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Music Therapy and Culture: Exploring my Culture and its Influences

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This research was completed as part of the degree requirements for the Music Therapy Department at Molloy College.

MUSIC THERAPY AND CULTURE: EXPLORING

MY CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCES

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science

in Music Therapy

by

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Abstract

With the rapidly growing cultural diversity in the United States, scholars have emphasized the importance of not only understanding other cultures, but also one's own. It has become essential to evaluate the influence of one's cultural background as he/she evolves a healthcare professional. Utilizing the method of *self-inquiry*, this paper explores my own cultural background and how it has shaped the way I work as a *music therapist*. *Cultural differences* between *Japan* and *America* are discussed, including disparities in *social systems*, *music*, and *health*. Two *clinical case examples* are presented to illustrate my experiences in relation to my *cultural influences*. The purpose of this paper is to encourage other music therapists to explore their cultural roots, values, and influences, and the effects they may have on their clinical methods.

Keywords: self-inquiry, music therapist, cultural differences, Japan, America, social system, music, health, clinical case examples, cultural influences

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1

Music Therapy and Culture: Exploring My Culture and Its Influence

Personal Motivation

Entering the New World

I was only 15 years old when I left Japan, my native country, to enter the new world. When I arrived in the United States of America, I was overcome with strong emotions that still resound within me whenever I reminisce back to the day I arrived to my new home. I remember being sad but also filled with positive and hopeful energy, anticipating the new beginning of my life. Originally, my family and I had planned for me to be in America for only a year. I have now been in America for almost half of my life. It has been a period of my cultural exploration.

Cultural Awakening

It was a music therapy ethics course that shifted my perspective towards multicultural issues. Dr. Cheryl Dileo, author of the American Music Therapy Association Code of Ethical Standards for Music Therapy, gave my class a guest lecture encouraging ethical thinking related to multicultural issues. One of her assignments was for us to explore our heritage, as well as our cultural values and beliefs. As I was working on the assignment, I realized that, although I had been thoroughly Americanized, I was still proud to be Japanese. I began to think of all the unique things my homeland and its culture, belief systems, and values had to offer the world of music therapy, and became excited at the prospects.

Music therapy scholars (Kim, 2001; Pavlicevic, 1997; Ruud, 1998) emphasize that understanding one's own culture, personal meaning, and values, as well as learning

about others, is critically important to our growth as music therapists, musicians, and as

persons. Moreover, Turry (1998) discusses the importance of understanding our own

cultural music when developing authentic musical and therapeutic relationships with our

clients:

> It is important to remember that we can only be ourselves, that our music is a
>
> reflection of our personal history, culture, and training. If we become more aware
>
> of our musical selves, we can use the elemental forces of music with more
>
> integrity and effectiveness. We can understand more about ourselves and our
>
> clients through the mutual process of self-exploration. (p. 168)

The more I learn about this topic, the more I am curious about the role of culture

in music therapy: how music influences our therapeutic relationships in cross cultural

music therapy, and what cross cultural issues that I may have experienced in sessions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to explore the cultural differences between Japan and

America, and how these divergent cultures have influenced me both personally and

professionally. Two music therapy case studies are used to highlight how my cultural

experiences have shaped my beliefs and practices in a music therapy setting.

I hope that this may help me increase the level of awareness of my own culture

and in turn better understand my clients in regards to this topic. In addition, I hope that

this self-examination inspires other international students to begin exploring their cultural

identities and therapeutic and musical relationships with their clients, and that in doing so

they may enrich their practices and evolve as clinicians. Further, as I have seen many

international students struggle because of their miscommunications and/or disagreement

with the professors, this paper may help music therapy educators better understand the differences in their students' clinical intent derived from cultural values. Once we are able to understand and emphasize with one another's point of view, I believe that music therapy and music therapy education will flourish. It is important to note that there are individual differences among Japanese people, so what I describe here is based on my own cultural and personal experiences.

My Cultural Being

Who Am I?

Growing Up in Japan

I grew up in a family with a father, mother, an older sister, and a grandfather. Although my father was still traditional in his demanding and male dominant personality, unlike other typical Japanese families, he was also the one who provided warmth and care. His particular job allowed him to be home often, and he took my sister and I fishing and to the parks whenever he had free time. The neighbors knew my father as a kind and strong man, who dedicated most of his free time to nurture us. My mother, on the other hand, was very strict and focused our education. She was the one who would resort to physical punishment, which made both my sister and I seek love from our father at a young age while fearing our mother. She also possessed unique characteristic and strong personality. My mother was one of the most popular mothers in my community due to her passion in taking care of others and her driven personality. By watching her and her active role in the community, my sister and I learned how to be creative and spontaneous. My grandfather, who was from my mother's side, lived with us, and he was even more demanding than my mother. He often talked about World War II and the poverty he had

to go through. He was the wise man of the house. Finally, my sister was both a calm studious person. She was the role model of the house, whereas I was more of a troublemaker.

My hometown, Hannan-city in Osaka prefecture, is well-known for its unique culture and the dialect spoken by the people. It is surrounded by both the mountains and the sea. Our family enjoyed playing at the beach and hiking up the nearby mountains to collect seasonal vegetables. The dialect spoken by the people from Osaka is very strong, and people from other areas of Japan often find the dialect harsh and hard to relate to. Osaka people are typically more casual and can be perceived as straight forward and rude due to their known behaviors. As a communalistic society, the Osaka people take on their neighbor's problems as if they were their own. Perhaps part of my passionate and friendly personality in nature comes from exposure to this type of behavior throughout my childhood in Osaka.

Throughout my childhood in Japan, I was a young and rebellious girl who often attempted to do everything against the country's societal norms. The hierarchal social systems and rules did not make sense to me, and I often felt that I was not allowed to express myself. Instead, my creativity was bottled up inside me and I could not help feeling that some invisible weight was forcing me down. I often spoke my opinions to my teachers, only to be chastised and called "a nail that stood out.[1]" I felt that there were a great deal of tensions, discomforts, and hidden truths within the everyday life of Japanese people. I often struggled to understand where my place was within society. I longed to burst out and freely express my inner self—my playfulness, passion, and love.

Early Days in the US

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[1] This concept will be explained more in detail in later section.

When I first came to America, I lived in a small town called Mapleton in Utah with a host family for two years. During this time, I attended a local public school for one year, then a private school the second year. My host mother, Susan, was a very loving person, who often sat with me when I had difficulty understanding school work or any problems I was having adjusting to new life. My host father, Randy, worked as a computer technician who radiated brightness and intelligence. He ha a calm energy that somewhat reminded me of my sister. Susan and Randy had five children, Josh, Nicole, Amy, Tyler, and Braden. I was the oldest of the children. Braden was only five at the time so I often played with him. We both taught each other English. Although being part of a big family was very refreshing and fun, however I felt a sense of responsibility to make sure all siblings was OK.

My Relationship to Music

Music has been a strong and essential part of my life since very young age. My sister and I spent most of our play time in the house listening to a wide collection of records our parents had, genres including Japanese Pop, Japanese Folk, American Pop, and Classical. I particularly enjoyed listening to Classical piano pieces, as I developed love for the instrument. At age four, I began private piano lessons. During my piano training in Japan, I was never allowed to pick what I wanted to play. My piano teacher would assign appropriate pieces for my age and technical levels. When I liked the piece, I practiced a lot so that I could make it my own. However, my teacher's teaching style was, "Look at this. He says forte here. Play forte." My own personal musicality was ignored and I often felt discouraged as a musician. At the age 13, I decided to stop taking lessons,

because I became involved in other school activities, such as playing volleyball. I thought that I found a perfect reason to quit piano.

Even during my rebellious years, however, I continued to participate in every musical activity at school. I loved music classes. Music was a place where I could feel a sense of unity. It was where I worked, made friends, and connected with others. Especially during my junior high school years, I was so rebellious that I had difficulties with "fitting in." I normally stayed together with a group of friends in isolation. Music class was the only place I could sort of interact with other classmates in positive manner. Music brought us together naturally.

I did not start serious piano playing until a year before college, when I began preparing for college auditions. My new piano teacher, Mrs Sado, was the one who introduced me to expressive communication when playing the piano. She encouraged me to add my personality to each piece I played and deeply understand music and my personal relationship to it. During this time, musical expression became a very important part of my musical life. Being able to express my emotions within my piano playing felt liberating and authentic, and although I only knew a fixated way of playing piano and did not have the technical skills to deliberately show my musical expression, I knew I could eventually develop those skills.

I have grown to become a serious and passionate musician, using music as a way to express myself and my creativity, share love and beauty, communicate with others, find inspiration, feel different emotions, and participate in meaningful moments with others. In addition, I often play the piano to check in with myself. Playing the piano

leads me to find calmness and explore how I may be feeling for the day. Ultimately, music helps me find the balance and harmony that I often like to feel within myself.

My Current Status

I am a 29-year-old Japanese American living in New York and working as a humanistic music therapist focused on a music-centered philosophy. I am also at my last stage of the graduate program as a music therapy student. I have been privileged to be a part of the music therapy team at the Rebecca Center for Music Therapy at Molloy College.

Due to my unique cross cultural background, some information regarding differences between Japanese and American cultures related to everyday values, music, and health will be discussed in below, to further explore what cultural values and beliefs have influenced the way I have become.

Cultural Differences Between Japan and America

Social Structure/Cultural System

One of the most distinct differences between Japanese culture and American culture is that of their divergent social systems: collectivism and individualism (Dileo, 2000; Ho, 1985; Iwasaki, 2005), respectively. While the Japanese heavily value community health and interdependence, people in America emphasize the importance of individualism. The Japanese often put their effort into promoting harmony and balance, whereas Americans are more focused on self-expression and meeting individual needs.

Collectivism

Collectivism emphasizes the importance of harmony, the well-being of a group, the controlling of feelings, interdependence, and wholeness (Morton & Olenik, 2005; Sue

& Sue, 2003). The pursuit of individual and/or self-driven goals is not valued or

encouraged. Rather, individuals work towards creating a healthy social environment and

community. A Japanese person may grow independent and self-reliant to an extent, but

these traits are within the context and confines of the collectivistic social structure. In a

collectivistic society, there exist many social groups at various levels; the immediate and

extended family are considered to be the smallest. The social group dynamic expands to

include friends, neighbors, school, the work place, and finally, the entire country itself.

Any given individual is representative of all of these social groups at once (Ho, 1985;

Iwasaki, 2005; Pallaro, 1997; Sue & Sue, 2003).

There is a famous Japanese saying that translates roughly to, "the nail that stands

out gets pounded down (Iwasaki, 2005, p. 132)." Different opinions and/or ideas are not

welcomed, and if someone goes against the norms, that person will be rejected and

ostracized. In Japan, being the nail that stands out is very difficult. Many individuals

instead choose to ride the societal flow so that they may remain within the harmony and

wholeness of the group. This non-individualistic attitude can be found in the traditional

Japanese teachings of Shinto[2], Buddhism[3], and Bushido[4].

Individualism

Individualism values each person and his/her uniqueness, autonomy, freedom, and

independence. In addition, an individual takes responsibility for his/her own actions,

well-being, and rights. Although there are many social communities in America, more

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[2] Shinto is the oldest religious form found in ancient Japan. The religious practice focuses on shamanism and nature worship (Morton & Olenik, 2005). Refer to Appendix E.
[3] Buddhism is the dominant religion found in Japan. The basic teachings focus on meditation, self-training, and praying to promote self-understanding, self-peace, and/or self-enlightenment (Tsuchiya, 2004). Refer to Appendix F for in-depth explanation.
[4] Bushido—a way of Samurai—is the essential philosophy of everyday life for Japanese (Nitobe, 2002). Refer to Appendix G.

than creating harmony and wholeness, these organizations work to further provide

individuals with opportunities for variation and independence, encouraging individuation

(Ho, 1985; Hurley, 2000).

Understanding Individualism and Living in This Culture

I was searching for individual freedom, yet I felt very lost when initially exposed

to America's freer lifestyle. My first experience of culture shock after coming to America

was when I had my first dinner with my host family in Utah. My host brother

continuously complained about the green beans his mom had made because they were

over-cooked. I thought the same, but still finished every bean on my plate to show

appreciation and not cause any conflict. In contrast, my host brother took out a can of

peaches and began eating, not at the dinner table, but by the kitchen sink. His mother did

not seem bothered by his behavior at all, and responded with something along the line of,

"If that's what you want, ok." I remember wondering to myself, "Where is the respect?"

Another bit of culture shock came when I went to my high school to register for

classes. I was surprised that there was no rigid class structure like there was in Japan. I

was told to register for several classes, find the classrooms, and go to those rooms for

each class. In Japan, students remain in one classroom all day and teachers come to them

every period to teach. I thought, "How do I make friends when I move around all day?

When do I talk to people?" Also, when I was choosing courses, no specific instruction

was given. I was simply told to pick a Math, English, History, and a few elective courses

out of a long list of possible choices, each with different teachers. My host mother asked

me, "What do you like?" I responded, "Music." As a result, I was signed up for three

music courses. I remember thinking, "I get to choose what I like to do? That is so cool!"

Since I could not speak English very well, I was mostly a quiet student. However, whenever I had questions or did not understand the material, I would raise my hand and ask my teachers. Neither my teachers nor my classmates seemed bothered by my asking questions, and although I was the only Asian girl in all of my classes, I did not feel any separation or discrimination from my classmates. Many of them showed interest in my differences from them, such as my facial features, dark hair, and the way I dressed. Although it seemed I was "the nail that stood out," I was not going to be pounded down. It felt very freeing and empowering.

One thing I struggled with in America was how to express my feelings. I became a very good listener after moving to the U.S., always smiling and never being assertive. There were several reasons: Firstly, I was not confident enough with my English to speak. It was easier for me to be a listener and just agree with whatever anyone else said. Secondly, in Japan, I was taught to control self-centered thoughts and never break the societal flow in order to strengthen group dynamics. When I reached my senior year in high school, although expressing my thoughts and my feelings became more natural, I still often chose not to share them with others. I felt that speaking my mind would be selfish and I needed to be a stronger person for the benefit of group moral.

Even after living in America for thirteen years, I still only verbally express my feelings when I feel it is absolutely necessary. As a result of my upbringing, I heavily value the concept of harmony and the well-being of a group, so I try to keep from making waves by speaking out. I also believe that it would create a healthier dynamic if people around me can become aware of what others were feeling through actions and/or behaviors rather than verbal communication.

Communication and Expressiveness

Expressive Use of Language

Collectivistic values teach the Japanese not to express their feelings, but rather to control and suppress them. As a result, the Japanese language does not have as many words for feelings or expressions as the English language does. For instance, when feeling tired, there is a variety of expression in English: "I'm tired," "I'm exhausted," "I'm shot," "I'm running on E," and many more, depending on the degree of tiredness. In Japanese, we simply say, "I'm tired." When very tired, we say, "I'm very tired." English is a language rich with expressive words that people can use to clearly and creatively describe their emotions. Cursing is an excellent example of this. In the Japanese language, cursing does not exist. When we are angry, we just say, "I am really, very angry!" The expression lies in the nuance and intonation of the way we say it. On the other hand, in English, people often add the f-word and say, "I'm f-ing mad!" to emphasize and properly convey their feelings of anger.

Nonverbal Communication and Expressiveness

Americans are very verbal in nature. They know how to communicate and express their feelings with the use of language. I often hear my American friends say, "Just tell me. If you don't tell me, I don't know." This is a very different style of communication compared to that of Japanese culture. The Japanese highly value the nonverbal aspect of communication, which we call, "reading the air/energy." Japanese people often understand each other without words because, to them, expressiveness lives "in the air" between people. For instance, my father is not a verbal person. He often only responds to "yes" or "no," concrete questions, and does not normally use words to let his

needs be known. My mother, sister, and I are constantly reading his air, or the energy he is giving off, in order to know what he needs. This is done through observing his facial expressions and the tone of his cough, and/or how he answered "yes" or "no" to a question. In Japanese culture, it is not about how much you express with language, but rather about feeling and living in that energy in order to communicate with others.

Naikan Therapy—using nonverbal technique—is considered one of the most well known forms of psychotherapy in Japan. Naikan therapists believe in the phenomena of nonverbal communication and the energy within the therapeutic space that will bring healing and self-realization to their clients. The philosophy and emphasis of Naikan therapy clearly illustrate the Japanese cultural and traditional influences when applied to a therapeutic environment (Tanaka-Matsui, 1979).

My Communication and Expressive Style

Unlike many of my Japanese friends, I am much more verbal in how I express my thoughts. I often ask them to tell me instead of communicating nonverbally, because I would prefer to just know what they are thinking or feeling rather than infer. Even when I was a young girl in Japan, I often preferred communicating verbally. That was one of the reasons people referred to me as "the nail that stands out."

I highly value verbal communication and use it every day. However, expressing my emotions out loud when using English tends to be difficult for me. I realized this during one of my improvisation classes when, after improvising with a peer, my professor asked me, "How did that feel?" I knew how I was feeling, but I could not find the words to articulate it. My professor pointed this out to me, stating that she felt my emotions were often disconnected. This statement made me think deeply about my

emotions and expressiveness. I wondered, "Am I hiding my emotions? Do I not even know how I'm feeling? Is that why I could not accurately describe it?" This was also when I realized how much American culture demands the use of expressive language and does not value the concept of "reading the air."

I am still exploring the dichotomy between expressing my thoughts verbally and my emotions nonverbally. When trying to convey my emotions, it is easier for me to use Japanese. The Japanese language leads to an open-ended emotional communication by allowing the listener to read the air, which speaks more than the words do. For instance, when something is extremely difficult, all I need to say is, "This is difficult (tsurai)." The word "Tsurai" has multiple meanings, such as "difficult," "rough," "hard," and "painful." The air between the listener and me takes over the word, and the listener can read my energy to understand what I mean by "tsurai." In English, I need to specifically explain why and how difficult the situation is in order for the listener to properly understand, which is more difficult for me to do.

Therapy and Healing

    Japanese

Strong cultural values derived from Shinto[5], Buddhism[6], and Bushido[7] do not allow the concept of psychotherapy in Japan. Traditionally, any symptoms of mental distress are perceived as signs of weakness and lack of self-discipline. Family members and peers often do not show empathy towards those who are suffering from mental disorders. Instead they simply tell them to "grow up," or to "be stronger." Once an

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[5] Appendix E
[6] Appendix F
[7] Appendix G

individual is diagnosed with a mental disorder, the family often attempts to occult this information in order to protect the family honor and their careers (Iwakabe, 2008).

Psychotherapy is still a very new concept in Japan, but has been growing rapidly within the last decade (Iwakabe, 2008). However, traditional ways of promoting health are still far more widely used and accepted. Japanese people often consider meditation as a therapeutic tool to promote health and healing. In fact, when I went through a period of feeling hopeless, lost, and stuck due to personal relationships, I joined Buddhist meditation in hopes to purify myself, find self-strength, and understand suffering. Although many people were meditating around me, I felt that I was alone, fighting against my own desires, fear, and suffering. Through the experience of meditation at a Shinto temple, I was able to find healing energy and slowly move forward.

Food is also considered one of the important ways of promoting health in Japan. Japanese people eat small portions of many dishes every day to take well-balanced nutrition into their bodies, which will provide them with a fresh and healthy mind. The concept of well-balanced meals shows a correlation to well-balanced music. To the Japanese, balance is an essential part in creating a "healthy music." For instance, well-balanced harmony, instrumentation, and voicing often bring a sense of comfort and security for the listeners.

Shamanism is also an important medium in facilitating health and healing (Morton & Olenik, 2005) in Japan. Shamans are those who are believed to have power in their spirits to communicate with the dead. A few shamans are Buddhist monks who have mastered a series of self-training regimens and have achieved enlightenment. When an individual is suffering from mental distress, shamans interpret this suffering as an evil

spirit. The only way to get rid of the evil and allow positive light to enter is through ritualistic purification derived from Shinto. Many people seek help from shamans. As part of our family tradition, we visit a Shinto shaman regularly to maintain our purity and good fortune.

Music

Traditional Music in Japan

Japanese traditional music and art consist of court music, court dance, folksong, festival music and dance, and Buddhist chant (Miller & Shahriari, 2009; Morton & Olenik, 2005). The court music is known to come from sixth century China, and since then has been modified. Court music, "Gagaku," and court dance, "Bungaku," have preserved their forms without any changes, and are mostly performed by the families who carry the tradition. Another popular traditional theater is called Noh and Kabuki. Noh Theater is an ancient form of Japanese play, Kabuki being a more modern version, where performers sing, dance, and speak while accompanied by music. All these art forms illustrate Shinto and Buddhist beliefs, such as slow chant and posture-dance that represents beauty of nature (Morton & Olenik, 2005; Pitts, 1985).

Court arts and traditional theaters only allow traditional Japanese instruments. The most well-known Japanese instruments are the koto, shakuhachi, and shamisen (Miller & Shahriari, 2009). The koto is a zither instruments with 13-21 strings. Each string can change pitches according to the placement of ji, the bridge that supports each string. The strings are plucked by the right hand with special picks, while the left hand holds down the strings. The shakuhachi is a flute made out of bamboo. It produces a bird-like sound that represents purity. The shamisen is a lute that typically has three strings.

Although Japanese traditional music has much influence from China, Japanese music contains a lot of silence and silence, is written exactly how it should be played, which contrasts with the busy and flexible music of the Chinese. The silence in Japanese music draws calm and attentive energies from the listeners, providing them with the opportunity to absorb and appreciate the artistic form. The precision and specificity of the music is often said to reflect Japan's fixated and detailed culture. Since traditional music was originally developed for royal families, many common people did not have the opportunity to experience it.

Traditional Music in America

American "roots" music, or music that is indigenous to American culture, includes country, blues, jazz, Rock-N Roll, and Hip-Hop. What makes these artforms unique is that it often blends and borrows from previous cultures but creates its own unique music from it. This concept reflects America's "melting pot" culture. I believe that American music is very expressive and people put their heart and soul into it. When engaged in these music, the music and the person seem to become one.

Chapter 2: Music Therapy and Culture

In this chapter, I will discuss how I found music therapy as my profession and what particular music therapy I was attracted to, and my spiritual beliefs related to music therapy.

Music Therapy as my Profession

Upon high school graduation, I returned to Japan and began searching for a meaningful career that allowed me to help others while using my talents. My sister was the one who introduced me to music therapy. Although it was not yet an established career in Japan, I found out that America had fifty universities that offered music therapy programs. Pursuing music therapy would allow me to expand and deepen my relationship to music, understand the emotional power and meaning of music, and acquire the skills necessary to use my passion for music to help people find healing. As I learned more about music therapy, I was particularly drawn to Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy.

Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy

NRMT is a process-oriented music therapy approach which uses active music making (Nordoff & Robbins, 2007). The approach emphasizes the importance of the music as therapy, music is the primary clinical medium (Aigen, 1998; Nordoff & Robbins, 2007; Turry, 1998). Thus, the development of musical relationships between the client the therapist is of central importance this brings out the growth of the client.

NRMT's theoretical orientation was developed based on Anthroposophy and humanistic psychology, especially of Maslow (Ansdell, 1995). Anthroposophy, rooted in Aristotle, Plato, and Thomas Aquinas, is a spiritual philosophy developed by Rudolf Steiner in the late 19th century. It focuses on the science, the arts, and the religious

strivings of man as the three main areas of human culture, where experiences and form of

thinking come from inner development (Mays & Nordwall, 2009). NRMT attempts to

guide each client to reach humanistic goals and become fully human, which is also called

"self-actualization." Maslow (1971) discussed,

> The human goal, the humanistic goal, the goal so far as human beings are
>
> concerned—is ultimately the "self-actualization" of a person, the becoming fully
>
> human, the development of the fullest height that the human species can stand up
>
> to or that the particular individual can come to. In a less technical way, it is
>
> helping the person to become the best that he is able to become. (p. 168-169)

The concept of the music child is one of the highlights of the NRMT approach

and is influenced by the Anthroposophy. The "music child" refers to the individualized

musicality that is inborn in everyone, and the idea that human musical sensitivity is

common to us all (Aigen, 1998; Nordoff & Robbins, 2007).

> The term music child denotes a constellation of receptive, cognitive, expressive,
>
> and communicative capabilities that can become central to the organization and
>
> development of the personality insofar as a child can be stimulated to use these
>
> capabilities with significant self-commitment. Such commitment, creatively and
>
> responsively fostered, induces the functions of musical recognition, perception,
>
> and memory. Intelligence, purposefulness, confidence come spontaneously to
>
> individual expression as a child becomes more deeply, personally involved.
>
> (Nordoff & Robbins, 2007, p. 4)

The inner development through music allows each child to find a greater sense of his/her self, to find commitment and meaning in life, and to tap into the desire to communicate with the outside world.

Another important emphasis of NRMT is the concept of musical developments as self developments; that through music-making the client and the therapist can grow, learn, experience emotions, and discover their greater potential together (Aigen, 1998 & 2005; Nordoff & Robbins, 2007; Robbins & Robbins, 1998; Turry, 1998). NRMT provides the clients with a wide range of musical experiences that creates harmonious unity and balance is highly regarded to facilitate creativity and personal growth (Nordoff & Robbins, 2007; Aigen, 1998). This is similar to the concept of the therapeutic use of food among the Japanese people.

NRMT is a team approach, involving a primary therapist and a co-therapist. Teamwork is very important in bringing about significant clinical changes (Nordoff & Robbins, 2007; Turry & Marcus, 2005). The primary therapist (PT) is responsible for the overall direction of the therapy. He/she remains mostly at the piano, attempting to create a musical environment that accesses and directs the transpersonal forces. The main role of the co-therapist (CT) is to support the music and to facilitate the child's participation and experience in the sessions. Since the co-therapist is on the floor, he/she may act as a companion to bring about social interactions.

NRMT is one of the most sought-out music therapy approaches in Japan, and many music therapists from Japan have come to America to study it. I believe that the NRMT attracts the Japanese therapists because of its humanistic philosophy and the strong emphasis on the phenomenal power of music. Whereas most Japanese therapies

and ways of being remain strictly organized and structured, NRMT allows for self-expression and freedom, where the therapists are able to communicate with the clients on an authentic level. These concepts are certainly what me to pursue NRMT.

The Importance of the Spiritual Self

In Japanese and Buddhist traditions, self-enlightenment is achieved only through self-training and meditation—when one is able to understand that it is his/her own desires that lead to suffering. Once one becomes enlightened, he/she always remains at peace (Tsuchiya, 2004). Similarly, NRMT's concept of self-actualization is achieved through interactive music making, development of musical contact, therapeutic relationships, and peak experiences. However, whereas the Buddhist concept of self-enlightenment only looks at the self, interpersonal relationships are the key in NRMT.

My Spiritual Beliefs in Music Therapy

I am a spiritual individual who focuses on balancing and blending with nature and the energies around me. I believe that everything is connected to a greater whole. We may look at one person as a complete entity, but that person belongs to the universe as a larger collective. Our body, mind, and soul are in this harmonization with the universe. This belief directly reflects the Japanese collectivistic frame of mind. What we eat, whom we encounter, and the communities in which we live all contribute to this wholeness and unity. We are always harmonizing with our surroundings and with ourselves. Our souls guide us and nurture us. I believe that music is spiritual; one of the most powerful elements in the universe. Everything has a musical quality to it, and we always have the desire to experience something beautiful, dramatic, and inspiring, as well as dissonant, surprising, and even disturbing at times. Music does that all for us. I strongly believe that

making music can be transcendent and life-changing. In music, everything has its own time and meaning, and we are individuals who are constantly in search of something greater than ourselves—a balance with the universe.

Examining Japanese culture has made me realize what a unique background I have. Although I have become Americanized, and living in the US is very comfortable for me, I still retain many of the traditional values and beliefs I picked up during my childhood in Japan. As a cross-cultural being living in the country with individualistic values, and yet still honoring many collectivistic principles, it would be interesting to study how differently or similarly I may work with clients from different cultural backgrounds and observe the differences and similarities in my approaches to their therapy.

Chapter 3: Case Examples

The purpose of this section is to explore my clinical work in cross-cultural music therapy. It aims to take a closer look at how my clinical and musical tendencies may fluctuate between sessions as a result of cultural influences. At the Rebecca Center for Music Therapy, I have worked with children and adolescents with developmental challenges, including Autism, Pervasive Developmental Delays, Down Syndrome, Epilepsy, and ADHD. My Clients are primarily Caucasians and also include one African-American and tow Asians. This cross-cultural work has provided me with a wide perspective and a deeper understanding of culture. In addition, I have observed that cultural differences drastically exist between Japanese and American cultures. Two clients from two different cultures have been chosen from my current work at the Center. To protect their confidentiality, the names of the clients have been changed.

The Rebecca Center offers individual and group music therapy services for children and adolescents with developmental challenges to facilitate communication and relatedness, provide them with the opportunities to discover their own potentials, and assist them in finding emotional and behavioral self-regulation. Improvisational and interactive musical-plays are the primary use of intervention. This way, the therapists are able to create musical experiences that can meet each client's emotional being. Active music-making allows for emotional expression, relatedness, sense of accomplishment and responsibility. (The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy, 2011).

Case I: Brandon

Background Information

Brandon is a five-year-old, half Chinese, half Taiwanese boy diagnosed with Down Syndrome. He lives with his parents and one younger brother. His father is a very friendly and likable Chinese man who works as a physical therapist. Brandon's mother is an accountant from Taiwan. She is a polite woman who smiles often. Due to her limited knowledge of English, she does not say much, but she does give off an ambient energy. Brandon has one younger brother, two years apart.

Although Brandon was born and raised in America, his parents try to impart in him their Chinese and Taiwanese cultures. Brandon's parents often speak in Mandarin, their common language, with him. When Brandon's brother comes to the Rebecca Center with him and their father, I hear them communicate with one another mostly in English, although they do speak Mandarin as well.

Brandon attends a public school and receives various related services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. In addition to his school, he attends a Chinese social group class on weekends where he can interact with other Chinese children. Brandon exhibits delays in areas of language, cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development. His father thought that music could be a means for learning in various areas, as well as helping Brandon to acquire some vital social skills.

Clinical History

Brandon began his weekly thirty-minute individual music therapy sessions in the beginning of December, 2010 at the Center. His father found the Rebecca Center on the internet while searching for a service that would provide Brandon with assistance in the areas of language and cognitive development. His father stated that Brandon had always

enjoyed music and dancing. Since December 2010, I have seen Brandon as a primary

therapist, with a colleague assuming the role of co-therapist.

Therapeutic Relationships

    Trust

    In both American and Japanese literatures related to music therapy and other

psychotherapy, developing trust within the therapeutic relationship is seen as one of the

most crucial aspects of facilitating and enriching therapeutic processes (Iwasaki, 2005;

Nordoff & Robbins, 2007; Tanaka-Matsui, 1979). I sense a mutual trust between

Brandon and myself. A positive therapeutic relationship developed fairly quickly with

Brandon, perhaps due to our cultural and ethnic similarities, such as our facial features. I

quickly began to think that Brandon would trust my guidance because of the way he

interacted with me. From the beginning of the therapy process, Brandon's behavior was

similar to the way many other Asian children interact with their parents, teachers or

higher authority figures. Anything I suggested, he would comply with.

    Directiveness/Indirectiveness

    When working with Brandon, I am determined and focused, and I often take the

directive approach. My communication is upfront, such as, "It's time to play the drum"

or "Let's do some work on the drum." Brandon struggles in the areas of initiating ideas

and being independent. When given a choice, such as, "Do you want to play the drum?"

or "What would you like to play?" Brandon seems to be at a loss, only repeating the last

word spoken to him. Open-ended questions are still difficult for Brandon to understand

and relate to, so instead I utilize directive way of working. Although I consider Brandon's

pathology and delays, and the directive interventions are found to be more effective with

children with Down Syndrome (Adamek & Darrow, 2007), my directiveness also seems

to reflect my Japanese cultural influences. Most of the authority figures in Japanese

culture are in complete control of all interactions. In addition, when working with other

clients with Down Syndrome, I find that I am not as directive as I am with Brandon. The

approach I take with Brandon reminds me of how most of my martial arts teachers

instructed me.

Brandon most likely views me as an authority figure similar to his older relatives,

which further illustrates cultural transference. This is evident in how he tries very hard to

move with the therapeutic process and with me, and how he attempts to answer my

directives. Brandon understands and feels comfortable with our dynamic, and it appears

to have helped his focus. It is interesting to note that I still view Brandon as an equal

partner within our therapeutic relationship, despite my directive and authoritative stance.

These methods are in stark contrast to the humanistic perspective to therapy. As I explore

this conflict, I have synthesized cultural messages that both concepts are necessary for

Brandon to reach his higher potential. At this developmental stage, Brandon appears

unable to bring himself into a successful experience. As we grow together through music,

I am confident that Brandon will gradually learn to understand more indirect and open-

ended ways of interacting with others.

Verbal/Nonverbal Interactions

Brandon interacts with the co-therapist and myself both verbally and nonverbally.

However, due to his limited language skills, he often says only one word with excitement,

such as "Midori!" His gestures, facial expressions, and physical proximity show that he

trusts us. Brandon often runs towards me with a smile and gently hugs me. I interact with

him both verbally and nonverbally as well. To help him develop more language, I often

try to show him forms of greeting people, such as "How are you?" or "You are here." I

also smile frequently and exhibit friendly gestures so that he can feel a sense of comfort

and closeness. To contrast my directive approach when working with Brandon, I

constantly send nonverbal energy toward him, attempting to communicate to him, "Come

with me; let me show you the possibilities." I believe that these interventions are related

to my Japanese cultural influences of nonverbal communication and expressiveness.

Therapeutic Goals

Brandon's goals are: 1) to increase his sustained mutual music-making, so that he

may gain greater understanding of social-emotional dynamics; 2) to increase his ability to

engage in musical dialoguing, which will assist him in understanding the flow of human

communication in back-and-forth manner; and 3) to increase his vocal range and assist

his overall language development and expressiveness. In addition to these specific goals

developed as part of his treatment plan, I also focus generally on his physical

development.

To provide Brandon with opportunities to experience music as a whole, my

musical interventions often incorporate structural activities with familiar themes and

musical patterns that he understands. The session flow also has a structure: our ritualistic

celebration, followed by a new musical experience that either challenges his musical

responsiveness or gives him new musical tastes. These choices seem to have been

influenced by both collectivistic and individualistic values. While working on Brandon's

increased ability to be mutual, independence and expressiveness are also encouraged.

Musical Relationships[8]

    Trust

    Although interpersonal trust between Brandon and me developed rather quickly, some time was needed for us to create musical trust. Both Brandon and I struggled to find a mutual understanding in the way we made music together. We were eventually able to establish a musical world where we could connect with each other, and our musical relationships have been continuing to grow at a slow but steady pace. In reference to this, Ansdell (1995) writes,

> When musical response has been established, real communication is possible in the music. In this situation the client is aware of her own playing and how that playing relates to, and is answered by, the therapist's playing. She also finds out that what she intentionally plays affects the music as a whole—that she can influence the tempo, dynamics and character of the music...both can answer each other in the music and that this musical relationship can at the same time be a very satisfying human relationship, a feeling of being understood and accepted by someone else. (p. 72)

    Ever since Brandon and I have found the authentic musical relationship that flows between us, we have been re-connecting through the same musical structure as our ritual, to celebrate our musical moment together. During this time, a strong sense of musical trust is present in the room, where Brandon and I are able to understand each other in a musical way.

    I believe that the development of our musical trust is related to collectivistic values, such as interdependence, unity, balance and harmony. (Morton & Olenik, 2005;

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[8] Musical examples can be found in Appendices: A & B.

Sue & Sue, 2003) Perhaps partly due to my cultural countertransference toward Brandon, I could have been searching for a sense of togetherness. Moreover, both Brandon and I often want to re-visit the feeling of unity. More than encouraging independence, I tend to focus on interdependence and simultaneous music-making with Brandon.

Directiveness/Indirectiveness

When working with Brandon, my music, musical cues, and musical structures remain very directive and clear, as if to musically demonstrate an authority figure. Similar to our therapeutic relationships, my music often directly communicates to him, putting some musical demands on Brandon to move with me. Directive music seems to help Brandon sustain his state of focus and experience back-and-forth musical flow. Due to its clarity and predictability, I would say my musical directiveness seems to have been impacted from values of Japanese culture.

Structure Vs. Freedom

Most of the time, my music is rigidly structured with clear cues in order for Brandon to understand the musical messages and challenges I'm presenting. I often struggle with finding an effective balance of structure and freedom when working with Brandon. This is exemplified in Brandon's way of beating the drum. Within rigid structures, Brandon displays higher levels of motor control and musical responsiveness. When more freedom is given within the musical experience, however, Brandon often loses ability in his upper extremities and begins to beat the drum with less flexibility and fluidity. This illustrates how Brandon and I are interdependent, which reflects a collectivistic cultural influence.

Expressiveness

I am not as expressive as I can be when working with Brandon. Although I have compassion toward Brandon, I often remain a distant authority figure to him in both interpersonal and musical relationships; and I feel that my music has less expressive qualities as a result. The way I use my voice also appears more directive and straightforward than expressive. Music created for and with Brandon often has bright quality that allows for positive feelings. Both Brandon and I are energetic when we play. I tend to focus more on developing Brandon's cognitive and social-emotional understanding than his ability to express himself musically. I believe that this clinical and musical focus is once again influenced by collectivistic values.

<div align="center">**Case Example II: Alex**</div>

Background Information

Alex is a 10-year-old Caucasian boy with autism. He presents himself as fearless and happy, but he often isolates himself from his surroundings. Alex is nonverbal, and has many sensory issues. He often craves sensory input on his hands; and in order to fulfill his sensory needs, he holds onto things, such as a book or soft material, for instance guitar strap. Due to his limited expressive language skills, it is difficult for Alex to make his needs known. At times, he appears uncomfortable with his own body, displaying facial tension and impulsive vocalizations. Alex also often wanders around the session room aimlessly, perhaps in attempts to avoid human interaction. At his public school, he receives Applied Behavioral Analysis, which focuses on modifying targeted behaviors such as perseverative movement, speech, and occupational therapy. In addition to music therapy, Alex receives weekly art therapy at home.

Alex's father is a technician, and his mother is a teacher. He has an older brother and a younger sister, both 2 years apart. His family shows a great deal of affection toward Alex. His mother and sister, who often bring him to therapy, greet the therapists respectfully, and often sit in the waiting room very quietly during sessions. His father is always holding Alex tightly in his arms. His older brother shows playfulness and friendliness toward him, often approaching Alex with infantile interactions, such as "boo." Although much effort from his family can be observed, Alex typically does not show emotional involvement toward his family members. Alex often walks through the hallway independent of his family after the music therapy sessions.

Clinical History

Alex has been coming to the Rebecca Center since September 2005. His mother reported, that although many therapies and services were provided for him at school, he did not show much progress in areas of interpersonal development. Her hope was for him to find connection with his therapists through music. Since 2005, Alex has been seen by several therapists in individual music therapy. He began working with me as his primary therapist in January 2011. My NRMT training supervisor assumes the co-therapist role for Alex.

Therapeutic Relationships

Trust

I feel unconditional acceptance and love toward Alex. Every time I see him I want to hold him and welcome him to our sacred time together. Although I do not hold him physically, I try to sense his energy for the day and appreciate who he is and what he brings to us. I also want to provide him with a sense of security and warmth because he

often appears at a loss. Alex seems to have difficulty expressing his inner creativity, joys, and struggles, and often remains within himself. He has very limited resources for emotional outlets, so I want to nurture him and create a safe environment in which he can begin to explore his outer world and discover his own potential. Although Alex does not display interpersonal shared attention with me very frequently, when he does smile or make intentional eye contact, he shows a strong emotional presence and a sense of unity with me.

The beginning stages of developing a therapeutic relationship with Alex, I struggled to be authentically available for him. Alex's emotional presence and energy were often fleeting, and I had difficulty capturing any moment of mutual understanding. Through the use of musical games that became meaningful to Alex and the therapy team, our trusting relationships began to develop. At the present stage of our music therapy process, it seems that Alex is able to trust our presence and guidance in the music room. I am also able to have trust in Alex that he will occasionally engage in mutual relationships with us.

I believe that my unconditional acceptance toward Alex shows influence from the individualistic and humanistic viewpoints. I am able to focus on Alex's individual differences and needs, and Alex appears to feel free in the music room.

Directiveness/Indirectiveness

I am mostly indirect when working with Alex, whereas the co-therapist takes on a more active and directive role. Direct communication between Alex and myself is very brief. I become more passive during music therapy sessions with Alex, perhaps waiting for the co-therapist, my supervisor, to guide the direction of the sessions. When I do take

the directive role, I am determined and Alex responds with an emotional presence to my directiveness. My manner of approaching Alex seems to come from both collectivistic and individualistic values. Since the co-therapist is my supervisor, at times I may be unconsciously thinking that it is more respectful to allow her to direct the process, which reflects my collectivistic influence. At other times, I would like to respect Alex's needs, so I remain indirect and give him space, which is indicative of a more individualistic approach.

Verbal/Nonverbal Interactions

Since Alex has very limited language ability, verbal interactions do not occur. He has said "bye" to us on occasion, but the quality of his engagement seemed more memory-based than emotionally invested and spontaneous. Alex's nonverbal interactions often communicate to us that he has difficulty in sustaining human connections and intimacy. Long periods of emotional engagement appear to overwhelm Alex, and he needs to leave the interaction and have some space. His sensory issues also seem to cause difficulties. It is important for the co-therapist and I to understand Alex's nonverbal messages, such as his aimless wandering, jumping, and hand tapping, so that we can provide him with what will benefit him in that moment. I often keep in mind how I was taught to read the air/energy of a person while growing up in Japan. Subtle facial changes and gestures are important messages from Alex to the therapists, and I use them frequently to guide therapy sessions.

Therapeutic Goals

Alex's goals are: 1) to increase his ability to sustain self-regulation, meaning his ability to remain calm and available for an interaction; 2) to increase his ability to sustain

mutual engagement so that he can further develop the understanding of purposeful and meaningful interactions; and 3) to increase his ability to engage in musical dialoguing, so that he may gain a greater understanding of back-and-forth human relationships. Although these specific goals have been chosen for Alex, the most important area seems to be assisting him in finding intrinsic motivation so that his world becomes more shared, purposeful, and meaningful.

I often create musical experiences based on Alex's interests so that he can feel a sense of relatedness and accomplishment. For example, the peek-a-boo musical game has become one of our weekly music experiences where we can all understand our roles. The peek-a-boo game is our ritualistic musical sharing to celebrate our musical moments together. The co-therapist and I also guide Alex to the drum so that we can slowly work on his beating, which will help his coordination, release some of the emotional and physical tension he may have, and awaken his music child. My clinical focus with Alex tends to remain within the individualistic values of freedom, self-expression, independence and individuation (Ho, 1985; Hurley, 2000), but also seems to delve into the collectivistic emphases on unity and rituals.

Musical Relationships[9]

Trust

Although it took some time to develop, I am now able to trust our musical relationships with Alex. There is a flow between Alex, the co-therapist, and myself as we make music together. We have found some musical themes together that can take us to the world of mutual understanding and celebration. Though Alex may be far away from me at the piano, he hears my music as a grounding base for him to explore the room, his

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[9] Musical Examples in Appendices section: C & D

body, and his interpersonal and musical relationships with us. Each week I bring back meaningful musical themes, such as our peek-a-boo song, as a way for us to feel a sense of security and trust, and also to function as a foundation from which we can expand and explore.

I often use sequencing melodies that do not resolve, or that have long phrases, in order to sustain Alex's musical engagement. My music often has many elements at once, such as short trills, melodic rounding, moving left hand, grounding bass, staccato phrasing, and dissonance. When singing, I often use melodic leaps to invite him into a vocal exchange with me. I am trying to create well-balanced music to facilitate a healthy environment. This concept is related to the Japanese traditional food and collectivistic concepts of unity and harmony. I also have the desire to musically nurture Alex so that he may feel safe and begin to explore his outer world, which is more of an individualistic value.

Directiveness/Indirectiveness

When working with Alex, the music can be both directive and indirective, depending on the therapeutic situations. For instance, when working on his drum beating, my music tends to have more directive musical drives and energy in order to sustain Alex's engagement. At times when he needs space, such as when he goes to the corner of the room and/or actively resists participation in musical interactions, I put less demand on the music. Instead, I just hold the musical environment and allow him to take the time and space he needs. With Alex, I am able to incorporate both collectivistic and individualistic values and transition smoothly between the two as necessary.

Structure Vs. Freedom

Similar to the topic mentioned above, Alex seems to benefit from both structured and free music. Structured music can often assist him in sustaining his mutual engagement and drum beating, whereas music with freedom can provide him with the sense of acceptance and space that he needs. Although the session itself has an overall structure, a great deal of freedom is given to Alex within it, such as with out-of-time music or gentle singing.

Expressiveness

Alex is one of the clients who responds the most to my expressive use of voice. He often had difficulties engaging in any musical experiences into which I invited him, especially at the beginning of our music together. I did not use my voice much at the start, since the co-therapist often had to chase him around the room in an attempt to engage him in music. The co-therapist often sang, and I usually waited for her to take directives. During our third session, Alex was near me, and I began singing in a lower range that had more vibration and deliberateness. Alex vocalized back to me immediately. Now that interpersonal and musical trusts are developed, Alex and I often have a brief moment of connecting through singing/vocalizing. I try to be expressive with my voice and the way I deliver vocalizations to him.

Alex may respond to my voice more because, in American culture, we are expected to respond verbally when another person talks to us. Alex is far more responsive to vocalizations, and so I often use this approach in my attempts to communicate with him.

The music goes through various emotional qualities during Alex's music therapy sessions, such as celebrating during our peek-a-boo musical play. During this time, the

music has a warm and sentimental quality, as if asking Alex, "Will you be with us?"

When working on drumming, the music becomes more energetic and driving to assist in

building emotional excitement. Overall, the music remains highly expressive, which is

reflective of an individualistic cultural influence.

Chapter 3: Discussion/Conclusion

Case Comparison and Discussion

Therapeutic Relationships

With both Brandon and Alex, I have been able to establish trusting and positive therapeutic relationships, although the processes have been different. The common areas are the unconditional acceptance and love I have toward them, and the maternal feelings I carry when working with them. However, many distinct differences are found, which appear to have some cultural influences.

The first major difference is in my role as the primary-therapist. I take a directive role with Brandon, whereas I become much more receptive and indirective when working with Alex. Many insights are considered here, such as my clients' specific cultural backgrounds. When working with Brandon, I may be feeling some countertransference or cultural understanding toward him due to our close ethnic origins. I may be projecting my childhood experiences and cultural values onto him. As a young child in Japan, I was basically told to what to do and when to do it by my teachers and parents, and since the music therapy environment can be viewed as similar to a scholastic setting, I may see myself as a teacher to Brandon and therefore feel the need to give him more directions.

On personal cultural level, although I have been taught to read the air/energy, I have difficulty connecting to people who do not verbally share their thoughts and feelings with me. Alex reminds me of those people because of his fleeting engagement and energy level. It could be that at times I become hesitant at times when working with Alex because I am not sure what he may be feeling. As a result, my way of interacting with him becomes indirective and reflects a more individualistic influences.

My differing approaches could also be due to Alex and Brandon's pathologies and present cognitive and emotional levels of functioning, in which case my methods have nothing to do with cultural influences. For instance, Brandon has difficulty in understanding social-emotional dynamics and social cues. As a result, he does not quite understand back-and-forth communications and initiating. I may be providing him with clear directions so that he may learn from our interactions and help him eventually develop agency. On the other hand, Alex requires a lot of space and time before being able to join into therapeutic interactions. My interactions may become indirective to support his present emotional state and put less of a demand on him. The particular needs of each client may alter my therapeutic approach, and could be the explanation for the differences in their therapy processes.

Another area to consider is the role of the co-therapists in sessions. My peer assumes the role as the co-therapist for Brandon. She is also my good friend whom I can trust and be open with. Her presence in the room may have been allowing me to take more direct approach toward Brandon. When working with Alex, there is another layer because he is my NRMT training client, and so I work with my supervisor as co-therapist. I respect my supervisor and I see her as an authority figure. In Japanese culture, we never talk back to or go against our teachers or elders (Iwasaki, 2005). I also feel that my co-therapist has much more knowledge than I do. During sessions, I tend to rely on her to guide me rather than taking initiatives. This way of working with the co-therapist is culturally appropriate to me.

How I view the clients and their established goals is also very different. I see Brandon as a whole, and treat him as such. However, I have more targeted goals for Alex.

Asians view clients in a holistic way and believe that a whole person needs to be treated in order to get better, whereas American methods focus solely on an individual's particular needs.

Lastly, the speed in which each client warmed up to me was also very different. Although there are pathological, developmental, and personality differences, I do sense a significant cultural influence, especially with Brandon. He was able to easily separate from his parents, although they showed concerns leaving him alone. I feel that my familiar facial features helped Brandon feel safe and secure, allowing him to find an immediate emotional connection. Brandon has never shown any hesitancy toward me, and although many positive and playful interactions are observed between Brandon and his co-therapist, Brandon always seems to be more interested in and connected with me.

Musical Relationships

My musical relationships with Brandon and Alex are very different in various ways, such as the direction of the musical experience, musical forms/structure, elements, and emotional/expressive quality.

Direction of the Musical Experiences

When working with Brandon, I often have a clear musical direction in mind, and I remain fixated with my plan most of the time. It is partly because I trust that Brandon can expand musically with me, but it is also because I forget to be creative at times. This may be a cultural influence, since most Asian leaders are lacking in their capacity to be spontaneous and creative. Traditional Japanese music shows similar characteristics as well, such as well-planned melodic lines and fixated musical patterns. During sessions, I feel that my sense of responsibility toward Brandon and meeting his parents' wishes take

over my creativity, and I become controlling of the music. I am much more able to be

flowing and spontaneous when working with Alex. Sometimes I do not know the musical

direction at all, but am able to trust in the moment and spontaneously create new musical

ideas and forms. My direction of the musical experience with Alex tends to emphasize

creativity, self-expression and individuation much more so than with Brandon. This could

also be due to the dynamics in the room, since both Brandon and Alex have different

needs and behavior patterns, but I find that my spontaneity with Alex is indicative of an

individualistic cultural influence.

Musical Forms/Structures

Short musical forms are created for Brandon, whereas with Alex I often create

long musical forms that do not resolve quickly. More than cultural, this area seems to be

influenced by my clinical intent and knowledge from the NRMT philosophy. Musical

structure shows some cultural influences. When working with Brandon, I become highly

structured similar to the traditional Japanese music. Although I consider his pathology

and carefully make the musical choices, my overall structured music may be due to some

cultural transference and/or understanding. In contrast, music with Alex often has more

freedom within a loose structure. The music allows time for breaths and space, which can

be influenced by individualistic values.

Musical Elements

The nuances of the music I play in each session are very different because of the

specific musical elements I incorporate into my playing. The music for Brandon seems to

stay driving and energetic, while music for Alex fluctuates more to accommodate

different moods. I feel that I use these musical elements with my clinical intent in mind,

and am not influenced as much by cultural values. However, I must note that my music

often reflects the concept of balance derived from the collectivistic value. Brandon's

active drumming often becomes the essential ingredient or highlighted solo part. In

contrast, due to Alex's limited engagement in music-making, I often play various

elements to create a well-balanced environment for Alex, where he can add some colors

and spices to the music.

Conclusion

In this self-inquiry paper, my cultural roots, beliefs, and my life experiences both

in Japan and America were examined. Two case examples illustrated how cultural

influences can determine the clinical choices and interventions I chose for two clients

from different cultures. Due to individual differences and this paper being my personal

experience, generalization is not suggested.

As a person, a musician, and a therapist, I must say that almost everything and

everyone I have encountered in my life have influenced me to become who I am now,

how I view music, the beliefs I have, and how I practice music therapy. I believe that my

Japanese cultural background, the spiritual beliefs my mother taught me, and coming to

America at a fairly young age all contribute to who I am as a person and therapist.

As I write this paper, I am realizing that a great need for the field of music therapy

is to explore and expand the understanding of cultural influences. When searching for

examples and resources related to music therapy and culture with clinical examples, I was

at a loss. More contemporary journals, such as *Voices: A World Forum for Music*

Therapy, have begun to discuss cultural factors and multicultural music therapy, but few

others have explored this topic (Ikuno, 2005; Brown, 2002).

Although though these resources were helpful, they did not provide me with any clinical examples that discussed both therapeutic and musical relationships. Other disciplines, such as psychotherapy, have already begun publishing differences in therapeutic approaches due to cultural influences (Ho, 1985; Iwakabe, 2008; Iwasaki, 2005). More studies and literature that discuss different musical relationship patterns and cultural influences can enrich and widen the field of music therapy and the manner in which music therapists interact with their clients.

I have spent nearly half of my life in America, and I embrace every moment of it. I enjoy the freeness and equality. I was an angry girl in Japan, especially at school, who could not "fit" into the group dynamic. Coming to America was an eye opening experience for me, and ultimately America was where I found peace within myself. I cherished all the trusting and authentic relationships I have developed with people around me including my friends and professors, and the freedom and non-judgmental environment I'm so lucky to still have today. At the same time, coming to America game me the opportunity to revisit my cultural roots as well as acknowledge and deeply appreciate the beauty of my own country.

Living in and adapting to a new culture is a life-long learning process. Most individuals struggle their whole lives to understand their cultural identities. I strongly believe that examining one's unique cultural roots and influences can help him/her achieve enlightenment and harmony, leading to a healthy life.

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Appendix A: *Musical Example I: Brandon*

Appendix B: *Musical Example II: Brandon*

Appendix C: *Musical Example III: Alex*

Appendix D: *Musical Example IV: Alex*

Appendix A: *Shinto*

Shinto is the oldest form of religion in Japan since ancient days dating back in 300 to 100 B.C. during the Yayoi Period (Morton & Olenik, 2005). After the Old Stone Age, the Jomon Period, which lasted from 3000 B.C. to 660 B.C., Yayoi culture began, and the ancient Japanese began to use bronze and make figures. Shamanism was developed during the Yayoi period, which led to the Shinto mythology. The basic belief of Shinto is "appreciating the nature." In Shinto, each natural element has its own god. Queen Himiko, daughter of the sun, became the ruler of the Yayoi period, as well as a shaman. She contacted the spirits when in a trance in order to flourish the civilization. Queen Himiko was one of the children of the gods, Izanagi and Izanami. Izanagi and Izanami had many children, and each of them became a god or goddess. At my house we have special altar for water and fire gods, to protect us from evil such as fire and food poisoning.

Living with nature in harmony is the essential importance in Shinto beliefs, and we pray a lot to the gods. I remember when we built our house 23 years ago, we hired a shaman to give blessings to the property and also to get rid of all the negativities, because we were cutting trees and invading this new space, where others may have lived a long time ago. We go to our local shrine at least twice a year to purify ourselves and receive blessings. Shrines are where gods dwell; we go there to pray for rich lives and to unite the community.

Another important value of Shinto is calmness and making an effort to create peace. The flow of nature is not to be disturbed; we must try to flow with it. Nature worship is crucial according to the Shinto beliefs. Ever since Queen Himiko, shamanism

still exists. Most Japanese people carry Shinto beliefs and traditions, and they practice

ritual purity, which is considered at most important especially after childbirth, shedding

blood, and death.

Appendix F: *Buddhism*

Buddhism was first introduced to the Japanese in 552 A.D. from the king of

Paikche in Korea (Morton & Olenik, 2005). The Japanese were immensely impressed

with the Buddhist system, its artistic rituals, depths, and the significance it placed on life

and death. Soon after, Buddhism became an essential philosophical and religious belief

among the Japanese. Buddhism was supported by the government, and in 604, Prince

Shotoku developed a constitution that was hevily influenced by Buddhist beliefs. This

constitution lasted from Japan's formation until 1868 (Tsuchiya 2004).

Buddhism focuses on self-understanding, self-peace, and/or self-enlightenment

through meditation, self-training, and praying. It also emphasizes the concept of standing

strong with two feet while not disturbing others. Human beings hold desires and cravings

that force them to believe that they are suffering. In order to leave the life cycle and reach

self-enlightenment, one needs to understand the self and what causes suffering—which is

desire and selfish thoughts. During meditation, an individual is left alone to face his/her

own cravings and fears while supported by others around him/her and nature. The

ultimate goal of the Buddhist religion is knowing oneself, because "one can only heal

oneself." These concepts are found is Buddha's writings, entitled "Four Noble Truths."

Four Noble Truths

1.   *Shogyo Mujo*—every element that exists is not still. Every infant

      becomes an adult, and every adult reaches death. Nothing is still; things

      constantly change their shapes

2.   *Shoho Muga*—Nothing has self.

3.   *Issai Kaiku*—Everything is suffering. Although there are pleasures, they ultimately turn to sufferings

4.   *Nehan Jakujo*—Illusion disappears, and one reaches peace. Human beings are either at peace or suffering. Once self-enlightenment is reached, only peace exists.

Other Essential Buddhist Beliefs

Besides a significant amount of self training, Buddhists also pay special respects to their dead ancestors because, without them, we would not be here. Buddhism also has many sects, such as Jodoshu, Jodoshinshu, and Shingonshu. My family practices Jodoshu and Shingonshu. The primary beliefs in all sects are same; however how they practice and where they place the most emphasis are where they differ. Jodoshu, for instance, heavily emphasizes its tradition and the use of symbolism. During the "Obon" when the dead return home, vegetables are used to symbolize different elements such as animals and rivers. During this period, we are not allowed to consume living produces such as meat and fish. We take broth from mushrooms and mostly eat vegetables. Jodoshinshu is a small sect that separated from Jodoshu. My mother was raised in Jodoshinshu beliefs and later had to learn the Jodoshu tradition when she was married to my father. The Jodoshinshu monk prayers are more poetic and expressive. Unlike the monotone grounding prayers other sect monks read, Jodoshinshu prayers are more rhythmic and have resting points. Shingonshu emphasizes on ancestry worship more than the other sects. A great deal of self-work and a journey around shrines to pray are other crucial practices of the Shingonshu sect.

As a result of Jodoshu and Shingonshu emphasis within my family, our practice includes ancestry worship and ritualistic symbolism. Everyday when we cook rice, the first fresh scoop goes to our ancestors, whose spirits are resting at the altar. If we receive any gifts by our neighbors and friends, we first present them to our ancestors to show appreciation. We believe that our ancestors have built the foundation over centuries for us to have the lives we have today. It is very important for us to respect our ancestors. During "Obon" time, my mother collects special vegetables to worship the family altar. Buddhist incense is never to be lit during this time as well.

Appendix G: *Bushido*

Bushido is perhaps the essential philosophy of everyday life among the Japanese.

It developed during the warrior period, between 1158 and 1185. "Bushi" means "warrior"

or "samurai," and "do" refers to a way of living. The meaning of Bushido is the way

Bushis lived, which originated from Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucius beliefs of loyalty,

honor, self-sacrifice, filial piety, and duty. When Japan was still young and developing,

we went through many battles and civil wars. During these times, many leaders

(Shoguns) gathered their followers and fought over power and control. Bushis fought

with honor and respect for their Shoguns, sacrificing their lives so that their leader would

become the master. The most well-known Shogun is Ieyasu Tokugawa, who became

Japan's ruler in 1600. Until 1868, the Tokugawa family continued to rule the country.

Other well-known Shoguns are Hideyoshi Toyotomi and Nobunaga Oda. Their children

have continued their rich family history, and they hold high societal positions in Japan

even today. When Bushis were battling, they maintained an incredible amount of loyalty

toward their Shoguns, whom they admired and believed in. This spirit continues to live in

Japanese people. The Japanese are very loyal to their families, friends, and work. They

will make every effort to meet the requirements and sustain a harmonious environment

(Nitobe, 2002).

Bushis or Samurais participated in intense training to become sword masters. The

ultimate goal of handling sword was becoming "no mind," fearing nothing. This way of

crafting sword (fighting with a sword was considered an art) was an important part of

being a Bushi, which illustrated a strong Buddhist influence. Bushis always wore white

robes under their armors or kimonos to honor the Shinto belief of purity. The

combination of Shinto and Buddhism are said to have worked well for the Bushis because Shinto belief gave them the concept of purity and peace, while the Buddhist values gave them strengths and the philosophical idea of "don't fear death" (Morton & Olenik, 2005). Once Bushis mastered Bushido, they fought with no fear; only with honor and self-sacrifice (Nitobe, 2002).

The concept of Bushido is how the Japanese learn morality and respect (Nitobe, 2002). I remember one late night when I was a child, where we left the city too late and there was no train to take us home. My father was working and was not coming home until the next morning. My mother was still a housewife at that time, and we did not have extra money for a taxi. My mother just said to us, "Walk. Just walk." My sister and I were crying and whining, not wanting to walk all those miles home. My sister and I often bring back this story, joking about how crazy my mother was. My mother says her actions that night were her teaching us Bushido. Within our small family community, our father is the Shogun. Although he had a good job and provided enough for us, we still had no extra cash. Instead of feeling helpless and complaining, my mother's idea was to honor our family system, to remain loyal to it by walking home without breaking anyone's harmony. In this case, breaking harmony may have been my mother knocking on someone's door asking for a ride or cash for taxi. I cannot clearly remember how long it took us to reach home, maybe 2-3 hours, but I remember just walking. Walking represented the Buddhist idea of self-training and becoming "no mind."