

Africa NOW #115

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pp. 2-15 **Special Topic: History of AJF's 25 years and our future**

The Africa-Japan Forum (AJF) was established in March 1994. Since then, the AJF has been involved in a variety of activities aimed at building equal partnerships between the various people concerned with Africa. This issue of Africa NOW features 'History of AJF's 25 years and our future', looking back on the history of AJF's activities and considering how AJF will continue to work with the people of Africa in the future.

pp .3-7 **Interview with Saito Ryoichiro: AJF's 2000-2016 history of connecting with people**

This is an interview with AJF's former Executive Director, Saito Ryoichiro, who assumed the responsibility from 2000 to 2016. He describes the work of the Infectious Diseases Study Group, one of the two AJF study groups that began in 2001, in responding to the voices of HIV-positive people in Africa and working to ensure the right of HIV-positive people to access treatment. The other group, the Food Security Study Group, contributed to building networks with other organizations to advocate the rights of Africa's diverse farmers and smallholders. He also points out that the strength of the AJF is in 'human network' and the importance of the work to connect members each other.

pp .7 **The history of AJF's activities,1994-2019**

pp .8-13 **What can we do with African people ? - Consideration on AJF's activities for 1994-2019**

The following are the remarks made by each speaker at the AJF's 25th anniversary special event 'What we can do with the people of Africa in the future - Looking back on the history of the Africa-Japan Forum' held on 8 February 2020.

pp .8-9 **Review of AJF activities, Part I , 1994-1999**

The three speakers explain how the AJF was established, why it was named 'Africa-Japan Forum', and what advocacy work aimed to achieve at the time.

pp. 9-10 **Review of AJF activities, Part II, 2000-2019**

Seven speakers describe AJF's advocacy work after 2000, including advocacy at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), awareness raising on Africa, collaboration with people of African origin living in Japan, and efforts to conserve African tropical forests and wildlife.

p .11 **Why are we posing a question of 'what we can do with the people of Africa'?**

by Tamai Takashi

AJF board member (then and now co-chair of the board) Tamai Takashi discusses the necessary shift in our image of Africa and the problems with the idea of 'what can we do for Africa.'

pp .11-12 **Learning from Africa, the system of supporting physical health and emotional pain**

by Sugishita Tomohiko

Sugishita Tomohiko, a medical doctor and then AJF board member, discusses traditional African system of medical care that treats not only 'diseases' but also 'illnesses' and provide care for the people in trouble themselves. Sugishita emphasizes the importance of learning from African wisdom to create the society in which socially vulnerable people are protected and feel safe.

p. 13 **How can we work with indigenous peoples against resource exploitation and Ebola?**

by Nishihara Tomoaki

In the tropical forest regions of Africa, resource exploitation and the threat of infectious diseases such as Ebola are destroying indigenous pygmy communities. AJF board member (at the time) Nishihara Tomoaki reports on this situation and suggests that we need to think about what 'we' can do with the Pygmies and other indigenous peoples.

pp. 14-15 **Activity reports of AJF's four committees**

To improve and strengthen AJF's governance, four committees (Activities, Membership and Finance, Public Relations, and Ethics and Crisis Management Response), which were established in 2020, report on their discussions to date.

pp. 16-17 **Western Sahara “Remember Gdeim Izik Protest Camp”** by Hakoyama Fumiko
On 9 October 2010, on the plains of Gdeim Izik, near El Aaiún, the capital of the Moroccan occupied Western Sahara, people (Sahrawi) gathered and set up tents to protest for the right of self-determination for the Western Sahara. This action spread quickly and 7,000 tents were erected and 20,000 people participated. However, a month later, in the early hours of 8 November, the Moroccan army destroyed the camp with armoured vehicles. Many were arrested and 19 people are still in Moroccan prisons. To commemorate the action, Hakoyama Fumiko, a member of the AJF and the Friends of Western Sahara Japan, reports on the seminar ‘Remember the Gedeim Ijik Protest Camp in Western Sahara: Resistance and Repression of the Desert Peoples’, held online on 7 November 2020.

p. 17 **Commentary: The reality of Western Sahara - First military conflict after 29 years**
by Inaba Masaki

On 13 November 2020, the Moroccan military incursion into the buffer zone and military action in Guerguerat, near the Mauritanian border, triggered the first military clashes between Moroccan troops and the Polisario Front (*Frente Polisari*), the liberation force in Western Sahara, in the 29 years since the signing of the armistice in 1991. AJF board member, Inaba Masaki analyses the background to the clashes and calls for the restoration of sovereignty and decolonisation of Western Sahara.

p. 18 **My encounter with African Kids Club and African Youth Meetup** by Nakata Mari
This is the 8th instalment in a series of ‘Essay Relay - African Kids Club’. Nakata Mari, the second year of Junior High School in Aichi Prefecture, Japan, says that the African Kids Club and the African Youth Meetup have made her feel less negative about being a black mix. She also hopes that there will be fewer people who are discriminated against or do not like who they are.

p. 19 **Introducing African Kids Club TOKAI** by Evade-dan Irene
Evade-dan Irene (AJF Board Member), who has been involved in African Kids Club as an former AJF intern, introduces the activities of African Kids Club TOKAI, which started in 2019 in the Tokai region.

p. 20 **“Kimo Kawaii” Shona sculpture** by Miyazono Hiroyuki
AJF member Miyazono Hiroyuki explains the cultural background and attractiveness of Shona sculpture in Zimbabwe. He said that the expression of Shona sculpture, which is a stone sculpture, is ‘*kimo kawaii*’ (creepy cute) and is appreciated as a contemporary art.

p. 21 **Book Review: Tamai Takashi “People Who Search for a Treatment”** by Komoriya Yuji
A book review by Komoriya Yuji of Tamai Takashi’s book “*People Who Search for a Treatment: The ethnography of the therapy network in the waterfront slum in Nigeria*” (“*Chiryō o Watari Aruku Hitobito: Naijīria no Suijō Suramu ni okeru Chiryō Nettowaku no Minzokushi*” in Japanese original title). According to the book, when the Eguns of Makoko, a waterfront slum in Lagos State, Nigeria, become seriously ill with malaria, they travel some seven hours to return to their home country, neighbouring Benin, despite the availability of quality health services in the area. The reviewer refers to the author’s analysis of this ‘strange’ behaviour as Egun’s ‘searching’ for the therapy network of their acquaintances and homeland in the context of tensions with Yoruba, Nigeria’s main ethnic group.

p. 22-23 **Introducing AJF’s interns and volunteers Vol.1**
Each of this year’s seven AJF interns and volunteers (Uchiumi Fuka, Lee Julin, Babaguchi Kano, Sato Maya, Nakamura Misa, Ribeirokoi Reia and Wada Natsuki) share their aspirations and expectations for the AJF.

Back cover **Afterword (“*Hitotsu no musubime to shite*” in Japanese) and a record of AJF’s activities**