

Quietude and Loving-Kindness in Daily Life: Interpreting Zen Koans



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Engaging with a distinctive interdisciplinary methodology that integrates the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, W.R. Bion, D.W. Winnicott and Heinz Kohut with the philosophical insights of D.T. Suzuki and Nishida Kitaro, the paper investigates the themes and motifs of quietude and loving-kindness in daily life through the analysis of Zen koans. The paper inquires the psychological and existential dimensions of quietude and loving-kindness, two qualities greatly revered in Zen Buddhism and increasingly acknowledged for their therapeutic value in the modern world.

The paper engages with Freud's exposition of various defence mechanisms that hinder the individual to attain psychological depth and engages with Jung's notion of archetypes and collective unconscious. It engages with the methods through which the psychoanalytic perspectives of the true self and the holding environment by Winnicott, containment and reverie by Bion and the concept of self-psychology by Kohut advance the understanding and meaning of quietude, empathy and kindness in daily life.

The paper analyses the method through which the above-mentioned psychoanalytic perspectives integrated with D.T. Suzuki's elucidations on Zen Buddhism and Nishida Kitaro's philosophy of direct experience enable personal growth, self-understanding, and foster the growth of compassionate and interconnected relationships with others. The paper argues that the engagement with the multiple layers of meanings of Zen koans propels one to cultivate quietude and loving-kindness which can impact everyday living in a profound manner. The integrated analytical methodology is used to decipher the contemporary existential and psychological challenges.

Biography:

Adarsh Narayan Parbat is a research scholar at Ambedkar University, Delhi.