

# The Reason Why We Do Philosophy for with Children in Miyagi, Japan

著者	TABATA Taketo
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# The Reason Why We Do Philosophy for/with Children in Miyagi, Japan

\*TABATA Taketo

## Abstract

This paper<sup>1</sup> is a philosophical essay on philosophy for children in Miyagi (p4cM) that we started in October 2013. The shock of the terrible disaster in March 11<sup>th</sup> 2011 stimulated our interest in p4c Hawai'i (p4cHI) because we, educators and children in Miyagi hit by Tsunami, needed the intellectually safe place to talk with each other our loss and shock and to think deeply the meaning of the catastrophe. And the intellectually safe place is the most important element of p4cHI. According to the history of the philosophy, the crisis is a critical moment the philosophy wakes up and starts to be free. (§1) However we confront the big gap between the images of philosophizing in the traditional philosophy and in philosophy for children. It takes for granted that philosophizing is a kind of monologue inside a philosophical person. We will examine this assumption based on the ancient Greek symposium and present the possibility of philosophical dialogue in a community. Plato's symposium with wine was a festival of Dionysus that is very similar with p4cHI because the souls of the participants get hot and, like iron in a fire, grow younger and softer. (§2) We will clarify this basic condition of the philosophical discussion according to the concept of »basic mood« by Hiedegger. (§3) After that, we try to bridge the cultural gap between U.S.A and Japan. Is p4cHI transcultural or not? The idea of p4cHI is an opposition to modern times involving society and schooling that consist in »disciplines« (Foucault). So p4cHI is effective as a counterculture not only in U.S.A but also in Japan. (§4) Finally, impressive phenomena are described as a notable result of p4cHI/M and the reason why such phenomena happen in a safe circle. (§5, 6)

**Key words** : philosophy for children Hawai'i and Miyagi (p4cHI/M) (子どもの哲学ハワイ・みやぎ)

Tsunami in 2011. March (2011年3月の津波)

Philosophizing (哲学すること)

Basic mood (根本気分)

Disciplines (規律訓練)

Intellectually safe place (知的にセーフな場所)

Trans-cultural (文化の違いを超越した)

## INTRODUCTION: THE BEGINNING OF PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN IN MIYAGI

The grass-roots movement of philosophy for/with children in Miyagi, one of the 48 Japanese

prefectures, began with well wishes from Waikiki Elementary School (WES) in Hawai'i for the recovery from the huge damage by the disaster on March 11, 2011. It was a major catastrophe. After the magnitude 9.0 earthquake the incredible tsunami up to 20m (67ft) attacked East Japan. The death and

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\* Pedagogy Course

missing toll rose to 18,480. Out of this number, 593 of the lives lost were those of students, including small children.

WES started to support and encourage Wakabayashi Elementary School in Miyagi with the mindfulness that has been grown in the p4c Hawaiian style (p4cHI). In June 2013 WES's teachers visited Wakabayashi E. S. and did p4cHI. It was the first amazing session of p4c in Miyagi. Japanese teachers were inspired by it and convinced that the p4c was significant for students not only in Miyagi but also all over the country. We decided to study, practice and extend the p4cHI and formed the organization called philosophy for children Miyagi style (p4cM) in October 2013. The organizers were only 13 teachers in public school or university but the network of p4cM continues to grow locally, nationally and internationally.

Actually, the p4c Hawai'i-Japan exchange program had been providing opportunities for Japanese teachers and researchers to consider and participate p4cHI since it started in 2006.<sup>2</sup> However bridging a gap between p4c and a Japanese standardized education was so difficult that the number of teachers doing p4c was restricted and even some public school's teachers beginning p4c with enthusiasm choose not to continue. So Miyagi is the first place in Japan, where the ongoing, sustained supporting network of public school's teachers and academic researchers has been expanding.

In this three years, the network of p4cM has been held a monthly meeting with almost thirty teachers and ten researchers and made the teacher exchange study trip between Hawai'i and Japan three times

a year. On every trip, seven or eight teachers visit elementary, middle and high schools for a week and do p4c there. After the session they reflect it and exchange ideas. The relationship between Japanese and Hawaiian teachers is equal and reciprocal, while Hawaiian group has a longer history than Japanese. Additionally, we have held two forums in which over hundred people concerned took part.

Today (2016) in Miyagi, p4cM supported by our network is practiced, researched and recreated in fifteen elementary schools, nine middle schools, one nursing college and two universities. At every school, teachers start and continue p4c voluntary, for it is not added to the school curriculum. In spite of adverse conditions of Japanese educational system, or rather because of them, the grass-roots movement of p4cM has been alive and well.

## 1. WHY DID WE BEGIN PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN IN MIYAGI AFTER THE DISASTER?

Why did the seeds of p4cHI germinate in this place, in Miyagi? This question may be transformed to the following supposed one. If we, teachers in Miyagi adjacent to Fukushima, had not experienced the disaster in 2011, would we have been aware of the significance and necessity of p4cHI in the Japanese educational context? My answer is NO. The disaster asked us to take stock of what the education was and what students needed to learn at school. It destroyed 390,000 houses, 14,000ha farmland<sup>3</sup> and 28,612 fishing boats<sup>4</sup> and created over 450,000 refugees.<sup>5</sup> Even now (in 2016), the number of the evacuees is over 130,000.<sup>6</sup> Out of this number,

1 This paper comes from the draft for the German article, "Einen sicheren Ort schaffen: Warum wir in Miyagi mit Kindern philosophieren" that was published 2017 in *"Polylog"*, 37, S.37-S.53. The German article is not a 'translation' of the draft in English. In my opinion, the draft has the original meaning. This is the edited version of the draft.

2 Mitsuyo TOYODA: "Practicing Philosophy for Children in the Search for a Better Society" in *Journal of the College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa* n.d., 20.

3 Cabinet Office: *White Paper*, 2012, in : <http://www.bousai.go.jp/kaigirep/hakusho/h24/bousai2012/html/honbun/index.htm> [accessed Dec. 2016].

4 Fisheries Agency in : [http://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/j/kikaku/wpaper/h23\\_h/trend/1/t1\\_1\\_1\\_2.html](http://www.jfa.maff.go.jp/j/kikaku/wpaper/h23_h/trend/1/t1_1_1_2.html) [accessed Dec. 2016].

5 Reconstruction Agency in : <http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/hikaku2.pdf> [accessed Dec. 2016].

21,428 are children under 18 years old in/from Fukushima.<sup>7</sup> Many lives, houses and communities were lost. It was a heartbreak and homelessness. At the loss, children needed help not only of their family and teachers, in some particular cases, of the psychotherapists but also of their friends and classmates. They needed the caring relationships in the classroom. When we encountered p4cHI, we found that its “community of inquiry” approach was an effective means for cultivating such relationships.

But why does the philosophy or philosophical inquiry cultivate the caring relationships? Is it true that the philosophy cultivates the community? If it is true, what is the philosophy? My answer to the questions was changed after the disaster. Disaster is, whether the natural or the nuclear, a crisis. In the crisis, the real philosophy awakens and grows up. The example is the phenomenological movement. It was never arbitrary that late Husserl gave a lecture titled “The Crisis of European Sciences and Psychology” in Czech, the country of his birth, in November 1935, three years before his death and two years after Hitler came to power. He spoke »the crisis of sciences as the radical life-crisis of European humankind«. <sup>8</sup> According to Husserl, the crisis of sciences is that »in our life-crisis – so we are told – this science has nothing to say to us«. <sup>9</sup> »Questions of the meaning or meaninglessness of the whole of this human existence« demand reflections and answers »based on rational insight«. <sup>10</sup> With those questions, the philosophy begins, if those who ask them are academic philosophers or not. Certainly the actual crisis of Europe in 1935 is different from that

of Japan in 2011, but those questions are essentially the same and universal. Men, women and children who suffer great losses confront inevitably the same existential question and realize that they cannot console themselves with the thought that the death of their loved people is nonsense and historical occurrence including disaster »is nothing but an unending concatenation of illusory progress and bitter disappointment«. <sup>11</sup> The confused, contradictory and tragic situation after the disaster asked us including children to consider the meaning of human existence and death to reconcile with the reality that seems nonsense.

In this context an impressive moment of p4cM stand out in my mind. It was the p4c session in January 2017 with thirteen-year-old students in Onagawa where many residents had been killed by the Tsunami. It started with the playful question: If you were free whole a year, what would you do? They laughed and answered one after another, “I would play video games every day,” or “I would take a trip around the world.” The facilitator stimulated by answers asked the question: Now are you free or not? A boy having tendency to juvenile delinquency looked up and said, “We are free. Those washed away by the Tsunami must have had a lot of things they wanted to do. But they could not because it took away their freedom to do. So we still alive are free.” Other students listened intently to him in the silence.

The crisis such as disaster and war is a critical moment the philosophy wakes up and starts to be free. For »the closer we come to the crisis, ...the more we

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6 Reconstruction Agency in : [http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat2/sub-cat2-1/20161129\\_hinansha.pdf](http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat2/sub-cat2-1/20161129_hinansha.pdf) [accessed Dec. 2016].

7 The official website of Fukushima Prefecture in : <https://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/uploaded/attachment/190933.pdf> [accessed Dec. 2016].

8 Edmund HUSSERL: *Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie*, Husserliana VI, Nijhoff, Haag 1976, 1.

9 HUSSERL: 1976, 4.

10 HUSSERL: 1976, 4.

11 HUSSERL: 1976, 4-5.

12 Martin HEIDEGGER: *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, GA. 7, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2000, 36.

question«<sup>12</sup> to care for souls.

## 2. WHAT IS IT — PHILOSOPHIZING?

The philosophy for/with children demands us to change the image of philosophizing. As usual, it seems to be a kind of monologue. It seems to be taken for granted that the philosopher shuts himself up in his study, sits at the desk frowning face, reads the books, thinks alone and writes his book in silent. Or it is taken for granted that the philosopher is the authority who gives a lecture at university. But those images focus on only one side of philosophizing and philosopher. Once attention to “the philosopher’s way” (Philosophenweg) of Hegel in Heidelberg or to the daily punctual habit of Kant in Königsberg is made, their preference to walk comes to mind. Moreover, we may remind us that Kant had a circle of friends he frequently met, had a guest at lunch and talked over supper with his friends almost everyday. It means more than his own personal taste. The philosopher likes to talk and hear with friends over supper. Symposium, word and concept, is Greek in origin. The word “symposium” derives from *συμπόσιον*, a feast, a drinking party, talking over dinner. It was one of places doing philosophy as Plato said; »the convivial gathering, when rightly conducted, is an important element in education«. <sup>13</sup> Figure 1 shows the restored arrangement of the dining-couches in Greek last quarter of the 5th. c. B.C., where the symposium might be held.

According to Plato’s *Symposium*, two or three people sat or lay down in a couch. <sup>15</sup> So 14-21 people sitting or lying around talked each other joyfully and philosophically with wine in the ancient Greek

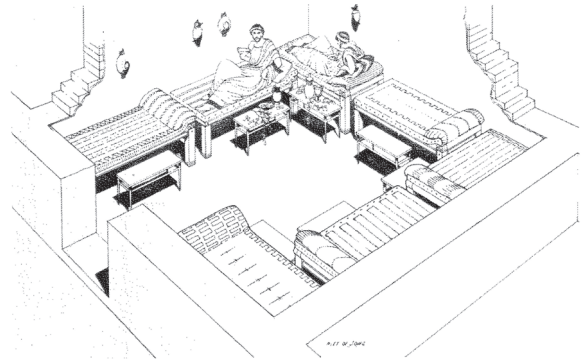


Figure 1 <sup>14</sup>

symposium. Philosophy was not only a monologue of a philosopher, but also a dialogue among over a dozen people. <sup>16</sup>

And wine played the educational role there. As the wine flows more freely, everyone is uplifted above his normal self, and is merry and »the souls of the drinkers get hot and, like iron in a fire, grow younger and softer, so that anyone who has the ability and skill to mold and educate them, finds them as easy to handle as when they were young«. <sup>17</sup> This is the reason why symposium is »a festival of Dionysus«: »an inexpensive and less harmful test« of »the nature and disposition of a man’s soul« and »a chance to train them« – provided some appropriate precautions are taken. <sup>18</sup> So it will rank as one of the most useful aids available to the art, which is concerned to foster and cultivate a deliberative community.

Naturally, children don’t need wine because they are enough young and born hot and soft like iron in a fire. But in fact, children are cooled down, even chilled at school not only in U.S.A. but also in Japan. As Jackson, the creator and developer of p4CHI, points out, »too many classrooms are not safe. Some are not even physically safe, either for

13 PLATO: *Laws*, 641D.

14 John TRAVLOS: *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens*, Hacker Art Books, New York 1980, 536.

15 Cf., PLATO: *Symposium*, 222E.

16 For example, Plato’s *Symposium* is the discussion among a dozen characters and *Phaedrus* is the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus.

17 PLATO: *Laws*, 671C.

18 PLATO: *Laws*, 649E - 650B.

teachers or students. More, perhaps most, lack the prime requisite for wonder and inquiry: intellectual safety.<sup>19</sup> Then children need help to be warmed and heated to recover their natural character. One of the arts kindling a fire in souls and community of children is, in my opinion, the philosophy for/with children Hawaiian style.

Instead of wine, we use the “Community Ball” made of woolen yarn (cf., Figure 2). It has been created in Hawai‘i as the lighthearted tool for the discussion. It has an amazing power in itself. It is colorful, soft and warm. Children like to touch and stroke it as if it were a pet or teddy bear. It relaxes them. Throwing and catching the ball is a joyful moment in the session.



Figure 2

They cheer, “Wow!”, over the complete pass and exclaim, “Oops!”, over the incomplete pass. It makes them playful and brings them a merry laugh. In the midst of such pleasure, children get hot and grow younger and softer opening their mind.

Well, the above is about the Dionysiac essence of the philosophy. Dionysus is not an only Greek god of philosophy. It worships another god: Apollo that connects with the controlled and reasonable aspect of human nature. Also p4cHI/M serves Apollo and helps students and teachers to cultivate their own reason, thinking and inquiry. »The Good Thinker’s Toolkit grew out of an imperative need to provide, to teachers and their students, visible, concrete ways of deepening their own thinking/feeling, of “scratching beneath the surface” or opening up a topic.<sup>20</sup> The

seven letters W, R, A, I, T, E, C represent a way of deepening a nascent inquiry. »They call attention to the need to clarify what might be meant [W], to ask for or give reasons [R] to support what is being said, to be alert for possible assumptions [A] or inferences [I] being made. They heighten awareness of possible implications [I] of what is said and whether of not an assertion is true [T]; if true, whether there is evidence [E] in support or counterexamples [C] to restrict the range of the claim made.«<sup>21</sup> As students and teachers become more familiar with the Toolkit, it sophisticates, first the discussion in the circle and then each person’s internal discourse and sharpened self-reflection. It contributes to practice *λόγος*; it means reason, speaking, discussion, judging, reflection and relation. The Toolkit gives an intellectual rigor to the community and individuals. At the same time it is also filled with playfulness or joyfulness as well as the Community Ball because its seven letters (WRAITEC) sounds like a magic word.

### 3. PLEASURE AS »BASIC MOOD« LINKING AN INTELLECTUAL SAFETY

Pleasure of thinking and talking in a community is a key concept of p4cHI/M. Pleasure, playfulness, joy, affects or moods in general are by no means nothing ontologically. They are neither bubbles of vitality, nor the »accompanying phenomena«, nor »the psychic phenomena, functioning as a third class of these, mostly along with representational thinking and willing.«<sup>22</sup> Moods have an existential significance.

It is the merit of Heidegger that he has again created the freer view of these phenomena in contemporary philosophy. Moods close or disclose our sights of the surrounding world. »“Mere mood” discloses the there more primordially, but

19 Thomas E. JACKSON: “Philosophy for Children Hawaiian Style—‘On Not Being in a Rush...’” in *The Journal of Philosophy for Children*, volume 17, Numbers 1&2, Montclair State University 2004, 5.

20 JACKSON: 2004, 7.

21 JACKSON: 2004, 7

22 Martin HEIDEGGER: *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1986, 139.

it also closes it off more stubbornly than any *not-perceiving*.<sup>23</sup> For example, people say in English that I am blinded by passion. It means the passion closes down my sight of the surrounding world that has been opened before flaring the fiery temper. Or I'll never find a rainbow if I'm looking down. The saying has not only physical but also existential meaning, that is only the bright mood and positive attitude may disclose a hopeful, beautiful thing. »The joyful mood opens the world again for human being.«<sup>24</sup> Bollnow, following/against Heidegger, emphasizes the importance of bright mood and cheerful atmosphere as a supportive condition of education. »Even the playfulness or foolishness that seems usually nonsense ... rather holds its positive valued significance as the ground of development.«<sup>25</sup> Therefore he says, »pleasure. man made only the space to play — abandoning displeasure — then all young powers flow out from itself.«<sup>26</sup>

Pleasure, fun or joyfulness is linked to the heart of p4cHI: the intellectual safety. According to Jackson, it contains pleasure as one of its seven elements.<sup>27</sup> In other words, elements of a safe place include that »in a safe place, there is laughter, not just the canned laughter of television, but real laughter that comes from sharing meaningful work and play.«<sup>28</sup> His insight into laughter of a safe place may be interpreted by Bollnow's words to mean »where laughter is evoked freely, there at the same time the region of discrimination, of hidden hostility and of not-willing to cooperate is necessarily broken up. The child can never be other than a part of the

community.«<sup>29</sup>

Pleasure as an element of the intellectual safety is more than a subjective emotion for it extends throughout the community beyond the individual and penetrates the place as a whole. It is essentially an inter-subjective phenomenon. Indeed, pleasure, fun or joyfulness as itself can be a subjective feeling, but if it remains just an inner subjective phenomenon and only a few children feel it, it cannot construct an element of a safe place where over dozen children sit together in a circle. The mood must come over almost all children in the circle if it promotes the safety of the community. Like a bright atmosphere, it pervades the place, affects individuals there and changes their minds into kindness. In terms of space, the cheerful mood is larger than an inner space of the subject and expands beyond it to encompass the community.

Besides, in terms of time, the intellectual safety has a longer duration than the temporary emotion. The bright and safe mood should continue to exist during the p4c session, if the topic of conversation may be changed from the enjoyable to the serious. It should not only last for the session but also grow up day by day in the community according to a series of sessions. We may distinguish moods into classes in the spatial-temporal perspective. Based on Heidegger, they may be divided into two basic classes: the class of the shorter durable, spatial smaller and the class of the longer durable, spatial larger mood.<sup>30</sup> The mood of safety belongs to the latter. Heidegger calls the former »affect (Affekt) « and the latter »passion

23 HEIDEGGER: 1986, 136.

24 Otto Friedrich BOLLNOW: *Die Pädagogische Atmosphäre—Untersuchungen über die gefühlsmäßigen zwischenmenschlichen Voraussetzungen der Erziehung*, Quelle & Meyer, Heidelberg, 1965, 27.

25 BOLLNOW: 1965, 28.

26 BOLLNOW: 1965, 27.

27 Cf., Thomas E. JACKSON: "A Guide for Teachers", PDF, n.d., 4. <http://p4chawaii.org/resources/planning-teaching-and-assessing/> [accessed Dec. 2016].

28 JACKSON: n.d., 5.

29 BOLLNOW: 1965, 28.

30 Martin HEIDEGGER: *Nietzsche I*, Neske, 1989, 59. But Heidegger does not refer to the spatial feature of moods.

31 HEIDEGGER: 1989, 59.



(Leidenschaft) « following Nietzsche. He says that »affect: the seizure that blindly agitates us. Passion: the lucidly gathering grip on beings«. <sup>31</sup> Only affect, e.g. anger and infatuation, is blind, fickle, and susceptible but passion, e.g. hate and love, is never blind: it is perspicuous and once it germinates it grows time after time. <sup>32</sup> To passion belongs a reaching out and opening up of oneself. It intensifies reflection and rumination. Heidegger interprets a feeling of pleasure in the sense of Nietzsche as passion. <sup>33</sup> With Nietzsche's word "passion", Heidegger thinks and elaborates his own concept of »basic mood (Grundstimmung) « <sup>34</sup> that »opens beings as a whole differently and in an essential way. ...Mood as mood allows the openness of beings to occur.« <sup>35</sup> Pleasure as an element of the intellectual safety in p4cHI/M also should be seen not as affect but as passion or basic mood that grants children reflectiveness and mutual loving care. Only when we grasp the pleasant and safe mood of p4cHI/M as passion or basic mood, we understand precisely its importance and its powerful function changing children.

#### 4. WHY p4c HAWAIIAN STYLE IS TRANS-CULTURAL?

In the first two years beginning to do p4cM, we, Japanese teachers and researchers saw a need to modify p4cHI for the context of Japanese public schools. Because the curriculum of Japanese elementary, junior high and high school is legally bound and standardized by MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan), it seemed very difficult to create and maintain time for p4c as the case of WES or Kailua high school in Hawai'i. Certainly the difficulty is

not yet overcome, but now we don't think the modification of p4cHI is necessary, as we understand p4cHI more deeply in its philosophy and practice. Rather we want to internalize it and see a need to do it in our own way with the heart of p4cHI for bringing forth fruit to Japanese children. Its heart seems to be trans-cultural.

Why is it trans-cultural? Why not only Hawaiian but also Japanese teachers and children need the intellectual safe place? The reason is rooted in the deeper hidden basic mood of schooling and society in modern times.

The intellectual safety is, mentioned above, basic mood that penetrates into teacher and their children and lasts during the p4c session. It is a *counter* mood to the deeper mood covering almost all over the world: rush. On the one hand it means literally a sudden feeling of extreme pleasure or excitement, e.g. people say that: users of the drug report experiencing a rush. On the other hand it means fast movement, hurry, busy situation and sudden demand. Those are a keen expression of modern technological life style or of modern basic mood of existence and society.

Jackson who discovered and described this basic mood calls it precisely »Being in a Rush«. It is reminiscent of Heidegger's eminent word »Being-in-the-World (das In-der-Welt-sein) «. Today being in the world means being in a rush that never slows down but speeds up with the development of new technologies. Jackson says »the crushing reality is that in fact we — parents, teachers, administrators, business people, politicians, all of us, including increasingly our children— ARE in a rush. We ARE in a rush to get somewhere— to get the kids to

32 Cf., HEIDEGGER: 1989, 58-59.

33 HEIDEGGER: 1989, 61.

34 »The fundamental attunement (Grundbefindlichkeit) of Angst as an eminent disclosure of Da-sein« (Heidegger: 1986, § 40) in *Being and Time* can be interpreted as a prior concept of basic mood. After *Being and Time*, Heidegger examines several basic moods: boredom, Hölderlin's holy mourning, Greek wonder, and the reserve, shock, and awe.

35 Martin HEIDEGGER: *Hölderlins Hymnen »Germanien« und »Der Rhein«*, GA. 39, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1980, 82.



soccer practice, to respond to the latest email, to submit that proposal, to raise the test scores, to be sure “No Child is Left Behind,” to bring democracy to the Iraqi people, on and on.<sup>36</sup> Not only Hawaiian but also Japanese people lives in the same rushing world. Being in a rush is trans-cultural basic mood in modern societies.

So the Jackson’s idea of »on *not* being in a Rush« is, so to speak, an opposition to modern times. The intellectually safe place realizing the idea is »Place of Refuge«<sup>37</sup> from a rush of modern societies. In modern times schooling has raised as an agency charged with the transformation of immature human beings into socialized adult citizen. It is an extensive and elaborate human institution on an international scale but consists in »disciplines« as Foucault analyzed.

»Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience) .«<sup>38</sup> It creates a new ordered, partitioned and ranked time and space in which individuals move with functional and docile bodies. »By assigning individual places it made possible the supervision of each individual and the simultaneous work of all.«<sup>39</sup> On the principle of partition or location, pupils are arranged in rows in the class, corridors, and schoolyard. Not only space but also time is partitioned, administered and made useful. Schooling consists of timetables for day, week, month and year. »The disciplinary methods reveal a linear time whose moments are integrated, one upon

another, and which is orientated towards a terminal, stable point.«<sup>40</sup> It is a social time of a serial, oriented, cumulative type called progress, development or genesis. Even an hour of class is usually oriented towards a terminal, stable point<sup>41</sup> : the purpose of teaching in the class<sup>42</sup>. Teacher makes an effort to guide pupils step by step to a predetermined answer or outcome. The main features of schooling, e.g. “teacher-oriented” and “answer-driven”, result from disciplines.

Discipline of schooling and society has been completing itself more and more exhaustively. In Spatial terms, it spreads itself across different cultures worldwide and reaches throughout society and individual body. In temporal terms, it involves and controls almost all time even leisure time and gathers speed as technology develops. This is the rushing reality.

The question of p4cHI/M is taking refuge from this reality, excluding or putting aside it, phenomenologically speaking, bracketing the reality of the lifeworld including schooling. In the p4c session, teacher and their children sit in a circle not in rows behind desks, turn the system into being question driven, ARE *not* in a rush to get anywhere, let the dialogue go where it wants or needs to go<sup>43</sup>. The progressive linear time of discipline should vanish. »The dialogue develops its own integrity, its own movement«.<sup>44</sup>

So first of all, what we, Japanese teachers and

36 JACKSON: 2004, 4.

37 JACKSON: 2004, 5.

38 Michel FOUCAULT: *Discipline & Punish — The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan, Penguin Books, 1991, 138.

39 FOUCAULT: 1991, 147.

40 FOUCAULT: 1991, 160.

41 It must be recall that Wilhelm Rein (1847-1929), a famous Herbartian transformed the Herbart’s psychological concept of development in recognition into the technical concept of class: five formal steps (Formalstufe), preparation (Vorberitung), representation (Darbietung), knotting together (Verknüpfung), summary (Zusammenfassung) and application (Anwendung). Not the thought of Herbart but the technological method of Rhein spread among modern nations including Japan at the end of the 19th century.

42 It is called ‘*Jugyo no Meate*’ in Japanese.

43 Cf., Thomas E. JACKSON: “Gentry Socratic Inquiry”, PDF, 2016, p. 10. <http://p4chawaii.org/resources/learning-about-p4chi/> [accessed Dec. 2016].

44 JACKSON: 2016, 10.

researchers, also have to do is not modifying p4cHI but doing genuinely its philosophy and practice that require us to change ourselves beyond the cultural differences and to bracket the internalized mental model of what it means to be a teacher. It demands us to become a co-inquire in the unfolding inquiry.

## 5. IMPRESSIVE PHENOMENA IN PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN

Impressive phenomena that we evaluate as a notable result of p4cHI/M are seen quite often similarly in Miyagi and Hawai'i. They are sometimes called »chicken-skin moments«. <sup>45</sup> One of them is the phenomenon that a child who hardly ever spoke speaks. For example, a teacher said in surprise after the p4c session, "It is literally first time that I heard his voice!"

I remember doing p4c with a class of fourth graders. I was invited as a facilitator to sessions at the elementary school. Before sessions, the principal and the vice-principal explained a girl to me that she was very depressed every day and had been never spoken. She was diagnosed not as having developmental disorder but having expressive language retardation. The teacher in charge of her class was well experienced and looked after students really well but had a lot of trouble with the girl. She went out of the classroom when she was displeased about something. She was extremely shy with strangers. "We are concerned today," they told me, "She might leave the classroom during the p4c with a person whom she meets for the first time."

When I went in the classroom, students already sat in a circle. I found the girl sitting with her knees drawn up and her arms around them on the chair. She muffled her face in hood and hung her head. (See

the picture of the girl, which I circled with a marker in Figure 3.)

At the beginning, we played a speed game with the community ball. <sup>46</sup> Students enjoyed with smiles the physically active nature of this game. The girl did not play but looked up just a little from time to



Figure 3

time. Next, we played some other p4c games called "If...then...Game". I asked children some questions, for example, if a chicken were two meter tall, what could happen? Students raised their hands and gave their answers one after another. "A henhouse could be broken by the super chicken." "We could eat big fried eggs." "Loud clucks of cock-a-doodle-doo could wake the whole world up." Some students laughed jovially at a funny answer and some cheered for a fantastic supposition. When a student talked, "The food problem in the world could be solved.", the other students marveled at the inference. The girl raised her eyes, looked to the front and watched the excited analogical game.

After that, we discussed a question asked and selected by the students: "Why dose our homeroom teacher have the habit of saying 'Araha Yare!' <sup>47</sup>?" Firstly the students wrote down and secondly talked their answers. The girl began to engage with the activity and wrote down something. I witnessed

45 Thomas B. YOS: "Raising the Bar: Love, the Community of Inquiry, and the Flourishing Life" in *The Journal of Philosophy for Children*, volume 17, Numbers 1&2, Montclair State University 2004, 56.

46 Cf., Thomas E. JACKSON & Ashby L. BUTNOR: "The Start-up Kit<sup>®</sup>: Lessons for Young Beginners 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition", PDF, n.d., 7. <http://p4chawaii.org/wp-content/uploads/Start-Up-Kit-3rd-Ed-by-JacksonButnor.pdf> [accessed Dec. 2016] .

47 It is impossible to translate this Miyagi dialect into any other languages, even into standard Japanese. It sounds like, "What did you do?", but is filled with polysemy and unique nuance.

opening her mouth to speak to her neighbor and the homeroom teacher heard her voice. Then she took off the hood (cf., Figure 4).



Figure 4

“She has changed since the p4c,” the vice-principal told me, “The trouble with her has decreased dramatically.”

## 6. BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE REALM

Why does a child who hardly ever spoke speak in p4cHI/M? In safe and pleased mood, as Bollnow said, »all young powers« may »flow out from itself«. However, what kind of young powers is it? We need to analyze and specify the power flowing from children in p4cHI/M more detailed. It is not the ability to control people or something, but »an initiative«<sup>48</sup> to join the community with word and deed. The girl began to take initiative to insert herself into the surrounding presence of others: into the human world of »appearance – something that is being seen and heard by others«.<sup>49</sup> Her insertion – raising her eyes, taking off the hood, watching and listening the student who speaks and speaking something – is especially impressive for teachers or adults because »this insertion is like a second birth«<sup>50</sup>

as Arendt found out. The pleased, intellectually safe place empowers children and releases their initiatives that are suppressed by disciplines of schooling.

Here, the distinction by Arendt between the public and the private realm is helpful to understand the significance of child’s initiative. The public realm means the sphere of appearance being seen and heard by others. It is the realm of light into which things can appear out of the darkness of sheltered existence and be seen by many in a variety of aspects<sup>51</sup>. In contrast, the private realm indicates the shadowy interior of the household or the intimate life – the affect of the heart, the thought of the mind and the delight of the senses<sup>52</sup>. The term “private” meant literally a state of being deprived of something. »To live an entirely private life means ... to be deprived of the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others.«<sup>53</sup> With speech and action, human beings come into the public realm from the private. Action and speech are »the modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men«.<sup>54</sup> »In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world.«<sup>55</sup> Human beings are promoted into action by virtue of birth; by taking initiative from which no one can refrain.

However, to leave the household demands courage. To act and speak is to risk one’s life because reactions from others are not foreseeable and action has its outstanding character: »its inherent unpredictability«.<sup>56</sup> Those who acts and speaks might suffer from putdowns and comments intended to belittle, undermine, negate, devalue, or ridicule.

48 Cf., Hannah ARENDT: *The Human Condition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1998, 176-177.

49 ARENDT: 1998, 50.

50 ARENDT: 1998, 176.

51 Cf., ARENDT: 1998, 50-51, 57.

52 Cf., ARENDT: 1998, 38, 50-51.

53 ARENDT: 1998, 58.

54 ARENDT: 1998, 176.

55 ARENDT: 1998, 179.

56 ARENDT: 1998, 191.

This is the reason why students hide themselves in complete silence and perfect passivity at school. They withdraw from the realm being seen and heard by others, or keep silent, or pretend they understand something even though they do not. Withdrawal from school, called “*Futoukou*” (that means refusal to attend school or school phobia), has been a Japanese social problem over two decades. According to the latest survey by MEXT, the total number of the students suffering *Futoukou* in public elementary and junior high school amounts 126,009.<sup>57</sup> The percentage of them to all junior high school students reaches 2.83, that means one person out of thirty-five suffers. Another one is bullying (“*Ijime*”). Some reports of the student’s suicide led by bullying are carried by the media every year. Recently, we got a terrible shock by the news reporting that the students bullied a thirteen-year-old boy at the junior high school in Yokohama city into where he and his family had been refuged from Fukushima. He suffered *Futoukou* and wrote down in his diary, “I considered suicide again and again. But I decided to live even if my life was filled with sufferings. For a lot of lives were killed by the disaster in 2011.”<sup>58</sup> Similar news was reported one after another for these two months.

We need a safe place not only in home but also in school. The former is the private realm enclosed and secured with four walls, without which no living thing can thrive.<sup>59</sup> Children require by nature the security of darkness to grow at all<sup>60</sup>. On the other hand, school and classroom is not neither the private shadowy nor the public bright realm with »the much harsher light«<sup>61</sup>, but should be a safe place being seen and heard by others. It can be the third *quasi*-public realm where children begin and practice taking initiative, revealing their unique personal identities

and thus making their appearance in the human world. Our grass-roots movement of p4cHI/M starts to create an intellectually safe place of dialogue between the private and the public realm.

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57 Cf., PDF by MEXT. [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/houdou/28/10/\\_\\_\\_icsFiles/afieldfile/2016/10/27/1378692\\_001.pdf](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/28/10/___icsFiles/afieldfile/2016/10/27/1378692_001.pdf) [accessed in Dec. 2016]

58 *The Asahi Shimbun* 2016. November 15.

59 Cf., Hannah ARENDT: *Between Past and Future*, Penguin Books, 2006, 185.

60 Cf., ARENDT: 2006, 183, 185.

61 ARENDT: 1998, 51.

