

DR. SEIICHIRO KAWANO



COMPREHENSIVE LESSONS FROM JAMKHED

The 2007 JELA Artificial Limb Work Camp in Jamkhed, India included a record 19 members, with one participant carrying unusual qualifications for a group of volunteers.

Dr. Seiichiro Kawano is a neural surgeon in the city of Kitakyushu. He learned of the work camp through posters at Hakozaiki Lutheran Church, where he is a member, and joined the tour in order to view first hand the endeavors of

Jamkhed's Comprehensive Rural Health Project, co-sponsors the camp with JELA.

Founded in 1970 under the leadership of Christian doctors Rajinakant and Mabelle Arole, CRHP is devoted to improving the health of local residents through a variety of approaches, including programs in family support, agriculture, and micro-financing, as well as health services.

CRHP's artificial limb program is one such



had delivered, he was astounded at their responses. Almost all had successfully delivered hundreds upon hundreds of babies, while also identifying difficult deliveries in advance and directing those mothers to the CRHP hospital.

He came away feeling he had much to learn from these women, whom he saw working with diligence and pride, despite literacy levels that Japanese society would not accept. He was touched by their leadership skills, their love for their communities and the value of practical knowledge and earnest effort.

As for employing CRHP practices back home, Dr. Kawano notes that the situations of Jamkhed and Japan do not match up well, except in the desire to improve quality of life in a more total sense. As

such, he is eager to discuss the “comprehensive” approach. Western prosthetic devices are too expensive and wieldy for handicapped farmers, who need artificial limbs to continue working in their fields. Lightweight and inexpensive CRHP prostheses have proven the perfect answer, although they need replacing every few years. Limb construction continues year long, with JELA volunteers helping for one week in February.

approach with colleagues in Kyushu and ponder what might be done to better fulfill Japanese needs, for example, in the area of care for the elderly.

The highlight of the final day of the Artificial Limb Work Camp was a ceremony in which recipients received their new limbs from the JELA volunteers. This was followed by music and speeches, with one of the first speakers being Dr. Kawano.

In his talk as a representative of the group, Dr. Kawano thanked the CRHP people for their kindness throughout the week and the opportunity to live among them. The volunteers had come to help, he said, but in the end perhaps it was they who benefited most, with each member – as with he himself -- taking home valuable lessons from Jamkhed.

Dr. Kawano was most interested in the letter “C” of CRHP – standing for “Comprehensive.” In Japan, he has often felt the limitations of medicine and wondered if something more could be done to help sick and suffering people. He therefore yearned to see the grassroots approach of CRHP.

Everything he experienced in the one-week camp was impressive, from the building of artificial limbs to helping at the CRHP model farm to visiting local villages and markets and more. Despite the poverty, he thought many people showed more vitality and energy than those in Japan.

