

From the Director

Impossible? Yes, we can!

*Hidefumi Kotani, Professor, Director of IASCP,
Congress Chair of PRRC-IADP 2008*

When the idea first arose to try to host the 8th Pacific Rim Regional Congress of the International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes in Japan, it seemed like mission impossible. No major associations of medical and psychological professionals showed interest in assuming responsibility for hosting the Congress. However, group psychotherapy is expected to be the leading approach for psychotherapy and organizational development in the century. Our globalizing society requires much wider and more systematic views of mental health, community building and organizational development. In fact, our individual societies and the world at large would benefit greatly from new perspectives. Moreover, the future development of group and organizational dynamic theories must focus on the welfare of society at large. The time was ripe for an International Congress of this sort, but who would accept responsibility for hosting it?

As fellows of this Institute, we have been searching and developing new approaches in individual and group psychotherapy over the past seven years. Our efforts have been supported by government grants under the auspices of the "Attractive Graduate School Initiative" and the "Center of Excellence" programs. Finally we have reached a conclusion. Wisdom emanating from the Occident and the Orient has to be embraced and integrated for the future welfare of our planet. It was our insight that the time to do this had arrived. We therefore assumed the responsibility of hosting the Pacific Rim Congress even though the Japanese Association of Group Psychotherapy, the main association for group psychotherapy in Japan, found it necessary to forego this opportunity.

Surely it was absurd to think that such a small Institute with a history of only seven years could accept such an important responsibility. But we declared that, "Yes, we can!", and succeeded against the odds in hosting an exciting and fruitful congress. It was difficult for many friends and colleagues to believe our declaration. As we came to understand, the dynamics turned out to be paradoxical. Somehow the fact that many people who were not directly involved thought that the idea of hosting the Congress in Japan was impossible made the impossible possible. These were crisis dynamics. Ironically, confronted by what seemed to be an insurmountable crisis, the group coalesced and the dynamics of creativity began to come into play. We knew about this phenomenon in theory but now we were experiencing it in reality. If your hope, your dream and your trust in your company are strong, the challenge of the "impossible" can unleash a strong energy to develop the group and the organization. This is one of the most interesting dynamics of creativity. As we all know well enough, the original and most fundamental challenge for the psychotherapist is to transform the impossible into the possible.

To all our readers I express the hope that you will be inspired by the collegiality, camaraderie and optimism that animated the 8th Pacific Rim Regional Congress of the International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes in Japan. We are looking forward to sharing with you our achievements at the Congress through publication of the IAGP News Letter, in the academic journals of IJCP and IJGP, in a book written in English, and in Japanese in a public journal entitled "GENDAINO ESUPURI".

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From the Editor

Feature of this Volume : PRRC-IADP 2008

8th Pacific Rim Regional Congress of International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes & 14th Conference of International Association of Dynamic Psychotherapy (PRRC-IADP 2008) took place from October 7th to 11th, 2008 in Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture. The theme of the congress was "Creating New Space beyond Internal and External Wars". Pre-congress was held on October 7th and 8th. About 30 workshops were convened and intensive training was conducted. Congress Program which included Lectures, Symposia, Workshops, Case Studies and so on were held from October 9th to 11th. Some programs were opened not only to professional clinicians but also to citizens. About 300 attendees were gathered and the congress was closed with great success.

The current IASCP Newsletter makes a feature of PRRC-IADP 2008. Colleagues who created the Congress together gave us comments on the congress. (*Editors*)

Impressions of Matsue/IAGP PRRC-IADP 2008 Congress

Frances Bonds-White, Ed.D., President of IAGP

As the train from Kyoto approached Matsue and I saw the lake glistening in the sunlight, I suddenly had a very warm feeling in my heart. Memories of the wonderful time I had the two days touring the area with Professor Hidefumi Kotani, Drs. Tomoko James and Yuki Nakamura and Mr. Miyake and Mr. Ishikawa in 2007 rose in my mind. With these memories in my mind, I looked forward to getting into the city and being involved in the Congress.

Before the PRRC-IADP congress began, the Board of the Directors and the Executive Committee of the International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes held their meetings. These were long hard working days, made a bit easier by the views of the water from the meeting room and the hospitality of the staff at Kunibiki Messe.

Then the Congress began with the lively party that ended the Pre-Congress days and opened the Congress. The party gave me the opportunity to visit with both old friends and new people. I learned about many people's investment in being involved in the Congress. Many thanks to Maria van Noort and Kazunori Hashimoto and all of the Pre-Congress leaders for the wonderful work they did. Although I could not attend a workshop because my IAGP role required me to be in meetings most of those two days, I heard lots of positive feedback and comments about the work.

There were so many very rich experiences in the Congress that it would take the entire newsletter to describe them, but let me try to name a few. Professor Kotani's opening lecture was very exciting and as I said when I began my lecture on anxiety, they seemed like chapters 1 and 2 of a book. The other events seemed to build on the theme of safe space. The Agora that involved many participants of the congress was very moving as people from different backgrounds began to exchange experiences. The art work of Hiroko Inoue stirred up memories of my own adolescence, some of them happy and some quite sad.

I would be remiss if I did not tell about the pleasure of seeing the looks of amazement on people's faces as they entered the Matsue Vogel Park and saw all of the hanging plants. Then the performance of the "Kagura" kept me on the edge of my seat.

Professor Bon Koizumi's lecture about his great-grandfather was fascinating as he related the cross-culture life of Lafcadio Hearn that led to Hearn's understanding of and identification with the Japanese culture he encountered. When I was listening to the participants of the closing lecture I felt deeply moved by their candidness and thought about the universality of trauma and that the need for psychologically safe space is universal.

For me personally and for many of the people I talked to at the conference, the hosts, the students, the volunteers, the presenters and the participants all seemed to work together to make connections and create a truly safe space that I felt very sad to leave behind. Of course, I only left the physical space behind and care in my heart and mind the memories, feelings and thoughts of the time in Matsue. I have revisited them frequently in the time since I got on the airplane to fly home and am sure that I will remember this experience the rest of my life. Many thanks to everyone who worked to make the conference such a wonderful experience.

The 8th PRRC and 14th Conference of IADP 2008

Sabar Rustomjee, M.D., Past President of IAGP, Advisory Board of PRRC-IADP 2008

This was indeed a most memorable congress, which will not only live in our minds, but will reside in a very safe and protected part of our hearts for a long time.

The Congress theme itself signified the importance of all of us, sharing our own individual precious safe space, created after years of reflection and experience, woven with the goodness within each of us, with the External world at a time when it is most needed. It may be to protect the vulnerable part of ourselves, that of our near and dear ones in life, or the very sensitive, fragmented and dissociated parts of our patients when harsh and even cruel realities of life, force themselves upon us unsuspectingly.

Discussants at the congress described the various presentations of Evil. They focussed either on particular Individuals or Groups through the projection of envy, jealousy, taking unfair advantage, through inflicting emotional pain through humiliation, and shame, subjecting innocent victims through sexual abuse and torture etc. How to initially recognise and then overcome such evilness was studied. One example was the early recognition of parasitic behaviour, where through initial seduction, the parasite (i.e. the person who gains entry into an unsuspecting host) then devours the host, and leaving only a broken dead husk, moves on to find the next host, so as to enter and destroy similarly in a cold and calculated way.

The evils of External wars were also well explored, where at the end of the day, there are no winners. Prof. Kotani's final account of the indescribable trans-generational trauma following the A-Bomb at Hiroshima, and the Memorial Monument which now stands there openly declaring, '..... for we shall not repeat the Evil.' are certainly words born from great wisdom.

It endorses Ralph Waldo Emerson's thoughts.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us."

Comment on Pre-Congress of PRRC-IADP 2008 in Matsue

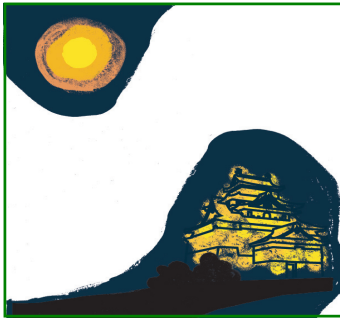
Kiyoshi Takara, Ph.D, Professor of Meiji University, Pre-Congress Co-Chair of PRRC-IADP 2008

How come Matsue?

Matsue is actually religious city but not so convenient as Tokyo in Japan. I was wondering about the place where a congress, but it didn't take a time to know that was my imaginary fear. That was because there were many valuable persons together in one place as gods came together in our spiritual home of Japanese mythology. 26 subjects totally on Pre-Congress were presented during 2 days Oct 7-8th. I was so surprised to see such a various field between medical, educational, delinquent, individual and group, and also to see each program had own originality and high quality. It was sorry just a few participants were there on some class, but it would present a very luxurious time for them in a sense.

By the way I had a one-day workshop "Treating PTSD with Action Method" with Dr. Kate Hudgins. We had a wonderful time when we could discuss of expressing own anger feeling in a group. That must be cross-cultural issue between east and west.

Time past like a blink. I can remember the moment in the congress as if it happened just on yesterday, on other side I feel it happened a long time ago. Any way such a great celebration came to an end now, so we should meditate what happened on such a religious place, Matsue. Thank you!



From Board Chairperson of the Congress Program

Masahiro Nishikawa, Associate Professor of IASCP, Congress Program Chair of PRRC-IADP 2008

During the three-day Congress Program, a total of over 1,200 professionals and almost 100 members of the public took part, and all programs were conducted as scheduled. Through the three days, many programs for professionals, and a few group-programs for both professionals and members of the public were conducted, and these two developed together in resonance. On the last day, it seemed that we could face up to “genocide” and “soul murder”, and fulfill our responsibility to support some parts of the world with “Here and now”. I sincerely appreciate everyone who were interested in the Congress Program.

Comment on Pre-Congress Program of PRRC-IADP 2008

Kazunori Hashimoto, PAS Institute, Pre-Congress Chair of PRRC-IADP 2008

A total of twenty-six workshops were offered in the pre-congress with the focus on education and training. The topics varied from group psychotherapy, cultural competence, Rorschach test, juvenile delinquency, adolescent psychotherapy to organizational consultancy. Some of the workshops were two-day, sixteen-hour programs that were usually rare in Japan, and others were one-day, seven-hour programs. Workshop was where participants were as though invited to the offices of leading clinicians and learned theories, skills, and research methods experientially through exchanging what each participant knew. It was an attempt to offer participants an opportunity to experience the essence of apprenticeship that is now being forgotten not only in Japan but also in other countries. Forty-six leading professionals from the USA, countries in Asia, Oceania, Europe and Japan responded enthusiastically to our proposal to be trainers, and a hundred twenty-four people participated. The number of the participants was less than what we had anticipated. However the size of each workshop was appropriate. Some workshops were small enough for the participants to be able to receive almost one-on-one training from an expert in the field, and even the biggest workshop had about ten participants at the most. From the group dynamics point of view, those group sizes are suitable for group psychotherapy where everyone in the group can actively participate, and in fact participants in the workshop programs seemed to enjoy the training opportunity that they would not have gotten elsewhere. The trainers, too, felt the sense of accomplishment, and I kept receiving messages from trainers in Japan one after another that expressed their sense of satisfaction and the joy they felt in the intensive workshop programs that were unusually small in sizes. Some trainers from abroad were amazed to find keen sensitivity to “sense of body” in Japan, and theories and techniques developed in Japan such as psychological safe space and adolescent identity group caught the attention. Through this learning experience that was beyond differences in languages and cultures, I have personally felt that Japanese group psychotherapy that is high in quality can contribute to helping the world to get out of the psychological stagnation, although group psychotherapy in Japan is not as widespread as in some other countries.

Report about Pre-Congress PRRC/IAGP in Matsue.

Maria van Noort, Psy.D., Chair of Consultative Assembly of Affiliate Organizations of IAGP, Pre-Congress Co-chair of PRRC-IADP 2008

Together with my co-chair Kazunori Hashimoto we tried to present a wide variety of topics in the two days of the pre-congress. The option of choosing between two days, one day or half a day was innovative and useful for other international congresses to apply.

As a colleague from Europe it was for me a very positive experience to contribute and to participate in this conference. I realized that refinement in behaviour and interactions between people and rituals designed to keep relations flow harmoniously are capacities that could be rekindled in my own country The Netherlands and I assume in other Western countries as well.

Although this has sometimes led to misunderstandings I felt an overall genuine wish to understand each other and put effort in creating good communication. Also the respect for silence in an accepting way is part of this.

The eagerness and endless curiosity of students and young professionals and the quiet warmth and wisdom of older colleagues struck me. It definitely created a wish to want to know you better and work more together. Not being able to speak Japanese and depending a (wonderful!) translator was sometimes difficult but in general very good because it forces one to slow down and really focus on the essence of what one wants to communicate. It helped me to attune more to non-verbal communication. As a group psychotherapist I experienced and noticed how quick Japanese groups are cohesive and at the same time have a fear of expressing differences and difficult feelings. When safe space is there it happens more naturally.

Open forums as a way of reaching out to society and the high technological knowledge used in organizing events form a good model for me to take with me and apply it in other IAGP congresses. You all have imbued me with many important knowledge and experiences and I hope that I gave you in return from my knowledge and experience.

It was an experience for which I am very grateful. Domo arrigato!

Reviewing the Citizen Group

Wahei Yoshigi, Matsue Convention Bureau, Kunibiki Messe, Participant of PRRC-IADP 2008

The program conducted for citizens at the International Christian University (ICU) in Mitaka monthly was brought to the congress in Matsue to organize this workshop. At first, Prof. Hidefumi Kotani, a professor at ICU proposed to create “the festival of local community culture”, then, we broke up into small groups for discussion. I coordinated a 23-member group on the theme of “Chanoyu (Japanese tea ceremony) and safe space”. The participants felt their movement of feeling with experiencing Japanese traditional Chanoyu. They experienced two types of ceremony. One was Koicha (thick tea) which people passed around a cup to drink and had Japanese cake. Another was Usucha (thin tea) which people drunk a cup of tea individually and had dry confectionary. Procedure for making tea was performed by a group of “Fumai-ryu” which was descended from a feudal lord who was master of ceremonial tea in Matsue, therefore the procedure was authentic. All participants in this workshop got together in one group at the end and shared the comments. One told that tea ceremony was consolable, and one asked why Japanese people got familiar more with tea. Chanoyu was accomplished 45 years ago when samurai repeated wars in Japan. Some of them took a breather over a cup of tea before going to the war and was killed in battle right after that. Japanese Chanoyu was not just healing ceremony. Today, I realize that unlike tea or coffee, having a cup of Japanese tea itself provides us active safe space. This is extremely astonishing. Guys, let’s have Japanese tea.

Before and after PRRC-IADP 2008, we invited Dr. Fern J. Cramer-Azima (Past President of IAGP) and Dr. Walter Stone (Past President of American Group Psychotherapy Association) to Japan and offered to hold workshops. Dr. Cramer-Azima did three workshops including "Consultation for Adolescent Clinical Treatment", and Dr. Stone had an "open supervision" workshop for group psychotherapy with schizophrenic patients. Here, we would like to introduce their letters written about workshops in Japan. (Editors)

Comments on Workshops in Japan

Fern J. Cramer-Azima, Ph.D., Past President of IAGP

Among my many international travels and workshops my visits to Japan hosted by Prof. Hide Kotani and his staff remain among my favourites. Returning after 6 years to the Institute for Advanced Studies of Clinical Psychology of the International Christian University I recognized many people who now had obtained their Ph.D's or who were on their way to obtaining one.

Of the three workshops I gave in Tokyo - Theory, Supervision and Consultation. The latter remains as the most memorable. The large audience came prepared to present and discuss their problem cases. Each presenter was well prepared and the case challenging.

Due to the late hour many requests could not be addressed and I am sure we could spent another 2 hours debating alternative strategies.

Another highlight for me was the invitation to present my paper on "Group Psychotherapy with Depressed and Suicidal Youth" on a panel addressing the issue of depression. I was very impressed with the presentations of the other speakers who addressed Bionian theory as used in Group Psychotherapy and the risk of depression and suicide among the nursing profession. Again the audience was very responsive and asked for elaboration.

I want to add my sincere thanks to the many people who looked after me from the moment of arrival to my departure and to the splendid team of translators. I pay homage to the leaderships involved in organizing these workshops and congresses.

Consultation with Mr. No

Walter Stone, M.D., Past President of AGPA

I am very pleased to comment on the consultation session of October 15th to a presentation of Mr. No. The task of the consultant is to assist the supervisee in using himself as a therapeutic instrument. My approach is to try to understand questions posed in consultation from an empathic perspective. However, that does not neglect the perspective of the external observer.

Reading the notes in the transcript, I noticed a number of instances where the therapist's comments were immediately followed by ones from the co-therapist. I wondered if there was competition between the two leaders. This hypothesis awaited confirmation.

The first theme was about girls bullying boys. I wondered if this was a parallel process in which the patients' associations were stimulated by the therapists' behavior.

I initially asked Mr. No asked if there was competitiveness between the two therapists. Mr. No didn't believe so. I described the process, of women bullying men, and I noted that the co-therapist's behavior, which could convey to patients experience of bullying. This seemed to strike a correct observation for Mr. No.

I asked why the co-therapist was not present, because her absence might be linked to competitiveness. As I understood the reason for her absence, that notion seemed unlikely.

Additional themes emerged. A man was identified as a woman. A man talked about a kangaroo kicking, likely representing a response to bullying. Later in the session covert references to homosexuality occurred, further depreciating men. A patient's dream of her mother's suicide by hanging added to a sense of violence. Mr. No did well to avoid talking about the aggression because this further disorganizes schizophrenic patients.

Towards the end of the session, a member spoke about ambivalence towards brothers. I saw this as progress; people did not have to be categorized as all good or bad. The session ended with Mr. No suggesting that attacks could be a way of people protecting themselves, providing members crucial understanding for their anger.

The central thrust of my consultation was to raise the possibility that the therapists' relationship might suggest competitiveness to the members. The patients' behavior likely mirrored those of the therapists, which could be understood as an enactment of their family of origin dynamics.

Institute for Advanced Studies of Clinical Psychology (IASCP)
International Christian University
3-10-2 Osawa, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181-8585 JAPAN
TEL/FAX: +81-422-33-3655 <http://subsite.icu.ac.jp/iascp/>
[Email: iascp@icu.ac.jp](mailto:iascp@icu.ac.jp)

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