

EDITORIAL
REMARKS:

AN INTRODUCTION
TO TAKAHISHI'S
"IS MPD REALLY
RARE IN JAPAN?"

Richard P. Kluft, M.D.

Occasionally *DISSOCIATION* receives a paper that is indeed important, yet requires additional commentary to place it in an appropriate context. Yoshitomo Takahashi's paper "Is Multiple Personality Disorder Really Rare in Japan?" is an excellent contribution to the currently small Japanese literature on multiple personality disorder. As Dr. Takahashi acknowledges, his contribution, despite its findings, is more a beginning than a conclusion. It may well represent an early step in the sensitization of our Japanese colleagues to the many complexities that surround the recognition of this condition. Its most basic value is that it serves notice that a Japanese academic department of neuropsychiatry has begun to explore MPD, an event that is of signal importance. However, it leaves the sophisticated reader with more questions than answers.

Those of us who have observed the recent history of MPD are keenly aware of the problems attendant upon its recognition and non-recognition in new areas. There are certain apparent invariables — the atmosphere of skepticism, the conservative tendency to diagnose (instead of MPD) a more "respectable" condition the symptoms of which have some overlap with those of MPD, the assumption that the diagnosis (of a condition the very signature of which is the covertness

rather than the overtness of its manifestations) can be made easily without making more focused efforts to do so, despite the fact that standard examinations of mental functioning do not screen adequately for dissociative phenomena, et cetera. All of these elements influence this contribution, but do not diminish its importance.

In order to place this study in a cross-cultural and a scientific perspective, five authors who have made pioneering contributions to the study of MPD in their respective countries and have a useful and hard-won perspective on what may be in store for our intrepid Japanese colleagues at Yamanashi Medical College have been asked to offer commentaries on Dr. Takahashi's findings: Colin A. Ross, M.D., of Canada, Alfonso Martinez-Taboas, M.A., of Puerto Rico, and Bennet G. Braun, M.D.; Onno van der Hart, Ph.D., of the Netherlands and Edward Frischholz, Ph.D. of the United States.

We wish the best to our colleagues in Japan, and trust that over the years the pioneering work that emerges from Japanese psychiatry will become more available to western readers.

Richard P. Kluft, M.D.

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