

Individual Psychology in Japan(2)

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Introduction

In our last presentation at the International Congress of Individual Psychology in 1999, we raised the issue about several merchandise-oriented companies in Japan that took an advantage of Individual Psychology (IP) for merchandise purposes by manipulating ordinary people for their profitable purposes. Their understandings of IP are inappropriate in many ways along with the theory and philosophy of IP. During that presentation, we had more than the expected number of participants to give us many interesting questions and thoughtful feedback toward our agenda in Japan. Not to mention that it was such an encouraging moment for all of us.

Three years have passed and now the situation has been nearly settled. Today, we are here to share with you some future advancement of the Adlerian movements we are now working on in Japan.

At The Congress in Chicago.

After our presentation in Chicago, we received a lot of questions and advices from Adlerians all over the world. First of all, we had a question regarding the situation in Japan, which was, "What are you so worried about?" The reason why we were so worried was that, firstly, Mr. I, the president of the company, is very good at using a variety of media such as radio and magazines, etc., since we can listen and read the same materials in almost every part of our country. The severity of the influence of the media is much more than you might expect, so the chances of inappropriate information about IP being broadcasted and published, would be spread very fast and soon this inappropriate information will become a part of the common knowledge of ordinary Japanese people.

We had taken some prompt measurements such as sending letters and articles to them, pointing out their mistakes by using a theoretical point of view almost every time they appeared on media. We have never received a direct answer from the media, although we can say that it seems that now

they are more careful in handling the matter of IP.

Other reasons are as follows. Also during that time, their newsletter had not only stated that they went into partnership with the Adler School of Montreal in Canada, but they also making a contact with the Adler School of Chicago as well. This indicates their intention of falsely using the IP name in order to give authority to themselves. This is, to say, if they would unite with the country of origin of IP, then it might also raise the possibility of obtaining people who do not know very much about IP. They would eventually believe the falsifications about IP that they teaches, as a real IP. In order to stop this, after the presentation in Chicago, we posted a warning to oversea Adlerians that this was a domestic matter of Japan so please be neutral regarding to that matter. As a result of these activities, cooperation could never implement the plan that they were introducing.

We also had a question about why we don't bring this matter to the court and file a lawsuit. The reason why we didn't do so was that what we were focusing on only the theological and philosophical issues. We also believed that these kinds of issues would not be suitable for controversy in court.

We later took a measurement to be academically controversial and began expressing our views on our websites and journals. These activities led to several incidents such as the Company sending us letters of warning stating they would sue us for a libel. However, we did not change our attitude and a lawsuit was never filed against us.

We can't do much as far as attracting many kinds of people as the teachings of IP is spread throughout in our country and is becoming so popular as a matter of fact we had received another question asking us what we are being so particular about. While, this is certainly true that we cannot stop appealing to many kinds of people, we strongly believe that it is our responsibility, as Adlerians, to continue discussion and be particular about when we are faced with the situation of being informed about something that is not a representation of IP or if we want to be a real and true Adlerian.

Point at issue in Japan.

After an introduction of IP in Japan in 1983, it had been informed and studied mostly by professionals for a while. However, after a short period, the JSAP changed the way of taking action to be more practical, making it a movement of IP. It was rather contrary to the fact that the other psychological schools' professionals in Japan. They are more likely to make it a habit to practice the psychological approaches in their clinics or counseling rooms.

When we use the term IP as a movement means to give greatly importance in actually practicing the theory in everyday life, enhancing the regional activities by non-professionals, and respecting the basic concepts and ideas of IP. To give greater importance in everyday life means to put IP into practice to our professionals and non-professionals in their everyday lives while recommending them. Theoretically, our five basic concepts are for example: "To see things objectively", "To reflect the relation with others as personal-relation way" and so on. And as philosophically, to determine "To live by helping others" and "To live by not dominating others" Finally, these techniques must keep the conformity with Adlerian philosophy.

For a long time many people practiced this method. Then all of a sudden when the incident with the company occurred and many Adlerians could not hide the feeling of bewilderment. So

that led to the controversy in which we presented our former presentation. In fact, we learned a lot through this agenda, which was a perfect chance for not only leading Adlerians in Japan, but also for all of us to self-evaluate. Throughout this controversy, the typical question that we received from Japanese Adlerians, especially from the beginner Adlerians are as follows. Firstly, they asked us, "Well, IP is a psychology of getting along with people, now why in the world are you raising a controversy?" This question came out especially from those students who studied the teachings of IP from Mr. I. We listened carefully to understand what they were insisting and we came to the point of understanding of their attitude toward certain things was such as that if we would say like this; "Considering your total understanding of IP, your understanding A is not true by conforming the basic concept B of IP". Then they understand our comment, as "You are a wrong person". We eventually obtained their understanding by explaining thoroughly what we are pointing out now. Let us show you an example, there was a person who said "I took the counseling of the company and it was quite effective to me so that counselor is great." Then we said, "We certainly accept the fact that person is a wonderful and has the potential of being a counselor. Although if we may say, considering the way of approach and his goal of counseling, is in fact not representative of IP" that person understood the meanings. However, some person who only pursues "Getting along with the people" had left us eventually.

We also had many opinions that they do not like the "political" movement. In the matter of fact, we also are not very keen at "political" matters, and yes we had some difficulties of dealing some tasks at first. However, Dr. Noda, the founder of the JSAP, wrote using Dr. Corsini's words, "If some problems should occur, do not hide and talk bad of it, rather, we must set forth our argument, and take legal actions. So we thought of it as a responsibility of being Adlerians to act positively, and we searched some effective methods and put them into an action⁽¹⁾ .

Some principal activities we did after the presentation.

As we mentioned before, after the previous presentation in Chicago, we had many kind of activities. For example, we kept working with Montreal and Chicago. We changed our website to target the people who are not familiar with IP. As a result, some people who entered our website ended up participating in our lectures and study sessions. We are now struggling to make our society to form a legal entity. We also started to form ourselves to fit into Japanese Academical Council. One of the greatest activities after the presentation was that we invited Dr. Shulman, honorary president of our society and asked him to do a special lecture for all of us. We were so content with his lecture. It was such a great opportunity for each of us to once again self evaluates our true understanding of IP. Possessing a thorough knowledge in psychiatry, psychological theory, and neurophysiology, Dr. Shulman's lecture of IP was indeed great opportunity to re-check the theory of IP for all of us. In fact, our members were so impressed that the way of living Dr. Shulman represented was truly a living model of those of Adlerians. Never political, but as one scholar, clinician, and a family man, Dr. Shulman is indeed a living model for all of Adlerian professionals. Also, his son, Dr. Robert Shulman concluded with the following speech; "I think of my father as being in direct lineage with Alfred Adler and Dr. Dreikurs. I think through this lineage, through Dr. Noda, Japan has benefited from this direct lineage that goes right back to Alfred Adler"⁽²⁾ . This

comment had assured our members that what we have been practicing was not wrong.

After all incidents happened, the Ms. S, a chief counselor and a teacher of the company, stopped having relations with the company and started her own psychological approach. Mr. I himself had suggested our society for segregation. As a matter of fact, Mr. I still teaches IP, but curiously, his approach has changed from "Specialized store of IP" to "Department store of psychology" besides IP, now that he teaches other psychological approaches as well. Now the chances are that many people who want to study more about IP would choose us as their IP professionals.

As a result of our continuous activities plus a firm and heart warming support from overseas Adlerians, our movement has been fulfilled and now we are heading toward resolving the many problems we had faced three years ago.

Development in the near future.

Now that we would like to share with you our brief agenda to be discussed later in our society are as follows:

1. How to correspond to those who are teaching misunderstood methods of IP outside of our society.
2. How to correspond to media and printing materials.
3. How to correspond to the people who study inappropriate information of IP.
4. How to introduce IP in an appropriate way.
5. How to maintain a suitable level of the professionals.

We believe that these five items on our agenda would be our priority for a while. This theme has a connection to a comment of Dr. Manaster in the Journal of IP in 1987⁽³⁾. It is an old but still new and important theme for us. It is true that in Japan, it is said that IP is rather closely related in comparison with other psychological societies in Japan. This reason could be related to the fact that we emphasize more on practicing the theories in action, and sometimes we have to choose between practice and study only. Especially, we want the professionals to put the theory into practice in their everyday life. So no wonder they would feel that we are rather closed and strict in some points.

Nowadays, even professionals admitted that if you practice IP in the daily life, it would be more effective both in their professions and private life. This is why more professionals are recognizing us gradually. IP was chosen for one of the workshops to be presented at Japan's largest academic society for clinical psychology called Japanese Society of Clinical Psychology. Also, many doctors (psychiatrists, pediatricians and physicians) are practicing IP for their professional work.

Our society and Adlerian movements in general have been quite generous of letting non-professionals study. However, professionals and leaders must have more responsibilities toward IP not to mention that they always tend to be faced with the criticism, while it is certainly true that our experiences throughout this movement would one-day progress.

Therefore, we are determined to pursue our study to be true Adlerians from now on to the future.

Conclusion.

One of the main purposes for today's presentation was to show appreciation for the encouraging support of Adlerians all over the world and to our society in Japan. It will be our greatest pleasure if something that we mentioned here today helped you gain thoughtful insights as we continue to practice and implement IP in Asia. We also hope that we were able to offer suggestions in some way to help all of you who are here today.

- (1) Noda,S.:Response to Toshinori Iwai,The Adlerian,12(1). 104,.
- (2) Shulman,R.:Fundamentals of Adlerian Psychology,The Adlerian,15(1),31,2001.
- (3) Manaster,G.J.:Adlerian Theory and Movement,Individual Psychology 43(3):280-287,1987.

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