Afterword

In life, there are encounters in which a book one happens to pick up one day ends up completely altering one's landscape the following morning.

It was the winter of 1999, and I was a youth in my twenties, when I had the great fortune of encountering such a book at a bookshop in Ikebukuro. This was Ichiro Kishimi's *Adorā Shinrigaku Nyūmon* (*Introduction to Adlerian Psychology*).

Here was a form of thought, profound in every way, yet conveyed in simple language, that seemed to overturn our accepted wisdoms at their very roots. A Copernican revolution that denied trauma and converted etiology into teleology. Having always felt something unconvincing in the discourses of the Freudians and Jungians, I was affected very deeply. Who was this Alfred Adler? How had I never known of his existence before? I purchased every single book by or about Adler that I could get my hands on and became completely engrossed and read them over and over again.

But I was struck then by a certain fact. What I was interested in was not solely Adlerian psychology but rather something that had emerged through the filter of the philosopher, Ichiro Kishimi: It was Kishimi-Adler studies that I was seeking.

Grounded in the thought of Socrates and Plato and other ancient Greek philosophers, the Adlerian psychology that Kishimi conveys to us reveals Adler as a thinker, a philosopher, whose work went far beyond the confines of clinical psychology. For instance, the statement "It is only in social contexts that a person becomes an individual" is positively Hegelian; in his laying emphasis on subjective interpretation over objective truth, he echoes Nietzsche's worldview;

and ideas recalling the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger are in abundance.

Adlerian psychology, which draws inspiration from these philosophical insights to proclaim "All problems are interpersonal relationship problems," "People can change and be happy from this moment onward," and "The problem is not one of ability, but of courage" was to utterly change the worldview of this rather confused youth.

Nevertheless, there was almost no one around me who had heard of Adlerian psychology. Eventually, it occurred to me that I would like to make a book some day with Kishimi that would be a definitive edition of Adlerian psychology (Kishimi-Adler studies), and I contacted one editor after another and waited impatiently for the opportunity to arise.

It was in March 2010 that I was at last able to meet with Kishimi, who lives in Kyoto. More than ten years had passed since my first reading of *Introduction to Adlerian Psychology*.

When Kishimi said to me then, "Socrates's thought was conveyed by Plato. I would like to be a Plato for Adler," without a second thought, I answered, "Then, I will be a Plato for you, Mr. Kishimi." And that is how this book was conceived.

One aspect of Adler's simple and universal ideas is that there are times when he may seem to be stating the obvious, while at others he is likely to be regarded as espousing utterly unrealizable, idealistic theories.

Accordingly, in this book, in hopes of focusing on any doubts that might be harbored by the reader, I have adopted the format of a dialogue between a philosopher and a young man.

As is implied in this narrative, it is not a simple thing to make the ideas of Adler one's own and put them into practice. There are points that make one want to rebel, statements that are difficult to accept, and proposals that one may struggle to grasp.

But the ideas of Adler have the power to completely change a person's life, just like they did for me over a decade ago. Then it is only a question of having the courage to take a step forward.

In closing, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Ichiro Kishimi, who never treated me as a disciple, even though I was much younger than he, but met me forthrightly as a friend; to the editor Yoshifumi Kakiuchi, for his steadfast and unstinting support at every step of the way; and last but not least, to all the readers of this book.

Thank you very much.

Fumitake Koga

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More than half a century has passed since the death of Adler, and the times still cannot catch up with the freshness of his ideas. Though compared to Freud or Jung, the name Adler is little known in Japan today. Adler's teachings are said to be a "communal quarry" that anyone can excavate something from. And though his name often goes unmentioned, the influence of his teachings has spread far and wide.

I had been studying philosophy ever since my late teens, and it was around the time my child was born, when I was in my early thirties, that I first encountered Adlerian psychology. Eudaimonic theory, which investigates the question "What is happiness?," is one of the central themes of Western philosophy. I had spent many years pondering this question before I attended the lecture where I first learned of Adlerian psychology. On hearing the lecturer declare from his podium, "Those who have listened to my talk today will be able to change and be happy from this moment onward," I felt repulsed. But at the same time, it dawned on me that I had never thought deeply about how I myself can find happiness, and with the notion that "finding happiness" itself was perhaps easier than I'd imagined, I took an interest in Adlerian psychology.

In this way, I came to study Adlerian psychology side by side with philosophy. I soon realized, however, that I could not study them separately, as two distinct fields.

For instance, the idea of teleology, far from being something that appeared suddenly in Adler's time, is present in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. It became clear to me that Adlerian psychology was a way of thinking that lay in

the same vein as Greek philosophy. Moreover, I noticed that the dialogues that Socrates engaged in with youths, which Plato recording in writing for posterity, could be said to correspond very closely to the counseling practiced today.

Though many people think of philosophy as something difficult to understand, Plato's dialogues do not contain any specialized language.

It is strange that philosophy should be something that is discussed using words understood only by specialists. Because in its original meaning, philosophy refers not to "wisdom" itself but to "love of wisdom," and it is the very process of learning what one does not know and arriving at wisdom that is important.

Whether or not one attains wisdom in the end is not an issue.

A person reading Plato's dialogues today may be surprised to find that the dialogue concerning courage, for instance, ends without arriving at any conclusion.

The youths engaged in dialogues with Socrates never agree with what he says at the outset. They refute his statements thoroughly. This book is continuing in the tradition of philosophy since Socrates, and that is why it follows the format of a dialogue between a philosopher and a youth.

Upon learning of Adlerian psychology, which is another philosophy, I became dissatisfied with the way of living of the researcher who only reads and interprets the writings of his predecessors. I wanted to engage in dialogues in the way that Socrates did, and eventually I began to practice counseling at psychiatry clinics and other venues.

In doing so, I met many youths.

All of these youths wanted to live sincerely, but many of them were people who had been told by worldly, jaded elders to "be more realistic" and were on the verge of giving up on their dreams, people who had been through arduous experiences of being entangled in interpersonal relationships that were complicated precisely because they were pure.

Wanting to live sincerely is an important thing, but it is not enough on its own. Adler tells us that all problems are interpersonal relationship problems. But if one does not know how to build good interpersonal relationships, one may end up trying to satisfy other people's expectations. And unable to

communicate out of fear of hurting other people even when one has something to assert, one may end up abandoning what one really wants to do.

While people may certainly be popular among those they know, and not many people will dislike them perhaps, they will end up being incapable of living their own lives.

To a young person like the youth in this book, who has many problems and has already had a harsh awakening to reality, the views put forward by this philosopher, that this world is a simple place and that anyone can be happy from this day onward, may come as a surprise.

"My psychology is for all people," says Adler, and dispensing with specialized language much as Plato did, he shows us specific steps for improving our interpersonal relationships.

If Adler's way of thinking is hard to accept, it is because it is a compilation of antitheses to normal social thinking, and because to understand it one must put it into practice in everyday life. Though his words are not difficult, there may be a sense of difficulty like that of imagining the blazing heat of summer in the dead of winter, but I hope that readers will be able to grasp keys here to solving their interpersonal relationship problems.

The day Fumitake Koga, my collaborator and writer for this book, first visited my study, he said, "I will be a Plato for you, Mr. Kishimi."

Today the reason we can learn about the philosophy of Socrates, who left no known writings, is that Plato took down his dialogues in written form. But Plato did not simply record what Socrates said. It is thanks to Plato's correct understanding of his words that Socrates's teachings are still conveyed today.

It is thanks to the exceptional powers of understanding of Koga, who persisted in carrying out repeated dialogues with me over a period of several years, that this book has seen the light of day. Both Koga and I often made visits to our teachers in our university days, and the youth in this book could be either one of us, but more than anyone, he is you, who picked up this book. It is my sincere hope that while your doubts may linger, I will be able to support your resolution in all manner of life situations through this dialogue with a philosopher.

Ichiro Kishimi