

## The Structure of "Urami"

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"Urami" can be translated as "grudge", "resentment", "ill feeling" or "malice". But its connotation is different from these, because *Urami* has its own structure in the Japanese emotional and cultural context. It is our aim to make this structure clear.

It is obvious that "*Urami*" is linguistically the nominalization of "*Uramu*", the verb which means to have a grudge against somebody. This verb is derived from "*Ura*" (reverse-side), which in contrast with "*Omote*" (surface), refers to "mind". Although we will bring up several Japanese words in this paper, our matter of concern is not the linguistic but the phenomenological structure of "*Urami*". From this point of view, we wish to characterize the phenomenon called "*Urami*" chiefly as it is related to *Ura*, *Omote*, and *Omoi*.

**Keywords:** OMOTE (表), OMOI (思い), URA (裏), URAMI (怨み), INSIDE, MIND, RESENTMENT, REVERSE-SIDE.

### URA VS. OMOTE

*Urami* is related to *Ura*, the opposite of *Omote*. While *Omote* means "surface", "rightside", "outside", and "face", *Ura* has the meaning of "back", "reverse-side", "underside", and "mind".

In almost all Japanese ghost stories, the ghost (*Yuhrei*) has an *Urami* against one who has hastened his death. Because of this *Urami* the ghost cannot go to the next world, and maintains his resolve to revenge himself upon his foe.

The Japanese for "to revenge oneself" is "*Urami o harasu*". "*Harasu*" means to disperse fog, clouds, or the like. When *Urami* is dispersed, the ghost's mind, which has been dark because of the *Urami*, grows light, so that he can leave this world and attain Buddhahood.

It is often said that a Japanese person does not always show what is on his mind in his facial expressions. He may smile, but be miserable inside. The mind is shut up inside, and therefore, it is considered the *Ura*. For instance "*Ura-ganashi (Ura-kanashi)*" implies a sadness in the mind. "*Ura-goishi (Ura-koishi)*" signifies to long for one's lover without any overt expression of affection.

Ura-goishi	If the beloved
Waga Senokimi wa	Whom I have married
Nadeshiko ga	Were a flower
Hana nimo gamona	Of fringed pink,
Asa na Sa na min	I could see him every morning.

(*Man'yoh Shuh*, Vol. 17, No. 4010)

“*Ura-naku*” is to weep only on the inside. “*Ura-sabu (Ura-susabu)*” means that one’s mind is troubled and finds no pleasure. “*Ura-matsu*” signifies to wait in one’s mind. In the following example this word is used (in the form of “*Ura-machi*”) by a woman, who is impatient for her lover’s call but never makes her strong feelings known to him.

Aki-Kaze ni	An autumnal wind is blowing.
Ima ka Ima ka to	My lover will be just coming.
Himo toki te	Untying the girdle
Ura-machi iru ni	I am waiting for him.
Tsuki katabuki nu	The moon is going down.

(*Man'yoh Shuh*, Vol. 20, No. 4311)

In contrast, *Omote* is the front or the face open to society. The word “*Omote*”, which consists of “*Omo*” (face) and “*Te*” (side), means the appearances. “*Omote-muki*” signifies the outside, or surface, or one’s trade, business, or father’s occupation, or, in some cases, public office.

While *Omote* is thus public, *Ura* is private. *Omote* is open, but *Ura* is shut. The European personality is thought to be open to society (*Omote*), but a Japanese tends to prefer being kept from sight, in the dark of *Ura*.

### OMOTE VS. OMOI

The main function of the mind (*Ura*) is *Omoi*. “*Omoi*” means “thoughts”, “feelings”, “affections”, “emotions”, “desire” and so forth, but this word implies that the subject of these mental processes keeps them to himself, and does not expose them outside.

“*Omoi-Zuma (Omoi-Tsuma)*” is the spouse whose name one does not announce, but whom one loves ardently. If this affection is excessively ardent, one may die because of *Omoi* (“*Omoi-shinu*”). Once a lady composed;

Iu Koto no	If I blurt out my secret
Kashikoki Kuni zo	I shall be fearfully gossiped about.
Kurenai no	So I must be careful
Iro ni na ide so	Never to show my emotions,

Omoi-shinu tomo

Even if I should die of this longing.  
(*Man'yōh Shuh*, Vol. 4, No. 683)

The 20th story of the 24th volume of the *Konjaku Monogatari* is about a wife whom her husband has left alone. "The wife spent her days in grief because of *Urami*. The *Urami* was so deep that she fell ill with *Omoi*, and several months later she died due to the *Omoi* ("*Omoi-jini*" ← "*Omoi-shinu*"). The woman having neither parents nor close friends, her body was left as it was. But the hair did not fall apart, and the bones never separated from each other".

Thus there is a case where *Omoi* has the same meaning as *Urami*. For example "*Omoi o harasu*"—though this expression is used rather in vengeance stories than in ghost stories—signifies to revenge oneself just as "*Urami o harasu*". The *Urami* of a warrior (*Samurai*) killed not in action but in a private affair survives as his son's *Omoi*. The son takes over his father's *Urami*, which can be dispersed at the same time when the son revenges his father's death.

This *Urami* (*Omoi*) should not be in sight of the public (*Omote*), above all of the foe. The *Omoi* must be concealed and amplified in the mind (*Ura*) until the final scene. The more the *Omoi* is kept secret, the more finely it will be dispersed when the tragedy comes to a close, as the "*Chuhshin-gura*" illustrates. In this play, a lord's *Urami* is taken over by his forty-seven loyal retainers (*Chuhshin*).

"*Omoi*" is in some ways a synonym of "*Imi*". *Imi* is the situation wherein someone must not enter into the public area. In this *Imi*-situation one is confined to one's house and conducts oneself as if one were an ascetic. To fast, or to abstain from some particular food or from going out in some particular direction, is called "*Monoimi*" or "*Omoi*".

Orikuchi Shinobu indicated in his *Kokugo to Minzokugaku* (Language and Folklore: 1937) as follows. "It is called *Omoi* to be confined in *Mono-Imi*. *Imi-Zuki* (a month when *Imi* must be fulfilled) is called *Omoi-Zuki*. The period of mourning of an emperor is called *Mi-Mo-no-Omoi*. And the woman whom one loves deeply in his mind is called *Omoi-Zuma*. In brief, *Omoi* meant, in the old Japanese language, to remain motionless, confined to one's house, controlling his bodily desires" (*Complete Works of Orikuchi Shinobu*, Vol. 19, p. 178).

*Omoi* is thus opposed to *Omote*. It is not centrifugal but centripetal. Its orientation is not social or public, but private. *Omoi* is formed and amplified on the opposite side of *Omote*. That is, on the side of *Ura*. Here all the outer actions are to be withdrawn. Dayflowers, gestians, and perennial plants with yellow flowers are called "*Omoi-Gusa* (*Omoi-Kusa*)", because in their typical state, as if they were bowing the head low, quietly submerged into their own *Ura*, they remind us of *Omoi*.

### OMOI IN URA

It is on the side of *Ura* that *Omoi* arises and grows. When the *Omoi* is a love

emotion, we can name this mental process a “crystallization” in the sense of Stendhal, who in his *De l'amour* regarded a spacial and temporal distance between the subject and object of love as the most important condition for the formation of this affection. In order to foster love, it is necessary not to see the loved one for the time being, because this *Omoi* is to be bred in *Ura*.

When the *Omoi* is a doubt, we may recall the doubt of Descartes, who, in his autobiographical work *Discours de la méthode*, after having related how doubtful he had been of everything—including his own reason and senses—suddenly used the word “penser” (think) for “doûter” (doubt), and wrote “je pense, donc je suis” (I think, therefore I am). In this case the thinking (*Omoi*) was not any ordinary act of the mind. It was first of all and fundamentally a doubt, and this *Omoi* as a doubt was crystallized as Descartes relinquished methodologically all his relations with the external environment, the outside, the *Omote*. The *Ura* fostered his *Omoi*.

Descartes' methodological doubt accords with the most fundamental demand of philosophy, which was expressed as “Become aware of yourself!” by an old Greek sage and later as “Turn your eyes from the outer world to your own interior!” by a modern German philosopher. One of the acts of these eyes is such a philosophical doubt as Descartes'. Needless to say, the sight of these eyes is not an ordinary act of ordinary eyes, and it is of importance not in the *Omote* but in the *Ura*. Within the *Ura*, this sight acts through the *Omoi*.

The Japanese for “mind” is usually “*Kokoro*”. But as far as the mind is closed within itself, it can be called “*Ura*”. For example “*Ura-koishi*” is a synonym for “*Kokoro-koishi*” (beloved), “*Ura-ganashi*” for “*Kokoro-ganashi*” (sorrowful), “*Ura-motonashi*” for “*Kokoro-motonashi*” (uneasy). “*Ura-naku*” means to weep (*Naku*) without tear within mind. “*Ura-matsu*” signifies to wait (*Matsu*) anxiously and inwardly. And under the same condition, “*Omoi-ganashi*” is also a synonym for “*Kokoro-ganashi*”. “*Omoi-gurushi*” is another word for “*Kokoro-gurushi*” (painful, regrettable).

As far as the mind is active inwardly (within *Ura*), it is not only a *Kokoro*, but also an *Ura* or an *Omoi*. But the *Omoi* which has an *Ura*-character most typically is perhaps the *Urami*.

### URAMI IN URA

In the 15th volume of the *Kokin Waka Shuh* we find the following poem written by Taira Sadabun.

Aki-Kaze no	An autumnal wind blows
Fuki Ura Kaesu	Turning leaves of kudzu
Kuzu no Ha no	Inside out.
Urami-temo nao	Looking at their reverse-side
Urameshiki kana	I feel inexhaustible resentment.

The *Kuzu* (kudzu) is a perennial vine. It grows wild in fields and mountains in Japan and China. The *Ura* (reverse-side) of the leaves of the kudzu is nearly white, almost colorless. But the theme of this poem is, of course, not the reverse-side of the leaves. It is the *Urami* in the poet's own *Ura* (mind). He confesses that the *Urami* is inexhaustible in his own *Ura*.

But this *Ura* is to be closed and concealed. The *Ura*, just as the *Ura* of the leaves of the kudzu, should not reveal any color, nor any distinguishing characteristics. The *Ura* must conceal its own character. And the less our ordinary eyes can be set on the *Ura*, the more unearthly is the *Urami* which arises and grows in the *Ura*.

*Kuzu-no-Ha* is also the name of the heroine of a well-known legend. Though the legend supplied material for *Johruri*, *Kabuki* and so on, the *Johruri* play "Ashiya Dohmon Oh'uchi Kagami" by Takeda Izumo, performed for the first time in 1734, is the most famous.

In the forest of Shinoda lived a white vixen called *Kuzu-no-Ha*. Transforming herself into a woman, she married Abe Yasuna, and was delivered of a son, Abe Seimei, a well-known occultist in the middle Heian period. But when her husband became conscious of her true nature, she took flight into the wood, leaving the following poem.

Koishi-kuba	If you yearn after me,
Tazune kite miyo	Come in search of me
Izumi naru	To Izumi, and you will find
Shinoda no Mori no	In the Wood of Shinoda
Urami Kuzu no Ha	Resentful leaves of kudzu.

As "Kuzu-no-Ha" she referred to both herself and the leaves of kudzu which were familiar to her. What made this reference possible was her *Urami*. The reverse-side (*Ura*) of the leaves of the kudzu is symbolic of this vixen's inner mind (*Ura*), in which her *Omoi* condensed into *Urami*.

At the same time that she brought the reverse-side of the leaves of the kudzu to mind, the inner eyes were set on her own inside (*Ura*) and there came the *Urami* in sight. Just as her true nature, however, her own inside was not to be revealed to others, not even to her husband. She called on him, therefore, to come and see the reverse-side of leaves of the kudzu, which was symbolic of her inner *Urami*.

The *Urami* is prone to confine itself in *Ura*. Her *Urami* was repressed in *Ura*. A way of saying "to repress one's resentment" is "*Urami o nomu*", that is, "to drink *Urami*". She drank her *Urami*, so that it was not revealed. The more aptly she concealed her *Urami*, the more conscious she was of it, and she was gazing at its growth with her inner eyes.

### URAMI BEHIND OMOTE

*Urami* is commonly explained as the mental attitude of one who, dissatisfied with

some maltreatment by another, does not openly reproach it and, trying to surmise the other's real intention, does not bring his own intention to light. The point is perhaps what and how much he conceals in the dark behind his face (*Omote*).

There is seldom such a case as "*Ura ga nai*" (the absence of *Ura*), as if all the *Omoi* were disclosed. And there is often such a case as "*Ura ga aru*" (the presence of *Ura*) or "*Ura niwa Ura ga aru*" (an *Ura* within an *Ura*).

It is reported in the third volume of the *Ohkagami* that seven days after Fujiwara Tadanobu had risen to the rank of Chuhnagon ahead of his elder brother Fujiwara Sanenobu, the latter died of his grudge against the former, clenching his own fist so firmly that the fingernails dug into the palm and penetrated the hand. In such a case as this it is possible that *Omote* may allow us to surmise how thirsty the *Urami* is for revenge in *Ura*.

The extrication of *Omote* from *Ura* makes us anxious. Out of this anxiety we are apt to regard *Omote* as a signal of *Ura*, or the latter as a hidden center of the former, and try to peep into *Ura* through *Omote*.

In the posturing called "*Omoi-ire*"; a Kabuki actor gives expression to the *Omoi*, without resort to language, only with the look on his face and the movement of his body. He puts the *Omoi* from *Ura* into *Omote*. There are some cases where this *Omoi* is *Urami*. "*Ire*" of the "*Omoi-ire*" means to put in. The actor puts the *Omoi* of a person whose part he is playing in his own *Omote*. And his *Omote* is for the audience the only passage to the *Omoi*, in some cases to the *Urami*, which the person should conceal in his *Ura*.

Then it is *Ura-yomi*—literally "to read *Ura*"—on the part of the audience which corresponds to *Omoi-ire* on the actor's part. "*Ura-yomi*" means to read out of an expression the truth concealed behind it. The expression is *Omote*, and the truth behind it is *Ura*.

But the *Omote* is not always required to be a human face or to have human behavior. In the Nara and Heian periods, when the political situation was very unstable, bad crops and epidemics struck again and again. People blamed these phenomena on the deepseated grudge (*Urami*) of the spirits. In such a case as this the disastrous phenomena also can be regarded as *Omote*.

Certainly, the anxiety that these phenomena excited in ancient people may be derisive. But any anxiety about some latent agency, in particular about *Urami*, is very human. And if some *Urami* is concealed in *Ura*, it is not easy to read *Ura* (*Ura-yomi*), because human beings other than Kabuki actors do not perform *Omoi-ire* every day, and *Urami* is the *Omoi* which tends extremely to conceal itself in *Ura*.

Thus the *Urami* is not a direct reaction against maltreatment at all, but there it arises where such a reaction is impossible for some reason or other. Because of its strong *Ura*-character this sort of *Omoi* is akin to the doubt mentioned above. In both cases, persuaded neither of external things nor of one's own perception, one turns one's eyes from the outer world to one's own interior, and the *Urami* becomes connected with one's being. The ghost (*Yuhrei*) may say, "I have an *Urami*, therefore I am in this world".

## 怨みの構造

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要旨：「怨み」が日本人の情緒及び文化の文脈の中で持つ独自の構造を明らかにすることが、本稿の意図である。その「うらみ」が「うら」(裏)に由来する「うらむ」の名詞形であること、そしてその「うら」が、「おもて」(表)とは対照的に、「心」にかかわるものであることは、言うまでもない。我々は本稿でいくつかの日本語を取り上げるけれども、我々にとって問題なのは、言語学的でなく現象学的な「怨み」の構造であって、そのような観点から我々は、主として「裏」「表」および「思い」とかかわる様態において、「怨み」とよばれる現象を特徴づけたい。