



Excerpts from

Japan Society for Dying with Dignity Newsletter
No. 203, October 1, 2026

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The 26th World Federation of Right to Die Societies International Conference in Tokyo is coming soon!

**November 25–28, 2026
Venue: Toshi Center Hotel, Tokyo**

The 26th World Federation of Right to Die Societies (WFRtDS) World Conference in Tokyo is just around the corner. This will be the fourth time that Japan has hosted the World Conference. Under the theme of “A Good Death Based on Self-Determination,” the conference will provide an opportunity to deepen our understanding, exchange ideas, and support one another while respecting the diversity of histories, cultures, and values surrounding dying with dignity. Over four days in late autumn, more than 60 speakers—including anatomist and author Takeshi Yoro, who will deliver a special lecture—will take the stage to discuss the current state of dying with dignity in countries around the world, as well as the various issues and challenges surrounding Medical Aid in Dying (MAID). Below, we present the full conference schedule, including all presentation titles and subtitles.



A Message Ahead of the Tokyo Conference

One Country’s Progress Becomes Another Country’s Hope



Asunción Álvarez
President, World Federation of Right to Die Societies
(WFRtDS)

Asunción Álvarez is a professor at the Faculty of Medicine of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Her work focuses on research, education, and public awareness concerning the Right to Die with Dignity. She has worked to foster cultural and legal environments in which people can make choices about the end-of-life care they wish to receive. She has served as Vice President of the WFRtDS since 2019 and as President since 2021.

As we eagerly look forward to the upcoming Tokyo Conference, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone in Japan—and especially to all those who have devoted so much time, effort, and heart to making this important conference possible. Organizing an

international conference is a major undertaking, and your dedication truly embodies the spirit of cooperation that has sustained our Federation for so many years.

The Tokyo Conference will be much more than simply a meeting. It will be an opportunity to strengthen our friendships, share knowledge and experience, and reaffirm our common mission: to do all we can to ensure that each person can experience the best possible end of life, in accordance with their own wishes and values. For many participants, it will also be a valuable opportunity to discover the wonderful country of Japan and experience its rich culture.

To all member organizations of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for your dedication, perseverance, and compassion in advancing our shared mission. We work within different cultural, social, and legal contexts, yet we are united by our belief that respecting each person's right to self-determination and dignity at the end of life is a fundamental human value.

Strengthening Our Voice of Solidarity

International cooperation has always been one of our greatest strengths. Progress achieved in one country can bring hope and inspiration to others, while the challenges we share give us the opportunity to learn and grow together. By supporting one another, sharing our knowledge and wisdom, and working together across borders, we can make our collective voice of solidarity stronger and enhance our ability to bring about meaningful change in society.

I very much look forward to meeting you all in Tokyo and to continuing our work together. Once again, I thank you for being part of this wonderful international community.

With my sincere respect and gratitude,

The World Federation of Right to Die Societies International Conference 2026

Date: November 25th (Wed)~28th (Sat)

Venue: Toshi Center Hotel (Tokyo, Japan)

Wednesday, November 25

Welcome Reception (WFRtDS and JSDD Board Members Only)

Thursday, November 26

WFRtDS General Assembly Meeting

8:30-11:15

Opening Ceremony

11:30-11:50

Keynote Lecture

11:50-12:30

Chair: Masahiro Nomoto, Vice-president of JSDD
“50 Years of Expansion – History of the WFRtDS”
Rob Jonquiere, Former Executive Director of WFRtDS
“Personal Account of Sean Davison; Arrested for Ending the Suffering of
People in 3 Continents”
Sean Davison, Former president of WFRtDS

Special Lecture

14:00-15:00

Chair: Kiyoko Kamibeppu, Vice-president of JSDD
“When My Time Comes”
Takeshi Yoro, Anatomist

Symposium 1

15:15-17:30

“End-of-Life Care Legislations in East Asia”

Chair: Yoshihiro Kitamura, President of JSDD
“End-of-Life Care and Self-Determination in Korea: Palliative Care, Withdrawal
of Life-Sustaining Treatment, and the Prospect of Assisted Dying”
Da Hye Choi, President of Korea Association of Right to Die
“Issues and Implications from the Korean Constitutional Complaint”
Jae Ryon Kim, On-Sesang Law Firm
“The Legislative Process, Current Status, and Challenges of the Patient Right
to Autonomy Act in Taiwan”
Daniel Fu-Chang Tsai, National Taiwan University
“VSED and the Patient Right to Autonomy Act in Taiwan: End-of-Life Autonomy
and the Debate over the Legalization of Euthanasia”
Yicheng Chung, Kumamoto University

Session 1

15:15-17:10

“Beyond Individual Choice:

Historical, Philosophical, and Relational Foundations of Autonomy in the Right to Die”

Chair: Kiyoshi Kitamura, Trustee of JSDD
“The Historical Emergence of the Right to Die in International Perspective”
Niels De NUTTE
“Preparing future nurses and allied health professionals for addressing
medical assistance in dying: the EUroMAiD project”

Dennis Demedts
“Whānau and assisted dying: A qualitative study of family experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand”

Pelayo Manu
“Reconsidering Self-Determination in Life and Death: The Philosophy of Holism and the Artistic Practice of Immunologist Tada Tomio”

Yoko Kawakami
“Critiques of “Anti-Life-Prolongation” Surrounding Living Wills from a Patient Perspective: Implications for Advance Care Planning in Japan”

Mutsumi Saito
“Bringing Death to Life: The Importance of Teaching Death Literacy”
Anna Cohen Kirah, Galina Arbeli

Friday, November 27

Session 2

9:30-12:20

“Social and Relational Dimensions of End-of-Life Care in Japan: Realities, Narratives, and the Role of Social Systems”

Chair: Kiyoko Kamibeppu, Vice-president of JSDD
Sumito Ogawa, Board member of JSDD

“Age- and Setting-Related Differences in End-of-Life Care, Living Wills, and Signs of Death: A Questionnaire Survey of Physicians With Expertise in End-of-Life Care”

Mitsutaka Yakabe
“Making MAID Legalization Work: The Conditions of Autonomy in Japanese Society”

Kazuo Kojima
“Challenges and Solutions in Hospital Admissions, Discharges, and Facility Transitions for older Adults without Family Support”

Chieko Matsukuma
“Supporting End-of-Life Care for People Without Relatives: The Crucial Role of ALP and Decision-Making Support”

Masayoshi Egoshi
“The Current State of End-of-Life Care in Japan”

Toshiyuki Sugiura
“The Record of End-of-Life Care Entrusted by My Mother: Conflict and Resolution of a Physician Facing Simultaneous Bereavement of Parent and Pet”

Yoshiyuki Kunieda

“Being a Companion at the End-of-Life”

Chihoko Hirabayashi

“Supporting Grieving Families, Turning Every Experience into a Light: The Role of the ‘Little Lighthouse Project’”

Kazuko Kondo

Symposium 2

9:30-12:20

“Dying with Dignity: MAID, Death with palliative care, Sedation, VSED”

Chair: Satoru Mitsuoka, Board member of JSDD

“Euthanasia” Why and how in The Netherlands”

Rob Jonquiere, Former Executive Director of WFRtDS

“Palliative Care and Palliative Sedation in Japan: Addressing Refractory Suffering at the End of Life”

Masanori Mori, Seirei Mikatahara General Hospital

“Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED): A Lesser Known but Widely Available End-of-Life Option”

Pope Thaddeus

“A Sociological Analysis of the Debate over Death with Dignity in Japan

Miwako Hosoda, Seisa University

“A Discussion on MAID/Euthanasia in Japan”

Satoshi Kodama, Kyoto University

Session 3

9:30-12:20

“International Comparison of MAID/VAD:

Legal Evolution, Implementation, and Governance9:30 Announcement”

Chair: Michiya Ito, Board member of JSDD

“Twenty-Five Years of Medical Assistance in Dying Legislation in the Netherlands: Past, Present and Future”

Fransien van ter Beek

“Evolution of Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD) Legislation in Belgium and the Netherlands: From Terminal to Non-Terminal Suffering, Children, and Advanced Dementia”

Dennis Demedts

“The first decade: Clarifying the facts on medical assistance in dying and the role of the right to die movement in Canada”

Kelsey A. Goforth

“A Summary of MAID Practices and Progress in the United States, including the 3 new states since the last WFRDS conference in Dublin”

Edmund Tiryakian

“How Community Voices Shaped the Voluntary Assisted Dying Conversation in Victoria, Australia”

Jane E. Morris

“Issues Surrounding Voluntary Assisted Dying Laws in Australia”

Takako Minami

“Regulating Medical Assistance in Dying in Slovenia: Legal Context, Stakeholder Positions, and Recent Policy Developments”

Marija Milavec Kapun

“Tung LAM Bill”

Lam Lord Tung

Anniversary Lecture

14:00-14:40

Chair: Yoshihiro Kitamura, President of JSDD

“50th Anniversary Lectures of the Japan Society for Dying with Dignity and the Histories of Its Regional Branches”

Soichiro Iwao, Honorary president of JSDD

Symposium 3

14:00-15:40

“Symposium on Dementia and LW-Support for shared decision in the EOL”

Chair: Masahiro Nomoto, Vice-president of JSDD

“Medical Treatments in Advanced Neurological Disorders: Expected Benefits, Burdens, and Limitations”

Takayoshi Shimohata, Gifu University

“Support for Decision-making regarding Medical Treatments for Neurological Conditions including dementia at the EOL (Tentative)”

Mieko Ogino, Toukai University

“Can We Choose Not to Live With Advanced Dementia?”

Asunción Alvarez

Session 4

14:00-17:00

“Social Practice and Care in MAID/VAD:

Barriers to Access, Cross-Border Choices, and Death Literacy”

Chair: Shusho Okada, Board member of JSDD

“Planned Swissicide”: A neurocognitive and corporate model for intercepting high volume of Swiss VAD clients as a global suicide-attempt prevention strategy”

Kristy Martin

“Reflections on suicide tourism”

Lewis M. Cohen

“Cross-Border Choices at the End of Life: Experiences of Korean Families Seeking Assisted Dying in Switzerland and the Regulatory Gap”

You ha Nam

“Implications of Exploring the Boundaries of Assisted Dying in Switzerland - How Pegasos has Extended the Eligibility Criteria”

Sean Davison

“When Medical Aid in Dying Too Often Fails Suffering Individuals”

Janet Hager

“Why Do Voluntary Assisted Dying Regimes and Judicial Decisions Emerge in Particular Regions?”

Yukio Sakurai

“Bridging Gaps in Medical Aid in Dying Access: Inequities in End-of-Life Choice in the United States”

Donald J. Moore

“From the Value of Continuing to the Right to Stop: Antinatalism and the Philosophical Justification of MAID”

Kazuo Kojima

Award Ceremony for Distinguished Service to JSDD

14:40-14:50

Regional Branch Presentations

14:50-17:00

Symposium 4

15:40-17:00

“Withholding and withdrawing artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH)”

Chair: Reiko Miyamoto, Board member of JSDD

“Artificial Nutrition and Hydration in End-of-life care : Considerations on Continuation and Care Options

Yuko Joie, Izumiotsu City Hall Welfare Office

“Empowering the Courage to Say No “The Little Lighthouse Project””

Kazuko Kondo, Japan Society For Dying With Dignity

“Withholding and withdrawing artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH)”

Reiko Miyamoto

“Drip is natural enemy”

Gala Dinner

Saturday, November 28

Special Film Screening: "Peaceful Death"

10:00-12:00

The film "Peaceful Death" (*Itakunai Shinikata*) is based on the book by Dr. Kazuhiro Nagao, former Vice President of JSDD and a physician who has been involved in home-based medical care. The film was written and directed by Banmei Takahashi.

It tells the story of a young home-care physician, played by Tasuku Enomoto, who struggles with the harsh realities of end-of-life care but gradually learns to face patients and their families with greater understanding and compassion.

Information & Activity Booths

10:00-12:30

- Interactive "Go Wish Game"

Workshop: Reflecting on Future Care and End-of-Life Choices

The **Go Wish Game** was developed by the Japanese Association for Clinical Advance Care Planning (iACP), founded by physicians and other healthcare professionals involved in palliative care and community and home-based medicine. It is based on the U.S. **Go Wish Game**.

Participants simply choose cards describing things that are important to them at the end of life, gradually reflecting on what matters most to them. On the day, a JSDD branch board member who has completed the iACP Master Program will help facilitate the game.

- Medical Consultation Booth (Japanese Language Only)

The medical consultation offers an opportunity to talk openly about concerns and have someone listen, helping you organize your thoughts and feelings.

You are welcome to discuss questions such as:

- What are a **Living Will** and a **Statement of My Wishes**? When and how should they be prepared?
- If I become unable to eat by mouth, can I refuse a **feeding tube** (gastrostomy)?

- Is it possible to spend the final stage of my life at home, in familiar surroundings?

A nurse who serves as a telephone consultation counselor for JSDD will listen and provide support.

- Legal Consultation on End-of-Life Issues Booth (Japanese Language Only)

A lawyer who serves on the JSDD Board of Directors will provide legal consultations on end-of-life issues.

You are welcome to stop by if you have questions such as:

- I have a serious illness and am struggling with decisions about treatment and life-prolonging measures. What is the legal basis for withholding or discontinuing life-prolonging treatment?
- A family member is approaching the end of life, and I am being asked to make difficult decisions. What is the legal role of a surrogate decision-maker?
- I want to prepare for unforeseen circumstances for myself or my family. What is the legal basis for a Living Will?
- I would like to learn more about wills, voluntary guardianship, asset management, and related matters.

- Therapy Dog Interaction Session and Demonstration



We will welcome therapy dogs currently working with the Japanese Animal Hospital Association, together with their volunteer handlers, to demonstrate their activities. Therapy dogs visit hospitals, care facilities, schools, and other settings to provide emotional support and comfort. Spending time with or interacting with a dog can help ease anxiety and tension, and may encourage people to smile, communicate, and engage more actively with others.

Registration and Participation

Registration

Advance registration is required.

Please register through the Conference website on the Association's official homepage.

Registration Fees

All four days / Full access to all sessions

- Association Members:
¥3,000 (without lunch)
- General Participants:
¥5,000 (without lunch)
- Full Conference Registration with Lunch:
¥20,000
(Accompanying family member: ¥10,000)

Only full three-day Conference passes are available. Single-day registration is not offered.

Commemorative Gifts

All participants will receive:

- A full-color photo and song collection featuring the popular newsletter series "Songs of the Four Seasons", including an English edition.
- A commemorative publication celebrating the Association's 50-year history: "Fifty Years of the Association: A Chronological History."

These gifts will be provided in the official Conference bag.



Advance Reservations for Open Space Events

Those wishing to participate in any of the Open Space events are required to make an **advance reservation separately from paid registration for the Tokyo Conference**. Reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Even if you wish to attend **only the events on November 28**, advance conference registration and the applicable participation fee are required.

For advance reservations or inquiries, please contact **Mr. Tanzawa** by email at yoyaku2026@songenshi-kyokai.or.jp.

Looking Ahead to the Tokyo Conference

From a First Step in Tokyo 50 Years Ago to the Next 50 Years



Yoshihiro Kitamura
President, WFRtDS Tokyo Conference 2026
President, Japan Society for Dying with Dignity (JSDD)

Dear Members and Friends Around the World,
It is my great pleasure to welcome the World Federation of Right to Die Societies (WFRtDS) World Conference to Tokyo in November 2026.

This conference holds special significance for the Japan Society for Dying with Dignity (JSDD). In 1976, the same year that JSDD was founded, the first international conference was held here in Tokyo, where the Tokyo Declaration was adopted. Fifty years later, the return of the international conference to Tokyo offers us a valuable opportunity to reflect on the journey we have taken and to look toward the future.

The theme of this year's conference is "MY LIFE, MY CHOICE." How we live and how we approach the final stage of life are deeply connected to each person's view of life and values, relationships with family, and the culture and society in which they live. The great significance of this international gathering lies in bringing together people from different backgrounds so that we can listen to one another, engage in dialogue, and learn from each other.

With the Support of Our Members...

For JSDD, 2026 is also the year of our 50th anniversary. Throughout these five decades, we have advocated the importance of thinking for ourselves about the final stage of life and expressing our wishes, while working to promote Living Wills and related initiatives. It is each and every one of our members who has supported this journey. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you.

The Tokyo Conference is an international conference hosted by JSDD, but we also hope to make it a truly memorable 50th-anniversary gathering shared with our members. Let us meet and connect with colleagues from around the world, listen to their experiences and perspectives, and reflect together on how we can approach the final stage of life in the years ahead.

Fifty years ago, an international connection began here in Tokyo. Fifty years later, that connection has returned to Tokyo.

With the journey of the past 50 years in our hearts, let us join hands with our colleagues around the world and take a strong new step toward the next 50 years. I look forward to moving forward together with all of you.

We warmly look forward to welcoming you to Tokyo in November, amid the beauty of late autumn.

From the telephone and email medical consultations

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Social Welfare Councils to Become a Core of Public Support

This is a page where we introduce specific consultation cases and answers given over the phone or by email. A nurse will answer the questions, but sometimes, we will ask for the help of an advisor doctor.

On June 19 this year, a revised Social Welfare Act was enacted in Japan. The revision introduces a framework for providing comprehensive support to older people without family or other close relatives to rely on. Under the new framework, Councils of Social Welfare (Shakyo) and other organizations will provide or arrange public support ranging from assistance with daily life and hospitalization to procedures following a person's death. The system is scheduled to be launched by June two years from now.

As reported in our 200th issue, we have seen a growing number of urgent inquiries from people without family support, those living alone, and older couples who have no one else to rely on. Here, we introduce several cases while considering how people can seek assistance from their local Council of Social Welfare.

Q: I have no family or relatives I can rely on. I am worried about having an emergency contact when I am hospitalized and about managing daily life after discharge, such as shopping, cleaning, and preparing meals. What should I do?

A:

① First, consult the hospital.

Speak as early as possible with your attending physician, nurses, a medical social worker (MSW), a discharge coordinator, or the hospital's community medical liaison office.

② Tell the hospital if you have no emergency contact.

If there is no one you can rely on, explain your situation honestly. When necessary, the hospital can coordinate with the local government and relevant organizations to arrange appropriate support.

③ Check what support is available after discharge.

You can discuss available programs together, including long-term care insurance, disability welfare services, and local government services that support daily living.

④ Make use of the support you need.

Under the long-term care insurance system, a care manager can coordinate appropriate services.

Depending on the circumstances, local government support services, paid volunteer services, and private household-support services may also be available.

⑤ If you do not know where to turn, contact your local Comprehensive Community Support Center or Council of Social Welfare.

They can provide information about available programs and connect you with appropriate support organizations.

Key Point

Rather than waiting until hospitalization or discharge is imminent, it is important to explain your circumstances to the hospital and local consultation services before hospitalization or discharge, so that the necessary support can be coordinated in cooperation with the relevant organizations.

Q: If I develop dementia, who will take care of admission procedures for a care facility and payment of the fees?

A: Even after developing dementia, as long as a person retains sufficient decision-making capacity, they generally continue to make their own admission contract and pay the associated fees. If there is no one available to provide support, it is advisable to consult the local Council of Social Welfare or Comprehensive Community Support Center **before dementia progresses**. A Council of Social Welfare cannot itself act as a person's agent for signing a facility admission contract or paying facility fees. Depending on the circumstances, it may therefore be necessary to consider using the **Adult Guardianship System** or other forms of support.

Key Point

If you are concerned about the future, consulting in advance about the Adult Guardianship System or an Voluntary Guardianship Agreement (Ninikōken) while you still have sufficient decision-making capacity can provide greater peace of mind.

A Major Shift Toward an Inclusive Community-Based Society

With this revision of the law, Japan appears to be making a significant shift toward realizing an inclusive, community-based society. The role of Councils of Social Welfare is expected to become increasingly important as a hub for collaboration, connecting individuals with appropriate support according to their circumstances while working together with healthcare and long-term care providers, local government, and legal professionals.

Looking ahead, if you may need to rely on local support and services, we recommend gathering information in advance from your local Council of Social Welfare and municipal government office.

Michiko Sasaki, Medical Consultation Counselor

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