



## From the Director:

### Difficult and beautiful life during student years

*Hidefumi Kotani, Professor, Director of IASCP*

Our good friend and colleague, Professor Tomabechei, is retiring. He contributed a great deal not only to our university counseling but also to the Japanese Society of Student Counseling. Although I feel that he is “too young” to retire, each of us has to accept our reality.

The phrase “too young” reminds me of my student years. There was pressure, and the sense of the presence of a wall, and sometimes a challenge, such that a variety of thoughts and feelings came to me every time I was planning to expand my dreams and activities toward new practical goals. Thanks to that phrase “too young” uttered by my mentor, I could direct my uncontrollable, youthful energy toward a specific goal. Whenever I failed to achieve my goal, “too young” turned out

to be a good excuse for my failure. Although I never want to go back to those days, I admire students who lived through those times, struggling hard to achieve a beautiful life.

There must be very few students who do not experience some difficulty during their student days. Major challenges to be faced include deciding on a future course of life, finding a partner for life, along with a group of supportive friends. In the end, each of us has to face these challenges alone. It is quite hard work, and therefore beautiful. Hard work contains within it elements of fear, anger, loneliness, passion, hostility, guilt, indeed, every type of emotion. How can we make this work beautiful?

It is, of course, too difficult to fight and overcome these challenges all by ourselves. Freedom and responsibility are the most indispensable conditions, the necessary and sufficient conditions, for self-actualization. The phrase “too young” often serves as a double stimulus for kindling both a desire for freedom and acceptance of the responsibility associated with that freedom. However, words of this nature are not familiar anymore in the current culture associated with late adolescence and young adulthood. I see Professor Tomabechei as a rare person nowadays for whom the phrase “You’re too young!” is especially appropriate. This is precisely why I mentioned above that “He is too young to retire.” On many occasions in this Institute I have seen Professor Tomabechei tell my young colleagues, “.... you are so good, but it seems to me too young (for you to say so).” Of course he also helped our smart, but still young colleagues, in their various journeys toward self-actualization.

It is often difficult for us to experience freedom and responsibility to their fullest potential. When we look at world affairs, the ongoing struggle for peace and human rights, the plague of endless conflict in the Middle East, explosive riots in various parts of Africa, and strongly suppressed conflict in Asia, we see a lack of balance between freedom and responsibility. During our student years, each of us has to struggle to find a balance between freedom and responsibility in order to work responsibly in the wider society during the years beyond our student days.

Greece, the original home of democracy, needed sages, those venerable members of society imbued with a profound sense of wisdom. I believe that sages who can say “You’re too young!” are indispensable for students living through the various transitional periods of their lives. With his beautiful white hair, Professor Tomabechei is a person who always reminds me of the critical importance of sages in each of our lives.

I appreciate very much your great contribution, Professor Tomabechei, to our students and our Institute.

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## Special Topic : “The Past, Present, and Future of Student Counseling”

Professor Noriaki Tomabechi is retiring in March, 2011. He greatly contributed not only to counseling at International Christian University but also to student counseling in Japan. Also, he contributed to teaching young counselors as a faculty member at the Institute for Advanced Studies of Clinical Psychology. The history, current approaches, and problems for the future of student counseling are discussed in this feature issue titled "The Past, Present, and Future of Student Counseling." Professor Tomabechi's last lecture is reported in the beginning, and current approaches and problems for the future of student counseling are outlined by two student counselors afterwards.

### Professor Noriaki Tomabechi's profile:

After he completed his master's course at International Christian University, he worked in a psychiatric hospital in Tokyo for nine years. Then since 1981 he worked at the counseling center at International Christian University for 30 years. He also served as the bureau chief and chief director for the Japanese Association of Student Counseling. Thus, he greatly contributes not only to our university but also to student counseling in Japan at large.

### Last Lecture: Student Counseling and Clinical Practice

*Noriaki Tomabechi, Professor, Director of Counseling Center, ICU*

To state my conclusion based on my student counseling experiences first, I have come to think, “student counseling is a dialogue.”

When I started to work at ICU, I had the fortune to be supervised by Dr. Takeo Doi and Dr. Haruo Tsuru. I once wrote about what I learned from Dr. Doi as follows: “What I learned from Dr. Doi were practical things in basic clinical practice, such as how to do a psychological interview and about assessment, and another big thing I learned was from his very presence.” I think that to learn through a mentor's presence or personality is a very important experience in clinical training. Specifically, this includes a feeling of tension that I had when I was near Dr. Doi, and the fact that he became an object to whom I refer in my practice: for instance, what would he do in this kind of situation?

I participated in Dr. Tsuru's encounter group when I was a graduate school student and had an experience in which I felt relieved through the group. In that sense, I think this participation in the group served as a training analysis. Also this experience became a source for me when I conducted individual and group counseling.

The student counseling system of ICU gradually became richer thanks to the understanding of the university administration and the university at large. I was assigned as the chief counselor in 1988, and I soon submitted a document titled “A recommendation for the richness and development of counseling activities on the campus.” In this paper, I included three of my requirements for the maturation and development of the counseling center: to make the institution independent, to assure the position of counselors, and to extend and reconstruct the building. With regard to the independence of the institution, I requested a director, to have an independent budget, and the placement of a secretary. As for the position of counselor, I asked for a professional, rather than a general office employee. Although it took much time, these requirements have mostly been met. Now, there is the position of a “university counselor,” with two full time

counselors, and there are four therapy rooms, a conversation room and secretary room in the Dialogue House. Collaboration with the university office and cooperation with other professors are achieved through meetings such as the “meeting to think of student health,” and are achieving results. Certified clinical psychologists are most of the time workers who came from other clinical fields and must newly build their work and status on their own. This somehow seems similar to the clients who need to fight with their situation and open their own way, and I consider this to be a task worth working on.

Recently, I have been recognizing again the importance and meaningfulness of listening in counseling. To create a safe space where the client can talk freely is a significant task for the clinician. Perhaps the importance of the words of a counselor are not placed on giving guidance as to how the client should behave, but on showing that counseling is a safe place where one can speak freely.

Thinking about the term “entrust” might also be meaningful. It is the place, person, and time (the future) which we entrust. For example, the fact that the interview takes place at a Psychological Consulting Services or a counseling center already earns us a score of about 20 percentage points from the client, in terms of the sense of trust that the client feels toward us. Therefore, it is needless to think that we must do everything by ourselves. In therapy and counseling, we often face a painful situation where we have to struggle, however, with the idea of “entrusting,” I believe we can feel some ease. And that would allow us to meet the client with a more focused attitude.

When I face and listen to a student, I often start to see each of the students as a central character of a novel or drama. Most of the time, the central character of a drama encounters various difficulties such as setbacks, separations, illnesses and accidents. They develop in a humanistic way through those tough experiences. The students who visit the counseling center too grow through tough experiences. Stu-



dent counseling, a place where I stand by these particular situations, is a very interesting job.

Tomabechi, N. 2008 "What I learned from Dr. Takeo Doi"  
International Christian University Annual Report. 20.

## Practice and Contemporary Task of Student Counseling; Psychotherapy in Student Counseling

*Yoshiya Ishikawa, Assistant, IASCP, ICU*

I have been working at student counseling center of the University of Tokyo for seven years. I mainly do weekly individual psychotherapy and, in addition, I do weekend intensive group psychotherapy program called campus identity group (CIG) with my colleague several times a year. Although chief complaints of the students are wide-ranging such as depressive state, interpersonal problems, escape from academic work, and crisis of dropping out, they have common task in weakness of body ego identity and avoidance of external object relations. Students who avoid external object relations varies from the withdrawals from interpersonal relationship except for family to those who seem to have relation with other students but they are almost lack of energy exchange with others in reality. These students are often diagnosed as depression, developmental disorders or personality disorders by doctors or counselors. Many of them, however, show good prognosis of psychotherapy, more specifically, they could be seen as having neurotic personality organization (Kernberg, 1984) and experiencing developmental breakdown (Laufer & Laufer, 1984) at adolescent developmental process.

I have found a recovery of integration with body self and psychological self is a key factor for psychotherapy with these students. Since they have weak sense of self-identity, having instability of self-boundary and difficulty of holding their own feelings and needs, the recovery of integration of body self and psychological self helps them reorganize their sense of self-identity and construct their ego identity.

Since many students coming to the student counseling center are intellectual elite and they fight to get into the top-

level university with highest intellectual capacity and productive use of obsessive mechanism, they have certain ego strength to make efforts alone. However they have weakness of integration with body self and psychological self, and lack of peer relationship in which they could have experience of security and enlargement of self, and strengthening their ego. Therefore, combining individual psychotherapy with CIG is very effective since CIG could offer playground for experiencing peer group and extrafamilial authority. I have been moved when students who had struggled by themselves with ambition and inferiority feeling in mind met real peer, experienced sense of belongingness in CIG, and showed genuine self expression and sincere confrontation to other members..

These days, many of mental health professionals tend to look upon problems of adolescents mostly from the viewpoint of psychopathology, and prescribe problem solving approach. Some of them might get help he/she needed by the approach. Such a standpoint, however, is almost ignoring oscillating equilibrium process of adolescence, beginning with advent of puberty. It is not enough to diagnose these intelligent and ambitious adolescents only from dysfunctional aspects and offer them information-oriented problem solving strategy or holding environment. I believe, from my clinical experience with students, that it is a mission of student counseling center to offer them psychotherapy of facilitating adolescent developmental process by harnessing their capacity and strengthening their untrained ego in psychologically safe space.

## Practice on University Student Counseling and It's Current Issues

*Nanae Kurita, Counselor, DAITO BUNKA University, Itabashi-Student Counseling Room*

As I work at the student counseling room of a large private university in the downtown area of Tokyo, I often feel the modern background mentioned in New Psychotherapy (Kotani, ed, 2008) in my practice, while also the social background, the university system, and the students themselves are changing.

It's been awhile since "diversity of the university students" is said to have developed; I actually feel it in my practice. The students have a wider range in terms of their intelligence, developmental level, existence of pathology or disability and its degree, and family culture, due to rising university advancement rate and the change of the entrance examination system. As the percentage of university graduates who found a job (according to research in 2010 by the

Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare) was only 68.8%, which was the worst level since the research started, the difficulty of finding a job today seriously effects university students. Many of the students become busy processing the flood of information related with job hunting, even more so due to IT, right after they become juniors, and this phenomenon of university students continuing their job hunting process and making a lot of compromises for a long period has grown into a serious problem. The work of establishing one's own career identity within long term life planning, which students are supposed to do during university, has become difficult, and the tendency toward materialism and the confusion of identity can easily happen in students facing this situation.



The tendency of so called “offering supportive services” spreading among some universities due to the low birthrate, and universities focusing more on finances, which is mentioned in “Handbook of Student Counseling” published in 2010, is probably related with this situation.

Actually, some universities are changing their education systems, such as applying different grading methods, including attendance checked by student ID card, even for general education classes, and omitting senior theses or research which requires autonomous work for a long period, and rather using passing the examination or fulfillment of required courses as academic requirements for graduation. Perhaps those changes are made in order to support students and make it easier for them to earn credits, graduate, and find a job; however, while they support social adaption of the students on a behavioral level, they might pressure students to gain the obvious achievements and results. University students today are not only deprived of the extra time and space which students in the past used to have, but are also exposed to a prodigious amount of information in classes, human relations, and job hunting, which is more than what they can manage but yet have to process.

With all of these challenges, it is not only very difficult for students to have enough latitude of time and space in real life to experience moratorium, but also very difficult to experience identity exploration, and trial and error psychologically, and sometimes they even are told or feel a message that they should not take time and risk for exploring their identities or trial and error. Those students whose main issues are developmental stage proper used to be the core targets of student counseling, now they are easily referred to the hospital and take medication-only treatment. Therefore, it is very difficult for modern university students to cordon off the time and space to work enough on late adolescent developmental tasks such as dependency and independency, conflict against authorities, and establishment of ego-identity, and sometimes they are even in the environment which interrupts their work on these tasks.

Students whose reality life is in control, like getting good grades and finding a job early, and still have some scarcity consciousness and feeling of hopelessness, feel more isolated because not many people around them are conscious about the gap between their intra-psychic life and how they appear to the others. Students who have a reality difficult to change such as disability, family environment, financial situation, or job hunting situation become less and less interested in their own intra-psychic world, which can always have the possibility of changing, because the supports they receive from their surroundings are only focused on the extra-psychic adaption to the university and society. Those students surely used to be around before, but will be more common in the future.

In “On Strategy of Enhancing the Student Counseling System in Universities” developed by an independent administra-

tive institution, Japan Student Services Organization in 2007, which followed the policy about university student life stated by public administration in 2000, the importance of “the coordination and collaboration” of the faculties and the student counseling room based on the principle of the “student services and student counseling as part of the education” is accented. When modern universities function more for offering social work-related services due to the fact that student counseling in Japan has its origin in the community model, the function of social working in the student counseling room could be collaborated on and shared with other university divisions in order to support students effectively, and the professionalism of the student counseling room should be exercised more in the clinical side of supporting students. The social work assistance is inseparable from current student counseling. However, as Kotani (1994) was deeply concerned that university student counsellors would focus more on the professionalism of case work and loose their professionalism as clinical psychologists, the student counseling specializing in behavioral level support will thin the boundary between the counseling room and the outside, and weaken the function of being a safe space, and of assuring the psychological safe space.

Putting aside my individual issues as a clinician, I think that how we can offer professional treatment in the intra-psychic world every time in each session with time limitation to those late adolescents who live in such a background, how we can supply the time and space where they can feel their intra-psychic world freely and safely which is difficult to obtain outside of the counseling room but still essential for their growth, maturing, and changes, and how we can help them to have psychological safe space, are the issues of student counseling today.

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