

A JAPANESE PHYSICIAN'S PERSONAL ETHICAL CODE

Our readers are not familiar with the name of the great Japanese physician, Koan Ogata, who lived from 1812 to 1863. His medical code is styled as *Fushi I Kai No Ryaku*. This immortal code has been translated by Drs. Shiro Tashiro and Martin H. Fischer and published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. As this code is worthy of general study by medical men belonging to any school of medicine, in all countries and at all times, I cannot resist the temptation of reproducing it in our journal.

I hope all medical men will ever remember it at heart during the time of their busy practice.

I

"The physician lives not for himself but for others. This is the essence of his profession. Do not look for fame or profit. Work to save others though you lose yourself. Maintain life, restore the sick and ease the suffering of men. You have no other object.

II

"Face to face with the patient, remember only that he is sick, not his station or his wealth. Compare the rich man's handful of gold with the poor man's tear of gratitude. Which will you have?

III

"When practising your art remember that the patient is the target, not the bow or the arrow. Do not play with him. Think without prejudice; consider with narrowed eyes.

IV

"Besides being modern and erudite, learn how to win the confidence of your sick man through word and action. But let these be not superficial, casual or pretentious. Do not mouth deception and queer hypothesis.

V

"At night think over the happenings of the day. Record your experience and observations. Such benefit the patient and the world.

VI

"One deliberate examination and one visit are superior to many careless examinations and many visits. But do not refuse to make frequent calls on the ground that such degrade your dignity.

VII

"Even when the disease is incurable, understand the sufferings of your sick man and do your duty by trying to maintain his life. It is inhuman to surrender. Even when you cannot save him, you can comfort him. This is the human art. Try to prolong his life even though it be for but a moment. Do not tell him of the hopelessness of his state. Through your discretion in word and manner you will not let him guess the real situation.

VIII

"Make the patient's illness cost him as little as possible. Of what use to save his life when you take away the means of his maintenance?

IX

"The physician must win the goodwill of the public. However skillful your science, however dignified your conduct, you cannot impart to advantage the good within you unless you hold the confidence of your people. You must understand man and the public state of mind. You who are interested in life, who must listen to naked truth, who must hear the confession of shameful sin, need character and gentleness. Avoid gossip. Silence is better. Nor need I warn you against gambling, drunkenness, sexual excess and anxiety for fame.

X

"Respect and love the colleague of your profession. But, if possible, at least be patient. Do not discuss other physicians. To narrate their shortcomings is the shame of the wise man; to talk their defects is the business of the small. A moment's discussion of a single error may work perpetual injury to a reputation. Consider such consequences. Every physician has his own characteristics and his own methods. Do not judge lightly. Respect the older physicians and endear the younger to you. Stress their better side and refuse to comment on their treatment, since you have not seen the patient.

XI

"A consultation should not include many—three at most. Select the right men. In conference, consider only the safety of the sick man and argue nothing else.

XII

"A patient may leave his physician to consult you. Do not be deceived. Hear the former physician's side. But when convinced that the treatment has been in error, it is against the code to be indifferent. Especially when critical, act, and with vigour.

"These twelve mandates have I written and showed to a few, but mainly did I write them for my own guidance".

—THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS, Nov. 1933
