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## **Reconsidering the symptoms of Taijin Kyofusho from an embodied perspective**

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Taijin Kyofusho (TKS) is a form of social anxiety disorder that is considered to be a culture-bound syndrome, which is mainly found in Japan. The term itself has its origin in Japanese psychiatry, and literally means phobia (Kyofusho, 恐怖症) of the interpersonal (Taijin, 対人). As expressed by the term, a patient with TKS experiences extreme tension and fear during interpersonal interactions with others. Symptoms are experienced mentally as well as somatically and include the fear of blushing, making eye contact with others, emitting unpleasant odors, and acting awkwardly, among others. The patient often shows a tendency to avoid social situations, even though there is no actual threat. According to the current diagnostic criteria of DSM-5, the important character that distinguishes TKS from the social anxiety disorder is the excessive concern about others (APA, 2013). Patients with the social anxiety disorder are behaviorally embarrassed in front of others, and experience fear as a direct reaction to the presence of others, whereas patients with TKS are also afraid that they might offend others or make others feel uncomfortable. The characteristic of offending others has been focused on for defining TKS as a culture-bound syndrome. However, only a subtype of TKS involves the characteristic of offending others (Kasahara, 2005).

Focusing on bodily aspects of both TKS and social anxiety disorder symptoms suggest that the excessive fear is triggered by social situations where the patient's body and performances might be perceived and judged negatively by others. The source of anxiety and fear is the patient's own figure reflected in the other's mind and the other's negative evaluation of it. In this regard, it is possible that patients are afraid of the other's mind that is originally unknowable, in the general sense that a person is unable to perceive exactly in the same manner that the other person perceives (Sartre, 1943/1956). From the perspective of the embodied self, what characterizes both TKS and social anxiety disorder is the inadequately attuned embodied interaction of perceiving and being perceived between the self and the other. TKS is essentially a continuation of social anxiety disorder as an embodied experience, and thus, it is not necessarily correct to define TKS as a culture-bound syndrome. Instead, I would like to point out that social anxiety disorder including TKS would be observed in any society where the ambiguous character of interpersonal situations would be salient.