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## ABSTRACT

The back of “front and back”: Rethinking this Japanese clinical concept

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In Takeo Doi's concept of “front and back” there is a special surface structure. This study aimed to re-evaluate this Japanese concept, which is between an everyday word and a theoretical word, and provides an effective vocabulary for explaining psychotherapy in Japan. I engaged in psychotherapy with a female client whose refusal to work on her “front” initially impeded our ability to undertake meaningful psychotherapy. She behaved in a negative manner between sessions, rendering her self-destructiveness inaccessible to treatment. However, this self-destructiveness became accessible due to the development of therapeutic relatedness over time. Ultimately, a new front emerged. This study examined the two kinds of “back”. There is “back” I which is an invisible drive and “back” II which is a visible front. So this study clarified the intrinsic two-dimensionality of the concept of “front and back”. I also introduced three-dimensional depth to this concept by incorporating notions of “persona, psyche, and front” into the framework. The concept of “front and back” involves excessive visibility, which renders the psyche invisible. This original Japanese clinical concept forces us to rethink mental health.

**Key Words:** two-dimensionality, surface, front, Japanese culture

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