

PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERPRETATION OF CULTURE PSYCHOANALYSIS IN JAPANESE CULTURE AND ITS BROADER SCOPE

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a history of the development of psychoanalysis in Japan. Japan, as one of the Eastern countries with its significant history, is paid our attention as the country which has a rich experience of how to assimilate and harmonize new developed concepts in its traditional concepts. On the other hand, Psychoanalysis, which was originated in the centre of Europe, is the system of knowledge which deals with the structure of human mind and the mechanism of psychological apparatus of an individual. Moreover, it discusses a psychological issue of the individual in relation to culture. By observing the history of psychoanalysis in Japan, we will aim to focus on harmonized coexistence of Eastern and Western thoughts in cultural field.

Keywords: Assimilation, Japan, Amae, Ajase complex

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The main process in the development of social concept is how a new idea or theory penetrates the root of the society where the traditional thought exists, so that a correlation of the two ideas enriches the system of social concept. On the other hand, it is important to the development of social concept when the new idea interconnects with the cultural characteristics. In the history of humanities and sciences by their characteristic nature, even though each of Eastern and Western thoughts plays their own role. But today, in the stream of globalization, it is crucial to consider the Eastern and Western thoughts in regard to their possibility of their correlated existence. Especially, there is an importance of creating a new tendency of discussion about social issue from a viewpoint of correlation of two sides in various cultural aspects.

The new concept is assimilated into the traditional field of concepts through a complete circulated process. One of the historical facts of this process is the historical development of assimilation of psychoanalysis in Japan. The introduction of psychoanalysis in Japan was followed with wide range of activities such as translation of Freud's original works, meeting with Freud himself, practicing psychoanalytic training under the supervision of Freudian scholars, organizing psychoanalytic association and society, etc.

Psychoanalysis originated in the West, in Europe, so its theory is fundamentally, based on Western thinking, with stresses on paternal dominance as seen in religion (in Christianity). However, parental dominance or patriarchy is not the only way of society. There are matriarchal societies in the world. Even in Western society and Catholic Christianity, virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, carries some weight. There is a stand of psychoanalysis in Japan that proposes such points.

Japanese scholars who were interested deeply in psychoanalysis, understanding its idea and mastering its clinical practice played an important role in this movement. They endeavored to interpret Japanese cultural aspects from the point of view of psychoanalytic thoughts. "It can be imagined how enthusiastically psychologists and men of the letters wanted to incorporate the Western concepts of the human mind in order to modernize their fatherland."¹

Therefore, from the history of Japanese psychoanalysis we will also understand that the importance of scholars who play a key role in the development of social concepts.

1 Akimitsu Miyoshi and Kazushige Shingu. "History of Psychoanalysis in Japan" in *Two Millennia of Psychiatry in West and East*, ed. Toshiko Hamanaka, German E Berrios (Nagoya: Gakuju Shoin, 2003), 133.

I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF JAPANESE PSYCHOANALYSIS

Psychologist Kaison Otsuki (1880-1936) was the first scholar to mention Freud's work in his article entitled "The Psychology of Forgetfulness" which was published in Japanese Journal *Shinri Kenkyu* in 1912. Also there were some other scholars who introduced psychoanalytic theory in the following years. Since then, there were born four generations in Japanese psychoanalysis. Its history roughly divides into two periods:

1. The period before World War II;
2. The period from the end of World War II to the present.

The scholars from the first period were the pioneers who laid the foundation for its development. To understand any new theory, it is important for an introduction to precede original works of it. First generation scholars of Japanese psychoanalysis started their activities by translating Freud's original works and adjusting its terms in the Japanese language. It is important to translate new terms and notions by finding definite meaning in the native language in order to develop a correlation with the traditional thought successfully.

Otsuki formed Tokyo Institute of Psychoanalysis whose initial purpose was to translate all of Freud's works.² His translation was based on English translation and helped by Yaekichi Yabe (1891-1945) who met Freud through Eitingon in 1930 after finishing his analytic training by Ernest Jones and Edward Glover, and other scholars. Yabe was one of the three scholars who met Freud personally. When he met Freud, he explained to him the reason why "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" had been one of the first to be translated. According to his explanation, the ideal of life tending towards death was a Buddhist idea, and since Buddhism influences Japanese thought, "an understanding of psychoanalysis might be easier through this book."³

In fact, Otsuki's organization had no academic affiliation. By contrast, The Sendai branch of International Association, set up by Kiyoyasu Marui (1886-1953) and his student Heisaku Kosawa (1897-1968 second generation) were more of officially professional-psychoanalytic organization. Their translation was based on Freud's German editions. Marui was the third scholar who met Freud privately, and when he visited Freud in Vienna in 1933, he received an approval for establishing the Sendai Branch of the IPA.

From two versions of Japanese translation, we can observe "the differences between

2 Geoffrey H. Blowers and Serena Yang Hsueh Chi. "Freud's deshi: The Coming of Psychoanalysis to Japan", *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 33 (1997), 122.

3 Ibid, 121.

translators suggest a tension between fidelity to the source and underlying presuppositions about the nature of mind in Japanese culture.”⁴

The most recent Japanese edition of the complete works of Freud was published by Iwanami Shoten, completed during the years of 2006 to 2011. It was edited by Kazushige Shingu, Taizo Michihata and other scholars in 22 volumes based on German edition. The translation of this edition comparing to previous editions was more modernized and well-arranged formation of Freud’s original terms and ideas of psychoanalysis in the Japanese language.

It is difficult to understand and to gain a complete knowledge about psychoanalysis without the knowledge of its clinical practice. Also, the clinical practice of psychoanalysis is an important field of psychiatry. Therefore, it has been taking a significant part in the development of Japanese psychoanalysis as well. In the field of psychiatry, psychoanalytic psychotherapists in Japan began to actively perform psychotherapy for schizophrenic patients. One of the important issues in psychiatry is to describe normal healthy condition of mental state in order to correctly diagnose symptoms of a patient with mental disorder. Moreover, the mental health of an individual is one of the essential factors of social psychology and in social concept.

Marui was the first to mention the importance of psychoanalysis in the field of psychiatry. He studied psychiatry under Adolf Meyer at Johns Hopkins University in 1916 to 1918. During his study, he was impressed by the great influence of psychoanalysis on American psychiatry. At the time, the main stream of psychiatric teaching in Japan was strongly influenced by German school, particularly Kraepelinian trend. So, after his arrival in Japan, he began his teaching of psychiatry by incorporating psychoanalysis into it at Tohoku University. His contribution to the development of psychoanalysis in Japan as the first psychoanalytic generation was to produce first psychoanalytically-oriented psychiatrists.

Since the beginning of World War II, almost all psychoanalytic movement was interrupted. Freud himself exiled to England and most of his disciples and scholars immigrated to America because psychoanalysis was considered as Jewish idea. From 1939, psychoanalysis in Japan was also interrupted because Japan was Nazi Germany’s ally.

After World War II, second generation of Japanese psychoanalysis began its activities again. From this period, American influence to all aspects of Japanese society was observed massively. So, American dynamic psychiatry began to prevail in the young generation.

4 Ibid, 123.

The Japanese Association of Psychoanalysis and the Japan Psychoanalytic Society were organized. Marui’s student Heisaku Kosawa, and his student Takeo Doi (1920-2009), Keigo Okonogi (1930-2003) and other scholars, began to try to formulate psychoanalytic ideas based on Buddhist thoughts and the cultural aspects of Japanese society.

The movement of the third generation was mainly developed during the 1960s to 1970s. During this period, several students returned to Japan from abroad. There were psychoanalytic streams of Freudian scholars such as Jungian thoughts, Otto Kernberg’s theory, Kleinian school, theory of Winnicott and Erik Erikson etc. Hayao Kawai (1928-2007) was the first Japanese to obtain the qualification of Jungian analyst who studied at the Jung Institute in Switzerland, Tetsuya Iwasaki (1935-present) presented Otto Kernberg’s theory and also Kleinian school of thought to Japan. The characteristic activity of the third generation was to broaden the development of psychoanalysis from its original source to the generation after Freud.

Most scholars in the fourth generation, a new wave of psychiatrists⁵ returned to Japan after studying psychoanalytic psychotherapy and dynamic psychiatry in Britain and the United States. Also, from this period, Kleinian trend began to integrate into the main stream. Moreover, “Lacanian psychoanalysis was introduced to Japan through literary and psychiatric ways, but Japanese Lacanians are still small in number and they have not formed their own professional organization yet.”⁶ The present Japanese psychoanalysts are describing their psychoanalytic activities as follows, “The members of the fourth generation, not only introducing psychoanalytic theories from abroad to Japan, try to express their opinions in international fields. The system of the formation of psychoanalysis has been only recently better formalized.”⁷

From the brief history of the development of Japanese psychoanalysis above, we can understand that the first half of its history tells us that Japanese psychoanalysts’ major aim was to assimilate the original idea of psychoanalysis. The process of assimilation was characterized as a new tendency in which traditional Japanese thoughts such as Buddhist ideas and psychological significances of Japanese society were considered from the position of comparing Eastern concepts with Western idea of human mind.

5 Keigo Okonogi. “Japan” in *Psychoanalysis International: A Guide to Psychoanalysis throughout the World*, ed. Peter Kutter (Stuttgart-Bad. Canstatt: Frommann-holzboog, 1995), 2: 128.

6 Miyoshi and Shingu, “History of Psychoanalysis in Japan”, op. cit., 140.

7 Ibid, 140.

II. AJASE COMPLEX (HEISAKU KOSAWA 1897-1969)

In 1933, when Kosawa met Freud in Vienna, he presented his paper entitled “Two kinds of guilt.” The paper was about his notion Ajase complex. Unfortunately, Freud’s response to the idea remained unclear. Aj ta atru/Ajase narrative has many versions and its versions attested in the scriptures of ancient India, written in Sanskrit, Pali, Jaina and in translated Chinese sources. It was introduced by Jodo Shinshu patriarch in Kamakura period, Shinran’s (1173-1262) text “Kyogyoshinsho.” In fact, Kosawa’s version of Aj ta atru/Ajase narrative has various unacknowledged sources. In the early modern period, there were some Japanese Buddhist scholars⁸, who synthesized and also treated Chinese context and the Buddhist scripture with original invention, presented Aj ta atru/Ajase narrative of Japanese version. The Japanese version of Aj ta atru/Ajase narrative was completed as a rearranged version of the original Buddhist scripture. So, Kosawa’s version is the version of Japanese version of Aj ta atru/Ajase narrative. Kosawa’s version of the narrative more likely originated from the characteristics of Meiji to Modern period Japan. According to Michael Radich, the characteristics contain: nationalist use of Buddhist ideas; the post-war boom in nihonjinron⁹; the role and image of modern Japanese women; and new currents in theatrical theory and practice in modern Japan.¹⁰

So, Kosawa’s idea in the Aj ta atru/Ajase narrative is discussed as a transformed narrative of Buddhist texts in modern context. Kosawa’s version of Aj ta atru/Ajase narrative tells a story¹¹ about a relationship of mother and son that arises from their mutual ambivalent

feelings. Ajase complex is the mutual dependency that develops between mother and child. Also it expresses an ambivalent feelings arising out of both mother’s and child’s desire to love and to be loved and its contradictory feeling of hatred. Ajase’s feeling of guilt which leads him to become ill, was soothed by his mother’s nursing that results the second type of guilt such as “heartfelt remorse.”¹²

Kosawa proposed the Ajase complex to be contrasted to the Oedipus complex. “Subsequent reworking of the theory at the hands of both Kosawa and his disciple Okonogi Keigo (1930-2003) modified and extended it into a theory of individual psychology, family relations, and the cultural specificities of Japanese psychology.”¹³ Kosawa’s idea of Ajase complex can be considered a modification of the orthodox view of psychic development at the time. And it was also the first written attempt at establishing an Asian cultural variant on what, for Freud, was a universal mechanism. In the beginning of the 1920s, anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski argued about universality of Oedipus complex. His research field work proved that there was no Oedipus complex in Trobriand Islands because there was matriarchal society. He asserted that the Oedipus complex was a particular feature of patriarchal societies like Freud’s own culture and it is not universal in its essence. In fact, the argument was widely discussed and some scholars also accepted that Oedipus complex was culturally relative indeed. Thus, there have been debates about whether the Oedipus complex is universal or relative, and we should admit that Kosawa and Okonogi’s Ajase complex theory was a proposal of Eastern version of family complex and the Buddhist story was interpreted in a modern context of thought.

III. “AMAE” (TAKEO DOI 1920-2009)

Kosawa’s student Takeo Doi was strongly impressed by American psychology and culture, during his study (1950-1952) at the Menninger Hospital in America. Considering cultural and psychological differences between Japanese and American society, he formed a notion *amae* that considered as central for understanding the Japanese personality. *Amae* is the important notion for sensing unconscious process itself, mentions Doi.¹⁴ His first paper about *amae* was

8 Chikazumi Jōkan (1870-1941), Noda Shizan, Yasui Kōdo (1883-1968), Fuji Shūsui (1885-1983). Micheal Radich, “How Ajātaśatru was Reformed: The Domestication of “Ajase” and Stories in Buddhist History”, *Studia Philologica Buddhica*, Monograph Series XXVII (2011), 88-94.

9 The term nihonjinron refers broadly to discourses and ideas that attempt to identify characteristic features of the Japanese culture and /or people, often with the critical implication that the ideas concerned are somewhat baseless or ideological. We might translate the term as “ideas of Japaneseness”, “theories of the Japanese character” etc. See Radich, *ibid*, 108-109.

10 *Ibid*, 125-126.

11 The story tells about Ajātaśatru king of Magadha during the lifetime of the Buddha who appears in Buddhist scripture and his mother, Idaike. King Bimbashara (the protector of Buddha)’s wife Idaike desires a child to attract her husband who was no longer attracted to her. A soothsayer tells her that she will become pregnant with the reincarnated soul of a hermit after his death. But Idaike hastens to become pregnant, so she kills the hermit who curses her on his deathbed with the prophecy that he will return in the form of her son, The Prince, to murder her husband. Idaike fears of her unborn child and she attempts to kill him at birth by dropping him from her womb at a great height. The son survives the fall. “Engulfed in feelings of rage he attempts to kill his mother, but is overcome by such feelings of guilt that he falls seriously ill, and is only nursed back to health by her intervention. Idaike’s charitable act resolves her own conflicts over her son, who

recovers to become a wise king.” See Blowers and Hsueh Chi, “Freud’s deshi”, *op. cit.*, 11.

12 Keigo Okonogi, “Japan”, *op. cit.*, 134.

13 Micheal Radich, “How Ajātaśatru was reformed”, *op. cit.*, 1.

14 Miyoshi and Shingu, “History of Psychoanalysis in Japan” *op. cit.*, 137.

published in an American speech journal under the title “Japanese Language as an Expression of Japanese Psychology.” He says, “*amaeru*¹⁵ has a distinct feeling of sweetness, and is generally used to express a child’s attitude toward an adult, especially his parents. I can think of no English word equivalent to *amaeru* except for “spoil”, which, however is a transitive verb and definitely has a bad connotation; whereas the Japanese *amaeru* does not necessarily have a bad connotation, although we say we should not let a youngster *amaeru* too much. I think most Japanese adults have a dear memory of the taste of sweet dependency as a child and, consciously or unconsciously, carry a lifelong nostalgia for it. (p.92)”¹⁶ Doi also asserted that *amae* was not a psychology unique to the Japanese, but it is rather a universal psychology. In contrast to Western psychology (particularly, in the English language), Mongolian *amæ* (erkh=in the Mongolian language) exactly corresponds to Japanese *amae*. Doi mentions that, “*amae* and its vocabulary refer to inner experience. For instance, passive object love or primary love as defined by Michael Balint can be equated with *amae* in its pure form...”¹⁷ In a relationship between child and parents, child has a desire to be dependent on his parents. Mother loves her child unconditionally. On the other hand, a child knows the psychology of *amaeru* naturally. In Japanese psychology, it is the most natural thing in the world for *amae* to exist in the parent-child relationship. Human existence is ultimately dependent on the parents, and it is not possible to eliminate the mother and father. Doi says, “Suzuki Daisetsu points out that by contrastive at the basis of the ways of thinking and feeling of the Westerner there is the father. It is the mother that lies at the bottom of the Oriental nature. Love in the West always contains a residue of power. Love in East is all-embracing. One might see this as nothing other than a eulogy to *amae*.”¹⁸ He continues, “This spirit of non-discrimination and equality, I believe, has been a part of the Japanese makeup ever since ancient times, and not merely as part of Zen ideas. I believe in fact, that the so-called “way of the Gods” is precisely that, since the “way of Gods” seems consistently to have extolled the principle of no-principle and value of no-value. It is this policy, in fact, that has allowed the Japanese to devour various alien cultures without any particular sign of indigestion and to make them, in some fashion or other, their own.”¹⁹

15 It is a verb for *amae*. Erkh=*amae*(noun)=>erkhleh=*amaeru* (verb).

16 Keigo Okonogi, “Japan”, op. cit., 129.

17 Ibid, 130.

18 Takeo Doi. *The Anatomy of Dependence* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001), 77.

19 Ibid, 78.

Conclusion

There is increasingly a role for psychological factor to play in the development of modern society and culture, significantly. Therefore, we, Asian philosophers, are required to cooperate on the issue in our research field. Japanese psychoanalysis can develop further on the stage of international field of psychoanalysis characterizing its Eastern thought in a modern context.

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