

# Analytical Psychology in a Changing World

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## The search for self, identity and community

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## Chapter 2

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### Big stories and small stories in the psychological relief work after the earthquake disaster

#### Life and Death

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# BIG STORIES AND SMALL STORIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL RELIEF WORK AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE DISASTER

Life and death

*Toshio Kawai*

## **Outreach model and collective task**

As the strict setting of psychoanalysis typically shows, psychotherapy has been based on the free will and decision of patients to visit psychotherapists and pay the fee for sessions. However, recently more and more psychotherapists have been engaged with work in hospitals (HIV counseling, terminal care, genetic counseling etc.), schools and even in places hit by natural disaster and social crisis. Psychotherapy is used for crisis intervention. In such cases people can get psychological help as a service offered on site, sometimes without paying a fee. Although the conventional model of psychotherapy is still widely used, this new type of psychotherapy may bring about a fundamental change in the idea of psychotherapy.

Analytical psychology is not an exception in this trend. There is no statistical data available for what percentage of Jungian analysts work outside of their own private practices. However, analytical psychology's involvement with various kinds of trauma work and activity after the earthquake in China (Shen & Lan 2012) seems to prove its engagement with new needs and working models for psychotherapy. This change effects not only the working style from the analytical setting to an outreach model, but also the theoretical framework. As Jung's work, *Symbole und Wandlungen der Libido* (1912), which inaugurated the school of analytical psychology, typically shows, analytical psychology has tried to investigate the collective psyche through work with individual persons. However, especially in the case of crisis intervention a collective problem stands in the foreground while in a normal

and conventional analysis the collective dimension is hidden in the background and elucidated only as interiority. In this sense, analytical psychology is faced with a new situation, which is caused by the changing needs of people and society.

I would like to discuss how analytical psychology and psychotherapy confront collective problems and tasks in the new working model by mainly referring to my involvement with the psychological relief work after the unprecedented earthquake disaster in March 2011 in Japan. Unlike in normal psychotherapy, there is a clear assumption in this psychological relief work that psychological problems are caused by the shock of the earthquake. How can analytical psychology cope with the collective problem of an earthquake disaster? Moreover, I have to point out that there is not only the concrete collective problem, but also that of the worldview. In the case of this earthquake, it was not only a natural but also a national disaster. The whole of Japan was physically and psychically hit by the disaster. The way of living, the trust placed in technology, and the responsibility of political officials have all come into question. So people have to face the collective dimension not only as a concrete problem but also as worldview problem. In this chapter, I will mainly focus on the practical aspect, but I will refer finally to the metaphorical aspect.

### **Listening to stories**

Let me describe briefly the devastation caused by the 2011 earthquake off the Pacific coast of Tōhoku, which occurred on the afternoon of March 11, 2011. It was the most powerful earthquake ever to be recorded in Japanese history, with the extremely strong energy of a magnitude 9.0. About 16,000 people died and 3,000 are still missing. More than 350,000 houses and buildings were half destroyed or totally destroyed. More than 22,000 ships were lost. The huge tsunami, following the earthquake, triggered at the epicenter about 70 km off the coast, caused unprecedented damage and victims. More than 90 percent of the victims were swept away by the tsunami and were drowned. Moreover, the shock and the tsunami destroyed several nuclear power plants in Fukushima, which led to the secondary disaster of radiation leakage from the plants. There is still ongoing danger and after-effects from the nuclear accidents. Given the nature of the series of tragic events that occurred, this disaster is appropriately called ‘the Great East Japan Earthquake.’

Immediately after this tremendous disaster, not only rescue parties and relief supplies but also psychological relief teams were sent to the stricken areas. Many volunteer psychotherapists and psychiatrists and those sent by public services travelled to the region in order to support refugees psychologically. At the beginning it was almost impossible to differentiate psychological help from practical help. Many volunteer psychotherapists helped to dispose of rubble and mud, or they simply stayed with depressed and despairing refugees.

Afterwards, psychological relief work was mainly organized by the Association of Japanese Clinical Psychology, which has more than 20,000 members. The Association of Jungian Analysts Japan (AJAJ) and the Japanese Association for Sandplay Therapy (JAST) also organized a joint working committee for psychological relief work for earthquake victims. (Sandplay Therapy is very popular in Japan, and the JAST has more than 2,000 members. This is probably because Japanese people still partly live within a pre-modern worldview in which experience is not primarily situated within the human subject but in things or in nature. In this sense, Sandplay Therapy fits nicely into the worldview of Ikebana and the Japanese garden tradition (Kawai 2010).) I was Chair of this joint working committee and our activity has been reported in part on the IAAP website (<http://iaap.org/>).

Our project had several focuses. One important concept was the care of caregivers such as psychotherapists, nurses, teachers and firemen. The reason for this type of indirect intervention was that our team came from a distance and could not be on site permanently. Such caregivers are supposed to be able to endure psychological difficulties for a certain period of time and wait for psychological help. Our second focus was to send a school counselor to the stricken areas, since sandplay is suitable for children. This project led to care of people based at the school because not only children but also their teachers and parents came to consult the school counselor in the course of time. From the standpoint of the government, equality is of absolute importance, which very often leads to a scattering of money and persons. With our limited resources, we tried to use the chance to have contact with victims and to deepen our quantitatively limited work, which could contribute to creating a new model for psychological relief work in the future.

The caregivers have to contain the difficult experiences and stories without any outlet for a period of time. This can become an unbearable burden for them, so it is important that those stories are shared in a protected circle. In this sense, the care of the soul means the care of stories. Stories should be listened to, respected and shared. Our project does not try to teach the caregivers or to impose new methods to cope with psychological difficulties. Rather, we try to make protagonists out of people who suffer and to learn from them as well. Indeed, many caretakers are overwhelmed by various new methodologies and offers given to them. There are many courses for psychological coping and relief work organized by the government.

We did not go to the Tōhoku region immediately after the earthquake but waited until there was a need from the victims to reflect on what was happening. The first set of emails and fax inquiries about the damage and situation among members of both associations in the Tōhoku region met with very few replies. However, the second set of inquiries that were sent out resulted in many responses, indicating how our members experienced the disaster and how they were struggling for professional help. So we decided to visit the site at the end of April for the first time, just after the partial recovery of Sendai Airport.

### **Life and death, coincidences**

On arriving at Sendai Airport and observing the area from the plane, we were shocked by the piles of destroyed cars that had been swept away and crushed by the tsunami. Observing the wiped-out trees and buildings, we saw that the tsunami came right up to the airport building and destroyed everything around.

On arriving at the city center of Sendai by bus a short while later, I had another strange feeling because I expected to find a heavily damaged city like Kobe after the Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995. At least seen superficially from outside, almost no sign of the earthquake disaster was noticeable. People and cars were moving on the streets without any trace of damage from the earthquake. The contrast to the condition of the area near the airport was significant. Later, we visited the area directly hit by the tsunami near the coast. On one side of the highway there were ruins of buildings, destroyed cars, fallen trees, personal belongings, etc. On the other side of the highway, however, there was almost no damage to be seen because the highway bank blocked the tsunami. Because most of the damage was caused by the tsunami in the case of this earthquake in Tōhoku, there was a clear contrast of damage along the path of the tsunami versus areas outside the tsunami's path. Very often, the damage on one side versus the other side of a road was completely different.

This is why there were so many stories about life and death. Some people could narrowly escape with their lives, while others unfortunately died. Some schools had no victims, while others had several or many victims. More than 20,000 people were killed, most of them because of the tsunami.

Concerning these dramatic stories of life and death, I would like to report only one story told by my colleague, Yasuhiro Tanaka, who was a member of our psychological relief work team. His mother-in-law who lived in Ishinomaki, a port town devastated by the tsunami, was missing for a week after the earthquake, so we were afraid the worst might have occurred. However, luckily she was found alive in a high school. Two days before the huge earthquake, there was a relatively big earthquake of magnitude 7.2 in the same area. This was later regarded as a major foreshock of the main earthquake. Her neighbor who was Korean and had not experienced a big earthquake before was terribly upset and visited her to ask what the matter was. His mother-in-law explained that this was an earthquake. Her neighbor thanked her for the explanation and promised her to escape together in his car when a big one should come since she did not have a car. When the big earthquake really occurred in the afternoon of the 11th of March, her neighbor came up to her after the first long shake and suggested to escape with him by car. They went by car to the nearest elementary school to take refuge, but they were refused entry because it was already full of people. This school, which was regarded as safe and a refugee spot, was hit by the tsunami afterwards and many people died there. So a seemingly unfortunate rejection turned out

to be fortunate for them. They went on by car, but the road was crowded because many people tried to go up the hill by car. The tsunami was already coming from behind. The Korean neighbor did not know the roads, but my colleague's mother-in-law did. She suggested to her neighbor to make a right turn on the next street. Because of this decision, they were narrowly able to escape the tsunami and arrive at a high school that was used as a refugee camp, where they stayed for a week. Coming back home, she found her house totally devastated, full of water, and a corpse of an unknown person floating inside.

This story shows how my colleague's mother-in-law was saved by several coincidences. Without these coincidences she might very well have died. If there was no preliminary earthquake, if her neighbor had not come up, if they had been accepted by the first school, if they had not turned right on the road . . . This story is dreadful enough. But there are many stories about how a person lost a partner, children, parents, friends or pupils. The principal of the school to which we sent a school counselor told us that four pupils were picked up by their parents right after the earthquake and killed by the tsunami afterwards while other pupils remained at school and were saved.

If one's fate was decided by sheer coincidences, how did one feel and react in the face of such a fate? Did a person who suffered nothing but slight damage only feel lucky and relieved, while a person who suffered a serious loss such as death of family members was left with a great sorrow and agony? Psychological pain is not simple and does not correlate with the objective gravity of damage. This experience of the earthquake let us know how the human psyche is complicated, connected with others and sharing the sufferings. A counselor told me that those firemen who had to wait for an order to dispatch and stayed in the station experienced more suffering and psychological problems than those who actually did the hard rescue work and were confronted with many corpses. The imagination and guilty feelings caused more psychological problems. In a workshop for nursing teachers concerned with psychological relief work for the earthquake disaster, some teachers said that they had been suffering from guilty feeling because their schools were relatively safe and had less damage. Because the human psyche is connected, this can lead to a positive and negative result. On one hand, we can be sympathetic to other people and share their sufferings. This earthquake reminded us of human solidarity and produced the key word 'Kizuna' (solidarity). But on the other hand, because of the connectedness of the human psyche, we can have unnecessary pain that has in truth nothing to do with us. The point in psychological relief work seems to be to find out how to relate to and at the same time separate from the issue.

Telling and listening to a story also has these two aspects. Telling one's own story of suffering can bring back the fear and agony, but it may also provide relief from the suffering. In this regard, I would like to point out that Jung emphasized the dialectics of union and separation in his late works on alchemy (Giegerich 2007). The subtitle of his late work *Mysterium*

*Conjunctionis* is 'An inquiry into the separation and synthesis of psychic opposites in alchemy'. In analytical psychotherapy, the aspect of integration and union is stressed as a successful result of therapy: one should integrate the shadow, or relate to anima/animus. But the moment of separation and the dialectic relation between union and separation seem to be crucial in the psychological relief work after the earthquake.

### **Experience sharing: psychological time**

During our psychological relief work, we noticed that stories about life and death are not told soon after a disaster. Our team does not consist of trauma and crisis intervention specialists, so we stay with the victims and observe without presumption what happens in the course of time. Very often victims of a disaster need a certain lapse of time before they are psychologically ready to tell their personal stories of their experiences. However, this timing is very often not respected by the mass media, which are eager to find and report dramatic stories immediately following any disaster. And in these days of communication by Blog and Twitter, people tend to ignore their psychological timing and disclose their stories too early. Because we visited the area hit by the tsunami regularly, we noticed that there is a general flow of psychological time. When we visited in July, four months after the disaster, we had many reports from school counselors that children begin to talk about their nightmares. I am not of the opinion that psychotherapists should focus on and 'work out' technically these nightmares and trauma experiences in such cases. How, then, can we understand such nightmares and their timing?

In the case of therapy with schizophrenic patients, it is reported that they begin to have dreams related to their delusions and hallucinations when the condition is a little stable. A Japanese psychiatrist, Hisao Nakai (1974), who is famous for therapy of schizophrenics, interpreted this change as absorption of delusions into dreams. Delusions can now be objectively experienced and placed in the framework of dreams. In the analogy with this process, experiencing and telling nightmares should not be interpreted as a revival of the traumatic events. It rather means that they cease to have overwhelming power and are no longer so threatening. It revives the memories, but also helps them to disappear. The person can now be connected to the experience and the story, but also be separate from them. Here again is a dialectical play of union and separation in the sense of Jung's alchemy study, so it is important simply to listen to the story without working it out too much and trying to relieve the person from the story.

In a school we visited regularly, one teacher told us in July that he had recently dreamt about the earthquake and tsunami and wondered why this timing. And the principal of the school we had met several times before told us for the first time his experience of the tsunami in detail. Maybe his experience could be digested in ways that he could talk about it only after it

was not so overwhelming for him. His story was as follows. After the earthquake, he led first all the teachers and pupils into the sports hall, but as he felt that the hall might not be resistant enough against a possible tsunami, he wanted to evacuate them from the hall to the rooftop of the main school building. He went there with the vice principal to check it. Then on the way back to the first building the tsunami came all of sudden. The vice principal behind him was swept away, and the principal walking ahead could barely escape and run up the stairs to the rooftop. From the rooftop he observed a scene like hell where many broken houses, cars and people were being swept away. He was desperate because he was afraid that the hall was destroyed and children were killed. Luckily, the vice principal could hold on to something and was saved. Also, the hall remained intact, somehow, against the tsunami so that no child was injured or killed.

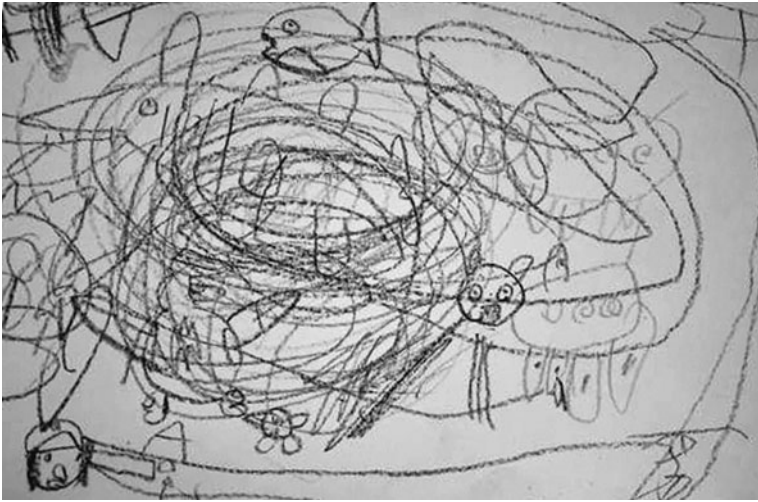
I think such critical stories are told when they are no longer too overwhelming for the person telling of their experience. Our experience with the children at the school supports this hypothesis. In one of the first-grade classes, children freely drew a picture in February by chance, so that was just before the earthquake (Figure 2.1). Then the teacher let them draw a free picture in April again, just after the tremendous earthquake (Figure 2.2). Most of pictures indicated a negative effect of the earthquake and tsunami. It is especially impressive that the structure of the picture was very often destroyed, which seemed to mean the psychic structure of the children was fundamentally shaken by the earthquake and especially by the tsunami.

According to picture-drawing test and therapy, such disturbances of structure in drawings is equivalent to that which is symptomatic of a psychotic crisis.



*Figure 2.1* Painting in February (just before the quake)





*Figure 2.2* Painting in April (just after the quake)

In the pictures drawn in June, a clear recovery was already noticeable (Figure 2.3). The structure of pictures no longer showed any disturbance, so we may conclude that the experience of an earthquake and tsunami leaves indeed a tremendous influence on the psychic structure of people for a short period. However, most children, and indeed most people generally, seem to be able



*Figure 2.3* Painting in June (three months after the quake)

to recover from it if there is a sufficiently good protecting environment. So the frequent reports of so-called traumatic experiences and nightmares in July, four months after the disaster, do not necessarily reflect the onset of traumatic complications. This means rather that the first psychological crisis is over. Although those nightmares and fearful stories are told after the earlier stories become less overwhelming, it is still very important that those stories are shared by a receptive person and in a protective atmosphere.

### **Psychotherapy and small stories**

The reader can imagine how often memories of traumatic experiences of earthquake and tsunami are recounted in psychological relief work. However, as we have experienced in many psychological interventions after other natural and social disasters such as typhoons, criminal attacks and suicides, most people usually begin to talk about something other than the traumatic events after a while. As I explained before, it took about four months after the earthquake disaster for people to overcome their initial shock. Very often adults and children start at some point to speak about other problems, like difficulties in their family relationship or conflicts in school and the workplace. So the traumatic experience of disaster falls away into the background and improvement in psychotherapy is brought about by dealing with more immediate problems like family relationships or conflicts in school.

Our working committee sends a school counselor once a week to an elementary school that was hit by the tsunami. After a while, according to the counselor's reports, the earthquake and the tsunami as such are no longer the theme of counseling. There are various problems that have very little to do directly with the earthquake, although they might be caused indirectly by the earthquake disaster. We also have some reports from teachers that they are anxious about some children and suspicious about the negative effects of the earthquake. Children's psychological and behavioral problems are worth handling, but they have very little to do with the earthquake directly.

So psychotherapy may start because of the earthquake, but its theme does not necessarily have to do with traumatic experiences related to it. In this connection, I would like to introduce very briefly sandplay therapy in the Pediatrics Department of the Red Cross Hospital of Ishinomaki. The following cases were presented in a supervision session offered by our working committee. (I would like to thank our colleagues for permission to use the material.)

The first case (Case 1) was a 10-year-old girl reported by Takehiro Tanaka. She was already in therapy because of a physical complaint before the earthquake. When she lost her sister in the tsunami, her condition deteriorated. In the first sandplay (Figure 2.4), which was made several months after the earthquake, she put many animals in the box. Some seemed to be climbing up the tree, so a tendency toward height was noticeable. In the next session,



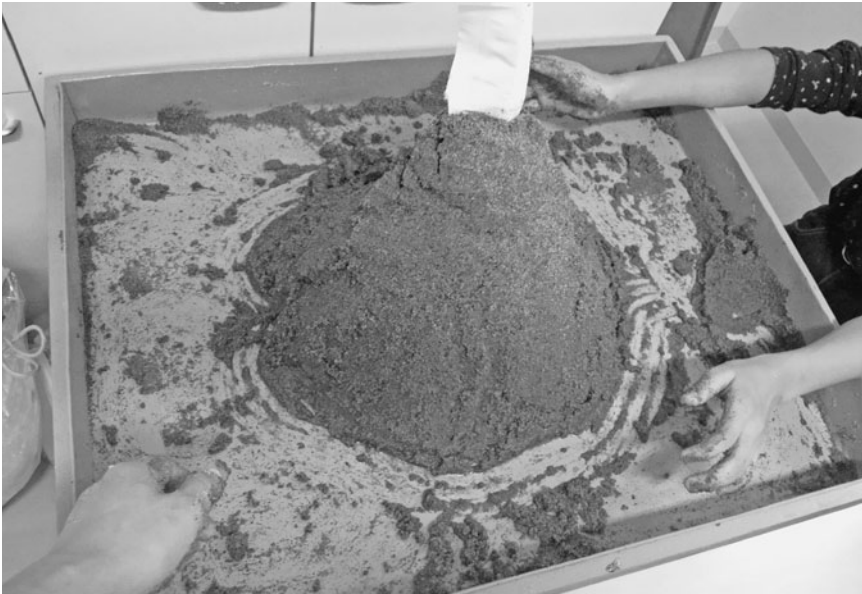
*Figure 2.4* Case 1: 10-year-old girl, No. 1

she made a big mountain and thrust a paper stick in the center (Figure 2.5). Afterwards she leveled the ground and separated the tray into two lands (Figure 2.6). So in this process a clear centering and separation were achieved, which indicated the establishment of her self. After this session, her condition became much better. Her mother, by contrast, made a literal copy of the tsunami scene in her sandplay in the same session, and seemed to stick to the big and literal story of the disaster (Figure 2.7).

Another case of a 10-year-old boy, reported by Akiko Sasaki-Miura, shows a nice psychological development. He took refuge on the rooftop of his school right after the earthquake and watched the tsunami from there. Afterwards he was nervous, bit his nails and could not change into his pajamas at night. The first sandplay (Figure 2.8) was a mixture of woods and water, which may have been to do with the effects of the tsunami. In subsequent sandplays, the work of separation and establishing height was expressed. In the next sandplay (Figure 2.9), there is already some order. In the last sandplay (Figure 2.10), butterflies are at the top of trees. The need for dependence seems to turn into a feminine quality. The boy felt better and was able to leave therapy.

We may conclude that the success of psychotherapy consists in the shift of stories, from the big story of the traumatic event to stories about small, personal problems, or personal psychological development. The big story is repressed and replaced, to use the Freudian term, by small stories. As the

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*Figure 2.5* Case 1: 10-year-old girl, No. 2



*Figure 2.6* Case 1: 10-year-old girl, No. 3



*Figure 2.7* Case 1: mother's sand play



*Figure 2.8* Case 2: 10-year-old boy, No. 1

PSYCHOLOGICAL RELIEF WORK

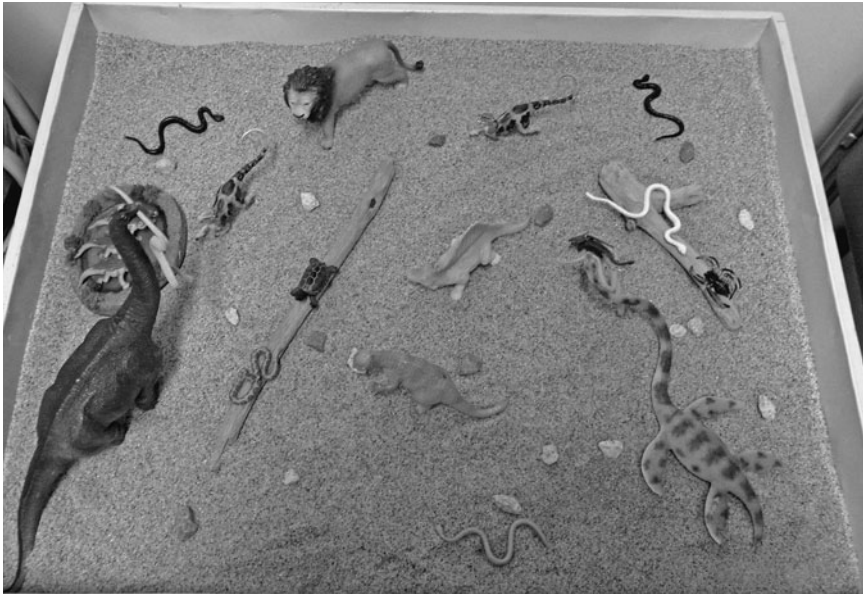


Figure 2.9 Case 2: 10-year-old boy, No. 2

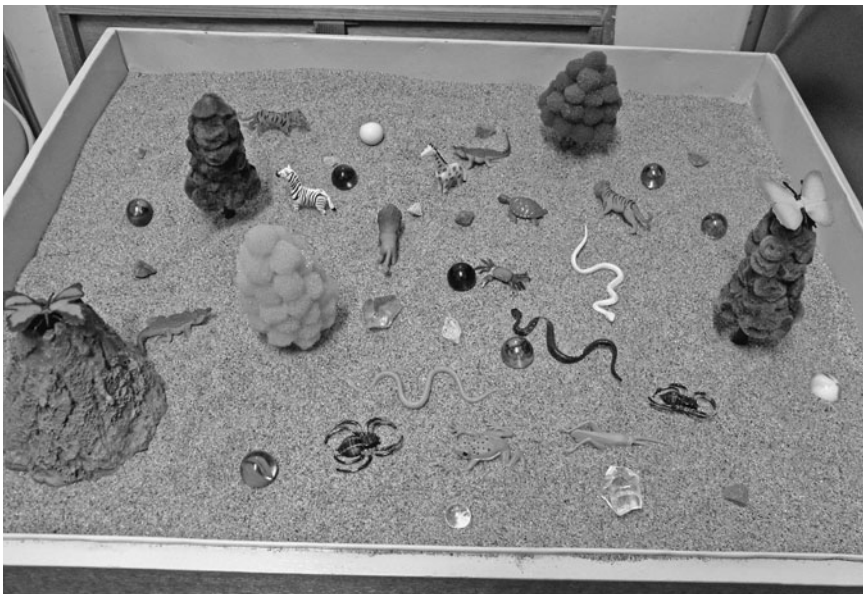


Figure 2.10 Case 2: 10-year-old boy, No. 3

sandplay of the mother of the girl shows, psychological recovery is difficult if the patient sticks to the big story of earthquake and tsunami.

The relationship between the big story and small stories is also valid for the psychotherapy of so-called psychosomatic symptoms. I work as a psychotherapist in a hospital specializing in thyroid diseases. If a medical doctor there diagnoses that psychological factors play a significant role or it is difficult to cure a patient by medical treatment alone, he or she sends the patient to psychotherapy. Also in this case, if the patient talks only about physical problems and complaints, there is no chance of improvement. But psychotherapy and even physical recovery can be facilitated if the patient starts to talk about, for example, her mother-in-law, discontent for her husband, and so forth in the therapeutic session. In this case there is also a shift from the problem of physical complaint to small personal stories.

In psychological relief work after an earthquake disaster I would like to suggest that some victims can make use of the disaster experience for psychological development. In the two sandplay cases mentioned above, both children could achieve the psychological task of separation, height and centering, which are appropriate developments for their ages. A very impressive paper on a psychological work with a boy after the earthquake in Northridge reported by Taki-Reece (2004) can be understood not as trauma work, but rather as psychological development using the crisis of the earthquake. The separation from his parents and the establishment of his psychic center was the theme of the story expressed by his sandplay. Psychotherapy cannot cure the big story, but rather has to do with the small stories.

The importance of small stories should also be stressed outside psychological relief work. The Internet is full of small—and I am inclined to say even unnecessary—stories in the form of personal blogs and twitter postings. ‘I get up . . . I am now eating . . . I am now in a bus heading to . . .’ But just after the earthquake all such stories disappeared from the Internet. People were compelled, or at least felt compelled, to make a headline message: ‘I feel deepest sympathy for those hit by the earthquake . . .’. They refrained from reporting daily, trivial events. One big story could dominate and suppress the small stories, which can be unhealthy. Control of mass media by the government was a critical theme after the earthquake, especially concerning the nuclear plants, but we have to be aware that we must have hidden self-control.

### **Psychotherapy and big stories**

As our psychological relief work with victims of the earthquake disaster indicates, psychotherapy has less to do with the collective problem of earthquake trauma than with small personal problems. In this sense, psychotherapy has little to do with the big story but tries to help people find small stories to live and cope with. When a big story is brought up during therapy as a social

and collective problem, it is very often a sign that a victim still sticks to the old story and avoids change. Sometimes this could be interpreted as resistance to therapy. The exact reproduction of the tsunami scene in a sandplay made by the mother of one of our patients shows that a fixation on the trauma experience is counterproductive for psychotherapy. This may suggest that psychological relief work, which focuses too much on the trauma experience, could be problematic. Various kinds of methods specializing in trauma work were used on this occasion. Such methods could draw too much of the victims' attention to the trauma experience as a big story. According to our support activity in schools, the earthquake and the tsunami really did cause recognizable psychological shocks that, however, became somehow endurable and controllable after several months in a normal and protected process. As we analyzed the meaning of nightmares and the telling of dreadful experiences, the dialectic relationship between integration and separation, between remembering and forgetting, seemed to be psychologically important concerning a collective problem and the big story.

In the big story, it is important to differentiate between the level of concrete problems and that of the worldview. The Tōhoku earthquake in 2011 caused not only real damage but also brought a tremendous shock in the worldview to many Japanese people. It totally destroyed their trust in technology and recalled their relationship to nature. The previously believed big story became meaningless. Following the disaster of the earthquake, the Japanese seem to be in search of a new worldview. In the face of concrete collective problems, psychological relief work suggests that the process of dialectical separation is crucial. In this sense, psychotherapy has nothing to do with the collective dimension, but what about the worldview?

### **The power of nature: fear and fascination**

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, there is a famous inner conversation about myth. Jung asks himself: 'But in what myth does man live nowadays? In the Christian myth, the answer might be 'Do *you* live in it?', I asked myself. 'To be honest, the answer was no. For me, it is not what I live by.' 'Then do we no longer have any myth?' 'No, evidently we no longer have any myth.' 'But then what is your myth – the myth in which you do live?' 'At this point the dialogue with myself became uncomfortable, and I stopped thinking' (Jung 1963, p. 195).

In this conversation, Jung manifested his clear concern about his worldview after the loss of the Christian myth. Similarly, analytical psychology is interested in the big story, not as a social problem but as a worldview on the metaphorical level. However, we have to distinguish psychology from psychotherapy. Psychology does have to do with the discussion of the worldview and the big story, but very seldom does a psychotherapist encounter a creative big story, which seems to be left for artists and novelists. In this case, the big



story tends to be symbolized and metaphorized in a work of art or a novel instead of being replaced by small stories. In the form of psychological interpretation and investigation, psychology does have to do with such big stories. There are some stories in the past and new ones that should be taken into consideration, but in this chapter I would like to remain in the field of psychotherapy.

Although sandplay therapy has to do with an individual problem and solution, there are some signs of the collective dimension as well. In the first case of a girl reported above, a lot of animals were put in the sand box. It is striking that many animals were gathered in some other cases of sandplay. For example, in one case reported by Chie Yoshinari (Figure 2.11), who works as a school counselor in the area hit by the tsunami, a girl made a sandplay in which many animals were coming forward. In another one, presented by Akiko Sasaki-Miura (Figure 2.12), many animals were gathered in the center of the box. Such animals do not necessarily mean confusion or something overwhelming because there is some kind of order among the animals. Rather, they give the impression that the power of life is returning and approaching us, and this indicates the recovery of life.

In the case of a natural disaster, very often there is both the aspect of fear and the feeling of power derived from it. For example, on the coasts hit by the tsunami this time there are hundreds of Shinto shrines. This is because people are both afraid of and thankful for the power of the water, the power of the ocean, which provides fish and other products. People are afraid of nature but, at the same time, grateful for its richness, which is why people built many shrines along the coast.



*Figure 2.11* Case 3 by Chie Yoshinari



Figure 2.12 Case 4 by Akiko Sasaki

These two attitudes are somehow equivalent to the feeling of *tremendum et fascinatum* that Rudolf Otto described as feeling toward the ‘holy’. Both aspects belong to our attitude toward the holy and nature, and were historically noticed in other rituals in Japan. After many natural disasters and epidemics around the ninth century in the Heian period in Japan, a festival was created to drive away bad spirits. This was Gion Matsuri, the most famous festival in Kyoto. However, according to historians, it was important for people at that time not only to drive away bad spirits, but also to gain power over them, so there is both a moment of fear and of fascination. Bad spirits were not feared and hated, but welcomed because they could bring power to the people. Seen from this context, many animals in the sandplay box seem to indicate the power of nature in the positive sense after victims experienced the negative side of the power of nature. Thus it is psychologically problematic if victims are only afraid of an earthquake and tsunami and try to defend themselves from them.

If we go further and analyze people’s attitude toward the nuclear power plant in Japan from this point of view, I have to say that it is totally outside of this worldview of fear and fascination, fear and gratitude. Nuclear power does not belong to environmental order and is outside nature. No wonder

Japanese people have not built any shrines to give thanks to nuclear power plants and want to discard them now without any gratitude for such powers. Is it a failure to build nuclear plants, which do not belong to Japanese cosmology? Do we have to establish a new relationship with the nuclear plant? These are open questions.

### Psychotherapy and psychology

In this chapter, I have remained within the standpoint of psychotherapy and tried to show the aspect of the big story and small stories in the psychological relief work for victims of the earthquake disaster. The psychotherapy consists in the shift from the big story of collective suffering to small stories of personal problems. But as a collective image, the feature of coming-back-to-life power is suggested as a counterpart to the negative natural power of the earthquake.

For psychology, it is also important to think about big stories as a worldview expressed in the novels and works of art both in the past and present day. I cannot go into the subject here, but there are a number of good ideas in past and modern literature (Nakazawa 2011). One legend concerning a tsunami from Kunio Yanagita's *Legends of Tono* (1910) gives an important hint, and Haruki Murakami's stories in *After the Quake* are very suggestive, but it is premature to speak about a new story concretely. It is important now to accept and carry the loss as loss. Because of the earthquake of March 11, 2011, many people lost loved ones, precious property and a place to live. As a psychologist and a psychotherapist, I would like to respect the loss of the old story and worldview so that the emptiness may become a place for the birth of a new story.

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