Masaya Sato (1932–2010)

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Masaya Sato died in the summer of 2010. He was a pioneer of behavior analysis in Japan and the leader of the Japanese Association for Behavior Analysis (J-ABA). He also contributed to the dissemination of behavior analysis around the world. One of his major accomplishments was to help the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) to become truly international through his election as the first ABAI president from outside the United States. In fact, he was a great antecedent for behavior analysts.

On the night of August 23, 2010, we were assaulted by the tragic news that an old man who was waiting at a station platform for a train was pushed forward from behind and died after falling between the train and the platform. Several hours later, when the news reported that the person who died was Masaya Sato, President of Seisa University, emeritus professor of Keio University, and a world leader in behavior analysis, everyone who knew him was astonished and crushed with grief. This news quickly spread through e-mail to behavioral societies around the world. Sato was a senior,

but he was still hale and hearty and moved around Tokyo by train during rush hour to conduct his work as university president.

Masaya Sato was born October 27, 1932, in Tokyo. His father was a renowned poet and novelist, Haruo Sato. His mother was well known too. The young Sato was raised in Tokyo, except for a brief period when he moved to a rural area to get away from destructive air raids during World War II.

After graduating from senior high school, he entered the medical department preparatory course of Keio University. The next year, he reentered the Psychology Department of Keio University in Tokyo, where he received a BA in psychology and an MA in psychology.

Keio University is the third oldest university in Japan and the oldest private university to establish a laboratory in psychology (which occurred in 1926). Keio University is also where the experimental analysis of behavior started in Japan. In 1952, based on a recommendation from B. F. Skinner, the laboratory was given a Harvard-type operant chamber from the United States (Asano & Lattal, 2008). Sato came to Keio University in 1953, so it may be no exaggeration to say that behavior analysis in Japan began with him.

Sato completed his doctoral program in 1962 and immediately began to work as an assistant professor. He engaged in research and education at Keio University as a lecturer, associate professor, and then professor until 1998. He didn't receive his PhD until 1976 because, at that time, it was the tradition of the Japanese academic world to award a PhD for a lifetime of contributions (the situation now has changed considerably). His disserta-

tion, titled "Issues on Stimulus Control in Operant Conditioning," represented his lifelong interest in the experimental analysis of behavior and in behavior analysis in general.

His research in behavior analysis began with stimulus control: His first four papers, written from 1960 to 1962, all dealt with stimulus generalization in pigeons. He then expanded his research to various areas of behavior analysis, such as schedule performance in humans, verbal behavior, and conceptual and theoretical analyses of behavior. He explored a wide range of topics in his writings, including imprinting, sympathy and imitation, behavior and awareness, verbal conditioning, memory, observational learning, quarrelling, lying, and laughing. He left us eight books, two books of translation, two collections of poems, four music CDs, and 75 articles, most of which were written in Japanese.

In 1998, after 36 years as a faculty member in psychology at Keio University, Sato retired and moved to Teikyo University, where he worked for another 10 years. After retiring from Teikyo University, he served for the next 2 years first as professor, then as President of Seisa University.

Thus, Masaya Sato was a most active leader in the field of behavior analysis in Japan for 50 years. Countless people were influenced by him, including not only students who studied directly with him and those with whom he had personal relationships, but also those who learned through his papers and books and talks at academic conferences. It is likely that he influenced everyone involved in experimental and applied areas in Japanese behavior analysis.

I myself began to learn from Sato when I was a sophomore at Keio University in 1966. We used *Science and Human Behavior* (Skinner, 1953) as the textbook and *The Analysis of Behavior* (Skinner & Holland, 1961) as a supplement. It was not easy for Japanese undergraduate students at that time to understand Skinner's

English, but thanks to Sato's well-focused and easy-to-understand guidance we were able to wade deep into Skinner's concepts and the world of behavior analysis. I owe a debt to Sato for the completion of my dissertation, "Superstitious Behavior in Humans," on the basis of which I was awarded a PhD from Keio University in 1985.

Sato was pivotal in creating the J-ABA, which was officially founded in 1983, and was its second president from 1986 to 1991. He was also the first editor of the *Japanese Journal of Behavior Analysis*.

Sato initiated international exchanges in behavior analysis when he studied in the United States from 1974 to 1975. During that year, he conducted research with Don Baer at the University of Kansas as well as research in behavioral pharmacology with Lewis Gollub at the University of Maryland, College Park. During his stay in the United States, he visited Harvard University and met Skinner for the first time on July 21, 1974.

Sato was also dedicated to the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI, formerly ABA) throughout his career. He attended every annual convention of ABAI from 1979 until 2010. The ABAI convention is held at the end of May, when it is most difficult for those who work for Japanese universities to leave their routines in the midst of spring term. Nevertheless, he gave the highest priority to the ABAI conventions. He also strongly encouraged not only his own students but all young behavior analysts all over Japan to attend.

Sato also invited myriad behavior analysts from ABAI to Japan. Responding to his invitation, Skinner attended the convention of the Japanese Psychological Association held in September 1979 hosted by Keio University, and gave a special lecture titled "Selection by Consequences." Based on this lecture, Skinner published a paper of the same title in *Science* (Skinner, 1981). Sato translated his manuscript into Japanese for the

interpreters who worked at that lecture, and he felt extremely happy and fortunate to be among the very first to understand the concept of “selection by consequences.” Skinner gave another lecture during his stay in Japan, titled “The Non-punitive Society” (1990), after receiving an honorary doctorate from Keio University. His original paper and its Japanese translation by Sato appeared in the *Japanese Journal of Behavior Analysis*.

In 1998, Sato was elected as the first ABAI president not from the United States. As president of ABAI, his greatest contribution was to help the organization become truly international, which included adding an international representative to the ABAI Executive Council and establishing a biannual conference to be held outside the United States. Before Sato began his term as ABAI president, the necessity of promoting internationalization had been recognized by the organization. I vividly recall a statement in an earlier ABAI presidential address expressing something to the effect of, “ABA is formally referred to as ‘ABA: An International Organization’ at present, but it is no more international than the South Dakota International Airport. The South Dakotans insist on its internationality even though they operate an overseas flight just once every couple of months. We should promote the true internationalization of ABA.” For these contributions, Sato received an Award for International Dissemination of Behavior Analysis from the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis in 1997.

Catania (in press) described Sato’s international activities as an ambassador for behavior analysis in a memorial he wrote for a special issue of the *Bulletin of Seisa University*:

I began to see more of Sato-san as he became a regular attendee at ABA meetings. It was during this time that his significant role as ambassador for behavior analysis became more obvious. Certainly he served Japan exceedingly well in one direction, from west to east, as he brought behavior analytic

concepts to his colleagues and his students. But he also served exceedingly well in the other direction, from east to west, in his own travels and in his placement of his students with American researchers in various laboratories.

Sato was first and foremost a scholar whose interests were not limited to behavior analysis and psychology. He also had an appreciation for painting, literature, philosophy, culture, and especially music. He was a master of piano and had composed songs since his youth, some of which were recorded by professional singers. Sato was also deeply concerned with the differences between Japanese and Western cultures. His concerns were triggered in part by his life abroad from 1974 till 1975. In the afterword of his publication *Invitation to Behavioral Theories* (1976), he listed various examples that demonstrate the differences between the two cultures and summarized them as follows: “Respondent-type contingency relations are dominant in our Japanese culture while operant-type contingency relations are in Western culture,” and “If we focus on operant-type contingency relations, discriminative stimuli are dominant in Japanese culture whereas operant behaviors are in Western culture” (p. 286).

As not only a behavior analyst but also a human being with intelligence and humanity, Sato was a great antecedent for all of us.

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