More Than Medals

Frost, Dennis J.

Published by Cornell University Press

Frost, Dennis J.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/81036
Chapter 1

Tokyo’s Other Games
The Origins and Impact of the 1964 Paralympics

That it has been possible to hold the 1964 International Stoke Mandeville Games for the Paralysed in Tokyo is due greatly to the understanding of our Japanese friends, who had the vision to recognize the significance of these Games not only as an important sports Movement but as a beam of hope for disabled people all over the world. The Japanese Organizing Committee, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Y. Kasai, have undertaken their great task with an enthusiasm, efficiency and generosity which commands our admiration and gratitude. It is gratifying to know they have had the full support of their Government and many leading Japanese organizations.

Ludwig Guttmann, 1964

In his words of welcome to the competitors in what became known as the Tokyo Paralympics, Ludwig Guttmann, founder of the Stoke Mandeville Games for the Paralysed, offered high praise for the vision and enthusiasm of the host country. Four years earlier, however, when the Paralympic Games concluded in Rome on September 25, 1960, a mere handful of people in Japan were aware of their existence, and even though preparations for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics were already underway, few people in Japan or elsewhere would have believed that Tokyo would ever host this international sporting event for athletes with physical disabilities. At the time, Olympic venues were not required or even expected to host the Paralympics, and Japan was not a country renowned for progressive treatment of the disabled. Indeed, many in Japan dismissed the very notion of sports for those with disabilities as a preposterous and even dangerous idea. Yet only a few years later, Japan became the third country—and the first outside Europe—to host the Paralympic Games. This chapter explores how this remarkable turn of events came about.
With Tokyo’s selection as the host for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the city was set to be the first in the world to hold the International Paralympic Games on two occasions, a development that inspired increased interest in Japan’s earlier experience hosting the Paralympics. Despite this renewed attention and the obvious significance of the 1964 Games to the history of disability sports more generally, Japan’s first Paralympic Games have remained little known, especially for those without access to Japanese-language materials. Japanese accounts themselves tend to fall into two categories: official or institutional reports and general overviews of the Tokyo Paralympics; both focus almost exclusively on key organizers whose vision and effort helped overcome various obstacles to bring the Paralympics to Japan. Although these individuals played pivotal roles, closer consideration of the events leading up to the Games reveals a more complex picture involving intersecting personal, local, national, and transnational actors and motivations, all of which culminated in intense pressure to hold the Games in Tokyo immediately following the Summer Olympics.

In the end, the 1964 Tokyo Paralympics attracted hundreds of athletes, thousands of spectators, widespread media attention, and major sponsorships. They were widely hailed as a success and credited with giving “hope, courage, and self-confidence to Japan’s physically disabled.” As the first Paralympic Games held outside Europe, they also had a profound impact on the emerging Paralympic Movement by demonstrating its growing international appeal, strengthening its association with the Olympic Games, and promoting an expanded multi-disability approach to disability sports. Nevertheless, analyses of the Games themselves and especially the ways in which Paralympic organizers sought to present them in Japan point to the need for a more nuanced understanding of their impact that goes beyond simple claims of success and progress.

Given the relatively limited nature of existing scholarship on the Tokyo Paralympics, it is not surprising that there has not yet been proper attention to how these Games, and especially their participants, were represented in Japan. Studies of more recent Paralympic coverage have highlighted the importance of close examinations of such representations, because it has become increasingly clear that the amount of attention these events receive can be less significant than the ways in which the Games and their athletes are portrayed. As a number of scholars have demonstrated, representations of Paralympic athletes, especially those appearing in the mass media, have often relied on images and descriptions that reinforce medicalized understandings of disability. Athletic involvement and achievement have tended to be framed in terms of “overcoming” disability through sports, a reductionist approach that presents
Paralympians as victims who warrant pity or as “super-crips” who merit attention because they have not allowed their disability to prevent them from pursuing and achieving success. Research has also shown that nationalism, gender, forms of impairment, and the types of sport also play a significant role in shaping representations of disability sports.

As explored later in the chapter, the representations of athletes participating in the 1964 Tokyo Paralympics share several similarities with those from more recent disability sports events. But analyses of the materials associated with the 1964 Games also offer insights that go beyond adding a “non-Western” perspective to the existing scholarship. For one, an examination of what the Japanese public was seeing in the early 1960s serves as a useful reminder that the representations we often encounter today have a history. Because Japan was among the earliest countries to host the Paralympics and did so at a time when few in the country were familiar with disability sports, the Tokyo Games provide a unique vantage point for exploring how a large population was introduced to the Paralympic Movement and its ideals. In other words, a study of these Games can help explain how patterns of representation and stereotypes took shape.

The history of the Tokyo Paralympics clearly demonstrates that the perceptions and approaches that Paralympic organizers adopted were pivotal in shaping these early representations. Their emphasis on sports as a means of rehabilitation ultimately helped re-inscribe preexisting medicalized views of the disabled body, views particularly apparent in official reports and promotional commentaries. At the same time, disability advocates and Paralympic athletes were able to take advantage of the prominence of the Tokyo Paralympics to articulate and display alternate understandings of disability to a large audience, laying the groundwork for Japan’s domestic disability sports movement and a broader, gradual shift in perceptions of disabled athletes in post-war Japan. At the core of these efforts was a form of co-constitution, a negative nationalism of sorts, that praised the “brightness” of foreign Paralympians while at times demeaning Japanese athletes to highlight the flaws in Japanese approaches to disability in an attempt to initiate changes. Although these efforts ultimately seem to have helped foster such changes, they also complicate any effort to see the Tokyo Paralympics as a clear-cut “beam of hope for disabled people all over the world.”

Analyses of the writings of Paralympic promoters from the periods before, during, and after the 1964 Paralympics also make it clear that for many, the significance of the Paralympics as a “beam of hope” was also secondary to their role as an arena for evaluating Japan’s standing in the global community.
“The De Coubertin of the Paralysed”
Looks to Japan

Before turning to an examination of the Tokyo Paralympics themselves, it will be useful to situate them in the broader history of the Paralympic Movement, which in 1964 was still in its earliest stages. Without a doubt, Ludwig Guttmann, the man Pope John XXIII once described as “the De Coubertin of the paralysed,” is a critical figure in that early history. Guttmann, a respected Jewish neurologist, hospital director, and full professor of neurology, fled Nazi Germany in 1939 and resettled in England. After he spent several years at Oxford University, the British government commissioned him in 1943 to be the director of the newly established National Spinal Injuries Unit at the Ministry of Pensions Hospital, Stoke Mandeville, which was located roughly 65 kilometers outside London. Guttmann’s well-documented activities as director at Stoke Mandeville and his revolutionary emphasis on movement and activity for people with severe spinal injuries quickly led to the integration of sports as a critical component of his patients’ total rehabilitation programs.

Competitive sports were part and parcel of Guttmann’s approach at Stoke Mandeville from the beginning, but the origins of the Paralympics are often dated to July 29, 1948, when Guttmann helped organize the first Stoke Mandeville Games. What began as a small public archery competition between two teams of paraplegics quickly became an annual tradition. With each passing year, the Stoke Mandeville Games (which used varying names during these early years) attracted more competitors and added new sports. In 1952, a Dutch team participated, making the Stoke Mandeville Games truly international.

As many, including Pope John XXIII, have observed, Guttmann’s Stoke Mandeville Games were often associated with the Olympic Movement. Whether intentional or fortuitous, the first Stoke Mandeville Games occurred in 1948 on the same day as the opening ceremony for the London Olympic Games. Throughout the early years of the Stoke Mandeville Games, Guttmann repeatedly referenced the Olympic Movement, citing it as both an inspiration and a goal: he hoped paraplegics would one day compete in the Olympics. After the International Olympic Committee awarded the Fearnley Cup to the International Stoke Mandeville Games “for actions in keeping with the true spirit of Olympism,” Guttmann and other organizers began exploring the possibility of holding the ninth International Stoke Mandeville Games in Rome immediately following the 1960 Olympics. The result of their efforts, an event that is now officially recognized as the first Paralympic Games, involved nearly 370 athletes from twenty-two countries competing in twelve
different events and using many of the same facilities that the Olympic athletes had used only a few weeks before.

With the success of the Rome Paralympics and the ongoing growth of the annual Games held at Stoke Mandeville, it might seem only natural that Guttmann and other organizers of those Games would look to Tokyo, the host for the next Olympics, as the site for the thirteenth International Stoke Mandeville Games. In fact, one brief English-language account describing the origins of the Tokyo Paralympic Games notes that Guttmann was “keen to stage the Games again at the same venue as the Olympic Games in 1964, in Tokyo.” Another account comments specifically on the “self-assurance” of Stoke Mandeville organizers and their widespread belief that the “International Games really could be exported to any country.”

Japanese sources reveal much less optimism. In 1960 there was, in fact, very little reason for anyone, including the organizers in Rome, to believe that Tokyo would be willing or able to host the Paralympics. For one thing, no Japanese athletes or official observers had ever participated in or attended the International Stoke Mandeville Games. Although the International Paralympic Committee website claimed that support for Guttmann’s plan to hold the Paralympic Games in Tokyo “was boosted by the positive reactions of Japanese observers who visited the 1960 Games in Rome,” the sole Japanese who actually witnessed these Games was Watanabe Hanako, whose presence at the Paralympics appears to have been partly accidental; she was there because she was married to the chief of the Rome bureau for Japan’s Kyōdō News Service. Fortunately, Watanabe was also a scholar of labor and welfare policies, and she took an avid interest in the Games. She reportedly spoke with Guttmann about the possibility of holding a similar event in Tokyo, but this discussion was certainly not an official commitment. Perhaps it goes without saying, but a conversation with an enthusiastic individual spectator hardly seems like the best foundation for planning a major international sporting event in a foreign country. There is also good reason to suspect that Guttmann may have been skeptical of Watanabe’s statement of interest. Only a few months earlier, in February 1960, Nakamura Yutaka, a 32-year old doctor from southwestern Japan, traveled to Stoke Mandeville to observe the facilities and study Guttmann’s methods. According to Nakamura, Guttmann greeted him rather harshly: “So you’re Japanese? Several Japanese have come here already. All of them have said that they want to imitate what we are doing here, and then they go back to Japan. So far, not one of them has followed through and done it.” Nakamura acknowledged that Guttmann’s statement was probably accurate, and Watanabe herself indicated that Guttmann had offered similar complaints when she spoke with him about her interest in bringing the Para-
lympics to Japan. If Guttmann had so little faith in Japan’s medical professionals, the very people who would seem most likely to share his ambitious goals, it raises an important question: Why was he so “keen” to hold the International Stoke Mandeville Games four years later in a country that seemed to have minimal interest in or commitment to sports for the disabled?

In many respects, Guttmann’s desire to hold the Games in Tokyo makes perfect sense; these Games were simply the next logical step in his broader agenda. If the Paralympics were to continue to grow, develop, and gain prestige, then they had to go to Tokyo: they had to follow wherever the Olympics led. It also seems plausible, given Guttmann’s record, that Japan’s seeming lack of interest in disability sports itself would make it a particularly appealing host site. He was certainly not one to avoid a challenge, and if the Paralympics could be held successfully in Tokyo, it would demonstrate that the Stoke Mandeville Games could, in fact, be exported anywhere—even outside Europe or to countries without a strong history of involvement in disability sports. Moreover, Guttmann’s encounters with the various Japanese doctors who had visited Stoke Mandeville pointed to latent interest in his approaches to sports and rehabilitation. A large-scale event such as the Paralympics could garner greater attention for his ideas and help them take root in Japan.

Japanese source materials also indicate that Guttmann and his Stoke Mandeville Games were not the only forms of disability sports attracting attention in Japan in the years before the first Tokyo Games. Sporting events in Japan for those with hearing impairments dated from 1918, and those for the visually impaired were launched in the 1920s. Many of these events were local or national events tied to Japan’s specialized schools for visually or hearing-impaired students, and they seemed to have had only limited connections to international organizations or developments. In that sense, these early examples of sports events shared similarities with localized events hosted for other disability groups in places such as Tokyo, Saitama, and Nagano in the years following World War II. Recent archival discoveries and scholarship have also revealed a variety of sports events organized during the war for Japan’s veterans with disabilities, an intriguing and still developing story examined further in chapter 3. All of these events suggest that Guttmann was pitching his particular disability sporting event to a country with more exposure to disability sports than it might first appear.

In fact, by the early 1960s, a handful of Japanese medical experts interested in rehabilitation had established relationships with specialists outside of Great Britain who were actively promoting sports for those with disabilities other than spinal injuries. Japanese organizers of the 1964 Games seem to have been in regular contact with a group of specialists that included Gerd Brinkmann, Hanz
Lorenzen, and Norman Acton, who eventually became head of the International Sports Organization for the Disabled (ISOD).\textsuperscript{23} In July 1963, at Acton’s urging, Japan dispatched a team of athletes to participate in what various Japanese sources identify as the First International Sports Festival for the Disabled held in Linz, Austria.\textsuperscript{24} Unfortunately, this early sports festival, which was likely the world’s first international multi-disability sports event (though one that did not include athletes with spinal cord injuries), appears to have attracted little scholarly notice, so further consideration of its relationship to the Stoke Mandeville Games must await further research. That said, Japanese participation in Austria highlighted the fact that Tokyo’s would-be organizers were willing to engage with any and all forms of disability sports, an approach that would, as outlined later, result in a structure for the Tokyo Paralympics unlike any previous Stoke Mandeville Games.

It is also apparent that the years leading up to the Tokyo Games were marked by simmering tensions in the emerging disability sports movement. Details are murky, but these tensions reached a boiling point during the June 1963 meeting of the International Working Group for Disabled Sport, where unspecified events launched a dispute between Guttmann and Gerd Brinkmann, who was serving as president of the Deutschen Versehrtensportverbandes (DVS), the organization that represented Germany at the Stoke Mandeville Games. The dispute proved serious enough that Guttmann resigned from the Working Group and the DVS opted to boycott the 1964 Stoke Mandeville Games in Tokyo.\textsuperscript{25} These behind-the-scenes tensions and Japanese organizers’ manifest interest in potentially competing approaches to disability sports both point to the distinct possibility that Guttmann and other promoters of the Stoke Mandeville Games were experiencing added pressure in the early 1960s to ensure that their Games were represented in Tokyo. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that Guttmann wanted to hold the thirteenth International Stoke Mandeville Games in Tokyo, but as he acknowledged as the Games began in 1964, his goals and plans were ultimately dependent on the actions and interests of those in Japan.

**From Zero to Paralympics in Four Years**

On the Japanese side in 1960, the prospects for the 1964 Paralympics did not look promising. Very few people even seemed aware of the existence of the Stoke Mandeville Games, and broader familiarity with disability sports was lacking at nearly all levels. There were no institutions, official or otherwise, in place for organizing an event of this sort in Japan. Even if the Paralympics
were smaller and more informal than they are today, hosting them in Tokyo was going to be a monumental, and uncertain, undertaking. Among many other tasks, would-be organizers needed to establish new organizations, create basic public awareness, gain at least tacit approval from national and local leaders, generate funding, find and train Japanese participants, and, certainly not least of all, plan and host the Paralympic Games themselves—all in less than four years and at a time when attention and resources were overwhelmingly focused on preparations for the 1964 Olympics. An examination of how and why Japanese organizers decided to pursue these tasks offers insights into institution building and especially the ways in which several individuals mobilized existing social networks, the media, and the symbolic power of the imperial family to pursue their agendas.

According to official accounts as recorded in both the organizing committee’s *Official Report on the Tokyo Paralympic Games* and the *Twentieth Anniversary History* of the Japan Sports Association for the Disabled, the 1964 Games were rooted in a series of events that occurred in early 1961. In February, Okino Matao, a disabled navy veteran and director of the Japanese branch of the World Veterans Federation (WVF), received materials about disability sports from the head office in Paris. Interested in bringing greater attention to the topic in Japan, Okino joined with Hieda Masatora, the head of the National Disability Rehabilitation Training Center, to translate the materials and prepare a 157-page booklet titled “Sports for the Disabled.”

Hieda’s interest in disability sports was not new; during a 1953 conference in Copenhagen, he acquired some written materials on the topic, including those by Hanz Lorenzen, one of the pioneers of multi-disability sports in Austria and West Germany. While visiting Europe in 1957, Hieda also observed a regional sporting event for the disabled in Hamburg, West Germany, an experience that inspired him to share what he learned after he returned to Japan, which may explain why Okino reached out to him in particular. Despite their interest in promoting sports for the disabled, neither Okino nor Hieda expressed a desire to host the Paralympics at this point. Discussions about that possibility, however, soon followed.

On April 13, 1961, at a workshop on disability rehabilitation training, Watanabe Hanako gave a presentation about her experiences at the Rome Paralympics, and Okino followed with a talk titled “Elevating Sports for the Disabled in Japan.” Details about these presentations remain vague, but based on references to the discussions that followed, it is clear that at least one of them raised the possibility of hosting the Stoke Mandeville Games in 1964. Although Watanabe’s name largely disappears from official accounts soon after this meeting—a reflection of the male-dominated nature of the organization
recording the history of this event—she undoubtedly played a pivotal role. According to Hieda, Watanabe later provided him and Okino with introductions to Ludwig Guttmann, and her personal connections to labor and welfare scholars, as well as the media, would have been useful to any nascent organization looking to gain publicity. Watanabe would continue to be an active supporter of the Paralympics, publishing frequently on the role that disability sports could play in improving Japanese approaches to disability. Her later advocacy aside, as the sole Japanese observer of the Rome Games, her firsthand knowledge would have been an invaluable resource in the early planning stages.

That is not to say, however, that Watanabe’s and Okino’s presentations translated into an instant commitment to the Games. Several of those present at the April workshop raised concerns about funding and the difficulty of hosting such an event without any institutions in place to do so. Dazai Hirokuni, who was attending as head of the Health and Welfare Ministry’s Social Welfare Bureau, allegedly suggested, “This is great news for the disabled, but preparing to host [the Paralympics] will be a real problem. Why don’t we just see today’s meeting as the first steps in the right direction?” In other words, Dazai had no problem with the promotion of disability sports, but was not ready at that point to commit himself and, by extension, the Japanese government. He, and many others, needed to be convinced that holding these Games in Tokyo was both possible and worthwhile.

Unfortunately, some of the earliest attempts to forge the necessary institutions proved less than successful. In May 1961, Okino attended the international congress for the WVF in Paris, where he met with Guttmann. After returning to Japan, Okino held an informational meeting at which attendees agreed to form an organization for promoting disability sports in Japan, but remained reluctant about hosting the Paralympics. According to the official account from the Japan Disabled Veterans Association, those present felt that Japan needed to start by promoting disability sports at home before hosting an international event. In line with that approach in August 1961, representatives from twenty-four groups that worked with the disabled population formed the Association for the Promotion of Sports for the Disabled. With the bulk of its meetings focusing on bureaucratic minutiae, this organization proved ineffective, taking little concrete action toward achieving its mission.

Just as early organizational efforts appeared to have stalled, a series of events reinvigorated the movement and sparked a new round of institution building. First, on October 22, 1961, Ōita Prefecture, located approximately 1,000 kilometers from Tokyo on the island of Kyushu, hosted Japan’s first competitive sporting event for the disabled. Organized by Dr. Nakamura Yutaka and
Hirata Atsushi, a prefectural government official, this groundbreaking event employed rules and approaches associated with international sports organizations, demonstrating that disability sports could work in Japan, despite the widespread belief to the contrary. Then, in March 1962, Iimuro Susumu, an executive officer from the Lions Clubs International, contacted Terada Muneyoshi, who was affiliated with the Asahi Shimbun Social Welfare Organization, and informed him that if Japan were going to host the Stoke Mandeville Games, the Lions Clubs would provide “across-the-board support.” The next month, Terada and several other social welfare leaders and rehabilitation specialists met at the offices of the Asahi Shimbun Newspaper Company, where they drafted a definitive plan of action that would bring the Paralympics to Japan. Those present agreed that they should work actively with the Lions Clubs, that they should launch a Preparatory Committee composed of a small core of selected individuals, and that the International Games held in Tokyo should be a multi-disability event, including athletes with paraplegia, blindness, hearing impairments, and other physical challenges. Immediately after this meeting, Terada shared these plans with several officials from the Health and Welfare Ministry, who on hearing that the Games would include participants with a range of disabilities, offered their full-fledged approval of the plan to establish a Preparatory Committee. Having secured the blessings of these officials, Terada and Ishijima Haruyuki, who was affiliated with the NHK Public Welfare Organization, began using their institutional contacts to notify relevant individuals about their plans, and on May 10, 1962, twenty-one individuals met to form the official Preparatory Committee.

Although Japan’s hosting of the Games themselves was still far from guaranteed, the creation of this committee in 1962 marked the country’s first official step toward that goal. Compared to only a year earlier, the changes in the level of both governmental and nongovernmental support the effort received were striking, especially given that one of the officials now giving his full-fledged approval was Dazai, whose lack of enthusiasm for hosting the Games had been readily apparent in early 1961. Clearly something had changed.

For one, the idea of hosting the Paralympics had proven to be more than the fleeting dream of a handful of enthusiasts; supporters continued to organize, events continued to be held, and more and more people seemed to be taking notice of disability sports, which raises a second key difference. By 1962 individuals and groups outside the medical or rehabilitation fields, including the Lions Clubs, the Asahi Shimbun Social Welfare Organization, and the NHK Public Welfare Organization, were expressing an interest in bringing the Paralympics to Japan.
The official accounts remain largely silent on the factors that motivated such groups to offer their support, though recollections from participants suggest that Ujiie Kaoru, the deputy director of the National Center for the Disabled, and Dr. Nakamura Yutaka both played key roles in lobbying for support from nongovernmental groups.\textsuperscript{35} As for the Lions Clubs, the organization’s long-standing commitment to the visually impaired may offer some explanation, and support for disability sports also fit well with the health- and welfare-oriented missions of both of the other organizations.\textsuperscript{36} Regardless of their specific motivations, the support from all three of these organizations promised significant benefits for the would-be organizers of the Paralympics. As an established institution with branches throughout Japan, the Lions Clubs could serve as a conduit for fostering popular awareness and raising much-needed funds. The other two organizations offered social networks of their own, but perhaps more importantly, they provided links to national media outlets: the \textit{Asahi} newspaper and the NHK radio and television networks. With this increased popular, institutional, and media backing, the emergence of official support seems less surprising.

In addition to increased support of various sorts, one of the other key developments associated with the creation of the Preparatory Committee in 1962 was the explicit commitment to hosting the Paralympics as a multi-disability international sporting event. At that time, there was no precedent for such an event; the Rome Games, like all the International Stoke Mandeville Games before them, had only included athletes with spinal injuries. Unfortunately, available sources do not reveal who proposed this approach for Tokyo’s Games or why they did so. Given the connections between some of the organizers and promoters of multi-disability sports in Europe, it seems feasible that some in Japan and perhaps abroad saw the Tokyo Games as an opportunity to unify disability sports by combining Guttman’s established approach with the multi-disability formats championed by Lorenzen, Acton, and others associated with the emerging ISOD. For instance, Nakamura’s biographers suggested that by 1962 he was convinced by his interactions with Lorenzen to approach Guttmann about the need to provide more sports-related opportunities for other disability groups. The tantalizingly vague nature of the references to these interactions makes it difficult to determine whether they preceded or followed plans unfolding in Tokyo.\textsuperscript{37} The Japanese commitment to hosting a multi-disability event may also have reflected the agendas of such groups as the Lions Clubs, which had pledged their support, or of others that might be inclined to do so if the event involved a broader spectrum of athletes with disabilities. We might also speculate that this approach was a possible manifestation of pressure—whether actual or perceived—from the Health and Welfare
Ministry to hold an event serving a larger disabled population. Evidence of such pressure can be seen in a July 1961 Yomiuri shimbun newspaper article about the possibility of holding the Paralympics in Tokyo. Along with details about the purpose of the Games and the earlier, largely unsuccessful efforts to promote them in Japan, the article quoted an unnamed ministry source stating that even though it could not presently agree to host a “Paralympics only for those with spinal cord injuries,” the ministry wholeheartedly supported the development of “sports for all disabled” in Japan and was planning to study the issue further in the coming year. Given these public pronouncements, it makes sense that Terada made a particular point of mentioning the multi-disability element to Health and Welfare Ministry officials when seeking their approval. Opening the event to more participants would seem to satisfy any number of stakeholders. Although the specific reasons behind this early Japanese commitment to hosting a multi-disability event remain unclear, it ultimately gave the Tokyo Paralympics a structure unlike any before or since.

As significant as the establishment of the Preparatory Committee was, in many ways its primary purpose was to create another committee: the official, government-sanctioned committee for organizing the Paralympics themselves. As a first step in that process, the Preparatory Committee members sought out a new leader, Kasai Yoshisuke, who was serving as chair of the Association for the Promotion of Social Welfare. As a former Health and Welfare Ministry official, Kasai was almost certainly selected because of his background and the influence that came with it. In particular, during the Allied occupation following World War II, Kasai was instrumental in the conversion of military rehabilitation centers to civilian use and was also closely involved in the drafting and implementation of the 1949 Law for the Welfare of Physically Disabled Persons. Despite these credentials, Kasai appears to have had little previous interest in or exposure to disability sports before the summer of 1961, when he witnessed a sports event for the disabled while visiting Germany. The very fact that one of the key leaders in Japan’s disability sports movement had minimal familiarity with such sports before 1960 exemplifies the challenges facing efforts to bring the Paralympics to Tokyo. As chairman of the organizing committee, Kasai quickly overcame this initial lack of familiarity and would frequently serve as the public face for the Tokyo Games in both official and popular venues. He continued to be a tireless promoter of disability sports long after the Games ended.

With a new, influential leader in place, the Preparatory Committee set to work on two other immediate goals: working with the Lions Clubs to begin raising funds and sending a Japanese team to compete at the annual International Stoke Mandeville Games in England less than two months later. On
May 30, 1962, members of the committee attended the annual Lions Clubs Governors’ Convention where they shared pamphlets and information about the Paralympic Games and asked the regional governors to encourage their local members to assist in fundraising. In July, the committee achieved its second goal when two men from Ōita Prefecture became the first Japanese athletes to participate in the International Stoke Mandeville Games in England.\textsuperscript{41}

According to the official accounts, because the Preparatory Committee had minimal resources at the time, the Asahi Shimbun Newspaper Company and NHK agreed to serve as guarantors, which enabled the committee to secure a loan from a bank in Ōita to fund the trip of the two-member Japanese team. In the end, these somewhat risky financial moves proved worthwhile. Even before their departure in mid-July, Japan’s first delegation to the International Stoke Mandeville Games attracted widespread media coverage, which often explicitly mentioned the possibility of hosting a similar international sporting event for disabled athletes in Tokyo. In early August the recently returned athletes and several members of the Preparatory Committee also met with members of the imperial family, including Crown Prince Akihito, who expressed his hopes that the Paralympics would be held in Tokyo two years later. As part of the barrage of press coverage associated with these meetings, several newspapers featured photographs of the athletes demonstrating their skills for the crown prince and princess.\textsuperscript{42} In addition to securing the blessings of Japan’s imperial family, at a press conference, Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato, Health and Welfare Minister Nishimura, and Labor Minister Ōhashi also expressed their desires to see the Games in Tokyo, pledging “as much assistance as the government could possibly provide.”\textsuperscript{43}

Although it is too simplistic to see these events in August 1962 as the turning point when the dream of hosting the Paralympics in Japan became a reality, they do represent a critical moment in that process. The Japanese athletes gained more media attention in July and August alone than the organizers had achieved in nearly two years. Perhaps understandably, given its formal and informal association with the Preparatory Committee, the Asahi newspaper offered especially detailed coverage, including interviews with the athletes and reports on their performances in England.\textsuperscript{44} The fact that Prime Minister Ikeda allegedly informed one observer that these events marked “the first I’ve ever heard that they hold an Olympics for the disabled” suggests just how important this expanded media coverage was.\textsuperscript{45}

Although it remains unclear how the meetings with imperial family members came about, it seems likely that committee members, and perhaps Kasai specifically, mobilized their social connections to establish what proved to be a long-lasting and critically important link between the Paralympics
and the imperial household. Associations with the crown prince, in particular, practically guaranteed the Games increased media attention. At a moment when the ruling conservative party in Japan, led by Prime Minister Ikeda, was looking to revive the influence and prestige of the imperial family, the potential power of the crown prince’s expressions of support should not be underestimated.46

While Kasai and other members of the Preparatory Committee continued to cultivate support and funding, they turned their attention to the establishment of the formal Organizing Committee. On February 12, 1963, members unanimously approved the charter creating the Organizing Committee for the Paralympic Games, and on April 5, 1963, the Health and Welfare Ministry authorized its incorporation.47 On May 14, 1963, the Organizing Committee hosted a two-hour public convocation that attracted more than 700 people and included musical performances, speeches, a film of the Rome Games, and several exhibitions of disability sports. The event culminated in a public declaration of the intent to host the Paralympics in Tokyo one year later.48 Only a day earlier, on May 13, Kasai sent a formal notification to Guttmann and the International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee about the Japanese intention to host the Games immediately after the Olympics. Guttmann’s reply, received several weeks later, expressed his excitement about developments in Japan and indicated that the Japanese request would be discussed and presumably approved at the International Committee’s meeting in July.49

As exciting as these events must have been for all involved, the ultimate success of the Games remained uncertain, perhaps especially on the financial front. Despite the ongoing attempts of organizers to solicit funds from Japanese business and financial leaders, their efforts proved frustrating in large part because many of Japan’s corporations and businessmen were already committing significant resources to the upcoming Tokyo Olympics.50 Gradually, as planning for the Games continued, the financial situation for the Paralympics stabilized. The Lions Clubs, for instance, contributed nearly 7 million yen in September 1963, and a month later, a 12.5 million yen donation from the Japanese Automobile Manufacturer’s Association subsidized the purchase of nine new buses, adapted for wheelchairs and equipped with lifts, costing 25 million yen. These contributions were soon followed by 20 million yen from the national government, 10 million yen from the Tokyo metropolitan government, and nearly 48 million yen from the Japanese Bicycle Promotion Association, the organization that oversaw professional bicycle racing, a popular gambling sport in Japan.51 Smaller donations also came from schools, local groups, and individuals throughout Japan. The Japan Bartenders’ Association created special Paralympic “Goodwill Boxes” for collecting individual donations
from bars and cabarets all over the country, producing more than 3 million yen in total. By the end of the Games, fundraising had proven so successful that a small surplus remained, providing a base for the ongoing development of disability sports in Japan after the Paralympics.

Alongside its fundraising activities, the Organizing Committee also continued to promote Japanese participation in disability sports at home and abroad. In July 1963, seven Japanese athletes traveled to Europe, five to participate in the First International Sports Festival for the Disabled in Linz, Austria, and the other two in the International Stoke Mandeville Games. Several members of the Organizing Committee accompanied the athletes to observe the Stoke Mandeville Games, gather resources, and meet with the International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee, which formally approved Japan’s plan to host the Paralympics the following year. After their return, participants again received an audience with the crown prince. Organizing Committee members were also involved in planning Japan’s first National Sports Meet for the Disabled held in Yamaguchi Prefecture on November 10, 1963. In contrast to the earlier prefectural sports meet in Ōita in 1961 and a similar meet held in Okayama Prefecture in November 1962, the event in Yamaguchi involved nearly 500 athletes from throughout the country and used the same facilities as the annual National Sports Festival (Kokutai), which Yamaguchi had hosted only a week earlier. After the Paralympics, involvement in similar national and international sporting events for people with disabilities remained a primary commitment for many members of the Organizing Committee.

With the Paralympics themselves only a year away, organizers also began planning in earnest. Everything from the refereeing of sporting events to the accessibility of athletes’ housing had to be addressed. In September 1963, Kasai met with Satō Eisaku, the government minister in charge of organizing the Tokyo Olympics, and finalized arrangements for the use of the Olympic facilities for the Paralympics. In November, the Organizing Committee established ten subdivisions tasked with arranging particular elements of the Games, such as translation, promotion, and management of the Athletes’ Village. Each of these subdivisions was in turn paired with a relevant nongovernmental organization, which assumed responsibility for completing any assigned duties. Without the direct assistance of this army of organizational volunteers, it is difficult to imagine that Kasai and others, no matter how ambitious they might have been, could have organized the Games at all.

In February 1964 the Health and Welfare Ministry dispatched the first of several official notifications to all prefectural and municipal governors about the Paralympics, which among countless other details, included information on the recruitment of Japanese athletes for the event. Two months later, the
Organizing Committee extended formal invitations to thirty-one countries and thirty-nine organizations. Guttmann’s visit to Japan in June spurred the final push, as organizers busily finalized daily itineraries, planned menus, designed uniforms, trained volunteer translators, arranged transportation, and planned necessary modifications to the Olympic Village, modifications that would have to wait to be made until after the conclusion of the Olympic Games. With athletes scheduled to arrive on November 5, 1964, the Olympic Committee handed over control of the Olympic Village on November 1, leaving fewer than five frantic days and nights to construct ramps and modify bedrooms, bathrooms, and other facilities to make them wheelchair accessible. The team from Argentina arrived a day earlier than expected, and by November 7, almost all of the foreign athletes had arrived at the Athletes’ Village. The International Stoke Mandeville Games had come to Tokyo.

Nakamura Yutaka: A View from the Margins

When looking at the names of the twenty-one individuals who founded the Preparatory Committee in 1962, the affiliation of one member, Nakamura Yutaka, appears oddly out of place on a list consisting mostly of members representing national welfare or disability organizations, government agencies, or institutions based in Tokyo. Nakamura Yutaka was from the national hospital in Beppu, a city in Ōita Prefecture, a thousand kilometers from Tokyo. What was this man doing on a committee of selected individuals devoted to bringing the Paralympics to Tokyo? Details from the official accounts of the Games offer a simple explanation: the previous year, Nakamura and Hirata Atsushi had organized the country’s first competitive sports event for athletes with disabilities in Ōita. As important as this path-breaking sporting event may have been, however, it was only one example of Nakamura’s involvement with the Paralympics and disability sports more generally. Exploring Nakamura’s role in the organization of the 1964 Games, a role largely obscured in official accounts, complicates our understanding of how these Paralympics came about. Whereas institutional and official sources privilege the center, implying that change radiated outward from Tokyo, Nakamura’s story offers a view from the periphery, demonstrating how strategic actions at the local level could effect changes at the center.

A native of Beppu, Nakamura had pursued a specialty in orthopedics with a particular focus on rehabilitation. In 1958, at the age of 31, he became head of orthopedics at the national hospital in Beppu. According to his own writings, Nakamura had given little thought to the role that sports might
play in rehabilitation until 1960, when the Health and Welfare Ministry sent him on a six-month overseas trip to study rehabilitation facilities and practices in the United States and Europe. One of Nakamura’s fellow doctors from Kyushu had earlier translated some of Ludwig Guttmann’s writings into Japanese, enabling Nakamura to learn about his work; therefore, Nakamura included a visit to Stoke Mandeville on his itinerary. Nakamura’s experience at Stoke Mandeville appears to have been transformative. Fascinated by Guttmann’s “sports before surgery” approach, Nakamura repeatedly expressed amazement at Stoke Mandeville’s success: after six months of treatment, 85 percent of patients with spinal injuries experienced at least some level of rehabilitation, with many leaving the hospital and returning to society.

Perhaps motivated by Guttmann’s criticism of the Japanese failures to implement what they had learned on their visits to England, Nakamura returned to Japan in August 1960 committed to incorporating sports into Japanese rehabilitation practices as quickly as possible. However, when Nakamura approached his colleagues in Beppu and surrounding areas about having their patients participate in sporting events, most were adamantly opposed. Some openly ridiculed the idea, stating that no real medical professional would suggest such a thing. In the views of many doctors, sports would simply undo all the rehabilitative work they had achieved, and putting the disabled on public display at a sporting event was the moral equivalent of showing off “freaks” at a circus.

The reluctance on the part of Nakamura’s colleagues almost certainly reflects general attitudes toward disability sports in Japan at the time. But there was also something else going on. Nakamura, a young doctor, was seeking to introduce a new foreign technique in a region of Japan long famous for its medically efficacious hot springs (an issue examined more fully in chapter 3). Nakamura’s foreign-inspired emphasis on exercise and sports not only challenged more traditional Japanese methods involving hot springs treatments and massage but also threatened to undermine one of the factors that made Beppu and its surroundings an attractive location for rehabilitation facilities. Sports for the disabled, unlike hot springs treatments, could be used and developed anywhere. Despite the resistance he encountered, Nakamura forged ahead, convinced that a local sporting event in particular would demonstrate the viability of Guttmann’s approach. With almost no facilities, institutional support, personnel, or equipment available, Nakamura spent the next several months meeting with local disability organizations, physical education (PE) instructors, and medical specialists. With the support of Hirata Atsushi, head of the Ōita Prefecture Department of Social Welfare, Nakamura’s efforts culminated in the First Ōita Prefectural Sports Meet for the Disabled, held on October 22, 1961.
In retrospect, the groundbreaking nature of this event—Japan’s first competitive disability sports event conducted using international rules and guidelines—is easy to see. At the time, however, Nakamura recalled that, with the exception of those who might have had a vested interest in rehabilitation issues, few in Japan seemed to take notice, and many dismissed the event as simply the “hobby of a quirky, back-country doctor.”

In addition to its significance as a “first” in Japan, the Ōita sports meet proved critical to Nakamura’s involvement in the Paralympic Movement for two specific reasons. First, the general response to the sports meet convinced Nakamura that disability sports were going to make little headway in Japan unless they could generate national publicity, and only Japan’s participation in an international event, like the Stoke Mandeville Games, was going to do that.

Second, the Ōita meet attracted the notice of would-be Paralympic organizers in Tokyo. The July 1961 Yomiuri article about the possibility of holding the Paralympics in Tokyo had mentioned the planned sports event in Ōita as a promising development in Japan’s quest to host the Paralympics, so Nakamura’s work was not as unrecognized as he seemed to think. However, up to this point, Nakamura appears to have had little formal contact with people or activities in Tokyo, so in this sense, the Ōita sports meet served to draw him into early organizational efforts at the center. But it is critical to note that Nakamura did not wait for people to come to him. Fueled by his newfound commitment to hosting the Stoke Mandeville Games in Tokyo after the Olympics, Nakamura made a whirlwind visit to the capital city in early 1962 with the express purpose of selling these Games to would-be Paralympic supporters, including Terada Muneyoshi from the Asahi Shimbun Social Welfare Organization. According to Terada’s recollections, Nakamura had taken the night train to Tokyo and was preparing to return to Beppu that same evening. His unexpected visit was prompted by concerns that reluctance on the part of the Health and Welfare Ministry would spell the end of efforts to host the Paralympics. After explaining the goal and broader significance of the Games, Nakamura argued that the only hope for the Tokyo Paralympics lay with leadership from groups like the Asahi Shimbun Social Welfare Organization. And Japan could not afford to fail. Not hosting this event in 1964, Nakamura contended, “would give lie at an international level to the notion that Japan is a modern welfare state.” Struck by Nakamura’s fervor, Terada vowed his support and later provided Nakamura with a venue for sharing his ideas with others, interactions that ultimately led to Nakamura’s membership on the Preparatory Committee that formed in May 1962.

Nakamura’s growing enthusiasm about the Paralympics explains not only his involvement on the Preparatory Committee but also the committee’s role
in sending a Japanese team to the Stoke Mandeville Games in England in July 1962. It was Nakamura who first proposed the idea, which must have seemed far-fetched to many of his fellow organizers at the time. The Games were less than two months away, Japan had few athletes who might be able to compete, and the new committee had no funds to pay for the team’s trip anyway. Perhaps realizing the potential media attention that would result, the committee’s new leader, Kasai, agreed with Nakamura that sending a Japanese team was “a priority,” regardless of the funding situation. As it turned out, Nakamura was also instrumental in securing the funds for the trip. The lack of sponsors at the time led Nakamura—rather than the Preparatory Committee itself, as official accounts imply—to approach the bank in Ōita about a loan, which was eventually secured because of the backing of NHK and the Asahi newspaper. Even with this loan and a donation from the British Overseas Airway Corporation that covered roundtrip airfare for one, Nakamura was forced to sell his own automobile to pay for the team’s trip to England. In the end, both of the athletes and two of the other three delegates, including Nakamura, came from Ōita Prefecture, a clear reflection of the prefecture’s, and by extension Nakamura’s, pioneering role in the development of disability sports in Japan.

A year later Nakamura and several athletes from Ōita once again traveled to Europe to participate in the international games held in both Austria and England. Several members of the recently established Organizing Committee, including Kasai, joined them in July 1963, and by that point funding was less problematic. Recounting his experiences at the Stoke Mandeville Games in 1963 when Japan’s bid to host the Paralympics was formally approved, Kasai later commented, “If it hadn’t been for Nakamura, we would have had nothing but problems.” According to Kasai, Nakamura’s familiarity with the staff and facilities, his knowledge of the Games themselves, and especially his relationship with Guttmann proved invaluable. “Without Nakamura,” Kasai observed, “the Paralympics might not have happened.”

**Two Games in One: Tokyo’s 1964 Paralympics**

At 10 o’clock in the morning on November 8, 1964, four thousand spectators, including Crown Prince Akihito and Crown Princess Michiko, gathered at Ota Field in the Olympic Village to witness the opening ceremony for the Tokyo Paralympics. The ceremony, intentionally modeled on the spectacular Olympic Ceremonies held a month earlier, began with a colorful, flag-waving procession of 369 athletes from twenty-two countries. Following speeches from Guttmann and Kasai, Crown Prince Akihito, in his capacity as “Patron of the
Games,” offered words of welcome and praise. Noting his sincere respect for the International Stoke Mandeville Games, the crown prince also expressed his wish that the honor of hosting these Games in Tokyo would provide Japan’s disabled with hope and encouragement. At that point, Aono Shigeo, one of the Japanese athletes, took an oath on behalf of all the Games’ participants, as five hundred doves were released into the sky. With the conclusion of these festivities, the crown prince and princess descended from their royal box to greet and offer words of encouragement to the athletes who had come to Tokyo from around the world.  

Two hours later the Games were underway, and over the course of the next five days, male and female athletes with spinal injuries competed in more than twenty events, including several newly added wheelchair races. Reflecting the comprehensive planning efforts of the Games’ organizers, special meals and parties, evening entertainment, shopping, and sight-seeing trips complemented the sporting events. Throughout the Games, several members of the imperial family—Crown Prince Akihito and Crown Princess Michiko, Prince and Princess Hitachi, and Empress Kōjun (unaccompanied by Emperor Hirohito)—attended the athletic events, attracting particular media attention. Finally, on November 12, after words of praise and thanks from Kasai and Guttmann and the ceremonial departure of the crown prince and princess, the closing ceremony concluded with the recession of the athletes bearing their countries’ flags. Soon thereafter athletes began their journeys home. The Games had ended, but not completely.

Indeed, one of the more curious elements of the Tokyo Paralympics was their structure. The International Sports Meet for the Disabled, as it was officially known in Japanese, was a two-part event. Part One, referred to in Japanese as the “International Sports Meet,” was the five day-event just described, the thirteenth iteration of the International Stoke Mandeville Games. Part Two of these Games, called the “National Sports Meet,” began on November 13 and concluded a day later. This two-day event attracted 480 participants hailing from all 46 of Japan’s prefectures and Okinawa, which was still occupied by the United States at the time. Despite its name, organizers of the National Meet had also invited athletes from Europe, and a team from West Germany competed as “special participants.”

Unlike the initial International Sports Meet, which followed the Stoke Mandeville Games’ parameters and featured only athletes with spinal injuries, the second part of the meet was a multi-disability event that appears to have been organized with little direct input from outside Japan. With more than thirty-four sporting events for men and women with a wide range of disabilities, the National Sports Meet added a layer of complexity to the planning.
efforts that in later years would play a role in other potential host sites’ decisions to decline the Paralympics. The structure adopted for these Tokyo Games reflects the commitment to hosting a multi-disability event that was apparent in some of the earliest organizational efforts. Though it does appear that some in Japan and elsewhere might have been interested in holding a single, rather than a split event, the plan for a two-part event was apparently already settled by the time Kasai wrote to Guttmann officially announcing Japan’s intent to host the Paralympics. In a sense, it was the perfect plan. It did not threaten to alter the approach of the Stoke Mandeville Games themselves, and it addressed Japanese desires to serve a larger portion of the disabled population. Yet the Games were clearly not equal in length or prestige, and as a result, the National Sports Meet attracted far less attention.

Ultimately, several aspects of the Tokyo Games, including their structure, would prove significant in the history of the Paralympics. For one, these Games marked the first attempt to directly link differing approaches to disability sports at the same venue. Tokyo’s approach was both unprecedented and groundbreaking, and it was not until 1976 that official joint international games were held. Even though they would have other official names for years to come, media and popular references before and during the Games in Tokyo helped standardize the usage of the name “Paralympics,” particularly in Japan. Contrary to the wishes of Guttmann, Kasai, and many others, the 1964 Paralympics would also be the last International Stoke Mandeville Games held in the Olympic host city until the 1988 Seoul Games. As it turned out, the Games could be held in Japan, but they could not, in fact, be exported anywhere.

The National Meanings of a Transnational Movement

Continuing in his role as patron of the International Sports Meet for the Disabled, the crown prince helped open the National Sports Meet portion of the Games, declaring that this event offered “an excellent opportunity to improve our nation’s inadequate understanding of disability and strengthen our interest.” Clearly intended to be inspirational, his message to participants about the significance of the Games also hints at two facets of their ultimate impact in Japan. On one hand, the Paralympics were linked to the promotion of sports for the disabled, activities that came to be seen as a means of improving the lives of individuals with disabilities and changing social perceptions of disability more generally. On the other hand, these Games offered a chance to as-
The largest impact of the Tokyo Games came, not surprisingly, in the realm of sports. Soon after the Paralympics ended, the organizing committee was dissolved and replaced by the Japan Sports Association for the Disabled (JSAD), a national organization led for many years by Kasai Yoshisuke. With the support of this new association, national and local sports meets for athletes with a range of impairments became regular events, and increasing numbers of Japanese began competing and winning abroad.87 As explored in chapters 2 and 3, Nakamura Yutaka, like Kasai, continued his commitment to the promotion of disability sports both at home and abroad, playing a pivotal role in the establishment of the regional Far East and South Pacific (FESPIC) Games for the Disabled and the Ōita International Wheelchair Marathon. Within months of the Paralympics, Nakamura also began implementing his plan to establish what became Taiyō no Ie (Japan Sun Industries), a factory in Beppu specifically created to employ individuals with disabilities.88

Given such developments it seems understandable that many saw the Paralympics as a grand success in improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. Looking at other aspects of the Games reveals a more complex picture, however. For instance, the time crunch involved in preparing to serve as host meant that the Tokyo Games had little impact on the city’s infrastructure. Unlike more recent Paralympics where the creation of barrier-free environments and transportation has been a key component of the host-city bidding process, Tokyo after the 1964 Games was as inaccessible as it was before them.

Perhaps even more importantly, these Games, because of the many “firsts” they involved, helped shape Japanese understandings of disability sports and disability more generally. Although we cannot, of course, know how all Japanese interpreted these events, we can explore the ways in which those events were presented. The structure of the 1964 event, for example, played a perhaps unintended role in shaping how disabled athletes were portrayed. Even though far more Japanese athletes with disabilities participated in the National Sports Meet, their efforts received much less official and popular attention than the more spectacular and prestigious international component. It is therefore not enough to say that the Tokyo Paralympics shaped Japanese perceptions of disability; understanding the impact of the Games necessitates a more careful exploration of who was being represented, who was doing the representing, and what those representations suggested about those with disabilities.
Selling the Paralympics

The process of representing athletes with disabilities in Japan began long before the crowd of four thousand spectators gathered on November 8, 1964, to observe the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Paralympics. Given the general lack of awareness about the Paralympics in Japan before this point, those seeking to bring the Games to Tokyo faced a difficult task, one that required them to make a case both for the importance of the 1964 Games and for the need to continue developing sports for the disabled in their aftermath.

Naturally, part of making that case involved educating the public about the event and its participants via the mass media. A more thorough examination of such popular media representations is provided in chapter 4, but it bears noting here that the 1964 Games—and the International Sports Meet portion in particular—generated far more Japanese media coverage than might be expected given the state of disability sports in Japan at the time. The major urban dailies, sports newspapers, a mix of regional papers, and the NHK public television network all covered the event, with some offering extensive commentary, multiple photographs, and, in the case of NHK, live coverage. Even a cursory glance at the leading dailies in Japan reveals that the “spectacular” elements of these Games—their international nature, their ceremonies, and the involvement of imperial family members—generated far more attention than the athletes’ achievements or the broader social issues that organizers hoped the Paralympics would address. Reflecting a pattern that has only recently begun to change in Japanese newspapers, much of the coverage of the 1964 Paralympics appeared not in the sports sections but on the society pages.

The Paralympics and disability sports were being treated as human interest or health-and-welfare stories, not “real” sports. The distinction between sports and disability sports apparent in media coverage of the Tokyo Games reflected the approach of organizers, like Kasai, Nakamura, and others, who explicitly emphasized the rehabilitative purpose of sports for the disabled. In all these ways, the extensive media coverage generated by the Tokyo Paralympics serves as an important reminder that the amount of publicity can be less important than its content.

It is also clear that such coverage was no accident, having been actively pursued and cultivated by Paralympic supporters. Well aware of the benefits of media attention, organizers established a large publicity subcommittee in early 1963, which was charged with reaching out to major newspapers, magazines, broadcast networks, and governmental publications, including those from some 630 cities across Japan. Leaving few potential publicity outlets unin-
formed, subcommittee members also provided Paralympic-related materials to labor unions, women’s groups, youth organizations, 420 major companies, 320 cultural or educational organizations, and 80 industry publications. The subcommittee established a particularly close relationship with the reporters’ club connected with the Ministry of Health and Welfare, a less-than-surprising development considering the ministry’s oversight of disability-related issues and its support for the Tokyo Games. During the Games themselves, subcommittee members sought to maximize coverage by offering almost free media access to all areas and events as long as it did not interfere with the competitions underway.92

As the work of this publicity subcommittee suggests, Paralympic organizers did not leave media coverage to chance. Of course, they could not ultimately control how the media covered the Games, but that did not stop them from attempting to direct coverage toward their own agenda of “raising societal awareness and understanding about disability issues and generating discussion about promoting rehabilitation policies.”93

The combination of such behind-the-scenes publicity work and the media prominence of figures such as Kasai and Nakamura points to the need to understand how the organizers themselves conceptualized and talked about the Games and their participants. Unfortunately, original records related to the earliest history of the Paralympic Movement in Japan remain scarce. However, a number of official reports outline early organizational efforts and document the success of the 1964 Games, and when examined together with promotional pamphlets, event programs, the speeches and writings of Paralympic supporters, and a documentary film produced by the NHK Public Welfare Organization, these official and semi-official sources offer good indications of how and why those interested in promoting the Paralympics sought to do so.

Not surprisingly, materials used to introduce the Tokyo Games highlight efforts to address the general lack of awareness of disability sports in Japan at the time by placing emphasis on the rehabilitative purpose of the Paralympics. One of the earliest official pamphlets, “The International Sports Meet for the Disabled (An Explanation),” dates from 1963. It outlines the history of the Games, their relationship to the Olympics, and the origin of the name “Paralympics” (a combination of para from paraplegia and lymics from Olympics); yet it devotes less than a page to listing plans for the actual event, with minimal clarification of the distinctions between the Games’ two parts. Well over half of the pamphlet’s eleven pages are devoted to explaining why it is “extremely important to incorporate sports as a means toward rehabilitation” and how several countries—Germany, England, and Greece, but not Japan—had
already done so with great success. The pamphlet ends by noting that “even Pakistan and Indonesia are implementing disability sports,” an implicit critique of Japan’s slow start.

Distributed by the publicity committee in 1964, a second pamphlet, “Paralympic Tokyo 1964: The International Sports Meet for the Disabled,” follows a similar approach, framing the Paralympics as a means for improving Japan’s engagement with beneficial international trends in rehabilitation. This pamphlet provides much more information about the upcoming Games, including specifics on the types of competitions and the selection process for Japanese athletes; yet most of its content (twelve of eighteen pages) juxtaposes details on existing disability-related policies, facilities, and statistics in Japan with firsthand reports from Kasai, Lorenzen, and two Japanese athletes that describe the situation abroad. For instance, in Takazaki Ken’ichi’s account of his experiences as a participant in the 1963 disability sports event in Linz, talk of sports proves secondary to glowing praise for Austrian society’s treatment of those with disabilities. Similarly, Andō Tokuji’s report from his time competing at the 1963 Stoke Mandeville Games describes England as a place that is “easy to live in as a disabled person,” and he ends his brief essay with a sentiment clearly shared by Paralympic organizers: “I can’t stop hoping that our country will become that kind of country as soon as possible.” In case readers had any doubts about how to go about achieving this goal, the pamphlet’s other essays and comments made it apparent that the answer lay in Japan’s adoption of new approaches to rehabilitation, approaches modeled on these European countries where sports had helped make “disabled people feel very bright.” Although it remains unclear exactly who would have been reading these kinds of promotional pamphlets, their writers left little doubt that disability sports were critical to Japan’s future.

Perhaps intended to supplement the official Japanese-language programs that included little more than dates, times, and locations, the glossy Japanese leaflet distributed during the Paralympics themselves seems to have targeted a broader audience than the earlier promotional pamphlets. Using a question-and-answer style, the colorful, double-sided leaflet offered simple explanations of the Games’ history, purpose, and format, interspersed with multiple photographs of individuals with disabilities engaging in athletic competition. Even without the detailed comparisons with Europe in the pamphlets, the leaflet authors made it clear that the Paralympics were a form of rehabilitation that Japan needed to embrace, as exemplified by the response to the question, “What are the Paralympics for?”: “The social rehabilitation of the physically disabled. . . . Sports are one means for attaining this sort of rehabilitation, and therefore, each country is seriously promoting these kinds of events.” Along
similar lines, the leaflet described the various sports competitions of the Games, but informed readers, “For the Paralympics, the goal wasn’t about winning competitions.” This comment was almost certainly intended to reinforce the rehabilitative purpose of the Games while preempting potentially unrealistic expectations about athletic performances (perhaps especially those by Japanese athletes) raised by the recent Olympics. It also unintentionally brought to the surface underlying tensions in the emerging Paralympic Movement. Organizers in Tokyo and elsewhere were intent on distinguishing their Games—which had clearly defined rules, countable medals, and honored victors—from mere recreational events, yet promoters’ tendency to view and market the Paralympics as medically and socially beneficial compelled them to downplay these very same sport-like elements. Disability sports were sports, but they were clearly being portrayed as different from sports for the able-bodied.

These sorts of mixed messages were echoed in the official Photograph Collection from the Tokyo Paralympic International Sports Meet for the Disabled, published in the immediate aftermath of the Games. The collection provided an annotated visual record of the athletic competitions themselves, along with substantial coverage of the preparations leading up to the Paralympics and their ceremonial elements. Although images of athletes with disabilities have often been rightfully critiqued for problematic patterns of representation, the photos used here were remarkably diverse. A mixture of active and passive shots depicted both men and women of different national and ethnic backgrounds, displaying a whole range of emotional expressions. The collection also featured athletes with a wide variety of physical disabilities, and in fact, among the official materials produced before, during, or after the Games, the photo collection offered the most detailed attention to the athletes who participated in the National Sports Meet portion of the event, coverage that still amounted to roughly half that given to the International Meet.

Images of the sports themselves tended to be grouped by event, with surrounding text that highlighted how the pictured athletes competed and why the particular sporting activity would be medically efficacious. In that sense, these annotations diverged little from other official sources with their emphasis on the rehabilitative purpose of the Games. For instance, the comments introducing the photographs from competitions at the International Sports Meet portion directly referenced modern Olympic founder Pierre De Coubertin’s famous statement: “The important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win, but to take part.” They continued, “De Coubertin’s words are perhaps even more appropriate for the Paralympics. The point of the Paralympics as a competition for the disabled is not to strive for records, but for them to participate in the competition, and in so doing improve their abilities and
encourage each other.”

Yet readers who continued examining the photos of athletes from both the international and national sections of the Games would learn that a significant portion of those pictured had earned medals for their victories. For a sporting event that was not about winning, those telling the story of Tokyo’s Paralympics certainly seemed intent on documenting winners.

In contrast to the photo collection in which athletes with a variety of disabilities featured prominently, one of the more striking aspects of the organizing committee’s *Official Report on the Tokyo Paralympic Games* is the relative absence of those with disabilities, winners or otherwise. To be sure, general references to the physically disabled or to forms or indicators of disability abound, and the report opens with eight pages of photographs, including several images of athletes competing at the Games. However, the rest of the 271-page report incorporates the words of only two Japanese athletes and a formal statement from the British team, all of whom had been involved with the international portion of the Games. In the section explaining key events before the Games, the reference to Japanese athletes participating in the International Stoke Mandeville Games for the first time ever in 1962—an obvious turning point in the history of the Paralympic Movement in Japan—provides no information on the athletes’ names, their sports, or their results. This section does, however, include specifics on how the trip was financed and shares quotes describing the responses of the crown prince and the prime minister after the athletes returned home.

The second delegation of Japanese athletes who traveled to Europe in 1963 to participate in two international sporting events receives slightly more attention, including a small chart listing their names, home prefectures, ages, occupations, and form of disability. The focus quite clearly is on the fact that these people were disabled, not that they were athletes with disabilities, because once again, the report provides no indication of what sports these participants actually did while abroad. Yet it does share the names of organizers who traveled to Europe with the Japanese team and offers details about their participation in the international meetings held in conjunction with these sporting events. The absence of concrete information about the athletes’ experiences in this section of the report is even more noteworthy, because such details would have been readily available. Only a few months earlier, the publicity subcommittee’s own promotional pamphlet had used firsthand accounts from athletes participating in each of these 1963 events to advertise the real-world benefits of disability sports.

Despite the groundbreaking nature of the National Sports Meet portion of the 1964 Paralympics and its large number of participants, the official
report also gives surprisingly little attention to these competitions or their athletes. It is mostly limited to documenting the ceremonies, including transcripts of speeches from Kasai and the crown prince. Were it not for photos at the beginning and the list of results at the end, the vast majority of Japanese participants at the Tokyo Paralympics would almost be entirely absent from the Game’s official report. These sorts of omissions and the detailed documentation of bureaucratic minutiae, meeting schedules, and commentary from various section heads or volunteers that make up the vast majority of the official report, could easily be dismissed as a peculiarity of the genre, but they also reflect more general approaches and attitudes of the organizers. These Games were being organized for—not by—individuals with disabilities.

By all accounts, the early organizational efforts were initiated and dominated by medical professionals and individuals associated with government agencies or national welfare and disability groups, and only a few of them were individuals with a disability. Moreover, the most visible supporters featured in the report and in promotional efforts more broadly were nondisabled men such as Kasai and Nakamura. On one hand, this was hardly unique or surprising. Many of the so-called pioneers of disability sports around the world, including Guttmann, were nondisabled individuals interested in promoting rehabilitation; indeed, Japan’s far-from-progressive attitudes toward disability in the 1960s would have made it especially challenging for individuals with disabilities to promote sports entirely on their own. On the other hand, the dominance of nondisabled promoters before, during, and after the Paralympics did little to challenge paternalistic views of the disabled as individuals incapable of acting without the help of the able-bodied. I do not mean to imply that these organizers were not genuinely interested in improving the lives of Japan’s disabled population. It seems clear that they were, but in their earnest efforts to do so, they crafted a story that sometimes gave greater attention to themselves than the population they aimed to serve.

Indeed, the prominence of certain promoters in some of the official materials threatened to overshadow the intended focus of the event, the athletes. For instance, in the documentary produced by the NHK Public Welfare Organization, only three athletes (two of them Japanese) are named; in contrast, Guttmann, Kasai, Nakamura, four Japanese celebrities who participated in a promotional autograph event before the Games, and several members of the imperial family all receive both name recognition (even the “royal box” in the stands gets a special mention) and extended screen time. Similarly, the official English-language program for the Paralympics includes twelve photographs: three depicting members of the imperial family, one of Guttmann, one
of Kasai, one of an Organizing Committee event, and two of the Paralympic venues, leaving only four photos focusing on athletes.\textsuperscript{109}

In many respects, the star of the Paralympics was Japan’s crown prince. The very first photo in the English program portrays him in his role as the “patron” of the Tokyo Paralympics, and he was often the first one mentioned in speeches during the Games, usually with words of profound gratitude. The prince’s actions—and those of other imperial household members—received particular attention in the press and in many of the post-Games materials. The official report, for example, included a special section marked with a distinctive border that detailed every instance of imperial involvement during and after the Games; this section largely duplicated information recorded elsewhere in the report.\textsuperscript{110} As noted earlier, the link between the crown prince and the Paralympic Movement in Japan was not new or the result of mere happenstance, having been mobilized early on to provide maximum publicity for the Games. After seeing so many images of the crown prince and hearing or reading the words of praise and appreciation that organizers offered him in their speeches and official words of welcome in the program, one could easily reach the conclusion that he himself was a central attraction and that his patronage was a special gift to the disability sports movement.\textsuperscript{111} Strategically, seeking imperial patronage made perfect sense, especially because the crown prince proved to be an important long-term ally in the effort to promote sports for the disabled in Japan. But because many of the official materials seem to place particular emphasis on his patronage or on the mere presence of imperial family members at the Games (none of their comments or words of welcome are recorded in the documentary or shared in the programs), one is left to wonder whether the crown prince’s support was being interpreted more generally at the time as advocacy or as charity for the disabled.

**Rehabilitation Games**

In his own words of welcome at the opening ceremony for the International Meet, which are recorded in the official report, Crown Prince Akihito did express an interest in fostering change for those with disabilities. Not surprisingly given the setting, his speech focused on sports as the means by which many of the participants had “recovered their health” and achieved their rehabilitation or, more literally, their “return to society.”\textsuperscript{112} The crown prince was not alone in his views on the potential benefits of the Games. Impressed with results that they were seeing or hearing about from abroad, such organizers as Kasai, Nakamura, and other promoters who shared similar medical or social welfare backgrounds focused on rehabilitative potential as a primary
selling point of the Paralympics and sports for the disabled. As Kasai wrote in an article he published in the Ministry of Health and Welfare’s official bulletin in December 1964, Japan’s previous experience with sports for the disabled had been limited to “recreational field days” that were “far removed from sports aimed at rehabilitation that can build up the body and inspire confidence and courage.” Only a few months before, on the eve of the Games, Kasai had offered a similar argument to a much broader readership during an extended interview he gave for the mainstream magazine, Asahi Weekly. In the foreword to the official report on the games, Kasai expanded on these general points, insisting that disability sports aimed for transformation: they were meant to “build up the strength of disabled individuals, so that they could regain confidence in that strength and their abilities, and in so doing find the bright hope and courage that would allow them to alleviate their disability complex. As Dr. Guttmann has said, ‘Do not focus on what has been lost; live to the fullest with what remains.’” For Kasai and others, promoting sports as a rehabilitative tool was not only a new and arguably superior technique from abroad but also a means of improving the social welfare of Japan’s disabled population in general, a goal clearly expressed in the founding charter of the Paralympics Organizing Committee. Watanabe Hanako, who had been among the earliest promoters of the Tokyo Paralympics, echoed these ideas in her post-Paralympic article for the weekly newsletter of the Japan Labor Study Group. Referring to the oft-mentioned six-month rehabilitation rate in Europe and the United States, Watanabe argued that the real significance of the Paralympics lay in their demonstration for the general public that participation in sports was an inseparable element of getting those with disabilities integrated back into society and back to work.

Advocates like Watanabe and Kasai often acknowledged that changes were necessary in Japanese society to allow individuals with disabilities to pursue sports, but supporters’ approaches tended to shift the focus of rehabilitation back onto the individual. The preface to the promotional pamphlet from 1964, for example, cited the importance of governmental and private efforts to promote rehabilitation, but pointed out that Europe and America were increasingly turning to sports for the disabled because “the most important thing is that the disabled individuals themselves first develop confidence in their bodies.” Later in this same pamphlet, Kasai pointed to a similar conclusion he had reached based on what he saw abroad: increasing financial support and improving social services were certainly necessary, but even before that Japan needed to establish sports and job training opportunities “to give the disabled themselves health and confidence.” In a context where people were just beginning to learn about disability sports, it is not difficult to see how these
sorts of efforts to sell the Games, and especially organizers’ overwhelming, and internationally rooted, emphasis on sports as the primary means of rehabilitation, could lead to the notion that all disabled individuals could overcome their impairments if they were only willing to work for it. In other words, official organizational approaches and ideas played a central role in the emergence of a version of the “super-crip” stereotype, fostering the problematic notion that athletes with disabilities merit particular attention because they have not allowed their disability to prevent them from becoming successful.

Organizers’ focus on rehabilitation also tended to reinforce preexisting medicalized views of the disabled. Several of Nakamura’s writings on the Games were published in medical journals, and reflecting their intended audience, they tended to rely on specialized language to outline the specific benefits or dangers associated with particular sporting activities. Like some of the earlier promotional materials, Nakamura’s medically oriented writings also tended to deemphasize competition in sports for the disabled. As a physician, Nakamura’s tendency to frame the Paralympics along medical lines seems understandable, but he was hardly unique in this approach. Among the various official materials, the NHK Public Welfare Organization documentary offers some of the most concrete examples of this emphasis. Although we know that the film was produced in coordination with the public broadcast network NHK, most other details about its origins and intended use remain unclear. However, with its detailed descriptions of how the various events were intended to affect the athletes physically, emotionally, or socially, it seems likely that the documentary was targeting potential advocates for disability sports among various professionals already working with Japan’s disabled population. This film was a recruitment or educational tool, rather than a source of entertainment for the general public.

After an opening shot of airplanes and narration noting that a new group of foreign athletes has arrived in Japan in the days soon after the Tokyo Olympics, the voiceover for the film explains the origins of the name “Paralympics” and reveals the intended purpose of the Games—leaving no doubt that they are first and foremost a form of rehabilitation for the physically disabled. These opening scenes also include the seemingly obligatory references to the amazing rehabilitation rates in Great Britain, coupled with images of the British team members smiling and interacting cheerfully at the airport and on their way to the Olympic Village.

After breaking to Ōita Prefecture’s Beppu National Hospital, the film offers its first glimpse of Japan’s own athletes who are engaged in their final practices before leaving for the Games; here the narrator provides the first specific indication of how sports can aid such individuals. In contrast to most of the
foreign athletes who are said to be in the workforce already, the documentary points out that all of the Japanese participants are coming to the Games from hospitals or other health care facilities; then it proceeds to explain that, for the Japanese athletes shown on screen, “practicing with their impaired bodies is certainly not easy, but one by one their faces light up with joy as they realize that they can do it if they try.” In the next scene depicting the arrival of the Japanese team members in Tokyo, the narrator once again offers a statement on sport’s transformational impact on Japan’s athletes:

From Hokkaido in the north, to Kyushu in the south, the 53 athletes selected from throughout the country, including two women, began gathering in Tokyo one after another. Only a year ago, some among them were bedridden, and some had withdrawn into themselves because of the loneliness of their isolation from society. Ranging in age from 20 to 46, they have learned sports, and it is only through sports that they have become so bright.

The next several minutes of the documentary offer shots of the Games’ facilities, glimpses of numerous social interactions between the athletes, and more extended coverage of various ceremonies, with the opening ceremony naturally receiving the most time. At approximately the nineteen-minute mark, the forty-five-minute film shifts its focus to the athletic events themselves, and for the next eighteen minutes most of the footage—with the exception of a short scene depicting the empress’s arrival at the Games—is dedicated to displays of wheelchair races, field events, ping pong, weightlifting, snooker, basketball, swimming, fencing, and archery. With each new sport, the narrator provides a brief explanation of how wheelchair athletes perform it. Each of these mini-lessons invariably includes highly detailed descriptions of the specific physiological improvements the sports are intended to promote and the skills that athletes can gain by performing them. As the athletes on screen race, throw, swim, shoot, swing, lift, win, and lose, observers are reminded over and over that this athletic event is really a form of treatment and recovery. Taking into account the sociohistorical context in which this documentary was produced, one where disability sports promoters in Japan needed to convince many doubtful colleagues in the medical and social welfare fields that such sports were safe, beneficial, and internationally sanctioned, the medicalized approach and rhetoric in the film are understandable and undoubtedly helped foster improvements in the lives of many Japanese with disabilities. That said, the official emphasis on sports as a rehabilitative tool, especially apparent in the documentary and other official materials, simply recast would-be athletes as another kind of medical patient. They might
be out of the hospitals, but their bodies were still being subjected to a uniquely medicalized gaze, one that reinforced, rather than challenged, understandings of disability as an individual health issue.

Living the Bright Life

The rehabilitative emphasis so apparent in the documentary and other official representations of disability sports proved appealing to Japan’s Paralympic promoters in part because many of them saw their own nation’s approach to disability at the time as inherently flawed, especially after learning about the experiences of individuals with disabilities outside of Japan. Overcoming what many saw as a dramatic gap between Japan and the West necessitated the adoption of Euro-American methods and views of disability, a process that could only happen if people in Japan, especially rehabilitation specialists, government officials, and social welfare advocates, were aware of the flaws in the Japanese system. As Nakamura Yutaka concluded after his first attempt to promote disability sporting events in Ōita, one of the only ways to create national awareness quickly was to engage in international events. In this sense, participating in the Stoke Mandeville Games and, more importantly, bringing those Games to Tokyo would serve both to indict and to correct existing Japanese approaches to disability. The goal for Nakamura and other promoters of disability sports, then, was to shame Japan into action. In practice, what this approach involved was the repeated, and clearly reductionist, juxtaposition of foreign and Japanese methods and athletes. Although national humiliation can be a powerful motivating force for change, the process of comparing “bright” foreign athletes with their Japanese counterparts generated an overly simplified picture of life for those with disabilities in both Japan and the West.

While the Tokyo Paralympics were widely hailed as a success, Nakamura saw something different. As he put it, “The foreign athletes were strong, and their complexions were bright. But the Japanese athletes were weak, with dull complexions. There was more to this contrast than a difference between those actively involved in sports and those not. It reflected a difference in daily lives.” For Nakamura, the Paralympics served as a clear indication that his nation’s approach to disability was woefully lacking, and his evaluations seemed more the rule than the exception. In her post-Paralympic essay, for example, Watanabe Hanako offered an extended analysis of successful rehabilitation practices in Italy that she had learned about during the Games. She concluded her essay with a call for a more humane labor policy in general, adding harsh words about Japanese labor policies and policymakers who, she
suggested, would almost certainly reject outright the kinds of methods and policies proving so successful in Italy. With repeated positive references to Italy, Finland, England, and the “various developed nations” (senshin shokoku), Watanabe left little doubt that, in terms of its treatment of the disabled, Japan was not in that group. This implicit criticism would have had particular resonance at the time, because much of Japan’s Olympic and Paralympic hopes had been tied up in the idea that the nation was on the rise.\textsuperscript{126} Watanabe offered a similar critique in another essay published soon after the Paralympics in the mainstream magazine, \textit{Women’s Friend}. Here, Watanabe lamented the persistence of discriminatory attitudes and actions toward those with disabilities in Japan. She ended her essay with an observation that a truly democratic society would embrace the opportunities for promoting rehabilitation that the Paralympics had demonstrated.\textsuperscript{127} Aono Shigeo, one of only two athletes to have his words featured in the official report, offered an even more explicit critique. Observing that he was “not alone in wondering where the brightness of the foreign athletes came from,” Aono cited the different national welfare systems and the stability of life that the foreign athletes benefited from, and he concluded that “there is too big a gap between the current situation in Japan and that of the developed nations.”\textsuperscript{128} Although Aono expressed his own joy about the opportunity to participate in the Games, the Paralympics shone a light on problems in Japan that he was all too familiar with.

Like Watanabe, Nakamura, and Aono, Kasai Yoshisuke’s views on the success of the Tokyo Paralympics were tempered by his awareness of how conditions in Japan compared with those abroad. In his interview with the \textit{Weekly Asahi}, he described Japan as ten years behind the West in terms of its understanding of and approaches to those with disabilities, and many of his writings sought to highlight this gap.\textsuperscript{129} Writing for the Health and Welfare Ministry bulletin, he pointed out that “in England, 95% of the disabled were rehabilitated and working at a job, but regrettably, in our country, we have not even reached 50%.”\textsuperscript{130} Perhaps because of the shocking disparity they reflected, these or similar figures served as regular talking points for Kasai and many other Paralympic promoters. Kasai acknowledged that the problems in Japan were multifaceted, but he proposed a twofold solution clearly modeled on what he had seen during his time in Europe: increased promotion of sports for the disabled and the development of comprehensive rehabilitation programs that combined treatment, sports, and job training. According to Kasai, Japan could not simply allow the recent attention to disability-related issues to end with the Paralympics: “Because the disabled from various countries have brightly and cheerfully displayed the results of their training before
our very eyes, and they have shown us that they can do such things, I cannot stop hoping that by seizing this opportunity, Japan’s disabled can achieve rehabilitation quickly and brightly.” In Kasai’s view, the Paralympics had highlighted the problems, and now it was up to Japanese policymakers and rehabilitation specialists to respond with a new, internationally inspired approach. Failure to do so would leave Japan’s disabled people languishing in the dark.

Even the crown prince seems to have shared such concerns. In the days following the Games he hosted a meeting to congratulate the members of the Organizing Committee on their accomplishments, but according to the official report, he began with an implicit criticism of the Japanese system: “Watching the recent Paralympics, I noticed that the foreign athletes were much brighter and had better bodies. I know that unlike the Japanese athletes, who tended to come from hospitals or health care facilities, the majority of the foreign athletes had already returned to society. I think that foreign rehabilitation is going well.” Although he stopped short of actually saying that Japanese practices were failing, he really did not have to. Everyone in the room already knew, and they responded not with a defense but with a pledge to pursue change.

Perhaps not surprisingly given its repeated appearance in many of the comments from Paralympic supporters and participants, “brightness” proved to be a recurring idea in the NHK Public Welfare Organization documentary as well. The very first use of the term appears in connection with the arrival of the British athletes, whose “bright smiles” seem only natural, because viewers are informed that Britain has an exceptionally high rehabilitation rate (here given as 90%), and that the British team consists entirely of fully employed members of society. This portrayal of the cheerful British athletes heading for the Athletes’ Village in Yoyogi serves as a foil for the next scene where viewers see the Japanese athletes for the first time, but not before getting a clear indication of their location: an extended shot of the sign marking the entrance to Beppu National Hospital. This image, combined with the narration, shows clearly that Japan’s athletes are inferior to their British counterparts. The Japanese team members are not employed members of society; they are still hospital bound; and as noted previously, they are only beginning to experience some joy as they realize they are able to engage in sports. Whether intentional or not, the depiction of the Japanese athletes at the hospital, when combined with the next scene showing the Japanese team’s arrival in Tokyo, constructs a sort of mini-narrative: the Japanese Paralympians start in hospitals (unlike the British team who start in society), begin learning sports, travel to the Games, and finally become “so bright.”
It is also critical to note here that this scene offers the only use of the word “bright” in direct relation to the Japanese athletes. Although the Japanese athletes are frequently depicted in the film smiling, laughing, and otherwise competing and interacting in ways that seem to differ little from their foreign counterparts who appear in many of the same scenes, these representations are not labeled as bright. During the footage of the opening ceremony, for instance, the event itself is described as bright, and there is a reference to the bright faces of all present, but this description is belied by the shots of the Japanese team, whose serious, staid expressions do not seem to reflect the narrator’s comment that they are all “delighted that they are able to participate in the Games.” When the film moves into the coverage of the sporting events themselves, the notion of brightness and enjoyment takes second place to depictions and images of the hard work involved in sports’ rehabilitative benefits, as discussed earlier.

In contrast, as the film nears its end, brightness returns, but notably, the Japanese athletes disappear entirely. Following a group identified only as “foreign athletes” on a trip to a Japanese department store, the film shows these athletes—most of whom are being pushed by members of Japan’s Self-Defense Force—cheerfully interacting with shop clerks, tossing balls, trying on caps, and making purchases, activities that seem to reflect the narrator’s observation that “no matter where they go, their brightness is unwavering.” The final moments of the film, which depict the foreign athletes making their way to the airport and boarding their planes, exude a sense of appreciation to the foreign athletes (their countries of origin no longer specified) for showing Japan the potential outcomes of rehabilitation. Not surprisingly, the film ends with a call to pursue brightness in Japan: “Even though the Games have ended, and the athletes have left Japan and returned home, for us, we cannot allow the Paralympics to end. When each and every disabled person in Japan bears a bright smile like those of the foreign athletes, only then can we say for the first time, that the true Paralympics has begun.” Although sports might have helped Japan’s own Paralympians “become so bright,” apparently the documentary makers and many of the Paralympic promoters did not yet find them bright enough to serve as icons for the future of sports for others with disabilities in Japan. For that future to become a reality, only outside, foreign models would do.

Given the state of disability sports in Japan before the Paralympics, the comparisons between Japanese and foreign athletes in the documentary and in other official sources seem both understandable and strategically advantageous. For one thing, what we see in the case of disability sports reflects a broader process of co-constitution that has, at various points, proved critical to
the promotion of sports in Japan more generally. Experts and promoters have often looked abroad to diagnose and correct perceived problems at home.\textsuperscript{134}

Furthermore, there certainly were very real differences between some of the Japanese athletes and their foreign counterparts, especially those coming from countries with more established programs for disability sports. Some of these differences would have been particularly apparent during the athletic competitions, where Japanese athletes generally fared poorly in terms of victories. Even though many promoters deemphasized the competitive aspect of the Paralympics, many of these same people saw the disparities in athletic performance as a key way to highlight and then address more fundamental differences in the countries’ approaches to rehabilitation. As Nakamura put it in one of his medical journal essays, “The positive or negative results of the wheelchair competitions were a direct reflection of the levels of a country’s medical rehabilitation and its wheelchairs.”\textsuperscript{135} In this sense, documenting differences in athletic success at these Games was critical to helping Japan diagnose its problems and would serve as a baseline for measuring future improvement.

Other potential differences between the foreign and Japanese athletes, such as greater independence and a more positive attitude, would have been and continue to be harder to measure in any objective way. That said, there are moments captured in the film or other reports from the Games, where the independence of the foreign athletes surprised the nondisabled volunteers (often members of the Self-Defense Forces) preparing to assist them in some way. Such instances served to highlight the potential benefits of these comparisons. Writing for the Health and Welfare Ministry bulletin, for instance, Terada Muneyoshi of the Asahi Shimbun Social Welfare Organization described seeing two female athletes from London flag a taxi and go out shopping on their own in Tokyo. For Terada and presumably some of his readers, the scene he witnessed completely surprised him and brought home the fact that Japanese society needed to change its approaches to and views of people with disabilities.\textsuperscript{136}

Even with its highly medicalized approach, the Tokyo Games did demonstrate to a wide audience that people with disabilities, including those in Japan, were more than patients stuck in hospitals. They could be athletes living, working, playing, and going out on their own. As exemplified by the extensive media coverage they generated and the ongoing promotion of disability sports in their aftermath, the 1964 Paralympics and the differences they made apparent served as an unprecedented means of raising popular and official awareness about the current status of Japan’s largely overlooked disabled pop-
ulation. The Games also drew attention to the possibility of providing new methods for helping them succeed. Organizers would have been foolish to miss the opportunity of the Paralympics to seek change by pointing out some of these differences.

At the same time, it is hard not to see the repeated juxtaposition of the “bright” foreign athletes with the less bright or even “dark” Japanese competitors as a negative and stereotypical representation. On the foreign side, these comparisons not only gloss over the stark differences in approaches to disability among the various countries represented at the Games but also fail to distinguish between the varying experiences of people with different types of impairment in those countries. Tellingly, the oft-cited rehabilitation and employment statistics that organizers used to highlight Japan’s gap with the West make no such distinctions for either side. The descriptions of foreign athletes also overlook the self-selected nature of those who chose to compete in Tokyo. Traveling to Japan would have been an expensive and challenging undertaking for anyone, and those who decided to make the trip to Tokyo were probably less representative of the disabled populations in their home countries than many of the comparisons seemed to suggest. Such comparisons also rely to a great extent on the omission of details and depictions of the Japanese athletes. We are never told, for instance, if any of the Japanese athletes took advantage of their time in Tokyo to do some sightseeing or whether they, too, were given regular assistance from an army of volunteers, which would have made it much easier (and potentially enjoyable) for them to navigate the far from barrier-free environment in Tokyo. The National Meet component of the Games, which featured many more Japanese athletes than the International Stoke Mandeville Games, also remains strikingly absent from most of these comparisons, precisely because it did not involve large numbers of foreign athletes. When no one sees you, it will be hard for people to know whether you are “bright” or not. Based on the official materials few, if any, of these athletes measured up to any of the foreigners, and if Japan’s athletes could not measure up, what might that suggest about other individuals with disabilities? Perhaps the most problematic aspect of these comparisons, then, is the suggestion (sometimes explicit) that a relatively small, probably unrepresentative, and inaccurately depicted group should become the measure of success for Japan’s disabled population as whole. Even though promoters were clearly interested in using these comparisons to press for societal, governmental, and medical changes, they simultaneously seem to have produced a dark image of people with disabilities and set a standard that would have made it difficult for many in Japan to overcome that image.
Goodwill Games

As important as the Games were for those interested in improving Japan’s approaches to disability, for many, Japan’s hour on the Paralympic stage was equally, if not more, significant because of its potential for promoting international goodwill (*kokusai shinzen*). The official Japanese cabinet report on the upcoming Paralympics, for example, cited two explicit goals for the Games: promoting social rehabilitation for the physically disabled and contributing to international goodwill.\(^{137}\) With a range of people from Guttmann to Prime Minister Ikeda commenting on this perceived benefit of the Games, it would be easy to dismiss this notion as high-minded, but ultimately empty, rhetoric.\(^{138}\) However, closer consideration of the historical context suggests that promoting international goodwill was, in fact, a pressing concern in Japan. As studies have shown, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics were widely viewed as a critical venue for literally re-presenting Japan to the rest of the world less than twenty years after World War II. The Japan of the Tokyo Games was a peaceful, high-tech, rising economic power ready to take its place among the world’s great nations. Conservative leaders in Japan also used the Olympics as an occasion to revive such symbols of nationalism as the emperor, the flag, and the national anthem, symbols that had been associated with Japan’s wartime aggression only a few decades earlier.\(^{139}\)

The Tokyo Paralympics, emerging from this same historical and cultural milieu, proved no less important as a tool for reviving national symbols and bolstering Japan’s international prestige.\(^{140}\) Indeed, viewed in this light, the crown prince’s oft-mentioned involvement with the Paralympics reflected more than a personal commitment on his part; it was a carefully cultivated and highly politicized link designed to benefit both the Games and the international reputation of Japan’s future monarch. The Paralympics also served as an ideal arena for promoting the new postwar Japan committed to peace and international goodwill. Voluntarily agreeing to organize an international event that only two other European countries had ever hosted was the perfect way for the nation to demonstrate such a global commitment, particularly because the Paralympics were seen as serving an especially “humane” international purpose.\(^{141}\)

Adding to the sense that Japan should, or perhaps even must, host the Paralympics was the fact that the previous host had been Rome, another city using the Olympics to help negotiate a postwar return to the global community. After all, if Italy had volunteered to host the Paralympics and Japan did not, what would that say about Japan? We might recall, here, Nakamura’s warning to Terada about the potential damage to Japan’s international reputation.
should the country fail to bring the Games to Japan. The world was watching, which meant that failure to host the Paralympics and learn from them was not an option that Japan could afford to take.

In the end, of course, Japan did host the Paralympics with marked success. As this chapter has shown, that success and even the very possibility of hosting the Games had never been guaranteed. Driven by diverse agendas, individuals such as Guttmann, Kasai, Nakamura, Watanabe, and a host of others harnessed existing organizational networks, the power of the media, and the prestige of Japan’s imperial family to help an emerging transnational movement take root in Japan in a remarkably short period of time. Ultimately, the Tokyo Paralympics had an undeniable—if multifaceted and not always progressive—impact on Japan and the Paralympic Movement. As the following chapters demonstrate, the 1964 Games proved to be a foundational moment for Japan’s engagement with disability sports both at home and abroad. Even though Tokyo’s Paralympics in 1964 have been long overlooked, their significance cannot be ignored.