



# The Signal

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## “Akachan ni Kanpai!” Celebrating the Baby: Baby, Family, Culture

By 2008 WAIMH Local Chair,  
Hisako Watanabe

*Deep down in every heart  
Lie things long forgot  
Each of us a babe in arm  
Each of us once wrapped in someone's  
arms.  
Such sweet memories  
(Poem by Midori Kumon)*

At long last, sweltering summer days have passed, and a serene cool autumn has set in Yokohama. It is now a time of reflection for the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). More than 2000 participants from 39 countries gathered in Yokohama for the 2008 WAIMH congress. Fireworks adorned the Yokohama sky on August 1st, celebrating the eve of Yokohama Port's 150th Anniversary and the first WAIMH world congress ever to be held in Asia. We celebrated record number of plenary and masters lecture speakers in this congress along with over 500 innovative presentations,

thanks to the Program Committee. The ensuing five days left us enriched with vibrant, warm encounters among colleagues and friends old and new. The experience of this year's WAIMH congress convinced us that in spite of manifold differences we can unite by celebrating the baby of all ages; the real baby and the baby within us. Thus *Akachan ni Kanpai!* Celebrating the Baby: Baby, Family, Culture heralded an era of new infant mental health, where babies and families are cherished and respected as the precious roots of our lives.

**A PLACE FOR EVERYONE**  
From the outset, we had dreamed of creating at the Yokohama 2008 WAIMH Congress a place for everyone. Members of NGO Mind Club, a community-based confectionary factory for young people with mental disorders, busied

themselves in making 4,000 packets of cookies out of their oven to be served at coffee breaks during the five-day congress. Among experts in infant mental health were many youngsters, patients of mine and my colleagues' (some were former NICU babies), volunteering to welcome participants from all over the world. Undoubtedly, young adolescent volunteers, most of whom were suffering from *hikikomori* (social withdrawal), school refusals and eating disorders, who often felt alienated in the community revived their self-esteem through actively dedicating and engaging themselves as volunteers during the congress, assisting with interpretations in cultural programs or directing participants to the right lecture rooms. Our 2008 WAIMH congress logo and above poem were designed by a young woman, Midori Kumon, who overcame her adolescent crisis and transformed herself through abundant rampant *re-amae* experiences with her

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mother. How enlivened has she felt to be included in the processes leading up to and during the 2008 WAIMH congress !

## A DECADE-LONG AWARENESS BUILDING ACROSS JAPAN

The road to the Yokohama congress was long and steady. In 1992, when the current WAIMH was born out of merger of the WAIPAD and the IAIMH in the 5th Chicago World Congress, no one in Japan in the field of infant health knew about WAIMH. When in 1994, we held a regional WAIMH meeting in Tokyo, it was a meeting exclusively for psychiatrists, child psychiatrists and psychologists mostly in academic fields, and almost no clinicians were included. It was only when Prof. Bertrand Cramer made his post-congress lecture tour on parent-infant therapy in Kochi, Japan that a passion for learning was ignited in Kochi community, which was soon supported by its regional government. In 1995 the Mayor of Kochi visited Prof. Cramer's Infant Mental Health Clinic in Geneva on the occasion of his invited speech to the WHO.

In 1996, I urged hesitating pediatricians and community workers to attend the Tampere WAIMH Congresses; "Come and feel the atmosphere! It is a congress about infants and infants won't need any verbal language." To their surprise, they immediately felt the air in the Tampere Congress Hall as warm, genuine, serious, dedicated and caring. They became convinced that this was the forum, with which they wanted to be connected with in the coming years. They wanted to act right away. They made a trip to Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi in the Polar Region and found a colourful traditional hat that a reindeer shepherd wore. It was called FOUR WINDS hat, denoting north, south, east and west winds to guide their direction in snow-clad fields in winter.

After the Tampere Congress, these Japanese workers formed a group, named FOUR WINDS for Infant Mental Health, and an annual agenda was set to host a congress in regional areas of Japan and to invite a foreign lecturer each year to an open forum of encounter for all those who work for infants and families. With each

FOUR WINDS conference, we accumulated skill and wisdom in hosting a friendly forum free from hierarchy and authoritative air. Later this FOUR WINDS became an acronym for the Forum of Universal Research for the Workings of Infant and Neonatal Developmental Support.

Thus starting with Kochi in 1997, Nagasaki, Iwate, Yamanashi, Higashi Murayama, Tokyo, Toyama, Sasebo, Miyazaki, Hamamatsu and Tochigi became hosting cities and Dr. John Richer, Ms. Juliet Hopkins, Dr. Alan Sluckin, Prof. Colwyn Trevarthen, Prof. Justin Call, Ms. Mary Gordon, Dr. Campbell Paul, Dr. Bertrand Cramer, Dr. Stephen Malloch, Prof. Tuula Tamminen and Prof. Franz Plooj became lectures and facilitated an incentive for learning in each of these regions in Japan. Each hosting local group was composed of local administrative staff, community health worker, social workers, child psychiatrists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, social workers and other professionals, and became a secure base for community infant mental health activities.

## OPENNESS AND HONESTY AS FOUNDATION FOR OUR WAIMH CONGRESS PREPARATION

To celebrate the baby in its true meaning, particularly in Japan, we strove to create openness and seek honesty within ourselves. So, from the beginning, we said "no" to hierarchical authoritative orientation, often linked to social events in Japan. We instead said "yes" to all those who were willing to lend their hands. The number and diversity of volunteers were unprecedented. We invited friends and colleagues motivated to create a welcoming ambience for genuine encounters without hierarchy.

There is a deep handicapping divide in Japan between those with and without command of the English language. For ordinary non-English speaking Japanese workers, an international congress felt irrelevant or intimidating. I wanted to resolve this unfortunate divide by inviting non-English speaking members to work closely with me. To mitigate vulnerabilities of this formation, the core group in the LOC was constantly

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monitored by a group of experienced senior academicians on the one hand and a group of young vibrant bilingual professionals abroad and in Japan. The former willingly gave us wise opinions and support from international perspectives, while the latter openly alerted us to the here and now of risky situations. The Japanese LOC worked hard to promote the 2008 congress and to encourage a large number of congress participation from various parts of Japan. Site visits by Tuula Tamminen and Neil Boris in 2006 and Kaija Puura and Hiram Fitzgerald in 2007 provided the LOC direct support by the WAIMH office, which was an enormous relief and encouragement.

Beyond the success of the 2008 congress itself, I feel it was a great success that I was able to encourage reluctant and timid Japanese colleagues to go beyond their comfort zone and to promote their individual and professional growth. Inevitably, throughout the organizing process we made and learned from many mistakes. We argued, made and undid decisions and went over everything again and again. Despite challenging moments, such honest endeavors made us more open, wiser and optimistic. Many reported it was a wonderfully enriching and exciting learning experience.

Across Japan, the eleven community leaders of the FOUR WINDS already had a first-hand experience of organizing an infant congress in their areas of about 200 to 1000 participants. Their morale was high after a decade of awareness building and grass-roots efforts for the importance of infant mental health and building communities that naturally support families with young children. With a mutually trusting comradeship, they acted as substantial supporters in their mature, silent, and humble ways. They set the tone of cultural dignities and pride of their regions and added flavors of welcome to the foreign attendants of the congress. In the local Yokohama area, my home ground, friends and colleagues new and old gathered together; in all, more than 300 volunteers took part in various ways for the congress. Relationships were built and strengthened not only among professionals in infant mental health but with anyone and everyone who wanted to help in promoting the 2008 congress.

## CELEBRATING THE BABY OF ALL AGES AND 'AMAE'

The theme of our congress was celebrating the baby of all ages. Using the late Serge Lebovici's trilogy of the real, imaginary and fantasmatic baby, we wanted to celebrate the real baby in life, but also the imaginary baby. This meant fulfilling our wish that every baby would live its moments in good enough contexts. We also aimed to focus at the same time on redeeming the fantasmatic baby, within and without, which meant reflecting on the unresolved trauma and conflicts of wartime and post-war relationship problems, which is silently ubiquitous in Japan and yielding all sorts of individual, familial and societal deviations and mental problems in the next generations.

During my plenary speech, I invited Naohiko Umewaka, a renowned Noh actor and contemporary play writer, to present his silent play the "Birthday Cake" shot on 4K digital cinema cameras in collaboration with the Institute of Digital Media Contents of Keio University. I did this because I understand his work to be very much in touch with the fantasmatic world of the baby (and the baby of all ages) and the deep bond of early days with mother nature and culture. Umewaka's multi-faceted and beautiful vision depicts a soul desperately striving to hold on to its inner resources of parental love and sense of self and dignity in moments of ultimate alienation.

Intricately relevant to the vision in the film is the concept of 'Amae,' studied by a renowned Japanese psychoanalyst, Takeo Doi and reevaluated in this congress. Amae derives from a Japanese adjective, *sweet*, and describes mutual relational experiences synonymous with companionship and synrhythmia. 'Amae' embraces a deep mutual trust shared among a group, which sustains vulnerable individuals at time of extreme difficulty. Through Umewaka's film, I wished to bring us in touch with the core essence of infant mental health work. We need sympathy in order to be in touch with the deepest pain in the lived moments of babies, children and young people living in impossible contexts and fate (such as fatal diseases, abandonment, abuse, loss and exploitation). Personally, my mission and deep resonance emerged from my elder sister, who died at the age of 10 months from malnutrition just before the end of World War II, and from knowing of young men, who died tragic and inhumane deaths in the war fields. Imprisoned by their time and systems of their environment, how could these individuals, young and old, have silently maintained dignity as a person with his or her own right in the throes of such bleak human aggression? Umewaka's "Birthday Cake" is an experience worthy of repeated encounters, each time allowing new insights and emotions to emerge. As anticipated, Umewaka's film stirred diverse responses, which I hope will be foods for thought and reflections for years to come.



## ASIAN PANEL AT THE 2008 WAIMH CONGRESS

We wanted to mark the first WAIMH congress in Asia by hosting an Asian Panel presentation with representatives from various Asian regions. Planning for the Asian Panel for the WAIMH congress was difficult. We had hoped and tried to bring experts especially from regions in Asia that had fewest resources, and encountered challenges unforeseen. We were thrilled in the end to welcome Dr. Bounnack from Laos and Dr. Nguyen from Vietnam, who confided to us this was their first trip ever abroad. We are grateful for their participation. I must also thank our wonderful colleagues from Indonesia, Malaysia, and China for their help and contribution to the Asian Panel discussion. In addition to learning about the current plight of young children and families in various Asian regions, the Asian panel provided for me a reminder that there is much task ahead for WAIMH, particularly in supporting young children in developing countries. It is my hope that we will continue to foster new relationships with our Asian colleagues and to provide support in their work with infants and families.

## MEDIA COVERAGE AND NATIONWIDE INTEREST

Tremendous efforts were made to advertise the 2008 WAIMH congress, leading to the record number of participants in WAIMH's history. The congress also received some media coverage within Japan. The Pre-congress Symposium II entitled, 'Early Intervention of Infant Abuse' by Colwyn Trevarthen and Bertrand Cramer as speakers and Kaija Puura as discussant was later compiled into a one-hour TV program by Japan's national broadcasting company the NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation). Approximately 400,000 viewers were said to have watched the program on Sunday evening of September 7th, 2008. During the congress, press conferences were held, and an exclusive interview with Tuula Tamminen on the 2008 WAIMH congress ended up in Yomiuri Shinbun, the most widely read newspaper in Japan, on August 9th.



## LEARNING FROM THE SMALL, SIMPLE BEINGS

Vulnerable infants are the canaries of our society. Their life depends on sincere around-the-clock attendance of caregivers. They provide us with such rich learning experiences. I wanted to place them at the very center of my heart and the congress. Like a flower, a seed was planted 12 years ago in Tampere, Finland. Its small sprout has been carefully nurtured with silent but sincere efforts of each FOUR WINDS congress and accumulated over the past ten years.

With the 2008 WAIMH congress now finished, I am filled with a sense of satisfaction from our great success. Tuula Tamminen impressed me in one of her speeches, where she said she felt fine because she knew now that she had done something good for babies and families. I hope for each person attending the congress whether as a participant, a presenter, or a volunteer, the time we shared at the WAIMH congress was rewarding. It has been my policy over 35 years of my clinical work to facilitate mutual trust and interaction with children and families so that they can honestly confide to me their agenda without undue Japanese formalities. From the beginning, I had stated that the aim of this congress was not to compete, perform or judge, but instead to be open and honest in sharing experiences. As I had hoped, I had the pleasure of witnessing many relationships built and collaborative spirits cultivated through the process

of congress preparation and during the 5-day congress in Yokohama. Whispered Midori (author of the poem above) to me recently, "In your opening speech you said you aimed to create this forum to be where every single person can find his or her place, feel secure and be him or herself. Well it happened everywhere, as far as I know in the Pacifico and that was the most wonderful thing of the congress." What better compliments could I expect? It is voices like hers and countless others in our society we need to listen to. I am grateful for all those from our communities, ordinary mothers, fathers, and childcare workers, who have shared their stories of their life experiences that reflect the circumstances of our current society.

The experience of organizing the 2008 WAIMH Congress has become a memorable gift for each of us at the Local Organizing Committee, who toiled day and night for almost 2 and a half years. I am deeply grateful to all those who lent their heart, brain and hands: in particular, Tuula Tamminen, Hiram Fitzgerald, the WAIMH board members and the WAIMH Main Office, our LOC members, sponsors and hundreds of volunteers for contributing to this warmth and openness throughout the congress. I hope that the wonderful spirit and the momentum we have created through 2008 WAIMH congress will be carried forward, and I look forward to meeting my friends and colleagues again in Leipzig, Germany.

## Effective Communication about the Early Years: Understanding the Basics of Framing

By Debbie M. Rappaport,  
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Babies are great communicators. They communicate from day one, through sounds (crying, cooing, squealing), facial expressions (eye contact, smiling, grimacing), as well as gestures and body movements (moving arms and legs in excitement or distress). Most babies learn to communicate to get attention or to get a need fulfilled. They continue to develop more sophisticated communication capacities and are encouraged to do so when their efforts are rewarded by appropriate and timely responses from the people around them.

As adults, we are not that different. Throughout our everyday lives, we are constantly communicating both verbally and non-verbally. Over time we learn how to communicate best with various people and in different situations. We continue to develop and expand our communication capacities when our efforts are successfully received by the people around us.

As members of a world-wide community concerned with infant mental health, we know how to communicate effectively with one another. We commonly use terms such as self-regulation, early intervention, infant mental health and healthy child development. Yet our professional lexicon may seem like a foreign language to lay people, including policymakers who want to understand child development and help advance policies that will help promote healthy development for babies, toddlers and their families. Policymakers are not likely to be well-versed in the terminology of our field,

yet we expect them to comprehend intricate details of our work in order to create policies that support infants and toddlers appropriately.

Early childhood development is a complex process and communicating it effectively can be difficult. However, we must meet this challenge, so that policymakers and the public fully understand the needs of babies and the solutions that best support families raising young children. This article is designed to provide infant-toddler professionals and researchers with a basic introduction to some concepts of effective communications; first by outlining the fundamentals of framing, and then by introducing ways to think about reframing your communications. We conclude this article with some concrete examples of how we reframe a message related to early childhood development in the United States.

### FRAMING 101

Effective communication requires an in-depth look at *what* we are trying to communicate and *how* people make sense of the information.

Fortunately, there are people who dedicate themselves to this challenge. The FrameWorks Institute, a communications organization, conducts scholarly research on framing the public discourse about social problems and then translates that research into recommendations and tools for the non-profit sector. The FrameWorks Institute has conducted extensive research into how to communicate effectively about early childhood development, which makes its work particularly useful to the infant-toddler field. (The FrameWorks Institute)

FrameWorks' approach to communications is based on the precept that people rely on "frames" to make sense of the world. (Bales, 2002) "Framing refers to the way a story is told and to the way these cues [or stories], in turn, trigger the shared and durable cultural models that people use to make sense of their world." (Gilliam & Bales, 2004) In other words,

"people approach the world not as naïve blank-slate receptacles who take in stimuli...but rather as experienced and sophisticated *veterans of perception* who have stored their prior experiences as an organized mass. This prior experience then takes the form of expectations about the world, and in the vast majority of cases, the world, being a systematic place, confirms these expectations, saving the individual the trouble of figuring things out anew all the time." (Tannen, 1993)

We cannot be experts on everything, and so frames allow us to quickly make sense of the information we are receiving, so we can readily process new information.

"Frames signal what counts, what can be ignored, and allow us to 'fill in' or infer missing information."  
(Gilliam & Bales, 2004)

In essence, frames direct the way in which people reason about the information in a message. This process can have negative consequences though, because some frames will direct people to reason about the information inappropriately or inaccurately. In order to improve our communications, we must identify the frames that currently govern the way in which people think about infants and toddlers, so we understand how they are reasoning about the information.

Let's examine this from the perspective of communications about early childhood development. For those outside of the infant-toddler field, information about babies is likely to be guided by their own experiences with very young children, as well as the frames that dominate the news media and public discourse. These frames may or may not be accurate, based on what we know from scientific study about child development in the earliest years of

life. If we want our communications to help people reason about early childhood development appropriately, we should introduce new frames that lead to alternate ways of understanding the problem and the policy solutions that match.

The “framing” approach to communications, and how to talk about early childhood development, is based on the following assumptions (Bales, 2002):

- People are not blank slates.
- Communication is interactive.
- Communication resonates with people’s deeply held values and worldviews.
- Communication is frame-based.
- When communication is inadequate, people default to the “pictures in their heads.”
- When communication is effective, people can see an issue from a different perspective.

## NEXT STEP: REFRAMING

Understanding how frames work is the first step in an effort to help people consider a familiar issue from a different perspective. The next step is reframing – providing a different lens or story through which people can understand new information (Bales, 2003). Reframing is hard work and takes practice, but the FrameWorks Institute offers tools to guide us in this process. One such tool is “levels of thought.” We need to understand that “people reason on the basis of deeply-held moral values...” (Bales, 2003) Those moral values are part of a hierarchical process for how people think about ideas and issues. As you will see below, ideas and issues can be divided into three levels of thought.

## LEVELS OF THOUGHT (BALES, 2003)

*Level One:* Big ideas and values, like freedom, justice, community, success, prevention, responsibility

*Level Two:* Issue-types, like child care or child welfare

*Level Three:* Specific issues, such as earned income tax credits or family and medical leave

Reframing issues about infants and toddlers can be done effectively “by reminding [people] of the widely shared *Level One* values they already incorporate into their thinking...” (Bales, 2003) In America, we can communicate with others by using “words and concepts like ‘responsibility,’ ‘community,’ ‘connection,’ ‘prevention,’ and ‘stewardship.’” (Bales, 2003) Only after we have introduced the *Level One* value, do we communicate more specific information such as the issue type and policy details. Structuring our communications in this way provides people with a context or vision through which they can understand the fine details of our message. Let’s take a look at a fictional framing and reframing to illustrate the way in which using levels of thought can improve your communications.

## ORIGINAL FRAME

265 new babies were born in Fillmont, Indiana last year. 83% of those babies were born into homes in which both parents work and child care is a necessity. The community currently offers support services to new parents, but funds are lacking. The federal budget reconciliation bill made across-the-board cuts to domestic programs, including the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). This will have serious consequences for child care programs in our community. And with reauthorization of Early Head Start coming up this year, there is the possibility for even more cuts to the programs and services needed by the babies of Fillmont.

*What was this message about? It’s specifically about child care and budget cuts to programs for babies. However, there is no clear value expressed that would help us think about the information in a particular way. As a result, we are left to make sense of the information and come to conclusions based on the “pictures that already exist in our heads.” Unfortunately, those “pictures in our heads” may not match the communicator’s intentions.*

## REFRAME

The people of Fillmont, Indiana know how to strengthen *their community*. They know that a baby’s healthy social, emotional, physical and cognitive development helps form the brain’s architecture and leads to success in school, in life and in society. By investing in a comprehensive Early Head Start program, Fillmont, Indiana has made it a priority to provide the best start in life for all its babies and toddlers, so that their children will grow up to be *good citizens of the community*. The Early Head Start program offers an array of services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers and their families, including home visitation, parent support, early learning and access to medical, mental health and early intervention services. But this community program cannot succeed without adequate federal support for Early Head Start. Reauthorization of Early Head Start is right around the corner. It’s time to remind our federal policymakers that babies in Fillmont and across the country depend on them.

*What was this message about? The message was clearly about community, prevention, stewardship and responsibility. By creating a shared vision for the success of all children, we illustrate the notion that how we care for our youngest children is paramount to their future and society’s as a whole. When we then introduced specific issues and policies, it was through the lens of the Level One values we had already established in our communication.*

This is merely one example of reframing. You can begin to practice framing by thinking about situations in which you regularly communicate about infant-toddler development and writing down some sample messages. For instance, if you were going to meet with a policy-maker about establishing a quality rating system for infant-toddler child care, how would you develop your communication? First, make a list of the two or three big ideas or *Level One* values that establish a clear vision for how you want the state legislator to think about quality rating systems. Then identify the *Level Two* category for your communication and write down the specific *Level Three* policies that you are promoting. When you put

all of these together, you will have two or three possible frames for communicating about quality rating systems. Remember, frames have consequences for how people reason about the information, so be sure to test your new frames to determine whether people are reasoning about the information in the way you intended.

There is no magic bullet to effective communications. Instead our challenge is to work hard to understand the frames currently in use, as well as develop new frames that help people reason about early childhood development more appropriately. Babies are excellent examples of communication in action. Now it's our turn to implement these lessons on framing and **Be a Voice for Babies!**

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Dear WAIMH Members

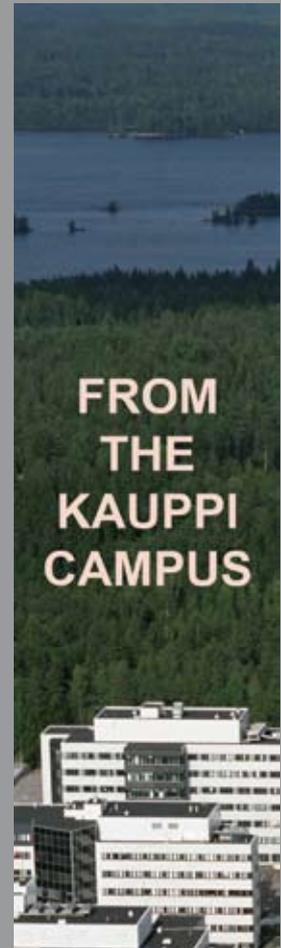
Although the general wellbeing globally increases, the infants and their families suffer in many situations, in many countries and in many ways. For succeeding in its goals to help infants worldwide, WAIMH needs now a valuable contribution from all of you. Every member of WAIMH has received an email concerning Board Member Nominations.

The email included a Call for Nominations from the President of WAIMH Antoine Guedeney and a Nomination form for WAIMH Board of Directors. Now you have a possibility to nominate candidates for three new members of the Board of Directors of WAIMH for the term 2009-2012. The nominee must be a member of WAIMH and willing to serve WAIMH in promoting the wellbeing of infants worldwide. So we need three active, enthusiastic, dynamic and innovative infant mental health researchers or clinicians to work in the Board of Directors of WAIMH.

If anyone has any kind of problems with opening of the nomination materials, please, contact Minna Sorsa here in WAIMH Finland Office ([waimh@uta.fi](mailto:waimh@uta.fi)).

*Päivi Kaukonen*  
*Executive Director*

*Minna Sorsa*  
*Administrative Assistant*



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## President's Perspective

There is no such thing as a clean war. In all ages wars are merciless to all civilians, especially to women and the youngest of children. This lack of mercy reached extreme dimensions during World War II, and even before in Armenia, and again in the Lake region of Africa. War shows no respect for the rights of infants not to be taken as hostage and to be isolated from the conflict and all of its consequences. However, threats to the rights of infants do not only come from war and civic disturbance.

In peaceful countries, we see that the increase in the overall stresses associated with everyday life that affect parents, are linked to increasing disorganization in infants. We see parental behaviors in parks, on the street, and in subways, that we were used to see only in the clinical population of parents with mental health disorders. So infant mental health scientists, clinicians, and practitioners have the responsibility to inform policy makers about these threats to infants and young children, and to propose that infants have the right to be physically safe and emotionally safe and secure.

At the recent Yokohama world congress, WAIMH officials met with officials from other world organizations and discussed development of a document that would clearly articulate

the Rights of Infants. I will have more information about this document in the months to come. Speaking about Yokohama, the world congress was a success, with an exceptional atmosphere and greeting, provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), headed by Hisako Watanabe. The lavish opening reception party, translations from and into Japanese, richly diverse events around the congress, and nearly 2400 people in attendance, produced a wonderfully successful scientific and financial congress. Congratulations again to the LOC!

Now time has come for WAIMH members to make their nominations for their candidates to serve on the WAIMH Board of Directors. At the same time we have started the process for electing chairperson for the new Affiliate Council, who will represent the Affiliates in the Board of Directors. Each person who is willing to serve on the WAIMH Board

of Directors should ask for support and seek colleagues who will provide support for their nomination. Please all the members of WAIMH, go on with the process! After these elections, WAIMH will fully implement its new bylaws in 2010, with strong member input and Affiliate presence on the Board. Please nominate others, or nominate yourself, all are welcome to the election process.

Warmly:  
*Antoine Guedeney*



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## Back from Yokohama – Impressions from the Land of the Rising Sun

By Neta Guttman-Avner,  
PhD, Psychoanalyst, Tel-Aviv

I was delighted and excited when it was first announced in Paris two years ago that the next WAIMH conference would take place in Yokohama. It was obvious to me that I would attend, despite the distance, the expense, and the differences – and perhaps precisely because of it. First in Tokyo, and then throughout the three weeks that we toured Japan, I began to comprehend the extent to which this country – its inhabitants, its culture, customs, habits, flavors and scenery – is unlike anything we from the West are familiar with. Japan is different, fascinating, intriguing.

I hoped that attending the conference would be an opportunity for me to attempt to understand the world and mentality of the Japanese people, for which I diligently prepared and read during the year preceding the trip. That was why I chose to participate in lectures and panel discussions given by my Japanese colleagues, and workshops which touched upon the unique aspects of the clinical work done in Japan. To say that, ultimately, I was able to understand the Japanese mentality, or come nearer to comprehending the Japanese mind – no, I cannot. Perhaps it is just not necessary. Perhaps what is important is to experience and absorb the spell which this country casts over you, and be satisfied with what you choose to take with you from your encounter with it.

It is not my intention to describe the enormously rich culture that I discovered during my trip – the magnificent temples, the religious tolerance, the fascinating museums and their captivating esthetics. Instead, I would like to share a few personal experiences on the human and interpersonal level, and some of my observations regarding the patterns of communication and behavioral codes that I encountered. Perhaps the best place to start is the conference's opening ceremony.

A magnificent convention center



in Minato Mirai 21, Yokohama's beautiful, ultra-modern district with its impressive skyscraper architecture. A large auditorium, an air of festivity and excitement, over 2,000 participants, two-thirds of whom are locals. A large stage, a striking flower arrangement in one corner. Conspicuous in its absence – a desk on the stage for the lecturers, with the names of the speakers and a chairperson to lead the ceremony. Precisely at the appointed time, without preamble and without any announcement to prepare us for what was about to happen, pretty Japanese music began playing in the background, and the lights on the stage began changing to the tune. A young lady, who I innocently thought was the moderator for the evening, appeared on stage. In a pleasant voice, standing in the middle of a circle of light, she read a moving poem, alternating between Japanese and English. A quarter of an hour later, an unseen voice was heard, announcing the first speaker to take the stage and deliver his speech...

Indeed, a different experience, very esthetic, rather sterile. I missed the human contact, the direct touch.

On a personal level, I was exposed to a fascinating culture, to a society of striking and amazing contrasts: tradition versus progress; abundance

versus minimalism; the Obon festival and its attendant beliefs versus "temples" of electronics and endless gadgets; the serenity and tranquility of Japanese gardens versus the noise and ringing of the betting machines in the gambling halls; the geishas in the Gion district versus the young people in Harajuku; Kyoto's small traditional wooden houses versus its ultra-modern train station; kimonos and yukatas versus designer clothes and brand-name fashion.

In spite of the feeling of strangeness that accompanied me throughout the trip, and the sense of distancing and alienation that I sometimes felt in my encounters with the Japanese, it was impossible not to be enchanted by the remarkable cleanliness, the politeness, the willingness to help, the manners, obedience, order, serenity and quiet that surrounds you at all times.

The first of August, the first day of the conference, was a holiday marking the 150th anniversary of the opening of Yokohama Harbor. The streets teemed with young people wearing colorful traditional garments, and in the evening the festivities reached their peak with a spectacular hour-long fireworks display. Instead of watching the show from the windows of the convention center, we went down to the water's edge to join the thousands of Japanese – clusters of young

people, couples, families with small children and elderly parents – who sat on mats, merrily eating and drinking. No less fascinating than watching the fireworks themselves was watching the behavior of the throngs of people during the evening and when the celebration ended. Festivity was in the air, excitement, shouts of joy and encouragement, and lots of emptied beer bottles. In spite of the enormous size of the enthusiastic crowd, no one pushed, no one cursed, no one shouted or argued, even when a municipal inspector asked the crowds to clear the passageways. It was enthralling to observe that even though everyone wanted a good place to sit, everyone respected the other person's space without trying to encroach upon it. And even more impressive was the highly disciplined manner in which people took their leave of the place.

The sight of thousands of people moving in an orderly flow, with almost no noise and no disorder, a great, quiet human river, was unreal. And at the end of the evening, after the entire crowd had gone, the area was spotless; no cigarette butts on the ground, no discarded bottles or empty snack bags to attest to the mass celebration that had just taken place. Where I come from, and in other places I visited, you don't find such conduct.

You might ask – is such behavior real or fake? The question is appropriate, and I assume the Japanese pay a high price for the obedience, the discipline and the emotional restraint that one sees all around. However, as a stranger in a foreign city, lost and helpless without the constant presence of a local guide, it was a pleasant feeling that created an easygoing atmosphere; you felt you could wander about everywhere, in every district and at any hour without worry or fear. You could be what you were – a foreigner, different – without feeling that you were attracting undue attention. You remain anonymous.

More than once, during a visit to one of the beautiful gardens, or when wandering about the narrow picturesque streets of the villages in the Japanese Alps, or during rush hour in the crowded but unbelievably quiet streets of a metropolis like Tokyo, or when I was lost and didn't know which direction to take, I would suddenly be approached by a

smiling Japanese face, and without our understanding one another, someone would spend many minutes accompanying me to my destination. Or in the midst of standing on the platform of the underground train station trying to figure out where I am, a young, rather threatening-looking young man attached to his cell phone would approach, without hesitation and of his own accord, would make a phone call, and in two minutes would rescue me from the confusion and give me precise information – at those moments I felt I could understand and be in touch with the word *amae* which Prof. Hisako Watanabe mentioned in her lectures, and whose meaning at the time, I am embarrassed to say, I could not grasp. This word exists only in Japanese, denoting empathy, confidence and trust, and it touched me personally in small human encounters. The sentence “*Amae* encompasses all human relationships” – accompanied me repeatedly, enabling me to bridge the gaps and learn to accept them.

On more than one occasion, I wondered how I could feel so at ease and comfortable in a place where almost everything was foreign and different, where there was no common language, and communication was limited and difficult. How could I understand the discrepancy between the niceness of the people I met, their generosity and desire to help, and the emotional reserve, the masking of emotions and the remarkable absence of any expression of feeling and affection in their behavior and way of communicating – which I observed on the street and also experienced on the interpersonal level. This is one of those contrasts that strike you... and to add to the confusion, uncertainty and the difficulties of communication, the Japanese never say “no.” The word doesn't exist. At times you just don't know whether the “yes,” or the positive shake of the head, means “yes,” – or “no”...

As a person who loves babies and young children, and who is a compulsive observer of them, I was amazed to watch the mode of crying of little Japanese children. In my country, Israel, such behavior would hardly attract any attention, and would generally be interpreted as a sign of the infant's discomfort. Only on one occasion in our three weeks in Japan did I see a Japanese baby throw a

tantrum, and that was at breakfast in a hotel in Yokohama! I hardly heard babies cry and never heard them scream. And while on the subject, I was surprised at how few pregnant women I saw around.

The babies take me back to the conference. One of the workshops I participated in, which was a very interesting experience for me, was “Buddhism in Infancy.” The workshop approached the Buddhism/infancy dialogue from various perspectives.

I will mention only the intriguing lecture of Prof. Vimala Inoue of the University of Kyosan. His impressive appearance lent an air of calm that reflected the content matter of his lecture as he presented the process and principles of meditation in a simple, yet serious manner. He deemed the Buddhist practice of mindfulness (bare attention) with awareness of breath an underlying practice, regarding it as a “holding environment.” He viewed mindfulness as a means for investigating the intergenerational transmission of parenting practices, and spoke about unconditional love, compassion, sympathetic joy; and about hate, envy, indifference and culpability – as enemies of love.

The workshop included lectures by Maria Pozzi-Monzo (Great Britain) and Stephen Malloch (Australia), each relating from their own personal and different perspective how Buddhism affected and shaped their way of thinking and their clinical work. For me, this was a fascinating opportunity to hear a dialogue between psychoanalysis and Buddhism in which they were not presented as two extremes or as two modes of thinking that have no point of intersection.

To conclude – in her two lectures, Prof. Watanabe stressed the importance that Japanese society attaches to small things. This is reflected in the values of that society: simple; small; slow; silent; sincere; sensitive; steady; strong.

Three weeks later, at the end of an amazing and fascinating trip, I can say that these words characterize much of what I experienced in my encounter with Japanese culture. I hope they will remain part of my personal Japanese experience, which I will continue to lock away in my heart.



## EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

### *WAIMH conferences and our Social Brain...*

By  
Miri Keren, M.D.  
Editor, *The Signal*

During the last WAIMH conference in Yokohama, I found myself reflecting on what drives us to put such a big effort in organizing and preparing conferences! I also noticed a sort of elated feeling I have had at each WAIMH conference I have attended, since 1996. I asked myself whether this is simply about achievement-oriented behaviors, under laid by narcissistic needs, shared by the participants and the scientific and local committees, or is there anything more to it that makes it different from the Olympics, where the goal of every individual sportsman is simply to win? On the last day of the conference, I also noticed among those colleagues of mine, as well as for myself, a kind of sadness at leaving, as if these gatherings meet some additional need of ours. Free-associative thoughts came through my mind, related to what I had read for the preparation of my Master Lecture on "Infant psychiatry as an application of the new biology of mind", and I allow myself to share them with you, in this Issue dedicated to the Yokohama conference.

It turns out that neurons are by their nature "social", in the sense that they shun isolation and depend on their neighbors for survival: if they are not sending and receiving messages from other neurons through their axons' firing (optimized by myelin)

on a constant basis, they literally shrink and die (apoptosis). Besides the axon and the synapse, the second way of neuronal communication is through the dendrites. The glial cells play a matrix role in the construction, organization, and maintenance of neural systems, probably also participating in neural communication.

Complex social interactions between individuals, has been a major driving force in the evolution of primate and human cognition: Dunbar's finding (1993) of a link between group size and the size of the neocortex, was followed by showing that it is the number of complex social manipulations that determines the size of the neocortex. Grooming is the

synapse", or "the space between us", the medium through which we are linked together into larger systems, such as families, tribes, societies, and the human species as a whole. Parents are the primary environment to which young brains adapt, and their unconscious minds are our first reality. We may conceptualize the parent-infant interaction as taking place in an "interface" social synapse. The caretaking and resonance behaviors made possible by the cingulate also provide an important component of the neural infrastructure for social cooperation and empathy. At the other end of the spectrum, we may conceptualize the devastating effects of anaclitic depression as the result of these processes.



"Even though we cherish the idea of individuality, we live with the paradox that we constantly regulate each others' internal biological states, and our interdependence is a constant reality of our existence... We are just beginning to understand that we have evolved as social creatures and that all our biologies are interwoven" (Cozolino L. 2006, p. 3)

From this perspective, the essence of WAIMH is, in a way, to offer every two years, a scene where our social brain is intensively activated during four intensive days, where new

connections/synapses, cognitive as well as affective, take place and make us more productive, until the next conference. If it is so, our "fate" is to go on working very hard for making these conferences happen!

connections/synapses, cognitive as well as affective, take place and make us more productive, until the next conference. If it is so, our "fate" is to go on working very hard for making these conferences happen!

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Cozolino (2006) suggests extrapolating from the individual cellular network to social interactions network: He calls the "social

## *A call for participating in Interface debates*

By  
*Elisabeth Fivaz*

In the name of the scientific committee, I want to make a call for interested colleagues to participate in plenary interfaces in the Leipzig conference in 2010. I will describe what we see as necessary if not sufficient conditions for successful interface debates. But first, let me give a brief narrative of the history of this concept.

In 1991, Serge Lebovici asked me to organize in Lausanne, Switzerland, a study group with Daniel Stern and colleagues who had contrasting perspectives on infants and their families. We met six months later with Dan Stern, as developmentalist, Serge Lebovici, his colleague Martine Lamour and Dieter Bürgin, from the University of Basle, as psychodynamicians; and John Byng-Hall, Antoinette Corboz-Warnery and myself, as family therapists. Antoinette and myself also served respectively as clinician and researcher for a non-clinical family with whom we were to work. The parents were participating with their son in our longitudinal study on the development of family communication in Lausanne and accepted to be part of our study group. They were interested in learning about our field and about their family. Their presence at work sessions challenged our modes of communication.

We decided to focus on an objective behavioral event, an “anchor event” as the point of reference for all of the diverse explorations of the material. It had to be highly significant in the family’s development from each of our perspectives. It occurred at a transition point in the Lausanne trilogy play of the family, when the partners moved from a “2+1” play part between mother and baby, with the father as third party, and the “3-together” play part, when the father joined the mother to play with the baby. Starting with this microsequence at 3 months, we repeated the interviews on the same microsequence at 12 months.

We watched together the video-sequence after everyone had described it in their own language and came to a common description of the observable interaction during these 30 seconds, based on microanalysis. We planned four interviews with the family: Dan Stern would begin by his “microanalytic interview” with the couple, Serge Lebovici with a psychodynamic one, Dieter Bürgin with a culturally oriented one, and John Byng-Hall with a family-script one. Our main goal was to draw relationships between different levels to approach the nuclear family: behavioral interactions, their subjective and unconscious meanings, and their intergenerational bases, to arrive at a common language and shared concepts permitting more fruitful exchanges between us. The interviews were videotaped and transcribed and each of us wrote a report on their own level of description, trying to answer the question: how does “triadification”, as we called it at that time, namely the move between 2+1 and 3-together, occur at this particular level. Then we attempted to find the correspondances between levels. The results of this work were presented in the Waimh Tampere conference and published in its IMHJ special issue along with a thoughtful and challenging discussion by Robert Emde.

The group met twice a year for three years. Its relational history was marked by friendship, playfulness, and hot debate, oscillating between struggles with differences and coming to joint views. Incidentally, in the beginning, the most salient differences between the group members were between psychodynamic and family orientations. They progressively gave way to differences between men and women, whatever their perspectives. Note that after the first year of meeting, the parents kindly advised us that they were learning very much from the interviews, but would prefer not to attend our (sophisticated) discussions.

This adventure was the inspiration for the plenary interfaces organized in the Paris and Yokohama Waimh conferences. The main idea was to

present in the afternoon interface plenary debate a clinical case illustrating from different perspectives the theme of the morning plenary lecture.

Three key rules were defined: 1. Included in the international debate team would be three partners: one case provider and two case presenters with different orientations. 2. Work was to start on the basis of a video-based observation only, in order to enlighten the resources and limits of behavioral observation; the other data (interviews, clinical data) would be added later. 3. The case presenters were to do their specific analysis first “blindly”, namely without access to the other video and clinical data. They would confront the results of their analysis with those of the other participants only after delivering their first report, to allow to sharpen the specific contribution of a given port of entry in relation to others.

In Paris, three 90 minutes plenary interface debates took place. They followed the conference agenda focusing on the transition to parenthood (day one), first year of infancy (day two) and toddlerhood (day three). By way of an example, the first one was introduced by a plenary lecture on the family triad. It focused on the interfaces between the assessment of the mother-infant and father-infant dyads in dialogue and the father-mother-infant triad at three months in a clinical family: what were the specific contributions of the dyadic versus the triadic ports of entry (see the Waimh Paris conference IMHJ special issue)?

Given the audience had appreciated this format, it was also proposed in the Yokohama conference. The first interface debate was articulated with Mechthild Papousek’s plenary lecture on the infant’s strengths and resources in developmental disorders. Entitled “A multifaceted look at self regulatory capacities in the etiology and treatment of early persistent crying”, it focused on a clinically referred case of a 3 and half month-old boy with early excessive crying. Video-based observations of mother-infant and father-infant interactions in

different contexts and of infant behavior during a semi-structured neuropsychiatric examination were analyzed from three different perspectives: the infant's developing self-regulatory capacities (Mechthild Papousek, Germany), the impact of the infant's strengths and weaknesses on family relationships (Sandra Serpa-Rusconi, Switzerland) and on the dyadic psychodynamic representations (Miri Keren, Israel). The three presenters fruitfully discussed to which degree

and how these different perspectives converged, overlapped, or contradicted each other and could be integrated to form a basis for a comprehensive therapeutic intervention.

The second debate: "Interfaces between the internal words of mother and child and the observable interaction: the case of a young child with autism spectrum disorder", presented a research case of a young child diagnosed with Autism spectrum disorder and his mother. It explored the interplay between the internal representations of both mother and child in relation to one another (Smadar Doley) and their observable interactions with one another (Jean Wittenberg, Canada). It addressed the following question: How is the mother's inner representation of her child (as reflected in her reaction to diagnosis and her insightfulness) and the child's security of attachment with the mother (as reflected by his use of the mother as a source of comfort) reflected in these interactions? The discussion (David Oppenheim) explored in depth the consistencies and inconsistencies between the data on inner representations and the interaction observations and their implications for intervention.

The third debate: "HIV mother-to-



child transmission in south Africa: stigma, grief and culture" dramatically showed what an overwhelming problem HIV-AIDS is, especially in the impoverished communities of South Africa. Astrid Berg described through video clips from two cases her clinical experience with this patient population and showed how early identification and medical treatment, together with ongoing psychological and social support can change the course of this disease from inevitably ending in death to ongoing living. Two other experienced clinicians, Campbell Paul, from Australia, and Neil Boris, from the USA, reflected on the infant's as well as on the clinicians' experiences through different clinical lenses, enlightening how these human dramas stand beyond our ordinary clinical perspectives. This larger lens gave the conference organizing committee incentive to devote a plenary session to this type of issue and thus increase our awareness of them as clinicians.

In summary, the debate starts from a video-based observation of a clinical case, coupled with the day's theme. Among the possible scenarios are a single video sequence analyzed through different orientations ; several sequences showing various functional levels of the same family (e.g. family versus dyadic play) and/or

in different contexts (play, separation-reunion, care, medical examination, etc); several sequences showing the longitudinal development of the case (e.g. prenatal-post-natal; or any other scenario involving different perspectives on a common issue.

We see the interface debates as a process which will evolve with time and experience. At this point, in practice, the work of the team would begin by an agreement on the case and by setting an agenda to go through the steps of the work:

- agreeing on each participant's perspective and
- on the feasibility of working with the available video material;
- doing the separate analyses;
- meeting for confronting them and
- planning the plenary presentation.

Importantly, this implies that participants agree to play the game and to invest time much in advance of the conference in this challenging, exciting and playful adventure.

We encourage interested clinicians to communicate to the scientific committee their suggestions, case material and possible themes for the Leipzig Waimh conference – no later than March 2009!

## Participant evaluation of the Yokohama WAIMH Congress

By  
Kaija Puura

Immediately after the Yokohama WAIMH Congress the WAIMH Office sent an email to all congress participants asking them to fill in an evaluation form in the web. The office received answers from approximately 10% of participants. The respondents were quite satisfied with the content of the congress: 90% of respondents pre-congress events, master classes and congress plenaries as excellent or good, 80% rated plenary interfaces, symposia and clinical teach-ins as excellent or good and 70% rated workshops, poster workshops, video presentations and poster sessions as excellent or good.

Concerning the amount of events, two thirds of the respondents felt there were too many events, while one third though the amount was just right. The respondents gave a lot of positive feedback on the organisation, content and facilities of the congress. What respondents were most happy about was the nice and friendly atmosphere of the congress, and the helpful and friendly staff was mentioned by many. The most frequently expressed critical comment was that there was too little time for general discussion, particularly after plenaries and in symposia. As suggestions for following congresses the respondents mentioned that posters should be up for a longer time. Some respondents suggested that abstracts from presentations could be available in the rooms or that printed abstract book would be sold in the congress. A key word search for abstracts on the website was also mentioned.

Of the internet based services submission of abstracts seemed to have gone without problems for the most of the respondents, while congress and hotel registration had been more difficult. Finding of the congress abstracts had also proven to be difficult for some of the respondents.

According to received answers, people were quite happy with the social programme. Nohs play, calligraphy, tea ceremony and kimono dressing were particularly mentioned, as was the get-together party and the fireworks! The gala dinner also got positive remarks, but some respondents felt it should have been in a facility allowing more people to attend.

For the next WAIMH Congress in Leipzig the respondents wished to hear more of fathers and of "real life", how to work in everyday practice. People also expressed wishes for more interaction between senior and junior congress participants, for group discussions in different language groups or around various interests and lunch discussions with experts. Practical courses on both assessment

and treatment interventions were suggested by many respondents. For social programme people expressed a wish for events with music and German traditions. Some of the respondents were also interested in visits to kindergartens, schools and hospitals. In short, people wished events with more interaction and discussion.

The results from the congress evaluation have already been given to the Board of Directors of the WAIMH and to the Programme Committee of the next Leipzig Congress. On behalf of the WAIMH Office I wish to thank all of the congress participants who gave their valuable opinion to help us organise even better Congresses in the future.



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