

# A History of Occupational Mental Health in Japan (1)

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This paper is a preparative study for sociological fieldwork of mental health activities in places of work of mainly private enterprises in Japan. Sociological researchers have discussed the rise of interests in knowledge derived from psychology or psychiatry in modern societies. For example, in Japan, some researchers have described the introducing process of clinical psychologists into schools and analyzed the way of using psychological knowledge in classrooms. Occupational Mental Health (OMH) activities, however, has not studied at all. So I have to study this field by following the history of OMH in Japan.

Some pioneers of this field, who are mostly psychiatrists, have written the short papers about the history or their experiences. I used these papers as starting points and accumulated other many documents to construct the history. In result, I think the history can be separated into four parts. The first period, which is called creating period, is from middle 1950s to 1973. The second, underwater navigating period, is from 1974 to 1982. The third, unfolding period, is from 1983 to 1994. The fourth, expanding period, is from 1995 to the present.

In this first discussion, I trace the first two periods. In Japan, some big companies, neither doctors nor the administration, led this kind of activity in period of high economic growth. The companies seemed mainly expect the psychiatrists to cope with or dispose the mental handicapped. The psychiatrists rather tried to eliminate stigma and make the handicapped return to work places. But, especially late 1960s, other psychiatrists severely criticized them. The critics believed that these psychiatrists just helped the enterprises to exclude the mental handicapped and labor who complain to the employers by maneuver. Therefore, in 1970s, the discussion about OMH had been stagnated.