Monologue

The recent development of medicine is amazing. For example, cardiology, the field in which the writer majors has attaining a striking progress. Using the latest techniques and adopting the newest physico-chemical methods, energetic studies are being carried continuously about the details of physical disorders. However, it has to be noted that the ailing individuals suffer not only from the somatic disorders but also from psychological disorders. Thus, psychological symptoms are becoming an important aim of therapeutics, i.e. not only somatic phase but also psychological phase of diseases are studied as an important object of medical research. In the medical field, much more attention is being paid on psychological factors. However, the relations between psychological factors and somatic factors may not be uniform but will vary by sorts of diseases. Sometimes psychological disorders may have primary effects on somatic phenomena, and sometimes somatic diseases which were caused by somatic disorders may involve psychological disorders. It may be synonymous to the phrase said by A. Szent-Györgyi in his book titled "Nature of Life — A Study of a Muscle". "What we call "life" is a certain quality, the sum of certain reactions of systems of matter, as the smile is a quality or reaction of lips. I cannot take the girl in my right arm and her smile in my left hand and study the two independently. Similarly, we cannot separate life from matter and what we can only study is matter and its reactions. But if we study this matter and its reactions, we study life itself".

Recently, psychological or psychiatric symptoms which are called "CCU" or "ICU" syndromes are reported. I consider that it may be a specific pattern in which psychological and somatic factors are mingled up.

There rises a question, "If psychological and somatic factors cannot be regarded as independent ones, where we can find the contact of the two factor? In other words, may some of the psychological factors possible be explained by the factors coming from somatic disorders? Although I don't have a very good talent for music nor can appreciate it as musicians do, I love to listen to the piano music played by a skilful pianist. Taking piano playing for example, "Should any trouble occurs in the mechanical system of the instrument, how it will sound to the audience? Should the player's hand be attacked by any trouble, how the music that he is playing will be affected? Should any trouble occurs in the cerebral parenchyma of the pianist, how the music will be distorted? Is it impossible to consider the sound of music as a physical sign, i.e. somatic phenomenon and the fine melody played by an artist at the piano as a psychological phenomenon? If it can be considered as such, is it impossible to consider some of the psychological phenomena may possibly be interpreted by the somatic phenomena?

Is it a daydream of a cardiologist who knows little about psychological field?

Yoshitsugu Nohara, MD

Professor & Vice-Director
Tokyo Medical College
Hachioji Medical Center