

**The Confrontation between ‘the Right to Play Sport’ or the Public Sphere of Sports and Neo-liberalism or Individual Consumption (1) : National and Municipal Sports Policies in the 1970s**

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**Abstract**

In Japan, around 1972-3, leisure policies (including sports) and administrative systems were established at national and local levels.

Since 1965, thirteen ministries have been involved in the ‘Fitness Promoting Project’ and the total budget of the project in 1970 was 80 billion yen, which increased nearly 4 times, up to 320 billion yen, in 1982. On the other hand, the total sports policy budget for local authorities in 1980 of 270 billion yen was an increase of 7 times over the 40 billion yen in 1970.

The year of 1973 was called ‘the beginning of welfare’ in Japan. Many reformist local councils were born, and much of the negative heritage of the 1960s—such as pollution, work-related injuries and a low level of social welfare—was the target of reform. In the early 1970s, ‘new human rights’ were recognized, including the right to education, environmental rights, civil rights. ‘The right to play sport’ with the obligation of public authorities to provide some conditions for them, was studied and became common. In 1976, the Council of Europe declared the “European Charter for Sport for All”, and in 1978 UNESCO declared the “International Charter for Physical Education and Sport” for the world. Reflecting these trends, inside and outside of Japan, the right to sport gained a very important position in Japan.

However, since the late 1970s, Neo-liberalism has become increasingly powerful, and welfare on every level of Japanese society, which was un-developed in comparison to Western countries, has become targeted for elimination.