



a-wa-i | in between

Design attitude towards Japanese inclusive culture

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Abstract

Persons with disabilities and their families have acted for their independent and vivid life in the postwar era in Japan. Although their effort improved their situation, many people cannot still change their mindsets that persons with disabilities are 'unfamiliar' and 'unhappy'. A civic organisation in Japan, Tanpopo-No-Ye has led *Able Art Movement*, encouraged people with disabilities to live vividly by using art expression, and created inclusive cultures in their ways. This paper aims at how designers can intervene in the current situation and help to create inclusive cultures in Japan, with examining such activities, other stakeholders' situations and design trends.

Keywords: disabilities, inclusive cultures, everyone is a designer, a-wa-i, design attitude

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Introduction

In August, 2018, as I was extremely exhausted, in order to make myself refreshed, with some of my friends, I decided to have holidays and go to a festival, named 'Good Neighbors Jamboree' in Kagoshima, the southwestern area in Japan.¹ Just before that, in Tokyo, as a design lead of a big project, I worked so hard and over-time almost everyday. As a result, I got almost spiritless and melancholic, and then my doctor suggested reducing my work to me.

As I wanted to forget my nightmare days in Tokyo anyhow at the festival, I enjoyed workshops, foods and music performances, breathing in rural fresh air. In Particular, I was very impressed by a performing group, named 'otto and orabu', which means sound and shouting, consisting of people having intellectual disabilities and care workers at 'Shobu Gakuen' in Kagoshima.² Its performance is characteristic, impressive and soulful, which created a good atmosphere, and made me relax and cured.

Before such experience, I have always been required to pursue goals efficiently as much as possible, competing with others, at schools and offices. Influenced by Western countries' policies aimed at 'small governments' such as Thatcherism and Reaganomics, Japan has privatised national owned services such as telephone and railway services since the Nakasone Cabinet in the 1980s. In the 21st century, the Koizumi Cabinet pursued further neoliberal policies, and not only for for-profit companies but also for administrative services had pursued productivity and efficiency.³ Such trends also affected public support for cultural activities.⁴ Social disparities have risen due to the effects of increased non-regular employment by deregulation policies for working environments, a long-term recession and population decline. So-called *karoshi*, illness and suicide due to over-work is also problematic. In such a competitive environment, I could not afford to consider others having warm hearts. Moreover I have had few chances to do anything with people having disabilities in Japanese 'homogenic' environment.

33 GOOD NEIGHBORS JAMBOREE COMMITTEE, 'GOOD NEIGHBORS JAMBOREE 2018', *GOOD NEIGHBORS JAMBOREE*, <<http://goodneighborsjamboree.com/2018/>> [accessed 10 February 2021].

34 Shobu Gakuen, *Shobu Gakuen*, <<https://shobu.jp/>> [accessed 10 February 2021].

35 Kengo Soga, *Local governments of Japan – 1700 Local governments and issues*, (Tokyo: Chuokoron Shinsha, 2019). Kindle Edition.

36 Toshiaki Amano, 'Position of Cultural Policy in Social Inclusion', *Journal of Ohara Institute for Social Research*, 625, 2010, 23-42.

After this experience, I often think about how we can get together with diverse people beyond various differences such as gender, age, ethnicity and physical/mental abilities. In this paper, I will explore the possibility of how we, designers can contribute to make the Japanese society more inclusive.

This paper aims to explore the possibilities of design approaches to create more inclusive culture in Japan, which consists of the following five parts. The first part will reveal people's perspectives to persons with disabilities in Japanese society, particularly in the postwar era. Secondly, I will introduce some civic activities for persons with disabilities using art expression and how such activities encourage them to live independently and vividly. Thirdly, this paper will examine other stakeholders such as governments, companies and individuals, and how they can be involved with making an inclusive society. Then, introducing some design approaches, I will discuss how designers can intervene with the current situation.

Historical perspectives to persons with disabilities in Japan

This chapter will describe historical perspectives to persons with disabilities in Japan. Actions that support persons with disabilities becoming independent and participating in this society started from 1949, in which the year, Act on Welfare of Physically Disabled Persons was established in order to mainly care for disabled survivors injured in World War II. In this law, persons with intellectual disabilities were not targeted yet.⁵ Traditionally, in Japan, most persons with disabilities have been cared for by their families in their homes without any public welfare support. Their family members, particularly their mothers, have had heavy burdens to care, and have tended to hide their children with disabilities from society as their shameful facts in the country. For instance, according to my mother, when she was a child, around the 1950s, she saw a child with intellectual disabilities captured in something like a cage in home, in her hometown, a rural area of Japan.⁶ At least not a few Japanese had the common sense that having children with disabilities were ‘unfamiliar’ and ‘unhappy’ as existences excluded from society. Due to such a situation, people who are concerned, such as persons with disabilities and their families, have argued the problem of how such children live individually and vividly even after parents’ death.

In 1952, mothers having children with intellectual disabilities connected each other and established Zenkoku Te-wo-tsunagu Ikuseikai, formally named Seishin-hakujakuji Ikuseikai (hereinafter referred to as Ikuseikai).⁷ They have demanded more institutions and/or colonies to have their children independent from their home support and relieve burdens of the families. In 1960, responding to such actions, *Act on Welfare of the Mentally Retarded* was established. This law was based on the philosophy which encourages some welfare institutions to keep supporting and training persons with intellectual disabilities to be able to ‘be independent in the local areas’, in order to mitigate the burdens of their parents.⁸ However, on the contrary, such trends caused another problem of ‘institutionalisation’ and still kept persons with disabilities excluded from society. To be more

5 Taeka Nakayama, ‘The Change of the Welfare for People with Intellectual Disabilities’, *Journal of Socio-cultural Studies*, 10, (2008-03), 45-68. Hiroshima University Institutional Repository.

6 Author interview with my mother

7 Zenkoku Te-wo-tsunagu Ikuseikai Rengokai, *Zenkoku Te-wo-tsunagu Ikuseikai Rengokai*, <<http://zen-iku.jp/>> [accessed 17 April 2021]

8 Taeka Nakayama, ‘The Change of the Welfare for People with Intellectual Disabilities’, *Journal of Socio-cultural Studies*, 10, (2008-03), 45-68. Hiroshima University Institutional Repository.

problematically, there were still many persons with intellectual disabilities not to be able to neither start working nor enter institutions at the time.⁹

In the 1970s, various civic political actions flourished in Japan. Resonating to them, some remarkable actions from groups of persons with disabilities themselves also emerged. Firstly, Aoi Shiba no Kai, a group of people with cerebral palsy, acted radically and aggressively for achieving their own rights. For example, against the incidents that people using wheelchairs were often rejected when taking buses, they protested by plunging themselves riding their wheelchairs into buses.^{10 11} Secondly, Isao Nitta who has cerebral palsy went on a hunger strike against ways of an institution he belonged to at that time and started his independent life in the society, cared for by volunteers. This event was epoch making in Japan as persons with disabilities had hardly been in the society outside of either their homes or institutions. On the other hand, the persons with intellectual disabilities started saying their voices through joining their parents' groups such as Ikusei Kai from the 1970s. Then, Japan Centre for Independent Life (hereinafter referred to as JCIL) and Human Care Association were established, in 1985 and 1986 respectively, as the first centres for independent life in Japan, which inherited the lineage of Centre for Independent Life (hereinafter referred to as CIL) led by Ed. Roberts in the US. These organisations were established by mainly patients having physical disabilities by polio at first, but also have focused on persons with intellectual disabilities and supported their independent life in the society.^{12 13} Moreover, in 1995, People First Japan was established as a self advocacy organisation for people with intellectual disabilities themselves and started making places for them, which has its origin in People First Movement in the US.¹⁴ Resonating to the concepts of 'normalisation' and 'from medical model to social model', these organisations' efforts have enabled such people themselves to live more naturally in the local society supported by caregivers and have made Japa-

9 Taku Watanabe, *Injury of Persons with Disabilities, Pain of Caregivers*, (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2018). Kindle Edition.

10 Yuki Arai, *Re-questioning the Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities*, (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2020), p207-244. Kindle edition.

11 Shinichiro Kumagaya, 'Movement by Persons with Disabilities – from Medical Model to Social Model', *Tojisha-Kenkyu – Discovery and Recovery of real 'self'*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2020), p225-325. Kindle Edition.

12 Ibid.

13 Taku Watanabe, *Injury of Persons with Disabilities, Pain of Caregivers*, (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2018). Kindle Edition.

14 Ibid.

nese society more inclusive.

In 2014, Japanese government ratified *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (hereinafter referred to as *CRPD*), established by the United Nations, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology started introducing the inclusive education system in Japan.¹⁵ Before ratifying the convention, several laws such as amendment of *Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities* (2011), *Act on Employment Promotion etc. of Persons with Disabilities* (2013), *Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act* (2012), and *Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities* (2012) were enacted.¹⁶ Various social actions by persons with disabilities and their families have made Japanese society easier to live in.^{17 18}

On the other hand, the government toward ‘small government’ has led to the reformed provision of administrative services based on ‘New Public Management’, which applies the mechanism of competitive markets, and public welfare services have also become more commercialised. Such neoliberal tendencies to pursue efficiency and productivity has infiltrated into people in Japan, and many people tended to get intolerant to others. To make matters worse, in 2016, a horrible crime occurred, in which an ex-worker killed 19 people being admitted to a welfare institution for intellectual disabilities in Kanagawa Prefecture in Japan. According to some news, the offender was reported to believe the eugenic thought and think he should kill ‘unhappy’ disabled people. Although it is clear that his motivation is extreme and inadmissible, even many Japanese might have a similar perspective that persons with intellectual disabilities are ‘unfamiliar’ and ‘unhappy’ people still now. In summary, in Japanese society, lives of persons with disabilities have improved as a result of the efforts of themselves and their families, but many people do not become tolerant to not only persons with disabilities but

15 Satoshi Arakawa, ‘Toward the Realisation of Inclusive Education: Current Situation and Challenges’ *Normalisation Welfare for Persons with Disabilities*, 37, (2017), <<https://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/japanese/prdl/jsrd/norma/n427/n427003.html>> [accessed 10 February 2021].

16 Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, ‘Chapter 2 Movements after Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | 2016 White Paper on Persons with Disabilities (Summary)’, Cabinet Office <<https://www8.cao.go.jp/shougai/whitepaper/h28hakusho/gaiyou/h02.html>> [accessed 29 April 2021].

17 Hitohiro Takizawa, ‘Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Legislation for Persons with Disabilities’, *Momoyama Jurisprudence*, 25, 2015, 73–95.

18 Taku Watanabe, *Injury of Persons with Disabilities, Pain of Caregivers*, (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2018). Kindle Edition.

also any other people in society, due to inadequate social policies and changes in individual social perceptions.

Around 'Able Art Movement'

As I described that I experienced a performance by persons with disabilities in the introduction, cultural and artistic activities by persons with disabilities are relatively popular in today's Japan. These activities could inherit the history of art genres, Art Brut and Outsider Art. This chapter will introduce such art genres and their limitations at first, and then will describe some activities supporting people with disabilities to express arts in Japan.

Art Brut and Outsider Art; emerging 'marginal' art genres

Art Brut is an art category, named by Jean Dubuffet, a French artist who collected art works by patients in psychiatric hospitals without experiencing any art education. Dubuffet introduced his collection as purer, more primitive and more vivid art works than ones by artists who had experienced established art education. Outsider Art is a similar genre, named by Roger Cardinal in 1972, which is defined as "an art produced by people with no formal training who exist on the margins of society". Such art works have been valued highly as their originalities, purities and possibilities in the Western art world, and inspired other artists such as Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso.¹⁹

In 1993, the first exhibition of Art Brut in Japan, named *Parallel Visions: Modern Artists and Marginal Art* curated by Maurice Tuchman, was held at Setagaya Art Museum as an exhibition tour from Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and became widely known in Japan.²⁰ Inspired by such exhibitions, many art works by persons with disabilities are introduced inside and outside Japan. Moreover, welfare institutions and civic organisations adopted making art works as methods for self expression by persons with disabilities from the 1990s, whose activities were resonant with actions for such persons' independent living as described in the previous chapter. Undoubtedly, Art Brut or Outsider Art has contributed to supporting today's art activities by persons with disabilities in Japan. However, at the same time, such concepts could be problematic to some extent in terms of defining the only such works as one particular genre and highlighting the differ-

¹⁹ L. Peiry, *Art Brut: The Origins of Outsider Art* (Flammarion, 2006).

²⁰ Setagaya Art Museum, '1993.09.30 - 12.12 Parallel Visions: Modern Artists and Outsider Art', Past Special Exhibition, <https://www.setagayaartmuseum.or.jp/en/exhibition/special/detail.php?id=sp00061&set_lang=true> [accessed 18 April 2021].

ences between inside and outside of the art world, or 'disabilities' and 'abilities' of people. Every art work has its own value if it is a work by persons with disabilities or not.

Tanpopo-No-Ye and Able Art Movement

Tanpopo-No-Ye is one of welfare institutions and civic organisations supporting people with disabilities to express their art.²¹ It started in 1973 as one of groups of parents having children with severe disabilities to make a place to live independently in the community. Since the 1990s, it led 'Able Art Movement' named by Yasuo Harima, a chairman of the board directors of Tanpopo-No-Ye, where everyone can express everything freely regardless of the type and presence of disabilities. Moreover, through establishing Association of Art, Culture and People with Disabilities, Japan (currently named Able Art Japan, a specified non-profit corporation), it also has connected with other organisations, and has contributed to the nationwide spread of the movement. Until now, as parts of the activities of corporate mécénat: patronage of the art and culture, sponsored by Toyota, one of Japan's leading car companies, it organised Toyota Able Art Forum from 1996 to 2003, and with the sponsorship by Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance Company, it held Able Art On Stage as opportunities to present expressions such as dance, music theater by performers with disabilities.^{22 23 24}

In the suburbs of Nara City, which was the ancient capital of Japan over 1200 years ago, among typical non-characteristic new houses in the country, there is a



Fig 1, 2, 3: Scenery of Tanpopo-No-Ye art centre HANA (Photo: author)

21 Tanpopo-No-Ye Foundation, Tanpopo-No-Ye, <<https://tanpoponoye.org/>> [accessed 11 February 2021].

22 Author interview with Daisuke Kobayashi, Good Job! Centre, on 24 November 2020

23 ABLE ART JAPAN, 'Forum', *ABLE ART JAPAN*, <<http://www.ableart.org/work/past/forum/>> [accessed 29 April 2021].

24 ABLE ART JAPAN, 'Able Art Performing Arts Project', *ABLE ART JAPAN*, <<http://www.ableart.org/work/past/paforming/paformingarts.html>> [accessed 29 April 2021].

characteristic building of Art Centre HANA, the base of Tanpopo-No-Ye's activities. There, about 60 members with disabilities such as cerebral palsy and intellectual disabilities create and learn various kinds of art works such as paintings, ceramics and textiles with receiving care. According to an officer in Tanpopo-No-Ye, the purpose of such activities is not necessarily to let members make works, but to make a place where people can find their own purpose to live through expressing it.²⁵ I visited there in November 2020, and observed daily activities while



Fig 4 (left top): JURIX WORKS (Medicine packages / 1995-2012) ©ITO Juri / Tanpopo-No-Ye art centre HANA

Fig 5 (left bottom): JURIX WORKS (Medicine packages / 1995-2015) ©ITO Juri / Tanpopo-No-Ye art centre HANA



Fig 6 (right top): JURIX WORKS (Inkjet print / 1995-2012) ©ITO Juri / Tanpopo-No-Ye art centre HANA

Fig 7 (right bottom): Ito's work in progress (Photo: author)

communicating with some members.

One of the artists, Juri Ito is good at finding and doing a lot of what she wants to do. One of such things is sticking to collecting various kinds of pill packages. At

²⁵ Author interview with Yukari Taketani, Tanpopo-No-Ye, on 25 November 2020

first, she found and collected the medicines her family had taken, but eventually officers around her began to keep their own pill packages and bring them to her. Then finally the collection got huge, so officers and she decided to exhibit her collection she divided by colour as an installation. The interesting point of this story is that officers and her family got involved in her interests through working together, the audience is also involved in her life by watching the work at her exhibition. In other words, her works could not be completed by themselves, but be open to all. She also creates other types of works. For example, she writes her daily thoughts and discoveries as forms of handwritten newspapers.²⁶ What she writes there seems to be difficult to understand, but it is undeniably her daily

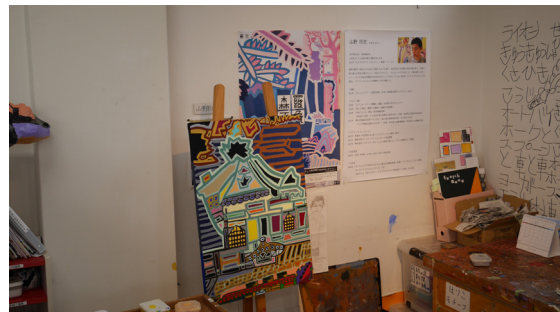


Fig 8 (left top): *Jungle no Naka no Aoi Taki: A Blue Water-fall in a Jungle* (Acrylic, Paper, Panel / 910x1167 / 2009) ©YAMANO Masashi / Tanpopo-No-Ye art centre HANA

Fig 9 (left bottom): *Omizu Nonderu Rakuda san no E: A Painting of Camels Drinking Water* (Acrylic, Paper, Panel / 728x1030 / 2010) ©YAMANO Masashi / Tanpopo-No-Ye art centre HANA

Fig 10 (right top): *Wata no Shiro: White Cotton* (Acrylic, Paper, Panel / 910x1167 / 2009) ©ITO Juri / Tanpopo-No-Ye art centre HANA

Fig 11 (right bottom): Yamano's works laying in the Art Centre (Photo: author)

²⁶ Author interview with Yukari Taketani, Tanpopo-No-Ye, on 25 November 2020

thoughts and discoveries themselves, and it could be described that they represent her 'life' itself.

Another member, Masashi Yamano, draws pictures in his own way of abstraction from looking at existing photo books and sketching real sceneries. He also has his own way of communicating with visitors. When I visited there, he came to greet me, introduced himself, and then explained what he had experienced so far. He has experienced creating some commissioned works. For instance, for a company manufacturing caregiving and medical products in Osaka, he created a big painting that decorates the entrance of a factory of the company. He seemed to feel heavily pressured as a professional while tackling the work for one year and 10 months, but also such an experience seemed to bring him a feeling of self-esteem.²⁷ His attractive aspects lie in not only the power of his paintings characterised in colours and compositions, but also his attitudes toward his works and communications with the people around him. Tanpopo-No-Ye is a place where various types of inter-correspondences between members and the other people emerge everyday.

Spreading Able Art Movement

The movement by Tanpopo-No-Ye has influenced other people and civic organisations by connecting each other. Creative Support Let's in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture is one of such organisations. In 2008, Midori Kubota, the representative of this organisation, started a project called Takeshi Cultural Centre. 'Takeshi' is the name of her son, who is a person with severe disabilities, unable to eat, change clothes and excrete himself, and needs someone's care always. Based on his son's passions for completing what he wants to do as an important axis of creating culture, Kubota organised the place for realising such passions. Currently this is not only for Takeshi and includes



Fig 12: Website of Creative Support Let's; Retrieved from <<http://cslets.net/>> [accessed 22 April 2021]

²⁷ Author interview with Yukari Taketani, Tanpopo-No-Ye, on 25 November 2020

a library cafe and a musical studio for communicating among persons with intellectual disabilities, and even a shared and/or guest house for both persons with disabilities and other people. Kubota wants to function this as a place to enable persons with disabilities including his son to live independently in the local society without help from their family and let every person experience the reality of their lives.²⁸

In 2012, Tanpopo-No-Ye started a new enterprise, Good Job! Project, and built a base of the project, Good Job! Centre KASHIBA. This enterprise is an alternative type of profit organisation, which plans, manufactures, distributes and sells their original products and services by using assets of art and design and exploring various new ways of working, with customers, companies, other welfare facilities and organisations. Members with disabilities, particularly intellectual disabilities, manufacture, distribute, and sell products as professions, supported by officers, considering their physical conditions and requests. For example, members and officers manufacture Hariko, Japanese traditional toy, using molds made by 3D printers. They try to explore the manufacturing process, distribution, and sales method of new products such as this elegant integration between traditional crafts and new technologies. Good Job! Project wants to advocate various work styles to the public, as an inclusive design approach, proposing new work styles from the side of persons with disabilities. Such an idea came from some inclusive design workshop series inspired by encountering Julia Cassim, who was a researcher at Helen Hamlyn Centre of Design, Royal College of Art.²⁹

28 Tanpopo-No-Ye (eds.), *Social Art* (Kyoto: Gakugei Publishing, 2016), p182-196

29 Author interview with Daisuke Kobayashi, Good Job! Centre, on 24 November 2020

30 Julia Cassim et al. (eds.), *Inclusive Design*, (Kyoto: Gakugei Publishing, 2014)



Fig 13: The exterior of 'Good Job! Centre KASHIBA'

Reproduced by permission from the website of Good Job! Centre KASHIBA: <http://goodjobcenter.com/>

Photo by Hideaki Hamada. [accessed 22 April 2021]



Fig 14, 15: Scenery of manufacturing at Good Job! Centre KASHIBA (Photo: author)

The cases of other stakeholders

In the previous chapter, we have seen the practices of citizen organisations such as Tanpopo-No-Ye aiming for persons with disabilities to live vividly and independently in the community, which have been involved in society, focusing on art activities with members with disabilities. On the other hand, the society around persons with disabilities consists of not only such welfare facilities and civic organisations but also an ecosystem of stakeholders, which are various actors such as governments, companies, and ‘able-bodied’ individuals. From here, let us look at how such stakeholders deal with persons with disabilities currently, and how they should be able to deal with them possibly.

The case of governments

Firstly, this section examines the case of the Japanese governments, particularly local governments. Many of them face not only welfare problems but various others. One of the main factors of such problems is undoubtedly population decline from 2018.³¹ According to ‘*the White Paper on Land Infrastructure Transport and Tourism in Japan, 2014*’, this factor will cause the following problems;

- Reduction of Services Related to Daily Life (Stores, Restaurants, Recreation, Medical Facilities, etc.)
- Falling Standard of Administrative Services Due to Decrease in Tax Income
- Down-Sizing, Withdrawal of the Local Public Transportation
- Increase in Vacant Houses, Vacant Stores, Old Factory Sites, Deserted Arable Land
- Functional Decline of Local Communities

From such an assumption, Japan’s population decline would cause a lack of providing administrative services, including services for persons with disabilities, in the near future. In fact, Yubari City, one of the cities in Hokkaido, collapsed financially in 2007 due to population and industrial decline.³² In contrast, as already described, in order to pursue the efficiency of public services, reforming organisations based on NPM applying the mechanism of competitive markets has been

31 Worldometer, ‘Japan Population’, <<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/japan-population/>> [accessed 20 April 2021].

32 The Guardian, ‘Japanese city’s financial collapse offers a number of interesting lessons’, <<https://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/2013/jul/31/japanese-citys-financial-collapse-lessons>> [accessed 20 April 2021].

promoted.³³ This trend also has encouraged local governments to collaborate with organisations and companies outside as outsourcing or co-working partners, aiming to cut costs. Then, such collaborators expanded to flourishing non profit organisations and civil society organisations. However, at the same time, it has been criticised as that it is not difficult to provide satisfactory services to citizens due to aiming to 'small governments' and emphasising efficiency and unilateral service provision. The welfare services became commercialised. However, there still remains problems to provide each citizen sufficient services equally instead of collaborating with local governments more easily. Christian Bason suggested some 'Networked Governance' models against NPM.³⁴ One of such models is 'Digital Era Governance' driven by digital and technological opportunities and capabilities. Another model is 'Public Value Management'. 'Public Value' is one of public consensus and includes factors as follows;

- the rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled
- the obligations of citizens to society, the state and one another
- the principles on which governments and policies should be based³⁵

'Collaborative Governance' is also one of models, which is based on primary attention on public-private partnerships, networks, and joined-up services. These characteristics could remind us of 'vTaiwan', an existing digital platform in Taiwan. This is a platform the Taiwan government deployed with civic engineers, where citizens can discuss public problems online, and can be one of good examples of 'Networked Governance'. In contrast, in Japan, as one of new Governmental Agencies, Digital Agency will be established in September 2021, aiming to realising the basic principles for forming digital society such as openness, transparency and fairness. If this trend succeeds, administrative services could become a platform and a place where citizen groups and persons with disabilities discuss and make some policies together with local governments, and it could drive to move forward toward inclusive society.

33 Christopher Hood, 'A Public Management for All Seasons?', *Public Administration* , 69.1 (1991), 3-19.

34 Christian Bason, 'Leading Public Sector Innovation: Co creation for a Better Society', *Social Policy & Administration*, (2012). Wiley Online Library.

35 Bozeman, B. (2007). *Public Values and Public Interest: Counterbalancing Economic Individualism*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

The case of for-profit companies

Currently, Japanese companies are obligated to employ a certain percentage of persons with disabilities. Some companies established special subsidiary companies admitted by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in Japan, in order to achieve the obligation as the whole corporate group. In contrast, there is a company which employs persons with intellectual disabilities positively in Kawasaki City, Kanagawa Prefecture, which is Nihon Rikagaku Industry Co., Ltd. manufacturing chinks mainly.³⁶ While more than 70 percent employees are persons with disabilities, the company has not been as a subcontractor but manufactured the original products positively, purchasing their quality and planning brand-new ones. As for the quality, for example, for adapting 'Japanese Industrial Standards', the company developed tools employees with disabilities can check the thickness of chinks. It also successfully invented brand-new products 'Kitpas', which are writing materials which produce no dust and are easy to write and erase on whiteboards and glass windows.³⁷ Yasuhiro Oyama, the former president of the company, who started employing persons with disabilities but unfortunately passed away in 2019, believed that only public sectors do not need to deal with the welfare in the society, and companies also should make purposes and places for persons with disabilities to work individually and happily.³⁸ Generally speaking, in Japan, many persons with disabilities still have to work in some welfare institutions, and thus, have difficulties to live individually. Oyama's belief can connect to 'Public Value' as described in the previous section.

In fact, it seems hard for every company to act as Nihon Rikagaku Industry Co., Ltd., but corporate culture could change situations. Cybozu, Inc. is a company in Japan which provides digital softwares to support teamwork and collaboration for companies and organisations. This company not only sells such software services for others but also stresses to make better teamwork and collaboration for employees themselves. Its website, named *Cybozu-shiki* publishes how they tack-

36 Nihon Rikagaku Industry Co., Ltd., *Nihon Rikagaku Industry Co., Ltd.*, <<https://www.rikagaku.co.jp/english/>> [accessed 20 April 2021].

37 Nihon Rikagaku Industry Co., Ltd., 'Kitpas', Nihon Rikagaku Industry Co., Ltd., <<https://www.rikagaku.co.jp/english/items/marker.php>> [accessed 20 April 2021].

38 Yasuhiro Oyama, *The Way to 'Happiness for Work': 'Hataraku Shiawase' no Michi*, (Tokyo: Wave Publishers, 2018). Kindle edition.

le improving its culture and philosophy to work with the public.³⁹ In some articles of this website, Yoshihisa Aono, the President and Founder of this company told that, when he became the President in 2005, the employees' turnover rate reached 28% similar to other typical IT startups in Japan because there was culture to work for a long time. However Aono doubted such a culture, and started improving employees' work environment and rebuilding the company's culture. For example, firstly, in order to help employees to raise their children and do their housework easily, he allowed them to select their time, place and even job-types to work, which is getting more popular but was not standard among Japanese companies at that time. Secondly, as the culture, he set 'openness / fairness' and 'independence / discussions' so that employees can talk about their thoughts of work honestly and be proud of their own ways of work.^{40 41}

Traditionally, Japanese companies have tended to set their rules to train their employees, and even if many employees might not understand, employees have to obey them, and also companies have cultures where employees see the same directions, for example, every employee should obey their bosses, and every employee should work for a long time. These ways might be effective to develop Japanese economy toward a certain direction in the postwar developing era, but in such ways the society can not include various human diversity such as gender, nationality and physical and mental conditions. Cybozu, Inc. challenges the change of such traditional cultures in Japanese work environment. This company has not employed persons with disabilities yet, but the principle of openness, fairness, independence and discussions enabled every person with/without disabilities to work easily.

The case of 'able-bodied' persons

Finally, I will describe the rest of people as 'people having able-bodies' including

39 Cybozu, Inc., 'Cybozu-shiki: the Media that Creates New Values of Your Teams', *Cybozu-shiki*, <<https://cybozushiki.cybozu.co.jp/>> [accessed 11 February 2021].

40 Cybozu, Inc., 'Why Can Cybozu, Inc. Reduce Restrictions of Time and Place?: 1', *Cybozu-shiki*, <<https://cybozushiki.cybozu.co.jp/?p=8328>> [accessed 11 February 2021].

41 Cybozu, Inc., 'Why Can Cybozu, Inc. Reduce Restrictions of Time and Place?: 2', *Cybozu-shiki*, <<https://cybozushiki.cybozu.co.jp/?p=8562>> [accessed 11 February 2021].

myself. In Japan, many children with disabilities enter special classes and study divided from the rest of the children. Even if they enter normal classes, they are not sometimes welcomed.⁴² After ratifying *CRPD* in 2017, 'Inclusive Education' was introduced gradually in schools, but the situations still differ depending on the local municipalities. In fact, it is difficult for all children to learn at the same places within the current fixed curriculum system. Therefore, in today's Japan, 'able-bodied' people have few opportunities to be together with persons with disabilities in their everyday lives. Moreover, as described in chapter 2, children with disabilities have tended to be cared for by their parents, thus there are more difficulties to be interrelated with each other.

On the other hand, the terminology of 'able-bodied' is problematic. There is not a dichotomy but a spectrum, between persons with disabilities and 'able-bodied' persons. Thus, everyone could be abled and disabled, depending on situations. This could be also explained as that 'disability' is caused by society, not 'impairment' by 'medical models'.⁴⁴ Therefore, as 'able-bodied' persons, people who have to live in the world clearly divided into 'ability' and 'disability' and have to pursue productivity and efficiency feel hard to live. Some people may feel that. It might be required to create alternative values against separately living each other everyday.

The idea of the 'tourist' connecting 'multitude' by Negri and Hardt with 'graph theory' by Hiroki Azuma, a philosopher, might be a hint to this situation. 'Tourists' enter 'irresponsibly' a world different from their everyday lives and meet people there.⁴⁴ For example, a 'tourist' who is neither a volunteer, an officer nor a carer suddenly visits a place where persons with disabilities are. Something new might be generated when both encounters, separated from each other before, meet. Azuma defines this as 'misdelivery'. This 'misdelivery' must be that I experienced the performance otto & orabu in Kagoshima, or that we felt each other when I met Yamano and Ito at Tanpopo-No-Ye. Such serendip encountering could be an

42 Kazuhiro Takemura, *Smart Inclusion for the future of Japan* (Tokyo: Next Publishing, 2017), p154. Kindle Edition.

43 Shinichiro Kumagaya, 'Movement by Persons with Disabilities - from Medical Model to Social Model', *Tojisha-Kenkyu - Discovery and Recovery of real 'self'*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2020), p225-325. Kindle Edition.

44 Hiroki Azuma, *Genron O: A Philosophy of the Tourist*, (Tokyo: Genron, 2017.4), p259-341

Abstracts in English are available here. <<https://genron-tomonokai.com/book/en/genron-0/>> [accessed 27 April 2021]

opportunity for an inclusive society.

Summary

In the current situation in Japan, there are still many issues, but also many possibilities in the following stakeholders; the governments, profit companies and individuals.

Firstly, the governments, even if the trend of efficiency improvement is unavoidable, can provide their services to citizens more easily by making digitally based platforms open and accessible. Secondly, more companies should have initiatives to employ persons with disabilities as Nihon Rikagaku Industry Co., Ltd. If they cannot do such, they could contribute by changing their cultures into more flexible and diverse ones. Finally, individuals, even if they are neither volunteers nor social activists, can change society through enjoying events where you visit and then knowing such rich and diverse places.

In addition, actions of each stakeholder, including civic organisations such as Tanpopo-No-Ye, should connect with each other without acting separately in each standpoint.

**Design approaches towards more serious
and complicated challenges**

How designers tackle serious and complicated challenges on earth including ‘making a more inclusive society’? Alice Rawsthorn wrote “design has always had one elemental role as an agent of change that interprets shifts of any type – social, political, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, ecological, or whatever”, referring to László Moholy-Nagy, a Hungry artist immigrating to Chicago and a teacher at *Bauhaus*, a legendary art school in Germany established in 1920’s. According to Rawsthorn, Moholy-Nagy believed that design has the power to build a better society and designers should collaborate with industry to build such a society.⁴⁵

In 1971, in the book ‘*Design for the real world*’, Victor Papanek, an Austrian-born American designer and educator, criticised the design situation in the commercialised and industrialised world, and advocated the necessity that “the designer must be conscious of his social and moral responsibilities”, resonating with ecological and the anti-consumerism movement.⁴⁶ Inspired by his messages, many designers have approached social problems in various ways. Moreover, recent rapid technology development such as smartphones, social media, artificial intelligence and blockchains has accelerated this trend.

While Papanek mainly focused on industrial design, more complicated today’s world requires designers to design not only products itself but also invisible aspects. Richard Buchanan, a researcher of design, management and information systems, claimed that the objects of design are expanding

	Symbols	Things	Action	Thought
Symbols	Graphic Design			
Things		Industrial Design		
Action			Interaction Design	
Thought				Environmental Design

Fig 16: Four Orders of Design (Buchanan, 2001)

from visible objects such as symbols and products to invisible objects such as environment, and today’s designers have to tackle ‘wicked problems’.⁴⁷ On the other hand, in the business and marketing field, as a trend, markets tend to get

⁴⁵ Alice Rawsthorn, *Design as an Attitude* (JRP/Ringier, 2018), p. 8

⁴⁶ Victor J. Papanek, *Design for the Real World*, 3rd Edn (London: Thames and Hudson, 2019), p. 102

⁴⁷ Richard Buchanan, ‘Design research and the new learning’. *Design issues* 17, 4 (2001)

more interests in service as a way to conceive value creation than products themselves. In other words, they tend to focus on service-dominant logic rather than goods-dominant logic.⁴⁸ From such a context, service design has emerged as a relatively new design discipline, which has one of its origins in an article, *Designing Services That Deliver* in 1984 by Lynn Shostack who analysed the process of a shoeshine parlor as a service using 'service blueprint' and clarified how to create better services.⁴⁹ This design field was adapted as one of the domains by design consulting firms such as IDEO, and then design firms specialising in Service Design such as Engine and Livework have also emerged.^{51 52 53}

The difficulties of explaining this design field lies in that it is the whole process itself of services and not always visible. For example, in a travel reservation service, objects to design are not only visible products and touch points such as websites, pamphlets and checkin experiences, but also invisible backstage elements to users such as building web systems, running call centres and making connections with hotels.

Another significant characteristic of Service Design is to have a human-centred process as well as other existing design fields. One of the methods of this process is provided as 'the Double Diamond design process' by Design Council. The process starts from the 'discover' phase when designers research everything for understanding target users such as needs, pains and situations. Then, designers assume the problem in the 'define' phase, and present some solution as prototypes in the 'develop' phase. This process continues to the next 'deliver' phase when designers refine possible solutions more suitable for users, by iterating some actions such as user testing and workshops. Particularly, in the 'develop' and 'deliver' phase, there is another trait of service design that designers can co-create with stakeholders relevant to the services, based on Participatory De-

48 Vargo, S. and Lusch, R. F. (2004), 'Evolving to a New Dominant Logic,' *Journal of Marketing* 68: 1-17.

49 G. Lynn Shostack, 'Designing Services That Deliver', *Harvard Business Review*, <<https://hbr.org/1984/01/designing-services-that-deliver>> [accessed 10 February 2021].

50 IDEO, 'IDEO is a global design and innovation company', *ideo.com* <<https://www.ideo.com/>> [accessed 28 April 2021].

51 ENGINE GROUP, 'Home', *Engine Group UK*, <<https://enginegroup.com/uk/>> [accessed 28 April 2021].

52 Livework, 'Livework designs better services', *Liveworkstudio*, <<https://www.liveworkstudio.com/>> [accessed 28 April 2021].

sign developed as citizens' democratic actions in mainly Scandinavian countries.⁵³

Service Design having holistic and human-centred perspectives has expanded its fields from business domains as its starting points to social domains tackling planet leveled 'wicked problems', in order to achieve more impactful outcomes. Manzini is a pioneer in applying Service Design to Design for Social Innovation.⁵⁴ In his book '*Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*', he argued possibilities of design as agents of changing society and making new culture. Interestingly, in his argument, Design emphasises not only problem solving but also sense making. In other words, he advocated, in the field of Design for Social Innovation, designers should create a type of culture. In addition, Manzini wrote that design capability is a combination of various capabilities inherent in human beings, and includes the following;

- Critical sense: which enables us to see what is unacceptable in the situation we are in
- Creativity: by which we imagine how things could be
- The ability to analyse: to recognise and assess the limits of the system and the resources available
- Practical sense: by which we put action strategies into effect that, within the limits of the system and making best use of the resources available, enable us to approach what we had imagined

According to Manzini, even non design experts having such capabilities can be a designer, and their roles are placed in the following diagram. In the field of Design for Social Innovation, He emphasised, design experts no longer cover the whole design process, but encounter and co-design

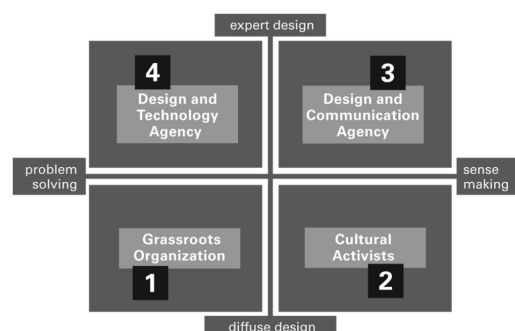


Fig 17: Design Mode Map (Manzini, 2015)

53 The Design Council, 'Design Methods for Developing Services', *Design Council*, <<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/design-methods-developing-services>> [accessed 10 February 2021].

54 According to the Young Foundation in the UK, Social Innovation is defined as "developing new ideas to tackle social problems or meet social needs. It may be a new product, service, initiative, organisational model or approach to the delivery of public services".

Nesta, 'Social Innovation | Nesta', *Nesta* <<https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/social-innovation/>> [accessed 27 April 2021].

with those who concern certain problems directly practicing diffuse design.⁵⁵

There are other design approaches toward social problems as well. One of them is Inclusive Design, which was presented by Professor Roger Coleman at Royal College of Art in 1994 at first, in a paper '*The Case for Inclusive Design*'. This approach aims to design for particular people such as those who have disabilities by involving themselves while Universal Design, as the similar design approach mainly developed in the US, aims to design for everyone widely and universally.⁵⁶ Roger led a programme, named DesignAge tackling the increase of the population of ageing in the 1990s. In the programme, he claimed designing for old ages is 'designing for our future selves' and emphasised we are parts of the society.⁵⁶ This approach developed into the establishment of Helen Hamlyn Centre of Design and spread around the world, including some design activities in Japan adopting its methods.⁵⁷

Speculative Design has more characteristic and more radical methods of approaching social problems, which was presented by Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby leading Design Interactions Course of Royal College of Art until 2015 and teaching at The New School / Parsons School of Design in New York now. This approach characterises stressing finding problems on the lineage of Critical Design, comparing with other major design approaches focussing on solving problems.⁵⁸ For example, in their work, *United Micro Kingdoms* (2013) by Dunne and Raby, they illustrated some future scenarios ironically such as the world of named Digitalians believing technologies totally, where everything is managed by tracking datas and driven automatically.⁵⁹ By creating such ridiculous prototypes at a glance, they presented our plausible futures. This approach starts being applied to actual policy-making. For example, Policy Lab, a group organised by the UK government, researching using designs for policy-making, supported HM Courts

55 Ezio Manzini, *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*, trans. by Rachel Coad (The MIT Press, 2015)

56 P. John Clarkson and Roger Coleman, 'History of Inclusive Design in the UK', *Applied Ergonomics*, 46 (2015), 235–47.

57 Julia Cassim et al. (eds.), *Inclusive Design* (Kyoto: Gakugei Publishing, 2014)

58 Matthew Malpass, *Critical Design in Context: History, Theory, and Practices* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 91–122, Bloomsbury Design Library

59 Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, 'The United Micro Kingdoms', *The United Micro Kingdoms* <<http://unitedmicrokingdoms.org/>> [accessed 10 February 2021].

& Tribunal Service to explore open justice in the future, describe their future scenarios by using this Speculative Design approach, and created a roadmap toward possible future justice systems.⁶⁰ As this example shows, this approach could apply to the methods to lead people to a better future in its original methods.

In addition, in 2015, another design approach, Transition Design was proposed mainly by three design researchers, Terry Irwin, Cameron Tonkinwise, and Gideon Kossoff, from the Faculty of Design, Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). This approach refers to existing design approaches such as Service Design, Design for Social Innovation and Speculative Design, which is a concept of designing social changes from the perspective of sustainability for the long term. Based on this approach, CMU has organised the same titled programme.^{61 62}

On the other hand, Liz Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers speculate about design's future in 2044 as that "design will play an increasingly large and significant role" that everyone will design, design will be a collective activity, and so on.⁶³ This idea also seems to be resonant with Manzini's one. According to them, design experts will make some tools such as 'cultural probes', 'generative toolkits' and 'design prototypes', and provide "the materials the rest of people use to imagine and express our collective ideas about future experience", as facilitators.^{64 65}

In summary, designers' roles have expanded from just making visible symbols and products to creating invisible existence such as services, systems, experiences, speculation, facilitation, and so on, and design aims not only to solve problems

60 Policy Lab, 'Using Speculative Design to Explore the Future of Open Justice', *Policy Lab* <<https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/2019/11/01/using-speculative-design-to-explore-the-future-of-open-justice/>> [accessed 10 February 2021].

61 Terry Irwin, 'Transition Design: A Proposal for a New Area of Design Practice, Study, and Research', *Design and Culture*, 7 (2015), 229–46.

62 Applying this Transition Design and Design for Social Innovation, an anthropologist, Arturo Escobar provided an alternative future plan for Cauca River Valley area in Columbia.

Arturo Escobar, 'Stirring the Anthropological Imagination: Ontological Design in Spaces of Transition', *Design Anthropology : Object Cultures in Transition*, ed. by Alison J. Clarke, 3rd edn (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), pp. 201–16, Bloomsbury Design Library

63 Liz Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers, 'From Designing to Co-Designing to Collective Dreaming: Three Slices in Time', *Interactions*, 21.6 (2014), 24–33.

64 Ibid.

65 Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers, 'Probes, Toolkits and Prototypes: Three Approaches to Making in Codesigning', *CoDesign*, 10.1 (2014), 5–14.

but also to create cultures. This paper will mainly focuses on such roles of design experts and design aimings in the coming chapters.

**How can design experts intervene with
the current situation?**

The previous chapter examined issues and possibilities of facing persons with disabilities in governments, companies and individuals in Japan. By creating 'design activities' in each area, and by connecting with each other including places close to persons with disabilities, the social situation could change.

Design attitude?

How can design experts intervene with such a situation? Let me consider this question by examining the characteristics and roles of design experts again. Kamil Michlewski, a design management researcher, researched designers working in four design firms such as IDEO, Nissan Design, Philips Design, and Wolff Olins, and revealed the following characteristics common among such design experts;

- Embracing uncertainty and ambiguity
- Engaging deep empathy
- Embrace the power of the five senses
- Playfully bringing things to life
- Creating new meaning from complexity

In other words, Michlewski showed it is their common attitude that they enjoy proposing playful and innovative options and meanings to today's uncertain world, with feeling empathy with target users.

On the other hand, Manzini showed two major roles of design experts from the two perspectives of problem solving and sense making, that the former is to co-design with people concerned to support their design activities, day by day, problems by problems, the latter is to cultivate such activities themselves by sharing visuals and stories, and then make them into cultures. Concretely, these roles could be viable by using 'cultural probes', 'generative toolkits' and 'design prototypes' as Sanders and Stappers proposed.⁶⁶ These might not be universal roles of design experts, but could consist of their attitudes.

For civic organisations

⁶⁶ Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers, 'Probes, Toolkits and Prototypes: Three Approaches to Making in Codesigning', *CoDesign*, 10.1 (2014), 5-14.

Based on these attitudes, let me consider the relationships between various stakeholders and design experts. First, I would like to consider the relationship with citizen groups and welfare facilities that are close to persons with disabilities. Such civic organisations have already engaged ‘diffuse design’, which is 1 and 2 quadrants in the diagram of design activities aligned by Manzini. As Tanpopo-No-Ye and Creative Support Let’s not only makes places and opportunities for them to live independently in the community through art activities by persons with disabilities as the ‘problem solving’ aspect, but also has made Able Art Movement opened to everyone as a valuable culture as the ‘sense making’ aspect, it could be easy for design experts to collaborate with the designer project as certain creative cultures have already been installed as a result of having collaborated with artists and designers as their traits related to expressing art. Design experts spontaneously should collaborate with such organisations to launch new projects and enterprises together, and spread their activities to everyone.

On the other hand, for organisations that do not have such knowledge or those which have just launched, for example, design experts could create online digital platforms that users can share their own knowledge. In order to reduce the burdens of officers, sharing the data for 3D printers that makes equipment used in facilities, and sharing standardised documents useful to organisations’ operations could be also another example. Such a network could expand to connecting with other stakeholders such as governments and profit companies.⁶⁷ In addition, designing tools such as games for organising and creating places, and holding workshops could work for activating communication within the organisations and creating new organisational cultures.

For governments

For governments, design experts could contribute to deploying digital platforms that might be planned in the future. Various kinds of visualised data such as *RE-SAS* published as an API, and discussion platforms such as vTaiwan could be referred to as existing cases. In the field of welfare services, it could also be helpful

⁶⁷ These are ideas that I came up in conversations with officers at the Good Job! Centre.

to provide accessible and affordable information and discussion forums.⁶⁸ Moreover such designers could design based on radical design research such as that carried out at Policy Lab described in chapter 3. For instance, creating quick prototypes and testing experimental demonstrations by the Speculative Design approach could examine the possibility and validity of future policies from the citizens' perspectives.

As strategies, roles of design experts are also important in such activities. Manzini claimed everyone could be a designer. If it is correct, bureaucrats in government could also be designers. Design experts should install mindsets as designers to them. Fortunately, some bureaucrats have become interested in design, and, in some governments, started their activities based on design thinking such as Policy Lab Shiga. Design experts should support building such autonomous environments as facilitators.

For companies

For companies, design experts could help to foster corporate cultures that allow more diverse work styles. For example, holding workshops regularly to reconsider the purpose of the companies and the relationships between employees could provide opportunities to change the corporate cultures by each employee as bottom-up perspectives. Such activities could also be effective not only for companies but also for civic organisations and governments as well.

The next step is to create an environment where persons with disabilities can work comfortably. One of them would be an instrument at the manufacturing factories. Nihon Rikagaku Kogyo made original instruments to meet the standards. Also, as mentioned several times, the precedent cases at the Good Job! Centre which made their original equipment with 3D printers could be helpful. If a platform that not only the welfare industry but also various companies can access such information is established, more various people can work at such com-

68 Cabinet Office, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Regional Economy, Trade and Industry, *RESAS*, <<https://resas.go.jp/#/13/13101>> [accessed 29 April 2021].

panies.

For individuals

For individuals, providing service platforms such as digital and physical spaces matching various places and people and as ‘misdelivery’ could be conceivable. Some ideas are, for example, visiting various organisations’ places as forms of tours, or holding inclusive parties between individuals, persons with disabilities and organisations. Finance services such as crowdfunding that encourage individuals to support organisations directly could also function as a temporary basic income system.

Towards inclusive cultures in Japan

In summary, in order to encourage everyone’s design activities, design experts could intervene to various stakeholders in various kinds of ways such as using tools for facilitating, proposing playful innovative options and making cultures. Here, I would bring an example of Noh, traditional Japanese performing arts. There are two types of actors; Shite and Waki on stages. According to Noboru Yasuda, a Noh



Fig 18: Noh Performance, Creative Commons, retrieved from <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Noh_Performance_\(235951661\).jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Noh_Performance_(235951661).jpeg)> [accessed 29 April 2021]

actor, the former is a main character in the stories, but the latter is not always a supporting character. He explains Waki plays as an intermediate that connects the audience to another world through interaction with Shite. Yasuda expresses such a space between these two worlds, *a-wa-i* which is a Japanese classical word meaning ‘in between’, which blurs the boundaries between stage and audience, self and others, self and environment, and time and space. The Noh stage invites the audience to the world of A-wa-i.⁶⁹ Such a world view has already been installed in Japanese culture, and it might be a place where an inclusive culture

⁶⁹ Noboru Yasuda, *The power of Awa-i*, (Tokyo, Mishima Sha, 2020). Kindle Edition.

corresponding to various factors is generated. The roles of design experts might be to re-create such a place like Waki actors.

Conclusion

The tour of this paper started from my personal experience that I enjoyed the otto&orabu's stage by performers with both disabilities and abilities in Kagoshima, 2018. I was fascinated by not only the incredible stage itself, but also the whole atmosphere. That was my unforgettable experience as a 'tourist'.

Yet, in fact, Japanese society traditionally has been hard for persons with disabilities and their families to live, public support was insufficient. As such persons and families continued to act sometimes radically after World War II, some laws were established and some institutions and organisations started to support them to live independently. Ratifying *CRPD* in 2007 helped such trends. In contrast, as many people live separately and hardly know each other, it was difficult to change their mindsets of discrimination. The occurring of the horrible terrorism in 2017 could be like a mirror of their minds.

Against such a tough situation, a civic organisation, Tanpopo-No-Ye has supported persons with disabilities through art expressions, leading Able Art Movement. Their activities are not to focus on their art works themselves like Art Brut or Outsider Art, but to encourage members with disabilities to connect to society by their works. Such movement, Able Art Movement has expanded to other organisations such as Creative Support Let's and even other types of enterprises such as Good Job! Project. In other words, their movement has infiltrated into Japan's soils.

As for other stakeholders such as governments, profit companies and individuals, there are still challenges but also possibilities. They are, for example, digital transformation of governments, updating corporate cultures, and 'misdelivery'.

My question was how designers help persons with both disabilities and abilities to live together, independently and vividly in the communities. Designers have proposed playful and innovative options and meanings to today's uncertain world with feeling empathy with target users although design objects have changed from visible ones to invisible abstract ones such as services and systems. Such attitudes encourage them to tackle social problems. On the other hand, Sanders

and Stappers provoked “Everyone can be involved in designing” in 2044. If this statement is correct, what can design experts help? I believe design experts must act like Waki performers on Noh. Such performers connect between other performers and the audience in a blurred world. They can make inclusive cultures as *a-wa-i*; ‘in-between-ness’ in Japan.

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