

Masato Tanaka

— A developmental psychologist for social justice —

Takehiko Ito

Below Summary: Masato Tanaka was a psychologist for development fulfillment, empowerment, peace and social justice. He combined science, educational practice, and sociopolitical movements. He was a child during WWII. He decided to achieve social justice and democracy through his research and social movement. He created development fulfillment theory in the systems of individual, group/organizational, and socio-political levels. He tried to improve his theory to apply to global peace issues, such as environmental destruction and poverty.

Tanaka Masato

1932 Born in Tokyo

1954 BA in Educational Psychology at Kyoto University

1956-70 Researcher at Ohmi Gakuen

1970-95 Professor of Kyoto University

1996-2003 Professor of Ryukoku University

2005 Passed away

I Masato Tanaka's formation of a "development fulfillment theory"

I-1 Childhood of Masato Tanaka

Masato was born to the Tanakas family in Tokyo in 1932. During first seven years of his life, he spent his time in Matsumoto, Nagano. He was a "physically weak, behaviorally slow, emotionally weeper, and socially lonely." He was often absent from school. In school, when his teacher asked him a question, he could not say a word; he would just weep. So the teacher gave up and skipped him when asking pupils to read a textbook. His third grade teacher recommended to

his family that he be assigned to a special education class.

Just after this incident, his family moved to Tokushima in 1941, and he proceeded to fourth grade in an elementary school there. He gained his health in a warmer environment there. He got friends to play with. He went swimming with his friends. “At the age eleven as one of the developmental turning points of life, every day accumulation of small adventures liberated my heart, mind and body.”

I-2 Masato Tanaka’s childhood and Fifteen-Year-War (1931-1945)

His childhood overlapped the time of war against China, US and other allied countries. At the final stage of the war, he was moved to Okayama for security purposes (Gakudo Sokai). After the end of the war, he studied through working such as making salt, cultivating vegetables, helping fishermen, and delivering newspapers every morning.

In 1950, he entered Kyoto University and majored in educational psychology. He experienced a drastic transition from wartime militarism to post-war democracy, including academic freedom.

I-3 Masato Tanaka met Kazuo Itoga at Ohmi Gakuen 1952

Kazuo Itoga was the establisher and Director of Ohmi Gakuen, which was a residential welfare school for mentally retarded children. Itoga was one of the pioneers of special education in Japan. He stressed that handicapped children are basically not the object of social welfare but are the subject of appropriate education. “They are not social disturbance. They teach teachers and adults what the real education is. The slogan is not ‘Give our lights for these children’ but ‘Take these shining children as our lights.’” Tanaka also commuted to a medical reform school and met children with disease or disabilities, failing adjustment to social life and committing crimes. In his notebook, he wrote “...these children are not human deficits,” “every human being must be treated as human,” “evaluation of labeling success or failure to a person is wrong to do.” He later edited a book with his classmates of Kyoto Univ. “University students at that time: lives of postwar transformation period” (2005) and wrote these experiences at his college time. Although in poverty, they enjoyed academic freedom and studied for democratic reconstruction of Japan through education.

I-4 Masato Tanaka's research for the Bachelor's degree (1953-54)

His graduation thesis on mother-child health was planned to include two studies: (1) a psychological, empirical research on the relationship between the children's prenatal conditions (Schwangerschafts-toxikose: mother's disease at pregnancy period) and later mental development, and (2) a study based on historical review of Japanese tradition of "education for the unborn baby (Taikyō)." This plan first made his mentor Prof. Masaki annoyed. However after the thesis presentation and examination meeting had finished, he walked to Tanaka and said: "I doubted that you were tackling educational psychology seriously or not. I sincerely apologize my misunderstanding. ...There are almost no educational psychologists who do socio-historical research. Study of human growth needs both natural science studies and socio-historical studies. I hope you will master the both methodologies and compile educational findings." So did Tanaka. This encouragement became true later.

His mother-child health survey research was soon presented at academic conferences. His history research was published in 1957. He was employed by the Faculty of Education of Kyoto University as a full-Research and Teaching Assistant immediately after graduation in 1954. However, He moved to Ohmi Gakuen in 1956 for practical research, employed by Kazuo Itoga.

I-5 Study for handicapped children and struggle against Cultural Violence in the domain of psychological research

Tanaka's research was based on observation of both normal children and handicapped children. His duty in Ohmi Gakuin was to build an educational curriculum. He later constructed his own developmental theory. Tanaka severely methodologically criticized the traditional approach of psychological studies focusing on inferiority of handicapped children. The results of these studies compiled evidence of their mental inferiority and suggested difficulty/ impossibility of education. "These typological researches might have contributed to deprivation of right to education according to degree of disability" (Tanaka, 1966).

Tanaka's group stressed "educationability" of handicapped children based on developmental commonality theory between normal and handicapped children. Tanaka tried to change the paradigm of the researcher's view of the handicapped

people as from being inferior burdens of society to common human beings who have the right to education. This was the first phase in which he facilitated culture of peace and social justice.

I-6 Struggle against Structural Violence in the domain of people with mental disabilities.

Tanaka and his group organized a national research movement organization (Zen-sho-ken), of which he was the first representative, for the purpose of the improvement of human rights, especially that of education. It has consisted of researchers, educators, parents, and so on. The central theory of Zen-sho-ken has been “Development Fulfillment Theory” mostly developed by Tanaka.

Tanaka wrote three books in 1973 and proposed what should be achieved for promotion of the rights of handicapped people: that is to tackle and integrate three systems of development: (1) the system of individual (2) the system of group/organization, and (3) the system of society. Each system has inner principles.

II Tanaka’s ten core thoughts on development and empowerment

In 1996, he revealed a note which summarized his theory into “Ten points required for the development.”

No discrimination permitted

(1) Tanaka criticized those studies which focused on the difference between normal and handicapped children in a fixed design as “typological research failure.” Instead, he proposed and practiced developmental studies of handicapped children based on developmental commonalities for finding their educational/developmental task. Tanaka stressed “commonality of developmental process of all the children.”

(2) “Hand in hand” cooperative proceedings against forced individualistic competition

Tanaka (1966) pointed out the contemporary Japanese society prevents the development of interchangeability of their ability through communication from the demand system for human development of the mentally retarded. He fought against the Japanese educational mainstream value system which

resulted in peer hostile competition and poor “interchangeability” or interaction between students. Self-actualization in each stage of development must be considered more important than social-efficacy and meritocracy.

(3) Lessons from progress, retreat, and zigzags

Tanaka tried to find values and meanings in every process. Formative evaluation should be done not only from outcomes/impacts but also processes. He also regarded the “troubled” behavior as a sign of chance for the further development. “It is important to find the child’s developmental demand through observing his disturbing behaviors.” He recommended that the child’s disturbing behaviors should be taken into educational process as the sign to organize “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1934). From the viewpoint of evaluation of the empowering process of both individual and group, his proposal is what is now called as “empowerment evaluation” (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005).

(4) Building common treasure by accumulation of the scientific and practical accomplishments

Scientific and practical fruit must not be privatized by a small amount of people. Tanaka and his colleagues developed a developmental health diagnosis system to find and intervene for babies with disability based on a local public health center (Otsu-System). The system has been recommended to other local governments. In order to disseminate scientific knowledge of human development and his theory, Tanaka had published books with children’s photos, slides, movies and videotapes for professionals and common people.

(5) Spontaneous questioning and deep thinking based on cooperation

Tanaka was a good teacher to his students. After he died in 2005 (his death news was released to public one month later according to his will), his former students and research colleagues held a commemorative meeting. They published a book in 2007 and forty-one of Tanaka’s former students and colleagues wrote their memory of Tanaka. Many of them remember Tanaka as a passionate researcher and professor, who enlightened their research and often ways of life. They discussed and shared a code of ethics in his laboratory (Hattori, 2007).

(6) Systematic, multifaceted, and integrated generation of competencies

Tanaka's development fulfillment theory is systematic in individual, group/organizational and social levels. Tanaka's theory of individual development includes and unifies physical, cognitive, emotional, and *interpersonal domains*. His theory is comprehensive. As Piaget tried to explain all areas of the cognitive development by his structural theory, Tanaka tried to explain all areas of early human development by his structural theory by a set of simple rules.

(7) Seek for stages in which the power to live and work are combined

Human personality development must be combined with the power to work. Avoid education for high test scores with low true achievement. Human competencies must be developed in association with *deep and wide personality* development.

(8) Scientific recognition of development must be the basis of the practice

Fight against superficial or mechanical views of development. Fight against agnosticism and neglect of the law of development. Fight against the theory which regards facilitating development according to the stage as discrimination.

(9) Unified grasp of the three systems

The system of individual growth, the system of group/organizational development, and socio-political progress of the society must be combined. Tanaka said, "...human development is not the process of individual's socialization. ...The demand system of individuals relies on their social groups phenomenologically ...In that sense, human development must be recognized from collectivistic point of view" (Tanaka, 1966). His view in education corresponded to biopsychosocial context approach (Engel, 1977) in *mental health*. "Struggles to create a new human right are necessary to stop the reactionary tendency based on acceptance of natural inequality. There exists the right to development. Only in the movement to fulfill their human rights, studies of the mentally retarded as the subject of human rights can exist."

(10) The right of development fulfillment as a human right

The right of development fulfillment can be achieved in process of constructing peaceful and democratic society. The first, the second, and the third generation must be considered.

III Conclusion: Masato Tanaka as a psychologist for development fulfillment, empowerment, peace and social justice.

Tanaka created a unified theory: development fulfillment theory, which has two components. One is the stage theory of individual development (Araki, 2004). The other component is his theory of psychology for social justice based on three systems, which this paper is concentrated on. The idea of fulfillment of human development corresponds to the theory of violence in Galtung's paper on structural violence (Galtung, 1964). Galtung defined violence as the artificial production of the gap between human potential development and actual development.

In 2001, Tanaka wrote a paper "Aiming at an applied psychology on which to build peace, security of life and human development," which he comprehensively tackled global issues from his theoretical framework. This paper pointed out global issues such as overpopulation, lack of resource, environmental destruction, and poverty. He proposed "...by grasping human history which has conquered human lack and poverty by creating human value through productive labor, applied psychology has responsibility to explain and solve the problems by research." The basic principles are (1) not to disturb the co-evolution mechanism, (2) to construct the circular system focusing on the use of resource based on generative power, and (3) to actualize fulfillment of peace, security, and human development through democratic autonomy, solidarity and cooperation. He stressed importance of UN role and people's solidarity.

This paper should have been a part of his planned book "Premises of development fulfillment and challenges of the study of development in 21st Century," which was not completed. In the middle of extension of his theory to global issues, he died in 2005 at the age of 73. He has published more than 15 books and hundreds of papers and articles. He has supervised four movies, five series of slide materials, and seventeen videos on child development.

References

- (Available in English only: As far as I know Tanaka wrote only in Japanese and there has not yet been any translation of Tanaka's work.)
- Engel, G. L. The need for a new medical model, *Science* 196,129-136, 1977.
- Fetterman, D.M. & Wandersman, A. (Eds.) (2005). *Empowerment evaluation:*

Principles in practice. New York: The Guilford Press.

Zimmerman, M. A. (2000). Empowerment theory: *Psychological, organizational, and community levels of analysis*. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 43-63). New York: Plenum.

* This paper was presented at the tenth International Symposium on the Contributions of Psychology to Peace: June,20, 2007 Lor In Hotel, Solo organized by Muhammadiyah University, Surakarta, and Gadjar Mada University, Yogyakarta

** I am thankful to Ann Anderson for her useful comments on *English expression*.