

Introduction of Nishida's Philosophy for Mindfulness-Based SIMT

Forward

Mindfulness SIMT

SIMT (Self Insight Meditation Technology/Therapy) is a type of MT (Mindfulness Therapy) that was developed uniquely in Japan. Examples of Mindfulness Therapy in the US are Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy, and Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT).

Mindfulness therapies are all similar in that they promote the development of one's mindfulness and yet they all differ in its methods. SIMT is unique in that it is based on the philosophies of Nishida and Suzuki.

SIMT's foundation lies on the ways of Zen and its philosophy. Because Zen is limited to its ideology, there were no real practical methods that could be applied to patients with mental disorders. The philosophy of Kitaro Nishida was applied to compensate for what Zen ideology lacked. Nishida practiced Zen and insightfully examined the Self to formulate his philosophy. His philosophy helped to establish the guideline for practical therapy as well as prevention methods for patients with mental disorders. Another important reference used in the creation of SIMT was Daisetsu Suzuki's writings on Zen.

As such, SIMT's Mindfulness Therapy was developed in Japan based on Nishida's philosophy, Suzuki's Zen ideology, and Dogen Zen, in addition to the typical references such as research results on patients with mental disorders and neurophysiology.

SIMT is a 10 step program and a manual for treating depression, anxiety and PTSD has been published. (Reference A, 2013)

In March of 2009, a non-profit organization called Mindfulness Research Institute was founded. There, Zen counseling was performed until SIMT was developed.

In June of 2014, Japanese Association of Mindfulness Psychotherapy(JAMP) was established. From then on, SMIT courses for therapists have been offered for the purpose of certifying Mindfulness Meditation Therapists (MMT).

Nishida's Philosophy

Nishida's philosophy was systemized by none other than Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945) who was born in Unokemura in Ishikawa Prefecture (currently Kahoku City). He logically defines the Self and the world in which he/she resides. His philosophy has been translated into many Western languages and is still being studied today.

Nishida's philosophy explains various issues however, for the purpose of our topic, only matters concerning psychotherapy will be mentioned. Serious issues deeply embedded in one's awareness will require the understanding of Nishida's philosophy on religion and absolute nothingness. That shall be for another time.

Chapter 1 The Self and the World

Section 1 Now-Here-Self

You exist here and now. The Self is always an integral part of the universe in which it influences the choices it makes in its actions to materialize one's value. The present becomes the past instantaneously and thus there is only the present. Now is forever eternal.

The world and the environment are created by actions taken by countless human beings in the present moment. The Self is always creating its environment from the point of now and here. One's senses help it to see, which in turn helps it to think and act to create the world.

Section 2 The Self Resides Within the World

(Reference Diagram 1-2)

According to Nishida, "if the world is created by countless individuals, then that implies that each individual is part of a whole and each interrelate with one another."

The world does not exist outside of oneself, one resides within the world. One is enveloped by the world and as such, individuals project the world within his/herself and uses this image as the foundation to create a new world by acting out the choices that enable materializing his/her values. (E11, F23)

Section 3 From the Created to Creating

Each individual is affected by the creations in his/her environment. Past creations placed in the world influence future creations. In other words, the

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have knowledge of its place is a more profound act which lies somewhere deeper than the previous location. (G2)

Section 2 Noesis (Act) and Noema (Subject)

(Reference Diagram 2-1)

There are various types of conscious acts that humans engage in (simply called acts or function). For each conscious act, there are two facets: the act and its subject. Nishida describes them as Noesis and Noema. Noesis refers to the act and Noema the subject. Noesis is also what envelop the space the two occupy. (G3)

Acts of consciousness include the senses, thoughts, and acts of will to name a few. The senses consist of sight, hearing, smelling, taste and touch. The contents of said senses are vision, sound, fragrance, taste (sweet, salty, etc.) and to feel pain or cold.

The contents of thoughts are words, ideology and scientific fact. For instance, when "one thinks I am no good," "I am no good" is the content but the act of "thinking" is taking place simultaneously. The act of doing and its content are two separate entities. The act of thinking is constant and yet its content is consistently changing.

The function of sight is to create images. Likely, sound is what is created by the function of hearing. What was created is usually called subject or content. While function or act does not change, the content is forever changing. One can perform the same function of seeing but the content will vary each time such as a mountain, a tree, a person, a wall, etc. (F7)

Section 3 The Act and its Subject Occupy the Same Place

The act of consciousness, consciousness for short, are basic functions such as sight and thought. Because they exist within one's consciousness, they too must occupy some space. Sight, hearing, taste, smell and physical sense such as feeling heat also have their place. Moreover, a place exists that envelop the act and its subject together. (G2)

Section 4 Subject Projection in the Conscious Field

A subject harnessed by an act projects itself in some place somewhere in one's consciousness. That projected place is called the Conscious Field. The consciousness and its subject is a conscious phenomenon. However, the field of consciousness is not of the same thing. The relationship is similar to that of a mirror image of an object and the mirror. (G2)

Section 5 The Act and its Subject Embrace their Place

The subject that causes an act resides beneath the function. The subject wraps around the function from its depth. The subject that knows and acts is also the place where the function of knowing and acting are enveloped. It is not a point but an area of embrace. (G2)

Self is not a subject nor a function and yet holds the definition of the two elements that occupy the space. (G2)

Section 6 Self Awareness

Self is the subject that lies beneath the act it causes. To progressively know oneself and to be conscious of one's self is called "self-awareness." (F4)

The "place" where the act is enveloped during one's act is considered to be "Self." Put another way, the subject that becomes aware of the act at the precise moment of performing a conscious act is considered to be "Self."

There are many cases where the individual does not recognize the Self during the act. The Self is not recognized whilst Enactive Intuition.

Chapter 3 Acts of Will

Section 1 Long Term Value of Life

People in the world chooses and materializes what is valuable to him/herself over an extended period of time. Examples are one's occupation, family, hobby and/or volunteer activities. These are the values of life. This refers to the value of doing and not of existence. One sees and acts to fulfill his/her value in the place of his/her choosing.

The value of life is what one creates for the world over a length of time. For instance, "truth" by scientists, "beauty" by artists, "holiness" by religious people and "technology" by industrial people. Individuals love themselves by loving the value they've materialized. (F39)

Because all individuals live within the world, he/she must work for the world. The act of establishing a goods or services within the world is called "Poesis." To work is a type of skill. Poesis means to work for the value of life. The act of developing one's inner self during this state of Poiesis is called "Praxis". (H9)

Section 2 Short Term Goal

(Reference Diagram 3-5)

While fulfilling one's long term value of life, one repeatedly pictures a number of short term plans and acts upon them. That in which they strive for

is the goal. The goal can be set in years, months, days, hours or minutes. For instance, the goal of making a meal can be achieved in less than half an hour. To pass an exam within a year is a long term goal. In order to achieve that long term goal, one can set short term goals such as studying math for 3 hours every day.

Section 3 Dogmatism – Self Interest – Egotism- True Intention

(Reference Diagram 3-3)

Whether it be a number of short term goals or one long term goal, it is very difficult to achieve them in a manner one hopes to. One faces many obstacles along the way. The world's movements are created by countless individuals. Because all human beings possess free will and behave freely, self-materialization and self-profit inevitably creeps in.

Because of one's freedom, he/she may misunderstand having obtained the absolute truth and act inappropriately. Or one may get overly attached to personal prejudice and profit and make others suffer or commit wrong doings. Prejudice, dogmatism, self-interest, egotism are all things that sabotage the fulfillment of one's or others' values and goals. In SIMT, they are called "True Intention." True intention works simultaneously with conscious acts. (F16)

Section 4 Varying Depths of Acts

(Reference Diagram 3-4)

As previously mentioned, there are various types of conscious acts such as senses, thoughts, desires and willful acts. There are varying levels within these conscious acts. The profoundness of the act depends on whether a certain act can be seen as the subject of another act. The act of seeing does not allow one to comprehend the contents of one's thought. On the other hand, the act of thinking manages what one sees with his/her eyes. In other words, one thinks about what he/she is seeing.

Therefore, the act of thinking is more profound than the act of seeing. For example, one can look at an apple and think about it in various ways. However, one cannot see his/her thoughts by simply looking.

Looking and listening often times causes an action. This causal force is called the willful act. A willful act allows one to consider the contents of what one saw, heard, or the contents of one's thoughts as a subject and it can also halt it. Therefore, a willful act is more profound than the act of seeing, hearing and thinking.

One's emotions are for expressing whether one is satisfied or frustrated with the state he/she is in and it is caused by his/her senses, thoughts and

actions. In addition, there are different degrees of emotions depending on its content's level of profoundness. (F8)

Section 5 Profound Willful Acts

(Reference Diagram 3-5)

To observe the difference and transition of various acts is a willful act. For the purpose of fulfilling one's value, one repeatedly envisions one's short term goals and works towards materializing them. However, because such actions activate one's true intent, they cannot get carried out as planned.

One uses mental acts such as perception (inner, outer), reasoning, and recollection in order to fulfill his value but the perceived idea may differ from his/her true intention and consequently be unpleasant. Even then, one should not engage in an act of value destruction. He/she must strive to work towards happiness by choosing to achieve his/her short and long term goals to fulfill one's value. This act of control is the willful act.

A willful act is the conscious act of unifying one's integrated goals by calmly observing one's actions and renewing one's determination and taking action that will materialize his/her goals. (F20)

Section 6 Further Profoundness in Self-Hierarchy

(Reference Diagram 3-6)

The Self behaves as a subject. Beneath behavior and function lie the subject. People have a multitude of views regarding the Self.

Nishida mentions the existence of the Profound Self and its acts. This view is not common in the West. The central belief in Nishida's philosophy is that of a profound self but that will be omitted here.

For the sake of improving and preventing psychological issues such as relationship problems, depression, anxiety, and PTSD, the practice of being a willful self by utilizing willful acts would be sufficient. However, for more serious issues like negation of personality or those concerned with death will require the practice of being a far more profound self as defined by Nishida.