

Symposium

📅 2025年9月25日(木) 16:25 ~ 17:55 🏢 Session Room 5 (Conference Room A)

[Symposium 18] Concept of death and culture

Moderator: Sergio Javier Villaseñor-Bayardo (Universidad de Guadalajara)

[SY-18]

Concept of death and culture

Kanako Shimizu¹, Marcos De Noronha², Yoshinori Cho³, Sergio J. Villaseñor-Bayardo⁴, Tsuyoshi Akiyama¹ (1.Rokubancho Mental Clinic(Japan), 2.Brazilian Association of Cultural Psychiatry(Brazil), 3.National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry(Japan), 4.Universidad de Guadalajara(Mexico))

[SY-18-01]

Living with the dead -prolonged grief disorder and the dead concept in Japanese culture-

*Kanako Shimizu^{1,2} (1.Rokubancho Mental Clinic, Japan depression center(Japan), 2.Jichi Medical University, Department of Psychiatry(Japan))

[SY-18-02]

Consideration of the Japanese view of life and death in the wake of the surge in suicides

*Yoshinori Cho (National Institute of Mental Health, National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry(Japan))

[SY-18-03]

The concept of death among Mexicans.

*Sergio Javier Villaseñor Bayardo (Universidad de Guadalajara.(Mexico))

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While death takes place to all human beings in all cultures, how death is conceptualized and what happens when a person dies varies significantly. This symposium explores the dynamic interaction between the concept of death and culture. Kanako Shimizu presents prolonged grief disorder (PGD, ICD-11) and death concept in Japan. She introduces some cases of PGD in Japan and discusses the influence of death and the dead concepts in Japan from the ancient ages. Marcos De Noronha presents "A Perspective on the Concept of Death Among Brazilian Ethnic Groups." Suicide is associated with sociocultural dynamics. Among some ethnic groups, the number of deaths by suicide exceeds the highest rates worldwide. He analyzes this fact and reflects on the concept of death. Yoshinori Cho presents "Consideration of the Japanese View of Life and Death in the Wake of the Surge in Suicides." In Japan, social phenomena with a strong negative impact tend to cause a rapid increase in the suicide rate. Possibly, the psychological threshold for suicidal behavior is low among Japanese, which may be one characteristic of the Japanese view of life and death. It is a deep-rooted problem since the remnants of the seppuku (hara-kiri) culture and religious views are thought to be involved in its formation. Sergio J. Villaseñor-Bayardo presents "The concept of death among Mexicans." To fully understand the current conception of death among Mexicans, one must go back in time. In pre-Hispanic times, the Nahua people stood out for their sophisticated view of life and death. Regarding the times, it is not easy to describe the many Mexican traditions that celebrate the Day of the Dead. The creators of offerings to the dead, also called "altars to the dead," may be actually celebrating life. Could these rituals intensely prolong life in the proximity of death?

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[SY-18-01] Living with the dead -prolonged grief disorder and the dead concept in Japanese culture-

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キーワード : grief、 prolonged grief disorder、 death、 dead、 cultural psychiatry

The concepts of heaven and hell, and the whereabouts of the dead, are questions that we can never definitively answer; we can only imagine. While death concepts that evoke our imagination for the deceased are partly common among humans, they differ from culture to culture, much like myths that vary slightly. However, those imaginary stories may have a profound impact on our psyche.

In this presentation, I will present a clinical case of a patient suffering from Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) and share some results from a qualitative study conducted on PGD patients in Japan. Based on this case and the study results, I will discuss aspects related to Japanese culture, particularly focusing on the proximity between the living and the dead, as well as the feelings of guilt experienced by the bereaved.

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Moderator: Sergio Javier Villaseñor-Bayardo (Universidad de Guadalajara)

[SY-18-02] Consideration of the Japanese view of life and death in the wake of the surge in suicides

*Yoshinori Cho (National Institute of Mental Health, National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry(Japan))

キーワード：suicide、view of life and death、Japanese

Japan has a chronically high suicide rate, and social phenomena with a strong negative impact tend to cause a rapid increase in the suicide rate. Increases in the suicide rate were found among middle-aged males in 1998 following the 'Yamaichi Shock' economic crisis and among females and younger people during the 'Corona Shock' period in 2020. The increase in suicide was not universal, and there have been no reports so far indicating a surge in suicide rate since 2020 except in Japan. Possible causal factors of the rapid increase were that the psychological threshold for suicidal behavior is low among Japanese, and they are more likely to perform a suicidal act in a mildly depressed state. This low threshold for suicide may be one characteristic of the Japanese view of life and death. It is a deep-rooted problem since the remnants of the seppuku (hara-kiri) culture and religious views are thought to be involved in its formation. At the same time, Japanese culture has many good qualities, so it is too early to argue that the Japanese traditions and social and cultural background should be fundamentally changed. However, what can be said with certainty about the issue of suicide is that education that values life should be practiced throughout the country as early in childhood as possible.

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[SY-18-03] The concept of death among Mexicans.

*Sergio Javier Villaseñor Bayardo (Universidad de Guadalajara.(Mexico))

キーワード : Death、Concept、Mexican

In order to fully understand the current conception of death among Mexicans, one must go back in time at least 500 years. In Pre-Hispanic times, the Nahua peoples stood out for their sophisticated view of life and death, which led them to integrate exceptionally well with the flow of the universe around them. The Nahua cosmology sees man as the center around which everything revolves and which gives meaning to it all. Man, together with the deities of death, is responsible for the permanence of the universe itself. For ancient Mexicans, death was not a cause of anxiety or fear. There was no reason to run away from it: it must be faced standing up, with equanimity. It was something that, even though it was not pleasant, was accepted calmly. Life is short. Their poets – known as *cuicanime* – were well aware of that and expressed it often: “Just a short time here...” The afterlife they expected was not a place of cruelty, damnation, pain, or suffering, so there was no reason to fear it. What really mattered was how they died, for their transcendence and continuity depended on it. It was not the same to die of natural causes than to die a death chosen by the gods. Nor was it the same to die as an adult or as a child. No death was more glorious than dying in the *xochiyaoyotl* or Flower War, dying on the *techcatl*, the stone of sacrifice, or dying during childbirth. The annual visit to the dead in Mexico is not an occasion of mourning but the motive to have a great party. Perhaps an explanation may be found in the *Codex Matritense*: “The elders said he who has died has become a god. They said that he became a god, that is, he died”. It is not an easy task to describe the many Mexican traditions that celebrate the Day of the Dead. We may wonder if, more than celebrating the dead, the creators of offerings to the dead, also called “altars to the dead”, are actually celebrating life. Could these rituals be an intense prolongation of life in the proximity of death?