

Toshiko Ibe, President, St. Luke's College of Nursing

Since its foundation, St. Luke's College of Nursing has contributed to the development of nursing and fulfilled social demands through education and research; this has been realized through its educational focus on "encouraging students to become proficient and knowledgeable in the art and science of nursing practice based on the Christian spirit, as well as turning out well-rounded individuals who are involved in nursing care services." In the fiscal year 2003, the school was selected to host the "21st Century Center of Excellence Program" (21st Century COE Program), which was a step forward toward the concept of "nursing practice with an emphasis on consumers," which has been encouraged at St. Luke's.

St. Luke's College of Nursing's 21st Century COE Program—Nursing for People-centered Initiatives in Healthcare and Health Promotion—has evolved centered on nursing practice development research. This program focuses on health issues for which present-day medicine is under pressure to find solutions, including "Advanced Medicine and Nursing," "Living with Illness and Nursing," and "Living with Social Injustice and Nursing," with a major paradigm shift in the nursing viewpoint. In addition, we aim to amass and globally disseminate health information that can be used by consumers, in general, to acquire expertise and technical skills to be able to practically manage health.

We have also ensured that several international symposia and evaluation meetings could be attended by all faculty members and graduate students of the school, so that this could be a college-wide initiative, centering on the Department of Nursing. This has allowed us to recognize the basic factors involved in nursing for people-centered health initiatives in healthcare.

These activities have spurred renewed vitality in the research activities of faculty members and graduate students. As a forum for them to apply the various findings and awareness acquired through such activities, the Research Center for Development of Nursing Practice has created shifts in social recognition: the many experiences gained in nursing practice through partnership with the general public should lead to an improvement in the public's problem-solving abilities, and that nursing professionals and the general public are partners in healthcare initiatives.

Through the course of our life, we pass through four milestone experiences—birth, aging, illness,

and death. Nursing is important in order to support the general population that undergoes these stages, such that they feel satisfied that they have lived their lives to the fullest, until the time of their death. Nursing can do this by providing hope and healing to people at each of these milestones. The 21st Century COE Program is promoted on the basis of this philosophy and guided by expert as well as consumer opinions.

Hiroko Komatsu, the project leader, suggests that our involvement in the promotion of people-centered care activities has revealed some essential factors: participation, relationships, capacity building, empowerment, products, policy/procedure changes, and community work.

As we conclude this five-year long major initiative, the 21st Century COE Program is about to proceed to the next step in collaboration with our general consumers.