

SANDSPIEL

Newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group

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Sandplay, School Phobia, and the Japanese Psyche: Kawai illuminates Eastern and Western cultural illnesses

Using a combination of charming personal anecdotes, and elegantly-expressed psychological theory, Professor Hayao Kawai, eminent Japanese Jungian analyst and a founding member of the International Society for Sandplay Therapy, discussed the differences between Japanese and U.S./European cultures during his May 13th professional seminar, held at the Earle Brown Center on the St. Paul campus of the University. Dr. Kawai used the first half of his morning presentation to contrast the cultural personalities of Japan and the West, and then used this as a foundation for his discussion of school phobia as a cultural disease of the Japanese.

In the Western countries, Kawai believes, the culture is dominated by the paternal principle, while Japan is shaped by the maternal principle. (While there are similarities, these are not the same as the patriarchal and matriarchal structures discussed by, for example, Erich Neuman.) In the West, this dominance by the paternal principle means that the "I" is very strong and assertive; that "I" and "you" are distinctly separated; that the individual and his needs and desires are highly valued; that differences are highlighted; and that verbalization is required in relationships in order to bridge the gap between the "I" and the "you."

In contrast, in the maternal-dominated Japanese culture, the "I" is weak and non-assertive. Instead of the "I" and "you," there is an emphasis on the "we"; the group's needs are valued over those of the individual; an "equality"

that contains the "we" rather than differences that divide the "I" and "you" is highlighted; and, because individuals are contained in the "we," verbalization is often thought not necessary for communication and understanding between individuals. For example, Kawai said, a Westerner might frequently seek an assurance from his or her partner that "I love you," but in Japanese culture it is thought unnecessary to say this because the fact that the relationship exists at all is sufficient evidence

that one is loved; it need not be said. In fact, in the ideal mature marriage in Japan, there may be virtually no oral communication.

These aspects of Japanese culture bring with it both costs and benefits. Because the group is valued over the individual, there is greater harmony in groups and a stronger sense of obligation to the group or community. Maintaining the equilibrium of the group is the highest priority, so direct conflict is avoided. Because it is rude to say "no" directly (an assertion of the "I" which highlights differences and runs the risk of severing the relationship), "no" is expressed in a kind of code. The Japanese are attuned to the code words and nonverbal cues which indicate when someone is in disagreement. However, when cultures

clash, for example, when an American businessman presents a proposal to his Japanese counterpart, he may often fail to understand the code. When the Japanese businessman says "Very interesting; let's discuss it later," the American is encouraged; he fails to understand that he has just been told "no."

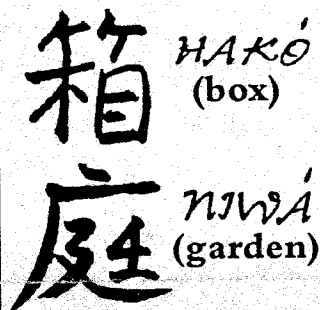
In the West, the emphasis on differences means that we often believe that success in school is largely attributable to innate differences in talent or intelligence; the Japanese believe, however, that intellectual potential is equal among children, and that differences in school performance are due to effort. Thus, all Japanese parents believe their child can be first in his or her class, if only they work hard enough. This is a root cause for the enormous pressure to succeed that is brought to bear on Japanese children by the adult world, and one of the contributors to the high frequency of school phobia in Japan.

Professor Kawai then described three types of school phobia, illustrated with art and sandtrays produced by his patients, which reflected how the cultural traits discussed above shaped the dynamics of each type. In the first, an overclose relationship between a fourteen-year-old boy and his mother who could not let him go pre-

vented the son from venturing into the outer world of school; he was contained, even trapped, in the Great Mother relationship and could not break free of it. Kawai found it particularly telling that the boy's hobby was

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Sandplay:



A Haiku on Dr. Kawai's Visit

*Rising sun
Son. Glorious
light in spring.
Mother-son sees
Buddha dream.*

— Alice Wagstaff

Masculine

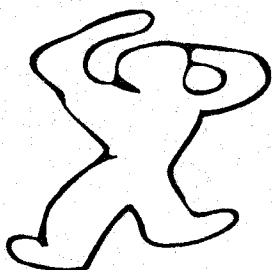
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and feelings about the cases and concepts with other participants.

Although the content of the conference was enlightening, for me, the **process** was the most powerful aspect of the experience. Among presentations were opportunities for study, meditation, walking, and creative expression. Many of us sought out the Manzanita room in which art materials invited us to transform our feelings and images into sculptures, collages, paintings, and what have you. The second night of the conference provided a ceremony to offer our gifts within the sacred circle. We placed our arts, crafts, and found objects into the sand. The protectors of the space lit tall candles and arranged them in the north, east, south and west sectors of the container. Each of us then lit a short candle and set in within the circle so everyone's light would shine within the sacred place to illuminate all the symbols. I felt the pooling of energies and the reconciliation of opposites as pieces of each of our spirits came together in that powerful event.

On the last day, we explored questions including, "Where does the rage come from for women (and for men) when stirring up masculine energies?" Barbara Weller described her case study as a journey of power and love. The conference offered us a similar journey, as we each learned more about the other (and the other within us). The final ritual was a non-verbal farewell, one on one, eye to eye. A civilization of ideals and understanding was born around a sacred circle. All the figures were removed along with the sand. We took back samples of the transformed sand and our gifts as tangible representations of a process which made us more than we were when we first joined this short-lived society. We celebrated for a time the wholeness of male and female energies combined, and the potential value of the masculine for men and women.

— Stephen Olmsted



Japanese Psyche

continued from page 1

throwing pottery, i.e., creating containers. In this case, the boy achieved the beginnings of a healthy separation from the mother through the sandplay process.

In the second type of school phobia, one finds the creative child who cannot go to school. "Creativity," Kawai said, "is dangerous in a maternal society - it sets one apart, and threatens the group." Kawai has found that many creative people in Japan have a history of school phobia. In fact, Kawai was a consultant to the Japanese Board of Education and developed a curriculum for "free play" for use by kindergarten teachers, who were finding it difficult to facilitate classroom environments which encouraged play without rules for doing it properly.

The third kind of school phobia in Japan arises in families in which the child seems essentially healthy. However, the mother is unhappy in the marriage, but cannot say so directly to her husband, because this would be an unbecoming assertion of the "I" and an open expression of conflict. The father in such families is often overinvolved with work and his circle of male friends (his "maternal container"). Kawai described the awkward but necessary family therapy necessary in this kind of situation, in which he has found that the parents are unable to talk directly to one another, even in his office, but are able to talk through him. When the focus shifts to the parents' relationship, the child is freed to go to school.

In discussing the sandplay seen in school phobics, Kawai noted that the trays of these children are often full of items on the left side (sometimes seen as the maternal side) of the tray, while the right side is relatively empty. However, when the therapist observes that significant figures in the trays move from left to right to left again, or up to down in serial trays, he or she may be seeing signs that integration or change is occurring.

While Professor Kawai focused largely on the cultural ills of the Japanese in this seminar, he noted also that in Western society, with its establishment of a strong ego and tradition of individualism, we may seek the "one right answer." Thus, for example, we promote the "right method" (or "technology") for raising children. This can result in many rules

on how to raise children (feeding schedules, the right preschool, the correct material goods, the right lessons), but a lack of relatedness or emotional attunement.

In the afternoon seminar for advanced sandplay therapists, MSTG president Carol Kindschi presented the sandplay process of a child who participated in a school-based sandplay project sponsored by the MSTG. This session permitted open discussion between Kawai and the seminar participants, and allowed Kawai to expand on his thoughts about the "I" in the sandplay process, and in the therapist-client relationship. The "I" is similar to the ego, the conscious part of the personality; but both the therapist and the patient must be engaged at a deeper level, the level of "being," nonverbal, image-based part of each of us. Kawai called this the "it," as contrasted to the "I," and said that it is the "it" that makes the sandtray; in fact, trays produced by the "I" are often not very interesting. He noted also that he advises against interpreting every item in each tray, because some of them have been placed by the "I" and are relatively meaningless.

"We do need interpretation," Kawai added; that is, the conscious, intellectual contribution of the "I," "but only after the patient's 'it' has spoken and the therapist's 'it' has heard."

There were numerous other rich clinical observations, leavened always by Professor Kawai's gentle, self-effacing humor, throughout the day, of which this account can capture only a few. On Saturday, Kawai provided several hours of individual and group supervision for MSTG members, and on Sunday, MSTG members gathered with him and his hosts Larry Greenberg and Carol Kindschi for a spring planting ceremony and brunch featuring foods of several cultures. Throughout the entire weekend Professor Kawai charmed and enriched all who were able to spend time with him, and, we were pleased to learn, professed himself eager to return to work again with Minnesota sandplay therapists.

He cannot come again too soon to suit us.

—Regina Driscoll

Local Sandplay Training and Supervision Opportunities

Lucia Chambers will be in the Twin Cities September 8-12, 1994, to teach a workshop on Sandplay with borderline personalities, and for individual and group supervision. Plans are also under way for the next seminars in Beginning Sandplay Therapy and Advanced Sandplay Therapy to begin in October, 1994. Please contact Barb Weller at (612) 729-7084 for more information about any of these opportunities.

In-Touch Network Continues

In April, 1990, the first "Floor Games" workshop with Agnes "Nessie" Bayley was held at Wilder Forest, introducing the series of attachment exercises used in treating children and adults with severe separation issues in Britain. At that time, Nessie asked that the material never be taught unless the trainers made a commitment to form an ongoing network which would allow for consultation. The most recent "In Touch Again" 3 day training session was held May 18-20, 1994 (with the half day follow-up Friday, September 16, 1994 from 1-4:00 p.m.). This means that now seventy-six therapists have attended the initial training series and are now on the "In Touch Again" mailing list. With a few longer intervals, we try to meet on a quarterly basis, and provide a forum to share difficult cases, successes, problems, and new approaches, always using the experiential "we try it on us first" method of learning.

The next "In Touch Again" general follow-up meeting will be Thursday, September 22, 1994, 8-10:00 a.m. at the home of Carol Kindschi. A continental breakfast will be served. Please call Carol at (612) 642-9417 for further information.

Sandplay Technique and Countertransference Sandplay Miniature Collection

Countertransference (the experience of the therapist) and transference (the experience of the client) are at the very heart of Dora Kalff's ideas about the process of the Sandplay therapy technique. She states that it is through the transference that a protected and stabilized place is created allowing the Self to constellate and manifest in therapy. This process is possible within the *therapeutic relationship* because it is similar to the natural tendency of the psyche to constellate when provided a *temenos*, - a free and protected space (Kalff 1980).

The importance of the therapist's relationship to the Sandplay collection is one of the unique and important concepts to have emerged out of the existing "Oral Tradition" of Sandplay. Although this concept has been discussed in a general way, it has not previously been written about in the literature.

I believe that basically it is the Sandplay practitioner's unconscious that is on the shelves of our offices, and it is because of this belief that I wanted to write down some of my ideas to share in this article. It is part of our psyche that is up there on the shelves - because we selected the pieces. I think that our care and concern about the miniature collection is an important part of how the "container" gets formed. Because the miniatures in our collections are reflective of our personal psyche, it is also imperative that we attend to the many possible manifestations of countertransference related to the powerful personal and archetypal symbolism associated with figures in the collection.

Example of the relationship between our psyche and the collection include: 1) figures that have been given to the therapist by the significant people in her/his life, 2) figures that were hand-made by the therapist, or perhaps by a client, 3) figures collected on a special vacation that hold strong

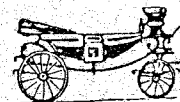
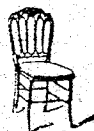
association to that place, 4) figures representing powerful "Shadow" elements, that may have been hard to buy and hard to put on the shelf, 5) figures or symbols that were significant to the therapist's own sandplay process or analysis.

The use of the Sandplay miniature collection allows for the concrete expression of inner psychic process within a "free protected" space. This constant proximity to the archetypal means that although the personal elements of the transference countertransference relationship are part of the human encounter, there is also an ever-present awareness of the greater transpersonal nature of the psyche at work. This impersonal, pre-verbal connection is seen to allow for a deeper psychological healing of the Self. Kalff (1980) says that it is at this pre-verbal, matriarchal level that psychic healing takes place.

"Co-transference" is the best way to articulate the significant connection between the unknown and archetypal aspects of the transpersonal and the deep level of psychological work present in the sand work. "Co-transference" (Bradway 1991), is a definition of the countertransference experience as a powerful "field" that includes the conscious and unconscious psychic material of the therapist and of the client. It is a dynamic interaction constantly at work. For purposes of this discussion I would like to highlight that the associations to the miniatures in our collection are also part of this "field".

I am currently working on a longer journal article related to countertransference and the Sandplay collection and would appreciate any feedback or personal anecdote you have to offer related to your experience of monitoring your own reactions to the powerful symbolic figures used in the Sandplay process.

— Stephen Lander, Ph.D., LMFT

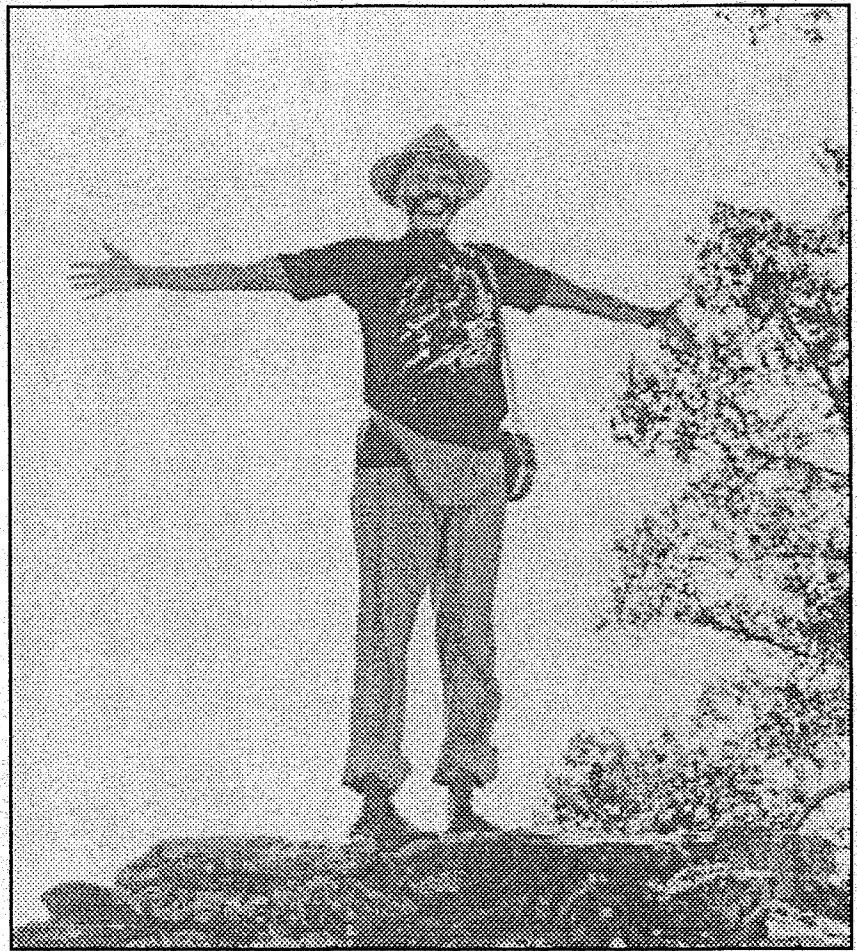


Roy Maiden Fund Named

The Saint Stephen's Project, which combined service to children, internships in Sandplay, and research in Sandplay has had a charitable fund to provide financial support for the project.

At its April 27 meeting the board unanimously approved the renaming of the St. Stephen's Fund as the Roy Maiden Fund. It is named in honor of one of MSTG's original members, who also was one of the first therapists to participate in the St. Stephen's Project. Roy has been an active member who also joined Joe Meyer in building the collection of sandplay miniatures, which has been a major resource for therapists in the area—and beyond—for making their own collections of sandplay miniatures. (The fund will continue to be a charitable fund and provide financial support for future internships where children will have access to services otherwise unavailable to them.)

Roy has been seriously ill, and has moved back to Houston, Texas to be close to family. We miss him very much, and our thoughts are with him and with his family.



Roy Maiden, January 1991 at the MSTG- sponsored seminar "The Place of the Turtle". Picture taken at Coba, Quintana Roo, Mexico

MSTG Defies Inflation, Keeps Membership Fee the Same.

Please renew (or join for the first time) now.

The Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group was formed in January, 1988, to support the work of the International Society for Sandplay Therapy at a local level. Its interests include public education, professional training, and research in sandplay. It supports the guidelines for the professional practice of sandplay therapy as established by the ISST.

Benefits of Membership include:

- * Priority in MSTG seminars and workshops
- * Discounts on MSTG seminars and workshops
- * Priority for individual sandplay hours with visiting ISST members
- * Discounts on books, toys, and miniatures purchased through the MSTG
- * Special members events

Regular Membership is offered to:

1. Persons holding membership in the ISST
2. Persons holding licenses or certification in the discipline which has included training in psychotherapy such as psychiatry, psychology, social work, psychiatric nursing, pastoral counseling, and others as approved by the MSTG Board.

Associate Membership is offered to:

1. Persons in training in a field of psychotherapy as listed above.
2. Persons interested in and supportive of sandplay therapy.
3. Psychotherapists living more than 100 miles from the Twin Cities.

Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group Membership Application

_____ Regular Member (1 year, \$35) _____ Associate Member (1 year, \$25)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

License or Certificate In:
(Check those that apply)

- Psychology
- Psychiatry
- Social Work
- Psychiatric Nursing
- Other _____

Please mail to:

Treasurer
Minnesota Sandplay
Therapy Group
3616 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Thank you for your participation and support

Minnesota's Loss is New Mexico's Gain

Longtime MSTG member and previous board member Kate Davis-Rogers is moving to New Mexico. We are pleased for her and will miss her. She can be contacted (and visited) at 1359 Rte. 344, Sandia Park, NM 87047 (Ph: 505-281-8001). Good luck Kate and thank you for all of your creative energy on Minnesota and MSTG's behalf.

Sandspiel is the newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group, 3616 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55407. Tel: 612-724-0854. *Sandspiel* means "sandplay" in German. The MSTG was formed in 1988 to provide education and training in the area of Sandplay, developed by Dora Kalf of Switzerland. 1994-95 board members: Carol Kindschi, President; Regina Driscoll, Ethel Griggs, Lawrence Greenberg, Stephen Lander, Katelynn Thompson, Alice Wagstaff, and Barbara Weller. *Sandspiel* Co-Editors: Stephen Lander and Carol Kindschi. Editing: Regina Driscoll. Typeset and Design: Clay Schotzko.

Members' Special Events: Friday Evening Seminars. Location and Details to follow.

October 7, 1994, "The Caldron" with Signe Nestingen

December 2, 1994, "Egrets, Herons and Other Wading Birds" with Steve Olmsted.

March 31, 1995, Prepare for April Fools Day, "The Trickster" with Carol Kindschi and Joe Meyer.

Mark Your Calendars

Next Board Meeting is September 20, 1994, at 7:00 p.m., at the home of Barb Weller.

November 1, 1994, 7:00 p.m. at the home of Regina Driscoll.

December 13, 1994, 7:00 p.m. at the home of Barb Weller.

Board meetings are open to any member wishing to attend.

Members' Meeting and Birthday Party is January 21, 1995, at 7:00 p.m., at the home of Doris & Joe Meyer in St. Paul Park.



Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group
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