



With the immigration flow resulting from the World War II and the acceptance of refugees from Indochina after the Vietnam War, racism and other problems occurred in the United States, which forced the country to adjust to a multicultural society. The 1970s marked the beginning of a focus on solutions through improving intercultural communication, and a person, holding the ambition to help people adapting to different cultures, and jumping right into the field, was Gary Fontaine, currently Professor Emeritus of the University of Hawaii. From education and training to research and so on, the activities of Fontaine ranged over wide area, but there was one thing in common with the endeavors of the Kanda Gaigo Group, that is the pursuit of a intercultural understanding education in Japan. (Text:Takeshi Yamaguchi, Photo:Yutaro Yamaguchi, titles omitted)

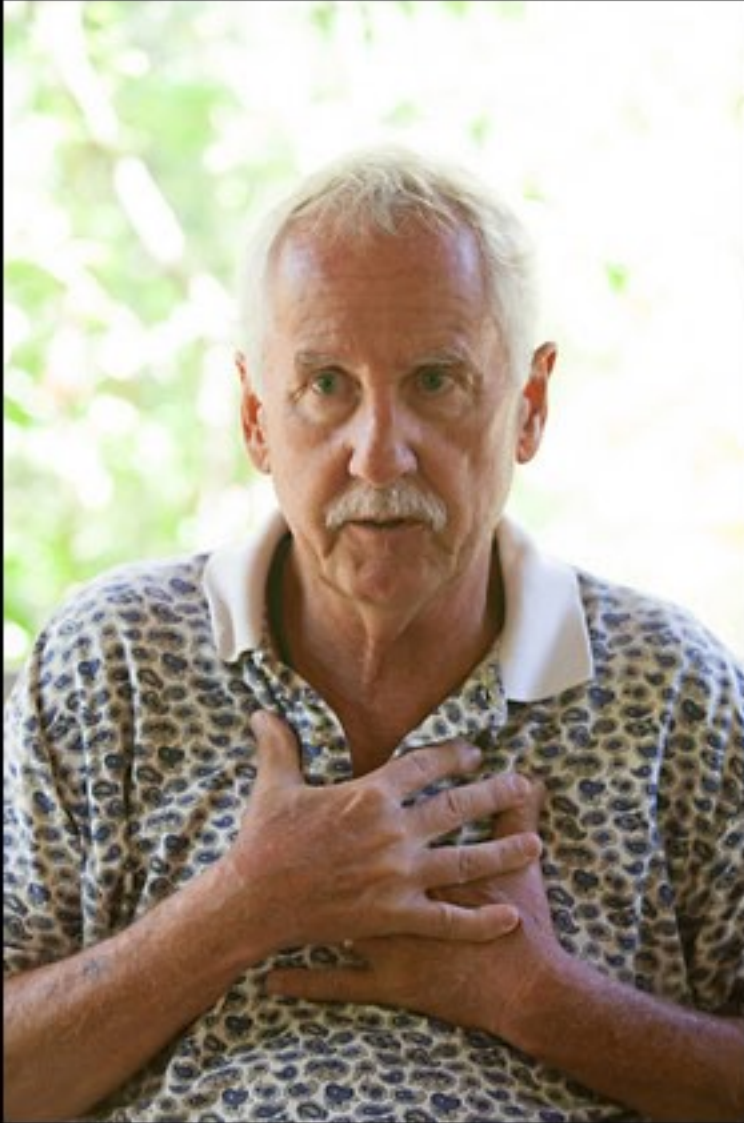
As a social psychologist, Gary Fontaine had one specific interest. When people, who are satisfied with their work and life in general, have to move to “strange lands” with different environment, culture and social systems due to unavoidable circumstances, then what happens inside their minds? What kind of change does this transition make in people's minds, beliefs, and motivation? He noticed that this interest of his coincided with the new at that time discipline of intercultural communication. He switched his research focus from psychological issues in the criminal justice system, developed in the 1970s, to better understanding the challenges of intercultural interactions and the skills needed to deal effectively with them.

Vol.7 Gary M. Fontaine Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawaii

Seek a Mind that can Adapt to Strange Lands

Pioneers of Education  
for Intercultural Understanding





In 1979 Fontaine moved to Hawaii. Hawaii plays a central role in the intercultural understanding education of the United States. The driving force of this trend was in the East-West Center and the University of Hawaii. The center was supporting students from the Pacific Ocean region and Asian countries studying at the University of Hawaii, and as a think tank performed studies of the Asia Pacific Ocean area. In addition, Hawaii was one of the most multicultural arenas in the United States, and it played a role as a great "laboratory".

Fontaine got a job as director of The Institute of Behavioral Sciences (TIBS). In the institute research was done on training for adaptation to different cultures, for example, targeting American soldiers stationed in Okinawa and elsewhere, and diplomats and businessmen appointed abroad. Fontaine and TIBS were training foreigners trying to settle in the United States, and with grants from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, were supporting Indochinese refugees to adapt to the American society. Then, in 1982 he was appointed professor in the Department (now School) of Communication at the University of Hawaii. One focus of the Department was intercultural communication.

In the early 1980s, the necessity for intercultural understanding education has been growing in Japan. The sharp appreciation of the yen caused by the September 1985 Plaza Accord, made the Japanese companies start expanding their production bases overseas. As Japan began expanding its business on the world stage, it was of course forced to equally compete with people from different cultures.(1/4)





### The essential for the development of a new area cycle of education, research and practice

In the 1970 there was a fast-growing English vocational school in Tokyo. This was Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages. Opened as "Central English School" in 1957, it was highly estimated for offering realization for foreign teachers who are native English speakers, and curriculum teaching practices for trading companies and airlines, so it had grown to become Japan's largest English vocational school. However, the 2-year curriculum of the Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages was limited, and after performing negotiations with foreigners on equal terms, in order to develop human resources to perform the business together, it became clear that it was necessary to have a university offering not only foreign language ability and actual practices, but also education in Japanese and foreign culture.

In the Sano Education Foundation, operating the Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages, began the consideration of the idea for establishing university in 1977, and in 1982 a preparation office for the university establishment opened. Later in this preparation office, the launch of the intercultural communication pillars was made as a special feature of the education in the new university, and in 1987 it was established as the Kanda University of International Studies. Although with different background, the reason for the higher education institutions of intercultural communication in both the United States and Japan to begin developing almost at the same time, was probably because there was such a global necessity.

Vol.7 Gary M. Fontaine  
Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawaii

Seek a Mind that can Adapt to Strange Lands

Pioneers of Education  
for Intercultural Understanding







Fontaine, at the University of Hawaii, continued to practice intercultural communication training with focus on corporate managers and other persons involved in intercultural and international activity. Additionally, Fontaine was also taking part in the activities of research networks related to intercultural communication. Exactly because the field didn't have a long history, researchers gathered to learn from each other and share their research findings and education and training practices. This sharing often occurred through the activities at The Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR) and related organizations. SIETAR is an international network of such professionals who are dedicated to research in the field of intercultural communication and who apply their knowledge to solve issues in the real world.

Fontaine's endeavors, covering and repeating the cycle of education, research, and practice, were also related to the contents that the works Sano Education Foundation has built. As a start, there were Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages and Kanda University of International Studies as educational institutions. The research institutions, which are annexed to the university, developed studies of intercultural communication, Japanese culture, and language education. Then, reproducing a medieval English village, the international training facility "British Hills" was also established to provide a place for practicing foreign language communication in a intercultural environment. In practical aspect, the "Kanda Gaigo Career College" provides training for working people, the "Kanda Gaigo Kids Club" takes advantage of the university research on English education for children to train instructors, and the "Kanda Gaigo Associates" produces human resources with intercultural understanding for the dispatch business.

It was natural for the "education, research and practice cycle" common to Fontaine, his colleagues and the Kanda Gaigo Group to spread the new field of intercultural communication among society, to provide the skills to those who need them, and develop as an academic field.(2/4)





Vol.7 Gary M. Fontaine  
Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawaii  
**Seek a Mind that can Adapt to Strange Lands**

Pioneers of Education  
for Intercultural Understanding

**By making use of "Swarm Intelligence" and a "sense of presence" people receive the power to deal more effectively with multicultural society**

On the basis of the experience in practicing training and intercultural communication, Fontaine pointed out that it is very difficult to deal with multicultural society in a globalized world. His theory says that it is necessary not only to address it by reason, but that it requires practical and trial and error actions.

"You can best try to see if a method is effective in dealing with different environments through trial and error. If one method does not work, you should try a different way. You can observe what the person next to you is doing, and by combining this with your own method, you can see if that is better to find the best way. Then, the best solution emerges for you. It is something understood from trying, and it is the gift of the trial and error. That is how I define "swarm intelligence", as sharing methods and their outcomes with others in a similar ecosystem.







Swarm intelligence involves observing the methods others in our ecosystem use to try to solve problems and the success of those methods and then trying out the more successful methods oneself. There is no certainty that a given method will be effective. Even in the same ecosystem, it is not guaranteed that it will function equally. Still, we can find the best way by doing trial and error and comparing our outcomes with others in our swarm."

Fontaine, who explored the application of "swarm intelligence" to solving intercultural problems made a significant progress in the research and practice of intercultural communication. In addition, his studies spread further by the concept of "sense of presence".

"For example, when you are attending a meeting at home in your own culture you are using about 10% of your consciousness. That's all you need because everything is familiar and predictable. The remaining 90% are about tonight's menu or your family relationship, errands you have to finish, etc. In other words, you don't need to be present at 100% in the situations that you expect to be repeated in the daily life. However, in a strange land, you cannot predict so effectively what will happen. If distracted by other things, you can make mistakes, fall off a cliff, be shot with a gun, damage human relations, and other possibilities for bad things to happen. That's why in different cultures your "sense of presence" must be nearly at 100%".

Fontaine notes that with the "sense of presence" at 100%, one is more aware and feels more alive. With a high sense of presence, even if one encounters the world of different cultures, it is possible to cope with the challenges. Noticing the different methods, it becomes possible to deal with a different attitude, and so one can find the necessary way to accomplish the mission. And what is most significant of all is that this being more aware and feeling more alive is an optimal experience for many people and increases their motivation to continue seeking and dealing with the challenges. He studied how to optimize the use of a "sense of presence" and use that knowledge in the training of people who have to deal with different ecosystems. (3/4)





Eliminate the collision, continue to maintain the relationship in order to create a "third culture"

Fontaine says that the most important thing in the practice of intercultural communication is the ability to resolve conflicts. Cultural differences are very deep-rooted and conflict is inevitable. In an attempt to resolve it, sometimes the problem is worsening. That's why, he says, it is important to continue the dialogue without giving up. Then, instead of adapting to either of the cultures, one can build a third culture. In companies and organizations where people with different culture achieve common purpose, it is necessary to build one more culture.

At the end of the interview, Fontaine kindly pointed out about the Japanese society:

"In the future Japan has to accept the foreign, and become able to adjust to the multicultural. Economically and demographically the ecosystem of Japan has also changed significantly. With Japan's aging population, to keep competitiveness to the world, you must be able to leave important work to people who are not Japanese. Japanese companies have to gather such talents, continue employing them, and to continue receiving their loyalty, must treat them under conditions that do not differ with those for the Japanese, and make them feel that "the Japanese companies are a perfect partner."

Vol7 Gary M. Fontaine Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawaii

Seek a Mind that can Adapt to Strange Lands

Pioneers of Education  
for Intercultural Understanding





It would be good if the exchange between diverse cultures would start with the young people. It is good to start exchange between Japanese schools and schools attended by foreign children. It can be also good to combine this with orientation and training to help the communication. I think that an effective way to enhance Japan's ability to respond to diversity is through teaching adaptive method to the young generation."

The pursuit for intercultural understanding education from both practical and theoretical side in the Kanda Gaigo Group has been done for over a period of about 60 years, and it has been realized in higher education institutions and related facilities. What kind of human resources are being nurturing by these efforts? They are the Japanese people who possess the human nature and culture to equally communicate with foreign people, combined with language skills, and sense of balance for harmony with the other party, or ability to develop what Fontaine calls a "third culture". The mission of the Kanda Gaigo Group is to foster human resources with high intercultural understanding, that would be able to contribute to the realization of "multicultural society necessary to be achieved by the Japanese," as pointed out by Fontaine. (4/4)

#### **Gary M. Fontaine**

Born in 1946. Received doctorate in Social Psychology from the University of Western Australia. In 1979 he was appointed as Director of The Institute of Behavioral Sciences in Hawaii, where he and his colleagues conducted research and training for intercultural adaptation. In 1982 he was appointed to the University of Hawaii Communication Faculty, and since then he has continued to passionately research, education and training in intercultural communication. In 2012 he was appointed as Professor Emeritus. Currently he is relocated to Boracay Island in the Philippines and Mercer Island near Seattle in the USA, and continues writing and researching in cooperation with researchers from all over the world over the Internet.