

Morita Therapy as a “conceptus cosmicus” for Psychosis Influenced by Zen Buddhism – A Comparison of the Principles of Mahayana Buddhist Philosophy (East Asia) and the Cognitive Thinking of M. Schlick (Vienna Circle)

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Abstract

In Western-style medicine it is customary to diagnose the symptoms of an illness, to define its cause and, if necessary, remove it from the human organism by way of a surgical intervention. In surgery and in internal medicine this method is often successful. But for a number of psycho-physical problems this is not the best method of treatment. Furthermore, the problem of what might be termed as the essence of “suffering” often eludes definition in both physical and psychological forms of treatment. If the cause of individual suffering is defined in the course of dialogue therapy, the patient’s psychological situation will not remain static at the defined position; there is always the possibility of change. More intellectual patients may have reservations about their therapist: They may doubt whether a particular therapy will provide an effective cure for their sufferings. Some of them will try to analyze the methods used by the therapist. Here it is necessary to consider what the essence of “suffering” for an individual is. A possible solution to this problem might be found through comparing the different sciences, languages, and basic ways of thinking of different cultures.

The “Morita Therapy” developed by Dr. MORITA Masatake (1874 – 1938) and his successors shows a unique approach to overcome this problem, as a therapy as well as a method of “self-healing” for psycho-physical disturbances. In his youth, Dr. Morita himself suffered from obsessive neurosis and anxiety psychosis. He was a difficult patient on whom the classic Western style psychotherapy did not have an effect. One of the turning points for Morita for overcoming his illness was the knowledge and practice of Zen Buddhism and its psychic and intellectual influence on both body and mind.

Some think that it may be an innovative contribution to conventional psychotherapy, whereas others hold that the Morita Therapy lacks a well-founded scientific basis. I have a still different viewpoint: As a medical doctor, Morita did not leave a scientific theory backing up his therapy. The therapy itself is an original system combining psycho-physical medicine, physical therapy, and anthropology. In my lecture I will compare the thinking system behind the Morita Therapy (the so-called “Art of Self-Healing”) with the basic principles of Moritz Schlick’s analytical thought and cognitive science (Vienna Circle, Lecture held in 1933/34). This may provide some useful insights for recognizing an efficient method for overcoming psycho-physical problems, which often arises within the complex dimensions of our lives governed by the networks of a globalized world.

Key words:

1. Dr. Morita's psychophysical therapy,
2. body and mind as a microcosmic unity,
3. Transmission of microcosmic organism (human body) and macrocosmic truth in Mahayana Buddhism,
4. The art of self-healing in Zen Buddhism,
5. Comparative philosophy of analytical thought and holistic insight of Zen,
6. Cosmic truth in a real world,
7. Inherent human nature in co-existential relationship.