

Psychoanalysis, Drawings, Letters

Hidemoto Makise

Abstract

Lacan considers the relationship between the subject and letters, taking Japanese calligraphy as an example, and says as follows in his paper 'Lituraterre': 'Between centre and absence, between knowledge (savoir) and jouissance, there is a littoral which only turns to the literal insofar as this turn, we might take it the same at any instant. It is from this alone that you can take yourself for the agent who sustains it' (Lacan, 2001.).

We try to identify ourselves with a signifier in the field of the Other and become a linguistic subject in order to position ourselves by means of language. No subject, however, can be identified with the signifier without being excluded from it. This is because the signifier is essentially different from itself (Lacan, 1964).

Therefore, as Lacan points out above, it is important to focus on the letter (the literal) that emerges between centre and absence, or between knowledge and jouissance, in psychoanalysis that encourages reconstruction of the subject. If we rethink the relationship between drawings and letters in Japan based on this point, can we obtain knowledge that is useful for psychoanalytic practice using drawing as one of the way to make use of thought of critical psychology clinically? In this paper, I would like to consider this problem, through exploring the lost Kana characters called 'Ashide(葦手) characters' that were once used in Japan.

Keywords: Lacanian Psychoanalysis, Drawing, Letter, Japan

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Ashide and Yamato-e

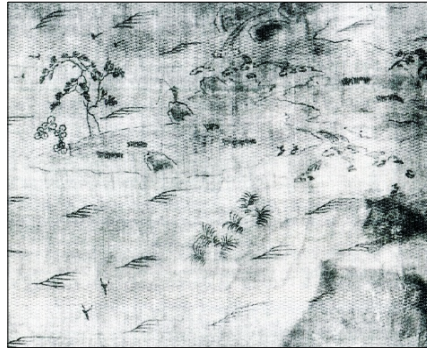
Currently, we use two types of kana characters, 'Hiragana (平仮名)' and 'Katakana (片仮名)' in Japan. However, there used to be another type of kana characters called 'Ashide characters' (Komatsu, 1968). The Ashide character was a pictorial letter that hides the letter in the picture and hides the picture in the letter (Ishikawa, 2016). The manuscript of the songbook "Motosuke-shuu (元輔集)" created by Kiyohara no Motosuke, a poet of the 10th century and the father of Sei Shonagon, is an example.

Figure 1: "Motosuke-shuu"



This cover picture, which seems at first sight to depict a landscape of the waterside, represents the first half of the tanka poetry (短歌) 'なきわたる かりのなみだや おちつらむ' (see Figure 1). In this, Ashide characters are written among lines that make up rocks, reeds, waterfowls, such as 'na(な)', 'ki (き)', 'ta(た)', 'ru(る)'. The method of expressing 'wa(わ)' by drawing a wheel, or the technique that combines reading and numbers by drawing multiple letters such as 'nami(なみ)', or the method of representing the meaning of words and phrases with pictures, is called 'Uta-e (歌絵)'. In some cases, these representations are combined into one and called 'Ashide-e (葦手絵)' (Tamamushi, 2016) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: “Azabu Sansui-zu”



These letters, which set up an ambiguous boundary between letters and drawings and result in an oscillation between meaning and non-meaning, occurred in connection with waterside scenery, as the word ‘reed (葦)’ indicates (Komatsu, 1968). It is said that Ashide characters were initially used as auspicious letters in songs celebrating ceremonies such as ‘birth and nourishment’ (Yotsuzi, 1980), but there are various theories about its meaning, and no clear answer has yet been given. For example, Ishikawa (1993) states as follows. ‘In history of calligraphy, Ashide characters were often undervalued as play/decorative characters of the Heian aristocracy, but it is interesting to me because it seems to imply essence of Japanese calligraphy. In Ashide characters, a letter=word=song is transformed into a natural feature such as a reed, a rock, a bird, and water, just before the limit of the characters were exceeded. As an artificial object, the letters that should stand out against nature, the letters with the meaning, phonology, and images of words are directly assimilated into natural scenery, and are about to blend it in and masquerades as it’.

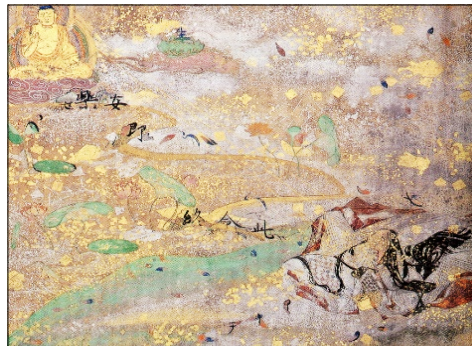
Further, an Ashide character is one of Kkana characters created in Japan, which lost its semantic and material base due to the decline and destruction of the Tang dynasty in the early 10th century, to create its own culture on its own, and it also had a great influence on birth of ‘Yamato-e (大和絵)’, that is a drawing unique to Japan. For example, Egami (2006) speculates that the year of production of “Azabu Sansui-zu (麻布山水図)” (see Figure 2) may be in the middle of Heian period, in the 10th century, comparing it with other relics of the same age, and points out that we can find ‘ru(る)’ and ‘fu(ふ)’ birds of Ashide characters as an expression peculiar to Yamato-e in this drawing.

Egami also says that a picture like “Azabu Sansui-zu” was not the matrix of Ashide characters, but it developed, inspired by Ashide characters that were decorative, as a result, the birds of Ashide characters were incorporated into it. In addition, Brasch (1997) states as follows. ‘The most noticeable thing in Yamato-e is that the face of a person is symbolically represented by dots and lines. One example is the ‘Hikime Kagibana (引目鉤鼻)’ style, in which eyes are drawn with long thin lines and a nose is also drawn with thin lines in the shape of a small hook on the plump face of a woman appearing in Yamato-e and Senmen Shakyo’. Besides, he suggests that there is connection between such expressions and Ashide characters.

The significance of Ashide characters and the problem about the 'impossibility' of the subject

In this way, it seems that the now-defunct Ashide characters played some role when the ancestors tried to position their culture and their existence by using the Kkana characters, which are unique to Japan. What was that role? What was the meaning of raising an ambiguous boundary between letters and drawings and bringing about a particular ambiguous relationship between meaning and non-meaning?

Figure 3: "Heike Noukyo Yakuohhin Mikaeshi"



Let us examine the first problem by taking the example of "Heike Noukyo Yakuohhin Mikaeshi (平家納経 薬王品 見返し)" (see Figure 3), which is said to have been drawn under the influence of Ashide characters (Komatsu, 1996) (see Figure 2). The "Heike Nokyō Yakuohhin Mikaeshi", which was produced in 1164, is one of the scriptures dedicated to Itsukushima Shrine by the Heike family, hoping for their prosperity. Amida Nyorai (阿弥陀如来) is drawn on the upper left of the screen, a woman praying with a sutra volume is drawn on the lower right of it, and a lotus pond is drawn in muted colours between the two.

The interesting point here is how Ashide characters are arranged. While the sacred light emitted from white hair between the eye brows of Amida Nyorai shines upon the praying woman, there is a lotus pond as a crack between the two, and Ashide characters are written in the form that emerges on the water's edge.

Why did Ashide characters need to be placed in such relationship? This question seems to be related to the most bizarre feature that Ashide characters were born in connection with waterside scenery and that were actually written in such a way as can be seen in the cover picture of "Motosuke-Shuu". That is why this question is closely related to the first problem. By referring to Lacan's idea here, it may be possible to examine it from a new perspective.

Let us recall what Lacan says quoted at the beginning of this paper. 'Knowledge' can be understood as the universal in the sense of the world of language, and 'jouissance' can be understood as the individual in the sense of individual life of the self. Due to the fundamental relationship between the subject and a signifier as

described above, there is a decisive crack between knowledge and jouissance. For this reason, even if the subject tries to capture the individual life of the self through the universal, the subject always fails to capture it. Therefore, in psychoanalysis, how we treat the desire of the subject to position the individual life (jouissance) in the universal (knowledge) becomes a problem. The important point in clinical practice, in that case, is to consider how the subject can reconstruct the relationship with the 'impossibility' (the core of the unconscious).

For this reason, Lacan (2001) points out that the crack that exists between knowledge and jouissance, between the universal and the individual, is described in the imaginary realm as a littoral that is the boundary between land and water, and it is important to pay attention to something like letters that are drift there in order to promote reconstruction of the relationship between the subject and the 'impossibility'. If we look at "Heike Nokyo Yakuohhin" again, comparing it with what Lacan points out, we may be able to recognize the commonality between the two.

Amida Nyorai is placed in the universal position, and the praying woman is placed in the individual position. The desire of the woman, suffering from a relationship between men and women, is that she wants Amida Nyorai, who is as if the universal existence, and to position individual life of the self is expressed by the sacred light emitted from white hair between the eye brows of Amida Nyorai. However, there is the littoral as a decisive crack between the two, and something like letters (Ashide characters in the form of birds and water, and the letters about life and death such as 'life (生)' and 'end of life (此命終)') are written as if they were adrift there (Komatsu, 1996. Egami, 2006. Matsubara, 2012.).

If what Lacan says and "Heike Noukyo Yakuohhin" overlap in this way, it is reasonable to suppose that Ashide characters not only played the role of expressing songs and sutras like pictures, but also played the role of expressing the impossibility to connect with the individual life of the self that the ancestors inevitably came to hold when they tried to position their existence through Kkana characters that are unique to Japan.

Furthermore, the reason why Ashide characters were generated in connection with waterside scenery as the littoral and were actually written in relation to the waterside, the littoral can be understood from this point of view. The impossibility of the connection between knowledge and jouissance also indicates a lack of sexual relations (Lacan, 1975). For this reason, in "Heike Nokyo Yakuohhin", both problems are probably expressed in the connected form.

In addition, the following mentions by Tammushi (2016) seem to illustrate this idea from another angle. 'In general, it is said that the development of Kana characters began with Manyokana, or Otokode characters, that is the pronunciation of Kanzi (Chinese character) applied to Japanese words, and Kusakana and Onnade characters were born by writing Manyokana characters in cursive style down in the first half of the Heian period. In the Kana writing classified as Otokode, Onnade, and Katakana, Ashide characters had been considered a special and playful writing, usually positioned at the last seat. These could be certainly true in empirical

research. However, the mysterious presence of Ashide characters may be hinting that another story can be talked about the establishment of Kana characters. In other words, it is a story similar to myths about the origin of the country, in which aquatic plants such as reeds and bush clover are born from the water and mud that nurture life, and then from the grass and the animals that live there, Kana characters are born. This is an animism interpretation of the origin of the letters in the Japanese notation.'

Leaving aside the discussion here of how Ashide characters are linked to animism, which aims at oneness with nature, at least from this mention, is it possible to read the possibility that Ashide characters were related to the origin of Kana characters as a unique Japanese character, and to the 'impossibility' of knowing about the origin of the existence of ancestors who came to use them? In order to make up for such 'impossibility', the connection between Ashide characters and the animistic viewpoint may have come to be imagined.

Next, let us consider the second problem, that Ashide characters raised an ambiguous boundary between letters and pictures, and caused an oscillation between meaning and non-meaning.

Lacan (2001) had the opportunity to experience various Japanese cultures through his second visit to Japan in April 1971. He describes the encounter with the kakemono (calligraphy) that he experienced then as follows: 'How to say what fascinates me in those things which hang, chattered about as kakemono, hang on the walls of all the museums in those places, bearing inscriptions of characters, of Chinese formation, which I know a little, but which, as little as I know them, permit me to measure what is elided in the cursive, where the singular of the hand crushes the universal, that is, properly what I teach you has no value but from the signifier.'

In addition, Lacan (2001) states as follows: 'Erasure of no trace that might be in advance, this is what makes shore (terre) of the littoral. Pure Litura, this is the literal. To produce it, is to reproduce that half without complement (paire) by which the subject subsist. Such is the exploit of calligraphy.'

So to speak, in calligraphy, when a character is broken, its meaning may disappear, and at that time, the materiality of the character itself that supports the meaning becomes apparent. In this sense, calligraphy is an art that consists at the brink, where the universal is crushed by the individual or the individual is cut off by the universal. Furthermore, on the brink of 'the littoral', calligraphy not only marks the disappearance of the subject, but also reproduces his unpaired half-body.

In this regard, Shingu (1989), based on his experience of dream analysis with a patient, regards what is reproduced at the littoral between 'knowledge' and 'jouissance' as a form of lost life. He says 'the fact that we are alive is shown to others as letters that we cannot read by ourselves' and calls the place where such letters appear 'the topos for letters'.

Ashide characters may have not only played the role of expressing the impossibility of connecting with the individual life of the self that the ancestors inevitably had,

when they tried to position their existence through Kkana characters which is unique to Japan, but also played the role of reproducing a form of lost life of the self. Based on this double-function, it seems that Ashide characters were letters that consist on the brink of whether it is readable or unreadable. Furthermore, such letters were ones that were shown to others, that is, they were able to open up the possibility of creating the desire of the subject based on the desire of the Other. In this respect, Ashide characters may have also played the role of supporting the existence of the ancestors. Thus, we can see that Ashide characters were letters that set up an ambiguous boundary between letters and drawing and caused an oscillation between meaning and non-meaning, as a device that enabled such movement of meaning concerning existence of the subject.

The relationship between Ashide characters and interpretation

Figure 4: Mizu-te



If the desire of the Other being found in this mysterious shaking between letters and drawings emerges through missing encounter with the lost life when the subject enters the universal, we may find here the connection between this fact and the problem of interpretation as a 'cut' or a 'punctuation' in psychoanalysis. In fact, Lacan (2001) describes the streaming of water through the land of Siberia as having the same meaning as the letter 'one' in calligraphy as follows. 'The streaming is the bouquet of a first stroke (trait) and of what effaces it. I have said it: it is from their conjunction that the subject is made, but in that two times are marked there. It is necessary then that the erasure be distinguished there.'

Lacan here points out the connection between the letter 'one' and the streaming of water, 'trait unaire', which is a passage that connects the universal and the individual, thereby bringing a concept of 'one' to existence of the subject. This point reminds us that Ashide characters were also called 'Mizu-te', which are characters written using the lines of the waterside in the picture, especially in 'Ashide characters' (Komatsu, 1996) (see Figure 4) and its relevance to the above discussion. In addition, Lacan discusses here the problem about the letters and the generation of the subject in relation to 'one' and emphasizes the need to consider 'two times'. From this point, we can see that Lacan shows the link between these issues and interpretation as a 'cut' or a 'punctuation'.

Lacan (1966) states that when the subject self-defines themselves, three 'logical times' are required: time to see, time to understand, and time to draw conclusions.

Thus, psychoanalysis needs to establish those times by punctuating speech of the subject while listening to the function of haste of him and to make the 'trait unaire' that connects the universal 'one' to the individual 'one' emerge while paying attention to movement of 'object a' as a lost object so as to encourage the subject to position own desire based on the desire of the Other (Lacan, 1975).

Based on these points, it seems reasonable to suppose that Ashide characters opened up a new relationship with the desire of the Other to the subject through missing encounter with the lost life (= the impossibility) as the character sways between meaning and non-meaning; to write it serves the same function as interpretation in psychoanalysis. 'It is insofar as something brutal is played out in writing (l'écrit) - namely, the taking as ones of as many ones as we like - that the impasses that are revealed thereby are, by themselves, a possible means of access to being for us and a possible reduction of the function of that being in love' (Lacan, 1975).

Observation on the clinical case

Ashide characters convey wisdom created by the ancestors to overcome the anguish that they inevitably had as a result of trying to position their existence by using Kkana characters that are unique to Japan. Ashide characters, which hold such knowledge, were lost, but they have been inherited in various Japanese cultures forming a point of contact between letters and drawings. This point may suggest that the trace of Ashide characters can be recognized in clinical practice using drawing at present.

It is important to remember here that Ashide characters that emerged on the littoral and brought about a swaying movement between meaning and non-meaning were not only auspicious characters for childbirth, but also ones that are related to the incomprehensible character and impossibility concerning the origin of existence of the ancestors, in other words, ones that were closely related to the issue of birth.

In this regard, Lacan (1964) says as follows. 'The subject is born in so far as the signifier emerges in the field of the Other. But, by this very fact, this subject - which, was previously nothing if not a subject coming into being - solidifies into a signifier.' Lacan also points out as follows, explaining the issue of 'alienation' in the relationship between the subject and a signifier: 'If we choose being, the subject disappears, it eludes us, it falls into non-meaning. If we chose meaning, the meaning survives only deprived of that part of non-meaning that is, strictly speaking, that which constitutes in the realization of the subject, the unconscious.'

If this part of non-meaning, which is indispensable for composition of the subject, overlaps with the 'impossibility' in Ashide characters, we may say that the culture of Ashide characters include the theory about birth of the subject that the ancestors built. That is why, through it, the ancestors could realise their own desire based on the desire of the Other and reposition their existence.

With these issues in mind, we will now examine the point of contact between the culture of Ashide characters and clinical practice using drawing. The following examples of drawing sessions with a child may provide us with very useful insights with respect to what we have described so far.

The clinical case concerns a boy in a nursery in Japan who was 4 years old. His family comprised a father, a mother, two elder brothers who were 15, 12 years old, and, of course, the boy himself. He had a problem with his life in the nursery when our sessions began. He could not communicate with other children. The teacher's intervention allowed him to play with other children temporarily, but his involvement with them was one-sided. In addition, he sometimes kept standing alone thinking about something, and he also tended to avoid relationships with the object. A teacher who was worried about his behaviour consulted with me, because I was there to support children in the nursery if they had difficulties. I asked his mother what he was doing in his daily life. As a result, it became clear that he had no particular problems at home, and it was a major change for him who had only spent time at home until then that starting to attend the nursery. These points seemed to indicate that he may have had some conflict due to the overlapping of where he was in the Oedipus period and the change in the environment at school.

I secured space in the nursery to spend time with him on his own and we were able to have some sessions with him drawing. I had ten sessions with him in about half a year. During the sessions, he re-questioned his relationship with his mother and came to reconstruct himself.

Furthermore, he became able to maintain a relation to the other in a fairly stable way. I have not heard that he encountered another problem after our sessions were over.

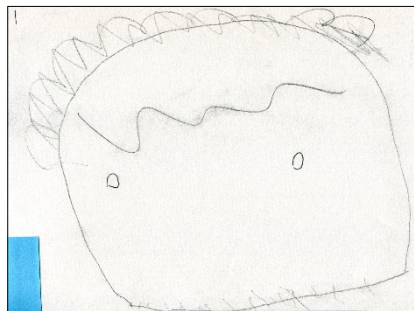
A series of drawings was made by the boy in two sessions. I utilized the 'squiggle' technique devised by Winnicott (1971) at the beginning of the session, but when the boy began to draw spontaneously, I worked with it in another way in line with a 'drawing association method' (Makise, 2013). This method first values the way in which children practise 'free association' using drawing. We can introduce a logical relationship into the drawing by kind of interpretation which is impossible when only listening to their speech; we do this by punctuating their phantasy with the exchange of the paper and making 'objet a' emerge. The exchange of the paper enables children to reconstruct a relation with the Other as the third party, by means of a relation with an analyst.

The boy became unable to maintain the relationship that he had built with his mother, by starting to attend the nursery. He needed to re-question his relationship with his mother and reconstruct himself. Those problems, which became apparent in the first session, were gradually expressed in a form that converged on the question 'where do babies come from', which is associated with Oedipal conflict. In this process, 'something like letters' emerged that set up an ambiguous boundary between letters and drawings, and brought about an oscillation between meaning and non-meaning.

In this paper, we will focus on the seventh session in which such 'something like letters' appeared and the eighth session in which development of treatment was promoted based on it.

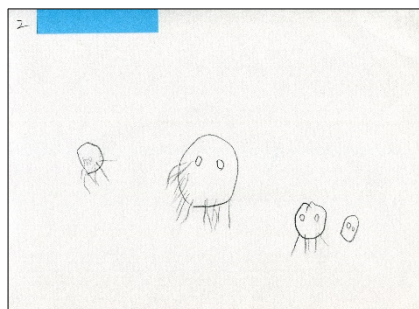
The seventh session

Figure 5: The first sheet



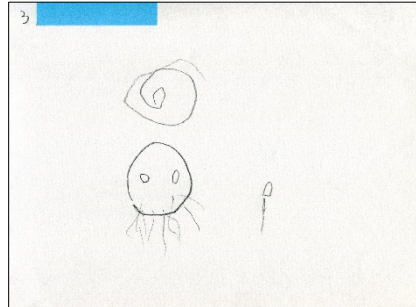
To begin with, I said 'I am going to draw round and round, closing my eyes as usual, if it seems to you to be something, can you tell me what it is', and I drew a wavy line on a sheet of paper (see Figure 5). Then the boy said: 'This is dad's forehead' and drew a big face, using the wavy lines as a wrinkle on his forehead, and added eyes and hair to it. Next he said: 'This is not a beard. It's an octopus', drawing a few thin lines on the underside of the face. At that I said: 'This is an octopus. Is there anyone else?', quickly changing the first sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 6: The second sheet



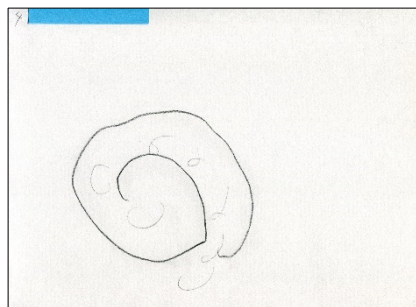
The boy said: 'The little octopus will be bigger', drawing a little octopus on the left side of the paper and then he told me what this was, saying: 'This octopus is me' (see Figure 6). Next he said: 'This octopus is a mother', drawing a bigger octopus on the centre of the paper. Furthermore, he said: 'My brothers are coming back from school', drawing two little octopuses on the right side of the paper. When we switched from the second sheet to the third sheet, I asked him: 'Where is a father octopus?', quickly changing the second sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 7: The third sheet



The boy answered: 'The father is back', drawing a slightly larger octopus and then he said: 'But no eggs have been laid' (see Figure 7). In addition, he said: 'The mother got a fever and died because the needle stuck in her body', drawing a spiral line on the upper side of the paper. I asked him: 'Did the mother die?', and he replied: 'But she is cured.' Furthermore, I asked him: 'What was the needle?', and he answered: 'It is like this', drawing the needle on the right side of the octopus.' Then he started to say 'Pom Pom Pom Pom (to describe, in Japanese, the sound of eggs being laid down). I asked him: 'Pom Pom Pom Pom?', and he answered: 'Octopus, Pom Pom Pom Pom,' with an air of some excitement. I asked him: 'What is Pom Pom Pom Pom?' quickly changing the third sheet for a new sheet of paper.

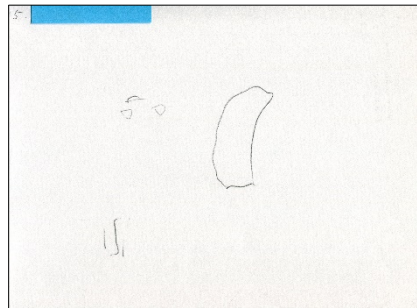
Figure 8: The fourth sheet



The boy remained excited and drew a spiral line and said: 'A egg is about to be laid. It is coming out', drawing the egg rolling out of the centre of the spiral (see Figure 8). Then he said: 'The mother is crackling like fireworks.'

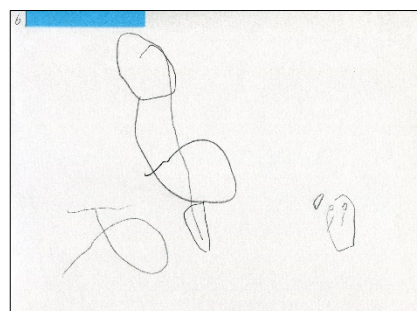
When we switched from the fourth sheet to the fifth sheet, I asked him: 'What happened after that?', quickly changing the fourth sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 9: The fifth sheet



The boy answered: 'Yokai (Ghost) fireworks happened. This became a broken ear (see Figure 9). There is a banana too', drawing them. (The Yokai fireworks are on the upper left side of the paper. The broken ear is on the lower left side of the paper. The banana is drawn on the centre of the paper.) Then he said: 'Boka Boka Bokahan (to describe, in Japanese, the sound of an explosion). The father is doing fireworks with the mother.' I asked him: 'What happened then?', quickly changing the fifth sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 10: The sixth sheet

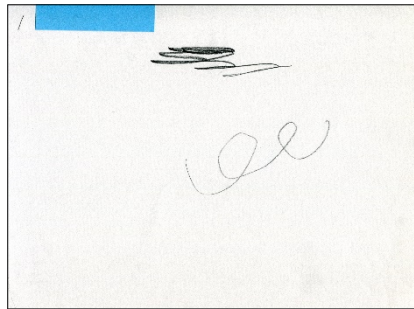


The boy answered: 'The father is saying something. I was born as an egg', drawing his own figure on the lower right side of the paper (see Figure 10). Then he said: 'A pee is coming out a banana', drawing the banana and the pee coming out from the tip of the banana on the centre of the paper. In addition, he wrote something like a letter ahead of the pee on the lower left side of the paper. I asked him: 'What is this?', he told me: 'This is my name.'

It was at that point that I ended the seventh session.

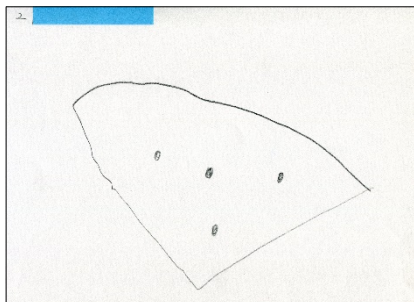
The eighth session

Figure 11: The first sheet



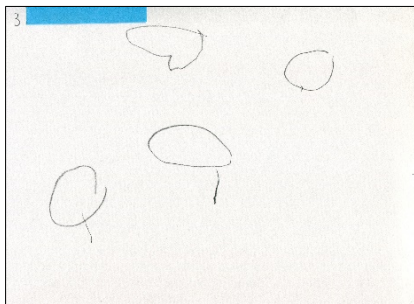
The boy took a seat and started to draw spontaneously. After drawing a spiral line by himself, he said: 'A poop is coming out vigorously, Buri Buri Buri' (to describe, in Japanese, the sound of a poop coming out) and drew it on the upper centre of the paper (see Figure 11). I asked him: 'Buri Buri Buri?', changing the first sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 12: The second sheet



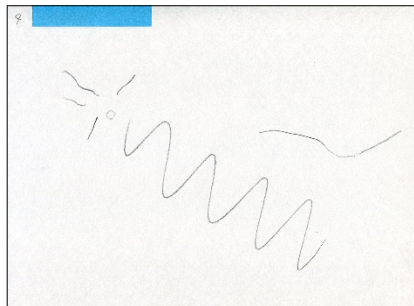
The boy answered: 'It became a watermelon', drawing it (see Figure 12). When we switched from the second sheet to the third sheet, I asked him: 'Do you like a watermelon?', changing the second sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 13: The third sheet



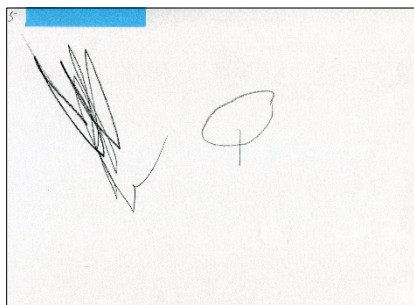
The boy answered: 'I also love an apple', drawing the apple on the centre of the paper (see Figure 13). Then he said: 'I also like an orange and a strawberry', drawing them. (The orange is on the upper right side of the paper. The strawberry is on the upper centre of the paper.) Next, he said: 'There is another apple' and drawing it. Then I asked him: 'Are there two apples?', changing the third sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 14: The fourth sheet



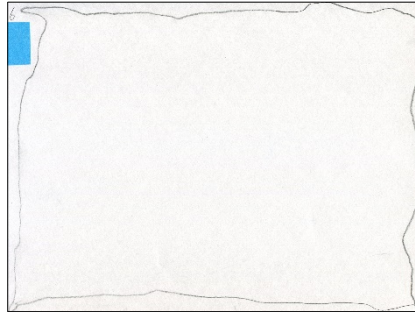
The boy answered: 'The God of thunder is falling', drawing how the God of thunder falls (see Figure 14). (The God of thunder is on the upper left side of the paper.) I asked him: 'Where does the God of thunder fall?', and he replied: 'It is my home.' Then I asked him: 'How is your home?', and he said: 'This is it', drawing a bent line on the right side of the paper. In addition, he told me: 'It is the sea. There are octopuses in this.' I asked him: 'What happened then?', changing the fourth sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 15: The fifth sheet



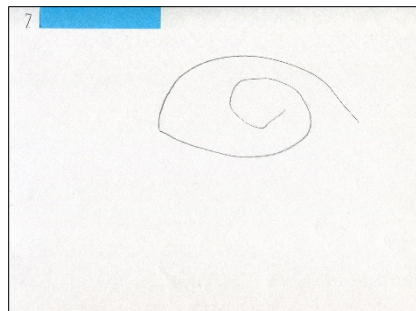
The boy answered: 'The thunder, Bari Bari Bari (to describe, in Japanese, the sound of thunder)', drawing the thunder on the upper left side of the paper (see Figure 15). Then he said: 'The God of thunder says that an apple is saying something', drawing the apple on the centre of the paper. I asked him: 'What happened after that?', quickly changing the fifth sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 16: The sixth sheet



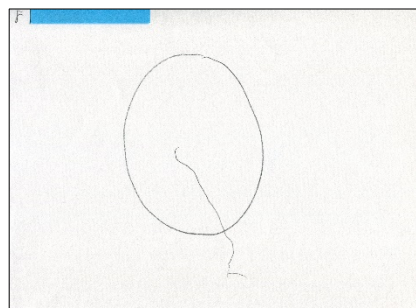
The boy answered: 'A mirror will come out', and drew a large square (see Figure 16). Then he said: 'I am in the mirror'. I looked into the mirror with him and asked him: 'Well, this is the mirror. Is there anything else in it?', quickly changing the sixth sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 17: The seventh sheet



The boy answered: 'Eggs are rolling around. They are competing, saying 'I am the top' (see Figure 17). I asked him: 'What happened after that?', and I quickly changed the seventh sheet for a new sheet of paper.

Figure 18: The eighth sheet



The boy answered: 'A baby is born from the egg', drawing a circle (see Figure 18). Then he said: 'A pee is coming out from the egg' and added a line to the egg. After that, he turned the paper upside down, and said: 'Turning the paper upside down, it became an apple'.

It was at that point I ended the eighth session.

Through the seventh and eighth sessions as described above, a turning point in treatment was caused, and as a result, the boy became able to express his conflict in a new way. Something like letters that emerged when such turning point in treatment was caused, were the letters drift on the littoral of the sea that octopuses lived, or the letters that brought about a swing between meaning and non-meaning. This fact seems to show a connection to what we have discussed before.

The boy tried to re-question his relationship with his mother and to reconstruct himself in the first session. Concerning this problem, in the seventh session, he became to re-question his origin through the question 'where do babies come from'. Furthermore, in process that the objet a for the boy, such as an egg or a baby produced by the sexual intercourse of parents emerged, something like letters as his name appeared, together with the image of a disjointed body (the sixth sheet of the seventh session). We may say that it was also a single trait (*trait unaire*), or the signifier of non-meaning for the subject. In addition, it was transformed into combination between a circle and a single line in the eighth session. Repeatedly appearing and disappearing at the waterside, or the littoral, finally, it became the object of the boy's character play (the eighth sheet of the eighth session).

Lacan (1964) states as follows regarding the issue of interpretation. 'Interpretation is not open to all meaning. It is not just any interpretation. It is significant interpretation, one that must not be missed. This does not mean that it is not this signification that is essential to the advent of the subject. What is essential is that he should see, beyond this signification, to what signifier - to what irreducible, traumatic, non-meaning - he is, as a subject, subjected.' Based on what Lacan says here, we can understand that the boy tried to express how he was subjected to the non meaning signifier, turning something like letters upside down, with humour, through the process we have described.

Hence, something like a letter in this clinical case, was one that indicated the impossibility of connection with the individual life of the self (the impossibility to know the individual life of the self) that the boy inevitably came to hold onto when he became a linguistic subject. At the same time, it provided opportunity for the boy to re-question his relationship with his mother and to reconstruct himself under that impossibility. In this sense, we can see that it had the same significance that Ashide characters had. In fact, Sano (2000) points out that the remnants of Ashide characters can be found in children's character play such as a drawing song. In other words, just as the ancestors supported their own existence through Ashide characters, the boy faced the 'impossibility', not being able to have words to express themselves, through 'something like letters', and grasped truly realistic thing for human beings, and then came to overcome the conflict (Makise, 2017).

Of course, something like letters in this clinical case had a connection with 'ma (ま)' which is a part of the boy's name, and strictly speaking, it was not the same as 'ma (ま)' of Ashide characters. However, if we remember the functional aspect of Ashide characters and the fact that it was used as auspicious characters at the time of

childbirth, we can find there not only the connection between the two, but also what we have in common with our predecessors, in other words, knowledge about suffering that we inevitably hold when we try to position our existence through Kkana characters which are unique to Japan and to overcoming it.

It can be also called 'knowledge about birth of the subject'. At this point of contact, it opens the way to utilize the culture of the ancestors about Ashide characters, in clinical practice using drawings. In addition, based on the results of the discussion in this paper, we can see that it is therapeutic significance to pay attention to something like letters beyond its meaning.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have considered the relationship between drawings and letters in Japan, using Ashide characters that were once the point of contact between the two as a guiding thread from the viewpoint of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Then, the following results were obtained. Ashide characters not only played the role of expressing songs and sutras like pictures, but also played the role of expressing the impossibility to connect with individual life of the self that the ancestors inevitably became to hold, when they tried to position their existence through Kkana characters which are unique to Japan. Ashide characters that opened up a new relationship with the desires of the Other to the subject through missing encounter with lost form of life (= the impossibility) in the sway between meaning and non-meaning, or to write it serve the same function as interpretation in psychoanalysis. Therefore, it may have functioned as a support for existence of the ancestors.

Furthermore, we have examined how these results are related to our clinical practice with drawing, based on the connection with 'knowledge about the birth of the subject' of Ashide characters. As a result, we can understand that something like letters that set up an ambiguous boundary between letters and drawing has the same function that Ashide characters had once, and it is possible to promote reconstruction of the subject by paying attention to such 'something like letters' as traces of Ashide characters, beyond its meaning.

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