**A Japanese Contribution to the SDG at the Boston Congress**

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I would like to express our gratitude to Drs. Maria Teresa Hooke, the ING chairman, Alexandra Billinghurst, the vice president, Sverre Varvin and others, who have organized this SDG for those practicing psychoanalysis in the Asian countries to meet and discuss together. I also feel honored to have an opportunity to be with our Asian colleagues: Qiu Jianyin from China, Minnie Dastur from India, Jaehak Yu from South Korea, and Pai, Mei-Jang Teresa, from Tai Wan.

We were given four subjects in advance.  To recount them in relation to the Japanese situation: 1. The history of the development of psychoanalysis in Japan, 2. The social and cultural status of psychoanalysis, 3. How far the idea of psychoanalysis is digested and where the difficulties lie, and 4. How to develop communications and interactions among Asian countries.

To save time for the discussion, I would like to point out that the factual and historical aspects of these issues are already reported by Dr. Kunihiro Matsuki at the Prague Congress in 2013. He succinctly described the Japanese history of psychoanalysis from Heisaku Kosawa’s study in Vienna study in 1932 to the foundation and development of the JPS (Japan Psychoanalytical Society) and the JPA (Japan Psychoanalytical Association) after the Second World War, their characteristics and activities to this day, referring to the achievement of Drs. Heisaku Kosawa, Keigo Okonogi, Takeo Doi, and Osamu Kitayama. In addition to his review, I would like to emphasize that the lack of a psychoanalytic clinic like the one in London has been one of the main obstacles to facilitate psychoanalytic training in Japan. This has created the difficulty with finding suitable cases even at a discounted rate and prolonged training. This has also made it difficult to promote the understanding for psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy among the Japanese public. Even if we managed to establish such a clinic, however, the increase of the cases which would not lend themselves to the method of free association is yet another difficult task to tackle.

I would like to move on to the next issue, the social and cultural status of psychoanalysis in Japan. We already have a contribution also done by Dr. Matsuki at a different international congress, and I do not have much to add, as I am not a specialist on this matter. I can only say a little about this based upon my personal experience.

What immediately comes to my mind from the title of "Psychoanalysis and culture" is the panel held at the Amsterdam Congress in 1993, to which I attended as a candidate, and the presentation there by Dr. Takeo Doi.  We can read this paper entitled "Psychoanalysis in a Cross-cultural Context: A Japanese View" in his English book of his collected papers. Dr. Doi began by introducing a review on the Japanese culture by an American analyst, James Clark Moloney, of the 1950s and ended with a quotation from books (1963, 1975) by a China-American anthropologist, Professor Francis L. K. Hsu.  Dr. Doi quoted the latter so as to criticize the membership system of IPA as an organization, comparing and equating it with the “Iemoto” system in Japan, the club in the United States, the clan in China, and the caste system of Hindu India. It is interesting that he had paid attention to the countries and their culture, the members of which gather in this room today, but I am not sure after twenty years if we have room for speculative work and anthropological reflection based upon writings of fifty years ago, considering the hardship psychoanalysis suffers currently.

The presence of rigidity and hierarchy in the organization, IPA, as he saw them, which he criticized, seems to me to be but basic components for an organization to exist at all.  What is really at stake is whether this organization holds its primary task that makes it worth persisting in this changing world.

I understand that Dr. Doi’s discussion was surely based upon his inquiry into the essence of psychoanalysis that explores the origin of the human mind and its interaction through the criticism and understanding of oneself. He conceptualized it in the notion of “Amae”.  He referred to this concept in the Amsterdam presentation, too, but I would like to focus how he had been shocked by the criticism of Dr. Moloney and what his response had been. The gist of Dr. Moloney’s criticism was that he had read the papers in the Japanese psychoanalytical journals up to early 1950s, found them "superficial, naïve, imitative", and regarded the Japanese psychoanalysis as the product of "syncretization”, that is to say, “the Japanese psychoanalysts mix psychoanalysis and their cultural heritage without much thought”. Dr. Doi was deeply shocked by this criticism, feeling that "the psychoanalysis I was then learning was so contaminated by elements of Japanese culture to the extent of losing the true spirit of psychoanalysis". Thus began his “journey to capture 'pure' psychoanalysis as it is taught and practiced in Western countries”.

If I may add some commentaries, the attitude of “syncretism”, accepting any imported values and worshiping whatever gods, without really appreciating them, is very common among the Japanese regardless of the genre, not limited to psychoanalysis. However, we are not entirely relativistic in a post-modern way nor blind to the value. A Japanese saying “to leave the body without the soul” or “Ploughing the field, and forgetting the seed” testifies this. We do pay respect to what is really invaluable. On the other hand, historically speaking, the Japanese has taken pride in devising under the threat from the outside; "Japanese spirit with Western learning" or more originally “Japanese spirit with Chinese learning” has been part of the Japanese tradition. In that way they created Japanese alphabets out of Chinese characters more than one thousand and three hundred years ago, and employed foreign teachers at the time of the Meiji Restoration, more than a hundred years ago, in order to cope with the gap due to the long seclusion policy and managed to assimilate western scientific concepts by translating technical terms into Japanese. The problem is that the spirit of Japan thus defended could be no more than the pride and the inferiority feelings covered by it. Masao Maruyama, a specialist of the Japanese politics, described in his “Japanese ideas” the eruption of the “pre-modern” ancient Japan which had expelled what had been thought to have learnt from the West at the time of crisis in the face of the World War Two.

What Dr. Doi learnt through his journey was that both "to capture psychoanalysis" and “transcending Japanese culture" were wrongly posed questions. We cannot treat psychoanalysis like an object completely separate from ourselves; we cannot escape from the influence of our culture, either. He concluded that "it is precisely because psychoanalysis presupposes a critique of one's own culture that it can claim a universal validity". If we understand what he called "culture" as the historical, social and relational medium which has formed us as we are internally and externally, psychoanalysis would not only “presuppose” their critical examination but also be the systematic exploration of that critical mind.

What is pity is that Dr. Doi did not say much about the essence of psychoanalysis in that paper. I suspect it might not have been just because of the time restriction for the presentation. There may be a reason why he did not express his own opinion on the high frequency, four or five sessions a week of psychoanalysis. To put it differently, he did not seem to have put value on the fundamentally conflict-provoking nature of psychoanalysis by contrast with everyday ordinary life, whether in the West or the East. To my mind psychoanalysis can only be conflictual as well as productive when it is rooted in one’s own culture. If it is too detached from the culture and self-sufficient, it would have got nothing to do with our real lives and become a well-done copy. Yet another type of danger is to call under the same name what has transformed into something completely different after a series of cultural adaptation. This kind of deception is not rare. A similar case is that one can behave as one has learned so long as it is peaceful, as it were, but once some life and death matter takes place, one can only act upon one’s nature, throwing what one had borrowed away. My sense is that psychoanalysis concerns the difficult task of being realistic, while maintaining the tension between oneself and the other, what is similar and what is different.

I would like to say a little more from my personal experience. From the autumn of 1993, I began to study at the Tavistock Clinic in London.  What they offered and still offer is the training of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, but it became an opportunity for me to understand the psychoanalytic approach as a whole in combination with personal analysis.

The first “culture-shock” for me was the severity of the patients who were referred to the clinic, seeking treatment, living under difficult conditions. Some of the parents of the patients were in prison, and they had witnessed murderous scenes of their parents, quite different from the patient layers in Japan at that time, who still believed themselves to be in the middle class and in the tipsiness of the bubble economy: youngsters with obsessive-compulsive disorders and a bit of violent behavior, women employees with binge eating and vomiting, and those having a quiet life on welfare. I wondered if the same understanding could be applicable, and in reverse, if the experience with difficult and troubled patients in London would be of clinical use in Japan. Unfortunately or not, it has turned out to be VERY useful in Japan, too.

As the training moved on, I had an opportunity to take charge of an African-English patient as therapist.  His therapy started on a once-weekly basis and developed into three-time a week therapy.  However, it got stuck after about two years and he broke off the treatment. I am afraid I do not have enough time to discuss the case here. In relation to the subject of this SDG, I gather the fact that he was a foreigner for me and had a quite different background, his parents’ immigrating from the African continent, had certainly increased difficulties with understanding on my part, and if I had been more familiar with his cultural background, there might have been a difference. However, as I look it back now, the amount of such knowledge could have contributed little, and the more crucial point would have been the distinction between what I had understood of him and what I had not, what he felt against and was dissatisfied with me, and how he had expressed it towards me: the psychoanalytic understanding in the session, in short. Only based upon it could I have had more chance to get through to him and understood the nature of the difficulty for the two.

The breakdown of the therapy would have derived both from the therapist of the early years in training and from the psychopathology of the patient. I do not think I did not have sufficient support for the analytic setting nor the conceptual tools. I regard the problem arose from the simple fact that I as a therapist did not appropriately differentiate what I guessed and what I felt and could not fully allow myself to be receptive enough to the pain of life, rather than from cultural differences. It was not that psychoanalysis had difficulty but that I had difficulty with acknowledging various real feelings. Psychoanalysis helps us understand other individuals as they really are, but that goal itself raises the resistance.  In a way it has got to do with the human nature and the difficulty lies not in my being Japanese, racially and culturally different from him, but in having analytic intercourse while keeping the emotional contact with the patient. To fall into cultural stereotyping is one of the easiest defense.

That is a story more than 20 years ago. We still have the same pitfalls in maintaining analytical mind and the danger of turning psychoanalysis into explanation or education but I feel I should not fail to mention the contemporary tasks in Japan. These may be in fact universal.

The one is the increase of the clinical population with the characteristics of the autistic spectrum, by contrast with the decrease of those with the features of personality disorders. Sometimes this is over-diagnosed and the initial impression of the patients may change in the end. However, their rigid and concrete yet sensitive tendencies persist as a challenge to psychoanalytic interaction, because they do not seem to be described well by the internal conflict model or the object relations theory model. The other may usually be understood as a socio-economical problem, that is, the perseverance of poverty, which affects the people on welfare all the more and incapacitate them from getting out of it. They would not have come to the private office for full analysis anyway, but may be the touchstone for psychoanalysis to demonstrate its usefulness in understanding the current issues and to respond to the needs in the changing world. Immigration and race mixture have been long-ignored issues which are coming back in the form of serious social problems.

As to the fourth agenda: How to develop communications and interactions among Asian countries and establish a constructive relationship, I have no idea when the Asia would become a “Region” of IPA, but it is of course important for us to build a constructive relationship. How to do it does not need a lot of exploration. So far the difference would have been more to do with affiliations, i.e. from which school of psychoanalytic thoughts you have learned. It will start, as we are having one at the moment, by having regular exchanges under a certain setting. For the time being we will need to use English as the language for communication; we have too many languages to give any one of them priority to use it.

This, however, would be a situation different from the Tower of Babel. For Asian, this diversity of the languages is likely to be felt as the manifestation of the biological and evolutional diversity, which Freud liked to use as an explanatory framework, rather than due to the wrath of the God against the human arrogance.  As far as the life is concerned, there would be no difference among any creatures, and human beings might also be but a leaf at the end of a branch of the phylogenetic tree. Of course, this is also a fantasy and some may prefer to include the images of stronger fights between animals. Words allow us to exert imagination and enable us to explore the human mind, ours and others.  In so doing, psychoanalysis would not aim at forming one synthesized interpretation in one language but keep the communication with what is foreign open, even if we do not understand each other so easily.

Finally, I found that in the previous panel “the world is looking east”, the Korean presenter quoted “Flower”, a poem by Kim Chun-Soo 金春洙（キム・チュンス 1922～2004）. In the report in the IJP, Frances Thomson-Salo understood the flower as the symbol of strive for recognition. I would like to end with an even shorter poem, not a Haiku, though, by a female Japanese poet, Naoko Kudo. It has got the same title with a different flavor. First in Japanese:「わたしは　わたしの人生から　出ていくことはできない　ならば　ここに　花を植えよう」（『花』）, i.e. “As I cannot get out of my life, I will plant a flower here.” The name of the flower might have been – psychoanalysis.