



Fukushima Prefecture

福島県





2008年6月1日(日) 東京大学 安田講堂

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a patient

- 18 years old man, printing office worker
- “Urticaria.”
- No response to any open questions
- Brief “yes/no” to closed questions
- Shy with physical examinations



a patient

- 15 years old girl, high school student
- “Headache.”
- No response to any open questions
- Brief “yes/no” to closed questions
- Keep emailing with a mobile phone during the consultation

Discussion with young trainee doctors

- ❑ Feel difficult to understand illness experience of teenage patients regardless of the severity of the problems
- ❑ Open questions just don't work well
- ❑ Lots of closed questions needed
- ❑ Emoticon effective? (^0^)/ ☺☆
- ❑ How to deal with talkative parents of the teenage patients?
- ❑ Clearly distinguish between “the very intimate” and “complete strangers”

Discussion with young trainee doctors

- ❑ Feel difficult to understand illness experience of the elderly patients with less severe problems
- ❑ Feel difficult to understand deep experiences during the war
- ❑ Talkative elderly without focus
- ❑ How to deal with “You should understand without words, Doc.”



Kenzaburo Oe (1935~)

- Born in a small village in *Shikoku*, an island off the southwest coast of the mainland Japan.
- Studied French literature at the Tokyo University.
- Numerous awards including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1994.
- His first son, *Hikari*, is disabled.
- Activist in antiwar, antinuclear movements

Haruki Murakami (1949~)

- Born in Kyoto and bread in Kobe.
- Studied drama at Waseda University.
- Ran the café/jazz bar from 1974-1981.
- Wrote his first fiction *Hear the Wind Sing* in 1978.
- Fled Japan in 1986 and did not return until 1995, when the Great Kobe earthquake and the Sarin attack on the Tokyo subway happened.



The light and the darkness

Who, in later times, will be able to understand that we had to fall again into the darkness after we had once known the light?

SEBASTIEN CASTILIAN: *De arte dubitandi* 1562.



A father's reaction to his brain-damaged son's birth

“My son has bandages on his head and so did Apollinaire when he was wounded on the field of battle. On a dark and lonely battlefield I have never seen, my son was wounded like Apollinaire and now he is screaming soundlessly. ... *Bird* [the father's nickname] began to cry. Head in bandages, like Apollinaire. ... Like Apollinaire, my son was wounded, ... and he has arrived with head in bandages. I'll have to bury him like a soldier who died at war. *Bird* continued to cry.

KENZABURO OE, *A Personal Matter*, 1969.



To operate, or not

“In 1963, my son was born. This little baby was a kind of personification of my unhappiness. He looked like a baby with two heads. There was a huge growth on his head that made him look like that. This was the most important crisis of my life. The doctors made us decide whether or not to operate. Without an operation, *Hikari* would have died very quickly. With the operation, he might live, but with terrible, terrible difficulties.”

The New Yorker 1995.



Escaping toward Hiroshima

“ My son was born on 13th of June, and I went to Hiroshima on August 1st. ... I was escaping from my baby. These were shameful days for me to remember. I wanted to escape to some other horizon. I'd been asked to do some reportage in Hiroshima, and so I went there, fled there. ...”

The New Yorker 1995.

Oe met Dr Fumio Shigeto

- Director of the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital
- An atomic-bomb survivor himself
- “If there are wounded people, if they are in pain, we must do something for them, try to cure them, even if we seem to have no method.”
- “The dignity of people who refused to surrender to their hardships”
- The dedication of Hiroshima doctors “who did not commit suicide in spite of everything”

KENZABURO OE: Hiroshima Notes 1965.



Caring for the chronically ill can bring healing

In trying to portray my son in the literary model known as a novel, I have passed through five similar stages. In the case of a person like him, with a mental disability, it isn't the individual himself but rather his family that has to pass from the "shock phase" to the "acceptance phase." In a sense, my work on this theme has mirrored that process.

KENZABURO OE: *A Healing Family* 1996.



Caring for the chronically ill can bring healing

I have had to learn through concrete experience to answer such questions as how a handicapped person and his family can survive the shock, denial, and confusion phases and learn to live with each of those particular kinds of pain.


KENZABURO OE: A Healing Family 1996.



Caring for the chronically ill can bring healing

I then had to find out how we could move beyond this to a more positive adjustment, before finally reaching our own “acceptance phase” – in effect coming to accept ourselves as handicapped, as the family of a handicapped person. And it was only then that I felt the development of my work itself was at last complete.

KENZABURO OE: A Healing Family 1996.



Recovery from the sufferings by means of literature

“I wish as a novelist to enable both those who express themselves with words and their readers to recover from their own sufferings and the sufferings of their time, and to cure their souls of the wounds. ... I have been making efforts to be cured of and restored from those pains and wounds by means of literature.”

KENZABURO OE, Nobel Prize acceptance speech, 1994.

Oe's grief work in 9 novels since the mid 1960s

- 1 yr to nickname the father
- 4 yr to name the father & the mother
- 10 yr to name the son
- 13 yr to use the real son's name
- 20 yr to describe *Hikari's* siblings
- 30 yr to describe *Hikari* as a composer

TAYLOR ND & KASSAI R: *Lancet 1998.*

The healer and the healed

Oe explores how his family's care of *Hikari* and his own writing about his life with *Hikari* have brought him personal healing.

Thus, Oe's works and life show us that the roles of the healer and of the healed can coexist within one person.

TAYLOR ND & KASSAI R: *Lancet* 1998.



Kenzaburo Oe with his son, Hikari

Nippon Columbia Co., Ltd

Literature and medicine

At a time when many health-care workers despair about the state of their art, Oe encourages us in the work we do and reminds us of the consolations that literature can bring to medicine.



Kenzaburo Oe with his son, Hikari

Nippon Columbia Co. Ltd

TAYLOR ND & KASSAI R: *Lancet 1998.*



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 - ❑ 1980 *Pinball, 1973* (1985)
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 - ❑ 1985 *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1991)
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Norwegian Wood

“We’re a lot alike, though, Watanabe and me,” said Nagasawa. “Neither of us is interested, essentially, in anything but ourselves.”

“Where Watanabe and I are alike is, we don’t give a shit if nobody understands us,” Nagasawa said. “That’s what makes us different from everybody else. They’re all worried about whether the people around them understand them. But not me, and not Watanabe. We just don’t give a shit. Self and others are separate.”



Norwegian Wood

“I can never say what I want to say,” continued Naoko. “It’s been like this for a while now. I try to say something, but all I get are the wrong words – the wrong words or the exact *opposite* words from what I mean. I try to correct myself, and that only makes it worse. I lose track of what I was trying to say to begin with. It’s like I’m split in two and playing tag with myself. One half is chasing the other half around this big, fat post. The *other* me has the right words, but this me can’t catch her.” She raised her face and looked into my eyes. “Does this make any sense to you?”



Norwegian Wood

Please forgive me for not answering sooner. But try to understand. It took me a very long time before I was in any condition to write, and I have started this letter at least ten times. Writing is a painful process for me.

I feel grateful in my own way for the year of companionship you gave me. Please believe that much even if you believe nothing else. You are not the one who hurt me. I myself am the one who did that. This is truly how I feel.

For now, however, I am not prepared to see you. It's not that I don't *want* to see you: I'm simply not prepared for it.



Norwegian Wood

Now, though, I realize that all I can place in the imperfect vessel of writing are imperfect memories and imperfect thoughts. The more the memories of Naoko inside me fade, the more deeply I am able to understand her. I know, too, why she asked me not to forget her. Naoko herself knew, of course. She knew that my memories of her would fade. Which is precisely why she begged me never to forget her, to remember that she had existed.

The thought fill me with an almost unbearable sorrow. Because Naoko never loved me.

Kafka on the Shore

“...You don’t have any idea who I mean?”

“Sorry, I don’t watch TV.”

The girl frowns and gives me a hard look. “You don’t watch at all?”

I shake my head silently. Wait a sec – should I nod or shake my head here? I go with the nod.

“Not very talkative, are you? One line at a time seems your style. Are you always so quite?”

I blush. I’m sort of a quiet type to begin with, but part of the reason I don’t want to say much is that my voice hasn’t broken completely. Most of the time I’ve got kind of a low voice, but all of a sudden it turns on me and lets out a squeak. So I try to keep whatever I say short and sweet.



Kafka on the Shore

Most things are forgotten over time. Even the war itself, the life-and-death struggle people went through, it now like something from the distant past. We're so caught up in our everyday lives that events of the past, like ancient stars that have burned out, are no longer in orbit about our minds. (...) ...But still, no matter how much time passes, no matter what takes place in the interim, there are some things we can never assign to oblivion, memories we can never rub away. They remain with us for ever, like a touchstone. And for me, what happened in the woods that day is one of these.



Kafka on the Shore

“I’ve experienced all kinds of discrimination,” Oshima says. “Only people who’ve been discriminated against can really know how much it hurts. Each person feels the pain in his own way, each has his own scars. So I think I’m as concerned about fairness and justice as anybody. But what disgusts me even more are people who have no imagination. The kind T. S. Eliot calls ‘hollow men’. People who fill up that lack of imagination with heartless bits of straw, not even aware of what they’re doing. Callous people who throw a lot of empty words at you, trying to force you to do what you don’t want to. (...)”



Kafka on the Shore

“When I was 15,” Miss Saeki says with a smile, “all I wanted was to go off to some other world, a place beyond anybody’s reach. A place beyond the flow of time.”

“But there’s no place like that in this world”

“Exactly. Which is why I’m living here, in this world where things are forever being damaged, where the heart is fickle, where time flows past without a break.” As if hinting at the flow of time, she’s silent for a while. “You know, though,” she goes on, “when I was 15, I thought there had to be a place like that in the world. I was sure that somewhere I’d run across the entrance that would take me to that other world.”


Kafka on the Shore

“So you did come back to this town to die.”

She shakes her head. “To be honest about it, I’m not trying to die. I’m just waiting for death to come. Like sitting on a bench at the station, waiting for the train.”


“And do you know when the train’s going to arrive?”

(...) “Kafka, I’ve worn away so much of my own life, worn myself away. At a certain point I should have stopped living, but didn’t. I knew that life was pointless, but I couldn’t give up on it. So I ended up just marking time, wasting my life in vain pursuits. I wound up hurting myself, and that made me hurt others around me. That’s why I’m being punished now, why I’m under a kind of curse. (...) So I’m not afraid of death. And to answer your question – yes, I have a pretty good idea of when the time is coming.”



*How do we make sense in communication
in medical practice
with patients who rely less on narrative?*

- Attentive listening still important
- Modified closed questions
- Can symbols work, such as genogram?



*How do we make sense in communication
in medical education
with trainees who are not used to
narrative and metaphors full of meanings?*

- Trainee-centered approach
- *Cinemeducation*



聽無音、
觀無像

*Listen to the sound of silence,
Gaze at the image of nought.*

— from the calligraphy in the Japanese garden of *The Huntington*, USA