MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE EDUCATORS

PODCAST TRANSCRIPTION OF

Yoshiharu Nakagawa, PhD
and
Translator: Sachiko Gomi, PhD
with host
Ba Luvmour

A Production of
Luvmour Consulting II, LLC
Portland, OR 97221

Copyright © Ba & Josette Luvmour, 2017
Welcome to Meetings with Remarkable Educators. Each podcast is a dialogue between me, Ba Luvmour, and an educator who sees the greatness in their students and touches the whole of their being. These educators defy generalizations, so here’s a bit about what they’ve done and how I came to know them.

This is an unusual podcast. Yoshi, Sachi [his translator] and I talked for over 20 minutes about important matters as the equipment was set up. Here’s a summary of what we spoke about.

In Japan, the 10 ox herding pictures are respected as a way to understand and approach enlightenment. Yoshi asked us to find the picture that most spoke to us about our past, present and future. This is very unusual, as the way Ox Herding pictures are often used is simply to go from one through 10. I was amazed at the new understandings that arose from this nonlinear approach. Yoshi admitted he hadn’t taught this way before and decided to incorporate qualities such as experiential education, dialogue, and even putting us together with other people who were at the picture with us at a given time. In this way he eschewed the entire traditional approach and chose what he has come to understand as more holistic practices. I appreciated his willingness to explore, experiment and trusted us to be respected learners and engaged.

I am interested in the international holistic education community. Yoshi spoke of his work and how it’s grown. The websites were mentioned elsewhere and can be found in the transcription portion of the podcast at luvmourconsulting.com. Please take a moment to look at all he has done and all that is happening in the Pacific Rim of Asia.

Sachi said she was surprised at the ease and the way Yoshi altered the Ox Herding experience and that she, too, found new insights. For instance, she realized that to believe that because she had had a liberating experience, the pictures depicting attachment and confusion no longer applied. In my response to questions about the difference in learning between Japan and America, she pointed to a greater freedom in America in choices of study and execution of her profession. She’s clear, that’s just a comparison. But in terms of what’s possible, there’s a long way to go.

She (Sachi) attended many presentations at the conference and found them energizing and very much applicable to her work in social welfare. She applied those understandings in her mind to her work with her clients back in New Mexico and had several
interesting stories of how just being with her clients led to greater well-being.

Now, let's listen to Yoshi and Sachi.

Yoshi, so is social justice, is that ... I don't really read or see too much about Japan in social justice, and can you help me out there?

Yoshiharu: I think generally discussions are growing. However, in the field of Holistic Education, discussions are better there. Maybe it works in peace education. We have a history of peace education. But the political issues, we don't discuss so much.

Ba Luvmour: I have a friend who was brought up in Japan, not of Japanese origin. And his experience of the Japanese culture was very positive, up until ... He said he felt much more nurtured with the Japanese friends and elders that he knew than with his own parents, who were Christian missionaries. But he said it seemed like after eight or nine years of age that the care for the child was sublimated, or put under, for the culture. And he felt like there was something really lost there. He works with me now in Rites of Passage, and he feels very strongly that the ages from 8 to the university are so structured and so regimented that it's very hard for the students to have a more holistic perspective. Is that true?

Yoshiharu: Yes, I agree with that very much, yeah. And the purpose of education for many parents is that their children go to universities. Actually that's the main purpose. Also, the children feel conformity is the most important part of life, and they learn conformity in their schools. And the teachers also, very structured. And the mind is not so open; they behave in a very structured way. I find that there are less opportunity, less possibilities, to develop Holistic Education in our schools, unfortunately.

Ba Luvmour: So how did you step away? Weren't you subjected to the same educational approach? Weren't you expected to fit in with the society? And yet you've stepped into a whole different way of looking at the world.

Yoshiharu: Yes. For some children it's very difficult to become conformed.

Ba Luvmour: It was tough for you to be conformed?

Yoshiharu: So, in my country for instance, the majority of people, even the adults, and every part of the society is structured.
Meetings with Remarkable Educators

Copyright © Ba & Josette Luvmour, 2018 • ba@luvmourconsulting.com
because he needed to work more on math and those subject matters. But the teacher in that tutor school he went to was different.

Ba Luvmour: You have much reverence for that teacher, don't you? I can see it in your face.

Yoshiharu: Yes. Yes. It's Japanese history, so there were that kind of schools many, many years ago. Recently there are very few of that kind of school. But 100 years ago, 200 years ago, there were schools. And the teachers are very unique, kind of masters.

Ba Luvmour: What about you, Sachi? What draws you as just ... Not just in the social work part of you, but what draws you to this? I mean, classical social work teaching is not necessarily holistic. It is "Here's your case, here's the problem, solve the problem." Very linear, one step to the next. But something's drawing you not to be okay with that. What is that?

Sachiko Gomi: I think in a way it's similar to what Yoshi just described. He met this individual, the teacher at the tutor school, who had much impact on him. And I think I was fortunate to meet somebody like that, also in my youth ... and I didn't really realizing that. But when I was in graduate school in Japan, Yoshi was my teacher, so I was introduced to this idea. So I think somehow I have that openness to accept the idea. He was lecturing in a class that I guess I had a good fit with it. So I think that's where the starting point was, and it just expanded.

Ba Luvmour: That's very interesting, because when Yoshi talks about, "I stand up there and lecture," and that many of his students just go on to work in corporations or whatever, I didn't get the feeling that it was an inspiring environment. And yet it was for you.

Sachiko Gomi: Correct.

Ba Luvmour: Was it the words? The ideas? The feeling ... I mean, I feel Yoshi is a warm, just very meaningful and warm person.

Yoshiharu and Sachiko exchange a few words in Japanese: [Japanese 00:12:06]

Sachiko Gomi: Yeah, I think so. Like you just said, not just the actual words, but when I think of a great teacher, a great mentor, who he is or who she is really matters, not just what the person is preaching. So I guess maybe I sensed that, what I was learning. I'm not sure.
Ba Luvmour: It's interesting to reflect on these things, isn't it? It's very interesting.

Sachiko Gomi: Right.

Ba Luvmour: I'm always in search of what allows certain people to move over into the bigger perspective. And I can't ... I don't know if anyone can put their finger on it. But I'm always interested in that question.

Sachiko Gomi: Yes, yes. Yes. I think something to do with that person, I think. Not just the word, but everything, I think, that was what he experienced with his teacher, too.

Ba Luvmour: Well, that's ... We're very fortunate in that way, aren't we? But our teachers can only be as effective if we have a place of receiving that. So something in us is receiving, is getting the message that "Hey, this is really what your heart wants to do."

Sachiko Gomi: Yes. Yes.

Ba Luvmour: That's such a powerful message, isn't it?

Sachiko Gomi: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes.

Yoshiharu and Sachiko exchange words in Japanese:
Yoshiharu: [Japanese 00:13:45]
Sachiko Gomi: [Japanese 00:13:46]
Yoshiharu: [Japanese 00:14:12]
Sachiko Gomi: [Japanese 00:14:13]
Yoshiharu: [Japanese 00:14:15]

Ba Luvmour: Yeah.

Ba Luvmour: It's Teaching Story time. Briefly, teaching stories invite us to see the world with a new perspective, often featuring a wise person, a wise fool or a trickster animal. It can be humorous and often have many shades of meaning shining throughout the story. I have told teaching stories for the past 40 years, and I love them. And I have to tell you, each time I tell one, I learn much more of myself. This teaching story is called, "Who Should I Listen To?"

The wise fool and his son were riding the donkey to the town market. A group of people passed. The wise fool heard them
whisper, "What times are these? Look at those two! They have no mercy on the poor animal!" The wise fool, hearing this, told his son to get off and continue the journey on foot.

Another group of people passing by and seeing this commented, "What times are these? Look at the man! His poor son with his frail body has to walk while he, at his best age, is riding the donkey." Hearing this, the wise fool tells his son to ride the donkey and he himself gets off to walk the rest of the way.

A third group of people, seeing this, remark, "What times are these? This young man is riding the donkey while the sickly old father has to walk." Hearing this, the wise fool tells his son to get off the animal and they both walk, with the donkey trailing behind.

Another group passing by points to them, laughing. "Look at those idiots! They have a donkey and they're walking all the way to the market!"

Can you find meanings in this story about education? If so, send your insights to Ba at luvmourconsulting.com. A three-person panel will select the most relevant stories, and they will be read at the end of the subsequent podcast. Again, that's B-A @ l-u-v-m-o-u-r-c-o-n-s-u-l-t-i-n-g.com.

I look forward to your insights and to learning from you. Those insights selected will receive a copy of the award-winning book so valuable for parents and educators, Grow Together: Parenting as a Path to Well-Being, Wisdom and Joy, by Dr. Josette Luvmour. Yes, we have the same last name and we are married, and we have been working together in Holistic Education for more than 30 years. But that’s not the reason I offer this book. Check out her many accolades and the book reviews on our website, luvmourconsulting.com.

Ba Luvmour: Yeah, so what is knowledge? We know in this other way. We know as wholeness. And so I have to say, Yoshi, to me it’s amazing that just standing in front and lecturing, that that could come through. Because it’s not the best environment for the kind of teaching that holistic teaching is. When you’re teaching, do you feel constrained, like "I’d like to get out from behind this lecture podium?" "I’d like to get in there with my students and do Ox Herding contemplations," or other things like that? Or is the lecture platform comfortable for you? Is it exciting to be a lecturer?

Meetings with Remarkable Educators
Copyright © Ba & Josette Luvmour, 2018 • ba@luvmourconsulting.com
Yoshiharu and Sachiko exchange words in Japanese:  [Japanese 00:18:09 to 0018:30]

Yoshiharu: Yeah. I want to introduce experiential part much more, because I think the students also have more enjoyment in the classes. However, the most difficult part is how to motivate my students to do something. They are not accustomed to do something in the classroom. So they have many years just to sit in the chair, just listen to the lecture. That's the style. So I have to change the style. The first part is most difficult. If I have a class of 100 students, I don't try because 70% of students don't follow me and I'm disappointed, so much disappointed. So I just lecture. But it's not so fun to me.

And even the lectured-to students, they don't listen too much. [They are] just tired.

Ba Luvmour: Maybe you should do a small learning center like the one you were inspired in; because in that environment, your inspiration presence would be very important. Just an idea. Just an idea.

Yoshiharu: Yeah. Last year I started one course, Holistic Development Practicum. It's an experiential course. I said that before, so the students have to do something. And they understand we have to do something in this course, so it's easier to introduce something. So last year Bob [London] came to teach at the course. I was afraid students wouldn't follow his suggestions to do something, and that happened to me.

Ba Luvmour: I think we yearn for experiential learning, Yoshi. I think all of us, all humans, love to learn by experience.

Yoshiharu: Yeah, yeah. That was a very new experience for the students and very new to my school. It's a big school, but there are very few experiential courses. I think we need to develop more experiential courses. I would try to do that.

Ba Luvmour: While we're about out of time, I have one more question for each of you, if you would each answer. And that is, there are many people, especially I know in America and in Canada, who are wanting to move more to a holistic perspective. They have much fear, the government, culture ... but they know that mainstream education has failed. It's failing, it's failed. And it's ever more evident that it's failed. So what would you say to them? Whether it's professionally, social work or education, or as parents, or just what can you offer to them that would allow them to go, "Okay, I'll give it a try."

Meetings with Remarkable Educators
Copyright © Ba & Josette Luvmour, 2018 • ba@luvmourconsulting.com
Yoshiharu: Yeah. That is also my question, and my one task. It becomes much more difficult, I feel. The society becomes more conservative and more rigid, and education is being more controlled by government, and it becomes more difficult. However, the mainstream education is not fun to all of us. I think we need something new. So I want to try something by myself. And what I can do is to expand ideas, and the methods, and the ways of Holistic Education to the teachers who don’t know at all about Holistic Education. They are also struggling. Many teachers become sick because of the educational environment. So they need something, but they have no ideas. My work, my part is to distribute good ideas for them.

Sachiko Gomi: Okay. It’s a great question, and I think I need to contemplate on this question. I’m not talking specific to social workers, but in general, even from my own experience of being a student in Japan and growing up in Japan, being in the educational system. I think fear is there, but if you are open to try something that you are not used to, it doesn’t hurt to try. If it doesn’t work for you, you don’t have to stick with it. So I think I would say just open up and just don’t be so worried about the consequence, but just try and see where that would lead to. Just have that open-mindedness. I think that is something I would say.

Ba Luvmour: Thank you. One more, Yoshi?

Yoshiharu: Yeah, one more. I am very concerned with fear. I myself have fear, very much. So that's why I was interested in Krishnamurti who talked about fear many times. Fear is the obstacle...

Ba Luvmour: Obstacle.

Yoshiharu: Okay. Obstacle we have. And the fear comes from the conditionings. So I want to explore facets of conditioning and also go beyond conditioning or at least identify with what the conditioning is. That is my main concern.

Ba Luvmour: I share that with you. I used to wear a button on my shirt that said, "I am not polite to conditioning." Great. Okay?

Yoshiharu: Okay.

Ba Luvmour: Okay. We did it.

Yoshiharu: Yeah. giggles.
Ba Luvmour: Meetings with Remarkable Educators is a production of Luvmour Consulting II, LLC; copyright Ba and Josette Luvmour, 2018. Our sound engineer: Demetri Young. Our webmaster: Nathan Young. And our all-important media maven: Cleo Young. All podcasts are transcribed with show notes and can be found at luvmourconsulting.com/podcasts.

Ba and Josette Luvmour would also like to thank SelfDesign Graduate Institute. We teach there, and at SelfDesign we nurture each learner's ability to explore inner and outer worlds and discover his or her own deep understanding and vision. Go to the SDGI website and see for yourself. That’s www.selfdesigninstitute.org.

This is Ba Luvmour reminding you that, holistic relationships with children leads to joy and self-knowledge with the adults in their lives. With respect for you and for children everywhere, see you next time.