

Synchronistic Phenomena and Psychological Symbiosis

Joseph Cambray, PhD
President, Pacifica Graduate Institute

In this presentation, I would like to delve into the symposium's theme, "*Kokoro* and Symbiosis", from the perspective of Jungian psychology.

Carl G Jung advanced the concept of synchronicity, where internal and external occurrences, between which there is no simple causal relationship, make a meaningful connection. Today, synchronistic phenomena can be reinterpreted in terms of a complex adaptive system model, which is a part of a modern view of energy. These systems can be found everywhere in nature. Examples include water, typhoons, and patterns on clam shells, which can also be described as "emergent forms", holistic structures resulting from spontaneous self-organization. One of the common characteristics of these forms is that their properties cannot be reduced to those of their constituent parts. Applying this perspective to synchronicity, a synchronic phenomenon can be seen as an emergent form of a complex adaptive system, which is a type of dynamic system.

As to symbiosis, another topic of this presentation, the concept of a rhizome (a horizontal subterranean plant stem), as used by Jung in his later years, can perhaps aid our understanding. This biological metaphor refers to a deep, largely invisible layer, which connects things and holds us in an extremely deep way.

Lastly, I would like to touch upon the idea of the "adjacent possible". Psychotherapy patients often dream about discovering and entering a new room at their own residence, a room with doors to new possibilities. This room is a direct psychological image of the adjacent possible. We enter this realm in ways that are quite unexpected and that can bring us to new complex organizations. I think that is where the symbiosis lies.