

Symposium | Medical Anthropology : [Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

📅 Sat. Sep 27, 2025 3:50 PM - 5:20 PM JST | Sat. Sep 27, 2025 6:50 AM - 8:20 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 1 (Main Hall A)

[Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

Moderator: Tsuyoshi Akiyama (World Federation for Mental Health), Goffredo Bartocci (World Association of Cultural Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President)

[SY-72]

Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

Tsuyoshi Akiyama¹, Nami Lee², Junko Kitanaka³, Marcos de Noronha⁴, Goffredo Bartocci⁵ (1. Rokubancho Mental Clinic (Japan), 2. Seoul National University (Korea), 3. Keio University (Japan), 4. Brazilian Association of Cultural Psychiatry (Brazil), 5. University of Torino (Italy))

[SY-72-01]

Dementia as a basis of neurodiversity in Japan: A Medical Anthropological Perspective

*Junko Kitanaka¹ (1. Keio University (Japan))

[SY-72-02]

NEUROSCIENCE, SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHIATRY

*Marcos de Noronha¹ (1. Brazilian Association of Cultural Psychiatry (Brazil))

[SY-72-03]

The Role of Mythology in Shaping the Self and Its Transcendental Counterpart

*Goffredo Bartocci^{1,2,3} (1. Italian Institute of Transcultural Mental Health, Co-Founder (Italy), 2. World Association of Cultural Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President (Italy), 3. Transcultural Psychiatry Section, Italian Society of Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President (Italy))

Symposium | Medical Anthropology : [Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

📅 Sat. Sep 27, 2025 3:50 PM - 5:20 PM JST | Sat. Sep 27, 2025 6:50 AM - 8:20 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 1 (Main Hall A)

[Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

Moderator: Tsuyoshi Akiyama (World Federation for Mental Health), Goffredo Bartocci (World Association of Cultural Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President)

[SY-72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

Tsuyoshi Akiyama¹, Nami Lee², Junko Kitanaka³, Marcos de Noronha⁴, Goffredo Bartocci⁵ (1. Rokubancho Mental Clinic (Japan), 2. Seoul National University (Korea), 3. Keio University (Japan), 4. Brazilian Association of Cultural Psychiatry (Brazil), 5. University of Torino (Italy))

Keywords : Anthoropology、 Philosophy、 Spilituality

This symposium aims to show syncretism among anthropological, philosophical, historical, psychological, and biological approaches. Nami Lee presents spirituality as a psychological engagement in a search for purposes and meanings beyond the individual dimension. A holistic medical approach, including psycho-socio-spiritual realms, can facilitate individual well-being regardless of religious background. Based on the literature review, practical guidelines to improve spirituality in medical education and training will be suggested. Junko Kitanaka discusses dementia in Japan from the basis of neurodiversity, presenting a medical anthropological perspective. She questions how we can discuss the brain in psychiatry in a way that fosters understanding and empathy. While the dementia population exceeds five million in Japan, she asks in what ways the “brain talks” can lead not to alienation and social fragmentation but rather to a broader scope for empathy and social empowerment. Marcos de Noronha clarifies that anthropology and psychiatry provide complementary insight. By expanding its studies across diverse cultures, anthropology reveals that behaviors in modern societies are not universally normative but deeply influenced by cultural factors. Suicide is undoubtedly associated with sociocultural dynamics. With the Nahua in Mexico, death is not inherently harmful; rather, recurring suicide among Indigenous groups suggests a linkage between social disintegration and the loss of cultural cohesion. Bartocci delves into the cultural construction of the Western approach to understanding the coexistence, clash, and interaction between “Science and Faith.” Following the principles of Cultural Psychiatry, the focus will be on the role of mythologies in shaping different manifestations of the Self. Identity construction is deeply rooted in specific psychological and social contexts. The emphasis will be on the recurring and influential narratives that often define the ethnic identity of populations. These narratives, embedded in parental structures and broader social groups, exert a profound influence usually attributed in traditional psychiatry to interpersonal relationships.

Symposium | Medical Anthropology : [Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

📅 Sat. Sep 27, 2025 3:50 PM - 5:20 PM JST | Sat. Sep 27, 2025 6:50 AM - 8:20 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 1 (Main Hall A)

[Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

Moderator: Tsuyoshi Akiyama (World Federation for Mental Health), Goffredo Bartocci (World Association of Cultural Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President)

[SY-72-01] Dementia as a basis of neurodiversity in Japan: A Medical Anthropological Perspective

*Junko Kitanaka¹ (1. Keio University (Japan))

Keywords : dementia、Japan、Medical Anthropology、neurodiversity

In an age of increasing obsession with the healthy brain, how can we talk about the brain in psychiatry in a way that fosters understanding and empathy? How can we begin to care for the brain in a way that does not alienate those who already suffer from neurobiological diseases such as dementia? These are questions that people are beginning to grapple with in Japan, which currently stands as the world's number-one "super-aged" society. With one-third of the population already over age 65, the number of people afflicted with dementia exceeds five million, and those with MCI (mild cognitive impairments) five million. Drawing on more than a decade of fieldwork among dementia experts, patients, and their families, with a focus on a cutting-edge neuropsychiatric department in Japan, I first want to illuminate how doctors explain dementia symptoms through neuroimages as a means of repairing strained family relationships and mitigating patients' sense of loneliness. I will then discuss how such "brain talk" is taken up by the dementia patient movement in their attempt to challenge the current obsession with the healthy brain. I ask in what ways these "brain talks" can lead not to alienation and social fragmentation but rather to a broader scope for empathy and social empowerment.

Symposium | Medical Anthropology : [Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

📅 Sat. Sep 27, 2025 3:50 PM - 5:20 PM JST | Sat. Sep 27, 2025 6:50 AM - 8:20 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 1 (Main Hall A)

[Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

Moderator: Tsuyoshi Akiyama (World Federation for Mental Health), Goffredo Bartocci (World Association of Cultural Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President)

[SY-72-02] NEUROSCIENCE, SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHIATRY

*Marcos de Noronha¹ (1. Brazilian Association of Cultural Psychiatry (Brazil))

Keywords : NEUROSCIENCE、SPIRITUALITY、PSYCHIATRY、Belief、mediums

This work arises from experience with healers, or mediums, aiming to verify possible genetic markers in this group that could differentiate them from other people. Faith, even if subjective, can be intensified by material evidence. Belief supports the interaction between healer/patient, doctor/patient, and psychologist/patient, besides intensifying the symbolic effects of medication. One can compare the activity of doctors with that of healers, as both require elements that can strengthen the results of their practice. One such element is belief in the practitioner. Many of them possess the gift of mediumship, which has both a universal and transcendental dimension. By searching for genetic markers correlated with mediumship, the goal is to broaden our understanding of this phenomenon. The study of the exome—the smallest portion of the genome, but responsible for 85% of the proteins essential for life—has recently brought a new perspective. Experienced mediums, with more than ten years of practice and who work spontaneously without charging for their services, were selected. These mediums were compared to groups of similar individuals without mediumship, chosen among their first-degree relatives (mainly siblings). These two groups, closely related by kinship, grew up in the same socio-cultural environment and shared the same socio-economic conditions. A large number of genetic variants were found in the mediums that were not found in the non-mediums. Findings: 33 genes, referred to as candidate genes, were present in about one third of the mediums and in none of the non-mediums.

Symposium | Medical Anthropology : [Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

📅 Sat. Sep 27, 2025 3:50 PM - 5:20 PM JST | Sat. Sep 27, 2025 6:50 AM - 8:20 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 1 (Main Hall A)

[Symposium 72] Anthropology Philosophy, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

Moderator: Tsuyoshi Akiyama (World Federation for Mental Health), Goffredo Bartocci (World Association of Cultural Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President)

[SY-72-03] The Role of Mythology in Shaping the Self and Its Transcendental Counterpart

*Goffredo Bartocci^{1,2,3} (1. Italian Institute of Transcultural Mental Health, Co-Founder (Italy), 2. World Association of Cultural Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President (Italy), 3. Transcultural Psychiatry Section, Italian Society of Psychiatry, Co-Founder and Past President (Italy))

Keywords : cultural construction of the Self、 Science–Faith Interface、 worldviews

This lecture aims to delve into the cultural construction of the Western approach to understanding the coexistence, clash, and interaction between “Science and Faith.” By following the principles of Transcultural and Cultural Psychiatry, which consider the diversity of worldviews as a key avenue for evaluating the influence of cultural factors on mental health, the focus will be on the role of mythologies in shaping different manifestations of the Self. Identity construction, in fact, is deeply rooted in specific psychological and social contexts that deliver diverse inputs. In this lecture, the emphasis will be on the recurring and influential narratives that often define the ethnic identity of populations. These narratives, embedded in parental structures and broader social groups, exert a profound influence often attributed in traditional psychiatry to interpersonal relationships. Many mythologies include elements involving ultra-human events. Such narratives shift the locus of control from the pragmatic Self to a transcendent Non-Self domain. For instance, the widespread belief that spirituality is a divine gift significantly shapes the psychological climate where the pragmatic Self develops. Although academic disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy, and the social and biological sciences respect the foundation of secular psychiatry, the enduring tension between the concept of a cosmogony “out of nothing” and evolutionary scientific theories remains unresolved. This debate can become more constructive by introducing cultural variables. A cultural and transcultural approach can illuminate the often-overlooked effects of Homo sapiens' unique capacity to enact extreme transcendental acts in response to external reality. The combined influence of cultural factors and individual or collective transcendence techniques activates biological mechanisms that lead to special states of consciousness, such as trance. By adopting a well-tuned bio-psycho-sociocultural approach, it becomes possible to explore the complex exchanges between the realms of Science and Faith without succumbing to the reductionist constraints imposed by institutional dogmas. To shed light on the interaction between culture and the construction of the Self—an implicit theme of this symposium—this lecture will draw on William James' assertion that religious beliefs are “an intellectually respectable object of study.” From a Roman perspective, it seems evident that the forces promoting theological spirituality or idealized secular supremacy (which, at their core, share a similar intent) continue to

overshadow the contributions of honest secular psychiatry. It is increasingly evident that psychiatrists require expertise to make clinical inferences and differential diagnoses regarding any form of idolatry.