



World Right-To-Die Newsletter

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April 2004

Living Wills to be assessed

The 15th international conference of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies is scheduled to take place on Thursday, September 30 through Sunday, October 3, in the Toshi Center Hotel, Tokyo.

The World Conference Japan has two major roles. One is to exchange views on encountering incidents with members of WFRtDS for a better movement in the world. The other is to analyze a large variety of living wills and to potentially construct living wills aiming the basic uniform rights of the terminally ill act among member societies in the world.

Here we will limit the living wills to the withholding

or withdrawal of life-prolonging procedure to the qualified patients with terminal condition. To begin with, we will overview the living wills in the world to find out diversities of living wills. It is our hope to propose some preliminary or prototype of living wills for the members of WFRtDS.

Hotel accommodation is also available in this hotel. Please return the registration card and other related forms as indicated in the final Circular that will be sent to you in the middle of April. The deadline for registration is July 30, 2004.

Listed information is as follows:

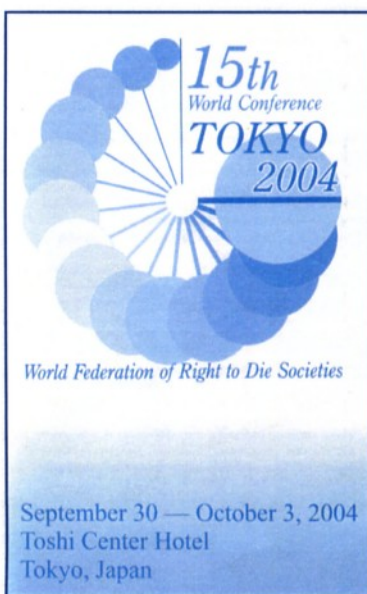
1) Brief Information on Time Schedule, Program Formal Registration Form and other related Forms are to be provided in the final Circular that should be sent to each Member Society in the middle of April. First, please enjoy provisional program of 15th World Conference Tokyo 2004 on page 2 of this newsletter.

2) We would like to make a request as follows: since one of the topics is the living wills around the world, we would like to get all living wills from each of our society or from the State. We would like to analyze the difference among living wills around the world. This is a good way to understand the cross cultural difference and to create better living wills. Therefore, please allow us to expect your great cooperation. Would you please send us your living will by mail to the following addressee?

To: Mr. Michio Arakawa, Executive Director
Japan Society for Dying with Dignity
2-29-1-201, Hongo, Bunkyo-ku,
Tokyo 113-0033, Japan

e-mail: info@songenshi-kyokai.com

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15th World Conference in Tokyo

Provisional Schedule

Thursday September 30

9:00-10:45	Board Meeting of WFRtDS	Room 603
10:45	Coffee break	
11:00-12:30	Delegates Meeting of WFRtDS (1/2)	Room Subaru
12:30	Lunch	Room Orion
14:00-15:30	Reports from Member Societies of WFRtDS (1/2)	Room Cosmos
15:30	Coffee break	
15:45-17:00	Reports from Member Societies of WFRtDS (2/2)	Room Cosmos
17:30 -18:30	Delegates Meeting of WFRtDS (2/2)	Room Subaru
19:00	Social time to converse for members of WFRtDS Snack and beverages to be served	Room Subaru

Fri. October 1

8:30-9:30	Board Meeting of WFRtDS	Room 603
10:00-12:00	Opening Ceremony and Welcome Messages <i>Opening Address</i> Rokuro Kitayama (President, JSDD) <i>Welcome Address</i> Michael Irwin (UK) (President, WFRtDS) <i>Address</i> Chikara Sakaguchi (Minister of Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) <i>Address</i> Hiroshi Okuda (Adviser JSDD, President of Japan Business Federation) <i>Keynote Speech</i> A desirable future of terminal care in Japan Soichiro Iwao (Director General, Health Policy Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) <i>Keynote Speech</i> Learning from history and challenging itself to future dignified death activities at JSDD Akihiro Igata (Chairman, Japan Society for Dying with Dignity) Presentation of George Saba Award	Room Cosmos
12:30	Lunch	Room Orion
14:00-16:00	Session 1 1) Choosing to hasten dying - who makes the choice? Richard MacDonald (Canada, Medical Director, The Hemlock Foundation and End of Life Choices) 2) The Future of the Right to Die Movement Derek Humphry (UK and USA, President, ERGO)	Room Cosmos
16:00	Coffee break	
16:15-17:15	Session 2 Attitudes of the Japan Medical Association for Living Will Hideya Sakurai (tentative) (Executive Director, The Japan Medical Association)	Room Cosmos

Fri. October 1 (continued)

14:00-15:30	Session 3 Living Will and Health Care Proxy Japan Adult Guardianship Law Association	Room 601
15:45-17:15	Session 4 The transition from "Euthanasia" to "Dying with dignity" in Japan Mitsuo Ohta (Executive Director, JSDD)	Room 601
18:30	Cocktail Party Free of registration and charge ????	Room Orion

Sat. October 2

8:30-9:30	Board Meeting of WFRtDS	Room 603
9:30	Coffee break	
10:00-12:00	Session 1 Dementia and dying with dignity Gen Ohi (Director, JSDD)	Room Subaru
10:00-12:00	Session 2 Laws and ethics of terminal care Saku Machino (Professor, Dept. of Law, Sophia University)	Room Cosmos
10:00 -12:00	Session 3 Living Will in the world and our activities for legalization Michio Arakawa (Executive Director, JSDD)	Room 601
12:00	Lunch	Room Orion
13:00-16:00	27th Annual Conference of JSDD <i>Address</i> Annual Report <i>Special Lectures</i> 1) Pro-Choice Living Wills Michael Irwin (UK, President, WFRtDS) 2) Enjoyable golden years Jakucho Setouchi (Author)	Room Cosmos
16:00-17:45	RtD-Europe Meeting	Room 603
18:00	Dinner Party Royal Hall, 5th floor, Akasaka Prince Hotel Annex (300 persons) Requirement of application and payment in advance Participation Fee: 3,000 yen	

Sun. October 3

9:00-10:00	Board Meeting of WFRtDS	Room 603
10:00	Coffee break	
10:15-12:00	Delegates Meeting of WFRtDS	Room 601
12:30	Lunch	Room Orion
14:00-16:00	Closing Ceremony	Room Cosmos

Mon. October 4

9:00	Nikko One Day Tour (chartered bus tour) Participants: 10,000 yen for one person	
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Court cases draw attention to cause

We must always remind ourselves that the World Federation unfortunately has to operate on a limited income. At present, the subscriptions from our 39 Member Societies only produce a few thousand dollars each year. That is why the proposed motion (to be discussed at our Tokyo Conference) to increase the maximum for the annual membership fees to US\$1000—which will only affect the much larger societies—is so important.

Up to now, when considering new World Federation projects, we could only implement those which cost almost nothing.

Two good examples of such activities, in the past year, are the first Annual Global Report (based on information I received from 27 Member Societies) which was issued last December, and quoted in various publications worldwide, and the draft World Federation Manifesto which has already produced positive responses from nine of our Members. Hopefully, the Annual Report can become a regular event, and the Manifesto is formally adopted in Tokyo in October.

Earlier this year, our Treasurer, Annelies Plaisant, sent out requests for the 2004 membership fees. It is important to remember that if a member society has not paid its annual dues by the autumn, it may cease to be in the World Federation (I am sure that every society, represented in Tokyo, will be fully paid up!)

New activities?

In spite of the above somewhat pessimistic comments, any member society which has an idea for some new project, to be undertaken in the name of the World Federation, should contact me or another member of the Board of Directors. If such a proposal is accepted by the Board and should require extra funding, then a special appeal could perhaps be made to member societies for this purpose.

The World Federation is a loosely-related, global network of organizations with a variety of objectives, ranging from the promotion of living wills and their legislation to positive laws permitting assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia. Basically, I am pleased to note that our links remain good.

Our international biennial conferences allow for the renewal of important personal contacts and the development of new ones, as well as assisting the local Society by providing good media coverage for the interesting relevant public discussions which are held. We must always be grateful to the host(s) who arrange these conferences because each event requires a great deal of planning and hard work. And, when regional conferences are also held, these can generate many mutual benefits—as was seen in Luxembourg last October.

I am pleased to announce that a new member society,

Libera Uscita (based in Rome), has been given “interim” membership by our Board, and formal approval will be requested at the next delegates meeting, in Tokyo.

Our newsletters report on interesting events and are a very important permanent record of what has been happening globally. Recently, I re-read parts of the 1981–2000 compilation of these newsletters which Derek Humphry produced at the beginning of this century: collectively, this gives an inspiring account of the development of the right-to-die movement. I am so grateful to Derek for remaining as our Editor.

Then, our new web site—thanks to Guido Hulscher at NVVE—provides much reliable information. I hope that individual Member Societies will make even greater use of this web site, and regularly contact Guido (info@worldrtd.net) to make their own inputs.

Finally, of course, the Board of Directors is the continuous central link of the World Federation. Although each Director is on the Board in an individual capacity, the present membership covers ten member societies. We are a most harmonious body, regularly keeping in touch with each other by e-mail (nowadays, it is hard to imagine a life without e-mails!) between our annual meetings.

An ageing world

We are living now in what some population experts are calling an agequake. According to recent UN estimates, the world's population of people 60 years or older is expected to triple to two billion by 2050—then, one person in five will be over 60 (and it is believed that there will even be more than two million people over 100).

This ageing population will naturally increase the pressures on the health care systems around the world; and will also indirectly perhaps generate much greater interest in positive laws on assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia in many countries?

Within the past year, several court cases around the world, especially those of Evelyn Martens in Canada and Lesley Martin in New Zealand, have generated much media attention on assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia. (Lesley was found guilty in March of attempting to murder her mother; sentence not imposed at the time we go to press. Evelyn's trial is set for September.)

While the World Federation and individual member societies may, for a variety of reasons, be reluctant to officially encourage their members to break local laws, I am personally certain that such court cases will eventually help to increasingly mobilize national opinions in favour of parliamentary actions for legalized assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia.

