all the difficulties that would entail.

During the war most Japanese regarded disabled veterans with reverence, which was one factor in marriages to disabled veterans. Influential public intellectuals praised

³¹⁴ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol. 142, September 1, 1965, 3.

³¹⁵ *Nippon Shōigunjin kai, Senshōbyō Kokufuku Taiken Kiroku* (Tokyo: Tokuma Press Center, 2000), 433-34.

women who entered such marriages and at the same time warned against acting for the wrong reasons. In an essay published in 1942, “Problems of Marriage with Disabled Veterans,” Watanabe Matao fundamentally encouraged young women to marry disabled veterans, while, reflecting prevailing gender norms, reminded them they were expected to remain subservient to their husbands even though they depended on their wives for assistance in their daily lives. At the same time, however, Watanabe emphatically argued against marriage when “young women are overcome by the emotion of the moment and passing sympathy, fear missing the opportunity to marry at all, or simply were marrying because this is how they understood what life had in store for them as women.”³¹⁶

Satō Risa was perhaps typical of Japanese women at this time who held disabled veterans in high esteem and was willing to accept the sacrifice marriage would entail. In fact, Satō recalled her resolve to marry a disabled soldier: “Out of reverence for our country, I decided to become the eyes and limbs of a soldier disabled on the battlefield.” When she happened to encounter a demobilized soldier clad all in white and walking with crutch, she instantly decided to marry him, “Sympathy for him drove me to dedicate myself to a life of service.” And having done so, she experienced the personal fulfillment of “becoming the wife of such an admirable man!”³¹⁷

The case of Satō’s motives was not necessarily atypical. A number of women, it appears, voluntarily married disabled veterans despite peer pressure not to do so. Shintani Michi, who married her husband, Takeo in April 1940, explained how her experience as an assistant nurse providing for disabled veterans led to her decision. “I was filled with conviction that being a woman on the home front of marriageable age, I would become the life partner of a seriously injured soldier.” In spite of fierce opposition to her marriage, she adhered to her resolution. As this example shows, despite the prospect of

³¹⁶ Matao Watanabe. “Shōigunjin no Kekkon Mondai (1942)” In *Kindai Josei Bunken Shiryō Sōsho Vol.9*, edited by Kuni Nakajima, 242-43, 258. Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1992.

³¹⁷ Aomori-ken Shōigunjin kai (Aomori Prefecture Disabled War Veterans Association), *Shōi no Kiroku* (Aomori: Aomori-ken Shōigunjin kai, 1982), 220.

considerable self-sacrifice, setting up a household with a disabled veteran could be a source of considerable satisfaction.

Women who brushed aside their families' opposition and married disabled soldiers did in fact experience mixed emotions. The parents of Kawamitsu Masako, who married her disabled husband in July 1942, tried to discourage her. "Aren't you getting yourself in trouble by marrying a disabled veteran? You will live a hard life married to a man who is unlikely to get a good job." Reflecting on that moment, Kamamitsu acknowledged her very mixed emotions. "Because it was the middle of the Pacific War, I felt it very honorable to become a wife of soldier disable in service to his country. Yet I could not help worrying."

Some woman married only after changing their minds. Oyamauchi Toyo initially did not intend to marry a disabled veteran, but like other women employees of the Ueno Department Store in she was required by management to visit inpatients at military hospitals on holidays. In the spring of 1942, she met a disabled soldier whose injury at first was not clearly evident. After several meetings, he wrote her a letter broaching the issue of marriage. Since she had no intention of moving with him to his home in Aomori prefecture, she came to see him less frequently. When she visited him on the New Year's Day of 1943, his left thigh had already been amputated. He bluntly told her, "You don't need to marry me because I have now lost my leg." At that very moment, however, she felt overwhelmed by his frank and stoic attitude. Without further inquiry as to the nature of his disability or the implications for married life, she resolved to marry him on the spot.³¹⁸

Kiyotaka Miyako, an elementary school teacher during the war, was moved by her future husband's fortitude and dedication to teaching despite his amputated left leg. In September 1944, Kiyotaka was transferred to the elementary school where Miyako taught. "It was the most difficult time before the end of the war, yet he threw himself into

³¹⁸ Aomori-ken Shōigunjin kai, *Sensō Taikenki* (Aomori: Aomori-ken Shōigunjin kai, 2006), 15-18.

his job at a rural elementary school where male teachers were few and far between. Paying no heed to physical pain, he worked himself to the bone.” Miyoko’s respect for him eventually developed into love, and she married him in 1945.³¹⁹

Some women who married disabled veterans did so primarily in response to the intense social pressure some families and society in general put on young women to marry and start a family. According to the testimony of Miura Ura, she, like many daughters of marriageable age, was told that she “should hurry up and find someone to start a family with or take over the family business.” Talk like this, Miura reported, “was really hard to take.” “Many women at that time,” she believed “were made to feel this way.” She was not able to withstand the pressure and agreed to an arranged marriage, “Without knowing anything about who husband was or what he might look like until the day of the wedding. That’s how I came to marry a disabled veteran.”³²⁰

In many cases, marriages to disabled veterans represented the confluence of the general social expectation that daughters would marry ‘before it was too late’ with the particular pressure of the wartime obligation to honor men who sustained disabling injuries in service to their country. Takenaka Kutoe, who married a disabled veteran in 1944, explained the reason to marry, “I married at the behest of my parents, who urge me to do the right thing for a disabled in service to the country.”³²¹ In Takenaka’s case, clearly, she was given very little choice in the matter. In other cases pressure took the form of suasion, as revealed in Morimoto Toshiko’s account of the circumstances of her marriage. In September 1941, the manager of the company where she was employed began urging her to consider marriage to Takenaka Saburo, a demobilized soldier whose leg had been amputated. Being Takenaka’s wife, the manager assured her, would not

³¹⁹ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyō Kokufuku Taiken Kiroku*, 266-67.

³²⁰ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyōshatō Rōku Chōsa Jigyo Hōkokusho* (Tokyo: Tokuma Press Center, 2000), 19-20.

³²¹ Gifu-ken Tarui-cho Shōigunjin kai (Gifu Prefecture Tarui Town Disabled Veterans Association), *Shōi no Ki: Shōigunjin to Sonotsuma no Bunshū* (Tarui: Gifu-ken Tarui-cho Shōigunjin kai, 1986), 193-94.

carry the social stigma associated of disabled people as damaged goods. “Although he lost his right leg, it was an honorable injury and he is a hero who fought for the country. You have no reason to feel ashamed of having such a husband.” A year later she agreed to the marriage.

The end of the war reduced social pressure on women to marry disabled veterans, who also as we have seen lost their protected legal status, as people’s sympathy toward disabled veterans faded. In addition, the new constitution written by SCAP broadly guaranteed women’s rights and specifically in equality in marriage which “shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation.” Nevertheless, even stripped of the pressure to marry out of patriotic duty, sympathy for the plight of wounded veterans continued to be powerful factor in marriages, as revealed in the testimony of Matsutani Kumi. At the instigation of a mutual friend, Matsutani agreed to meet a disabled veteran in April, 1952 to discuss the possibility of marriage. Matsutani heard that he already had a few marriage prospects despite his disability and at the meeting she learned that he was injured during military service, which evoked sympathy for him because two of her uncles had been killed in the war. Despite the postwar shift in public opinion with regard to those killed or injured in the war, she “immediately accepted the offer of marriage because he had been injured fighting for our country.”³²²

For some women, however, the fact of service to country was not a factor at all. Saito Fusa took the plunge and married a disabled veteran because he was a man of considerable means. Saito’s father opened a small rural enterprise during the wartime, her father’s illness made her assume the burden of assisting in the management of the family business. Upon reaching marriageable age, she received several proposals to enter into an arranged marriage. The man recommended by her grandmother had been blinded in one

³²² Miyazaki-ken Shōigunjin kai (Miyazaki Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association), *Shōigunjin no Senki, Tsuma no Senki* (Miyazaki-ken Shōigunjin kai, 2000), 68-70.

eye during the war. Saito, who had been a Red Cross nurse at during the war, frankly admitted she found this fact as irrelevant as the social stigma of his disability to her decision to accept the proposal. “Disabled veteran? What’s past is past. He is not a soldier anymore.”³²³

Saitō Michi married a disabled veteran in 1946 at the behest of her parents who did not even give her the opportunity to meet her future husband before the marriage. By her account she was given very little choice in the matter but she reported feeling greatly relieved when she learned his disability, a missing hand, was war related rather than genetic. “He’s missing a hand. It was not something he was born with but the result of a war injury. Seeing this, I instantly felt a reprieve of sort.”³²⁴

Another factor in marriages to disabled veterans was the difficulty in finding marriage partners experienced by many women who had not been able to marry during the war and by the time the war ended, were considered beyond the desirable marginable age. The frank account of the circumstances of one woman’s marriage, a member of Yamagata Prefecture JDVWA, illustrates the calculus behind marriages of this type. She explained that she married her husband, a veteran with severed right arm, in 1949 because “I had been evacuated from her home town and my elder brother was killed in the war. To make matters worse, I had already been past the prime marriageable age, than to be a wife to a divorced man or to a widower³²⁵ At the same time her husband fully understood that his disability would be a major obstacle in finding a marriage partner, and he built own house to provide an incentive in attracting a bride. As he confessed after their marriage, “With my handicapped body, I’m at a severe disadvantage in the marriage market. I thought I would need to have our own house we could move into.” He believed that owning a house would prove his financial security and responsibility as a

³²³ Gifu-ken Tarui-cho Shōigunjin kai, *Shōi no Ki*, 228.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 213.

³²⁵ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol. 142, September 1, 1965, 3.

breadwinner.

While Japan was waging war for its very survival there were numerous instances as we have seen of social pressure on young women to marry disabled demobilized soldiers. After the war, however, some women wanting to marry disabled veterans had to overcome resistance from their families, as is illustrated in the story told by Fujitani Yoshie. Yoshie made her own decision to marry a fellow elementary school employee Fujitani Tamio, who had lost an arm in the war, took a substantial amount of time to persuade her father. She decided to marry Tamio after hearing him talk passionately about how he was injured in the war. “I resolved to marry him right then. My old life ends at nineteen and my new life begins! I want to offer him my own left arm for the one he lost in service to the country!” Her father, however, initially did not give his consent to the marriage, threatening “If you do as you wish, I’ll cut all ties with you. What do you say to that?” She did not back down, however. “If you insist, I have no choice. If you cut ties with me, I will move out of the house. I don’t need a decent wedding. Please presume I am dead.” Her father was unnerved by her passionate resolve and one week later consented to the marriage, which moved her to unrelenting tears of gratitude.³²⁶

Some disabled husbands never mentioned their disabilities before marriage. An anonymous woman from Saitama Prefecture JDVWA confessed that it was only after he began receiving the supplemental military pension that she realized he had been classified as having a battlefield related disability³²⁷ Takahashi Nami, who in May 1950, entered into an arranged marriage with her husband, Toshio, discovered his injury only when she washed his back in the bath. He told her that, “My left shoulder blade was shot up, and there are still bullet fragments in it so I can barely raise my left arm.”³²⁸ At the

³²⁶ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyō Kokufuku Taiken Kiroku*, 406-408.

³²⁷ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol. 142, September 1, 1965, 3.

³²⁸ Gunma-ken Ōmama-cho Shōigunjin kai (Gunma Prefecture Ōmama Town Disabled Veterans Association), *Shōkon* (Gunma: Gunma-ken Ōmama-cho Shōigunjin kai, 1989), 299.

point, she lamented, “As I had not heard about his injury at the meeting to discuss marriage, I felt very sorry for him that it had been felt necessary [by the go-between] to conceal this fact from me.” Whether the husband had intentionally concealed the disability or the go-between had done so, the confessions of these wives of disabled veterans indicate that, at least in retrospect, disability was not an obstacle to marriage.

Testimony from JDVWA members reveals the common bias at the time against disabled veterans as prospective marriage partners. In December 1956, attracted his exemplary character, Santō Nobuko married Hidemasa, who suffered paralysis on his left side due to a war injury. She still recalls the suspicion her decision elicited among acquaintances, reporting that people often talked behind her back, expressing incredulity that an “able-bodied woman like her would marry a lame disable veteran,” or suspicion that her motives were mercenary, speculating that “It’s because of the military pension that he puts up with such a marriage.”³²⁹ The most common reaction, it appears, was perplexity. In 1948, Kawashima Shizue married a disabled ex-serviceman, who lost sight in both eyes and whose left arm had been amputated. She recalls acquaintances often asking her if she had married before her husband sustained disabling injuries and when she told them it was after the usual response was an embarrassed silence. During the war marriage to disabled veterans was understandable but after 1945, it was difficult for many people to comprehend why an able bodied woman would enter into such a marriage.

Wives’ Lives with Disabled War Veterans

The social stigma attached to disabilities in Japan at that time was an additional burden to wives of disabled veterans, as illustrated in the recollections of Dobashi Masami. On the recommended by her father, Dobashi willingly agreed to marriage to

³²⁹ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyō Kokufuku Taiken Kiroku*, 431-32.

veteran whose hearing was severely impaired. Early in the marriage, she admitted, she began to doubt her decision.

I didn't want the whole world to know about his disability because of the social discrimination we would face. The strain of trying to conceal this fact undermined my early resolve and I really wanted to end the marriage and go back home. But when I thought about my husband, I couldn't help but feel sorry for him and resolved to have a lifetime together. This was my lot in life and I tried to be cheerful as possible.³³⁰

Nogami Mitsu, who married Gyozaō in 1950, described the evolution of her own feelings about her husband's disability. Nogami talked about the initial years of their marriage, "When I was still young and we went out together, I would be lying if I said I didn't feel very uncomfortable being seen with him in public." However, she gradually came to regard his disability as a natural condition. "As I got older, to my surprise, I began to see his body not as something totally abnormal but more like some common physical conditions that set people apart, for example, being very short or obese. Her acceptance of his disability, she explain, was made easier by the fact that her husband took his injury in stride and did not think of his disability as an obstacle to enjoying a good life.³³¹ Not surprisingly, when both husband and wife embraced the fact of physical disability positively, the marriage was most likely to be successful. They believed so long as disabled husband and wife were able to cooperate, they could overcome any predicaments they encountered. Mishima Toshi talked about her belief with a commitment to mutual support; a couple could overcome all obstacles. Her husband, Yonekichi, had lost his sights in China in August, 1937 and she was the principal breadwinner. But rather than resenting this fact or despairing, when she sent off Yonekichi on a job search, she encouraged him by saying, "Dear, someday, we won't

³³⁰ Ibid., 419-20.

³³¹ Ibid., 103-104.

have to go to such great lengths to make ends meet.” He would cheerfully reply, “Yes, we’ve sure to achieve happiness someday!” She in turn would encourage him with the reminder that it is precisely when one’s back is up against the wall that one needs to press forward.³³²

Not a few wives were inspired by the figure of their disabled husbands who worked hard for the family. Ōmori Kumaji, who suffered impaired function of his right hand due to a bullet wound to the right arm, overcame his disability and dedicated himself to his job. His wife, Rakuko, was moved by the attitude he displayed in coping with his disability. He would often say, “I gave my right arm in service to the Emperor but some gave much more.” Her husband’s determination inspired her: “I am a wife of disabled veteran. I’ve got to hang tough!”³³³ This attitude was shared by Kaneda Chie, whose husband Atsushi suffered loss of function in both legs when injured in China in July 1945. He nevertheless worked when he could for a steel pipe company as a temporary worker while keeping up with farming. Trusting him, Chie worked really hard, “I was so exhausted that I felt as if my arms and legs were about to drop off. However, when I saw injured husband working so doggedly I would scold myself and say to myself, ‘That was nothing, get back to work.’”³³⁴

Wives’ Daily Caring for Disabled Husbands

Disabled veterans’ wives bore primarily responsible for providing whatever husbands required in the way of personal care. For Kusakari Hanako, her morning routine involved helping her prepare for work by putting a sock on his prosthetic foot and

³³² *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.16, October 1, 1954, 1.

³³³ *Nippon Shōigunjin kai, Senshōbyō Kokufuku Taiken Kiroku*, 262-63.

³³⁴ Toyosaka-shi Shōigunjin kai and Tsuma no kai (Toyosaka City Disabled Veterans and Wives Association), *Sensō no Kizuato Imamo Fukaku* (Niigata: Toyosaka-shi Shōigunjin kai and Tsuma no kai, 1983), 76-79.

adjusting the pant leg. Depending on the injury, wives had to overcome their own squeamishness. Ōhata Ayako husband had lost right leg in the war and was shocked when she saw his artificial limb for the first time. But she firmly determined to do what she could to ease his burden. After his long day at work, the lining of the artificial limb would become inflamed and bleed. She admitted, “When I saw blood is spreading on his artificial leg, I would shudder with pain. However, my husband would comfort me by saying, ‘This artificial leg is just like my own flesh and blood.’”³³⁵ Iwahara Nobuko had to overcome feelings of physical revulsion. Her husband’s thigh wound refused to heal, discharging pus for years after he sustained the injury. She would change the plaster and clean the wound several times a day. Reminiscing about this experience, she recalled “The smell that comes out from the affected part that oozes pus is so bad-smelling that you cannot describe it, which made me feel extremely sorry for him. At our home at least, the war is not over yet”³³⁶

A round-table of wives of disabled veterans convened by Shizuoka Prefecture JDVWA in 1987 reveals the satisfaction, as well as the frustration, wives experience in their role as caretakers. Iwahara Nobuko admitted she “had borne the brunt of his irascible outbursts” but accepted this fact as part of her wifely responsibilities. “Even with his disability he is my one and only husband after all. If for some reason something were to happen to me, I could not bear to think as his wife how he could possibly cope. I often find myself bursting into tears always out of sight of my husband.” Likewise, Suzuki Fujiko confessed, “Sometimes when I can’t handle my nursing responsibilities, I want to ask someone to help care for my husband.” However, she would persevere because, “When all is said, I believe I am the best person to care for him, having done it for such a long time. But of course this is not something I would say out loud.” Usami

³³⁵ Shizuoka-ken Shōigunjin kai (Shizuoka Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association), *Kenshō 35 nenshi* (Shizuoka: Shizuoka-ken Shōigunjin kai, 1987), 97-98.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

Sachie declared, “I think it is because my husband is so demanding that he is alive today.”³³⁷ Here we see not only that wives derived pride in their role as primary care giver, but, the importance of non-verbal communication in demonstrating their love to their husbands through giving care and conviction the emotion was reciprocated.

Wives’ Support of the Family’s Income

Due to the disadvantaged position of disabled veterans in the labor market, wives also had responsibility for the family’s financial security. In doing so, they reversed the normative roles in Japanese society of husband and wife. They felt that the burdens that they bore were heavier than other families through their work.

Inomuma Mie did not realize that she would have to work when she married in the winter of 1945 before her husband sustained a disabling injury. She had assumed she would be a housewife but “when the situation was reversed and he became financially dependent on me, it was a lot to bear.”³³⁸ Kamano Tsune’s husband contracted tuberculosis and loss of hearing while in military service. He was quite willing to engage in heavy labor but declined a more attractive job because of the difficulties his disabilities would pose. Kamano’s response was to think only about how hard this must be on her husband and worked all day long in the home doing piecework when the children were little and full-time outside the home after they started school.³³⁹ Nor were the physical demands of their dual role as homemaker and breadwinner the only burden. When Yoshikawa Keiko, whose husband’s tuberculosis kept him housebound, declared him as her dependent, her company complained and reluctantly accepted it. She recalled,

³³⁷ Ibid., 100-101.

³³⁸ Gunma-ken Ōmama-cho Shōigunjin kai, *Shōkon*, 307-308.

³³⁹ Osaka-fu Shōigunjin kai (Osaka Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association), *Shōigunjin Sonotsuma ga Ayunda michi* (Osaka: Osaka-fu Shōigunjin kai, 1995), 58.

“Nowadays, it is not unusual ... but at that time it was impossible to imagine a wife supporting the family. This made things very hard.”³⁴⁰ Some faced even harassment from government officials. Suzuki Tsuya, married to a visually impaired veteran, ran the family business which was listed in her name. One day she was summoned to the tax office and accused of tax evasion by not including her husband’s military pension in business revenue. She confessed to her fright when the official accused her of registering the company in her name to get a lower tax rate.³⁴¹

Wives who had to obtain a driver’s license because of their husband’s disability felt uncomfortable because at the time it was unusual for women be seen driving. Hatanaka Kinue had no choice in the matter since her husband was blinded in one eye and not eligible to receive a license. She confessed to doubt whether she could ever drive a car but regardless of what others thought, her husband was delighted when she began to drive.³⁴² Suzuki Miyoko, also married to a visually impaired veteran, managed a liquor shop. She needed to get a driver’s license in order to make deliveries, as was expected of liquor stores. She drove and he accompanied her to help with the heavy lifting. Often housewives would express their envy seeing them out driving together. Because she grew tired of always explaining that her husband was legally blind, she would retort, “If you envy us, just do it.”³⁴³

The Burden of Injured Manly Pride on Wives

In everyday life, disabled veterans sometimes suffered a sense of loss of dignity as their disabilities robbed them of the normative gender roles assigned to men in

³⁴⁰ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyōshatō Rōku Chōsa Jigyo Hōkokusho*, 73-74.

³⁴¹ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyō Kokufuku Taiken Kiroku*, 449-50.

³⁴² Osaka-fu Shōigunjin kai, *Shōigunjin Sonotsuma ga Ayundamichi*, 117-18.

³⁴³ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyōshatō Rōku Chōsa Jigyo Hōkokusho*, 58-60.

Japanese society. Wives, in turn, often bore the consequences. Miyoko Kusano's husband, Kiyotaka, after being purged from his position as a school teacher, had difficulty in finding alternative employment because of his amputated leg. To help out, initially, he did some of the household shopping. But one day, while standing in the train returning home with a heavy load of groceries, he chanced to encounter his former student who immediately gave up seat for him, "His act of kindness, which spared me the hellish pain of the heavy load on my bad leg, made me very happy but I felt so much shame." From that day on he never went shopping for food.³⁴⁴ Sometimes the trigger was an insensitive remark from a stranger. Kawabata Toshiko's husband, Kiyoshi, suffered severe burns to his face and both hands, so much so that he lost use of his hands after several surgeries failed. One day while riding on the train, the man standing next to him suddenly blurted out "Hey, what's happened to your hands?" Kiyoshi furiously retorted, "It's none of your business!" and after the incident never discussed his injuries, as if trying to suppress all memory of the trauma, which isolated him from his wife.³⁴⁵

The concept of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) had not yet been developed but numerous wives reported sudden changes in their husbands' personality after suffering disabling injuries. On May 14, 1945, Ono Nari's husband lost sight in his right eye in China. Legally blind when discharged, he frequently changed his jobs and ended up a common day laborer. "Since he became a disabled veteran," she confessed, "he seemed to become an entirely different person. He often fought with his fellows at work, and put the freeze on our children and me at home, which was extremely difficult to bear."³⁴⁶ A disabled veteran's wife from Mie Prefecture reported with regret that her husband's war injuries had completely changed his personality. He was a decent husband and a good father before he was injured in the war. However, after his discharge he

³⁴⁴ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyō Kokufuku Taiken Kiroku*, 268-69.

³⁴⁵ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyōshatō Rōku Chōsa Jigyo Hōkokusho*, 214-16.

³⁴⁶ Aomori-ken Shōigunjin kai, *Shōi no Kiroku*, 215-16.

frequently lost his temper often over trifles. Reflecting on the sudden change, she could not help thinking, “If only he had not been injured...” She also seriously thought about suicide many times since she could not stand the stress caused by his post-injury personality.³⁴⁷ To narrate a final example, JDVWA member Ura Kumiko experienced difficulties because of her husband’s reluctance to acknowledge the hearing loss he suffered during the Battle of Okinawa in May, 1945. After demobilization, it was impossible for him to communicate with people without using a hearing aid. As he got older, his hearing continued to decline to the point where the hearing aid was very little real help; however, he pretended to hear what speakers said in order to pass himself off as an able-bodied man. Consequently, he sometimes made off-the-wall responses in conversations and was made fun of, which hurt his feelings and angered him causing him to lament being taken for a fool. This was a cause of great stress to his wife, for his venting of his anguish caused her great distress.³⁴⁸

Conflicted Feelings as Wives of Disabled Veterans

The reward of military pensions to disabled veterans was a source of considerable pride in addition to material support. Yet there was an unbridgeable gap between them and other Japanese citizens. For disabled veterans, receiving pensions as compensation for war injuries was of crucial importance not only in protecting their livelihood but also in validating their place in postwar Japanese society. Nevertheless, wives sometimes bore the brunt of citizens’ resentment of the cost to taxpayers. Nakahara Yōko, who was the care giver to her paraplegic husband reported an incident where a local merchant told her “You’ve got it good, don’t you. Even if your husband sleeps all

³⁴⁷ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol. 137, April 1, 1965, 3.

³⁴⁸ Okinawa-ken Shōigunjin kai (Okinawa Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association), *Sōritsu 50 shunen Kinenshi* (Naha: Okinawa-ken Shōigunjin kai, 2005), 290-91.

day, money falls from sky. We unfortunates have to work to get by.” Nakahara instantly retorted against him, “I’d be happy to give you the money, if even for one week you have to have your face washed, be fed your face, and have someone empty your bowels while bedridden!”³⁴⁹ The merchant left their house apologetically, but she could not stop crying when she recalled the incident.

Sometimes the husband’s family took out their feelings on the wife. One of the unpleasant experiences that Saito Fusa went through was complaints she heard from her father-in-law. Her husband’s elder brother had been killed in the war. Then, the government provided the parents as the next of kin the pension due bereaved family members. Instead of being thankful his younger son survived the war albeit with a disability, her father-in-law berated him saying, “Elder brother was a filial son, but Shirō (her husband) is stupid, an unfilial son!” Saito, quite naturally, interpreted their rancor to the fact that the disability pension would be paid not to them but to his wife and children. This angered Saito greatly and she lamented she had not spoken her mind. She wanted to reprimand them “how can you possibly say that your son is unfilial just because you don’t get his disability pension, considering the fact that he sacrificed himself to the country!’ But if I had actually said something like that, they would have forced us to get divorced.”³⁵⁰

For disabled veterans’ wives, the presence of white gown beggars on the street was impossible to miss. Compared with their husbands, the wives were more likely to be angry about their solicitations. Ōsaka Yō dedicated herself to supporting her husband whose right leg was amputated in 1941. After the war, he patiently sold insurance policies door to door and she would provide hot compresses when he returned home for the inflamed stump fatigued from walking all day. Whenever Yō encountered white gown disabled veterans begging money on the street, she wondered, “Why can’t they

³⁴⁹ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyōshatō Rōku Chōsa Jigyo Hōkokusho*, 384-85.

³⁵⁰ Aomori-ken Shōigunjin kai, *Shōi no Kiroku*, 228-29.

work hard like my husband?” Likewise, she recalled her husband’s words, “As a fellow disabled veteran, I’m ashamed of their acts.”³⁵¹

Yamanaka Akiko confessed a mixed feeling about white gown beggars when she came across them. Akiko and her husband Kunizō reopened their stationary shop after the war. She looked back the baggers she happened to see in her neighborhood.

Whenever I saw disabled veterans dressed up in white on busy streets or the entrance to some shrine or temple appealing for alms, those who died or were injured in service of the country were praised and supported. Their pathetic figures cut me to the quick for it made me recall how during the war men who died or were injured in service to the country praised. After the war, however, disabled veterans like my husband only get a dirty looks from their fellow citizens, which is a very sorry state of affairs.³⁵²

While Yamanaka felt some sympathy for disabled veterans who engage in begging while expressed on indignation, both comments reveal their apprehension that their husbands suffered by association with those who begged and accordingly were exposed to public prejudice.

Some wives confessed to at time feeling overcome by feelings of hopelessness. Ōkawa Masue revealed the frustration of wives whose husband’s disability was not sufficiently great to qualify for an adequate pension but which at the same time negatively affected his quality of life. “Although this is not something I would never say to my husband, there are times when I would think it would be better to be completely disabled than to have one leg that is always causing pain.”³⁵³

Japanese Disabled Veterans’ Wives Association

³⁵¹ Ibid., 209.

³⁵² Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Senshōbyō Kokufuku Taiken Kiroku*, 283.

³⁵³ Shizuoka-ken Shōigunjin kai, *Kenshō 35 nenshi*, 101.

Efforts to support their husbands led first to the formation of local and prefectural-level organizations and finally to a national organization. Local organizing was well underway by the mid-1950s as wives of disabled veterans reached out for mutual support. The first local disabled veterans' wives association was organized in Shōbara city, Hiroshima prefecture in September 1954. On behalf of the disabled husbands, Tanaka Daizo, the president of Shōbara city Disabled Veterans Association, held a recreational meeting for about eighty wives of disabled members to express gratitude for their self-sacrificing service to their husbands. In his address, Tanaka lauded the wives in attendance.

We are convening this meeting to honor our "beloved wives." That is, no matter how badly treated by our country and society, we disabled veterans can endure with pride. During the war it was national policy to praise women's marriage to disabled veterans as an exemplary form of patriotism for woman. They answered the call at the time and following the end of the war, have never flinched but walked the walk down to today. We have brought together all these families out of the desire to demonstrate gratitude and love for the beloved wives.³⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the wives at the meeting were overwhelmed by their husbands' show of gratitude and immediately decided to form the disabled veterans' wives association in support of the JDVA.³⁵⁵ They later explained that the purpose in creating the society was to share information with each other, provide each other with emotional support, and encourage each other whose husbands whose lives were so constrained physically. In coming together publicly, they could feel pride in their mission and become even better wives.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol. 63, February 1, 1959, 3.

³⁵⁵ *Nippon Shōigunjin kai, Nihon Shōigunjin Kai 15 nenshi*, 222.

³⁵⁶ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.16, September 1, 1954. 3.

The creation of Shōbara city Disabled Veterans' Wives Association provided the impetus for similar action by disabled veterans' wives in other localities. Their organizations afforded them the opportunities to share their experiences. In the opening remark at the first convention of Kyoto City Disabled Veterans' Wives Association, organized in March 1959, Hayashi Mie, the president, delivered titled "Our Hope."

During the war, we, women who have disabled veterans as our husbands, were lauded as 'wives of the warrior nation' or 'angles of the wounded,' and all the burden of nursing and tending to the needs of the disable were thrust upon us. But what happened after the war? How were we who had sacrificed so much as the wives of disabled veterans rewarded? Nothing! Our endless tears are to no avail; we cry out, 'We won't ask for anything, just restore our husbands' health!'³⁵⁷

Here we hear the voices of women who while accepting their duty to care for their husbands, emphatically expressed their resentments and feelings of having been victimized by the Japanese government and social and general after the war ended. We also see how women like Hayashi who married during the war were able to publicly acknowledge their wartime marriages were not necessarily voluntary. Feeling abandoned in the postwar period by the government and society, for these women the social pressure they experienced during the war and perhaps were not able to critique at the time, created a strong sense of betrayal and frustration.

As the national organization for disabled veterans' wives gathered momentum, the JDVA expected their wives to play a supportive role in advancing their political agenda. In August 1961, the JDVA executive board, meeting in advance of the ninth national convention, affirmed the relationship of the JDVA and JDVWA "as one association acting in concert," and the goal of establishing a national welfare system that would provide a suitable level of assistance for disabled veterans, their wives and

³⁵⁷ Ibid., Vol. 65, April 1, 1959, 4.

children.³⁵⁸ Bolstered by their wives' participation, the JDVA expanded its political agenda explicitly to include provision of benefits for their entire families.

On October 13, 1960, the first national convention of wives of disabled veterans was held at First Members' Office Building of the House of Representatives of the National Diet in Tokyo. About hundred women from all over the country assembled to report on the activities of local associations, share information, and exchange views. The *Nisshō Gekkan* lauded their speeches not at all just women giving vent to their feelings but "women firmly bonding with each other on their own terms." The inaugural convention of the JDVWA adopted an ambitious legislative agenda. First, they demanded that they too be permitted free travel on national roads, followed by renewed demands for security of employment for their husbands. In line with the resolutions adopted at the JDVA meeting, they promised to make all-out efforts to achieve the JDVA's longstanding goals of revision of pensions and the passage of comprehensive legislation specifically addressing the disabled war veterans.³⁵⁹

On October 16, 1961, with about 1,500 wives in attendance, the JDVWA held the first national convention at the Nihon Seinen Kan auditorium in Tokyo. In the morning session, the JDVWA laid out its basic policy for promoting the welfare of disabled veterans and their families. First they proclaimed their solidarity and pride in being wives of soldiers disabled in service to their country. Recognizing that they and their husbands faced "multiple problems," they pledged to come together as families passionately united in our resolve" to augment the spending on social welfare and build a bright and peaceful Japan. As we see here, the JDVWA linked their pride as wives of disabled veterans to their role as exemplary homemakers, and dedication to promoting the welfare of their husbands to world peace.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ Ibid., Vol. 70, September 1, 1959, 1.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., Vol. 84, October 1, 1960, 1.

³⁶⁰ Nippon Shōigunjin kai, *Nihon Shōigunjin Kai 15 nenshi*, 229.; *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.96, November 1,

The organizational vigor and resolve of the JDVWA impressed their husbands. Matsumura Kōjirō, vice president of the JDVA Diet Affairs Committee, hopefully predicted that by working closely in concert with the JDVWA, they could achieve a breakthrough in the next legislative session. Politicians also took notice. Ikeda Mitsue, wife of Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato, attended as an honored guest and spoke warmly and encouragingly to the convention. She began by expressing her regret that with defeat in the Pacific War, disabled veterans and their families came to be viewed negatively in some sectors of society. She proceeded, however, to praise the wives at the convention for their devotion to their husbands and families. “I praise and honor you from the bottom of my heart for your support of your husbands, guardianship of your homes, and raising up exemplary children.”³⁶¹ Ikeda’s unequivocal affirmation struck a responsive chord in the audience. Many of wives found themselves in tears hearing her heart felt expression of gratitude. The success of the convention made visible the proactive role that wives of disabled veterans could play beyond the confines of the home. Taking note, the JDVA primed itself for renewed efforts to promote their legislative agenda.

Social Activities of Disabled Veterans’ Wives Association

Disabled veterans’ wives engaged in various social activities that coincided with the objectives of the JDVA ranging from volunteer activities to politically supporting the JDVA’s legislative agenda. As we have seen, the activities the JDVWA undertook and were grounded in their roles as wives and mother as defined by the dominate gender roles of the time. At the same time, what the greatest benefit the formation of JDVWA organizations afforded them was the opportunity of coming together in their own organizations to share their experiences and views among themselves. The heart-felt

1961, 2.

³⁶¹ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol. 96, November 1, 1961, 2.

testimony of Urushima Tomiko, a member of Ōmura Disabled Veterans Wives' Association in Kagoshima prefecture, reporting on her experience when her association formed in July of 1959: "We who did not know each other even while living in the same village, have found great value over the past many months in coming together once a month to share our thoughts and warm feelings of compassionate support."³⁶²

The solidarity forged in these face to face meetings motivated them to work unstintingly in supported their husbands' lobbying efforts in Tokyo. For instance, in 1960, members of Shōbara City Disabled Veterans' Wives Association, Hiroshima Prefecture stood on streets and gathered signatures on petitions to raise their husbands' military pensions. At a JDVA's political rally in Tokyo, they provided meals to disabled veterans.³⁶³ They did not limit themselves to lobbying. After the disastrous Ise Bay Typhoon hit the Tokai region on September 26, 1959, disabled veterans' wives stood on the streets soliciting donations for the victims and weeks later, seven board members of the Kyoto City JDVWA solicited donations outside Kyoto station. They were able to send about 8,000 yen in donations, along with sympathy letters, to their members of their association in Mie prefecture. An editorial in *Nisshō Gekkan* praised their act, "We are truly delighted to see this compassionate response, which is something other women's organizations have not yet demonstrated by other branches"³⁶⁴ Expressing gratitude for the public's support of disabled veterans, the Kyoto Prefectural JDVWA president and officers of the Kyoto Prefecture Disabled Veterans' Wives Association understood a year-end charity drive at train and bus stations and department stores that raised 5,882 yen for other welfare organizations.³⁶⁵

³⁶² Ibid., Vol. 74, January 1, 1960, 3.

³⁶³ Ibid., Vol. 74, January 1, 1960, 3.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., Vol. 72, November 1, 1959, 4.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., Vol. 98, January 1, 1962, 4.

Beyond providing financial support, they sought to inspire others to strive for success. The Hokkaido JDVA and JDVWA and Wives' visited the Prefectural Vocational Training Center to demonstrate rice-cake making to about 100 trainees. While disabled husbands pounded rice-cake wielding the traditional large wooden pestle, they courageously chanted, "We have disabled bodies but with our can-do spirit, you see what we can do!" as they kneaded the rice dough between each blow of the pestle.³⁶⁶

For disabled veterans and their wives, the trauma of their war experiences could, under the right circumstances, evoke a profound sense of honor at having serving their country nobly at such great personal sacrifice. They also affirmed pride in military service, which was viewed with distrust or ambivalence by much of the general population in the postwar period. With the help of the former captain, the Inba County JDVWA was held its opening ceremony on board a Self-Defense Forces naval vessel. The *Nisshō Gekkan* reported, "The convening of the association's ceremony on the Self-Defense Forces ship filled the disabled veterans with feelings of nostalgia, on the occasion of the commission of new wives' association, and prompted their wives to recall their feelings when their husbands went off to the war. Their children have learned something important for the future."³⁶⁷

Some of the activities of the local wives' association were reminiscent of the wartime period. They regularly visited sanatoriums, national hospitals, and Self-Defense Forces medical facilities to cheer up inpatients. In spite of the fact that the war generally was a dark period in their lives, JDVWA wives were able to transcend feelings of victimization. On September 7, 1959, Kyoto Shimogyo Ward Disabled Veterans' Wives Association paid a visit to the Ōkubo garrison of Self-Defense Forces in Uji city. Seeing the vigorous young soldiers of Japan's postwar armed forces, one member found inspiration. "Although my husband's figure and appearance have changed, the young

³⁶⁶ Ibid., Vol. 98, January 1, 1962, 4.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., Vol. 106, September 1, 1962. 4.

soldiers greatly remind me what he used to be, and I pledged to redouble my effort to help my unfortunate husband.³⁶⁸ On December 18, 1959, twenty two members of Fukuyama JDVWA in Hiroshima prefecture paid a condolence visit to inpatients at the local military hospital. A hospital official expressed his great gratitude, noting it was the first such visit since the hospital opened.

The consideration demonstrated by JDVWA members moved some disable veterans for the first time to publicly acknowledge appreciation for all their wives had done for them over the years. During a visit in October 1964 by representatives of the Hyogo Prefecture JDVWA, an inpatient voiced his gratitude to his wife. "I am usually very self-centered when I speak with my wife, but I want to take this occasion to say something. Thanks to the unceasing efforts of this extraordinary woman, all my daily needs are taken care of and I have been able to live as I have."³⁶⁹

As these incidents review, disabled veterans' expectations of the roles their wives were to play in their lives were entirely traditional and the wives appeared to have internalized gender norms from the wartime period. It is illuminating in this regard that the preferred apparel of JDVWA members on official occasions harkened back to the war years and the traditional white aprons (*kappōgi*) that was the proper attire of housewives.³⁷⁰ Their husbands approved. At the inauguration of the Tokushima JDVWA on 5 January, 1960, a JDVA commented:

Many prominent men from all quarters attended at the inauguration meeting and JDVA Chairman Moriyama delivered a congratulatory address. He also praised JDVWA members for their habit of adopting the traditional white aprons of housewives as everyday apparel, in contrast to the flashy clothing of women in many other organizations. The *kappōgi*, he noted with approval, instilled an atmosphere of

³⁶⁸ Ibid., Vol. 74, January 1, 1960. 4.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., Vol. 133, December 1, 1964, 3.

³⁷⁰ White overall apron was perceived as a symbol of Japanese women's wartime efforts. Tadatoshi Fujii, *Kokubo-Fujinkai: Hinomaru to Kappōgi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1985).

decorum and modest means characteristic of the JDVA.³⁷¹

Achieving peace was a goal supported by many wives of disabled veterans' and they did not hesitate to condemn nuclear-weapon testing. After the nuclear testing by Soviet Union, on September 14, 1961, Hyogo Prefecture Disabled Veterans' Wives Association passed a resolution calling for an immediate moratorium on the testing by nuclear powers.

As a Japanese citizen and as the wife or mother whose husband or son is now disabled due to the war, we have fervently prayed for the world peace... We earnestly desire to see the immediate suspension of nuclear testing, and to cooperate in the foundation of a peaceful world, a world of coexistence and co-prosperity for all human beings.³⁷²

Marriage to disabled veterans, we have seen, imposed heavy responsibilities and burdens on wives. Prior to and during the Pacific War, marriages to disabled veterans were in most cases at the very least encouraged if not lauded as a woman's patriotic duty, which is understandable in light of the magnitude and ferocity of the war. With defeat, however, opinion shifted and benefits received by disabled veterans declined drastically, adding both psychological and material burdens. Moreover, although one finds very little evidence in the record, in some of the statements of JDVWA members one can detect chagrin at historic irony of their situation. The U.S. occupation produced a virtual revolution, at least in terms of legal standing, in the position of women in Japanese society. However, while for the great majority of Japanese women the occupation period reforms opened the door to liberation, wives of disabled veterans assumed, whether willingly or not, the same gender role as they did during the wartime.

The wives of disabled veterans put them on the margins of postwar Japanese

³⁷¹ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.61, December 1, 1958, 3.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, Vol.95, October 1, 1961, 3.

society. Their daily encounter with husbands' disabilities reminded them of misery of war while their husbands' physical impairments imposed added demands, physically and materially. The lives of wives whose husbands' suffered from what is now recognized as PTSC suffered the additional strain of coping day in and day out with irascible and uncommunicative husbands. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that a number of wives testified as to the affirmation of self-worth they experienced through their devotion to their husbands and families; with the passing of time and increasingly awareness of wives' contributions as JDVWA members asserted themselves, not a few husbands candidly expressed their gratitude to wives. Therefore, while there is very little evidence of gender equality, JDVWA wives positively affirmed their identity and took pride in the complementariness and mutual dependency of husband and wife articulated in the Japanese adage, "husband and wife as one person."

The formation of JDVWA associations at the local, prefectural and national level also had political implications. As discussed in the next chapter, the JDVWA energized the parent organization and provided impetus for the JDVA's campaign to pursue its primary legislative objective.

CHAPTER VI
LAW FOR SPECIAL AID TO THE WOUNDED
AND SICK RETIRED SOLDIERS OF 1963

From the founding of the Japan Disabled Veterans Association (JDVA), the organization's long-term goal had been enactment of legislation specifically addressing the medical and financial needs of disabled veterans. Even before the official end of the United States occupation, the Japanese government had already moved to provide comprehensive support for disabled veterans through the passage of a variety of laws. Yet each law differed in objectives and scope and was implemented by different governmental agencies, which appears to have caused the intended beneficiaries considerable inconvenience.³⁷³ While the JDVA had campaigned with some success to promote the welfare of its members, in particular the increased military pension after 1952, they continued to argue the necessity of passage of an independent law that comprehensively addressed the needs of disabled veterans at the earliest possible opportunity.

This chapter examines the political process that led to the adoption of the Law for Special Aid to the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldiers (*Senshōbyōsha Tokubetsu Engo-hō*). The JDVA confirmed passage and implementation of the law as its top priority at a ceremony in 1962 to mark the tenth anniversary of its founding. Not surprisingly, disabled veterans enthusiastically supported the proposal for a new law and advocated combined efforts by the JDVA and allied Diet members and bureaucrats in the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) to draft the bill. Diet members from the Liberal

³⁷³ The following laws covered welfare benefits for disabled veterans: Act on Aid to Families and Others Related to Unrepatriated Persons (*Mikikansha Rusukazokutō Engo-hō of 1953*) provided medical care benefits, medical allowance, and lump-sum funeral allowance; Act on Relief of War Victims and Survivors (*Senshōbyōsha Senbotsusha Izokutō Engo-hō of 1952*) provided benefits for rehabilitative medicine, allowance for prosthetics and its repair, and institutionalization for national nursing facilities; Law for War Victims' Free Ride on Japan National Railway (*Senshōbyōsha tō no Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudo tō ni kansuru Hōritsu*).

Democratic Party (LDP) and MHW bureaucrats hurriedly prepared the bill in time to be presented to the 43rd Diet session, which convened in February, 1963. During the legislative process, the JDVA urged its member to participate vigorously in lobbying the Diet to secure passage of the bill. This chapter explores how disabled veterans perceived the significance of the legislation and traces its organizational efforts in support of its passage.

Seeking the Independent Law for Disabled Veterans

In the initial years of the JDVA, the leadership continuously proposed new legislation to aid disabled veterans, while focusing its efforts on raising military pensions. On November 16, 1952, the idea of enacting a law specifically targeting the needs of disabled veterans was presented at the first national convention.³⁷⁴ Subsequently, at each annual convention, the JDVA placed passage of such a law high on its agenda. At the third national convention, which convened on October 15, 1954, the JDVA took up the matter of advocating the path of “single issue” legislation (*tandoku-hō*) that would include specific measures such as the creation of a new agency exclusively devoted to disabled veterans’ issues, preferential passage on Japan’s national railways, exemption from national and local taxes, preferential quotas for employment in both public and private sectors, free medical treatment for war related injuries, and prosthetics devices.³⁷⁵ Because the JDVA gave higher priority to the issues of most immediate concern to their members, raising military pensions, other legislative initiatives made very little progress.

Nevertheless the issue of passage of targeted legislation did not go away. Several JDVA members argued that passage of a law dedicated to their needs had symbolic value beyond the actual benefits the legislation would confer. In the June 1,

³⁷⁴ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.1, May 20, 1953, 2.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol.17, November 1, 1954, 2.

1956 issue of the *Nisshō Gekkan*, the monthly JDVA newsletter, published a letter from Ōta Kaoru of the Fukushima Prefecture Disabled Veterans Association, titled “Prepare for Implementation of the Single Issue Legislation,”

We should point out the flaws in the existing welfare laws that address the needs of all crippled persons and critique bad laws, while setting as our highest goal efforts to create targeted legislation based on our own identity. Without realizing this goal, we disabled veterans cannot demonstrate to the public our pride and political savvy.³⁷⁶

The JDVA’s national meeting that convened in 1960 sheds light on what they envisioned. On April 13, 1960, frustrated by the government’s failure to address the needs of disabled veterans and their families, the JDVA held an emergency meeting at the Hibiya Public Assembly Hall in Tokyo. In the resolution passed at the assembly, the JDVA made a compelling case for passage of the law.

Whereas various measures for disabled veteran has been implemented piecemeal since the restoration of national sovereignty, the result has been duplications in present laws and governmental agencies, inadequate guidance and protection, and lack of clarity that has unnecessarily caused the bewilderments of disabled veterans. Passage of legislation addressing our needs confirms our pride as disabled veterans and rekindles our determination to rehabilitate ourselves. The legislation we seek will provide the next level of assistance we need.³⁷⁷

JDVA’s zeal led to an interview with the Health and Welfare Minister, Watanabe Yoshio and staff, who responded affirmatively by committing to drafting a framework for targeted legislation. In August 1960, by the order of newly appointed Health and Welfare Minister, Nakayama Masa, the Repatriates Relief Bureau (*Hikiage Engo kyoku*) reviewed and discussed the content of the draft and determined that the scope of proposal put forth

³⁷⁶ Ibid., Vol.32, June 1, 1961, 3.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., Vol.78, May 1, 1960, 2.

by the JDVA was as broad and diverse as to exceed the legislative purview of the Bureau, which stymied further action. In response, on August 30 the JDVA made a strong appeal to Nakayama to resume work. Nakayama subsequently ordered the chief of the Bureau's Department of Relief to resume action.³⁷⁸

On December 8, 1960, continued delay in drafting the bill prompted the JDVA to hold another emergency national meeting, after which Okino Matao, JDVA president, again petitioned the Ikeda Hayato cabinet. Citing the order issued by Health and Welfare Minister Nakayama Masa, Okino reiterated his members' expectation of legislative action and pleaded for "special consideration to secure early passage."³⁷⁹ Finally, at the behest of the JDVA Diet members sympathetic to the JDVA urged officials to expedite work on the bill. On December 23, LDP Diet members Nagayama Tadanori and Kato Tsunetarō asked the Legislation Bureau of the Lower House to reexamine the content of the bill.³⁸⁰

Despite the JDVA's lobbying, the Ikeda cabinet proceeded cautiously. Unlike the MHW, the government held the opinion that existing legislation adequately provided for the needs of disabled veterans. In particular, the Act on Relief of War Victims and Survivors of 1952 had established the principle of national compensation for war-related injuries, whether military personnel or civilians, which made it difficult for the government to advance discussion of the necessity of a new bill specifically targeting disabled veterans. Assessing the situation, the JDVA decided to bide its time before making a new push.

JDVA's Full-Scale Mobilization for Targeted Legislation

³⁷⁸ Ibid., Vol.82, September 1, 1960, 1.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., Vol.86, January 1, 1961, 2.

³⁸⁰ Nagayama Tadanori and Kato Tsunetarō were LDP members of the House of Representative from Hiroshima and Kagawa prefecture respectively.

The JDVA shifted its tactics after concluding that lobbying the National Diet was the more promising route to secure passage of legislation specifically addressing the needs of disabled veterans. There were good reasons for the JDVA and the LDP to team up; while the JDVA needed the political support of the ruling party, the LDP was seeking the support of the JDVA as a powerful voting bloc in the upcoming national election in the fall of 1960.³⁸¹ Indeed, the JDVA's strong ties to the LDP proved to be pivotal. The JDVA began to court LDP Diet members who were especially sympathetic to disabled veterans, designating them "supportive Diet members" (*engo giin*)³⁸²

The upcoming Upper House election provided the occasion for putting the new strategy into practice. Following the Lower House elections in November 1960, the JDVA officially endorsed a list of LDP candidates for the Diet, which proved beneficial in the multi-member electoral district system.³⁸³ In the Upper House election in June 1962, the JDVA endorsed 56 LDP candidates. Under the slogan of "The Election Leading to Targeted Legislation," JDVA members and their wives, organized as the Japan Disabled Veterans' Wives Association, campaigned on behalf of these candidates apparently to good effect as 39 candidates or 70% won seats. Reflecting back on the election, Teshima Fusataro, JDVA president, sent a rousing message to the members, "I urge fellow members to press newly elected Diet members aggressively, for directly and indirectly the spectacular election results achieved should further our political agenda of enactment of legislation targeting the our members' needs."³⁸⁴

Teshima's message had an immediate impact on the JDVA's lobbying efforts.

³⁸¹ The LDP presumably counted about 350,000 members of the JDVA and equivalent numbers of their wives as potential voters for them. *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.78, May 1, 1960, 3.

³⁸² 80 Supportive Diet members from the LDP formally organized the Council of Diet Members for the Assistance of War Injuries (*Senshōbyōsha Engo Kyōgikai*). *Ibid.*, Vol.78, May 1, 1960, 3.

³⁸³ In the election, 81 candidates won the seats for the Lower House. *Ibid.*, Vol.85, December 1, 1960, 1.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol.104, July 1, 1962, 1.

Many of the candidates they had supported had been elected to the Diet, and the JDVA followed up by organizing a series of meetings to finalize their own goals. Topping the agenda was early passage of the legislation specifically addressing the needs of disabled veterans, followed by a hike in all military pensions. They also resolved that JDVA members and their wives' should work together in the lobbying effort. In addition, on July 16, the JDVA Committee for Diet Operations reshuffled its staff. In order to cope with the changing political situation, the committee prepared for the forthcoming Diet session with the newly elected committee members.³⁸⁵ Matsumura Kōjiro, the new chairman of JDVA Committee for Diet Operations, urged the membership to demonstrate their support for JDVA's goals; particularly, he insisted that significance of legislation that acknowledged the special circumstances of disabled veterans.

At present, the top priority is speedy passage of a law that clearly delineates the special status and circumstances of battlefield injuries as deserving of national compensation. Until such legislation (what we call a targeted law) is enacted we face the unreasonable situation that we are less well provided for than other physical disabled persons despite the recent favorable revision of military pensions. We can no longer afford further delay and have to push forward with passage of new legislation with all our heart and soul. I entreat all of my fellow members' support in this endeavor.³⁸⁶

Following the tenth anniversary of the JDVA's creation in August 1962, the JDVA immediately went into action. On September 4, the JDVA sent a petition urging the government to move on the issue. Similar to previous public statements, the petition argued the "specific nature" of war survivors' and their families' claims based on the principle of national compensation for war-related illness and injuries."³⁸⁷

As part of the new campaign the JDVA reiterated various objections previously

³⁸⁵ Ibid., Vol.105, August 1, 1962, 1.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., Vol.105, August 1, 1962, 2.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., Vol.107, October 1, 1962, 2.

rose with the current situation to validate the call for new legislation. In the petition, what they considered as problematic was duplication and overlapping jurisdictions of government agencies. A persistent problem, they claimed, was that officials mistakenly classified some disabled veterans with the general population of disabled persons. As a consequence, the cases of these disabled veterans fell under the purview of social security services rather than reparation by the state (*kokka hoshō*), which it identified as a major obstacle in addressing disabled veterans' needs.³⁸⁸

While the MHW approached the drafting the bill with renewed vigor, the JDVA looked for opportunities to carry their message beyond their membership to a wider audience. One month later a golden opportunity presented itself. On October 16, 1962, with the Showa Emperor and Empress in the first attendance at the annual convention, JDVA convened its tenth anniversary national convention in Tokyo. Speaking before about 8,000 JDVA members, the Emperor lent moral support to the cause.

I am genuinely pleased to attend the tenth anniversary national meeting of the Japanese Disabled Veterans Association, and meet you in good health. I have been always concerned about you, who were injured for the country. It is my sincere pleasure to observe you, who help each other, rehabilitate yourselves, and work for society, while overcoming difficulties. I hope you take care of yourself and contribute to the country.³⁸⁹

Writing in the issue of November 1962 of *Nisshō Gekkan*, JDVA president Teshima Fusatarō undoubtedly expressed the sentiments of JDVA activists energized by the attendance of the Emperor and Empress at the tenth annual convention as an opportune moment “to forge solidarity among members to contribute to the development of the JDVA.” This was the moment, he stressed, for the organization to “reaffirm its

³⁸⁸ Ibid., Vol.107, October 1, 1962, 2.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., Vol.108, November 1, 1962, 1.

policy agenda and relentlessly push for results.”³⁹⁰

In spite of JDVA’s urgent appeals, the Ikeda cabinet and the LDP made very little real progress in advancing passage of new legislation. Although the LDP agreed to add measures advocated by the JDVA to its political agenda, Social Division (*Shakai bukai*) of the LDP, which was responsible for drafting the bill, was unable to muster a quorum of Diet members, which itself was a telling illustration of the bill’s low priority within the LDP’s larger legislative agenda. To make matters worse, in November, 1962, the prime minister, Ikeda Hayato embarked on a round of visits in seven European countries, which only increased the JDVA’s frustration with the slow pace of progress.³⁹¹

The JDVA accordingly made another attempt to publicize its effort to pass legislation in the 43 ordinary Diet session. To boost morale, on December 19, 1962, 137 JDVA prefectural leaders participated in the Meeting for National Delegates at Nihon Metropolitan Center in Tokyo. The manifesto prepared for the occasion read in part:

Ten years have passed since we, disabled veterans, organized the Japan Disabled Veterans Association. At the meeting marking this memorable occasion, we were blessed with the peerless honor of the Emperor’s gracious address. We now open the Meeting of National Delegates to appeal to the government and the Diet to reach our goals. Considering that protection of disabled veterans and their families accords with the Emperor’s wishes, we appeal for the passage of legislation addressing our specific circumstances and needs.³⁹²

The Meeting for National Delegates rewarded for successive legislative development. Diet members invited at the meeting encouraged JDVA leaders to make efforts for the independent law. The appeal to local congressmen at the meeting substantially helped raise their consciousness on the law. Above all, the MHW made a

³⁹⁰ Ibid., Vol.108, November 1, 1962, 2.

³⁹¹ Ibid., Vol.108, November 1, 1962, 3.

³⁹² Ibid., Vol.110, January 1, 1963, 2.

remarkable progress in drafting the bill.³⁹³ Moving in step with JDVA, the MHW pushed ahead with efforts to draft the new bill. The MHW took an additional on January 22, 1963 when the War Victims Relief Bureau opening hearing at which nine JDVA representatives were invited to testify as to the actual conditions of disabled veterans.³⁹⁴

Yet the MHW's legislative process took longer than the JDVA had expected. The initial plan called for completing drafting the bill by the end of January 1963 but a growing backlog made the JDVA's bill one of thirteen separate bills awaiting action. Once again, it was pushed to the end of the line. Although the Victim's Relief Bureau had completed their work, their draft needed to be vetted by the Social Bureau, which held jurisdiction over the Law for the Welfare of Physically Disabled Persons. As a consequence, the MHW's draft for the bill was to be delayed by the mid-February of 1963.³⁹⁵

Despite of the failure to achieve a breakthrough, the atmosphere in the Diet had changed for the better. On February 11, 1963, Nishimura Eiichi, the Minister of the MHW, publicly acknowledged the special status disabled veterans had long claimed. In a statement before the JDVA members "I entirely understand where disabled veterans are coming from; their situation is entirely different from persons injured in an automobile accident. "Nevertheless," he continued, "in promoting this bill one needs to give due consideration to the fact that our number one priority is the families of those who gave their lives on the battlefield."³⁹⁶

The campaign opened a new phase two weeks later when LDP's Diet members supported by JDVA began to pressure fellow Diet members.³⁹⁷ On February 25, the

³⁹³ Ibid., Vol.110, January 1, 1963, 2.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., Vol.111, February 1, 1963, 1.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., Vol.111, February 1, 1963, 1.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., Vol.112, March 1, 1963, 1.

³⁹⁷ In February 1963, the number of LDP's Diet members supporting JDVA was 144, which consisted of

influential LDP Diet member, Ogawa Hanji, came out publicly in support of the JDVA's agenda in an address in the issue of March 1, 1963 of the *Nisshō Gekkan*.³⁹⁸

You, honorable disabled veterans, having formed the JDVA have worked together to strengthen its organization and have always maintained friendly relations with LDP, which is one reason for the passage landmark legislation for the benefit of disabled veterans. This has indeed been a source of satisfaction to us. . . Needless to say, we fully understand your desire for legislation of this type. We look forward to deepening friendly relations and will make every effort to make your dream come true.³⁹⁹

Meanwhile, numerous Diet members were concerned that the original plan proposed by the JDVA might raise bureaucratic problems. In the interview with the JDVA, Yamashita Harue, an Upper House Diet member and JDVA supporter from Fukushima prefecture, offered some pragmatic advice as to reasonable expectations for the bill.

The legislation the JDVA has proposed includes thirteen specific kinds of protections. Although every one of these is important, I must tell you it will be difficult to secure passage in this session of the Diet if all provisions are to be included. Each must undergo a time consuming process of reconciliation with existing legislation. Thus, although I fear you may criticize my opinion, I suggest shifting the focus to creating a framework, whose essential element is the restoration of the honor of disabled veterans, to serve as the vehicle for measures that provide specific protections. Once this framework is in place, the rest will follow with relative ease and in the end will realize your objectives. How about it?⁴⁰⁰

Not everyone in the government, however, was convinced of the need for the

67 from the Upper House and 77 from the Lower House. The members included influential figures such as Nakasone Yasuhiro and Miyazawa Kiichi. Ibid., Vol. 73. December 1, 2.; Vol.111, February 1, 1963, 2.

³⁹⁸ Ogawa Hanji was a LDP member of House of Representative from Ishikawa prefecture.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., Vol.112, March 1, 1963, 1.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., Vol.111, February 1, 1963, 2.

legislation the JDVA was so determined to pass. A number of officials continued to believe the existing laws adequately addressed the disabled veterans' needs. In response, Matsumura Kōjiro writing in the *Nisshō Gekkan*, vented frustration as he reiterated the rationale for new legislation.

How on earth did we become permanently disabled in the first place? As a result of mandatory military service performed under extraordinary circumstances. It was not through fault or negligence. Therefore, the government should provide compensation for the losses we, disabled veterans, and our families have incurred. Moreover, we deserve a number of protections, including income benefits, medical services, and tax exemptions. This is through and through a matter of the state providing redress. This anyway, is our opinion... By defining our status as disabled veterans and implementing protective measures on the principle of national redress, our honor will be restored and our lives and livelihoods made secure.⁴⁰¹

The Process of Drafting the Independent Law for Disabled Veterans

On March 4, 1963, the MHW eventually presented the first outline for “the Law of Protection for War Casualties in Medical Care (*Senshōbyōsha no Iryotō no Engo nikansuru Hōritsu*),” The outline consisted of three chapters: overview of general principles, protections, and rehabilitation facilities for war casualties. The purpose of the law, as stated in the first chapter, was to provide protections for disabled veterans, including medical care, predicated on the principle of national compensation and in consideration of their present situation and special circumstances.⁴⁰² Thus, the outline represented a major victory for JDVA in for the first time explicitly acknowledging the government’s responsibility to provide national compensation.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., Vol.111, February 1, 1963, 2.

⁴⁰² Ibid., Vol.113, April 1, 1963, 1.

Prior to the meeting of the LDP Social Affairs Committee scheduled for the afternoon of March 14, 1963, nineteen LDP's Diet members aligned with the JDVA caucused in the morning. The causes, led by LDP Dietman Nagayama Tadanori, special liaison to the JDVA, confirmed their resolve to secure passage of the bill in adviser as well as LDP Diet member, in the 43rd ordinary Diet session. Nagayama appealed to Tanaka Masami, vice chairman of the Policy Research Council in LDP, to facilitate smooth passage of the bill. "This bill which the JDVA has demanded for such a long time is about to enter the final legislative phase. In order not to let slip this perfect opportunity to secure passage, our party should promptly bring it before the full Diet during the current session."⁴⁰³ Just before the afternoon session of the LDP's Social Affairs Committee convened, JDVA representatives received a message from Tokai Motosaburō, parliamentary vice minister of the MHW, that some provisions in the bill might be expanded. After deliberating, the JDVA representatives decided to give the committee a free hand in finalizing the bill. Despite minor different opinion, the LDP's Social Affairs committee reached a consensus on the passage of the bill in the current session of the Diet, although with certain changes.⁴⁰⁴ The plan for the bill presented at the next session of the Social Affairs Committee on March 29 reflected the thinking of the majority of the committee members that a simpler bill had a better chance of passing in light of the time remaining in the current session of the Diet.

The LDP's Policy Deliberation Commission, which met the same day, added four additional benefits: medical screening, care at TB nursing facility, new medical facilities to treat war casualties, and free passage on the Japan National Railway. (Furthermore, the commission recommended that the bill should be renamed "the Bill for Special Aid to the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldiers" to indicate comprehensive protections for disabled veterans in the future.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., Vol.113, April 1, 1963, 1.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., Vol.113, April 1, 1963, 2.

The substantive changes were welcomed by the JDVA; nevertheless they raised some anxieties concerning their timing. It had previously been agreed that the bill not require a supplemental budget. Nevertheless, the revisions made by LDP Policy Deliberation Commission required additional funding. The JDVA was worried this might complicate passage in the current Diet session even after harmonizing the views of the concerned ministries and LDP committees. They would miss the best chance if the bill were not passed in the current Diet session.⁴⁰⁵

JDVA's Diet Operation and the Legislative Process of the Independent Bill for Disabled Veterans

National local elections in April of 1963 interrupted deliberations on legislation in the Diet for nearly a month, and eventually shortened the 43rd ordinary Diet session's term, which jeopardizing scheduling debate on the bill in the general session. These developments prompted the JDVA to revamp its lobbying efforts. The JDVA demanded each prefectural JDVA organization to dispatch three representatives who were familiar with Diet operations, and assigned eighteen groups specific tasks covering a wide variety of activities. Located in its base in the House of Representative Building, they did everything from meeting personally with Diet members to sound out their views to drafting the documents required for submitting the bill itself.

All-out efforts for the independent bill initiated by JDVA impressed Diet members on their successful Diet Operation. A month had passed since they had launched what they hoped to be the final phase of their lobbying efforts. Even Diet members who were not designated a score member of the JDVA support group in the Diet frequently telephoned JDVA representatives, asking, "Are preparations for passage of the bill now completed? When will the bill come before the Diet?" Such positive

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., Vol.113, April 1, 1963, 1.

reactions made JDVA members think that their Diet operation would soon succeed.⁴⁰⁶

The response among Diet members was proving to be more positive than had been anticipated, but JDVA leaders were disappointed by the uneven level of support from within its own ranks. While a majority of JDVA branch organizations heeded the call and sent representatives to Tokyo for the final push, a disappointingly large number of prefectural branches did not send even a single representative, apparently content to let others do the heavy lifting. Not surprisingly, JDVA branches that had provided full-fledged support harshly criticized those organizations that did not match their own level of commitment. On 1 February, 1963, the *Nisshō Gekkan* made these views well in the front page, “At present in some quarters of the JDVA, it would appear, the most earnest of us are taken advantage of. Have they forgotten the spirit of mutual help, and love of comradeship-in-arms?”⁴⁰⁷ The sharp tone of the statement indicates the leadership’s frustration that when victory appeared close at hand, the failure of all members to rally to the call might slow their hard earned momentum.

During the period leading up to nationwide local elections in April of 1963, the Legislative Bureau of the Lower House of the Diet (*Sangiin Hōsei-kyoku*) continued to work on the bill in accordance with the 29 March decision by LDP Policy Deliberation Commission. In the interview with the JDVA in April 1953, an official of the Legislative Bureau expressed some frustration with the fact, noted previously, that various provisions of the bill duplicated or overlapped legislation already on the books. Nevertheless, noting that “much of the language of the bill had already been worked out with the assistance of the MHW,” the official pledged to “rush the bill to completion so as to satisfy the hopes of JDVA members.”⁴⁰⁸ The JDVA received another positive sign on prospects for passage when they heard that the War Victims Relief Bureau of the MHW already begun

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., Vol.112, March 1, 1963, 2.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., Vol.111, February 1, 1963, 1.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., Vol.114, May 1, 1963, 1.

to prepare for enforcement regulations contained in the bill on the assumption the bill would be enacted in current session of the Diet. In fact, the War Victims Relief Bureau as the agency responsible for enforcement entered into direct communication with the JDVA seeking clarification of their stances on various issues.⁴⁰⁹

Despite the proactive stance of the War Victims Relief Bureau, one last hurdle stood in the way. Before the LDP members of the JDVA support caucus could bring the bill to the floor of the 43rd ordinary Diet, they needed the approval of the Ministry of Finance, which expressed reluctance to accept the plan in its present form because the level of assistance proposed by the bill would necessitate larger budget. On May 14, LDP Diet representative and leading JDVA supporter Ogawa Hanji consulted with other LDP Diet members in the JDVA caucus and Ozawa Tatsuo, vice chairman of LDP Social Committee, on how to break the latest stalemate. The meeting Ozawa reported the preference of the Ministry of Finance that problems in the present draft be resolved and the bill be submitted at next year's Diet session. However, Ogawa and other members pressed Ozawa not to delay. "We have not changed our basic stance that the bill should be passed in the current Diet session," and urged him to ignore the reservations expressed by the Ministry of Finance.⁴¹⁰ While urging their supporters in the LDP to keep insisting on passage in the current session, the JDVA once again sent out a call to branch organizations asking each prefectural chapter to send members to Tokyo for a new round of lobbying. They also called on the national membership to bombard Diet members by postcard or telegraph with the message "Please enact the law immediately!"⁴¹¹

On 4 June, 41 LDP members including Ogawa placed the bill before the Lower House. Still, it took almost a month to bring the bill to a vote. JDVA lobbying did not cease and was rewarded when on 4 July the bill passed the lower House unanimously. On

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., Vol.114, May 1, 1963, 1.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., Vol.115, June 1, 1963, 1.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., Vol.115, June 1, 1963, 2.

the same day, the bill was sent to the Upper House. Speaking on behalf of the bill at the Social Labor Committee of the Upper House, Ozawa Tatsuo reiterated the gist of the JDVA's rationale on the need for new legislation.

It is natural that country should be responsible for supports for their fellow citizens who received sicknesses or injuries since they were exposed themselves to war for the sake of their country in all countries regardless of whether it is a victory country or defeated country.⁴¹²

However, while not directly challenging Ozawa's statement of support, Akune Noburu and Fujiwara Michiko of the opposition Japan Socialist Party questioned him on the exclusion of civilian war victims.⁴¹³ Akune asked Ozawa about the narrow scope of the bill. "What do you say about the scope of the bill" Akune asked, "What are you proposing for atomic bomb victims who even today are bed ridden"? Cognizant that any attempt to expand provisions of the bill would doom passage in the current Diet session, replied: "We understand that there are separate measures being taken for them. We do not think it appropriate to include protections for all war victims in a single benefits structure.

Fujiwara was not fully persuaded. "As long as the title of the bill is 'war casualties,' I think it arbitrary to exclude atomic bomb victims." In reply, Ozawa conceded that because "there are so many war victims including an A-bomb victims, we have not included them in this measure." He further expressed his intention to "subsequently study the matter."⁴¹⁴

The Upper House of the Social Labor voted the bill out of committee while adding a resolution in deference to Akune and Fujiwara urging the government to take

⁴¹² Ibid., Vol.116, July 1, 1963, 1.

⁴¹³ Ibid., Vol.116, July 1, 1963, 4.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., Vol.117, August 1, 1963, 2.

further steps to aid all of Japan's war victims. The slightly modified bill, titled "Law for Special Aid to the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldier," passed the Upper House on the same day. The legislation as enacted would be issued in August 1963 and implemented in November.⁴¹⁵

Enactment of the law was a moment of great satisfaction for JDVA president, Teshima Fusataro and the entire leadership for the principle of national responsibility for the well-being of disabled veterans was now enshrined in law. In the issue of August 1, 1963 of the *Nisshō Gekkan*, Teshima urged JDVA members to respond with gratitude and humility.

The enactment of this law is an epoch-making event that dramatically elevates that the status of disabled war veterans by institutionalizing benefits based on the principle of national compensation. While we enjoy our privileged status we need on the one hand to respond with self-reflection on what we have received and on the other, strive each and every one of us to improve ourselves so we are indeed worthy of our countrymen's merciful treatment, in addition to expand our organization and fulfilling our duties as disabled veterans.⁴¹⁶

Matsumura Kōjiro also cautioned its members to demonstrate humble attitude. Citing the now deceased former president, Kaba Atsushi, he reminded JDVA members "not to forget the fact that tax payers bear all costs of our treatment." Urging members to always be grateful even for what they rightly deserve. JDVA members, he concluded, can best repay the debt by "overcoming our disabilities, engaging in social and political activities, and contributing to the benefit of our country and society."⁴¹⁷

With the Law for Special Aid to the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldiers, the Japanese disabled veterans eventually achieved long-held wish. The successful outcome

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., Vol.116, July 1, 1963, 2.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., Vol.116, July 1, 1963, 1.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., Vol.117, August 1, 1963, 2.

of the campaign had numerous ramifications. Throughout the JDVA's Diet lobbying operation and communications with the LDP, disabled veterans raised their political consciousness as war victims deserving special treatments. Engagement with the campaign required them fully to affirm their identity as disabled veterans and thereby distinguish themselves in their own eyes as well as the public from civilians who suffered disabling injuries as well as the general population of disabled persons.

The campaign also had important political consequences. The JDVA's electoral strategy had demonstrated the efficacy of their organization as a voting bloc. Pushed by a strong cohort of Diet members many of whom had received crucial support from the JDVA, the LDP demonstrated its leadership by finally resolving the issue of national compensation to disabled veterans and their families. Taking a resolute stand on an issue whose ambiguities were the legacy of the Occupation period and compromised sovereignty in the immediate postwar period, the LDP boosted its prestige. In this regard, mutual interests and goals of both disabled veterans and the LDP were completely accorded.

CONCLUSION

Following the enactment of the Law for Special Aid to Retired Wounded and Sick Soldiers of 1963, the JDVA reached the apex of their cooperative relations with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Increase of military pension coincided with the Japan's "economic miracle" in this period. Still, the JDVA took every possible means to attain their objectives; if necessary, both the JDVA and JDVWA members were willing to challenge the authority of the ruling LDP. It seemed that they not only sought to protect their livelihood, but also strove to establish a dominant presence in Japanese society.

The JDVA's feisty pride can also be observed from their oral interviews. Initially, I planned to weave interviews with disabled veterans and wives in Mie prefecture into my dissertation. Mr. Toshio Tatematsu, secretary-general of the Mie Prefectural Disabled Veterans Association (MPDVA), kindly offered me to have interviews with disabled ex-soldiers and wives from the summer of 2004 to the spring of 2005. Not surprisingly, they gave a picturesque account of their war and postwar experiences. Their stories range over a variety of topics from their injuries and marriages to their patriotic feelings to their country and Japan's international relations told in a way that only occasionally supplemented the historical documents that I have collected. Although little of this material made its way into the dissertation, their narratives unquestionably inspired my work.

A disabled veteran's account demonstrated the connection between past and present that has taken shape in the course of lives of Japanese disabled veteran. In September, 2004, on referral from Tatematsu, I met Mr. Yoshikazu Kawai, former president of the MPDVA. In the interview, Kawai told a memorable story about the JDVA's political engagement in the early 1970s and Yasuhiro Nakasone, who served as the Prime Minister of Japan from 1982 to 1987. At the annual convention in 1971, the

JDVA passed a resolution requesting a steep increase in the military pension. However, when the LDP expressed difficult to accept their proposal, the JDVA decided to mount a vigorous campaign. Beginning in early December of 1971, the operation involved petitions to the Diet members, the boisterous meeting, marching on the Diet Building, and a hunger-strike. Kawai participated in the operation and observed carefully. What impressed him most about the operation was the hunger-strike in front of the headquarters of the LDP. The government's refusal of the JDVA's request led a showdown, and disabled veterans finally held the sit-in as scheduled. Standing before a crowd of disabled ex-soldiers, Nakasone, the LDP general council chairman, delivered an impassioned speech appeal for an end to the strike and vowing to raise the military pension. As a result, the JDVA successfully gained their demands. Kawai recalled the entire event, "It was a triumph of the JDVA. It was a heyday of the JDVA. I still remember it."⁴¹⁸



Figure 2: The JDVA and the JDVWA held joint uprising meeting at the Yasukuni shrine on December 7 and 8, 1971.

Source: *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.218, January 1, 1972.

Soon after the interview, I happened to find the articles about the operation and

⁴¹⁸ Yoshikazu Kawai, interview by author, Hisai-city, Mie prefecture, Japan, September 25, 2004.

the hunger strike in *Nisshō Gekkan*. Kawai's portrayal of the event coincided perfectly with the coverage of *Nisshō Gekkan*. At the annual convention in October 1971, the JDVA passed a resolution requesting the steep increase in the military pension to the government, and mobilizing "Operation 1323," which represented their prime goal that military pension for the severest disabled veterans should be paid 1,323,000 yen annually.⁴¹⁹ To the JDVA, the fact that military pension for disabled veterans was lower than livelihood assistance for the underprivileged was a problem that was hard to ignore.⁴²⁰ Beginning with the uprising meeting at the Yasukuni shrine on December 7 and 8, 1971, JDVA members from all prefectures were summoned to participate in the operation.



Figure 3: JDVA members' hunger strike in front of the headquarters of the LDP in Chiyoda ward, Tokyo on January 11, 1972.
Source: *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.219, February 1, 1972.

As last resort of the Operation 1323, on January 10, 1972, the JDVA members

⁴¹⁹ Amount of military pension for the most seriously disabled veterans served as a benchmark of the pension scheme. 1,323,000 would be equivalent to 3,675 dollars in that period.

⁴²⁰ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.212, July 1, 1971, 1.

sat in front of the headquarters of the LDP in Chiyoda ward, Tokyo. On the following morning, however, disabled veterans had to pay the price for the strike: Eleven strikers were admitted to hospitals. Eventually, the LDP yielded to their determination. Without wiping overflowing tears on his cheeks, Nakasone spoke in a tearful voice to his former colleagues sitting in the entrance of the LDP building.

I also went to the battlefield. It breaks my heart to see my comrade-in-arms, who are injured and in pain, under this wintry sky. This is the shame of the Liberal Democratic Party, and I can't bear to see it. I put my career as a politician on the line to care for you, and I swear I make the party increase military pension for the severest, say, 1,040,000 yen. If it does not come true, the Cabinet [under the LDP] should be disbanded. But the LDP is not such an irresponsible party! Please count on me! Please stop sit-in immediately!"⁴²¹

In response to Nakasone's passionate appeal the hunger strikers spontaneously shouted tearful cries, "Thank you!!" All of them were crying aloud. Hisayasu Tokuda, JDVA chairman of Diet operation, also said to them through his tears, "That's all, everybody. Let's stop sitting in gracefully as a disabled veteran!"⁴²² Although the response of the LDP did not meet the initial request of the JDVA, the revised military pension for the severest disabled veterans was 1,040,000 yen, an increase of 86.04% from the preceding year. It was the foremost achievement in JDVA history. Then I sent the photocopy of the article to Kawai. In quick reply, he sent me a postcard, writing what had occurred to him in the operation.

Thank you for the copy... I recall my own days in the operation and strike. At the Yasukuni shrine, Takao Fujinami, a member of the House of Representative from Ise-city, Mie prefecture, put us on mettle in tears. I had a reunion with disabled friends at the time of hospitalization. In marching towards the Diet Building, at the discretion of the JDVA president Sasakawa, karate players guarded us

⁴²¹ *Nisshō Gekkan*, Vol.219, February 1, 1972, 1.

⁴²² *Ibid.*

from the both sides of street. We got credit for quiet demonstration march.⁴²³

The communication with Kawai reminds me about how Japanese disabled war veterans' experience, which was little known to ordinary citizens, was deeply embedded in veterans' memories. This anecdote also reveals that the asymmetry in memories of the war between disabled veterans and the other Japanese. In the postwar period, disabled war veterans were often described as "forgotten men" in contrast to the economic prosperity. After having interviews with disabled veterans and their wives, and investigating historical documents, however, I have recognized a striking difference in the perception of disabled veterans and the general public. The mainstream public discourse tended to reinforce their image as forgotten men who were seemingly inactive and mute in the postwar society. In other words, disabled veterans served as a powerful reservoir of a facet of the war that was not desired to be remembered in association with defeat and misery. On the other hand, to disabled veterans, restoring honor through receipt of reparations by the state was a means not only to justify their existence, but also to receive recognition from the society. In the postwar climate that perceived them as a negative reminder of war, disabled veterans unexpectedly had to move their battle from foreign soil to fatherland. As a consequence, disabled veterans created a distinct identity, and were located in a unique position as a group of disabled persons in postwar Japan.

Now, the JDVA is about to complete its mission to support disabled war veterans and their families. The average age of the JDVA members is nearly ninety, and natural decrease of the membership has no choice to discontinue activities of prefectural and local disabled veterans associations. Most of all, the JDVA plans to dissolve the organization in 2013, which literally brings the curtain down on its history. Yet, what disabled war veterans left in the postwar period will not fade, if the history of disabled veterans who experienced the wretchedness of war establishes the foundation of peace.

⁴²³ Yoshikazu Kawai, postcard to author, October 18, 2004.

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