

Takeo Doi, scholar on Japanese psyche, dies

July 6 2009, By YURI KAGEYAMA , Associated Press Writer



In this undated photo shows Takeo Doi, a scholar credited with analyzing the Japanese psyche as thriving on a love-hungry dependence on authority figures, in Tokyo. Doi has died Sunday, July 5, 2009 from illnesses related to old age, his family said Monday. He was 89. (AP Photo/Kyodo News)

(AP) -- Takeo Doi, a scholar who wrote that the Japanese psyche thrived on a love-hungry dependence on authority figures, has died, his family said Monday. He was 89.

Doi, who died Sunday from illnesses related to old age, wrote the 1971 book, "The Anatomy of Dependence," which introduced the idea of "amae" - a childlike desire for indulgence - as key to understanding the Japanese mind.

Doi's work was a hit in Japan but has been widely studied abroad in translation. Ezra Vogel, social sciences professor emeritus at Harvard University, has praised Doi's book as "the first book by a Japanese trained in psychiatry to have an impact on Western psychiatric thinking."

Doi argued that amae, while also observed by other nationalities, was more pronounced and elaborate among Japanese, and was key in defining [social relationships](#) everywhere, including at the office, at schools and in marriages.

His work stemmed from what he called his "culture shock" when he went to study in the U.S. in the 1950s and saw the difference between how Americans and Japanese act, including his patients. He was struck by how there was no precise way to translate amae into English, although the behavior was common in puppies and human babies.

"I set about using my idea that amae might be vitally important in understanding the Japanese mentality," Doi wrote in his book. "I soon became convinced that it provided a clue to all kinds of things that had hitherto been obscure."

Doi used amae as a starting point for explaining other common Japanese traits, such as self-effacement and the widespread perception of a duality between appearances and a hidden internal reality.

Doi taught at the International Christian University in Tokyo between 1980-82, and he also counseled students and faculty members. Before that, he served as professor at his alma mater, the University of Tokyo, from 1971 to 1980.

He was working as a special adviser to the PHP Research Institute up to his death, the private think-tank said.

Funeral services are for just the family, and details of a separate memorial service have yet to be decided, said Megumi Doi, his daughter. Doi is survived by his wife, two sons and two daughters, she said.

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