LET YOUR TODDLER JOURNEY TO SEPARATION : CHILD SEPARATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF PLAYFUL INTERACTIONS IN THE JAPANESE MOTHER AND CHILD

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This article discusses theoretically and empirically, how child separation during toddlerhood in the Japanese society is culture-bound and how it leads to a reorganization of maternal interactions, including their playful teasing. Characteristic features of maternal playful teasing in their interaction are considered as a seeking for the mutual feelings of unitedness and the concept of incident-affinity was Proposed. Developmental semiotics of toddlers' separation from the mother in Japanese culture was discussed from the view of *amae*. In the discussion, problematic points in traditional cross-cultural studies are considered and, a the oretical viewpoint to overcome them is proposed.

Keywords : child separation, maternal playful teasing, incident-affinity, Japanese culture

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been demonstrated that mothers often employ tickling with exaggerated actions, light threats, or expressions of mild surprise to evoke emotion, especially laughter in children, and attempt to share playfulness with the children (Trevarthen, 1984, 1990, 1993). Employment of such actions by mothers was observed in every-day mother-infant interactions from as early as the first half of infancy. For example, Trevarthen (1979) reported that a mother showed such teasing with her 11-week-old son. This pattern of maternal joking behaviour that mothers make out of the feelings or interests of their babies has been called "maternal playful teasing" (Nakano & Kanaya, 1993; Nakano, 1994a; Trevarthen, 1984, 1990, 1993).

A typical pattern of the teasing is shown in the way that a mother holds things out towards her baby, shakes them to attract his/her attention and takes them back again with exaggerated facial expressions or physical gestures and/or intonational vocalizations (Gregory, Hartley, & Newson, 1994). It is different from the counterpart,*malicious teasing* that is intended to hurt and make the teased suffer, as Nakano (1994a) distinguished. Oppositely, maternal playful teasing to their children can be characterized as *benign teasing* because mothers must employ it expecting not only to give enjoyment to their children, but also to share in the pleasure with them. Thus, proccesses of playful teasing can be considered as a *negotiatory processes* for attaining

"mutual feelings of unitedness" in pleasure between mothers and their children.

The negotiatory processes would be inevitably reorganized in culture-reflecting turning points of child development such as child separation from mother described above, because maternal caregiving and interaction styles are assumed as actualization of cultural communication styles within mothers' intersubjective experiences (Stern, 1985) in their daily lives in their culture. Attainment of a mutually seeking of "feelings of unitedness" or intersubjective satisfaction becomes articulated between mothers and their children within a culturally shared frame (Fogel, 1993). Thus, Culturally appropriate development is embodied through a process of interactions toward a mutual feeling of unitedness within a frame which culture offers as a proper way of communication.

Japanese mothers of toddlers seem abruptly to become having a strong expectation for child separation, which is in contrast to the way they allow their children to seek proximity to them in infancy. The successful developmental change in mother-child relationship from proximity seeking to outgoing can be seen as crucial in the processes of child development, a 'turning point' in Japanese mother-child relationships. Farthermore, it is more significant than the formation of the mother-child attachment relationship in the second year of life, according to Nakano (1990).

It is hypothesized that Japanese children's successful separation from their mothers in toddlerhood reorganizes their mutual interactions, including playful teasing, into more satisfactory ones than their interactions in the period when children are unwilling to separate from the mother. In following pages, I will discuss characteristic features and psychological significances of maternal playful teasing first, and the developmental semiotics of toddlers' separation from the mother in Japanese culture, the second. Then, I will describe an experimental observation of the influences of toddlers' separation on maternal playful teasing interactions. Finally, some proposals to study of cultural aspects of child development will be presented as implications from those discussions.

2. WHAT IS MATERNAL PLAYFUL TEASTING, AND WHAT ARE ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS?

(1). Characteristics of Playful Teasing

Teasing, whether benign or malicious, is a person-to-person activity unexceptionally. In order for an act to be teasing the teaser has to guess correctly which conducts he/she can arouse positive/negative emotional reactions of the person to be teased. To succeed, the teaser has to know the behaviour patterns and inner state of the teased. The characteristics of teasing, both with benign intentions/motives and with malicious ones can be described as they occur in close, intimate relationships. In other words, teasing reflects the intimacy between a teaser and the teased that may be called a *joking relationship* (Pawluk, 1989), in which they enjoy jokes in the form of teasing, banter, and mutual flirtation. For example, Dunn (1988) reported that a one-and-half-year-old second-child broke his/her older brother or sister's valued possessions, or to the other's dislike, put a spider on the desk, when he/she had had a fight with the older one.

The most typical instances of playful teasing by mothers take the following pattern (Gregory, Hartley, & Newson, 1994);

a). Mother offers her baby a rattle, jiggling it in her hand to import to it noise and movement.

b). Baby attends to the rattle and reaches for it with the right hand.

c). At the precise moment that the baby is focused and about to make manual contact, mother moves the rattle back several inches beyond the baby's reach and says 'Do you want it then?'

d). Baby reaches more determinedly with increased visual attention and makes effortful vocalizations.

e). Mother moves rattle back to place it, handle first, into the baby's outstretched hand saying 'Here you are then.'

Although there is not a proper term to describe playful teasing in Japanese language, only the word KARAKAI (noun) or KARAKAU (verb) to describe malicious teasing, my preliminary observation of mother-child free interaction at home found the following sophisticated pattern to it using 'deception:

a). A mother of a 10-month-old baby clapped her hands gently, rhythmically and repeatedly just in front of the baby to catch his interest in her actions.

b). At the time when the baby looked at her performance surely enough,"My hands are stuck to each other. I can't separate them!", the mother suddenly shrieked with exaggerated tone and pretended to pull her hands apart with all her strength, showing her "stuck hands" to the baby.

c). The mother begged the baby's help with affected intonations, "What can I do? Please help pull my hands apart!"

d). At the moment when the baby was persuaded and attempted to pull her hands apart, the mother abruptly separated her hands in a manner startling to her baby and said "Bang!" at the same time.

e). As soon as the baby was surprised and stared at her face, the mother expressed a big smile and laughed joyously to the baby.

f). The baby started to smile joyfully too.

As these instances suggest, the mothers' teasing acts consisted of rapidly transforming contradictory alternations; from their irritation to the child in the first stage of their actions, to quick expression of clear smiles and laughter to wipe out any aroused irritabitity in the child and to give enjoyment. Not only the mother making an intuitive consideration of how their motives in teasing are acceptable to her to-be-teased child but also the child's perception of the mother's play motive are necessary for playful teasing to be playful, and different from malicious teasing. Then, in a process of playful teasing, if the mother's playful motives are not transmitted to her child, or conversely, if a child does not sympathize with them, even the benign teasing would be taken negatively and may lead to distress in the child as Nakano (1994a) categorized; *malign teasing* which is the teasing *eventually perceived to be malignant*. The mother's success or failure in communicating her playfulness, or in seeking mutual pleasure depends on whether or not the child can engage in *metacommunication* (Bateson, 1956) with the mother, i.e. whether the child is reading the subtle message as more

significant than the mother's apparent actions themselves (Nakano, 1994a). Thus, it is a general characteristic of playful teasing that the stucture underlying it comprises a fickle and fluctuating bi-directional process between the positive and the negative, regulated within the intersubjective relationship (Trevarthen & Hubley, 1978) or emotional attunement (Stern, 1985) or 'intersubjective theory of others mind.'

(2). Function of Playful Teasing

As Nakano (1994a) and Reddy (1991, 1994) pointed out, in spite of the theopretical and observational evidences of its importance as described above, remarkably little notice has been paid to playful teasing by psychologists. One reason may be that they are swayed to a onesided view of the harmful or abusive images of teasing connected to bullying. For example, Harris (1989) described teasing only as hurting others, i.e. malicious teasing.

To challenge this oversight, we must answer the basic question of maternal playful teasing, "Why are mothers tempted to tease their babies?" Gregory *et al.* (1994) viewed maternal playful teasing as "paradigmatic examples of situations, which although predicated on these mutual understandings, go beyond them, by introducing apparent incongruities between the overt verbal or gestural message and the context which comprise the semantic domain (p. 1)." They explained that mothers engage in tantalizing their infants because they want to ensure the infants' responses to them are "more than an automatic reach-to-grasp-on-sight reactions" and to show that he/she is the person with whom the mother negotiates, by means of encouraging the infant to show deliberate reaching with more intentional "I-want-that" gestures. In short, in the negotiatory process of their teasing, mothers would be doing an experiment, probing whether children's reactions to their attempts are deliberate, as well as guiding them to willing offers. This interpretation seems to present a convincing explanation why mothers attempt to tease their children from earlier infancy.

Some of the social anthropological studies on maternal non-playful teasing also offer a similar interpretation based on the "maternal-teasing-as-teaching" view. Bateson (1949) reported a characteristic pattern of mother-child interaction in Bali that Balinese mothers often seduced and teased playfully their children to arouse excitement of (sexual) emotion repeatedly, then evaded the child's passion when he turned it toward her seriously. It was argued that such a mother-child interaction would provide the context for Balinese children to learn to control their emotional passion. Benedict (1946) described "babyhood teasing" as a common socialization technique peculiar to Japanese mothers. This is when a mother holds and swings her child acting as if she takes care of "a realbaby" and saying "My big baby, how cute you are" with exaggerated intonation to shame him/her, when the child wants to sit on her lap persistently, though grown up enough to be separate from her. Benedict speculated that such a controlling technique would foster sensitivity to feelings of shame in a social situation, which has been portrayed as one of the central characteristics of the Japanese. Clancy (1986) observed that Japanese parents have often used this strategy to discipline their children to be compliant with them. Actually, if a young Japanese child insists obstinately not to stop playing with a toy and resists a request of the

mother to come home, the mother is likely to say to the child, "Bye-bye, you can stay alone and keep playing here", and pretend to leave for the house. These maternal teasing strategies can be interpreted as Japanese mothers teaching their children social discipline by means of making him/her aware of the rediculousness of his/her conducts.

As an explanation from another viewpoint, Reddy (1994a) suggested that "teasing acts to promote interpersonal contact at a personal level" and "can help to increase familiarity with negative emotions and the individual's ability to cope with them." Dunn (1988), who studied 'child teasing' to hurt siblings and parents, also articulated an insightful argument that researchers who focused on socialization by disciplinary action have dismissed evidence of the pleasure and excitement that children experience in transgressing rules, and in confronting and teasing others. She explained that children's teasing exchanges with them have the potential for helping the child to learn the limitations of acceptability of emotional expression in keeping with a good relationship.

(3). Incident-Affinity and Mutual Feelings of United Pleasure

Those explanations of the function of teasing seem correctly to account for some aspects of teasing. And as Reddy (1994a) claimed, the boundary of benign and malicious teasing may not "inviolable", but be negotiated and "fluctuating" in interaction. However, playful teasing is considered to include another characteristic; directed to mutual enjoyment. If a teasing attempt of a mother led to serious distress in her child, the attempt would be aborted or replaced by another one. In the negotiatory process in teasing interaction, mothers may act for children to find amusement from them, as well as their own enjoyment. In a sense, it can be hypothesized as a negotiatory process toward *attaining mutual feelings of united pleasure* or *enjoyment sharing* between mothers and their children. Similar ideas have been proposed by Stern (1985) and Trevarthen (1992). But, why are mothers so tempted to tease their children and why do children enjoy the attempts of the mother?

Nakano (1994a) introduced the concept of *incident affinity* to answer ths question. Incident-affinity is an ability to make sense of a perceived incident by bringing into and linking it with the history of the intersubjective relationship and to share it as a meaningful and controllable topic (anecdote) in the interaction with their *companion* (Trevarthen, 1994). Two types of incidents are assumed; environmental and deliberate. Environmental incidents are defined as something noteworthy happening including notable dissimilarity from daily-routines or ordinary events caused by either some physical accidents (e. g. car-crashes, stumbling over a stone) or natural phenomena (e. g. flurry of snow, rainbow), or attempts or expressions in the process of person-to-person interaction (e. g. unexpected reactions, showing a passion). For those happenings to be recognized as incidents, they should be *noticed and perceived* regardless of their magnitude. For example, even though a clear beautiful rainbow has appeared, as far as we do not notice and perceive it, we cannot recognize it as incident. Conversely, we can find a very subtle difference in the manner of a close friend from his/her ordinary attitude to be a significant incident (e. g. an unusual tone of voice).

Sometimes, a mother will deliberately attempt to create an artificial incidents for their children who were assumed to be interested in the attempts and to play as cooper-

ators. They seem to rather like to produce such exploits to create interaction with their children and to perturb its accustom pattern. Indeed, we do not always repeat established routinized interactions with others as predictable patterns or scripts, but are willing to go beyond them in an attempt to create a new format or new levels of intimacy acceptable to both interactants (Patterson, 1985). If a mother is willing to engage in new attempts to create incidents and to expect to attain mutual feelings of united pleasure with the companion in an interaction process, it is necessary for her to read or sympathize with the inner state or disposition of her child. The same thing is also required of the child as a companion in the negotiatory process. Thus, mutual trust within intersubjectivity (Trevarthen & Hubley, 1978) is needed for incident -affinity to be shared between them. However, the receiver's reactions to the attempts are considered to be both predictable and unpredictable to the performer at the same time, i. e. *stochastic* (Bateson, 1972). Thus, though results of her attempts can be expectable, actually it is incidental even for herself. However, we could speculate that the ration of successful attempts, i. e. elicitation of child laughter as expected, would be greater than unsuccessful ones. It can be postulated that both the mother and her child have to have incident-affinity. To attain mutual feelings of united pleasure with her child, the mother attimpts to deliberately create incongruities or discrepancies from the stable or ready-made way of interaction in the context and engages in negotiation with the child (Trevarthen, 1992, 1993). This may be termed a *gap-opening-and-closing process,* an idea derived from Lave's (1988) dialectic discussion about everyday practice. Stern (1985) also remarked that "it lay in the discrepancy between the way gradient features were actually performed and the way they were expected to be performed, given the context. The work of interpretation thus consists of measuring the distance between an imaginary performance and an actual performance of gradient features (pp. 179-180)."

The notion proposed here is against the notion of linear-causality between a mother's action and the reaction from her infant, as was underlying the notion of maternal sensitivity (Ainsworth, *et al.* 1978). On the contrary, as Fogel *et al.* (1992) suggested, "emotion is the process that emerges from the dynamic interaction among these components as they occur in relation to changes in the social and physical context" (p. 129) from the viewpoint of social process theory, the incident which comes from her attempt may evoke laughter from her child, or it may lead to distress. Perhaps at a certainpoint, the attainment to mutual feeling of united pleasure suddenly break up and a new organization of the interaction pattern by mutual appraisal of the attempt appears as a result. Laughter of both the mother and her child will be elicited depending on the appraisal because it nearly always occurs as a response behavior (Nwokah, Hsu, & Dobrowolska, 1994). Games and jokes including playful teasing are seen as good examples to be filled with deliberate incidents. The fact that they amuse by perturbing our expectations depicts exactly the function of incident-affinity.

Fogel *et al.* (1992) pointed out that the systematic relationship between emotion and the infant's ongoing actions has not been fully grasped because researchers have studied emotion in highly intense or traumatic situations. The viewpoint of the function of maternal playful teasing proposed above may provide a possibility for further

studies on intersubjective relationship and continuous dynamic changes in occurrence of laughter.

(4). Developmental Reconstruction of M-C Interaction

In spite of the evident theoretical importance of playful teasing, it has been disregarded by researchers, (Nakano & Kanaya, 1993; Nakano, 1994a; Reddy, 1991, 1994), probably due to its harmful or abusive images led by superficial views, as well as prejudice which regards as 'bad' play which comes from the rational idealism of child play (Sutton-Smith & Kelly-Byrne, 1984). Maternal playful teasing seeks mutual enjoyment with her child and her attempts are aimed to draw out the child's laughter, as described above. Nwokah *et al.* (1994) indicated critically that specific attention to infant laughter in mother-infant interaction has been limited because, possibly, in laboratory settings laughter seldom occurs since laughter is expressed in only a familiar, relaxed situation. By this neglect of both maternal playful teasing and laughter, studies of not only positive emotion but also intersubjective relation in dynamic flows of mother-infant interaction, i. e. the picture of the child's *vital* development in everyday situations, seems to have been hazarded to be skewed off for rather pathological views from, for example, *secure* attachment. As a result, there are very limited numbers of developmental studies of teasing or joking, or of laughter in mother-child interactions through infancy and early childhood. Nwokoh *et al.* examined timing and temporal sequence patterns of laughter of both mothers and infants by a longitudinal observation over the first 2 years. The results showed that timing features of infant laughter appeared to have stabilized and overlapped with the mother's laughter by the second year, as well as increasing in non-dyadic, self-repetitive laughter, contrasting with the relative stability in maternal parameters over time. In short, in the second year infant laughter is not only more sensitive to mother's laughter and attuned to it, but also it is idiosyncratic. They explained the increase in non-dyadic laughter in the second year by the fact that at that time mothers frequently portrayed non-positive affect during infant laughter, i. e. by the contrary laughter situation which occurred in situations when the mother expressed a pretended emotion or when she chased her infant, or when infants began to tease their mother, or the child engaged in mastering a new skill.

Although Nwokah *et al.* demonstrated those dynamic aspects in the developmental processes of infant laughter and mother-infant interaction from the viewpoint of a dynamic systems approach, the intersubjective quality of the mother-infant relationship seems to have slipped off from their analysis of temporal patterns of laughter and then explanation of the results, as Bloom (1992) criticized the dynamic systems perspective proposed by Fogel *et al.* (1992) that it is more descriptive than explanatory. In contrast, Nakano (1994a) observed maternal playful teasing and children's reaction to it in an experimental dyad play situation with toys that would lead a mother to playfully tease her child. The results demonstrated the frequency of children's playful responses including smiles or laughter, or pretending over age of 11, 18, 28, and 38 months, and depicted a U-shape curve with those in 18-month-old children significantly lower than those in younger or older groups. Eighteen-month-olds were highly attentive and hardly showed enjoyment to their mothers' teasing attempts. Nakano inter-

preted the result in 18-month-olds as reflecting the infant's ongoing developmental gradient to reconstruct a new intersubjective relationship from a stable relationship in 11-month-olds with 'affect attunement' (Stern, 1985) to one with symbolic abilities, which has just emerged by the age, to be capable of finding meaningful cues in the mothers' teasing actions. The recovery of children's playful responses to their mothers' attempts after 18 months appear to support this interpretation. In other words, it shows developmental changes in the expansion of comprehension of metamessage created by mothers' teasing gestures from an immediate at-the-moment reaction.

Stern (1985) suggested that children who are beginning to be aware of language may have a problem in that they have been used to finding out and responding to gradient information, but when they want to label things verbally they have to categorize them, even though the most decisive information in everyday interpersonal communication may consist of gradient information. Trevarthen (1990, 1992, 1994) also discussed this 18-month-old difficulty from a similar viewpoint. He described the play at the age as 'egocentric' because children of this age are likely to reject any recommendation that their mothers offered as to what should be done with a toy. On the other hand, they are also strongly attentive to the mothers' mood or gradient information (Stern, 1985) known as social referencing (Klinnert, *et al.*, 1983). Trevarthen described that children of this age are willing to pick up what mothers show or say. The mothers continue to influence what they attend to and play with. This implies that toddlers do not simply resist the mother's controls, but that they still retain motive to maintain the frame of intersubjective relationship with their mother, somehow they know their mothers' expectation of what they should do in givien situations. This suggests that there may be some discrepancies in timing and sequences, as Nwokah *et al.* (1994) have presented, between proposals by the mothers and plans and self-appraisal for products of performances by their toddlers because of the limitation of their own contribution to the role in the situation.

On the other hand, as well as these discussions of the breaking-down in harmonious mother-child relationship at toddlerhood considered generally from developmental changes in the children, it ought to be considered that mothers' expectations for developmental changes in behaviour styles of their children who are departing from infancy may have a significant influence on the relationship. In Japan, the child's spontaneous separation from the mother at toddlerhood and the mothers' expectation of this seems to be crucial to understanding the conflicts in the relationship, as is discussed below.

3. CHILD SEPARATION FROM THE MOTHER WITHIN JAPANESE CULTURE

(1). From *Amae* and *Skinship* to Separation

Child's separation from the mother at toddlerhood seems to be a more crucial turning point on the developmental course in Japanese children than children in Western societies influenced by individualism. Doi (1977) from his wide experience as an expert of psychoanalysis theorized a concept of the Japanese term, *amae* as the basic desire to found interpersonal relationships, especially in mother-child relationships. Doi used 'dependence' as an English counterpart of *amae*, but he admitted that it has

its own sense indigenous to Japanese with no equivalent in English. *Amae* may be translated as "desire for indulgence" or "enjoyment of the feeling of being loved", which is born in the prelinguistic union with the primary "object-choice", the mother, who indulges the infant completely (p. 20). The desire indicates what an infant feels toward the mother when he/she wants to come close to her and is accepted by the mother. Thus *amae* means more than 'infant's dependence on the mother' which implicates a situation in which the infant is passively protected by the mother to be able to survive. It is true that indulgence and spoiling are poorly defined concepts, hard to identify and measure even within a culture (Tobin, 1992, p. 22). Those characteristics of *amae* may be close to the concept of 'intersubjectivity' proposed by Trevarthen and Hubley (1978), which depicts an innate ability in the child to recognize others, especially hislher mother as a human being the same as him/herself, and not only to expose an emotion toward the person, but also to deliberately, mutually adjust it to share experiences about events and things. This notion of intersubjectivity implies that infants have the basic trust which their motives are completely communicable to their mothers as well as *amae*. However, while intersubjectivity denotes a personal ability, *amae* describes the person-to-person relationship itself. In a situation of *amae*, a pair of the mother and her baby, a facilitator of dependence and a receiver of it, is completely interdependent; the mother *amayakasu* (indulges) her baby allowing him/her to act or express emotion even in a frivolous manner as he/she pleases, and her infant *amaeru* (enjoys being indulged) trust in the mother's benevolence and acting to express his/her will freely. Ito (1994) summarised the common characteristics in Japanese philosophers and their thoughts and listed the following three fundamental features. (a) *Non-substantiality or Process-oriented-ness*; which is that dynamic changes in a "flow" or process form the foundation of the world, where relation is preeminent over substance. (b) *Each-other-ness*; which indicates reciprocal relation in "Place". (c) *Self-becoming-ness*; which develops itself through autonomous self-organization of the relationship of each-other-ness. The concept of *amae* and *amae* relationship can be seen to reflect and articulate those features.

The *amae* relationship between the mother and her infant appears also a feature of the interaction called *Sukinshipu* (*Skinship*) in everyday life. The literal meaning of *Skinship*, which is a Japanesemade Englishward, is physical contacts or touching between a parent and the child including hugging, holding the baby in the mother's arms, carrying the child on her back and accepting for him/her to sit on her lap, but it also describes more metaphorically activities to express *physical and psychological* closeness between them, for example, co-sleeping, co-bathing and play with rough-and-tumbling. Markus and Kitayama (1991) noted it is typically true that there is much greater incidence of physical contact between mother and child in Japan and China than in most Western countries. Japanese families are likely to keep proximity and to often touch each other physically (e. g. Forgel *et al.*, 1992). The physical and psychological closeness, *Skinship* can be considered as reflecting Japanese mothers' stronger attribution of self to her infant. Bornstein (1989) summarised findings from Japan-America cross-cultural studies; the Japanese mother is likely to see her infant as an *extension of herself* and to organize her interactions so as to consolidate and strengthen a *mutual*

dependence between them, while American counterparts promote autonomy in her infants and organize her interactions so as to foster physical and verbal *independence* in the child (p. 173). Thus when a Japanese mother finds her grown-up child is sucking his finger, she may have a feeling of anxiety or to feel guilty that enouqh of her not supplying *Skinship* to the child might have caused the conduct.

The Japanese child spends infancy in a physically; psychologically very close relationship with his/her mother. Their separation from her, which means both mother and child deliberately take physically and psychologically disparate actions, may be rarely experienced. As discussed later, it can be concluded that Separation-Reunion between mother and child imposed in Strange Situation Procedure common in attachment researches (Ainsworth, *et al.*, 1978) is not a proper way to study Japanese mother-child relationship as some researches have pointed out (e. g., Miyake, 1990; Takahasi, 1986; van Ijzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988).

(2). Toddlerhood Separation between Japanese Mother and Child

Amae is not only found in mother-infant emotional relationship, but it is also used generally to describe intimacy in hierarchical relationships in social groups, as a Japanese idiom "peacefulness just like baby depends on (*amae*) the mother" represents. The feeling of *amae* toward the mother is not ended at infancy, but is maintained throughout life changing its anchor into a broader relationship in the social world. Further, it can continue in the form of *amayakasu* on the *maternal* side depending on the relationship with "the other."

However, it is fully conceivable that early mother-infant *amae* relationship is transforming into the next stage of separation in toddlerhood. Doi (1977) implied that the process is that the infant developing from initial unconscious acceptance of maternal indulgence (*amayakashi*) to awareness and demands of it when it is lacking, i. e. to *consciousness of separation* which means the beginning of awareness of *the self* (*jibun*). More correctly, the self can be considered to be simultaneous awareness or feelings of the self and of *the other's* feelings, as Reddy (1994b) discussed in another context. Awareness of the self depends on the awareness of the other.

In the same way, the awareness of the self and the other transforms to awareness of interrelationship with *others* in the next step. Doi (1986) postulated the duality of the self or two-tiered self of the Japanese which is differentiated by contexts; outer contexts (*soto*) where to be restrained in the exposure of *amae* feelings and to mask one's real feelings (*tatemae*), and inner contexts (*uchi*) where one is allowed to express real feelings (*hon-ne*) directly and freely. The most important point of this boundary is that the difference of inner or outer contexts is decided by *the other*, not by the difference of a public or private situation. Japanese may keep inner-context relationship with their friends outside of home, while they may express outer-context attitudes toward even the spouse when discussing more formal topics inside the home. There is no dichotomy between relationship and individual; freedom or restraint for the individual is found in relationship with the other who facilitate the conditions (Rosenberger,1992). As described above, this *amae* notion assumes features of Japanese thoughts; Non-substantiality or Process-oriented-ness, Each-other-ness, and Self

-becoming-ness.

According to this theory, Japanese children must be socialized to be able to acknowledge such a psychological difference and to develop "theory of mind". They would learn this lesson from the latter half of the first year of life through interaction with the mother. For example, she shows the gesture of bowing to express "thanks" during give-and-take play with the child, or ask him/her to greet and bow before and after meals. In toddlerhood, they would learn the lesson of separation. As Tobin (1992) suggested, from the third year of life Japanese chidren would be focused on leaning how to constrain *amae* behaviour and to distinguish proper contexts for it, while for the first two years of life they are allowed to do things freely in an *amae* relationship.

Comparison between the Japanese and the American version of the Denver Screening Test for Child Development indicated that both Japanese and American mother's affirmative answers to the question whether their children spontaneously separate from them appear from the age of around two, but the percentage of the Japanese mothers' answer draws sharp increase and arrives at 100% at the age of around three, while the American one takes almost two years more to reach the completion (Nakano 1994b). In other words, there is a great homogeneity of subjective perception of the period of child separation among Japanese mothers, while there are larger diversity in the American counterpart. This finding implies that Japanese mothers in general would begin to expect their children' separation as soon as children have grown up to toddlers and it to be complete by the age of three. Such rapid and homogeneous achievement would not be done without mothers' storong, active involvement. It also suggests that the Japanese mother-child relationship may abruptly change from being psychologically and physically close, to being away from each other more. Actually, it is commonly observed in Japan that a mother takes her toddler to a play ground and ask the child to separate from her and play with peers there.

A longitudinal study of 20 children performed by Nakano (1990) also demonstrated the importance of child separetion in Japanese toddlers. It examined the correlation between the frequency of their spontaneous separation from the mother in free play in a laboratory situation at 3-and-half years, and their well-adaptability in kindergarten at 6 years, which was measured by scores of the Preschool Affect Questionnaire (Nakano, 1990) that consisted of 42 questions related to emotional adaptability in everyday situations in a kindergarten rated by school teachers on a 5-point rating. The results of the study demonstrated a significant relationship between them. Further, the study also showed that differences in attachment types measured in the Strange Situation Procedure at 12months was not related to the difference in the adaptability at all. Contrastingly, many studies on Western samples concluded that individual difference in adaptability in socio-emotional activities, which originated from the difference in attachment types at one-year-old, would be tightly consistent at least through childhood (Sroufe, 1983). For examples, Arend, *et al.* (1979) and Sroufe (1983) evidenced that securely-attached children (B-type) at one year were more ego-resilient, curious and exploratory at preschool age, and they were more often inclined to start activities spontaneously than the insecurely-attached children (A & C

-type). However, it is assumed that attainment of smooth separation from mother in toddlerhood would be more significant for future socio-emotional development of Japanese children than their formation of secure attachment relationship with the mother at one year.

(3). Negotiation Toward Child Separation

This process of developmental change to attain child separation may include negotiatory interactions between mother and child as discussed in the section on playful teasing. For example, in an informal observation of maternal teasing in the home situation, a mother of a two-year-old boy pretended to cry and waited for the child to come over and show sympathy to her when he rejected the mother's order to clean up a room. Then the mother explained in exaggerated accents how his disobedience had disappointed her. As Lebra (1992) explained, the ideal character of the Japanese child is believed to be *suna-o* which means a well-balanced combination of being obedient but straightforward or spontaneous, compliant but autonomous. If mother has this belief, she won't ask him/her to obey, instead she will facilitate deliberate acts of the child using other skills. For example, she will collect and clean up wooden blocks spread in the room herself, but then asks her toddler to put the final piece into a toy box and says "Wonderful, you cleaned *everything* up!". As described above, "babyhood teasing", which was reported by Benedict (1946) and Clancy (1986) as a common socialization technique used by Japanese mothers to discipline their children to be compliant with them, is considered as to be based on this maternal idealism.

Evidence of this can be seen in the study by Miyake, Campos, Kagan and Bradshaw (1986). They examined different effects of mother's vocal expressions on social referencing of 11-month-old infants to them when he/she approached an unknown object and compared the results between Japanese and American children. The results showed that Japanese mothers' angry voices prolonged the latency with which the infant resumed play as much as three times that of American pairs. This fact can be speculated as not only was the direct anger expression of the mother stronger to Japanese infants, but also that Japanese pairs would need to take much time in negotiation to clarify the real meaning of mother's anger. The Japanese children withdrew toward the mother, in spite of the fact that she had expressed anger, and stayed nea her.

The characteristic distribution of attachment types found in Japanese infants (Miyake, Chen & Campos, 1985; Miyake, 1990; Takahashi, 1986) also appears to show evidence to be interpreted from the viewpoint of mother-child negotiation. Those studies found that the occurrence probability of C-type infants (ambivalent attachment) in Japanese samples appears about 1.5 times as large as in the U. S. ones (eg. Ainsworth, *et al.*, 1978), while A-type infants (avoidant) were quite rare though this is the common insecurely attached type in Western samples. In a survey which includes almost 2,000 attachment type classifications obtained in 32 researches from 8 different countries including Japan, van IJzendoorn & Kroonenberg (1988) confirmed the uniqueness of this tendency. They concluded that the C-type emerges as relatively more frequent in Japan (and Israel) and the A-type more prevalent in Western countries, espe-

cially in Western Europe. Researchers have explained that this characteristic difference in distribution of the attachment types in Japanese samples was caused by the impropriety of Strange Situation Procedure for Japanese infants, because the measurements were gauged to the Ainsworth's *standard* procedure which is supposed to provide infants only "moderate" distress (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1978).

It may be difficult for Japanese infants to have recovered from destress suffered from the separation from the mother and meeting with a stranger because Strange Situation Procedure seems too "strange" for Japanese infants. Though this popular interpretation appears to be correct, there is another possible interpretation from a viewpoint of negotiation seems to remain. The "ambivalent" suggests that it took a prolonged time for the child to start to play with the mother though he/she appeared to have calmed down in the Reunion session. Thus they may have engaged in *negotiation* to explore and to communicate their intersubjective feelings, perhaps, feelings of *amae*. This interpretation seems to be relevant to the fact that the greater occurrence of C -types and almost non-occurrence of A-types does not offer the room for such intersubjective negotiation. Ambivalent behaviour of Japanese infants classified as C-type may not actually indicate the insecure attachment nor maladaptation, but rather it would demonstrate negotiation which they have learned under the *amae* relationship with the mother. Therefore, their 'insecurity' in attachment dose not have a consequent influence of their future socio-emotional activities.

It is concluded that not only attachment behavior but also general mother-child interactions may be heavily overlaid with cultural prescriptions. We need more systematic consideration of culturally guided *parental theory of child development*, "culture -specific folk theories" (Bretherton, 1992).

However, unfortunately, there are no relevant studies which have examined empirically the process of interaction in the abrupt changes in mother-child relationship in Japanese toddlers from this viewpoint. Moreover, the exact meaning and definition of *amae* has also not been established and is still controversial (Kumagai & Kumagai, 1985), except that it is clear that it means "relationship with the other." Doi (1977) did not attempt to offer a clear definition of it, because he regarded the meaning of *amae* to be too clear to explain it, at least to Japanese. He seems, in addition, to avoid intentionally presenting a single strict definition of it which would limit its universal power in explanating the Japanese characters. It is also true that he has not shown any empirical data related to child development except metaphorical statements, though he created a new interpretation or lexicon of *Amae* in ordinary Japanese terms and believed this supplies a conceptual tool for developmental psychology (Doi, 1990). Thus, we have to start to scrutinize the concept and to make an effort to construct a developmental theory appropriate to its cultural context to root it in our everyday Japanese life.

Finally, one can inquire whether these features of person-to-person interaction are unique or special to the Japanese society. My answer is YES and NO. Some similarities to that may be found in other societies more or less. I do not intend to insist on the idiosyncrasy of Japanese culture. However, it is embodied within Japanese society that children must learn to make much more fluid and subtle distinctions and to

step back and forth across the gap between outer and inner, appearance and real (Tobin, 1992; p. 24). Such a typical example of child development under the context of strong "parental theory of child development" would offer both an indigenous developmental theory like *amae*, and a more universal theory of culture learning processes in the course of child development.

3. Experimental Observation of Effects of Child Separation on Maternal Playful Teasing Interactions

(1). Purpose

As discussed above, it is hypothesized that mothers engage in playful teasing expecting to attain mutual feelings of united enjoyment. On the other hand, Japanese mothers of toddlers are assumed to have strong expectation for child separation from them. Then, if their children show spontaneous sepatation, i.e. they physically separate and take the role of a playmate in interactions, maternal attempts of teasing would be more successful in eliciting laughter from the children. Nakano (1994a) categorized maternal teasing attempts into either "expressive" which is defined as the teasing actions accompanied with laughter or smiles, and/or exaggerated utterances or gestures, or "intrusive" which is the teasing action to surprise without any expressive emotion or features. In the study, mothers used both types of teasing generally. The results demonstrated that intrusive teasing actions of mothers elicited only distress from their 11-month-olds and fixed attention from 18-month-olds, but positive response to it came up from 28-month-olds and showed significant increase in child age 38 -month-old. This developmental change was explained by the development of symbolic ability in children, but it may relate to child separetion. Intrusive teasing is annoying to a child because it includes fewer clues of the mother's playful motive. Then, if a child who is a un-separated, proximity seeker, and stays nearby the mother, receives intrusive teasing by the mother, who the child would be likely to feel annoyance because he/she has no other way of receiving it. However, if a child who is in a distant position from the mother, i. e. separate from the mother, receive it, he/she would escape from mothers treating attempts or cope with it more positively by deliberate adjustment of the distance from the mother by stepping back. In this observation, the relation between maternal teasing type and child separation is examined in a free play situation between mothers and their 2 or 3-year-old children.

(2). Method

Subjects: Subjects were 18 pairs of 2-year-old children (range of age; 16 to 28 months, the mean age is 26 months) and their mothers, and 24 pairs of 3-year-old children (range of age; 28 to 42 months, the mean age is 36 months) and their mothers.

Procedure: Each mother-child pair had 15 minutes free play in an experimental observation room (3m x 5m) containing toys such as a male adult mask and a puppet of Dracula (one of characters in a TV program for children) that would lead the mother to start playful teasing and to evoke mild surprise or fearfulness from the child. Before this session, a 10 minute warm-up served to encourage the pair to relax. The

free play session was recorded using two cameras, one focused on each partner, and were synchronized to form one picture. A digital time image was superimposed on the tapes.

Coding :

a. *Extraction of playful teasing episodes* : As a first step to data coding, maternal teasing episodes were edited from the videotapes of each 15 minutes observation. These episodes were defined as those situations in which a mother used the toys to show tickling, playful threats, or mildly surprising actions toward her child to evoke his or her playful responses. The onset of an episode was defined as the moment when the mother's action caught the child's attention toward herself or toward the toy, while offsets were when the mother stopped directing actions with the toy to her child just after the child's final response to her teasing actions.

b. *Coding system of couples of the mother's teasing actions with her child's responses* : Each teasing episode was reduced to a sequence of mother's teasing actions and the child's responses to them. Both mother's actions and the child's responses included verbalizations and vocal and non-verbal expressions which were coded by Unit Verbs to capture what they both did (eg. Mother *ANIMATE* puppet and Child *LAUGH*.). Those descriptions were accurately timed to within 1 second.

c. *Separate categorization of the mother's teasing actions and the child's responses* : Mothers' teasing actions were categorized into the following alternative categories based on the criteria whether they expressed clear play signs which would convey a metamessage of their play motives.

(1) Intrusive : Abrupt actions accompanied by non overt expressions.

(2) Expressive : Actions accompanied by positive expressions.

Children' responses to the mothers' teasing actions were categorized into the following four categories based on differences in their expressions.

(1) Unpleasant : Verbal or non-verbal responses to express their negative feelings or fixed attention to the mothers' actions inhibiting other expressions.

(2) Enjoyment : Joyful responses with positive expressions (laughter, smiles or joyful voices) or responses by pretending actions including imitations of the mother's actions and creative pretenses.

Separation from the mother : Children's spontaneous separation from the mother was defined as occasions when they positioned themselves out of the mothers' reach. The total duration of separation in a 15-min free-play situation was measured, then "Distant" and "Close" children were identified : Children who showed more frequent separation from the mother in the total duration than the age group average were identified as "Distant" children, while those showed infrequent separation were identified as "Close" children. The numbers of Distant and Close children in each age group were 9 and 9 in 2-year-olds, 13 and 11 in 3-year-olds, respectively.

Reliability : Two coders who were blind to the purpose of this study coded the data. Intercoder agreement of randomly selected 20 teasing episodes was 86.7%. Their judgments of children's spontaneous separation 10 children selected at random showed 92% agreement.

TABLE 1

Percentages of separation from the mother in DISTANT and CLOSE children.

		Out of Mother's Reach	Within Mother's Reach Mean	%
2-Year-old	CLOSE	(n= 9)..... 82.8	17.2	45.6
	DISTANT	(n= 9)..... 25.9	74.1	
3-Year-old	CLOSE	(n=11)..... 76.7	23.3	54.9
	DISTANT	(n=13)..... 18.3	81.7	

TABLE 2

Relation between child separation and frequency of mother-child interaction bouts.

	CLOSE	DISTANT	TOTAL
2-Year-old (n=18).....	64.6 (42.6)	87.1 (57.4)	151.7 (100)
3-Year-old (n=24).....	67.4 (55.2)	54.7 (44.8)	122.1 (100)

Numbers in parentheses are percentages.

TABLE 3

Interrelation between types of maternal teasing and children's reactions and physical distance from their mother.

		2-YEAR-OLD		3-YEAR-OLD	
	CHILD/MOTHER	Intrusive	Expressive	Intrusive	Expressive
CLOSE	Enjoyment.....	14.7	29.9	33.6	53.2
	Displeasure.....	85.3	70.1	66.4	46.8
DISTANT	Enjoymennt.....	36.6	34.0	30.3	55.1
	Displeasure.....	63.4	66.0	69.7	44.9

(3). Result

Children's separation from the mother: As table 1 shows, the occurrence rates of children's separation from the mothers in the Close and the Distant children was significant in both age groups ($x(1) = 29.8$, $p < .01$; $x(1) = 38.1$, $p < .01$; in age order). The average of children's separation also increased with age from 45.6% in 2-year-old to 54.9% in 3-year-old children. But this increase was not significant.

Frequency of playful teasing interaction bouts: Table 2 shows the mean frequency of interaction bouts of the Close and the Distant children in both age groups. Interestingly, mothers of 2-year-old children more often presented teasing actions to Distant children than to Close children, however, mothers of 3-year-old children, conversely, interacted with DISTANT children with lesser bouts of teasing actions than with CLOSE children and 2-year-old DISTANT children. This tendency was statistically significant ($x(1) = 4.3$, $p < .05$).

Occurrence rates of mothers' teasing types: Mothers of both the Distant and the Close children in both age groups similarly employed expressive teasing more often than intrusive teasing. There was neither significant differences between the separation

types nor between age groups in this tendency.

Inter-relation between child separation and maternal teasing types: The inter-relationship between child separation influenced by relation between mothers' teasing types and children's playful responses to them was examined in each age group. The results are shown in table 3. In 2-year-olds, the Close children expressed mostly unpleasant responses to mothers' intrusive teasing, while the Distant children enjoyed it much more than them. Mann and Whitney's U-test revealed that the difference depending on child separation is significant (CR = 2.57, p = .01). In 3-year-olds, however, no significant differences were found.

(4). Discussion

The hypothesis on the influence of child separation on mother-child interaction was supported in the 2-year-old group. Though intrusive teasing conveys less clearly the teaser's playful motive to the teased, the Distant children more often showed enjoyment of maternal intrusive teasing than the Close children, who showed non-playful reactions almost always to the teasing. This group difference suggests that children would need enough degree of physical freedom to buffer the intrusiveness of mother's attempts. The Distant children could have had much more the freedom and managed the intrusive teasing by, for example, stepping back. But it would be difficult for the Close children, who more often sit down close to the mother, to manage it. This interpretation concords with the fact that 11-month-old infants frequently expressed destress to intrusive teasing employed by the mother (Nakano, 1994a). Infants must be in the place close to the mother. However, why was the influence of the individual difference in child separation not found in 3-year-old children? This tendency seems to be contradicted because they showed separation and could manage the intrusiveness of the teasing more than 2-year-olds. This contradictory result would be interpreted by the consideration that mothers of 3-year-old children engaged less in interaction with their Distant children as the result shown in table 2 demonstrated. Mothers of the Distant children in 3-year-old group may have more or less *retreated from interaction with their children*, simply because the children had sparate from them.

Those results imply that child separation emerged newly in toddlerhood "*reconstructs*" *a new intersubjective negotiatory pattern* between mother and child under a new "scenario" that children have enlarged their capabability towards *incidents*. Child separation is considered as articulation of a culturally appropriate expectation of mothers. Their interactions thus would be able to *move* toward mutually seeking a feeling of *unitedness*.

Another implication of the results is that maternal actions are not necessarily the ones known as the "zone of proximity" (Vygotsky, 1932/1962) or "scaffolding" (Bruner, 1983). Why did mothers engage similarly in intrusive teasing to both 2 and 3-year-old children? If those concepts are available to the interactions observed in this study, mothers of 2-year-old children would not have introduced intrusive teasing to their children. Maternal playful teasing is characterized that mothers must employ it expecting not only to give enjoyment to their children, but also to share the pleasure with them, as Trevarthen (1994) also suggested. In mother-child interactions they

would perturb the ordinary pattern to attain enjoyment. This may be because of incident-affinity which was discussed in a previous section of this paper.

4. Conclusion: For Reconsideration of Cross-cultural Studies on Child Development

There have been numerous cross-cultural studies on differences of caregiving styles and quality of mother-infant interaction, and child developmental processes between Western and Oriental societies, especially Japan and United States. The Japanese has been targeted as an attractive counterpart to constrast with the American society and an ideal field to make evident the effects of social factors on human development because Japanese is technologically and materially just as advanced as any Western country, whereas they seem still to keep idiosyncratic manner and value patterns distinct from Western world (Shwalb *et al.*, 1994). The general conclusions of these studies come to the common point that American parents think of child as an individual and expect the child to be autonomous, whereas in Japanese society people are seen as being more interdependent and children are socialized towards their direction through social members including parents. Japanese mothers employ more proximal modes of communication, especially physical contact to soothe their babies, who are quieter and more inactive, while American mothers often use vocal expressions to stimulate their infants activities and their babies are more active (see Markus and Kitayama, 1991 for a review).

However, as Shwalb *et al.* (1994) pointed out, those studies only focused on replications of the results found in the Western countries and explained the cultural differences in relation to Western norms and only discussed higher or lower results have been discussed. This attitude that Western measures can be applied to non-Western societies and trying to *make up* differences in results of the measures can be criticized as depicting ostensible cultural differences considering neither the original contexts of the measures nor the social validity of the societies. To scrutinize whether the cultural differences found in previous studies are consistent, Bornstein (1989) reviewed 11 studies on motor activities in infancy which compared the Japanese and the American samples to find the origin of cultural influences on child development in both societies, and found many varieties in their results. His finding suggests that cross-cultural comparisons which simply apply the same measures to different societies can never create significant, cogent theories as far as they have an *intra-cultural background theory of child development*. Many cross-cultural studies seem to include this problem. One typical example can be found in attachment studies on Japanese infants (Miyake, Chen & Campos, 1985; Takahashi, 1986; Miyake 1990). As I discussed before, those studies have not provided any perspective on mother-child relationships and child development in the Japanese society, but have shown the limitation of Strange Situation Procedure which was standardized using American samples (Ainsworth, *et al.*, 1978).

Fogel (1993) claimed that cross-cultural psychologists use "culture" as an independent variable much like "social class", but 'culture is a *system of meanings* that mediate relationships between individuals and their environments' (p. 161). Bruner (1993) also pointed out that 'culture is not a set of responses to be mastered, but a

way of knowing, of constructing the world and others' (p. 516). Intra-cultural child development, culture leaning (Tomasello, *et al.*, 1993) in other words, may be achieved as actualization of his/her universal co-operative motives (Trevarthen, 1988) in interactions with other members in the culture who communicate such a system of meanings, especially in interactions at developmental turning points like child separation in the Japanese culture. The challenge for us is to elucidate this process.

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