

Does J-style “Kaizen” management create the joy of service? -Exploring the Co-creative Human Development Model -

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Abstract: This paper tries to develop a new foundation for the Co-creative Human Development Model (CCHD). CCHD aims at creating a platform for the exercise of freewill, a space that serves as a point of departure to open up the path to Truth and so divert us from the sinful route to self-destruction.

CCHD differs from A. Sen’s capability theory of human development, most markedly in its conception of the nature of development; Sen views this as expanding the capability (freedom) to choose, whereas CCHD sees it as awakening and activating the freewill to choose freedom.

Taking our place on the CCHD platform of freewill allows the linkage between practicing Kaizen (J-style continuous improvement) and the joy of service to be captured in visible form and made known to us through our experience. The exercises connected with CCHD shed light on our mind-set, so we can become aware of the true meaning of Kaizen in our working lives and lifestyles as a whole, which can then be linked with the joy of service.

Keywords: co-creative, value judgment, freewill, lifestyle, Kaizen, joy of service

1. Introduction

I would like to share with all of you a new foundation for the Co-Creative Human Development model (CCHD), which gives a theoretical structure to “Gakumon-ryoku” .

First we will discuss the essence of CCHD and why its development is necessary.

Secondly, we will examine how CCHD differs from the prevailing human development model that has its origins in A. Sen’s capability theory. Thirdly, we will explore how CCHD allows us to understand the connections between Kaizen (J-style continuous improvement) and two of its possible outcomes, joyful and joyless service.

2. The Essence of the CCHD model

CCHD creates a platform for the exercise of freewill, a space that allows us to practice the discipline of examining systematically the lifestyle and value judgments of homo economicus (the 'rational' economic human being). The concept of the "Co-creative" human being is closer to that of homo reciprocans, (a human being primarily motivated by the desire to be cooperative and to improve its environment).

At the same time, CCHD also provides a practical method to vitalize our general lifestyle by participating in "co-creative" activities. CCHD enables us to question directly our own ways both of thinking and feeling of our own freewill by interacting with others in a real (not virtual) public space. Therefore it allows us to shed light on the stubbornness of self-centered human reasoning and sensibility, and also to connect our intelligence (logic) with our virtue (moral awareness). By standing in a "co-creative" space with an open heart, we can become aware of both the great danger of self-destruction inherent in our lifestyle and also of the enduring life of Truth which will set us free from it.

In the CCHD model, 'lifestyle' is understood in a broad perspective, to include not only our "invisible" attitudes and values but also our "visible" behavior. Even so, the focus is still more on "invisible" factors, because they determine behavior.

This is because, firstly, our value judgments condition our behavioral choices. Secondly, our lack of objectivity and our self-focus lead on to a self-seeking pattern of conduct, which is dangerous. Thirdly, we tend to make decisions based on value judgments without being aware of having other

choices. Fourthly, the choices we make that are constrained by our value judgments may be somewhat unbalanced and inappropriate if our emotional processes are dominated by our rationality or vice versa. Fifthly, we may very often find ourselves acting on value judgments without critical thinking or giving full play to our freewill.

In a place of higher learning like a university, four intangible walls in the classroom, A-B-C-D, can hinder us in our search for our common goal, excluding the freshness of thought that alone can vitalize the learning environment.

The first is "the wall that blocks out Awareness". All those in the classroom, teachers and students alike, lack the "awareness" necessary to discover "problems" and "causes" in matters of real importance. The second is "the wall that blocks out a recognition of different Beliefs and values". We must presume that beliefs and value sets will differ among those in the classroom even when they are discussing the same issue. The problem is, how to make these differences visible so that all present can recognize to what extent they exist. The third is "wall that blocks out the Connection between knowledge and virtue". Those inhabiting the classroom are prevented from perceiving the relationship between these aspects of learning. The fourth is "the wall that impedes Dialogue". This absence of dialogue is not only between teacher and students, but also between one student and another.

The CCHD method demolishes these walls in our mind-set and creates a vitalizing zone both internally (in each individual's mind-set or conscious space) and externally (outside the individual in a vitalizing atmosphere).

How is it possible to realize this transformation? Three types of peaceful 'weapons' are collected for this purpose: the "BALL" as a signpost pointing to Light, Love and Life, the "BOARD" as the mirror of the human mind-set and the "MAGNETS" as that which brings forth the fruits of Joy.

First, the "BALL", which as a signpost indicates visually two codes of conduct for all participants; one is non-violence and the other is a shared goal or common topic for our "visible" lifestyle. Non-violence is indicated by the act of throwing the ball and catching it (as in baseball but definitely NOT as in dodge ball), as a symbol of interacting with one another without violence. It enacts respect for the freewill of all others even if their way of thinking and feeling is totally different from ours. By passing the ball to one another, we gradually come to realize that the real enemy is not the person opposing us, but the one who lives inside us. The second aspect of the "ball" as a signpost is to point to a common goal (a topic or a problem of our "visible" behavior) towards which all participants are heading, something they should focus on and share.

The second 'weapon' is the "BOARD", which acts as the mirror of our mind-set in which common yardsticks are set. These are the "invisible" ones which influence our "visible" style of (economic) behavior. For instance, a particular hair style is a "visible" one and would be outcome of an "invisible" value judgment as reflected on the "BOARD". Why is this important? It is because only once we are on the "BOARD" that we can become objectively aware of our standpoints and so can reconsider things using our freewill and then influence our "visible" behavior or lifestyle.

The "BOARD", therefore, has a unique and effective function in releasing us not only

from the habit of linear thinking, but also from the fixed attitude that "the answer or solution is the only one for a given problem" or "the problem is only one that needs answering". With the former, the habit of linear thinking can be examined by crossing it with other yardsticks, which makes possible a set-thinking or non-linear style of thinking that includes the senses. With the latter, the fixed mind-set is also examined by posing the question using the mathematical equation of $1+1=2(?)$. The left side represents the invisible mind-set whereas the right side reflects our visible behavior. With this equation, the particular visible hair style (behavior) of "2" may not be only possible outcome originating from one option of an invisible yardstick "1", but alternative options may appear from two yardsticks "1+1" on the "BOARD". Suppose one yardstick is the sense of loving and hating. Then, we would say, the particular (visible) hair style is chosen or not chosen, because we either love it or hate it. But this yardstick "1" or "love & hate yardstick" expressed as 1_{LH} may not explain the particular hair style even if it is chosen despite being hated. So another yardstick of, say, "good & bad" (expressed as 1_{GB}) is required. This yardstick along with the "love & hate yardstick" enables us to explain the choice of the particular hair style because it is good despite being hated. Moreover, the two yardsticks, " $1_{LH} + 1_{GB}$ " may not necessarily produce 2, because, for instance, if it is so good, so loving, the particular (visible) hair style would be felt to have a greater value than "2". On the other hand, if it were so bad and hated so much, it would be expressed as a negative value, say 10!

This style of thinking using two yardsticks is what we call co-creative "space"

thinking, which is totally different from the debating style or “straight line” thinking that uses only one yardstick. Debating is good for making clear which side of a line you stand on, either “For” or “Against”. But it also creates gulf between two sides that can never close and allows no exercise of freewill to allow you to reconsider your standpoint using another yardstick. But if we are in the co-creative space, we can resolve this harmful deadlock situation without making excuses.

The third ‘weapon’, the “MAGNETS” that we put on the “BOARD” along with the other participants represents our not only being aware of how different we are, but also bears the fruits of joy. We can expect to gain the following five outcomes from this:

a) It activates the freewill that allows us to think and express our opinions and feelings by choosing our standpoints.

b) It enables us to measure the distance (a problem) of standpoints between ourselves and other participants. This allows us to view our own standpoints objectively by comparing them with those of others.

c) Once all participants know and share their awareness of these distances, we can identify them as problems and move on to analyze possible causes for their occurrence as a matter of common interest. At this stage we can use a so-called fishbone, or cause-and-effect, diagram.

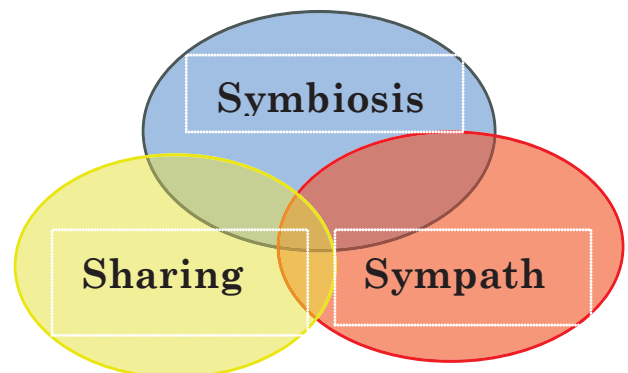
d) Following the common goods rule of CCHD, we may exercise the freewill to forsake our standpoint. This action can be stimulated by hearing the voices of other participants. Once we choose to forsake an action, we can be freed from it and can move on to alternative standpoints with magnets anywhere on the “BOARD”.

e) Through these activities, our co-sharing on the “BOARD” allows us to add new

values to our views and feelings as expressed by the magnets. This creates the possibility for changes in the visible aspects of behavior.

In summary, playing with the “BALL” and using the “MAGNETS” on the “BOARD” is nothing other than practicing the art of giving, which will enlighten and vitalize our lifestyle because the freewill to choose freedoms is activated along with the responsibility to follow the discipline of non-violence and the sharing of common goods. Therefore, in the co-creative space, the three virtues of Symbiosis, Sharing and Sympathy are realized as shown Figure 1. The freewill of both doing and not doing is a very important gift with which we can play when using CCHD. Our freewill consists in choosing to live together with respect (Symbiosis) but not choosing to live alone, to choose to share ideas and products (Sharing) but not to choose to monopolize the fruits of wisdoms, and to choose caring and kindness towards others (Sympathy) but not choosing apathy.

Figure 1 - Experience of 3S at



This experience makes us aware of the essential problem for homo-economicus in terms of human nature. Taking our stand in the co-creative space, we realize that it is a “human” space and each and every one of us as participants clings to our own self

yardstick even as we move anywhere in this space. Holding and sticking to one's own self yardstick is quite obviously human and we take it for granted that it must be so. But in the sight of God, it is an act that means turning away from him. It reflects a self-centered mind-set, which is nothing other than what is called SIN. Judging things to be good or bad, or loving or hating them and so forth using our own yardstick alone is an act of sin. As the Bible says, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Isaiah 53-6).

Such sinful human acts may be called "progress", but this is merely an illusion if we progress along the "chain of bondage", which starts from bondage and moves to liberty, from liberty to affluence, from affluence to complacency, from complacency to apathy, and from apathy back again to bondage. The "co-creative space" is, in fact, a platform where we come to realize that our progress along the "chain of bondage" is in fact following the "chain of sin". We awake to the recognition that God's judges our earthly aim of an affluent lifestyle as follows:

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other. So, because you are lukewarm- neither hot nor cold-I am about to spit you out of my mouth. (Bible-NIV, Revelation 3-15 & 16)

An affluent lifestyle is viewed as good by human standards, but in God's sight it is bad because "lukewarm". So we realize that we have freewill, either to ignore God's judgment or accept it and repent. By heeding the words of God, "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6-23) ", we come to know that this is a life or death issue. It leads us to face the ultimate question, "Which is your

choice, Life or Death?" It would be wonderful if we were to realize that we are given the freewill to choose Life.

Thus, the ultimate goal of using CCHD is to become aware of our self-centered mind-set, of so-called "sin" as part of the essence of human nature, and to accept this and repent of it by standing on the Truth. This truth is based on the words of John 8-32 in the New Testament, "Then, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free".

3. How the CCHD model differs from A. Sen's capability theory

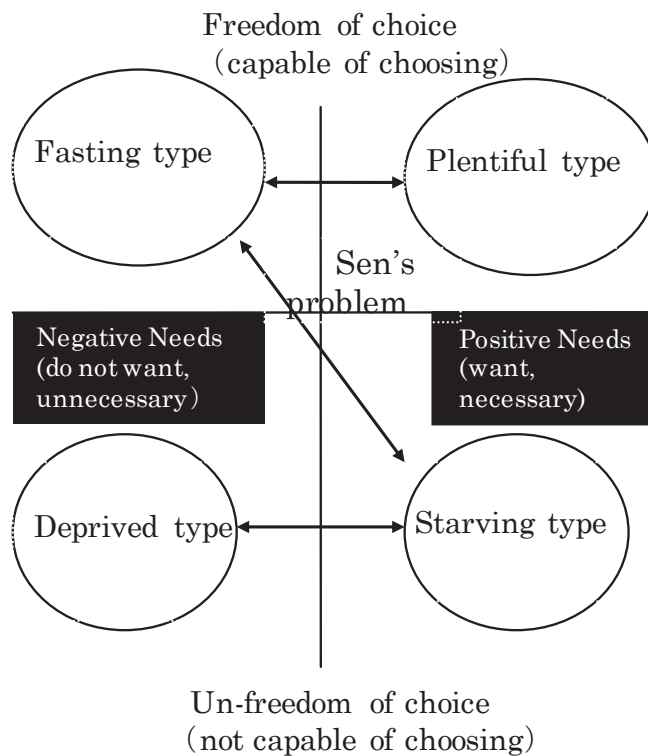
A. Sen views development as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy (Sen, A. 1999, p.3). He argues that capability is a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (or, ...the freedom to achieve various lifestyles). He next tries to show how the problem of capability matters by using the example of the same functioning achievement in terms of eating or nourishment. Despite the behavior of not eating being the same, the capability or freedom of an affluent person to adopt a lifestyle of fasting is higher than (forced) starving lifestyle of a destitute or poor person. This is because the former can choose to eat well and be well nourished in a way, but the latter cannot. Thus this difference in capability explains why fasting is not the same thing as being forced to starve (Sen, A. 1999, p.75,76).

Firstly, however, this capability approach is neither sufficient nor holistic since it excludes other possibilities of different lifestyles (functioning) once the element of human needs (necessity and wants) is included in it. For instance, in Sen's example,

the problem of comparing the fasting of an affluent person with the starving of a poor person is only one problem out of an entire problem set which influences the behavior or visible lifestyle of non-eating as shown in Figure 2. If the needs of two persons are different and totally opposite, one “wants to eat

and/or finds it necessary to eat” and the other “does not want or finds it unnecessary”, even if the capability is at the same level, there still exist problems of distinguishing, say, between a person who is fasting and one who has plenty, or between someone starving and someone who is deprived.

Figure 2 : Four types of lifestyle in the freewill matrix of capability-needs for influencing a non-eating lifestyle



Source: compiled from H.Oba (2009a)

The second issue is much more fundamental and crucial. Sen’s approach does not distinguish between “choice of freedom (freedom to choose)” and “freedom of choice (choosing freedoms)”. More simply, it focuses on the capability (freedom) to choose in the process of choosing stage, but ignores the action stage where freewill functions to choose freedoms once a choice is made.

Assessing the freewill or freedoms of acting out our lifestyle in a specific life stage

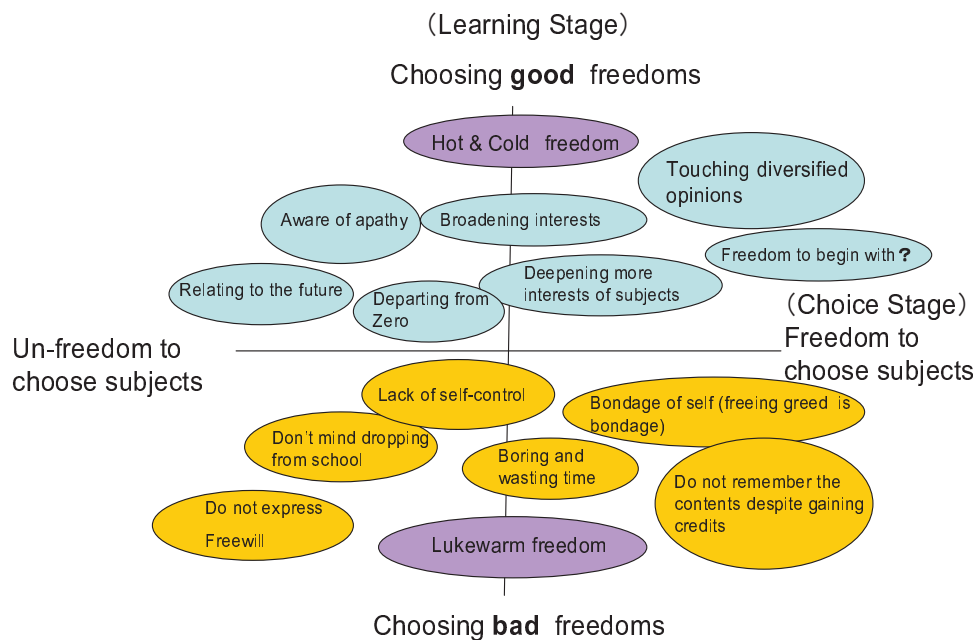
using CCHD is of great importance because we are bound to be unaware of the danger of freedoms enjoyed and very often may not be always clear whether they are good or bad.

In order to examine this hypothesis (freedom to choose ≠ choosing freedoms), here is a practical example, the choice of subjects during the registration period of a new semester at a university. This research was carried out at T University, Tokyo, Japan on April 13th, 2011. 36 students participated

in CCHD. We tried to assess both the attitudes of choosing subjects, either compulsory subjects or elective ones in the past and the learning performance after subjects were

chosen. The outcome of this CCHD practice, shown in Figure 3, is remarkable and really eye-opening.

Figure 3 - Outcome of CCHD on freedom to choose subjects and choosing freedoms



This makes us aware of the danger embedded in freedoms and clarifies for us that the students had two diametrically different freedoms: the good and bad, or “hot & cold” type freedom and “lukewarm” type freedom, irrespective of either whether they were choosing elective or compulsory subjects. The freedoms that are good in the “hot & cold” type freedom include touching the diversity of opinions, the freedom to begin with the question (?), broadening and deepening one’s interests in subjects, awareness of apathy, departing from zero knowledge, and relating to the future. On the other hand, opinions expressed on “lukewarm” type freedom include lack of self-control (or addiction), dropping off, boredom and wasting time, not remembering the contents of

subjects even if credits are acquired, bondage of self (freeing greed is bondage).

Assessing freedoms as above, we now have the freewill to say “Yes” to the “hot & cold” type freedom and at the same time, say “No” to “lukewarm” type freedom. This practice of choosing subjects is, of course, applicable to our problems of choice in any sort of shared interests, including Romania joining the EU.

4. Joyful Kaizen vs. Joyless Kaizen

Kaizen is understood here as the activity of continuous improvement when making products in the workplace. John A. Yung, former Present and Chief Executive Officer of Hewlett-Packard, was right in stating

that “Kaizen is the opposite of complacency and is a superb source for people seeking to institutionalize an ongoing process of self-renewal in the enterprises they lead”. It originated from QC (Quality Control) activity in production processes, and has become well known as an effective and efficient tool for productivity improvement.

But a problem arises when we pose a question: Does Kaizen bring the joy of service? Our answer is “Yes” and “No”, entirely depending upon whether it is linked with the quality of life (QOL) of the person or group involved in Kaizen activity. The concept of QOL originated and was developed in the field of medicine and health and has been applied widely to welfare economics and human development. It is a subjective assessment of one’s emotional and physical well-being. Joy of service should be understood as the domain of both efficiency and QOL criteria, because the level of QOL might differ between persons or groups even if the level of efficiency after practicing Kaizen is the same among them.

Let us illustrate this problem by using a simple mathematical equation. Two persons or groups, L_A and L_B , are practicing Kaizen while producing a product, Y_A and Y_B . Productivity in term of efficiency criterion can be expressed as $(Y/L)_A$ and $(Y/L)_B$. If the level of productivity is the same between A and B, then it can be shown as $(Y/L)_A = (Y/L)_B$. But is this still true if the QOL of two persons or groups is introduced? Our answer is negative once the QOL criterion is introduced. Namely, L as labor input is not only the function of working hours of labor, L_t , but also that of QOL of labor, $LQOL$. If $LQOL$ is different despite the working time, L_t of two persons or groups being the same,

the true productivity might be different as $(Y/L+LQOL)_A \neq (Y/L_t+LQOL)_B$. This will show us there is a possible case (problem) of joyful Kaizen vis-à-vis joyless Kaizen for persons or groups within the same organization or workplace.

Therefore, the true Kaizen or joy of Kaizen service should be measured by true productivity including QOL. Indicators of measuring QOL in Kaizen may include the worth of doing, aspiration, liveliness, passion and commitment, sense of responsibility, achievement and rewards, pleasure and delight and so forth. Our level of QOL and efficiency or our state of joy in Kaizen service activity can not only be captured, but also improved and uplifted by participating in the CCHD space. This brings us to realize the next very important questions: Is the joy of service in Kaizen the same as happiness in Kaizen activity? Also, what is the end of pursuing the joyful Kaizen? Does it follow the same road as A. Maslow’s needs hierarchy for self-actualization? We will examine these problems as the next step in our exploration of CCHD.

End Notes:

1. In writing this paper, I have benefited from the help of many experts, students, and academics, and especially Prof. Peter A. Luff of Reitaku University. I offer my gratitude and all credit to them. I am deeply indebted to the Hiroike Foundation for financial support.

2. For the concept of “Gakumon-ryoku” and its applications to service and management style, see details Oba, H. 2010, 2009b, 2009c, 2008, 2007.

3. On the nature of Kaizen, please see Imai, M. 1986.

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