

DHARMA-BASED PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH**Kazuo Yamashita***Director of "AIOI Counseling Center" (Japan)**E-mail: yamakaz@mvi.biglobe.ne.jp, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4476-4507>***FOREWORD**

Dharma-based Person-Centered Approach is a growing approach coming from the deep connection between Buddhism (especially Shin-Buddhism) and person-centered approach. Professor Gisho Saiko named this approach, "Dharma-based person-centered approach (DPA)." I will describe shortly who is Gisho Saiko and how my learning is living in myself.

1. About Gisho Saiko (1925-2004)

He was born in 1925 at a temple, Mangyo-ji in Nara, Japan. He became a Buddhist Priest. He also worked at Ryukoku University in Kyoto from 1970 to 1994.

His study was not only Buddhism, but also counseling (especially Person-Centered Approach), and social welfare, and education (Learner-centered education.) His style of studying is not only intellectual, but also experiential. On Buddhism he had a turnabout (spiritual Aha-experience) when he was in the 20's, and on Person-Centered Approach he continued to have group experiences. I think his works could be called "practical Buddhism" or "living Buddhism." In his paper, he proposes "Buddha Dharma" instead of "Buddhism." He had been seeking the way what Buddhism could contribute to save our lives in suitable way to Modern Society.

He often said to me. Encountering Client-Centered Therapy /Person-Centered Approach was fundamentally important to him. It gave him a deep awareness of himself how he had tended to look persons from above and teaching them. He found that when he tried understanding persons in their viewpoints, wonderful things happened on persons. And how Buddhism has affinity with that approach. He set up a counseling room when he was a high school teacher and he tried to practice "learner-centered education" in his classes. Then he established the study group for Shin-shu (Shin-Buddhism) Counseling and continuing studying contributing to the society. In later on his life he named his approach, "D.P.A.; Dharma-based Person-Centered Approach." He passed away in 2004.

He belonged many academic associations.

The Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies

The Japanese Association for Buddhist Social Welfare Studies

The Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare

The Japanese Association for Humanistic Psychology

Japan Transpersonal association

Japan Association for Transpersonal Psychology/Psychiatry

The Japanese Council for counseling

The Study Group for Shin-shu Counseling

2. My encountering with Gisho Saiko

I encountered him when I was a student of Ryukoku University. It was 39 years ago. I took his class. I remember clearly at that experience. He was a marvelous Listener. His smile was so beautiful. I was deeply relieved by him. It was an unbelievable encounter. Later I discovered the secret. He was a living Shin-Buddhist (Pure land Buddhism) who deeply understood person-centered approach. I followed him."

Then I have been learning PCA in my life and entranced into Shin-Buddhism teaching. Now both are connected deeply within myself inseparably. I am deeply relieved and having rich moment with my clients, students, friends, family within this deep connection.

3. My way of being as a D-pca facilitator

Now I am awakening how important **hearing** is. It is sensing the sounds, sounds of nature, sounds of feeling, sounds of voices, sounds of person's nature. It has both ways. The first is hearing myself whatever is going on. When I listen to myself I find hope, joy, anger, sadness, despair, loneliness and so on. It is important for me to sense all aspects of myself unconditionally. It is rich moments to me. The second is hearing others whatever going on, sadness, despair, anger, joy, hope and so on. It is like sensing their inner worlds unconditionally. The third is trying to go into their inner world and communicate my understanding.

And the most fundamental thing is **hearing** Buddha's power; especially Amida Buddha's power by the Primal Vow is always directing the virtue to me. I am awaking the power is also directing the virtue to someone. Both are within this power.

It could be describe it in these terms, especially as a helping person,

1) Dharma-based congruence

I am deeply myself within the relationship. I am congruent with "awaking Buddha Dharma", "experience", "experiencing" and "expression"

2) Dharma-based unconditional positive regard

I am awaking that clients/persons are also with Buddha Dharma. Amida Buddha's Power by the Primal Vow is directing the virtue to them. Mostly they are not awaking it. I am awaking this reality. I am deeply with them as a mundane person who is directed the virtue by Amida Buddha's Vow.

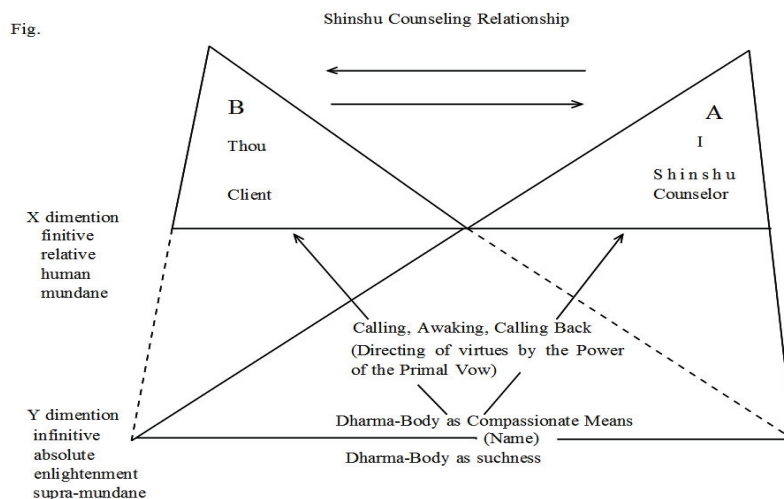
3) Understanding of the client's internal frame of reference, thoughts, feeling and their perception (Roku-Shiki, Six senses).

4) Dual relationship

Relationship between other and myself as mundane persons

Relationship between mundane persons and Buddha (supra-mundane existence.)

See **Figure** It describes so well how they are related. When I hear Buddha Dharma's wisdom I find myself that "I'm finite. There is no infinite in myself. I am blind and lost, came alone and departing alone. I am in ego-attachment. I am ego-oriented. I am in Evil Karma. I am in the ocean of death-and-birth. My self-power to go beyond this is useless. Even in this reality, no, because of this reality, Amida's Vow is directing me" It is infinitive. I am deeply relieved! I am fundamentally in the great Joy.



4. Practicing D-pca

I am awakening that I am a co-traveler with clients in our lives. Clients/persons are the only persons who know their directions. They do their thing. We are same persons with Buddha Dharma. We are co-travelers in our lives. Lives are not easy. I am being with them having sadness, heavy feeling, hardness. Sometimes I am

stuck, crying with them. Even this, Amida Buddha's Compassion is always directing the virtue to us. I am being with them in joy and relieving. I think this attitude is beyond "unconditional positive regards".

Note; Saiko abbreviated this approach, "D.P.A.", however, I name it "D-pca." Because "PCA" is more used as an abbreviation of "Person-Centered Approach."

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