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The Chinese Turn in Philosophy
THE CHINESE TURN IN PHILOSOPHY

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Note about the author

1. UTCP (The University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy): the 21st Century COE (Center Of Excellence) program at the University of Tokyo, Komaba.
I would like to find in this movement is something quite different. There might exist more subtle “lignes de fuite” that might be able to resist this type of re-appropriation and make philosophy open to the other in a completely different way. At this time, philosophy and its other (represented as non-philosophy, a-philosophy, or pre-philosophy) will reflect each other and transform together. They will be set in a curved or refracted space where we can find plurality in philosophy.

When I use the term “plurality in philosophy,” it does not mean that there are many philosophies in our temporal-spatial world. It means that philosophy cannot be reduced to one genuine genre of philosophy, but that it will always be with the other philosophy or the other of philosophy in its core. In short, plurality in philosophy is, simultaneously, the condition of the possibility and impossibility of philosophy. On the one hand, it makes philosophy more proper by being able to absorb every otherness, but on the other hand, it also makes philosophy welcome otherness in spite of the fact that doing so consumes away philosophy itself. We cannot talk about co-existence or comparison until we reach this point.

Just as with the condition of the possibility and impossibility, if I am allowed to use Kantian terms in a deconstructive way, “Kritik without synthesis” should be necessary to resist the re-appropriation of philosophy. It is an action of cutting out (krinein) the condition of the possibility and impossibility of philosophy, instead of reaching solid grounds through synthesis. It is a philosophical attitude of making philosophy open to the other. If being philosophical still means anything today, it should be relevant to this “Kritik without synthesis.”

Nevertheless, it is not easy to see philosophy as being open to the other. It compels us to consider the problem of the original violence to the other. Philosophy is not innocent when it draws and re-draws the line which defines itself. It makes different types of discourses into the other of philosophy or the other philosophy. This is an original violence, but insofar as it is always hidden and to be discovered only later, it was an original violence to the other. This is why being open to the other should signify opening up once again to the other while examining the delimitations of philosophy, inquiring into the violence against the other, and consuming away philosophy.

Certainly, it is almost impossible to escape from violence, original violence in particular, but it is indispensable to inquire into the violence of the re-appropriation of the other by philosophy and necessary to determine how to render justice to the other. From this vantage point, being philosophical begins to exist in our concrete world. It has to inquire into the history of violence and the right of resistance to violence.

2. Chinese Philosophy : An Alternative to being the other of Philosophy

During my undergraduate days as a student in the Faculty of Law at the University of Tokyo, I was originally interested in Political Philosophy and European Philosophy. My academic ambitions were focused on delving into the essential meanings of the political and the legitimate. Unfortunately, I had no chance to pursue this in the Faculty of Law after the retirement of Professor Maruyama Masao. All I had to choose from were courses which never dealt with these concepts directly such as analysis of political processes, political science and positive laws.

I could, however, detect a problematic similar to what I had in mind in the works of contemporary European “philosophers” such as Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas, and Martin Heidegger. Each of them took up these themes seriously in different and contradictory ways. After a while, I encountered political philosophers like J. G. A. Pocock and Hannah Arendt. In my view, the focus of these scholars turned towards violence. What is violence? How does it function? What is able to resist violence? In these questions one could see the realms of the political, the legal, and the ethical. Moreover, history was employed as not just a narration of violence or activity of philosophy, but also as a space of memory and as a witness to violence. Memory is another function of history as a narrative of resistance, while violence always aims to destroy this ability to narrate events in a different way than historiography. These aspects of contemporary European Philosophy so attracted me that I turned my back on the study of political science during my undergraduate years.

2. I placed “philosophers” in quotations inasmuch as I see them more as individuals who had complicated relationships with philosophy and criticized philosophy as such in order to open a realm of the “other.”
At the same time, I had decided to study Chinese Philosophy, even though I was sure that the field would soon perish in Japan. The reasons for which I chose Chinese Philosophy are too complex for me to go into detail here. Suffice it to say that I was convinced that Chinese Philosophy was an alternative to the other of European Philosophy. To me it seemed like a philosophy, whose modes of interaction with the other were markedly different from those of European Philosophy. Having confronted these two philosophies, we would be able to consume away the idea of philosophy lying at their tangent and ascertain the topoi for the other of philosophy.

I never forgot the debate about whether or not Chinese Philosophy was philosophy or not. Non-European philosophies like Chinese Philosophy, Indian Philosophy, and American Philosophy have often been regarded as improper philosophy, pre-philosophy, or non-philosophy. Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese Philosophies have been subject to even worse contempt. They are forced into being defined as thought. There are two typical reactions to this. One is to limit oneself to the realm of thought and play the role of the other of European Philosophy. The other is to over-philosophize oneself in an attempt to exhibit the same philosopheme as European Philosophy, and in some cases to even claim the potential to transcend it. It is a simple matter to find good examples of these two types of reactions in the modern history of philosophy in China and Japan.

These two types of reactions were inevitable, but they often resulted in an over-simplified understanding of European Philosophy and in shielding non-European Philosophy from severe philosophical criticism. In contrast, what is important is to reflect (bend back together in Latin) these two philosophies by shaking philosophemes each other. In other words, it is necessary to confront Chinese Philosophy as a criticizable and deconstructivable one, while delimiting European Philosophy. Chinese Philosophy has its own philosopheme, which makes clear the limitations of philosopheme in European Philosophy. Yet it also has a similar problematic as the latter, concerning the condition of the possibility of philosophy.

For example, I have been using the term “European Philosophy.” However, can we really conceive it as a coherent entity? There should be English Philosophy, French Philosophy and German Philosophy, which all have deep differences between them. They have each been grasping for the crown of philosophy for some time, each laying claim to being the true inheritors of the Greek philosophical tradition. Herein lie the problematics of legitimacy, heritage, and language. These problematics have not been the exclusively proper philosopheme of European Philosophy, but also exist at the core of Chinese Philosophy as well, inasmuch as they are strongly tied to the condition of the possibility of philosophy. Thus, I began to deconstruct Chinese Philosophy and contemporary European Philosophy at the same time.

3. Concrete Problematics in my zigzag Itinerary

3-1. Chinese Philosophy

Firstly, my concerns regarding Chinese Philosophy are grouped into four major problematics.

1) Otherness and Evil

Modes of representation of otherness and the distribution of evil between ego and the other are critical to developing an understanding of the ethical in Chinese Philosophy.

See “Don’t Mix! Can Be Dangerous: De Anima in China” (Chapter 1).

2) Violence and Language

Since the publication of “The Violence of Rectified Language and its Unraveling in the Xunzi” (1990), I have been tracing this problematic in literature as well as philosophy from ancient China to modern China.
3) Historiography and Historical Consciousness
The question of how best to narrate events is a recurrent question in the Chinese historical consciousness and is strongly connected to ethics. See « Pour en finir avec ce désir récurrent de TONG 枠 » (Chapter 3) and “Historical Consciousness in Hu Shi and Maruyama Masao” (Chapter 5).

4) The Configuration of Oriental Studies
It cannot be forgotten that Chinese Philosophy is a product of modern scholarship. It is necessary to pursue the configuration of Oriental Studies in Asia, which is intimately related to political problems such as nationalism and colonialism.

See “Pragmatism and Modern Chinese Philosophy: The ‘genetic method’ of John Dewey and Hu Shi” (Chapter 4) and “Like Tongueless Men: Silence at Fushun Coalmine” (Chapter 9).

These four problematics are too entangled to cleanly discern from each other. Besides, my recent academic endeavors have increasingly involved investigating the overlapping areas between them.

3-2. European Philosophy
Secondly, in regards to European Philosophy, I have been trying to make clear the limits of each philosopher from two different angles.

1) Ethico-Political Delimitation
I put Emmanuel Levinas and Hannah Arendt in the same arena in an attempt to set up a confrontation between their discourses. Through deep consideration of the similar terminology employed by Levinas while addressing ethics and Arendt while addressing politics, we discover the political in Levinas and the ethical in Arendt. Each, however, has the potential to undermine itself.

2) In-deconstructive Divinity
From the very beginning, Jacques Derrida has held onto the unique concept of “transcendental divinity.” When referring to this in-deconstructible series, which included concepts such as “messianism without messiah” or “faith,” he was always more levinasian than Levinas, whom he severely criticized. Herein lies an opportunity through which to boldly consider the transcendence of philosophy in theology.

See „Der Moment des Tränenvergießens: Gedanken mit Jacques Derrida zur transzendentalen Ökonomie der Zeit“ (Chapter 10) and „Lexikon zur Zeittheorie Derridas“ (Chapter 11).

In short, European Philosophy is in touch with the other of philosophy at the risk of becoming entangled with the latter. This consumption of philosophy seems to demand one to “be philosophical.” Chinese Philosophy can, in this respect, surpass it here by showing other ways of being open to the other of philosophy.

3-3. Comparative Philosophy
Thirdly, as for Comparative Philosophy, I have been focusing on multilateral comparisons between China, Japan, and Europe.

1) Chinese Modernity and Japanese Modernity
It strikes me as very strange that there has been little attention paid to comparisons between Chinese modernity and Japanese modernity on the levels of philosophy or political philosophy. A reason for this is that Japanese modernity was formed at the cost of ignorance of Chinese modernity.

See “Historical Consciousness in Hu Shi and Maruyama Masao” (Chapter 5) and “Genealogy of Nothingness: Nishida Kitaro and China” (Chapter 7).
2) Chinese Philosophy and Contemporary French Philosophy

“A Chinese man could pass through a wall” (In Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*). A Chinese dimension creeps into the most philosophical thinking of a contemporary French philosopher. François Jullien, a sinologist and philosopher, treats Chinese Philosophy as an “other of European Philosophy” in order to better understand the latter. How can we respond to this treatment of Chinese Philosophy in contemporary French Philosophy?

See « Relire Fonder la morale de François Jullien et redécouvrir une pensée chinoise plurielle » (Chapter 12).

3-4. Political Philosophy

Finally, as for Political Philosophy, I have once more taken up the study of modern and contemporary Japanese Philosophy as ethico-political discourses. What I emphasize here is to inquire into the political in modern and contemporary Japanese philosophical discourses as seen in politics, law, ethics and literature.

See “Trace of Legitimacy and Justice in Maruyama Masao” (Chapter 6); “Buddhist Discourses on Contemporary Bioethical Problematics in Japan” (Chapter 8); “Like Tongueless Men: Silence at Fushun Coalmine” (Chapter 9).

In this field, Maruyama Masao played an important role with his colleague Takeuchi Yoshimi. As a standard-bearer of postwar democracy in Japan, he was renowned for his analysis of contemporary politics. His main academic concerns were expressed in his works on the history of Japanese Political Thought. Though I have great respect for his role as a vital advocate of postwar Japanese democracy, I did not find his work on the history of Japanese Political Thought to be fully persuasive, as I saw something wrong with his treatment of Chinese Philosophy. He used it as a mirror reflecting Japanese Thought, and accordingly often oversimplified it. Even in Maruyama’s thought, Chinese Philosophy became a persistent problem.

4. Philosophy as questioning in friendship

Looking back at my zigzag itinerary as described above, I realize that I owe a great debt to my fellow colleagues. Some gave me opportunities to present papers in conferences while others encouraged me to pursue my studies in this field which had never received proper acknowledgement in the former Japanese academic system. Some gave informative, sensible and critical comments on my presentations, while others corrected my papers with great patience. Philosophy never exists without friendship, nor remains my zigzag itinerary without it.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of my friends, for their support and inspiration over the years.

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2. “From Foundation to Difference: On the Conception of the exteriority and the interiority in Chinese Philosophy” was given as a lecture in French in the Institut Marcel Granet, l’Université de Paris 7, on 14 March, 2002.
3. « Pour en finir avec ce désir récurrent de TONG 手 » was given as a lecture in the Institut Marcel Granet, l’Université de Paris 7, on 14 May, 2002 and in EHESS, on 3 May, 2002.
5. “Historical Consciousness in Hu Shi and Maruyama Masao” was given as a lecture at the Workshop “East Asia: Trans-Regional Histories workshop,” in University of Chicago, on 13 May, 2005.
6. “Trace of Legitimacy and Justice in Maruyama Masao” was given as a lecture at the Friday Forum, in Harvard-Yenching Institute, on 25 March, 2005.
7. “Genealogy of Nothingness: Nishida Kitaro and China” was given as a lecture at the International Symposium “Discussion between Japan and Europe on 20th Century Thought,” in Prada Foundation, Milan, on 14 March, 2006.
8. “Buddhist Discourses on Contemporary Bioethical Problematics in Japan” was given as a lecture at the Guangzhou Harvard Symposium “Borderless Asia,” in Sun Yat-sen University, on 12–14 November 2006.
9. “Like Tongueless Men: Silence at Fushun Coalmine” was given as a lecture at the NYU Conference “Morality and Modernity,” in Department of East Asian Studies, New York University, on 10 January, 2007.
10. „Der Moment des Tränenvergießens: Gedanken mit Jacques Derrida zur transzendentalen Ökonomie der Zeit” (translated by Michael Fuhrmann) was given as a paper for Orbis Phenomenologicus: Zeit on March, 2000, but was unpublished.
11. „Lexikon zur Zeittheorie Derridas“ (translated by Michael Fuhrmann) was given as a paper for *Orbis Phaenomenologicus: Zeit* on March, 2000, but was unpublished.

12. « Relire Fonder la morale de François Jullien et redécouvrir une pensée chinoise plurielle » was given as a paper at the International Colloque « François Jullien: Passeur de pensée et concepteur de rencontres », in Université de Fuc, Viet-nam, on 3 May, 2005.
I. Deconstructing Chinese Philosophy
Abstract

_De Anima_ in China made a sharp appearance in philosophico-religious debates between Christian missionaries and Buddhists in the seventeenth century and between Buddhists and Confucians in the fifth and sixth.

Christian missionaries attacked the Buddhist prohibition on hunting and fishing on the ground that the souls of animals were different from humans’. The Christians simply regarded animals differently from the humans. Rather than making a distinction among souls, Buddhists insisted on the inter-relationship between animals and human beings on the level of _Anima_, which they had utilized in a debate with Confucians during the Six Dynasties period.

Confucians, unlike the missionaries, denied the immortality of the human soul, but they affirmed, like the missionaries, the distinction among souls. Buddhists criticized Christians, saying: “If you totally separate human souls from animal souls, you cannot explain why we can communicate with others or why things change in our world.” In a word, the main issue of _De Anima_ in China consisted in communication with and transformation into others.

However, Buddhists did not monopolize the idea of communication and transformation. Chinese philosophico-religious thinking also found another form of imagination: Daoism in the _Zhuangzi_. Its desire would reach the extreme dream of enjoying every form of _Anima_ while escaping from heavenly restriction.
As long as we know that the human body is different from the animal body, the human soul cannot be the same as the animal soul. Thus we understand that it is absurd for Buddhists to maintain that the soul of a person can dwell in the body of another. The soul of a person should not accord with another's body; it can only accord with its own body, let alone with other types of bodies; it can never accord with them.

1. Don’t Mix! Can Be Dangerous

1. Debates between Christian missionaries and Buddhists in the seventeenth century

Aristotelian discourse on soul, i.e., De Anima, was introduced into a debate between Christian missionaries and Buddhists during the Ming Dynasty. The leading figure among the Christian missionaries was Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), and his Buddhist opponent was Yunqi Zhuhong. The issue in dispute consisted in the prohibition on hunting and fishing, in other words, the advisability of killing (and eating) animals. But what was profoundly questioned in the dispute was the way of comprehending this world, especially how to grasp the order of different souls.

The Jesuit Matteo Ricci advocated a tripartite structure of souls based on Aristotle: “Vital Soul 生魂,” maintaining life and supporting growth; “Perceptive Soul 觀魂,” or organs to perceive things; and “Spiritual-Rational Soul 靈魂,” deducing and discriminating reason of things. Obviously, these correspond to Plants, Animals, and Human Beings, respectively.

Ricci asserted, “There was no reason to prohibit hunting and fishing” (Tianzhu shiyi 天主天義). It is noteworthy that in so doing, he used the order of souls as a basis for his criticism against the Buddhist prohibition. His reasoning was as follows: humans can treat animals as commodities and even kill them for their own sake, because “animal souls are different from human beings”; even sages were constrained to kill and eat animals in many countries. As long as we humans desire to eat, all we have to do is ensure we do not kill too many of them.

There lay a doctrine of metempsychosis, behind the Buddhist defense of the prohibition on hunting and fishing. Metempsychosis would allow a soul to transmigrate from one genre to another. This was unacceptable to Ricci, as it permitted the intermingling of souls, which could even result in one soul’s migrating to a higher order. Even the slightest mixing of souls of different orders would invalidate Ricci’s argument in which human beings were allowed to treat animals as commodities and hence slaughter them for their own sake.

2. Attitude for facing those who have different type of souls

Ruchun, a Buddhist from Luochuan, for instance, criticized Ricci as follows: “Since early times up until now, sages and saints in many countries have killed living creatures and eaten the flesh without regret; they have never regarded their deed as disobedience to a commandment.”

As this citation shows, it was extremely dangerous for Ricci to let a person’s soul dwell in another’s body. He not only refused the mixing of souls across the orders (e.g., mixing the human soul with the animal soul), but he also denied the mixture of souls of the same type, at least as far as human souls were concerned.

It is difficult to find direct refutations of Ricci’s rejection of the mixture of souls in the Buddhist discourse, although Buddhists had previously attempted to defend it. There remained, however, the possibility in the Buddhist discourse of inventing an attitude for facing those who have different types of souls.

As long as we know that the human body is different from the animal body, the human soul cannot be the same as the animal soul. Thus we understand that it is absurd for Buddhists to maintain that the soul of a person can dwell in the body of another or souls can transmigrate in this world. As a matter of fact, the soul of a person should not accord with another’s body; it can only accord with its own body, let alone with other types of bodies; it can never accord with them.

2. Tianzhu shiyi, chapter 5.
3. Ibid.
as well as the later ones, albeit differently, have shown that they ultimately prefer life and cannot bear death. If Heaven created animals just for being killed and eaten up by human beings, why did the sages have Xin (mind 心) that could not bear the death of animals even temporarily? 

He presented some evidence to demonstrate that Chinese saints had never allowed the arbitrarily killing of animals but that they regarded the killing of animals as unavoidable to realize other aims, and that they had Xin that could not bear the suffering of animals, preferring life and abhorring death. Needless to say, this “unbearable Xin” came from the episode in the Mengzi in which a sovereign gives an order to change the sacrificial animal from oxen to sheep when he sees an ox passing by in awe of him.

Feiyn Tongrong 費鴻通容 also developed a similar criticism: “Whoever slaughters animals and says they have no souls kills them arbitrarily and simply satisfies his appetite. He has no virtue that cannot bear death.” 

Sur-rebuttals may arise against these criticisms. For example, the “unbearable Xin” may emerge only when one immediately faces an animal. This is nothing but the inferior mind of “small men 小人” who only love their neighbors but do not reach the profound Ren (benevolence) directed towards distant beings such as sheep sacrificed instead of oxen. Thus “the unbearable Xin” is only a feeling in the realm of experience, hence lacking the universality of principle in Kantian terms. It therefore does not lead to a deed based on duties.

“The unbearable Xin” that comes from the other unexpectedly, however, is irreducible to a natural feeling that takes interest in the others around oneself. When the sovereign in the Mengzi came to recognize the sheep’s being, he realized that there was no reason to distinguish an ox from a sheep and that he himself had not made a distinction; he was suddenly moved by the presence of the ox in awe. What is at stake here is not whether the human being is the same as the animals in the hierarchy of souls, but how “the unbearable Xin” spontaneously springs out in confronation with the other in crisis. It must be a radical affection free from any kind of interest or reflection.

Buddhists formed yet another important criticism. If we do not have “the unbearable Xin” and are allowed to kill animals arbitrarily, such an attitude can be easily turned against other human beings. That is to say, the arbitrary killing of animals may result in the killing of certain types of human beings. It was Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙 who advanced the criticism to this point:

Ricci said, “The prohibition on killing sacrificial animals wreaks much damage on the method of raising them,” and “It is better to kill and eat cows and horses with pain of momentary duration, because they suffer from their disastrous life.” If that is the case, one must hang oneself or hope to get killed by a stroke of the sword for those who carry goods for sale, those who carry shoulder spades, those who are imprisoned, those sick in bed, and those suffering from pain such as slaves, soldiers, and servants. Ricci’s doctrine about loving one’s neighbor could bring all the people in the country to death. One can hardly say that his teaching is the purification of intentions. 

Yu Chunxi was a disciple of Yunqi Zhuhong and exchanged letters with Ricci. In the above citation, he disagreed with Ricci as the latter’s view could result in the summary killing of people suffering from hard labor and illness. Once the idea that animals are to be regarded as mere tools is applied to people, it will reveal its cutthroat nature by providing the pretext for killing people in inferior positions.

Ricci may have found it impossible to apply such an idea to human beings, whose souls belonged to a different order from that of the animal souls. However, he sighed over a layperson who behaved however he desired, and he compared him to an animal enslaved by its desires. Furthermore, he equated “small men” who were not fully aware of “the distinction between the other and the ego” with animals. Thus, a reason “allowing us to kill animals” can be easily turned into one “allowing us to kill small men.”

We might trace a motif of the intercommunication of souls in the depth of the Chinese philosophical imagination, along with different attitudes towards this world deriving from that motif. Before encountering Christian missionaries, Buddhists had already set out the argument of intercommunication of souls among one another.

"Intercommunication of Souls" in Dreams

1. Debates between Buddhists and Confucians in the fifth and sixth

If my thought is not based on my body and can dwell in the body of another, it follows that A’s feeling can dwell in B’s body and C’s nature in D’s body. Is this possible? Never, it is impossible.

(Fan Zhen, Shenmielun 『神滅論』)

Fan Zhen 范愷 (450–515) took a strong anti-Buddhism position during the Six Dynasties, when the immortality of souls was discussed heatedly. This debate marked the apex of De Anima in Chinese philosophy. Its major issue was the relationship between the body and the soul. “If the body 形 perishes,” said Fan Zhen, “the soul 神 also perishes, because the body and the soul conform to each other as one.” For Fan Zhen, the body and the soul were two aspects of an “entity 体.” The “body 形” expressed the “material 質” aspect of the entity and the “soul” the aspect “in use 用.” The difference between the “body” and the “soul” was not substantial but semantic. This is why these two conformed to each other as one 形神相即.

Against Fan Zhen, those who sided with Buddhists maintained that the body and the soul did not conform to each other as one but that they were in a relationship of “coalescence 合.” In “Refutation against Fan Zhen’s Shenmielun,” Cao Siwen 曹思文 said, “The body and the soul coalesce to be in use. This coalescence is not conformity. When one is born, the body and the soul coalesce to be in use; when one dies, the body remains but the soul goes away.” He brought two articles from “Qiwulun” in the Zhuangzi: 『莊子』齊物論 as a ground for the separation and coalescence between the body and the soul:

While a person is sleeping, his anima intercommunicates [with others]. The reason why the soul can make a trip as a butterfly is its separation from the body. Once he wakes from sleep, the body begins to be active. Surprisingly, he becomes Zhuang Zhou, because his body and soul coalesced again. In this manner, once the body and the soul coalesce, they become one. Once they separate from each other, the body perishes and the soul goes away.

According to the Zhuangzi passage referred to in this citation, the soul was not closed off within the body but was in intercommunication with others. The “intercommunication of souls 魂交” brought in the order of dreams in particular had a strong power to reduce reality. Using the framework of the Zhuangzi, Cao Siwen argued that the body and the soul were separable. The intercommunication of souls in dreams was introduced as a ground for criticizing “conformation of the body and the soul.”

Cao’s argument, however, was dismissed by Fan Zhen on the basis of a dream:

[Cao’s] criticism attains the ultimate in logic but not in reason. You say the soul made a trip as a butterfly. Does this mean that he really became a flying worm? If so, when a person becomes an ox, he will pull a cart. When another becomes a horse, he will take on a passenger. The next morning, there should be a dead ox and a dead horse. But we can’t find anything like them. By what reason do you explain it? *

Fan Zhen’s conclusion was as follows: As long as “dreams and illusions are fictitious,” they do not touch on the reality and they cannot be regarded as a basis for reasoning.

Indeed, the Dream of the Butterfly in the Zhuangzi mentioned here is not a real event that Fan Zhen demanded as a basis for reasoning. For Cao Siwen and Xiao Chen 蕭憲, however, dreams were a gateway for

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7. Cao Siwen, “Refutation against Fan Zhen’s Shenmielun.”
8. Fan Zhen, “Reply to Cao Siwen’s Refutation against Shenmielun.”
accessing the truth of this world through changes in things. The logic based on dreams as changes in things was a kind of hyperbole exposing the depth of reality. If we understand dreams in this manner, it is futile to criticize it for its fictitious nature.

One cannot, however, accept the conclusion that Cao and Xiao drew from dreams: the separation and coalescence between the body and the soul and the immortality of the soul. It is undeniable that Buddhists profited from the soul’s immortality, suggesting that there should be pleasure and suffering in the afterworld.

Even so, we cannot sufficiently comprehend the truth of this world if we dismiss dreams only because they are fictitious, just as Fan Zhen did. Furthermore, Fan Zhen might have contradicted himself in terms of the conformation of the body and the soul as one if he laid too much stress on reality to reject the fictitious or dreams.

2. “Kokoro/ Xin 心” and “Heart 心器”

First, if, for example, the body and the soul conform to each other as one on the level of reality, the names designating the body must correspond to those of the soul on a one-to-one basis, but they do not. This was the point Shen Yue 沈約 made in “Refutation against Fan Zhen’s Shenmielun 『雜范範神論』”: the body had much more names than the soul.

Second, concerning the “use 用” of discretion for judging right or wrong, if Fan Zhen had required real “material 質” to be coalescent with discretion, he should have brought out “Xinqi 心器,” i.e., the heart, which was a specific organ, instead of “Xin 心,” the mind or soul:

Question: If discretion for judging right or wrong is not related to one’s hands and feet, what should it be related to?

Answer: It is governed by “Xinqi.”

Q: Isn’t the Xinqi (heart) one of the five organs?

A: Yes, it is.

Q: What distinction is made among the five organs? Why does the...

10. Fan Zhen, Shenmielun.

The questioner still continued to ask questions: namely, that the answerer’s argumentation contradicted the fact that discretion was not restricted to the heart but was shared by other sense-organs such as the eyes and the ears; its function was nonrestrictive, free from any specified organs. Fan Zhen was not able to give a valid answer to this last question.

Third, Fan Zhen, as mentioned above, stubbornly insisted that if the dream had been true, there should have been a dead body when the person awoke from it. Strangely enough, however, Fan Zhen did not apply his doctrine of coalescence between the body and the soul to the dead body, as if the corpse did not really exist. Had he applied the doctrine to the corpse, he might have introduced “dead soul 死魂” in the manner of Shen Yue. In sum, the reality to which Fan Zhen appealed was an extremely restricted concept and his doctrine of coalescence between the body and the soul had a limited scope of application.

3. One’s Soul’s Intercommunication with Others’ Souls

Another theme Fan Zhen rejected along with the concept of dream was one’s soul’s intercommunication with others’ souls. This theme was probably what he truly wanted to reject. As such it is worth quoting a relevant passage again:

If my thought is not based on my body and can dwell in the body of another, it follows that A’s feeling can dwell in B’s body and C’s nature...

9. Ibid.
in D's body. Is this possible? Never, it is impossible. 11

This passage is taken from Fan Zhen's final response to the catechism quoted earlier. On the basis of the impossibility of mixing a person's soul with another's body, Fan Zhen mentioned that discretion was not an unspecific function and therefore must correspond to a specified organ, which was the “heart.”

In Chinese Philosophy, communication has been a huge problematic and still is an important key concept in considering De Anima in China. The intercommunication of souls in the privileged space of dreams is not necessarily reducible to a simple model of communication of one's intention to others. Even in ordinary communicative situations, however, something other than the mere transmission of intentions may supervene. It was such a possibility of intercommunication of one's soul with others' that Fan Zhen wanted to reject. In this regard, we may cite Xiao Chen’s criticism:

Fan Zhen said, “Since the heart is the basis of discretion, it cannot dwell in places other than its own.” Although this might be valid to the mouth, the eyes, the ears, and the nose, it is irrelevant to others' souls. While the eyes and the nose share the same body, they are never mixed together, for the places they govern have different functions and the organs' functions are different from one another. Our souls, however, can communicate with others' souls, though they dwell in the others' bodies over there. It is because both the principle of soul and the function of discretion operate in the two sides at the same time. Thus, they said, “Open your mind, and let it pour into my mind” in the Shuojing『書經』, or “The other has his own mind, which I am guessing” in the Shijing『詩經』, Prince Huang 桓公 of Qi 齊 followed Guan Zhong 管仲’s plot, and Emperor Gaozu 高祖 of Han 漢 adopted Zhang Liang 張良’s scheme. In both cases, the first made discretion in his body dwell in the second’s body. It is absurd to say that “it is impossible that A’s feeling would dwell in B’s body and C’s nature in D’s body.” 12

Here Xiao Chen extended the concept of one's communication with others to his soul's intercommunication with others' souls, suggesting his soul can dwell in others' bodies.

This criticism is indeed not effective since Fan Zhen did not admit such a communication model as one's soul's intercommunication with others' souls. The model itself is not, moreover, sufficiently persuasive. It is not necessary for us to proceed to the separation of the body and the soul and on to the immortality of souls, following Xiao Chen.

Nonetheless, this model may potentially transcend Xiao Chen's own framework, because one's soul's intercommunication with others' souls through its dwelling in their bodies can be applicable not only to the discretionary function but also to “feelings” and “nature.” Let us assume that our “feelings” dwell in others and a butterfly's “nature” dwells in us. This is a situation in which the inter-generic mixture of souls takes place. We could say that this is the central potentiality of De Anima in Chinese Philosophy: one's soul's intercommunication with others' souls, this being neither its identification with them (like the anthropomorphism of animals) nor its imitation of or sympathy with them. It is thought of as matter in utter reality, neither in dreams as the fictitious nor in illusions.

1. The Dream of a Butterfly and the Transformation of Things 物化

The most symbolical expression of the inter-generic mixture of souls in China is, after all, the dream of a butterfly:

Zhuang Zhou 齊周, once became a butterfly in a dream. He was flustered, and was a butterfly. He enjoyed himself as much as he liked. He did not realize he was Zhuang Zhou. When he suddenly woke up, he was Zhuang Zhou as before. It is uncertain that Zhuang Zhou became a butterfly in the dream or a butterfly became Zhuang Zhou. There must be a distinction between Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly. That is why we say it is a transformation of things. 13

11. Ibid.
12. Xiao Chen, “Refutation against Shenmielun.”
It can be admitted that a situation in which things are transformed has supervened, that is, a person is transformed into another: the avatar of a human in a different figure, becoming others. This transformation is irreducible to the Confucian “change through teaching (教化),” which is a directed change to support an enlightenment program, making small men become men of virtue and sages. In contrast with this, the transformation of things is a change, which is not pre-arranged in a politico-esthetico-economical system and interests.

Nonetheless, this becoming-others does not lack the distinction between one and the other. As many scholars have mentioned, Daoism in the Zhuangzi aims at the unity of myriad things where one and others are amalgamated into one. If this is the case, the transformation of things would become useless, and the Zhuangzi passage that “Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly should be distinguished from each other” could be redundant. Daoism in the Zhuangzi is not in a transcendental position, although it claims to be so by putting every difference and distinction into a mutual relationship.

It might be worth referring to an old interpretation of the Zhuangzi. Guo Xiang 郭象 (252–312) in the Six Dynasties explained the transformation of things as follows:

The distinction between awakening and dreaming is not essentially different from the one between life and death. One enjoys oneself as much as one likes, not because the distinction is annihilated, but because it is determined. Time never stops even for a moment, and the now will never exist in the end. Thus, a dream we dreamt yesterday should become another in the now. The transformation between life and death is nothing but this becoming. Even if our minds are busy with a lot of worries, this lasts only while we exist. Just as Zhuang Zhou did not know he had been a butterfly when he awoke from the dream, we know nothing about “that” when “this” happens to us. If this is applied to man, he knows nothing about his “afterlife” while alive. Liji 呂記 is a case in point. The idiot pretends to know that life is pleasure and death is suffering, because he does not yet know what the transformation of things means. 

2. “Untie One’s Bondage 緊解”

Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962) criticized Zhuangzi’s philosophy as old-guard philosophy after defining it as a “supermundane attitude”: the “theory of Zhuangzi sounds reasonable when we first hear it, but it is far removed from real competition for a half an inch of difference in the worldwide progress of academic knowledge as well as in the worldwide social restoration or political revolution.”

Zhuangzi’s philosophy is a kind of life philosophy. It aims at “reconciliation with the mandates of Heaven (天命),” that is, to accept one’s fate calmly. In consequence, it only produces those who truckle with present situations or those who are not at all affected unless they are isolated from society. It is no more than an attitude of “looking down from the Eiffel Tower.”

14. Guo Xiang, Commentary on the Zhuangzi.

Hu Shi tried to find a way of supporting a political revolution within Chinese Philosophy. In so doing, he discovered the political philosophy of Non-Action in Laozi, which brought about a revolutionary change in Chinese society. Although he regarded the content of “revolution” by Non-Action as an economic system of laissez-faire to support the British Empire, he became attached to the “half an inch of difference” and dismissed the philosophy of Zhuangzi.

However, we should not oversimplify Zhuangzi’s case, since we might be able to ask whether Zhuangzi touched on the possibility of transforming this world itself in a manner other than Hu Shi’s political revolution. While totally affirming the present through self-enjoyment, it seemed to touch on the radical possibility of letting this world transform itself into a liberated space. In other words, it puts into question differences other than Hu Shi’s “half an inch of difference.”

The following passage may clarify Zhuangzi’s philosophy and what is meant by the transformation of things:

Ziyu 子舆 suddenly fell sick, and Zisi 子祀 went to see him. Ziyu said, “The Creator is great! See how He has bent me.” His back was so hunched that his five organs were moved up to the top of his body. His cheeks were level with his navel, and his shoulders were higher than his neck. His neck bone pointed up towards the sky. “The economy of yin and yang was deranged.” However, his mind was calm without getting confused. He walked to a well with tottering steps, and said again, “Alas, the Creator bent me like this.”

“Do you dislike it?” asked Zisi. “No, why should I?” replied Ziyu. “If the Creator lets my left arm become a cock, I would like to announce the hour. If He lets my right arm become a sling, I would like to shoot down an owl to broil. If He lets my buttocks become wheels and my heart a horse, I would like to ride on it. What need would I have of a chariot? I obtained something due to time and I am now losing it due to submission to Dao.

“Since I am content with time and submissive to Dao, feelings of sorrow and joy never penetrate me. This is, as the old saying goes, to untie my bondage. Those who cannot be freed from their bondage are so because they are bound to things. Things have never been superior to

Heaven for quite a while. Why, then, should I dislike my situation?” 17

Although this may sound strange, the scene of letting arms become a cock and sling etc. does not have to be taken as a mere illusion. On the contrary, what we are asked to imagine is to invent a new term for grasping the realities of transformation, including general changes such as birth by the combination of spermatozoon and ovum; becoming man or woman; growth from child to adult; growing old to die. Beyond these changes, for which we do not have adequate terms, the Zhuangzi suggested “accidental transformation,” which had been put aside under the name of deformity or abnormality. In his imagination, this was not thought of as an “abnormal” or “deformed” situation. But he affirmed that the left arm becomes a cock in terms of general “transformation,” in which the left arm was kept as such, only that its determined composition changed into that of a bird, announcing the hour.

This reality is different from that of the historical world that Hu Shi grappled with. This might be called “diabolic reality,” to quote Gilles Deleuze. 18 This diabolic reality is not independent from the reality of the historical world, but it haunts the latter as virtuality. If we affirm this diabolic reality, our combination changes into those of things and becomes others. Furthermore, our real world (the amalgam of the two realities) itself will be transformed into its extremity, wherein our bondage is untied. However, it seems almost impossible to affirm this diabolic reality, because, in order to carry out the affirmation, it is necessary for us not to accept our fate in a disinterested manner, but to run a risk of going mad to become others.

To return now to the Zhuangzi, it announced the liberation from bondage in terms of “破碎.” This term is also found in “Yangshengzhu 營生主” in the Zhuangzi, which reads: “bondage of ‘the Emperor of Heaven 上帝’ is untied.” This means that the Emperor of Heaven restrains us and hangs us from Heaven; if, then, the bondage is untied, we will be liberated from and to Heaven.

Our souls not only intercommunicate with one another across the different orders of souls, but they also radically transform the status quo of

18. Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, Mille plateaux: 309.
this world by becoming others: the souls and the world are released from the bondage of the Heavenly Emperor. *De Anima* in China has already reached the limits of ancient imagination.

References:

2. Institute for Research in Humanities, *Study on Hongmingji*, 3 volumes, Kyoto University, 1973–75.
7. Nakajima Takahiro, “The Unnatural Dead and the Cadaver: the conversion of Shenmielun by Fan Zhen,” in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, No. 4, the Society for Chinese Philosophy in the University of Tokyo, 1992.
Dai 戴震 (1724–77) was a grand authority of hermeneutics in the Qin 漢 dynasty. He endeavored to reconstruct moral (and political) space by criticizing Neo-Confucianism, not only as a system but also from the standpoint of the history of Chinese Philosophy. Specifically, he regarded Neo-Confucianism as a submission to Taoism, Buddhism, and the doctrine of Xunzi 孝子. On the one hand, he said, like Taoism and Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism fell into the essentialism, which suppressed desire as an accidental evil; on the other hand, like Xunzi, Neo-Confucianism looked for the basis of the good in “the Sense or Principle 理,” which is beyond the nature. 2 In contrast to Neo-Confucianism, Dai Zhen tried to open the moral space in the interiority by refusing all foundations from the exterior. To that purpose he re-affirmed desire and re-interpreted it; and, at this point he referred to Mengzi, and re-assessed the latter’s theory of “good nature or the goodness of one’s nature 性善.” 3

But, what sort of interiority did he unfold? Did not this interiority risk being reduced to the interiorization that is typical in the history of Chinese Philosophy? If this is not so, how can we consider his theory other

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1. CM: chapter "dao."
2. Therefore Dai Zhen said, “the ‘li’ of Neo-Confucianism kills people.”
than as traditional interiorization? And, in what way was desire re-affirmed in Dai Zhen? In order to answer these questions, for a starting point, it is necessary to comprehend Chinese formulations concerning exteriority, interiority, and desire.

1. The Aporia of Neo-Confucianism

In his program for the emancipation of the spirit or the diffusion of enlightenment, Zhu Xi defined the true character of this self-deception as “human desire." He insisted that one should suppress such desire in advance.

But, is it actually possible to suppress desire in advance? Would it not be a sort of imaginary suppression of a pure origin? That is, would it not be little more than a dream of eliminating the eventuality or the possibility itself of the event? If so, accomplishing the intention will end as pure interiorization without any exteriority. We may say that this is an auto-foundation. At this point, the following difficult question arises: what gives evidence of my success in accomplishing my intention to others? In other words, if others cannot recognize my result in some way, the program of enlightenment aiming at a politico-moral order might possibly be interrupted.

To this question, Zhu Xi tried to respond by introducing the concept of exteriority. By inserting “gewuzhizhi" as a supplement to the newly canonized text of the Daxue, he believed he could resolve the problem of foundation. “Gewuzhizhi" is the praxis that fully recognizes the entire Sense of exterior things. But, at the same time, this Sense "li" equally belongs to the interior "consciousness." In consequence, if one recognizes the entire Sense of exterior things, he/she can also testify to others the accomplishment of this intention consisting of "li" in the interior, because the recognition of Sense must be communicable.

This solution makes use of the double aspect of Sense’s belonging to both the exterior and the interior. It seems that there is a certain resemblance here to the methodology of Husserlian phenomenology. It is well known that phenomenology regards things as transcendence. This transcendence is not a transcendence of God as the primary cause, but is one that should be constituted as Sense. The constitution of things by a transcendent conscience is nothing other than a Bestowal of Sense to things. In that case, it would certainly not be a mistake to understand that in the thought of Zhu Xi, Sense belonged both to the interior and to the exterior. But, to be precise, there was not yet a dichotomy between the interior and the exterior. There existed only the movement of the constitution of Sense.

4. DZ: chapter 1.
5. DH: chapter 2; DH: chapter 4.
7. DZ: chapter 1.

10. See DES: 8–13.
11. DZ: chapter 1; chapter 6.
However, phenomenology itself did not completely succeed in constituting the Sense of things. This enterprise was difficult in principle. A thing has so many aspects that a human being, who is not God, can not comprehend it instantaneously and exhaustively. It was almost the same in the case of Zhu Xi. His solution had an inevitable aporia: although quid juris one may completely recognize the Sense of a thing some day, quid facti it is impossible to do so, because a thing only displays its one aspect to human beings. 12

As an example, we might refer to the famous anecdote of Wang Yangming (1472–1528). In his youth, he tried in vain for a week to recognize the Sense of the bamboo tree in his garden. Moreover, he nearly went mad. That was why he criticized the philosophy of Zhu Xi, which had made the fatal mistake of resorting to the exterior, and had given up the way of the interiorization. For Wang Yangming, as a legitimate heir of Zihui-xue, it was indispensable to reform the interpretation of "gewuzhizhi 格物致知," and to return again to the interior. 13

But, this about-turn of Wang Yangming did not resolve the aporia of Zhu Xi. We have to wait for Wang’s disciples to grapple with its difficulty. Before discussing this, we would like to inspect another mode of foundation on the exteriority in the history of Chinese Philosophy.

2. The Conception of the Exteriority in Xunzi

It is well known that Xunzi refuted the theory of the “goodness of one’s nature 性善” in Mengzi 孟子. Specifically, when he said that human nature was bad, he was refuting foundation by or through essentialism. In his eyes, essentialism tends to postulate essence as a ground of the good, and the foundation of the good on the ground of essence annuls any motif of good conduct. It divests any effort of effectiveness against real evils. Therefore, it was necessary for him to “practice against one’s nature and sentiment, which inevitably arrived at bad state of disorder,” 14 and to find a basis for the good somewhere exterior.

But, to what sort of exteriority does the question refer? In any case, it was not Heaven 天. Xunzi was a philosopher who radically separated human affairs from heavenly movement. The transcendent instance of Heaven was no more than a stronger essence. This was not the exteriority to be looked for. The exteriority of Xunzi belonged to the instance of the “poiesis 作” of the Sage-Prince or the Sage. The Sage produced and built institutions of rites and language referring to the history of such institutions. In other words, these institutions were not created ex nihilo, but were produced out of past institutions. Therefore, a new institution of rite consisted of the “older institution of praxis” 15 and new language of the “older system of language.” 16

The poiesis of the Sage concerned the conditions of the possibility of our actions and of our linguistic performance. Thus we could define it as the quasi-transcendental. If the transcendental concerned only the consciousness, poiesis could not belong to it. But, it was not appropriate to place poiesis on a transcendent order (as Heaven) or on an immanent order (as human nature). It would be quasi-transcendental, as long as poiesis was beyond essence, and it was the condition for the possibility of praxis. It could restore the meaning of the Greek and Medieval “transcendental.” 17

However, this exteriority of Xunzi has always been called into question: why did Sages have such a capacity to do so? Did not they possess it by their own natures? If so, did not the thesis of Xunzi revert to essentialism? But, Xunzi’s criticism of essentialism did not permit such a conclusion, because he was seeking to open the way to meta-physical exteriority (in the literal meaning of meta ta physica: exteriority that is irreducible to one’s nature and essence). Instead, his core problem was how to communicate constituted rites and language to other people. Unlike the approach of Zhu Xi (which presupposed spontaneity and fundamental communicability), Xunzi appealed to the political power of the prince and the contact of language made between people. 18 In other words, he introduced a very political dimension to communicability. 19

12. DZ: chapter 5.
By reversing the Aristotelian hierarchy of sciences, we could say Xunzi positioned poiesis as a primary philosophy that is superior to all quests for essence.

Nevertheless, this instance of poiesis in Xunzi was narrowly limited to Sages. Even if it was possible for ordinary people to become sages through “learning,” such poiesis must remain difficult for us. Here again, we must reexamine the relationship between the nature and the exteriority.

3. Natural Desires and Regulated Desires

As mentioned previously, Wang Yangming 王陽明 brought the ground of foundation back from the exterior to the interior. He interpreted the “gewuzhizhi” of Zhu Xi as a “loss of intention due to a fascination with things.” He criticized Zhu Xi for distinguishing “consciousness” from “sense” and making them distinct from each other. Contrary to this, his conception of “gewuzhizhi” was “to make a good intelligence-judgment of my consciousness extend to each and every thing.” In short, he thought that it was possible to constitute sense completely in the interiority. Because all human beings must share the “good intelligence-judgment” in common, the aporia of Zhu Xi should be resolved.

But, this solution simply replaced the problem that Zhu Xi had designated under the term of the diffusion of “auto-enlightenment” with others or that of “gewuzhizhi.” If we use another phenomenological term, then Zhu Xi had confronted the difficult question of inter-subjectivity: how can the other as another transcendental consciousness comprehend and repeat the constitution through a transcendental consciousness? This is the problem of radical incommunicability with others. But Wang Yangming, by shaking off the problem more rapidly than Zhu Xi himself, threw away the problem of otherness. He reinforced his theory of the “good intelligence-judgment” with the “heavenly principle.”

Did Wang Yangming appeal to the old transcendence in order to guard the interiorization? Or, did he comprehend the heavenly principle as the extreme limit of immanence? In either case, he did not succeed in explaining how the foundation of the good could appear through the “good intelligence-judgment.” It was his disciple Wang Longxi 王龍溪 who took a step in this direction, and tried to transform the signification of the “good intelligence-judgment.”

Wang Longxi is well known for his theory of “no good and no 善惡.” It means that people are fundamentally beyond the dichotomy of good and evil, so they are ultimately good. This was condemned by his contemporaries, and has been criticized by successive Sinologists for its simple affirmation of desires, and its abandonment of apprentice training 功夫. But, this condemnation misses the point. For, he equally conceived a program that is faithful to the doctrine of Yangming-xue 阳明学: restore the original nature of supreme goodness through training; training will purge the evils engendered by desire.

His originality existed rather at another place. While he questioned the “good intelligence-judgment” itself again, and reconstituted it radically, he reduced natural desires (appetite and sexual desire) through the constituted “good intelligence-judgment,” and re-affirmed them as regulated desires.

One who only knows that appetite and sexual desire originate from innate nature does not understand that human nature is derived from Heaven. Then, he is driven by such desires and there is no regulation.

In other words, Wang Longxi did not directly affirm natural desires as human nature. They should be grasped again and anew, not by the simple “intelligence-awareness 知,” but by the “good intelligence-judgment.”

When one sees food, one is aware of appetite. When one sees sexual objects, one is aware of sexual desire. But, this awareness is not the good intelligence-judgment. The good intelligence-judgment must spontaneously have heavenly regulation. So, it is adequate to the moment and is moderate in the fulfillment of desires. Therefore, it is never excessive. Mengzi said: “Tongue and mouth want delicious food and eyes seek beauty. Such an inclination belongs to human nature.” But, at the same time, he added: “At the very moment there exists ‘order 疾’.” To set up order is precisely to exhaust human nature thoroughly. 26

It is necessary to make human nature come to its end, or to exhaust it through the “good intelligence-judgment.” Only then does “human nature become good nature. And, the intelligence-awareness also becomes the good intelligence-judgment.” 27

In conclusion, Wang Longxi discovered regulated desires that exceed natural desires, and only at that moment did he say that human nature was good. 28 In contrast to Wang Yangming, he regarded the “good intelligence-judgment” as a constituted intelligence. It never belongs to the order of human nature or the natural. It should be discovered as a metaphysical pole of intelligence.

But, where are these regulated desires situated? Do they not still belong to the program of the philosophy of Yangming-xue? In my view, they are situated rather at the limit of the movement of the interiorization enforced by the two doctrines of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. That position would be the invisible border of the interiority. In other words, it is not a difference between the interior and the exterior, but the difference itself that is touched upon here.

Hereafter, we can return to the opening thesis of Dai Zhen.

4. “Everyone eats and drinks, but there are few who taste” 29

Dai Zhen refused the recourse to the exteriority just as Zhu Xi and Xunzi had done. Undoubtedly the implications of the two exteriorities in Zhu Xi and Xunzi are not the same. But, their conceptions of the exteriority equally designate the possibility and the necessity of thinking of otherness, communicability, and power other than by essentialism or foundation on some essences. Yet they had their own aporia; that is, the difficulty of explaining the topos of their exteriorities and the relationship between the exterior and the interior. In order to do so, conversely, it was indispensable to transform the conception of the interiority.

It is very interesting that Dai Zhen criticized Zhu Xi and Xunzi simultaneously. He was a successor of the re-affirmation of desires as regulated ones, and lived in a period when Chinese norms had been shaken by an invasion of barbarians. For this kind of man, any recourse to the exterior equally lacked stability, and failed to open up a space of communicability. The space of communicability (which is primarily the space of the moral and of politics) should be opened in the interiority. Naturally, the topos of the interiority here must not belong to the interior in the style of Wang Yangming, which pretended to oppose itself to the exterior, but in fact had joined hands with it. The topos was situated at a crossing of the way of the exterior and of the interior. One could name it a “transcendental difference.” Yet, what does this mean exactly?

In the heading of this paper, the words of Dai Zhen concerning the division of the concept of nature were quoted. On the one hand, Dai Zhen distinguished the good from the nature and the necessary from the natural. But, on the other hand, these two terms cannot be separated. He gave us the following account:

On the one hand, desire is the natural of the physical body, constituted of blood and energy. On the other hand, to rejoice in excellent virtue is the natural of the intelligence-judgment of consciousness. The above is exactly what Mengzi meant by the term of “good nature. ” The natural of the intelligence-judgment of consciousness is inclined to rejoice in “the regulatory Sense of things 理義,” but in fact it is difficult to attain and exhaust the regulatory Sense of things. Begin with a minute examination of the natural of the physical body.
Mengzi said: “That which everyone judges identically so in their consciousness is called ‘li’ and ‘yi’ [the regulatory Sense of things]. Only the Sage apprehends previously that which my consciousness judges identically so.” Mengzi always refuted the discourse putting “yi” in the exterior. He wanted to say that the “regulatory Sense” belongs to the nature. However, this does not mean that the nature in general always has a regulatory Sense. The nature is organized as a physical entity (blood and energy), and as the intelligence-judgment of consciousness based on the “yin-yang and five elements” [laws of Nature as so regarded in China]. On this level, human beings and other living things are divided and distinguished. Yet the regulatory Sense of things is only comprehended in the intelligence-judgment of human consciousness. Therefore, if his intention attains to it, he will never be embarrassed in his actions.

This intelligence-judgment of the consciousness is not limited to that of the Sage. We ordinary people surely possess it, but cannot use it sufficiently. Similar to the radical “good intelligence-judgment” of Wang Longxi, we must completely rejoice in and taste the regulatory Sense of things in the midst of our daily lives. The passage of Mengzi cited above was followed by these words: “the regulatory Sense of things makes our consciousness rejoice; just as flesh makes our mouth and tongue enjoy good taste.”

Therefore the Zhongyong said, “Everyone eats and drinks, but there are few who taste.” To eat and drink is a metaphor of our daily lives; to taste is a metaphor of an action without any fault. Thinking of the “dao” while abandoning daily life would be like looking for taste outside of eating and drinking.

For Dai Zhen, “li-yi” was the regulatory Sense of things that would be unfolded through “eating well;” the “intelligence-judgment of

30. CM: chapter “li.”
31. Ibid.
32. CM: chapter “xing.”
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. The Mengzi: vol. 6 A7.
37. CM: chapter “dao.”
consciousness 心” was a sort of judgment of taste (an esthetic judgment) in the Kantian meaning. 

Kant (1724–1804), who was a precise contemporary of Dai Zhen (1724–77), endeavored to open a space of communicability that is “subjectively universally valid” through the use of the judgment of taste as a bridge across an abyss between the natural and liberty. Similar to Kant, Dai Zhen also hoped that the necessary as the topos of transcendental difference could have a “subjectively universal validity” for everyone, under the name of “to judge identically so.”

If so, parallel to the effect of the thought of Kant (and that of Hannah Arendt as well), was it not difficult for Dai Zhen to escape a humanist teleology? As long as a line of division between human beings and animals is always folded back onto the human being himself/herself, what about a person who in principle does not participate in the judgment of taste? But, this is already the beginning of the next question at hand.

38. Dai Zhen attached importance to the faculty of judgment, and considered it in particular through the concept of “quan 構.” See CM: chapter “quan.” For example: “on the level of daily life, the Sage knows the sentiments of all people well, and satisfies their desires. That he judges what is or is not important does not lose shared Senses 分理, it is the significance of ‘li 理’; “quan 構” is a means to judge what is or is not important. Elucidated consciousness with ‘quan 構’ can distinguish things and attain their equilibrium.”


Pour en finir avec ce désir récurrent de TONG 續

1. L’histoire doit s’écrire dans la longue durée, sous forme de tongshi 通史

Depuis le Hanshu 漢書, les historiographes chinois rédigeaient les histoires dynastiques officielles 正史 dans le style appelé duandai jizhuanti 断代紀年體, qui couvrait une seule dynastie (d’où le terme duandai), et comportait plusieurs parties: les annales principales des souverains (benji 本紀), divers traités et monographies (zhi 志, shu 書), des tableaux synoptiques (biao 表), et des biographies d’hommes illustres (liezhuan 列伝).


C’est que le Miroir complet pour l’illustration du gouvernement, tout en restant fidèle à un découpage année par année (biannian), fit redécouvrir le sens d’une histoire générale écrite dans la longue durée, allant des origines aux temps présents (tongshi).

Konan n’appréciait pas beaucoup le très fameux historien Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661–721), à qui il reprochait un attachement exagéré au style de rédaction historiographique duandai jizhuanti illustré par le Hanshu. Et Konan n’a guère d’estime pour ce type d’historiographie: « prendre comme fil directeur la généalogie des Fils du Ciel et se contenter de con-

signer la chronique de chaque génération, c’est faire du rangement d’archives, pas de l’histoire. Depuis le *Hanshu*, les historiographes officiels se sont rabaisés au rang de ‘trieurs d’archives.’ »  


2. Une histoire qui nous permette de saisir l’actualité en nous donnant ‘le fil des événements historiques qui y ont mené’ 時勢の沿革


Quand le *Miroir complet pour l’illustration du gouvernement* fait renaître

3. Pour en finir avec ce désir récurrent de 時勢的沿革

le genre de l’histoire générale *tongshi*, en consignant année par année (*biannianti*) l’histoire de la Chine depuis la période des Royaumes Combattants jusqu’aux Cinq Dynasties, il transmet le fil des événements historiques menant à l’actualité, ce que le Prince doit savoir avant tout: plus qu’une simple liste d’ événements, ce qu’il doit connaître c’est l’art de gouverner et ses avatars, les secrets de l’ordre et du désordre, de la grandeur et du déclin des royaumes.  

Mais cette approche de l’histoire, qui cherche à y lire le fil des événements menant à l’actualité (時勢的改革) et rejette une chronique événementielle, c’est celle de Konan lui-même. Masubuchi Tatsuo 増淵達夫, spécialiste d’histoire orientale, dit à ce propos:

Si Konan, tout en prenant appui sur l’école herméneutique des Qing (考證学), portait un jugement élogieux sur Sima Qian (司馬遷), Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 et Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠, c’est que comme lui ils étaient à la recherche du cours naturel mais en même temps nécessaire de l’évolution des choses humaines, du sens suivi par cette évolution. C’est cette même quête qui est au cœur, à la source du travail d’historien de Konan.

Ce commentaire pénétrant nous montre le lien, dans la conception que Konan se fait de l’histoire, entre cette quête de sens, et la conséquence d’une telle logique, qu’il désigne sous le terme de *sinocentrisme culturaliste* 文化主義的中華思想.

Le sinocentrisme, qui repose sur la distinction entre Chinois et Barbares 華夷 et érige en principe la supériorité de la civilisation chinoise, se manifestait plutôt jusqu’au début des Qing comme une distinction de niveau ethnique 種族, qui se concrétisa sous la forme d’un loyalisme pro-Ming et anti-mandchou chez des penseurs comme Gu Yanwu 関炎武, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 ou Wang Fuzhi 王夫之.

Or sous les Qing, cette distinction entre Chinois et Barbares fut réinterprétée comme une opposition située au niveau culturel et non plus...
ethnique, tous ceux respectant la culture chinoise et œuvrant pour sa continuation n'étant plus considérés comme des Barbares même si ils l'étaient de par leur origine ethnique. Une telle conception présente des similitudes avec le culturalisme de Konan, puisque lui aussi dit respecter et œuvrer pour la continuation de la « culture orientale » dont l'essence est la culture chinoise, et prône la nécessité d'un rôle actif et conscient du Japon dans cette entreprise, dépassant ainsi les différences ethniques.

Mais si la différence ethnique n'est plus qu'un détail mineur, pourquoi alors est-ce le Japon qui doit se charger de cette mission? Pour Masubuchi, cela tient à une logique bien spécifique qui vient chez Konan de compléter celle du « sinocentrisme culturaliste », la thèse du « déplacement du centre culturel ». Pour Konan, depuis l'unification de la Chine, un phénomène de déplacement du centre culturel a entraîné un déclin des zones situées à l'origine à son centre, au profit de la périphérie, ce qui peut justifier que le Japon se substitue à terme à la Chine comme centre culturel de la « culture orientale ».

3. Les conséquences du sinocentrisme culturaliste

Ce « sinocentrisme culturaliste » a pourtant eu des conséquences terrifiantes. En 1924, Konan écrit dans son Nouvel Essai sur la Chine 新支那論 les phrases suivantes:

L'intervention du Japon dans la rénovation chinoise n'est ni fortuite ni due à des circonstances passagères. Du point de vue du développement de la culture orientale, il s'agit au contraire d'un engagement logique, qui justifie les liens historiques unissant les pays de la région. L'existence des nations que sont la Chine, le Japon, la Corée ou l'Annam est certes d'importance pour chacun de ces états, mais si nous nous situons dans la perspective globale de l'essor de la culture orientale, cette existence se réduit à un simple point de détail qui ne vaut même pas la peine d'être mentionné. L'essor de la culture orientale ne se soucie pas des distinctions nationales, il a son cheminement propre.

Des voix s'élèvent en Chine, ces derniers temps surtout, qui prétendent que l'invasion par une ethnie allogène est un drame pour les Chinois. En réalité, ce sont justement les incursions répétées d'ethnies allogènes qui ont assuré à l'ethnie chinoise sa longévité […]

En cette période d'essor de la culture orientale que nous vivons aujourd'hui, la vitalité de l'économie japonaise va nécessairement—sans pour cela que ce soit forcément délibéré—contribuer à la rénovation chinoise, et nous devons être conscients qu'il s'agira là d'un facteur déterminant pour la survie et l'avenir de l'ethnie chinoise. Et sans doute, en tentant de freiner ce mouvement, l'ethnie chinoise prendrait d'elle-même le chemin la menant vers son déclin et sa fin.

Au regard de cette mission essentielle, les accusations d'expansionnisme ou de militarisme portées contre le Japon à propos de sa politique chinoise ne tiennent pas un instant.

L'important pour Konan, c'est la Chine en tant qu'héritage culturel, c'est la « culture orientale ». Peu lui importe si au nom de cette cause sacrée, si pour mieux perpétuer cette tradition, le Japon doit envahir la Chine, et si les Chinois doivent y laisser la vie. Car c'est pour leur bien, c'est la survie même des Chinois qui exige l'invasion d’une ethnie allogène, il s’agit donc même d’un « bonheur extrême ». Et c'est ainsi que le culturalisme de Konan, qui lit dans l’histoire le sens caché du courant des événements, tout en affectant de se dégager des distinctions ethniques, n’en place pas moins pour autant en position privilégiée un groupe ethnique particulier, au risque de provoquer l’élaboration des autres, et ce au nom de l’« engagement logique justifié par les liens historiques qui unissent les pays de la région ». Et c’est là que Masubuchi reproche à Konan de faire abstraction, malgré—ou plutôt en raison même de—son respect pour la culture chinoise, des Chinois en tant que groupe ethnique, en tant que « sujets vecteurs de culture ».

Bien sûr, on peut repliquer à ces critiques que Masubuchi s’est mépris sur les intentions réelles de Konan. Mais même si l’on peut essayer

9. Ibid., p. 513.
de justifier certaines des déclarations de Konan, une lecture attentive de son *Nouvel essai sur la Chine* permet difficilement de le laver de tous soupçons. Certes, Konan s’est efforcé dans son *Essai sur la Chine* de découvrir dans les « tendances générales 大勢 » de l’histoire le fil d’une pensée démocratique chinoise, qui prendrait sa source sous les Song et se poursuivrait jusqu’à la révolution de 1911 (Xinhai Gémìng 辛亥革命). Mais en fin de compte il y décèle quand même que la pratique de la démocratie ne convient pas aux Chinois en raison de leur niveau déplorable de « morale politique 政治德義 ». Et dix ans après, dans son *Nouvel essai sur la Chine*, il en arrive à préconiser carrément, au nom de cette « tendance générale », pour reprendre les termes de Masubuchi, l’élimination des Chinois en tant que groupe ethnique, en tant que « sujets vecteurs de culture ».

Ouvrons ici une parenthèse sur l’« ethnicité 民族 » dont parle Masubuchi. Il ne s’agit pas d’un concept d’ordre culturaliste, ni de type nationaliste, forgé de toutes pièces à partir d’une identité biologique, historique ou culturelle, et qui trouve son prolongement naturel dans le concept de « nation ». Il s’agit plutôt de quelque chose de totalement réfractaire à toute idée de « nécessaire » et de « naturel », un lieu où vient prendre appui un faisceau de différences. Cet ensemble fortuit de différences ne peut être qu’accidentel, le point d’appui concret d’une pratique humaine, un groupement humain parmi tant d’autres. Ce point d’appui est bien sûr sans cesse à recréer, à recomposer. Cette « ethnicité » repose bien sur une « nature » matérielle, une économie corporelle, comme la façon de se nourrir et de se vêtir ou certains traits physiques. Mais cette « nature », de par son caractère parfaitement accidentel, ne se laisse pas si facilement détourner ni récupérer pour « cimenter » une « nation » et du « naturel », elle reste cette différence qui ne cesse de nous interroger.

4. La théorie de la légitimité dynastique (zhengtonglun 正秋論)

Alors est-ce que tout effort pour appréhender l’histoire dans la longue durée, pour saisir le fil directeur qui relie les événements entre eux et permet de comprendre les tenants et les aboutissants de l’actualité, mène nécessairement au sinocentrisme culturel ? Avant de nous pencher sur le discours de Wang Fuzhi, voyons d’abord ce que représente en Chine la théorie de la légitimité dynastique, le zhengtonglun.

Il s’agit d’abord d’une théorie de l’alternance dynastique, qui pour mieux légitimer la dynastie régnante, cherche à prouver qu’elle tient sa légitimité de la dynastie précédente. Autrefois, Zou Yan (305–240 avant J.C.) proposait une correspondance entre la succession des cinq éléments et celle des dynasties, et l’avènement d’une nouvelle dynastie se légitimait par l’acquisition par celle-ci de l’élément suivant dans la liste: terre/bois/métal/feu/eau.

Mais sous les Song, on en vient à évaluer la légitimité d’une dynastie par la « justesse (zheng) de sa succession/filiation (tong) » avec la dynastie précédente. Pour Konan, la naissance de ce concept de « succession légitime » zhengtonglun est la conséquence naturelle d’une vision globalisante de l’histoire du type tongshi. Mais une telle conception laisse non résolues de nombreuses questions difficiles, comme celle de savoir si les Qin sont les successeurs légitimes des Zhou (avec la question du zhengrun, légitime ou illégitime), qui est le successeur légitime à l’époque des Trois Royaumes (Wei 蘇 et Shu 蜀) et des Dynasties du Nord et du Sud 南北朝, etc… Aussi sous les Song du Nord, Ouyang Xiu avait-il fini par distinguer deux phases au zhengtong, celle du zheng et celle du tong, et tentait de résoudre ces contradictions en donnant la priorité au tong sur la justesse, et la légitimité de la succession et de la lignée, tong étant alors pris dans son acception d’« unification » (territoriale). Grâce au glissement sémantique ainsi opéré, il pouvait alors déclarer que « il arrive que le zhengtong (la succession légitime) puisse être interrompu ».

Sima Guang est en accord sur ce point avec Ouyang, et le *Miroir complet pour l’illustration du gouvernement* reflète ses conceptions: pour juger de la légitimité d’une dynastie, il se préocupa surtout de savoir si elle a été capable de rassembler et d’unifier tout le pays derrière elle. En ce qui concerne les périodes d’éclatement du pays, il est « bien obligé de consigner les événements survenus dans chaque pays en utilisant les noms d’ère Wei 魏, Song 宋, Qi 齊, Liang 梁, Chen 陳, Liang postérieurs 後梁, Tang postérieurs 後唐, Jin postérieurs 後晉, Han postérieurs 後漢 et
l’ordre et le désordre politiques. Ainsi la justesse du tong n’a plus rien à voir avec l’ordre et le désordre politiques, et puisque de toute façon il n’y a plus de tong, peu importe qu’il soit juste ou pas!

Mais s’il en est ainsi, une fois la notion de zhengtong invalidée, en quoi consiste donc pour Wang Fuzhi le travail de lecture de l’histoire ? On peut le résumer en ces termes : il s’agit de connaître les causes qui déterminent l’ordre et le désordre, l’unité et l’éclatement du pays, afin de mieux œuvrer pour son unification.

La succession de l’ordre et du désordre, de l’unité et de l’éclatement est une tendance générale du monde. Mais elle n’est pas déterminée par « la cession des cinq vertus » ou « la succession par filiation unique ». L’ordre ou le désordre tiennent à la situation d’ensemble qui résulte inéluctablement de la somme des actions concrètes des individus intervenant à divers « moments ». Ils apparaissent donc comme une sorte de nécessité comme « le ciel » ou « la loi du ciel », mais puisque cette nécessité est déterminée par « la tendance dominante » de chaque époque, l’intervention individuelle des humains y a encore sa place. Autrement dit, la connaissance des « tendance dominantes » régissant l’ordre et le désordre permet une intervention à bon escient, le « bon ordre/gouvernement réussi ».

En d’autres termes, lire l’histoire, c’est rendre possible une pratique politique. Mais quand on s’obstine en lisant l’histoire à y rechercher le zhengtong, la légitimité des successions dynastiques, on renonce à connaître les vraies raisons qui déterminent l’ordre et le désordre, et on finit donc par s’interdire la pratique politique qui contribuerait réellement à établir l’ordre politique et social recherché.

5. Le regard critique de Wang Fuzhi sur le zhengtonglun

L’une et l’autre interprétation sont rejetées par Wang Fuzhi (1619–1692), qui dénie toute validité au zhengtonglun, et critique ouvertement cette théorie dans sa préface à Lecture du Tongjian. La critique se focalise—c’était prévisible—sur le tong, qu’il définit comme impliquant simultanément l’unification dans l’espace et la continuité politique dans le temps. Si l’on examine l’histoire chinoise depuis ses débuts (tongshi), ces deux exigences ne se sont pratiquement jamais trouvées satisfaites en même temps, ce qui invalide ce concept. Il va même jusqu’à affirmer que « depuis la chute des Song, le tong a disparu de l’univers », puisque les Song ont été défaits par les Barbares. Ceci était déterminant pour lui, qui considérait la distinction entre Chinois et Barbares comme essentielle, et qui pensait que ceux qui tombaient sous le joug des Barbares se voyaient privés de civilisation. Plus question alors bien sûr de tong.

Quand au zheng, Wang Fuzhi ne le prend pas dans son sens de « justesse morale ». Il a toujours gardé ses distances avec l’idée d’une justice morale transcendeante, et pour lui les concepts de zheng et de non-zheng renvoient à la justesse de la conduite de ceux qui s’impliquent dans l’ordre et le désordre politiques. Ainsi la justesse du tong n’a plus rien à voir avec l’ordre et le désordre politiques, et puisque de toute façon il n’y a plus de tong, peu importe qu’il soit juste ou pas!

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6. Réinventer l’histoire dans un monde sans tong

Mais ici un doute terrible nous assaille. L’imagination que Wang Fuzhi exige de nous pour une lecture adéquate de l’histoire, ne contribue-t-elle pas uniquement à l’établissement d’un ordre chinois ? Il a certes critiqué la notion de zhengtong, mais puisqu’il ne remet pas en cause la
distinction Chinois/Barbares, le sinocentrisme culturaliste ne s’en trou-
t-\nt-il pas en quelque sorte renforcée?

Comme pour nourrir ce doute, les chercheurs japonais remarquent
 dans l’ensemble que Wang, tout en critiquant la notion de « succession
légitime » zhengtong, approuve celle de perpétuation de l’héritage culturel
chinois, connue sous le terme de « transmission légitime du Dao », dao-
tong 道統. Je reviendrai plus tard sur ce sujet si j’en ai le temps. 14 Et il est
sûr qu’il existe chez Wang Fuzhi un discours sur le daotong, ou encore sur
la notion de « filiation confucéenne 儒者之統 », notions dans lesquelles
le concept de tong a une acception moins directement politique.

Le daotong est au départ un concept sur lequel Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) s’est étendu longuement à l’époque Tang. Nécessaire pour protéger
les enseignements des sages princes d’autrefois 先王 contre les assauts du
bouddhisme, il le conçoit comme une transmission de l’héritage culturel,
du Dao chinois, héritage qui prend sa source chez les empereurs Yao et
Shun, se perpétue à travers les enseignements de Confucius et Mencius,
et continue en ligne directe jusqu’à Han Yu lui-même. Le daotong n’est
autre chose qu’un tong culturel, la perpétuation de l’héritage culturel chi-
nois. Remarquons d’ailleurs que Zhu Xi, qui se considérait comme
l’héritier spirituel légitime de Han Yu, inscrit lui-même son nom à la fin
de la lignée du daotong. Mais alors Wang Fuzhi, tout en se présentant
comme un détracteur du néo-confucianisme de Zhu Xi, ne serait-il pas
en fait redevable à ce courant de pensée du concept de daotong, qu’il
aurait emprunté en catimini?

Pourtant, c’est bien lui qui parle de la chute des Song comme de
« l’effondrement du monde humain dans sa totalité, du monde humain
distinct du monde animal, du monde où le dao se transmet et se
perpétue ». 15 De plus, sa thèse sur la distinction entre Chinois et Bar-
bares, comme sa conception de la civilisation, ne se laissent pas facilement
ranger dans la catégorie du « sinocentrisme culturaliste » : il les fonde
ostensiblement sur une différence ethnique et non sur la culture en
général, 16 pour lui l’évolution de la civilisation a comme préalable un
changement de mode d’alimentation et d’habillement, une différencia-

15. Wang Fuzhi, le Song Lun, livre 15.
plus discuté est de savoir si sous le couvert d’une critique du zhengtong en général, il n’aurait pas en fait été le partisan inavoué d’un zhengtong de type plus radical. Voyons d’abord ce qu’en dit Naitoh Konan, qui évoque ce problème dans son *Histoire des Sciences historiques en Chine*.

S’il ne discute pas du zhengtong, c’est que celui-ci s’est arrêté aux Song. En fait quand il dit « aux Song », il veut dire « aux Ming ». Car s’il avait cité ouvertement les Ming, cela aurait fait problème pour la dynastie des Qing, et il a donc dit « aux Song ». En disant que le zhengtong s’est arrêté aux Song, il veut dire qu’après la chute des Ming défait par la dynastie Qing, issue de Barbares, le zhengtong chinois s’est interrompu. 20

Cette interprétation de Konan est réfutée par Hayashi Fumitaka avec les arguments suivants:

*a.* Puisqu’on trouve ailleurs le nom des Ming dans le texte de Wang Fuzhi, c’est qu’il n’avait pas besoin de dissimuler son allusion aux Ming en les désignant sous le nom des Song.

*b.* Si on interprète Wang Fuzhi comme Konan en lui faisant dire que « le zhengtong s’est arrêté aux Song », on implique par là que Wang Fuzhi reconnaît la notion de zhengtong comme valide jusqu’aux Song, et on le met donc en contradiction avec lui-même. Bien sûr, littéralement il dit que « avec la chute des Song, il n’y a plus de tong dans le monde ». Il parle donc seulement du tong, et non pas du zhengtong. Il n’empêche, il semble bien avoir admis par ces mots qu’il y avait jusqu’aux Song une sorte de tong (même si ce n’est pas le zhengtong)…

C’est ce que pense Saitoh Tadashi, qui relève une certaine ambiguïté dans des textes de Wang Fuzhi en ce qui concerne le yitong « filiation unique ». D’un côté il réfute clairement l’idée de « succession par filiation unique », mais de l’autre il l’approuve. 21 Comme Konan, Saitoh remarque ici que le concept de tong se confond avec la distinction de principe opérée par Wang entre Chine et Barbares. En somme il existerait pour Wang un tong ou daotong situé à un niveau plus profond que le zhengtong d’ordre politique, un principe fondateur de la civilisation ou du monde.

Mais si c’est le cas, Wang Fuzhi ne se laisserait-il pas ainsi aisément récupérer par l’idéologie du « sinocentrisme culturaliste » ? Sa théorie du « vassal survivant des Ming » n’entraînerait-elle pas au service direct, par une ironie de l’histoire, de la logique d’autojustification de la dynastie des Qing, qui veut que Barbares ou Chinois soient à même de perpétuer la civilisation chinoise sur un pied d’égalité ? Saitoh, dans le même article, établissait un lien cohérent chez Wang Fuzhi entre la succession par « filiation unique » et la distinction Chine/Barbares, et concluait que cette dernière n’est au fond qu’« une différence culturelle ». Il voulait sans doute par là désagréger cette distinction du cadre étroit du nationalisme où on la relègue le plus souvent…

Pourtant dans la mesure où cette distinction se fonde chez Wang Fuzhi sur un dispositif concret (la terre, le corps « xueqi » et les formes « xingyi »), elle n’est en rien abstraite, elle renvoie à une « ethnicité » plus matérielle que celle que présupposent culturalisme et nationalisme. On pourrait alors la considérer, comme nous l’avons déjà proposé plus haut, comme le « point d’appui » concret d’un ensemble de différences. De même, il ne nous semble pas avoir justifié de rechercher un daotong plus radical que le tong dans la phrase « à la chute des Song, le tong disparut du monde », qu’on peut interpréter simplement comme la disparition décisive du tong politique (en tant que combinaison d’une unité spatiale et d’une continuité temporelle).

Il est certain que d’un autre côté, Wang Fuzhi a concevait aussi le dao-tong comme principe fondateur du monde chinois. Hayashi commente la phrase suivante tirée de *Songlun*: « avec la chute des Song, c’est l’effondrement du monde humain dans sa totalité [la civilisation wen-ming 文明], du monde humain distinct du monde animal, du monde où le dao s’est transmis et perpétué depuis l’Empereur Jaune, les empereurs Yao et Shun », en notant à juste titre que Wang Fuzhi concevait la possibilité que le dao-tong lui-même disparaisse, qu’avec lui disparaîtra aussi ce monde chinois civilisé dans sa singularité, et qu’il retourne au chaos de la barbarie et de l’animalité. A notre avis, c’est précisément pour cela qu’il

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a voulu à tout prix défendre ce monde chinois, un monde bien concret, dans toute sa singularité. C'est que pour lui ce monde-là était unique, était le monde par excellence. Et pourtant c'est aussi pour cela qu'il ne peut le sauver de la destruction. Parce que quand il parlait du passage menant de la civilisation au chaos, ou du chaos à la civilisation, en fondant sa discussion sur la distinction entre la Chine et les Barbares, il touchait du doigt le principe de la pluralité du monde; il y avait bien un autre monde hors de ce monde-ci, mais inconcevable de l'intérieur de celui-ci. Cette idée de pluralité, sans renvoyer à celle de multiplicité (en nombre) des mondes, fonctionne pour une civilisation ou un monde comme un principe fondateur. Or Wang Fuzhi, bien qu'il ait eu accès à ce savoir déstabilisateur, ou plutôt du fait même qu'il en a eu connaissance, se garde bien d'aller plus loin sur ce chemin dérangeant. Il décide de rester fidèle au principe d'une civilisation, la Chine, et de considérer ce monde-ci comme le monde (cf. Nakajima, 1998).

Pourrait-on parvenir à concevoir un autre tong, ou encore un principe directeur autre que le tong, agissant dans un monde sans tong ? Cela est sans doute une gageure. En guise de conclusion, je vous renvoie à la question de Hayashi: « serait-il impossible de supprimer ce contrôle exercé par le tong, en espérant quelque chose de vraiment inouï » ? C'est à nous tous que la question s'adresse.

Références:

II. Genealogy of Modern Philosophy in East Asia
Hu Shi (1891–1962) was strongly influenced throughout his life by the pragmatism of John Dewey. It is the latter’s “genetic method” that especially determined Hu Shi’s methodology—a methodology applied in his Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy (Volume I) [OHCP], and published in 1919. But, Hu Shi’s comprehension was somewhat different from Dewey’s. In Hu’s article “On pragmatism,” which appeared two months after OHCP, he said:

Although the idea of evolution, since Darwin, influenced all sorts of sciences, philosophy was the most conservative. In these 60 years, the idea of “evolution” in the philosophical sense remained a Hegelian one, which was different from the Darwinian conception in On the Origin of Species. But, at last, it was philosophers of pragmatism who began to apply the Darwinian idea of evolution to philosophy. They used it in every field: critique of philosophical problems; discussion of truth; inquiry into morality. As a result of the application of the idea of evolution to philosophy, the “historical attitude” (i.e., the genetic method) came into being. What is the historical attitude? It is nothing other than a consideration of how things have come into being, how they have presented themselves, and how they have changed to become what they are now. 1

For Hu Shi, who rejected the Japanese translation of pragmatism as “practicalism” [which was valid only for the thought of William James] in favor of “experimentalism” [a translation of “genetic method”] as an important element of experimentalism in so far as it considered genesis as the generation and the transformation of things.

This understanding of pragmatism of Hu Shi is not mistaken, at least regarding the inclination of the thought of John Dewey. For Dewey, the “genetic method” was an indispensable aspect of his pragmatism.

2. Dewey: the “genetic method” as a revealing “process”

John Dewey was born in 1859, the year Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* was published. 50 years later, Dewey held a conference to commemorate the publication of Darwin’s great work and said:

The influence of Darwin upon philosophy resides in his having conquered the phenomena of life for the principle of transition, and thereby freed the new logic for application to mind and morals and life. When he said of species what Galileo had said of the earth, e pur se muove, he emancipated, once for all, genetic and experimental ideas as an organon for asking questions and looking for explanations.

Dewey regarded Darwinism as a criticism of past philosophy that had comprehended the world in the light of the strong connection between arché and telos; Darwinism enabled us to consider concrete and accidental transitions that are irreducible to a causality determined by cause and end. The title of *On the Origin of Species* itself told of such an inversion. Species [eidos in Greek] had been considered “a fixed form and final cause” or “antecedent” from which “consequence” was “derived” or “deduced” teleologically. But, Darwin, by inquiring into its “origin,” deconstructed the concept of species and saved philosophy from determinism. It was necessary to look for a new historicity, i.e., a way of generation. In this regard, Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* was a revolutionary book that permitted us to think about other lineages of generation by deconstructing the concept of species.

Thus, the “genetic method” is a way of looking for a historicity other than that of fixed causality. Dewey then applied this method to the field of morality. Morality should not be founded upon transcendental principles, but must be traced rather to the specific conditions of generation.

Set apart from fixed causality, this new logic could then be capable of introducing “responsibility” into intellectual life.

In his article “The Evolutionary Method as applied to Morality” (1902), Dewey said:

The simple fact of the case is that the genetic method, whether used in experimental or historical science, does not “derive” or “deduce” a consequent from an antecedent, in the sense of resolving it, or dissolving it, into what has gone before.

It is important that the “genetic method” does not “derive” or “deduce” a consequent from an antecedent,” but rather grasps a generating process and its conditions in its concreteness.

Dewey went on:

5. Ibid: 17.
6. Ibid.
8. The genetic method, when used in historical science, is paraphrased below:

History, as viewed from the evolutionary standpoint, is not a mere collection of incidents or external changes, which something fixed (whether spiritual or physical) has passed through, but it is a process that reveals to us the conditions under which moral practices and ideas have originated. (“The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy”: 9.)

Or again, when used in experimental science, it functions as follows:

What experimentation does is to let us see into water in the process of making. Through generating water we single out the precise and sole conditions which have to be fulfilled that water may present itself as an experienced fact. If this case be typical, then the exper-
The fallacy assumes that the earlier datum has some sort of fixity and finality of its own. Even those who assert most positively that causation is a simple matter of antecedent and consequent, are still given to speaking as if the antecedent supplied the sole stamp of meaning and reality to the consequent... Indeed, the entire significance of the experimental method is that attention centres upon either antecedent or consequent simply because of interest in a process. The antecedent is of worth because it defines one term of the process of becoming; the consequent because it defines the other term. Both are strictly subordinated to the process to which they give terms, limits. 9

For Dewey, “process” took priority over antecedent and consequent. Antecedent and consequent were not strongly regulative, and furthermore were said to be “incomprehensible” 10 or “absolutely unknown.” 11

However, it seems that the “genetic method” of Dewey still remains ambiguous. To be sure, it emphasizes the generating process, but as long as it presupposes “antecedents” and “consequents” for constituting the generation of things, how does a sort of teleology not steal into it? Dewey said: “We get a more thorough and adequate experience of the antecedents, H and O, and of the consequent, water, in finding out how water is generated.” 12 But, such antecedents as “H and O” and the consequent “water” are not “absolutely unknown.” Without teleology, can one determine “a more thorough and adequate experience”? 13

3. Did Hu Shi misread Dewey?

The suspicion that teleology remains unpurged is reinforced by a so-called misreading of Dewey’s disciple Hu Shi. Two years after the 1919 article on pragmatism mentioned above, Hu Shi surprisingly rephrased the term “historical attitude” to “the ancestor-descendant method,” and reintroduced the concept of causality in its strong sense.

Dewey’s philosophical method can be generically called an “experimentalism.” I will describe it in its two aspects: as a historical method, and as an experimental method.

1 Historical method: the ancestor-descendant method

Dewey does not regard an institution or a theory in isolation, but as something in-between. That is, on the one side there is its genetic cause and on the other side there is its consequent. In other words, above it is its ancestor and below it is its descendant. Once we have a firm grasp of these two ends, the middle will not escape us. 15

Probably because “antecedent” also means “ancestor” and the “genetic” calls to mind images of generation and heredity, Hu Shi strongly translated the “genetic method” as a way of revealing familial lineage. This is clearly in variance with Dewey’s “critical motivation,” 14 which refuted a biological genealogy that falls into a closed circle. One might well say that this is a “misreading” by Hu Shi of Dewey’s historical method.

Gu Hongliang, for example, maintains that there is a difference in historical method between Hu Shi and Dewey. On the one hand, Hu Shi...
takes an external spectator position with regard to process. On the other hand, Dewey takes an internal participatory position. Thus Hu Shi inclines towards essentialism that never influences the process itself. 16

But, it is not sufficient to distinguish Hu Shi’s external historical method from Dewey’s internal one, because Hu Shi himself also carefully paid attention to the “inner process.” It was also his fundamental methodology in constituting his “History of Chinese Philosophy.” Moreover, Dewey himself seemed aware of the dangers of his own “genetic method,” which could easily lapse into a historicism.

4. The Historicity of “genesis”: Dewey’s Criticism of the “genetic method”

Before discussing Hu Shi’s “inner process,” we will cast a glance at the relationship between the “genetic method” and teleology. Dewey wrote:

Philosophically speaking, the problem with which we are confronted is the relation of the discrete and the continuous. Both of them are stubborn facts, and yet they have to meet and blend in any human association that rises above the level of brute intercourse. In order to justify continuity, historians have often resorted to a falsely named “genetic” method, wherein there is no genuine genesis, because everything is resolved into what went before. But Egyptian civilization and art were not just a preparation for Greek, nor were Greek thought and art mere reedited versions of the civilizations from which they so freely borrowed. Each culture has its own individuality and has a pattern that binds its parts together.

Nevertheless, when the art of another culture enters into attitudes that determine our experience, genuine continuity is effected. Our own experience does not thereby lose its individuality, but it takes unto itself and weds elements that expand its significance. A community and continuity that do not exist physically are created. The attempt to establish continuity by methods which resolve one set of events and one of insti-


EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION AND ART DID NOT EXIST FOR THE PURPOSE OF GREECE, AND GREEK CIVILIZATION CANNOT BE REDUCED INTO PRECEDING CIVILIZATIONS. THEY EACH HAD THEIR OWN INDIVIDUALITY. BUT, THEY WERE NOT TO BE ABANDONED IN THEIR DISCONTINUITY. THROUGH “HUMAN ASSOCIATION,” PEOPLE HAVE CREATED CONTINUITY AS A “GENUINE GENESIS.” IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THIS CONTINUITY IN DISCONTINUITIES, DEWEY SAID THAT THE “GENETIC METHOD” WAS NOT APPROPRIATE, BECAUSE “IT RESOLVES ALL INTO WHAT HAD PASSED SINCE.” HE WARNED AGAINST THE DANGERS OF THE “GENETIC METHOD” WHICH HE HAD ONCE RESORTED TO. 18 HE CONSIDERED IT TO OVER-VALUE CONTINUITY, AND TO PASS OVER THE ACCIDENTAL ELEMENT OF A MEETING WITH ANOTHER CULTURE.

However, could he avoid falling into a bad “genetic method” in the end? By dreaming of a “genetic origin” through an “expansion of experience,” he might surely have succeeded in fending off the concept of a strong “antecedent.” But, at the same time, inasmuch as he continued to desire “continuity” built over the “discontinuities” of “human society,” his position seems to have maintained a “consequent,” and retrospectively found a “process” that turned towards this “consequent” as a telos.

This sort of difficulty would not be incidental. The historicity of “genesis” is related neither to ideological tradition nor to “a mere collection of incidents or external changes.” It is, as Dewey said: “a process that reveals to us the conditions under which moral practices and ideas have originated.” That is, it retires from the plane of “fact” and constitutes “process” as the plane of condition. Therefore, one could rephrase it as transcendental history. Of course, it is not adequate to directly apply the Husserlian problem to Dewey. But, as another attempt to constitute the historicity of “genesis,” the attempt of Husserl, born in the same year as Dewey, is worth referring to across the waters of the Atlantic.

5. Historical Teleology in Dewey’s Contemporary, Husserl

At the end of the zigzag course of his phenomenological movement, Husserl turned to the problem of a “genetic phenomenology,” which was to inquire into the historicity of “transcendental subjectivity” and our world that is co-constituted with other transcendental egos. However, his genetic historicity was nothing but a historicity of ideas or inner historicity, so that he could hardly escape from a teleological stance. The result was that he founded “the concept of Europe as the historical teleology of the infinite goals of reason.” 19 Thus, he declared that “the European ‘world’ was born out of the idea of reason, i.e., out of the spirit of philosophy,” 20 while he decisively excluded the other and other cultures.

Philosophy and science would accordingly be the historical movement through which universal reason, “inborn” in humanity as such, is revealed.

This would be the case if the as yet unconcluded movement [of modern philosophy] had proved to be the entelechy, properly started on the way to pure realization, or if reason had in fact become manifest, fully conscious of itself in its own essential form, i.e., the form of a universal philosophy that grows through consistent apodictic insight, and supplies its own norms through an apodictic method. Only then could it be decided whether European humanity bears within itself an absolute idea, rather than being merely an empirical anthropological type like “China” or “India;” it could be decided whether the spectacle of the Europeanization of all other civilizations bears witness to the rule of an absolute meaning, one which is proper to the sense, rather than to a historical non-sense, of the world. 21

Husserl maintained the need to decide whether the telos was inborn in European humanity at the birth of Greek philosophy or if “this telos, then, is merely a factual, historical delusion, the accidental acquisition of merely one among many other civilizations and histories.” 22 But Husserl was never undecided. He unalteringly chose the former conclusion. To support this decision, he appealed to the inner and spiritual history of European philosophy inherited from Greek philosophy.

This we seek to discern not from the outside, from facts, as if the temporal becoming in which we ourselves have evolved were merely an external causal series. Rather, we seek to discern it from the inside. Only in this way can we, who not only have a spiritual heritage but have become what we are thoroughly and exclusively in a historical-spiritual manner, have a task that is truly our own. We obtain it not through the critique of some present or handed-down system, of some scientific or pre-scientific Weltanschauung (which might as well be Chinese, in the end), but only through a critical understanding of the total unity of history-our history. 23

Nevertheless, it would be unfair not to point out a chance of escaping from teleology in Husserlian historicity, for Husserl was clearly aware of the historicity of Urfaktum. Urfaktum is a transcendental fact that is prior to empirical fact, but in being a fact, is also prior to transcendentalsubjectivity. In short, Urfaktum is in itself the absolute difference between the empirical and the transcendental, so that it cannot be completely consumed in teleological historicity. For example, Greek philosophy was ‘not just a preparation for’ Europe. We can find other histories of succession or de-succession, even between Europe and China.

Similarly, Dewey’s genetic historicity of “process” may be said to have two faces. On the one hand, when Dewey overly stresses a created “continuity,” the “process” becomes teleologically fixed. But, on the other hand, when he makes “antecedent” and “consequent” remain “absolutely unknown” and he is aware of the otherness of matters, his concept of “process” remains open to contingency. If these two faces are inherent in the “genetic method,” an abrupt inheritor from another culture can

20. Ibid.
22. Ibid: 15.
consciously or unconsciously exploit it for a reconstitution of Chinese civilization.

6. Hu Shi at the Junction of Genealogies of Western Philosophy and Chinese Hanxue

Hu Shi did not write a Book of Philosophy or Chinese philosophy. For him, it was more important to write a “History of Chinese Philosophy.” In his OHCP, Hu Shi defined the role of the history of philosophy with three points. The first is to explicate the “線索 process (or lineage)” of thought; the second is to find the cause of differences in thought; the third is to criticize thought. Moreover he described the “系統 genealogical” picture of Chinese philosophy as a World philosophy.

At that time in China, the concepts of process (lineage) and genealogy were highly valued. For example, Cai Yuanbei, who was president of Beijing University, wrote an introduction to OHCP, in which he emphasized the importance of genealogy several times. He said that there were currently two difficulties in compiling a history of ancient Chinese philosophy. The first was the difficulty of text critique and the second was in “compiling a genealogy.” For the former, it was necessary to master the traditional Chinese science called Hanxue; for the latter, one must depend on the Western history of philosophy. Therefore, in order to write a history of ancient Chinese philosophy, one should retain the “heredity” of Hanxue, and at the same time comprehend the genealogical system of the Western history of philosophy. It was Hu Shi who satisfied these two conditions, said Cai Yuanbei. He was fit to compile a history of ancient Chinese philosophy.


4. Pragmatism and Modern Chinese Philosophy

However, or therefore, Hu Shi’s “History of Chinese Philosophy” turned away from the “genetic method” and was easily absorbed into teleology. In accounting for this “misreading” or “misunderstanding” of Dewey, Zhang Rulun mentions “evolutionary thought.” He says that “Hu Shi’s historical view was in fact based on evolutionary thought;” “strictly speaking, Hu Shi’s evolutionary historical view was in fact a historical view without any sensitivity to history;” “Hu Shi’s historical view and the modern Western historical view that Dewey devoted himself to criticizing were basically the same.” This conclusion is too strong for us to comprehend the reason for the divorce of Hu Shi from Dewey, if indeed there was such a divorce. It is certain that Hu Shi understood the meaning of the “genetic method,” and wanted to marry two different cultures. He believed that without the pragmatism of Dewey as a new philosophy there could be no marriage between Western and Chinese civilizations, and particularly between Western philosophy and Chinese Hanxue as history.

Yu Yingshi stresses “the heredity of Hanxue” in Hu Shi. He claims:

Hu Shi had a partiality for the term “history.” In this respect, his Chinese background is clearly exposed. Before he was converted to Dewey’s pragmatism, his own views on science and his inclination of thought had already been formed.

He further claims that Hu Shi’s comprehension of Dewey’s philosophy was not insufficient, but that he approached it from a Chinese background, and grasped it at the level of its basic spirit, attitude, and methodology.

This seems to be an acceptable account. But, it is not sufficient to

29. Ibid: 360.
explain how Hu Shi understood the base of pragmatism, and from what kind of “Chinese background” he approached it. It is necessary to explore the form of the marriage between Dewey and Hu Shi.

7. “Inner process” as a Teleological Genealogy

In an article called “The Process of Chinese Philosophy” (1921), Hu Shi distinguished between “outer process” and “inner process.” The former is a process in which currents of thought are produced by politico-sociological situations; the latter is “a sort of method, a philosophical method, what is called Logic in foreign countries.” He went on to add that the “outer process is nothing but change; but the inner process, even if it changes, never runs off the fixed route.” This “fixed route” goes between the two poles or two origins of Chinese philosophy, which are the revolutionary Laozi and the conservative Confucius. For Hu Shi, before Laozi and Confucius, philosophy never appeared.

Chinese philosophy did not attain “philosophy” until Laozi and Confucius appeared. It is not that there was no thought before Laozi, but there was no genealogically systematized thought.

Hu Shi defined philosophy as such by being a “genealogically” systematized thought. The thought of Laozi could become philosophy in so far as it was aware of a genealogy of thought and was systematized. This is why the philosophy of Laozi as the origin of Chinese philosophy would be carried on through the “inner process” of the history of Chinese philosophy. In other words, “philosophy” in China was settled to be equivalent to the “history of Chinese philosophy.”

At the end of this article, Hu Shi asserted:

[Philosophical] thought is to receive a precedent and to open the way for the following. It has a fixed process, therefore, it does not run here and there, and is far from having no order.

In other words, for Hu Shi, philosophical thought is but a thought including genealogically systematized thought within itself. He presupposed historicity in his definition of philosophy. That is why he borrowed the idea of historicity from Dewey and his genetic method.

30 years later, in December 1952, Hu Shi evoked the philosophy of Dewey and said:

Naturally, there are different kinds of thought: simple thought, complicated thought, fantastic thought, illogical thought, and logical thought. Professor Dewey thought that the genesis of logical thought had five steps. That was his great contribution.

Hu Shi thus restricted Dewey’s genesis to the “genesis of logical thought.” He continued:

The first step: the origin or starting point of thought. Thought does not float in the air. Fantastic thought is not thought. All true and logical thought surely has an origin, background, and starting point.

And, the last step was the following:

The fifth step: the end or the terminus of thought. It is verification… At the final place of verification, we can say that this thought results in resolving a problem. Therefore a supposition becomes truth; imagination becomes a sufficiently useful tool. This is the terminus of thought.

From the origin of logical thought to the terminus of truth the “genetic method” was limited to finding such a “fixed route” of logical thought.

35. Ibid.
37. Ibid: 520.
38. Ibid: 524.
40. Ibid.
8. Liberating the “genetic method” again

However, we cannot blame Hu Shi for “misunderstanding” Dewey. Instead, he might be said to have understood Dewey’s basic spirit and extended it in his own way toward a teleological history of philosophy. Undoubtedly his way was an exaggeration of Dewey’s thought. And, it also exposed his Chinese background, which was not only tied to the “heredity of Hanxue,” but also to a deep desire for “统 succession/unification”: “统 successional legitimacy” and “统 succession of Dao” as the ideal succession or traditions on which the foundation of science, politics, and morals are to be based. Nevertheless, we cannot forget Hu Shi’s struggle against Hanxue and the traditional use of “succession.” In fact he wrote a history of Chinese philosophy that was considerably different from Hanxue and “统 succession.”

Fortunately or unfortunately, his “History of Chinese Philosophy” as a history of logos or “inner process” is the direct descendent of a teleological Western philosophy and of the Chinese idea of succession. There is a profound complicity here far beyond “misunderstanding.” We must further explore other genealogies of the “History of Chinese Philosophy” and ways of constituting it other than genealogically or teleologically. For that, it will be necessary to liberate the “genetic method” beyond Hu Shi’s understanding and Dewey’s limitations.

References:
II. Genealogy of Modern Philosophy in East Asia


What role does a concept of history play in philosophy? This question is particularly important in Asia, where philosophy was transplanted in the modern period. When Asia confronted modern philosophy, philosophy was a universal science beyond specific histories and, at the same time, a proper science deeply rooted in the modern West. It attracted Asian modernists due to its universality representing modernity, while it urged them to invent their own proper philosophies in every country and region of Asia. Therefore, philosophy in Asia was obliged to be both more philosophical and more contra-philosophical from its beginnings. Because it needed to be more universal than modern Western philosophy in order to transcend the propriety of the latter and, at the same time, it needed to be put into parentheses to protect its own propriety other than the modern Western one. Therefore, terms like “thought 思想” or “current of thought 思潮” were often used in Asia to explain something that was similar to philosophy, but was different from philosophy.

When modernists in Asia had to take a path to pursue philosophy through their own examples, the concept of history was introduced. Philosophy was regarded as the history of philosophy or the history of thought. Nevertheless, it did not mean writing a chronology of philosophy, because such a chronological narrative could never be philosophical. The important thing was to get a philosophical historical consciousness, and to find a genealogy of this historical consciousness in history. However, this must cause complicated and difficult problems. On the one hand, to get a historical consciousness and trace its genealogy in history was an extremely modernistic approach that radically cut off the former worldview constituted upon “tradition” (i.e., succession of historical
facts). On the other hand, it was going to recover tradition at an ideal level, and it would result in contributing to a modern nationalism.

Even though it was inevitable to operate such a process of the nationalization of philosophy using the concept of history, it could not reduce all of the possibilities of philosophy in Asia. Because philosophy in Asia was a kind of transplantation from modern Western philosophy connected to universal values, it was impossible to remain a strongly nationalized philosophy. Its own historical consciousness was no more than a peculiar consciousness, so that, even unconsciously, it intuited somehow the existence of philosophy based upon another history. There must be another historical consciousness beyond its own historical consciousness.

This paper considers the process of the nationalization of philosophy using the concept of history through two Asian thinkers. One is Hu Shi (1891–1962), who wrote “History of Chinese Philosophy.” The other is Maruyama Masao (1914–1996), who wrote “History of Japanese Political Thought.” I would then like to touch on the possibility of connecting the history of the Others and returning justice to the Others, who have been outside this process of nationalization.

Historical Consciousness in Hu Shi 胡適

1. The First Philosopher in China: Laozi

When Hu Shi published Outline of History of Chinese Philosophy in 1919, he positioned Laozi at the beginning of the history of Chinese philosophy. Although many scholars criticized this, he did not renounce his opinion because this problem touched upon the essence of his understanding of Chinese philosophy and the history of Chinese philosophy.

Hu regarded Laozi as “the revolutionist Laozi.” The philosophy of Laozi was a “reaction” or a “revolution” against “the epoch of Poets.” Its central meaning lay in the political philosophy of non-action wuwei. It was a laisser-faire policy that insisted if the government did not intervene in people’s activities (especially economic activities), everything would go well (governed).

However, why Laozi? The main reason Hu chose Laozi was that he wanted to find an older tradition of philosophy than Confucianism, which had lost its vitality for a long time. This other tradition of philosophy should prove that there was a soil that conformed to the “most outstanding results of Western philosophy and natural science.” In addition, it must contribute to creating the future of Chinese Philosophy. For this purpose, Laozi was best suited, because “the revolutionist Laozi” was a revolutionary in terms not only of bringing a new paradigm into China, but also in having the potential to break the subsequent long tradition of Confucianism.

Nevertheless, in what sense was the thought of Laozi philosophy? It is because it was so conscious of history that it could systematize thought to become a paradigm. In 1921, two years after the publication of Outline of History of Chinese Philosophy, Hu gave a talk entitled “The line of Chinese Philosophy.”

We can say that Chinese philosophy did not get the term “philosophy” until Laozi and Confucius. This does not mean that there was no thought before Laozi, but it means that there was no systematized/genealogical thought.

Philosophy is nothing but “systematized/genealogical” thought. The reason why the thought of Laozi could become philosophy was that it became aware of history in the form of the “inner line,” so it could accomplish the systematization of thought. In short, when Hu wrote a history of Chinese philosophy beginning from Laozi, he regarded it as a philosophy that was conscious of its inner history.

2. Marriage Between Philosophy and History: Dai Zhen

For Hu Shi, the history of Chinese philosophy was not an external history that simply arranged philosophical thoughts chronologically; it was an internal history, which was found through a consciousness of history. In other words, to be philosophical meant to be conscious of history, so the history of Chinese philosophy was nothing but a philosophy. This was more apparent in the case of Dai Zhen, a philosopher who opposed Neo-Confucianism.

Then there appeared the great thinker Dai Zhen. Using a scholastic method of historical investigation at that time and his historical insight, he re-evaluated Neo-Confucianism over 500 years. This resulted in overthrowing the former Neo-Confucianism and building a new one. Dai Zhen built a new philosophy from his “historical insight.” Hu explained how this philosophy opposed Neo-Confucianism as a marriage between philosophy and history. If there only existed a new type of philosophy, it would not be easy for people who had been tired of philosophy to accept it. It must end in failure.

Dai Zhen built a new philosophy from his “historical insight.” Hu explained how this philosophy opposed Neo-Confucianism as a marriage between philosophy and history. If there only existed a new type of philosophy, it would not be easy for people who had been tired of philosophy to accept it. It must end in failure.

What was necessary was the historical method brought by Jingxue as a revolutionary history: “historical insight; invention of tools; inductive research; reliance upon evidence.” However, on the other hand, philosophy must go beyond history.

What we must not forget is that Jingxue [history] is, after all, different from philosophy. Scholars of Jingxue just try to find the original meaning of the classics, but philosophers do not need to be restricted by such a historical investigation. The latter have to express their own ideas independently, and build their own genealogical system. The lack of a

7. Ibid: 1004; 1006.
Contrary to the former Renaissances, which had been too unconscious to radically make a revolutionary change, the latest Renaissance in which Hu participated was a “completely conscious and intentional movement.” 12

However, why could only the latter be conscious of history? Hu said, “this element of awareness in the movement was derived from a long contact with Westerners and their civilization.” 13 “If there had been no close contact with the Western civilization, the ‘Chinese Renaissance’ would have been impossible.” 14 The Chinese people could not re-evaluate their own culture until a new standard of values was brought by Western civilization.

In short, for Hu Shi, the awareness of history was not only a consciousness of Chinese tradition, but was also connected to that which was outside China (here, Western civilization). The historical consciousness was a kind of in-between consciousness coming from what was between Chinese tradition and Western modernity. It was none other than Hu Shi, who was the most idealistic person for such an in-between historical consciousness. As Cai Yuanpei commented, only Hu could understand the genealogical systematization of the history of Western philosophy and, at the same time, had “inherited traditional Hanxue Chinese scholarship.” 15

4. In-between: Coming from Halfway

Concerning this notion of in-between, Hu Shi mentioned it in the other context of “plain language Baihua.”

Probably, the authors like us who came from halfway cannot write a genuine style of literature written in the national language. A creator of new literature must appear from our children. They come from the right way.

12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

Their first language is the national language. I believe that they must be able to avoid our defeat. 16

This was a letter that responded to criticism by Peng Haoxu. Peng had pointed out that Hu Shi had started a movement Zhengli Guogu to put Chinese original culture in the order, but, as a result of its bad influence, people turned to write a strange style of literature in an impure plain language, i.e., “half was a literary style and half was a plain language style.” Nevertheless, in his letter, Hu did not necessarily think highly of a “style written in a pure plain language.” Instead, he severely criticized the current situation in which the younger generation following the fashion of literature “was just scribbling in their own individual ways,” because they “had neither a conscious opinion, nor literary sense.” 17 In the realm of literature, Hu also requested a historical consciousness. Regarding this point, the following quote is illuminating.

The history of the novel written in plain language for the past fifty years still had a big defect in the same way as literature in plain language had for the past thousand years. That is, the adoption of plain language was still unconscious. It was neither serious nor conscious. On the contrary, “the revolution of literature” since 1917 is based upon a kind of conscious opinion. Unconscious evolution is too slow and too uneconomic. 18

In order to write an appropriate plain language, it is necessary for the writer to be conscious of history. That is why plain language in the “revolution of literature” had great success, while other attempts failed because they were unconscious. Many political movements such as Taiping Tianguo against the Qing government failed because they were neither deliberate nor intentional.

What is necessary is neither to write literature automatically in plain
produced the Guwen literary style, against which Hu Shi would fight in his whole life.

It is very interesting that in the eyes of the modernist Hu Shi, rather than traditional China, modern Japan definitively lacked a historical consciousness. He wrote the article “Movement of Modernization in China and Japan: a comparative research on cultural collision” (1939). In it, he said that the current problem was not “why the Japanese movement of modernization succeeded, while the Chinese one did not,” but it was “why China succeeded in subverting the old culture and achieving a Chinese Renaissance, while Japan could not yet abandon the solid core of old customs after 70 years of modernization.”

Referring to Emil Lederer, Hu answered this question as follows. Japanese westernization was nothing but militarization. Therefore, Japan could maintain the former institutions and traditions, which made rapid modernization possible at the first step. However, ironically, due to this, Japan could not reform its social institutions to realize democracy and liberty. In short, Japanese modernization had limitations. Unlike Japan, China accomplished the Xinhai Revolution and the “Chinese Renaissance” to radically reform society. It took time, but it finally succeeded in surpassing the modernization of Japan. Hu Shi regarded Japan as a place lacking in a historical consciousness.

5. Reinforcing Tradition or Cutting off Tradition: the Japanese Failure

However, Hu’s strategy to be conscious of history in order to expose tradition to the light of day did not necessarily succeed. In fact, conservatives welcomed it, and regarded this arrangement of original Chinese culture as the conservation of “national essence Guocui.” At a theoretical level as well, his notion of “genealogical systematization 系統” mentioned above was set apart from the “genetic method” of John Dewey, or it inherited the most dangerous aspect of the latter. That is, it came to be an “ancestor-descendant method” that stressed a familial lineage from ancestor to descendant. Through the inheritance of this familial lineage, Chinese propriety was re-appropriated. Here we again encounter a phenomenon that had been expressed in terms of “Duotong 道統.”

Although there was such a dangerousness in Hu’s historical consciousness, his modernist thinking could not be reduced fully into it. As for Duotong, Hu himself severely refused to accept it in a literal expression. We can see it in his “History of Literature written in plain language.” In this article, Hu re-evaluated Han Yu who brought a renaissance in the Tang dynasty as a pioneer of “new poetry written in plain language.” Nevertheless, because Han Yu also regarded himself as a person responsible for Duotong, he did not take the path of new poetry written in plain language. He fell into the “treacherous way” of seeking “antiquity and refinement” and the need for a “rhyme.” This evil soil

5. Historical Consciousness in Hu Shi and Maruyama Masao

II. Genealogy of Modern Philosophy in East Asia

Historical Consciousness in Maruyama Masao 丸山眞男

1. Historical Consciousness

It was difficult for another modernist Maruyama Masao to accept Hu’s diagnosis that Japan lacked a historical consciousness. As a writer of the history of national thought, Maruyama was very similar to Hu Shi. He insisted that Japan had a historical consciousness and China lacked it.

Not only in Research on the History of Japanese Political Thought written during the war, but also in Transcript of Lectures in 1948, he presented

20. As is generally known, New-Confucianists, who were the next generation after Hu Shi, have by all means been trying to restore the Chinese propriety in this Duotong.

thought to be equal to that of the modern West. But, there should be another important reason. That is, despite Maruyama’s assertion, the Japan he confronted was a place that not only lacked a historical consciousness, but also had a dominating mechanism to prevent it from being aware of history. That is why, I think, he was obliged to assert the existence of a historical consciousness against such a desperate situation.

2. To Make a Conscious Use of “Reminiscence”

Maruyama took a critical position toward “reminiscence.”

Kobayashi Hideo often expresses his idea that after all, history is nothing but reminiscences. This idea comes from his consistent attitude of refusing to accept the notion of historical development, or more precisely, a special transplantation of this idea into Japan. As long as the pattern of how to inherit the former thought in Japan or in the Japanese life of the mind is concerned, his proposition seems to touch one of the cores of the matter. Because the Japanese sequentially absorbs what is new and what is fundamentally heterogeneous, ... In other words, the past disappears from consciousness to sink into “oblivion.” Thus, it spouts out suddenly in a moment as “reminiscence.”

In Japan, while there was no conscious confrontation with foreign thoughts, new thoughts were received one after another. Accordingly, whatever they were, the thoughts were interminably “forgotten,” “smuggled and piled up” in the “tradition.” Such “jumbled thoughts,” which had been buried in the depths of “oblivion,” spout out as “reminiscences,” particularly in moments of “national or political crisis.” This is a time...

27. Ibid: 180.
when people regard this phenomenon as a “returning to a Japanese ‘original figure’ or ‘proper aspect.’” 33

Apparently, Maruyama tried to resist this amalgam of “oblivion” and “reminiscence.” In order to do so, it was necessary to “make conscious use of ‘reminiscence;’” 34 in other words, to put a historical consciousness against a-temporal or a-historical “reminiscence,” which was embodied in the discourse from Motoori Norinaga to Kobayashi Hideo. It was only the historical consciousness that could structuralize thoughts in order. This was his consistent methodology.

After getting a historical consciousness, thoughts would start a reciprocal dialogue or a real confrontation together. Then, we would be able to inherit them as a legacy. 35 Maruyama, like Hu Shi, wanted to find a foundation to criticize political power and its ideology by consciously facing history through a historical consciousness.

3. Dilemma of Maruyama

We have to recall here against what Maruyama fought. It was the National Entity, the “basis of the whole system of Ultra-Nationalism.” 36 Through this National Entity, the Japanese State occupied “substantial values such as truth, good and beauty.” 37 It could be regarded as a result of an esthetical political theology derived from Motoori Norinaga, and was well represented by Kobayashi Hideo. It was a political mechanism to esthetically and ethically control the interiority or the spirit of the people.

Nevertheless, Maruyama never got rid of nationalism itself. For Maruyama, a reform of the old social structure was sine qua non, and it must be accomplished through a democratic revolution. But, this democracy was nothing but a national democracy tied to nationalism. For the purpose of the democratic revolution, Maruyama needed to build a

“proper nationalism.”

As this quotation shows, Maruyama was convinced that there was a chance of establishing a “proper nationalism” in Meiji Japan. It was “unfortunate” that Japan failed to obtain a “synthesis of nationalism and democracy.” Therefore, Maruyama would inherit the task of Japanism from Fukuzawa Yukichi to Kuga Katsunan was so weak from the beginning that it was easily absorbed into nationalism from above with a strong power to govern. Therefore, the movement of nationalism from below was obliged to have an aspect of internationalism or cosmopolitan citizenship. We have only now got out of the long control by Ultra-nationalism. Today, we must unite the proper nationalism or the right movement for nationalism with a democratic revolution. For that purpose, while we take over the mission of Katsunan and others, we need to get rid of their insufficiency, which was halfway towards the realization of nationalism.” 38

As mentioned above, Kuga Katsunan aimed at a synthesis between nationalism and democracy in Japanism. Even though it was not thorough, I think, it must be essentially a correct perspective of the direction of modernization in Japan. A nation that exposes itself to the crisis of being colonialized or semi-colonialized because of its international inferiority or backwardness, has no option but to cut its own path in this direction. It was unfortunate that Japan failed to complete this synthesis in the past. The tendency of nationalism for the people from Fukuzawa Yukichi to Kuga Katsunan was so weak from the beginning that it was easily absorbed into nationalism from above with a strong power to govern. Therefore, the movement of nationalism from below was obliged to have an aspect of internationalism or cosmopolitan citizenship. We have only now got out of the long control by Ultra-nationalism. Today, we must unite the proper nationalism or the right movement for nationalism with a democratic revolution. For that purpose, while we take over the mission of Katsunan and others, we need to get rid of their insufficiency, which was halfway towards the realization of nationalism.”

Here, a dilemma appeared for Maruyama. In the same way as Hu Shi’s arrangement of Chinese original culture, Maruyama also took sides with what he had been supposed to restrain. In order to realize proper Japanese nationalism, he brought again a “reminiscence” that he had once refused.

A definition of a “community with a common destiny” was often used

37. Ibid: 22.
in Japan. Because we could easily find an experience to historically share the destinies of peoples everywhere. The definition [by Fukuzawa Yukichi] that "people hold a feeling of reminiscence in common, through a change in the situation of this world," which was derived from J. S. Mill's definition of nationality, is very similar to this notion of "community with a common destiny." In short, it is a community of nostalgia and one of reminiscence.

This notion of a "community with a common destiny" appeared in one of the Japanese poems composed by Professor Nambara Shigeru during the wartime.

I sincerely agree with a doctrine that the people belong to a community with a common destiny.

I also felt it right at the moment of an air raid. Bombs never avoided a pacifist. As Japanese, we were compelled to shoulder destiny. I felt that we were really in a community with a common destiny.

Maruyama's recollection clearly showed that the notions such as a “community with a common destiny,” a “community of nostalgia,” and a “community of reminiscences” deeply infiltrated even his feelings in wartime.

Ironically enough, Fukuzawa, to whom he referred here, criticized the “theory of the National Entity” based on a “community of nostalgia.” Fukuzawa said that what we must criticize most is “so-called National Learning 皇学.” It “criticized the current deeds of men as being flippant, because of their ‘obliviousness of the past.’ Meanwhile, it loudly promoted the great Cause in order to return to the past. Therefore, it followed the doctrine, while advocating the theory of the National Entity through the pursuit of past evidence. It planned to maintain the popular mind by means of this doctrine.” It appealed to “the sincere feeling of reminiscence among the people,” but it was disadvantageous politically. Because the people had not known for a long time about the existence of the Emperor, it was extremely difficult to “invent the sincere feeling of adoration for the Imperial Household anew.” On the contrary, “for the first time, we need to change the feelings of the people in order to forget the past and follow the new.” In other words, Fukuzawa did not need construct the “National Entity” as a “community of nostalgia,” but he needed to change the “feelings of the people” in order to make Japan stand independently upon a completely new principle, i.e., “Western civilization.”

Maruyama deeply understood Fukuzawa’s intentions. However, in fact, he dared to introduce a “community of reminiscences.” As he agreed, it had the danger both to bid up “Japaneseness” and to exclude other possibilities to remember history. He concluded: “it was the easiest case for Japan to define its [nationality], because race, language, and geography have been almost all the same since the epoch of Kojiki,” when those who were indifferent to the “old stratum” of historical consciousness were decisively excluded.

4. In-between: Man in “Wartime”

The people Maruyama excluded were, speaking plainly, those who came from the former Japanese colonies. They had other memories than “reminiscences” ending in “Japaneseness,” and were indifferent to the “old stratum” of historical consciousness. They could criticize not only Ultra-nationalism, but also the national democracy Maruyama was eager to develop. If Maruyama involved them into his “new nationalism,” it must become a completely artificial nationalism. At least in this artificial nationalism, he could criticize the “natural” to invent an ethico-political order and to return justice to the Others.

Moreover, it was certain that Maruyama had some opportunities to do so. Firstly, he understood the importance of the in-between standpoint of the “wartime generation” as being between prewar and postwar. He believed that only this in-betweeness could criticize the National Entity.

41. Ibid: 300.
There was a keen feeling toward the way the irreligious religion called the “National Entity” had exercised its magical force. But, this feeling has already disappeared in the pure postwar generation. Besides, it did not originally belong to the former [prewar] generation, who enjoyed “freedom of the thought” in its “magic.”

That is, the generation that can criticize the National Entity is neither the “postwar” one, which had already stood out from the National Entity after its separation from postwar Japan, nor the “prewar” generation before the separation. It is the wartime generation, which belongs to both “already” and “originally,” and has an in-between standpoint, that can only have a “keen feeling” toward the “National Entity.” This feeling is a unique condition for discussing the separation of the National Entity on August 15 in 1945 as the decisive starting point. Therefore, when Maruyama tried to construct a new nationalism by modifying the criticized “National Entity,” he assigned its possibility only to the wartime generation, even if they were an impure postwar generation. Nevertheless, those whom they had to enlighten about a new nationalism with a liberal subjectivity were the pure postwar generation. It was troublesome enough that the purer the postwar generation was, the more they were haunted by the new “postwar myth,” which was similar to the “magic of the National Entity.”

Anyway, this in-betweeness was the same as Hu Shi’s attitude toward plain language. It was nothing but a difference from before and after (prewar/postwar or literary style/plain language). Only from this subtle standpoint could people be aware of history, and have a “keen feeling” of history. If so, who most represented this in-betweeness? They were the people who came from the former Japanese colonies, who were forced to represent the wartime generation against their will. However, even though they had a “keen feeling” toward the National Entity, they were excluded institutionally and legally from postwar Japan. They were deprived of having experience of postwar Japan.

If Maruyama had taken into account the Japanese coming from the former Japanese colonies, his national democracy would have become a modern Western one as he had wished at the beginning. That is, unlike the National Entity ethico-aesthetically controlling the interiority of the people, it must be connected with a “neutral State.” In this “neutral State,” the interiority of the people is founded independently (typically by Christianity) from the State and the State’s activities consist of a purely formal legal system.

In his debut article “Logic and Mentality of Ultra-Nationalism” (1946), Maruyama argued it as follows.

As Carl Schmitt says, a distinctive feature of European modern States lies in a neutral State (Ein neutraler Staat). In other words, they take a neutral position on substantial values such as truth or morals. They leave them to other associations (e.g., church) or individual conscience. The foundation of State sovereignty is based upon a purely formal legal system that is abstracted from such substantial values. Therefore, there appeared a compromise between the rulers and the ruled, which divided their domains into form/substance, exteriority/interiority and public/private. As a result, matters of thought such as faith and morality are guaranteed as “private matters,” while public power is absorbed into the legal system with a technical character.

The national democracy, Maruyama imagined, belonged to an ideal modern State, where the “public” and the “private” were divided into two realms. On the one hand, State sovereignty consisted only of its “formal validity,” on the other hand, “freedom of subjectivity” rose independently.

### 5. “Seito 正統” as Legitimacy

Here we can find another possibility of Maruyama inventing the ethico-political order, to returning justice to the Others. Secondly, this modernist had a perspective to immediately question the foundation of State sovereignty by “Seito 正統” as political legitimacy.

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Maruyama continued to argue in the above article as follows. “Even in the case of the Prussia of Friedrich the Great, legitimacy (Legitiমা) is ultimately absorbed into legality (Legalitäم).” 46 “Legitimacy” was a key concept for criticizing the political.

Let me give another example of this problem. In his final work Reading of the Outline of Civilization Theory (1986), he argued:

According to Guizot, there exists a force, i.e., violence is the origin of all power without exception, but now power does not allow itself to be regarded as a product of violence. “From a warning of insurmountable instincts, any political form knows that violence is not entitled, might is not right. If it has no other foundation than violence, it lacks right completely.”

This idea is one of the most important melodies of European modern political thought. As you are aware, a proposition you can see at the beginning of the Rousseauian theory of social contract is that power does not engender right. That is, de facto power relationships do not engender de jure normative relationships or legal relationships. That “might does not engender right” is synonymous with that “power does not engender law”…

Guizot states his idea based on this European history of legalo-political thought. Any man of power must seek grounds for his own power, which is different from violence. These grounds are the problem of legitimacy. 47

According to Guizot, the “first characteristic feature of political legitimacy is the fact that while power denies that violence is its origin, it tries to connect itself to some moral idea or some moral power—idea of justice, right, and reason.” The result is an idea of justice. That is why there are two meanings of justice, i.e., “righteousness” and “judicature” in its origin. 48

These two quotations were picked up from a passage where he took up three important concepts Fukuzawa Yukichi used—National Entity, political legitimacy, and lineage based on blood. Among these, the second concept, “political legitimacy,” is noteworthy, because Maruyama believed that it could best express the concept of legitimacy as distinguished from ethical validity.

Here, he clarified that political legitimacy consisted of a process of establishing political power, not upon violence, but on justice. In other words, there was a possibility in Maruyama’s concept of legitimacy to interrogate violence existing at the origin of every power and State, from the perspective of justice. If so, Maruyama first had to criticize the violence in the National Entity and to return justice to those who had suffered from it. Moreover, if so, he could also attain the viewpoint of questioning not only “bad nationalism” but also nationalism in general.

Nonetheless, he did not thoroughly follow this path. He weakened his demand for justice and allowed political legitimacy to retreat. He shifted the problem of Seito from legitimacy and justice to orthodoxy. This orthodoxy was a concept guaranteed by the ideal continuity of “Dõtõ/Daotong” and had an affinity with “lineage based on blood.” As a result, this shift led to the failure of Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. 49

6. History of the Others: Asian Nationalism

Why did Maruyama pass over these opportunities? We might consider several reasons, but the most conceivable one seems to me that his historical consciousness never faced the memories of the Others.

This does not mean that he ignored the situation in Asia. Maruyama did not shut his eyes to Asia. In his article “Nationalism in Japan” (1951), he strongly stressed that Japanese postwar nationalism should have an influence on the world politics as well as Asian nationalism. 50 He never closed himself to Japanese nationalism, but he included both Asia and the world in his views.

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49. Cf. Ishida Takeshi, “Why did Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy end up being incomplete?” (1) & (2).
Far from that, it is no exaggeration to say that he put his hopes on Asian nationalism. He defined Japan’s previous nationalism ending in Ultra-nationalism as what “adhered to Imperialism,” because it did not have a “happy marriage” with democracy. By contrast, Asian nationalism, except Japanese nationalism, was highly evaluated, because “there was a consistent interior connection between nationalism and revolution.” Why did they succeed? Maruyama referred to China as a “typical pattern.”

The Chinese ruling class failed to accomplish modernization through the inner modification of the formation, so China allowed itself to be invaded by the Imperialism of the great powers including Japan for a long time. However, this forced Chinese nationalism movement against Imperialistic government radically reformed old Chinese socio-political institutions. Maruyama drew a sharp contrast between Japan and China. In Japan, the “success” of modernization brought about an adhesion of nationalism with Imperialism, and then even the counterforce did not appeal to “proper nationalism,” but was obliged to appeal to cosmopolitanism. In China, nationalism was so connected with revolution that it resulted in the reform of the old socio-political institutions. On this point, Maruyama finally agreed with Hu Shi. However, his assertion was formed on a decisive oblivion.

Japan is unique among Asian countries, because it has already lost the virginity of nationalism. While nationalism in other Far Eastern areas are filled with a youthful energy, and have internally the great chaos associated with youth, only Japan, even if not sufficiently, completed the cycle of nationalism: rise, maturity, and ruin.

Maruyama discussed his argument as if the “other Far Eastern areas” had not yet experienced any nationalism. In this narrative, he showed his longing for the “great youthful chaos” Meiji Japan surely once had. In other words, Asian nationalism was important for Maruyama as long as it repeated the Meiji Restoration. Here, he erased memories of nationalist struggles in Asian countries before 1945. Moreover, he forgot about their struggles against Japanese Ultra-nationalism. He paid sufficient attention neither to the proper history of Asian countries nor to the memory of Japanese invasion.

On the one hand, if he could have considered Asian nationalism in their own history including their connections with Japan, he should have recognized the shadow of Japanese nationalism and its negative legacy on them, but he could also find other possibilities of how to share our memories of the past together. On the other hand, if he could have considered Japanese nationalism from the standpoint of Asian nationalism, he would have found various possibilities in the chaos of Japanese postwar, even if they were neither youthful nor great.

These assumptions are just developments of his “methodology:” “If we pay attention to ambivalent possibilities of thought, we can find other possibilities that were not developed as a result. At an earlier stage, the case examined must have had an opportunity to produce another direction that was different from the actual result.”

Conclusion

Like Hu Shi and Maruyama Masao, we cannot abandon our responsibility for the inheritance of history. However, this responsibility toward history is not to re-appropriate a strong history as an inner history through awareness. Conversely, it should touch on various histories that are neither reducible to the “History of Chinese Philosophy” of Hu Shi nor to “History of Japanese Political Thought” of Maruyama Masao. When light is thrown on such histories, possible alternative thoughts would be invented. At this moment, what is necessary is to connect with

52. Ibid: 65.
53. Ibid: 64.
54. Ibid: 59.
the history of the Others. For that purpose, we have to rethink the in-betweeness once more. In the in-betweeness that is irreducible to the "national," we can share our memories together, and return justice to the Others against violence. This seems to be more urgent these days, in the face of a severe situation represented by Anti-Japan demonstrations in East Asia.

References:

Maruyama Masao (1914–96) had been regarded as one of the most influential intellectuals who contributed to so-called postwar democracy in Japan before the end of the Cold War. Since then, however, his reputation has been challenged. Some scholars started to bring to light the aspect of him as a national thinker. They criticized the limits of his concept of democracy, because it was closed within the constraints of Japanese nationalism. It seems difficult for him to evade such criticism, even if scholars of the Maruyama School strongly insist his innocence. His lifelong devotion to Fukuzawa Yukichi (a thinker in the Meiji era, advocating 脱亜入欧 [secession from Asia and entry to Europe]) is an inexcusable evidence of his preference for a “healthy nationalism.” His self-reflection on Japanese colonialism and imperialism was insufficient, therefore, he could hardly obtain an Asian perspective with which he could consider Asia’s nationalism and historical entanglements, and deal with Japanese nationalism aside from Japanism (Nihonshugi). Nevertheless, I am sure there remains something worth reconsidering in his thought, which still resists simple re-nationalization, and has a chance to “return justice to the Others.” In this paper, I try to re-read Maruyama from the viewpoint of his ambiguities.

According to Maruyama, a deconstructive way of reading is sine qua non for “Intellectual History” or “History of Thought.” “If we pay attention to the ambivalent possibilities of a thought,” Maruyama said, “we could find other possibilities that were not developed as a result. At an earlier stage, there must have been a chance to produce another direction that was different from the real result.” ¹ Let me apply this approach to

reading Maruyama’s own texts. For this re-reading, I am going to pick up some notions in the following description, but particularly focus on the concept of “正統,” to which he gave two different meanings at the same time—legitimacy and orthodoxy.

1. Historical Consciousness and Reminiscence

Newa Motomo took a critical position toward “reminiscence.”

Kobayashi Hideo often expresses his idea that after all, history is nothing but reminiscences. This idea comes from his consistent attitude of refusing to accept the idea of historical development, or more precisely, a special transplantation of this idea into Japan. As long as the pattern of how to inherit the former thought in Japan or in the Japanese life of mind is considered, his proposition seems to touch one of the cores of the matter. Because the Japanese sequentially absorbs what is new and what is fundamentally heterogeneous, without sufficiently confronting the past, a new thought gains victory over the past surprisingly quickly. This means that the past is put aside without consciously confronting the present, or the past is precipitated into the bottom of the historical memory. In other words, the past disappears from consciousness to sink into “oblivion.” Thus, it spouts out suddenly in a moment as “reminiscence.”

So-called “jumbled thoughts,” which had been buried in the depths of “oblivion,” spout out as “reminiscences” particularly in moments of “national or political crisis.” This is a time when people regard this phenomenon as a “returning to Japanese ‘original figure’ or ‘proper aspect.’” In order to resist this amalgam of “oblivion” and “reminiscences,” Maruyama appealed to a historical consciousness that could structuralize thoughts in order. In this historical consciousness, thoughts should start a reciprocal dialogue through their confrontation. Then we can inherit them as a legacy.

In other words, a historical consciousness opposes a “fact (factum)” accompanying a “feeling of reality” 實感. The latter has an affinity for “reminiscences” and “oblivion” because it excludes the dimensions of the abstract, the normative, and the historical. It is nothing less than accepting the actual Establishment as a kind of “nature” or untouchable “reality.” Maruyama calls this disposition an esthetical political theology. Now, he needs an opposite principle that enables him to open up a critical space. However, how can we introduce it in a “country without universality,” where the absolute principle, i.e., “nature” absorbs every aspect of the abstract, the normative, and the historical? He seeks this possibility of a principle through a critical heritage of traditional thoughts, then finds it in the concept of “legitimacy 正統.”

2. The National Entity 国体 and Legitimacy 正統

Maruyama closed his famous article “Logic and Mentality of Ultra-Nationalism” (1946) as follows.

In other words, a historical consciousness opposes a “fact (factum)” accompanying a “feeling of reality 實感.” The latter has an affinity for “reminiscences” and ”oblivion” because it excludes the dimensions of the abstract, the normative, and the historical. It is nothing less than accepting the actual Establishment as a kind of “nature” or untouchable “reality.” Maruyama calls this disposition an esthetical political theology. Now, he needs an opposite principle that enables him to open up a critical space. However, how can we introduce it in a “country without universality,” where the absolute principle, i.e., “nature” absorbs every aspect of the abstract, the normative, and the historical? He seeks this possibility of a principle through a critical heritage of traditional thoughts, then finds it in the concept of “legitimacy 正統.”

The National Entity was “the base of the whole system of Ultra-Nationalism.” In this National Entity the Japanese state occupied “substantial values such as truth, good, and beauty,” and “had its standard for substantial justification.” We should pay attention to the expression “substantial justification.” The National Entity was one that substantially controlled the interior—


ty and the minds of people. It was an “absolute value” having the character of “ultra.” However, or therefore, we could not define the National Entity as such, because it was a mechanism to control the interiority of people through its “insubstantiality.”

What was the main cause that allowed the emergence of the National Entity? Without any substance, the National Entity occupied a substantial justification of the Japanese State. Maruyama mentioned two causes: avoidance of confrontation with Christianity and promulgation of “Imperial Rescript on Education” (教育勅語). The former allowed a direct connection between the interiority of people and Ultra-Nationalism without any criticism from a transcendent value. The latter justified State intervention in the interiority of people through Emperor’s “Word of speech” which was beyond any positive law.

So, what did Maruyama imagine to be the opposite of the powerful mechanism of the National Entity?

As Carl Schmitt says, a distinctive feature of European modern States lies in a neutral State (Ein neutraler Staat). In other words, they take a neutral position on substantial values such as truth or morals. They leave them to other associations (e.g., church) or individual conscience. The foundation of State sovereignty is based upon a purely formal legal system that is abstracted from such substantial values… Therefore, there appeared a compromise between the ruler and the ruled, which divided their domains into form/substance, exteriority/interiority and public/private. As a result, matters of thought such as faith and morality are guaranteed as “private matters,” while public power is absorbed into the legal system with a technical character. 8

Against the National Entity, he positioned “European modern States” where the public and the private are divided: on the one hand, State sovereignty consists only in its “formal validity;” on the other hand, “freedom of subjectivity” arises independently. “Even in the case of the Prussia of the Friedrich the Great,” he said, “legitimacy (Legitimität) is ultimately absorbed into legality (Legalität).” 9 Maruyama sought to find the possibility of criticism of the National Entity through an inquiry into its legitimacy.

3. Quest for a “proper nationalism”

One year after “Logic and Mentality of Ultra-Nationalism,” he wrote the article “Kuga Katsunan: his life and thought” (1947).

As mentioned above, Kuga Katsunan aimed at a synthesis between nationalism and democracy in Japanism. Even though it was not thorough, I think, it must be essentially a correct perspective of the direction of modernization in Japan. A nation that exposes itself to the crisis of being colonialized or semi-colonialized because of its international inferiority or backwardness, has no option but to cut its own path in this direction. It was unfortunate that Japan failed to complete this synthesis in the past. The tendency of nationalism for the people from Fukuzawa Yukichi to Kuga Katsunan was so weak from the beginning that it was easily absorbed into nationalism from above with a strong power to govern. Therefore, the movement of nationalism from below was obliged to have an aspect of internationalism or cosmopolitan citizenship. We have only now got out of the long control by Ultra-nationalism. Today, we must unite the proper nationalism or the right movement for nationalism with a democratic revolution. For that purpose, while we take over the mission of Katsunan and others, we need to get rid of their insufficiency, which was halfway towards the realization of nationalism. 10

As this quotation shows, Maruyama was convinced that there was a chance of establishing a “proper nationalism” in Meiji Japan. It was “unfortunate” that it failed to obtain a “synthesis between nationalism and democracy.” “Today,” after August 15, 1945, the Japanese people could inherit the task of Japanism from Fukuzawa to Kuga.

However, was it simply an “unfortunate” incident for the people to be put under the control of Ultra-nationalism? Did the National Entity real-

Japanese political theology seemed to have captured Maruyama, although he criticized it severely. No doubt, this was caused by his precipitancy to reconstruct a new “proper nationalism,” but a “proper nationalism.”

Let us continue to read the following passage from “Kuga Katsunan.”

If you open a newspaper entitled “Japan Shinbun,” which was established by Kuga Katsunan 57 years ago, you can catch the outline of a map a of Japan with the title characters for “Japan” at the upper right side of the background. In this map there appear to be only four main islands: Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Hokkaido. Japan is now trying to start over from that period. That is, the present day urgently needs a new “Japan Shinbun” and Kuga Katsunan.

Many scholars severely criticized this paragraph. 12 “57 years ago” means the year 1890. Maruyama returned to the successes of Meiji before the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars. However, here is a decisive “oblivion” for those who are banished from the scope of the four major islands, and those who are deprived of their legal rights on them. Maruyama was reminded of the “Japanese ‘original figure,’” and forgot the existence of those who were forced to assimilate into the Japanese in Japan’s colonial territories. If he made the past confront the present in a historical and awakened consciousness, he could easily have become aware of the issues of their legal rights.

Historically and legally, those who came from colonial territories and lived in Japan were Japanese in the sense of having Japanese nationality. They were still Japanese, even after the issuing of the Imperial Ordinance on the registration of foreigners in May 1947, which regarded them as “foreigners.” They were not deprived of Japanese nationality until the San Francisco Peace Treaty in April 1952. This means that at least in 1947, when Maruyama wrote his article, many Japanese lived who were not absorbed into Japanism or the “Japanese ‘original figure’” on the four major islands of Japan.

Japanese political theology seemed to have captured Maruyama, although he criticized it severely. No doubt, this was caused by his precipitancy to reconstruct a new “proper nationalism” after the “rupture” of the National Entity. Nevertheless, what was the meaning of the break up of the National Entity? The task of interrogating the legitimacy of the National Entity was still insufficient, and the substantial values of the National Entity were still powerful at that time. Maruyama seemed to be in hurry to fill up the gap caused by the rupture of the National Entity using a new postwar democracy (à venir), which had no substantial values yet, and was ironically called an illusion.

Declaring a sharp “rupture” of the National Entity on August 15, 1945, he implemented a political strategy to drive away the conservatives who negated the rupture, and he preserved continuity from the prewar era. It was a strategy to separate “Ultra-nationalism” as an exceptional deviation from the true history of Japan, and to find somehow a foundation of “proper nationalism” in Meiji. However, as Yonetani Masashi explains, 13 it was a double-edged sword. At the same time, it was also favorable to the group (including Watsuji Tetsuro and Tsuda Sokichi) that was eager to find a true National Entity in history, and to combine it with the “Symbolical Emperor System” in postwar Japan.

So, how can Maruyama better present the rupture and continuity between the National Entity and “proper nationalism”? This is where we encounter his notion of “正統” again, but in a different sense.

4. The Other Meaning of "正統": Orthodoxy

In 1959, Maruyama agreed to publish a book entitled Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. It was apparent to Maruyama at that time that “正統” meant orthodoxy. But, he did not abandon the other meaning of “正統,” which is legitimacy. The problem lay in the ambiguity of this very notion of “正統.” Maruyama believed that he could manage this ambiguity to criticize the National Entity from the concept of legiti-

11. Ibid: 106.
12. For example, see Kan Sang-jung, “The Problem of the ‘Reason for the State’ in Maruyama Masao,” in Reading Maruyama Masao: 15.
macy, as well as to reconstruct a “proper nationalism” based on the concept of orthodoxy.

According to the reminiscences of Ishida Takeshi 石田雄, who was the leading disciple of Maruyama, and ran the society of Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy with him for more than 30 years, Maruyama planned at the beginning that he would think about the tension between the Emperor system as an orthodoxy and Marxism as heterodoxy (although it should fundamentally be paganism). However, unlike Christianity, the Emperor system and the National Entity had no bible, no creed system, and no church at their foundation. Moreover, in the postwar situation, both the Emperor System and Marxism softened their demands for orthodoxy. That is why he could not develop his own idea, and failed to publish Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. 14

It is certain that Maruyama assumed Christianity and Marxism to be possible opponents of the Emperor System and the National Entity. However, as mentioned above, Maruyama did not criticize the National Entity based on orthodoxy, but on modern nationalism. It was necessary for Maruyama to continue to compare it in several ways to the self-justification of modern nations, and to deepen his criticism from the angle of legitimacy.

Ishida said it was after 1980’s when Maruyama returned to the concept of legitimacy. Nevertheless, it was still an attempt to observe the entangled relationship between orthodoxy and legitimacy. Ishida concluded that Maruyama’s article “Yamazaki Ansai and his school” (1980) was an exceptional case, which succeeded in applying the problematic Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. However, except for this topic, the problem was extremely limited. 15

What compelled Maruyama to think about this futile problem? The answer might be that Maruyama was a national thinker, who emphasized reconstructing a new national identity rather than criticizing it from the perspective of legitimacy, as well as to return justice to Others. In answering this question, I would like to say yes and no. It is true that he wished to reconstruct a new national identity, but it was also a kind of antidote to the revival of “old nationalistic sentiments.” Besides, he paid attention to other Asian countries to some extent, even if insufficiently. We shall go back to the early 1950’s.

5. Ways to Resist the Revival of Old Nationalism

The People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, and the Korean War started in 1950. The Cold War was getting more and more severe when the policy of G.H.Q. radically changed. It required Japan to return to the international community as a member of the West. This was realized to some extent by the San Francisco Peace Treaty in the following year. Accordingly, Japan’s rearmament continued and old symbols began to be revived in this period of a reverse-course. Maruyama seriously regarded this tendency as being dangerous. He gave a warning in his article “Nationalism in Japan” (1951).

Old nationalistic feelings are being forced to flow through the bottom of society. Will they appear at the political surface again? Will they be remobilized in old imperial symbols? If it should be remobilized politically, it must follow the past reactive direction like running water in a ditch because of its structural formulation. In this sense, it has become inevitable in recent days to argue strongly against the hoisting of the rising-sun flag, revival of the Japanese national anthem, inclination to visit Shinto shrines, and a situation in which old symbols come to the fore again in national education. 16

This recent tendency of remobilizing both old nationalistic sentiments and old symbols, he believed, would not result in a simple revival of the National Entity. It would rather be connected to a “political power of a higher rank, which might be international, and be allowed to exist as long as it has a methodological usefulness for a certain political end of the latter (e.g., a world-wide strategy in the Cold War).” 17

15. Ibid (1) :18.
17. Ibid: 76.
This diagnosis led Maruyama to criticize neither the essential entanglement between nationalism and internationalism nor nationalism itself. Instead, he was led to reconstruct a “new nationalism” that “has a fresh sense of mission as attractive as the past imperial one.” For that purpose he requested that democracy ceases to be an “edifying sermon.” It will penetrate the “social structure and life-styles of the nation,” and furthermore, the “spiritual structure of the nation.” It was still a scheme that aimed to unite nationalism with democracy in the interiority or the subjectivity of the people. Therefore, even if it was different from the prewar National Entity as long as it tried to internally connect nationalism and interiority, it was still haunted by old phantoms from prewar Japan. It was unfortunate enough that the “new nationalism” would never be able to attain a strong “sense of mission.” Democracy also would never be able to reach the “ir-rationalization of democracy” in order to make democracy penetrate the interiority of the people.

On the contrary, what is necessary to resist the revival of old nationalism and its complicity with international politics is to thoroughly separate the interiority from nationalism. Moreover, it is indispensable to advance “institutional and legal reform of the State system” in order to support this separation. In other words, what was necessary was not an “ir-rationalization of democracy” that might fill up a new nationalism with hastily invented substantial values, but a radical rationalization of democracy. The latter would squarely reexamine the past, and would return justice to those who had suffered from the overwhelming power of the National Entity. It is nothing else but a process of interrogating nationalism from the viewpoint of legitimacy.

Those to whom justice should be returned are not foreigners, but the “Others,” whom Japanese Ultra-nationalism forcibly implicated in war and colonialism through every kind of violence. In particular, there included the Japanese who came from Japanese colonies as mentioned above. They are Japanese even in a legal sense. They can share a past together with so-called genuine Japanese, whom Maruyama assumed to be members of the new nationalism. Nevertheless, their way of sharing the past was different, because they do not belong to the “community of reminiscences.” They could be far from the politics of “oblivion” and “reminiscences” of the Japanese.

Even if Maruyama still believed that a new nationalism was necessary, he had to consider these other Japanese and the plurality of subjectivity. There must be an opportunity to think about other possibilities of subjectivity. It would refuse to connect the interiority of the people directly with nationalism. The most important question is how to share memories with the “Others,” and how to open the ground to ask for justice against violence even in the midst of nationalism. I am sure Maruyama could touch upon this question through his problem of legitimacy. Nevertheless, I must admit that it was nobody but he who lost it in his itinerary of thinking.

6. Trace of Legitimacy and Justice

The closing work in which Maruyama concentrated discussion on “正統” (“legitimacy”/“orthodoxy”) is Reading of “Outline of Civilization Theory” (1986). In this book, Maruyama took up the three concepts Fukuzawa Yukichi used—National Entity, political legitimacy, and lineage based on blood. Among them, the second concept of political legitimacy is noteworthy, because Maruyama believed that it could express the concept of legitimacy in a way that was most properly distinguished from orthodoxy. Then he made clear that political legitimacy consists of the process of founding political power not upon violence, but justice.

According to Guizot, there exists a force, i.e., violence is the origin of all power without exception, but now power does not allow itself to be regarded as a product of violence. “From a warning of insurmountable instincts, any political form knows that violence is not entitled, might is not right. If it has no other foundation than violence, it lacks right completely.”

This idea is one of the most important melodies of European modern political thought. As you are aware, a proposition you can see at the
beginning of the Rousseauian theory of social contract is that power does not engender right. That is, *de facto* power relationships do not engender *de jure* normative relationships or legal relationships. That “might does not engender right” is synonymous with that “power does not engender law”...

Guizot states his idea based on this European history of legal-political thought. Any man of power must seek grounds for his own power, which is different from violence. These grounds are the problem of legitimacy. 21

According to Guizot, the “first characteristic feature of political legitimacy is the fact that while power denies that violence is its origin, it tries to connect itself with some moral idea or some moral power—idea of justice, right, and reason.” The result is an idea of justice. That is why there are two meanings of justice, i.e., “righteousness” and ”judicature” in its origin. 22

These two quotations show the possibility in Maruyama’s concept of legitimacy of interrogating violence existing in the origin of every power and the State from the perspective of justice. If so, Maruyama first had to criticize the violence in the National Entity and to return justice to those who had suffered from it. Moreover, if so, he could also attain the viewpoint of questioning not only bad nationalism but also nationalism in general. Nonetheless, he did not thoroughly follow this path. In fact, he weakened his demand for justice, and allowed political legitimacy to retreat.

Strangely enough, Maruyama was going to separate the National Entity from political legitimacy in the next section.

To sum up, Caroling, who had been a subject of the French King just as the Fujiwara clan were of the Imperial Household of Japan, was gradually seizing real power. Thus, the mainstream of politics was changed; nevertheless, we cannot say that the French National Entity was changed. It is this matter that Fukuzawa wanted to say in his formulation that “change of political legitimacy/political form has nothing to do with rise and fall of the National Entity.” 23

If Maruyama could maintain his idea of political legitimacy to question the grounds of political power (National Entity) from the point of view of justice, he had to confute Fukuzawa’s formulation. However, he abruptly re-read this “政治” as “political form” or “political system,” and came to the side of Fukuzawa.

If political legitimacy has nothing to do with a change of National Entity in general, when did Maruyama think the latter would really change? At this point, he did not resort to de jure, but to de facto: once foreigners rule a country, its National Entity will be ruptured. He paraphrased Fukuzawa’s other formulation: “although there remain language and religion, if the people lose their political power to be ruled by foreigners, we define it as a rupture of the ‘National Entity.’” 24

This formulation defines: as long as the Japanese rule in Japanese territory, the National Entity is perpetuated; once foreigners rule Japanese territory, it is ruptured. According to this definition, the National Entity of Japan was ruptured by the defeat in war for a while. With accepting the Potsdam Declaration, the Emperor of Japan as a sovereign was subordinate to the power of MacArthur’s headquarters when the National Entity was ruptured. In this case, even if there is still a monarch, we cannot say that the National Entity continues. 25

Maruyama was well aware of the formidable power of the National Entity. It was next to impossible to have it ruptured only by G.H.Q. occupying Japan for a while. However, this de facto rupture of the National Entity was indispensable for Maruyama, because his “political act” necessitated a separation of the postwar from the prewar by any means in order to make a new point of departure for the Japanese people. Contrary to his expectations, there was hardly any attempt to interrogate the orthodoxy of the National Entity and the Emperor system, for the pur-

pose of making a substantial new orthodoxy at the beginning of the post-war period. There was neither a “transference of loyalty” nor a democratic revolution. Maruyama was surrounded by such the so-called “insubstantiality” of postwar democracy.

However, this cannot excuse Maruyama for his choice of a de facto rupture of the National Entity and the weakening of his pursuit of legitimacy. If you follow this path, once the Japanese people regain their power, the rupture of National Entity will be overcome. The same things will continue quietly as if there was nothing. What must be asked will disappear again in a structure of “oblivion” and “reminiscences.”

It should be necessary for legitimacy to radically interrogate the National Entity before establishing its de facto rupture. Only this de jure inquiry, I think, could open the conditions of the possibility for a “substantial new democratic nationalism” (if nationalism should still have meaning here, and it must be different from that of Maruyama’s). It would be open to a plurality of subjectivities, who would separate their interiority from the State and return justice to the “Others.”

Against Maruyama, but at the same time, in solidarity with Maruyama, we need to seek traces of legitimacy and justice, when the desire to build a “community of reminiscences” with a phantom of the National Entity is becoming rampant in Japan today.

References:

III. Flickering Shadows of China in Japanese Modernity
Taoist Culture is called a Culture of Nothingness. Nevertheless, it is still chained by Nothingness or a form of Nothingness. 1

It is not appropriate to say that Oriental Art developed in the direction of transcendence in the same way as Primitive Art. It might be better to say that it took an in-between position like Gothic, but developed in the opposite direction from Gothic. When Oriental Art is called spiritual, the meaning of the spiritual consists here. It does not find an expression of infinite life in a Gothic spire, but includes Heaven and Earth in a black tea bowl called "Kuroraku." 2

**Introduction**

Nishida Kitaro (1870–1945) insisted on distinguishing Japanese Culture from Chinese Culture. For that purpose, he needed to introduce a certain difference in Oriental Culture defined as “Culture of Nothingness” or “Thought of Nothingness.” He tried to differentiate between Japanese “Nothingness” and Chinese “Nothingness.” However, contrary to his intention, this difference seems to be reversible. In other words,

Japanese Culture or Japanese “Thought of Nothingness” he tried to define seems to be similar to the Chinese “Thought of Nothingness,” all the more in the eyes of a Sinologist.

His original intention to distinguish Japanese Culture from other cultures, including Chinese Culture, put Japanese Culture in the middle among them. This centrality of Japanese Culture made it possible to coordinate various cultures around Japanese Culture. For such a privileged in-betweeness of Japanese Culture, there have been many positive reactions. For example, Ueda Shizuteru said: “Since Nishida put himself in the ‘middle’ among various cultures, he took upon himself the task of considering a new theory throughout his life. This new theory should be constructed on a ‘still deeper basis,’ and should be applicable to both Eastern culture and Western culture in this one-world.” 3 However, this emphasis on the in-betweeness of Japanese Culture at the same time reminds us of the so-called Japanese Orientalism. We have to ask why Nishida assigned the in-betweeness to Japan, or why he raised Japan to an exemplified place at the “middle.”

It might be easier to answer the question by stating that Nishida was Japanist. But, if we forget that he opposed some kind of Japanism, and distanced himself from it, this answer would miss the importance of the question. Yet, it is difficult to save him by saying that the reason why he raised “Japan” and other Japanist concepts such as “Imperial Way” and “Japanese Spirit” consisted in the “struggle to gain the significance [of these concepts]’ against Japanese military authorities and Japanists.” 4 It was not the situation at that time, but Nishida’s philosophy itself, that made Japanese Culture and the “Japanese spirit” a “still deeper basis” in the highest instance. Contrary to the defense for Nishida, his philosophical structure led him to conceal a critical dimension of the real politics at that time. It affirmed accomplished Fact much more than was done by other Japanists.

There is also another type of discourse that defends Nishida. It tries to lower the value of what he discussed about Japanese Culture, stating that it was “just a passing episode in the course of his thought” or it was “far from purely philosophical.” 5 However, it is impossible to separate philosophy from aesthetics and politics in Nishida’s thought. He argued that he could “clarify [his] fundamental thought in relation to” aesthetics and politics, which were involved in special concrete problems such as what was the nature of artistic production. 6 Besides, the structure he tried to extract from Japanese Culture is similar to his “purely philosophical” discourse, i.e., the concept of “absolutely contradictory self-identity.”

What is necessary for us is neither to save Nishida in relation to the political situation at that time nor to protect him from criticism by saying that this is just a peripheral issue in his pure philosophy. We need to ask about the meaning and limitations of his acceleration of Japan or Japanese Culture as a philosophical question. It is not until then that we can inquire about any possibility of resisting the Japanese onto-aesthetico-ethico-political philosophy typically embodied in Nishida’s discourse.

In order to approach this question, it is inevitable to examine Chinese Culture which Nishida tried to put aside. This problem of Chinese Culture has been always neglected by favorable readings of Nishida, too. They praised his discourse on Japanese Culture as “intercivilizational” or “multi-culturalism.” 7 Nishida was never indifferent to Japanese Orientalism. Although using Chinese concepts, he ignored China. However, in Nishida’s thought, especially in his “Thought of Nothingness,” there lurks the Chinese as a negativity inconvertible to positivity or as a negativity consigned to oblivion. The Oppressed must inevitably go back again.

But, it is complicated enough that this oblivion of the Chinese is also a repetition of the “Thought of Nothingness” in Chinese Culture. We

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not only need to recapture Chinese Culture from its modern philosophical oblivion in Nishida, but we must also criticize the Chinese “Thought of Nothingness” in a way other than Nishida’s.

1. The Form of Japanese Culture: Thought of Nothingness unchained from Nothingness

At the beginning of his paper “The Forms of Culture of the Ancient times of East and West Seen from a Metaphysical Perspective” in Fundamental Problems of Philosophy: A Sequential Work (1934), Nishida expressed his purpose.

I would like to consider how different the forms of cultures of East and West are from one another on their own basis from a metaphysical standpoint. *

Then he inscribed differences among Greek Culture, Christian Culture, Indian Culture, and Chinese Culture. The former two Western cultures are “Thoughts of Being,” while Indian Culture is that which “has the deepest Thought of Nothingness as its foundations.” Because Indian Culture reaches “the extremity of negation,” it ends up inversely affirming “the existence of absolute infinity.”  

As for Chinese Culture, Nishida recognized two dimensions in it simultaneously, i.e., the Confucian Culture of “Rites” and the Taoist Culture of “Thought of Nothingness.” In Chinese Culture, there is something “similar to” Western cultures and something “closer to” Indian Culture. **But, at the same time, he distinguished it from other cultures. He insisted that Chinese Culture was “not philosophical” as the Greek one was, did not have the “idea of persona” as the Christian one did, and was “not religious” as the Indian one was.** He stressed par-

1) Based on the two dimensions of Chinese Culture, first of all, Nishida emphasized two aspects of Japanese Culture. First, Confucius “Rites” represented a moral aspect of Chinese Culture, while Japanese Culture was not moral but “emotional.”  Second, Japanese Culture is more radically founded on the basis of “Nothingness” rather than the Taoist “Thought of Nothingness.”

2) Let us paraphrase the latter aspect. Nishida said, “Taoist Culture is called a Culture of Nothingness. Nevertheless, it is still chained by Nothingness or a form of Nothingness.”  Contrary to that insufficient “Thought of Nothingness” in Taoist Culture, Japanese Culture is unchained from “Nothingness” and reaches the “absolute affirmation” beyond the negative function of “Nothingness.” By saying so, he could find the authentic figure of “Thought of Nothingness” demanding that the “absolute negation must be the absolute affirmation” in Japanese Culture.

3) Nishida proposed a concept of time to unify these two aspects,
the emotional and the radical “Nothingness.” Greek Culture and Chinese Culture are spatial and solid, while Japanese Culture is temporal and flat. 16 As far as “emotion comes out temporally,” it must always be “generative” and “developing” to produce “form without form.” 17 As for the radical “Nothingness,” Nishida insisted that the “authentic self-limitation of Nothingness as the affirmation of absolute negation must be something in infinite motion,” thus, it is necessary to introduce the “present in motion,” which never becomes spatial or static. 18 He concluded that it was Japanese Culture that embodied this temporality.

However, what did he aim to realize through this gesture to distinguish Japanese Culture from other cultures, especially from Chinese Culture? The last sentence of this paper reads: “We can learn the path along which we should truly advance only as we both deeply fathom our own depths and attain a profound understanding of other cultures.” 19 Some years later, this “path along which we should truly advance” became evident.

2. Political Philosophy of the “Imperial Way”

“Wild cherry blossoms are glowing in the morning sun.” This is a phrase from a Japanese poem on the Japanese spirit composed by Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801). Nishida referred to this phrase not only in the last part of “The Forms of Culture of the Ancient times of East and West seen from a Metaphysical Perspective” (1934), but also at the beginning of The Problem of Japanese Culture (1940). Nishida declared that the “Japanese Spirit” was “to obey the truth of things” and “to bow one’s head to the truth.” 20

Nishida distinguished Japanese Culture from other ones, and put it at a central position in this work as well. Indian Culture and Chinese Culture became “rigid and fixed” at some moment, whereas Japanese Culture was regarded as a “new creator of Oriental Culture through the assimilation of Western Culture,” because Japanese Culture could “go to things themselves without chains.” 21

What allows Japanese Culture to do so depends upon its character of “Nothingness” and in-betweeness. Here, Nishida rephrased it as a “flexible-minded Culture,” which enabled the “Japanese Spirit” “to embrace other subjects from a standpoint of the World.” 22 It is not “imperialism” which makes a “subject” when confronted with other subjects and possesses them from a standpoint of a “subject.” 23 That is, the “Japanese Spirit” Nishida wanted to defend became the “World” to embrace all subjects by virtue of negating or nihilizing subjectivity itself.

Nishida explained this structure from the concept of time again.

As I wrote once in Fundamental Problems of Philosophy: A Sequential Work, we can characterize various cultures in terms of time. I think it might be possible to arrange, relate, and unify various cultures in the structure of time. 24

Thus, Japan was privileged as a place to arrange other Cultures in its temporal structure. This acceleration was reinforced by the concept of history as well.

It seems me that the basis of our Japanese people’s thought consists of a principle of self-constitution in a historical world. 25

17. Ibid. Nishida insisted that Japanese poetry beginning from Man-yoshu (The Ten Thousand Leaves) was already “lyrical” (ibid.) and has given great importance to “emotion.” However, he neglected Chinese Poetics, of which Japanese Poetics had been continuously conscious. For example, the “Great Preface” of the Shijing reads: “poetry is a place where our intent is expressed. Intent consists in Mind. Poetry is Word where intention is expressed. Once our emotion moves in Mind, it will appear in Word.” To express “emotion” is a core discourse of Chinese Poetics.
22. Ibid: 59.
23. Ibid.
Japan is a vertical world. The Japanese spirit consists in a construction of Japanese history. However, Japan is no longer an isolated island in the Orient today. It is not a closed society any longer. It has become Japan in the world, or Japan has confronted the world. Therefore, the principle to constitute Japan should become the principle to constitute the world from now on.  

At the present moment, as far as the “horizontal world has become vertical one,” Japan has to lead other countries that are standing in a horizontal space, because Japan is a country in a “vertical world” that is able to construct history. It is Japan that can “truly unify” other countries in the world.  

But, how can we grasp such a Japanese principle in a concrete way? Nishida ultimately mentioned the “Imperial Way.”

It seems me that the Imperial Household transcends these subjectivities, and sets itself in a position in the world, determining itself as a contradictory self-identification between the subjective oneness and the individual plurality.  

There is a fact founding of the country at the basis for our national thought. There existed just a so-called historical fact. This means that we will constitute a historical world on the axis of this fact. The Imperial Household is a contradictory self-identical world, an eternal present embracing past and future, and a place from which we come and to which we go. This must be the thought that has the total support of all people.

The Imperial Way has been a principle constituting the world from which we come and to which we go.

The secret of time makes the Imperial Household a historical continuation over “thousands of years” since the founding of the country. The “Imperial Way” is the uninterrupted production of history with the “total support of all people.” Thus, the “path along which we should truly advance” is nothing but a “demonstration of the Imperial Way.”

However, we never make the “Imperial Way” “hegemonic” nor “imperialistic.” It must be a process of self-negation down to the extreme state: “everything becomes things and matters of the Imperial Household as the world (things are things that belong to a historical creative world, and matters are matters that belong to the historical creative world).”

Contradicting Nishida’s reservations, the process of self-negation in the “Imperial Way” was never innocent in comparison with hegemony and imperialism. However, we cannot find any possibility of criticism against the relevant State and the status quo in Nishida’s understanding of the “Imperial Way.” Far from that, it was totally affirmed for them as an accomplished Fact. The present State of Japan was legal and moral only because it existed factually. In “The Problem of the Reason for the State” (1941), Nishida asserted:

Politics has to be a step-by-step creation. The State forms itself legally, but the legal formation is not the State. The State should be a gathering place of all historical power.

We function morally as a creative element in a creative world. This means that we function nationally. Conversely, to function nationally means to function morally. From this standpoint, I think, we can solve the problem of the Reason for the State. […] Being and Moral are unified into one in the State.

Concerning Law, Nishida concluded with the phrase: “Law and Morals are unified into one from a standpoint which regards the subject as the
world, that is to say, from the standpoint of the State.”

To sum up, the self-negation in the “Imperial Way” is a political philosophy to unify Being, Law, and Morals in the State. This political philosophy could raise Japan and make Japan possess totality more strongly than any “imperialism.”

3. Aesthetization of Political Philosophy of the “Imperial Way”

The political philosophy of the “Imperial Way” is aesthetic, too. This is not only because it is founded on “emotion” as mentioned above, it is also because it tries to register itself in a discourse of Art.

In the same year as the publication of “The Problem of the Reason for the State,” Nishida presented a paper on aesthetics: “Artistic Creation as the Historical Formative Function” (1941). In this paper, he frequently referred to Wilhelm Worringer (1881–1965), the author of Formprobleme der Gotik (1911), and paid much attention to Worringer’s definition of Gothic as an “in-between phenomenon.” He wanted to have Oriental Art understood as still more gothic than Gothic.

If we think the Artistic Will lies in the middle between the transcendent [like Primitive Art and Oriental Art] and the immanent [like Classical Art], it should be gothic. This gothic can be seen as both internal and spiritual. However, it is not yet a third standpoint that I intend to take. In my opinion, it is still a standpoint for the objective direction, and just a grasp of the space of things.

Although Nishida put high value on the in-betweeness of Gothic, he concluded that it was still insufficient because it was just a “grasping of a space of things.” On the contrary, the Oriental Art he was trying to redefine was an Art that “took the same position of in-betweeness as Gothic, but could develop in the opposite direction from Gothic.” By “grasping a space of Mind,” Oriental Art could truly get away from itself and “set itself free in the Mind.”

Japanese Art was exemplified in this concept of Oriental Art. It was a “tea bowl of ‘Kuroraku’ to embrace Heaven and Earth” that corresponded to the Gothic spire. Otherwise, the style of Oriental Art of “making itself vanish into an absolute space” was also found in the “architecture of a tea-ceremony room.”

It seems to me that there is something flexibly minded and existent-real, which functions at the bottom of Japanese Culture. This should be able to be developed into a scientific spirit, which would never been chained to anything. We do not need to say that Japanese Art is mystic or symbolic. The essence of Japanese Art consists in grasping the world in the moment of the Absolute Present.

As the title of this paper shows, it is Japanese Art that has “the Historical Formative Function” and can “grasp the historical space as the existent-real.” That is why we point out the aesthetization of the political philosophy of the “Imperial Way.”

4. Maruyama Masao:
Resistance against Japanese aesthetico-political philosophy

How can we delimit the Japanese “Thought of Nothingness” as an aesthetico-political philosophy? Or what possibility of philosophical criticism against it can we pursue? Here, we would like to examine a radical criticism of the “National Entity” in the aesthetico-political philosophy of Maruyama Masao (1914–96).

He argued the character of Japanese Culture in this way.

38. Ibid.
41. Ibid: 298.
42. Ibid: 282.
43. Ibid: 300.
44. Ibid: 299.
The Japanese sequentially absorbs what is new and what is fundamentally heterogeneous, without sufficiently confronting the past, a new thought gains victory over the past surprisingly quickly. This means that the past is put aside without consciously confronting the present, or the past is precipitated into the bottom of the historical memory. In other words, the past disappears from consciousness to sink into “oblivion.” Thus, it spouts out suddenly in a moment as “reminiscence.”

So-called “jumbled thoughts,” which had been buried in the depths of “oblivion,” spout out as “reminiscences” particularly in moments of “national or political crisis.” This is a time when people regard this phenomenon as a “returning to Japanese ‘original figure’ or ‘proper aspect.’”

How can we resist such a Japanese Culture in its amalgam of “oblivion” and “reminiscence”?

Maruyama first raised a question to the naked “Fact (factum)” having an affinity with “reminiscence.”

In a country without universality, Kobayashi Hideo finished peeling away universal designs when he faced the absolute of Facts utterly unmoved by “interpretation” or “idea”—there is only a way of going ahead toward things (Motoori Norinaga). Even Kobayashi with his fierce individuality had no choice but to silently bow his head in front of this Fact (things).

He criticized Naturalism as represented in the lineage from Motoori Norinaga to Kobayashi Hideo. Naturalism is an aesthetico-political theology based upon Nature. Maruyama regarded this Naturalism to be a supporter of the National Entity. In the same way as Nishida’s aesthetico-political philosophy of the “Imperial Way,” by appealing to the insight into the “impermanence of things” and to “reminiscence without any distracting designs,” Naturalism connects the present Fact with History, and affirms the present-factual state as it is.

Therefore, it is necessary to find grounds to resist “reminiscence” and “Fact” in order to criticize an authoritative ideology. For that purpose, Maruyama tried to destroy the ideological aesthetics of the “Feeling of Reality” that supported “reminiscence” and “Fact” in the first place. He never stopped criticizing the “village community,” which was a place where “all ideologies are originally embraced, and people are embraced by a world of Oneness by being released from the spell of every kind of abstract theory.” And, this was the place from which the National Entity had been nourished.

Second, Maruyama stepped forward to separate History and Norm from their adhesion with Being. That is, he tried to make Historicity and Normativity irreducible to the “Natural” by appealing to the artificiality of the “Natural.” At this stage, he attempted to introduce Historical Consciousness as another Historicity, and Legitimacy as another ethico-legal Normativity, which would be opposed to the lineage of Naturalism since Norinaga, via Nishida, up to Kobayashi. However, Maruyama could not effectively overcome the Japanese aesthetico-political philosophy. As for Legitimacy, he made it slip away from legality, and saw justice as a positive foundation of the power of orthodoxy as a support for a particular dogma. He abandoned the critical tool of the National Entity.

As for Historical Consciousness, like Nishida, Maruyama also privileged Japan over China. In his early days, he said that China was “a-historical,” while Japan had a “mature Historical Consciousness,” therefore, Japan could have Political thought. A similar scene was


Kobayashi here referred to Norinaga and admired the beauty of Historical Fact: “only a thing that rejects any interpretation and is immobile is beautiful. This is the strongest thought of Norinaga” (Ibid: 18–19).

50. Ibid: 46.
51. Ibid.
53. You can see the details of the process of this resistance in an article by Nakajima Takahiro, “Memory and Legitimacy: Law, Violence and History in Maruyama Masao,” in the Journal of the Humanities, No. 86, Yonsei University, 2004.
repeated in his last days. In “The ‘Old Stratum’ of Historical Consciousness” (1972), Maruyama willingly discussed a Japanese “old stratum” characterized as “Eternity in the genealogical succession.” He could not constitute Historical Consciousness on a Universal dimension.

We cannot but approve the mighty potential of the “flexible-minded” ness of the Japanese aesthetico-political philosophy. It absorbed even a severe critic such as Maruyama. But what was the reason for this absorption? We cannot help recognizing in it a program of separation of China from Japan. Even Maruyama could not escape from the program to arbitrarily make the negative aspect of Japan impose on the Chinese. The distinction between positive Japan and negative China would result in a re-affirmation of Japan.

Yet, the characteristics included in the “form of Japanese Culture” (like “Thought of Nothingness” and “Emotion” or “Historical Consciousness” and “Legitimacy”) are also easily found in Chinese Culture as a matter of fact. Moreover, we can even find in Chinese Culture a program to affirm itself by appealing to the concept of “History,” and by distinguishing one’s own culture from other cultures.

If so, we must retrace this Chinese genealogy, which has been consigned to oblivion. And, then we need to arrange it horizontally by the side of Japanese aesthetico-political philosophy in order to resist the latter. This arrangement itself could help to stop the program of Self-affirmation. In doing so, we would like to open up the other possibilities of philosophy that never go to the programmed end.

56. Here, we can refer to the Han Yu in Tang dynasty. He asserted “Guwen” literature based on one’s spontaneity, which has been carrying a “Chinese ancient way” in it. And, by appealing to this old but ever lasting literature, he distinguished “China” from Buddhism. Cf Nakajima Takahiro, “Delimitation of the Spontaneity for a Deconstruction of Neo-Confucianism,” in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, No. 9, the Society for Chinese Philosophy in the University of Tokyo, 1995.

Let us return to Nishida’s “Thought of Nothingness” once again. By exemplifying Japanese Culture as the extreme embodiment of the “Thought of Nothingness,” Nishida created a basis for his Japanese esthetico-political philosophy. In contrast to Chinese Culture (Taoist Culture in particular), which is “still chained by Nothingness” or a “form of Nothingness,” Japanese Culture is unchained from “Nothingness.” In other words, beyond the negative function of “Nothingness,” Japanese Culture reaches the “absolute affirmation” and accepts the whole reality. However, if we argue from the standpoint of Chinese Culture, the scene of “Thought of Nothingness” to wholly affirm reality had already been seen in the China of the Six Dynasties.

When we retrace the genealogy of “Nothingness” in Chinese Culture, it is worth noting the modern philosophization of the concept of “Nothingness.” The concept of “Nothingness” was excessively registered in modern metaphysical discourses both in Japan and China. If we simply retrace its genealogy, we cannot help but find a duplicate of the modern concept of “Nothingness” in traditional Chinese Culture. Thus, it is necessary for us to re-read Chinese texts, while paying attention to how they have been read in the modern philosophical discourse.

The first clue to retracing the genealogy of “Nothingness” is the ancient Taoist text called the Laozi Daode Jing. Nishida himself referred to this text: “It seems me that the so-called ‘Tao’ is apparently a Thought of Nothingness in Taoist teaching like the Laozi and the Zhuangzi.” He cited several chapters (1, 18, 14, 16, 2, 20, and 25) from the Laozi one after another. But, there is no passage that clearly defines Tao as “Nothingness” in the chapters cited. For example, Chapter 1 begins: “Tao that we can regard as Tao is not a constant Tao. The Name that we can regard as a Name is not a constant Name. Nameless is the beginning of Heaven and Earth. Name is the mother of Myriad things.” In short, this chapter shows that “Tao” is not “Nothingness” but “Namelessness.”

Again, in chapter 14, “Tao” is treated as “Shapeless” or “Formless.” As far as Nishida’s citations can prove, “Tao” has the meaning of “Formless” at most.

According to Horiike Nobuo, who is an excellent scholar in the philosophical reading of Chinese Culture, to comprehend “Nothingness” as “Formless” is “the limit of Taoist thinking at the end of Han.” Beyond this limit, one who could grasp “Nothingness” (beyond a binary opposition between Being and non-Being) as the entire ‘Nothingness,’ as the absolute ‘Nothingness’ and as the existence of nothing absolutely was Wang Bi (226–49) in the Wei dynasty. In order to prove this proposition, Horiike refers to Wang Bi’s commentary on Chapter 1 in the Laozi: “Every Being begins with Nothingness. That is, the moment before forming or the Nameless is the beginning of a Myriad of things.” It is in this part, he suggests, where Wang Bi found “Metaphysical ‘Nothingness’” in the Laozi. On the basis of this interpretation, Wang Bi could set up other concepts such as “Tao,” “Profundity,” “Depth,” and “Bigness” as sub-categories of “Nothingness” or as limitations on “Nothingness.” Thus, Wang Bi should have been successful in explaining the generation of “Being” coherently.

This reading by Horiike might be the most refined philosophical explanation of the metaphysical acceleration of “Nothingness” in Chinese Culture. However, Wang Bi’s “Absolute ‘Nothingness’” would be still “chained to Nothingness” as long as we keep following Nishida’s diagnosis. Nishida thought that the “absolute negation is nothing but the absolute affirmation.” Unless the “Thought of Nothingness” affirms “Being,” the metaphysics of “Nothingness” would not have been completed.

We need to take notice of the above philosophical explanations. As for Wang Bi’s commentary, the first half of his commentary on Chapter 1 is just a citation from the very text of the Laozi, Chapter 40. That is, this part does not show Wang Bi’s originality. Once we read his whole commentary on Chapter 1, we easily understand that Wang Bi interpreted “Nameless” in the text as “Shapeless” or “Before forming,” not as “metaphysical ‘Nothingness.’” This is reinforced by his commentary on Chapter 40, where he disposed of binary opposition: “High and Low,” “Noble and Humble;” “Being and Non-Being,” “Nothingness” was interpreted as “Non-Being,” which contributed to “make Being complete.” In sum, even Wang Bi never positioned “Nothingness” as “metaphysical ‘Nothingness.’” He comprehended “Nothingness” as “Non-Being” to benefit “Being.”

This must be a strange scene both for Nishida and for Horiike. As long as the aim of “Taoist Culture” consists in benefiting “Being” by supporting “Nothingness” as “Non-Being,” this becomes closer to the Japanese Culture idealized by Nishida. More surprisingly, Nishida’s ideal world had already been realized in the other text on “Taoist Culture” at the ultimate figure. It is time to go to the second clue of retracing the genealogy of “Nothingness.”

6. Genealogy of Nothingness (2): the Zhuangzi and Guo Xiang’s Commentary

Guo Xiang (ca. 252–312) in the West Jin dynasty was praised as “Wang Bi’s Equal.” He is famous for his commentary on the Zhuangzi. According to Horiike, the character of his thought is the “total exclusion of any metaphysical ground or the Supreme in his Ontology.” Horiike continues that he negates even Wang Bi’s “Nothingness” as the metaphysical ground and asserts “Being” itself as having its own ground. That is, everything “varies by itself,” “acquires itself,” and “generates by itself.” This is the ultimate scene of “Nothingness,” where “Nothingness” negates itself and affirms “Being” absolutely. It is the same ideal Nishida wanted to find in Japanese Culture.

Moreover, Guo Xiang’s “Ontology of ‘Nature,’” as Horiike analyses it, is inclined to demand the “Negation of the Mind” of the Sage. For it is not until “he negates his mind, devotes himself to ‘Nature’ and corre-

sponds to every variation of Being” that he can neither “acquire ‘true teaching’ nor comprehend ‘Nothingness.’” 65 This “Nothingness” is not “Nothingness” as Ontological ground, but “the ultimate accomplishment, and the realization of ‘Nature.’” 64 At this ultimate stage, everything is confirmed as it is through a “Negation of the Mind.”

If we accept Horiike’s reading, the ideal world of Nishida had already been realized in Guo Xiang’s thoughts. However, we should pay more attention to the status of “Nothingness” in Guo Xiang.

Contrary to Wang Bi, who used “Nothingness” as a contributor for “Being,” Guo Xiang separated “Being” from “Nothingness,” and founded “Being” on “Being” itself without “Nothingness.”

As far as Nothingness is already negated, it cannot engender Being. As far as Being is not yet engendered, it cannot engender something else. So who produces things? Things spontaneously engender themselves. [...] there is no place where things come out of. 65

Nothingness cannot engender things. 66

There is no Nothingness after all, while Being comes out spontaneously and abruptly. 67

These citations show that Guo Xiang did not negate “Nothingness” at the ultimate metaphysicalization of “Nothingness,” but affirmed “Being” as “Nature” without “Nothingness.”

But, what was the concrete meaning of this self-affirmation of “Being” as “Nature”? If we retrace the genealogy of “Nature” before Guo Xiang, Ji Kang (223–62) in the Wei dynasty gave it a radical meaning. By saying “to devote oneself to Nature beyond a ‘ritual system’” (Ji Kang, “The Abandonment of Ego”), he negated the present ‘ritual system’ based on Confucius’ “Rites” and “Human Virtue.” He also tried to devote himself to “Nature” beyond/before that system. However, surprisingly enough, Guo Xiang reaffirmed that system as “Nature.”

As far as Human Virtue and Righteousness belong to human emotional nature, everything goes well if we devote ourselves to them. 68

In other words, he absolutely affirmed the Confucian system represented in “Human Virtue and Righteous,” which had been criticized by the Taoist school.

Thus, Guo Xiang’s thought lost the possibility of criticizing the existing state (the status quo) for its lack of “Nothingness.” This was a consequence of “Taoist Culture” that was unchained from “Nothingness.” The consequence should have been repeated in Nishida as well. Even though Nishida negated “Nothingness” after the metaphysicalization of it, what he affirmed in the “absolute affirmation” of “Being” was “Nature” based on “human emotional nature.” Ironically enough, the Chinese “Thought of Nothingness” was restored in the philosophy of Nishida in a modern design.

**Conclusion**

By distinguishing Japanese Culture from Chinese Culture, Nishida insisted on making Japanese Culture re-appropriate the essence of “Thought of Nothingness,” which ended up in the self-negation and the absolute affirmation of the present Fact. But, once we retrace the genealogy of “Nothingness,” we can find that this way was already registered in the inheritance of Chinese Culture. However, Nishida forgot this Chinese inheritance, while he tried to accelerate Japan up into the privileged place of “Nothingness.” This logic was no less than Japanese Orientalism to centralize Japan through the oblivion of China. Even if Nishida took a critical stance against both the “subjectification” of Japan and “hegemonization” or against “imperialization” of the “Japanese spirit,” what is at stake is his gesture to set China at a peripheral position, and to

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63. Ibid: 597.
64. Ibid.
65. Guo Xiang, Commentary on the Zhuangzi Jiulun.
66. Guo Xiang, Commentary on the Zhuangzi Tiandi.
67. Guo Xiang, Commentary on the Zhuangzi Gengsangchu.
68. Guo Xiang, Commentary on the Zhuangzi Pianmu.
set Japan in the privileged place of “Nothingness.” Besides, this concept of “Nothingness” let Nishida lose the possibility of asking a metaphysical (i.e., anti-natural) question critically to the accomplished Fact in Japan.

If we imagine the resistance against Japanese onto-aesthetico-ethico-political philosophy, we have to pursue Historicity and Normativity once again in the same way as Maruyama, but without repeating his setback. For that, before we hasten to build up the ultimate instance of Japanese Culture, we need to re-read Chinese Culture and its inheritance through a genealogical eye other than Japanese Orientalism. If we neglect to do so again, we will be compelled to stay in the closure of Nishida’s problematic.

We would like to understand the conclusion drawn by Nishida in a way other than Nishida’s: “We can learn the path along which we should truly advance only as we both deeply fathom our own depths and attain a profound understanding of other cultures.”

References:

Abstract

The concept of “Bioethics” has been recently created to provide an authoritative guarantee to explosively advanced biotechnology. It is no more than a normative system of evaluating biotechnology on a socio-politico-economic basis. While appealing to the universal, it also caters to particulars in a given culture, thereby making itself all the more acceptable.

Bioethical discourses in Japan often allude to Japanese tradition and Buddhism as part of the country’s culture. Here, I first discuss how Japanese scholars use Buddhism in connection with Bioethics, together with the limits of their theses. Especially I have focused on Umerhara Takeshi, a then leading figure of the Prime Minister's Special Committee on Brain Death and Organ Transplantation. I have also considered some Buddhist scholars who contributed articles to The Problem of Brain Death and Transplantation and Bioethics by the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies (published in 1990). These scholars combine ethical terms such as “moralization” and “self-determination” with Buddhist discourses.

The second part of the paper is concerned with counter-arguments within Buddhism itself to Buddhist bioethical arguments. These opponents endeavor to find other possibilities in Buddhism in response to the current state of affairs on death.

Finally, with reference to ancient Buddhist discourses in China, I suggest a few notional possibilities for the Buddhist discourse on current problems of death. I derive the “ethical” other than “moralization” and
the “attitude towards the dead” other than “self-determination,” based on the paleonomy of *upa-visthā* in Sanskrit.

**Introduction**

Not a few Buddhists have discussed bioethical issues in terms of Buddhist philosophy. They use more or less similar references and the framework in which they construct their arguments is almost standardized.¹ Scholars have questioned such Buddhist responses to bioethical problematics. Some asked how one could define a single Buddhist point of view. Others wondered if such a Buddhist point of view might not be an effective way of dealing with current Bioethical issues after all.² Instead of considering Bioethics in terms of Buddhist viewpoints, I will propose to analyze the configuration of Buddhist discourses on Bioethics. This will enable us to question anew the way in which bioethical problems are recognized as such and to find a radically different relationship between Bioethics and Buddhism. In so doing, it is necessary to grasp the possibility of putting a radical question to Buddhism—a possibility that none of the current Buddhist discourses have discussed.

Taking a strategic detour, I will introduce two old debates in China: “*Shen mie bumie lun*” during the Six Dynasties and a debate on the prohibition of hunting and fishing during the Ming Dynasty. The first debate, “*Shen mie bumie lun*,” was concerned with the disappearance of spirit upon the annihilation of a body and especially focused on the definition of death and dead bodies. The second debate took place between Buddhists and Christian missionaries during the reign of the Mings. It raised the issue of whether or not it was possible to prohibit eating animals, apparently a natural practice. This further gave rise to the question of how to distinguish humans from animals.

**Buddhism and Bioethics**

1. **Nature and Morality**

Bioethics is a recent concept. It is an institutional as well as regulatory system imposed on biotechnology that developed explosively in the late 20th century.³ It is therefore only a normative and evaluative system, taking into account social, political and economic concerns. Rather than appealing to the integrity and Morality of medical doctors and engineers who utilize biotechnology, Bioethics thus emphasizes the establishment of guidelines for adequate biotechnological procedures. It is, in other words, a discipline providing ethical endorsement to biotechnology. If such a bioethical guideline includes both universal and culture-specific principles, it can provide more reliable and stronger criteria.⁴

When Buddhism or “Japanese Culture” is called forth in the context of Bioethics, it often ends up offering moral support to guidelines formed for medical doctors and engineers. It can hardly be used to condemn the monstrous nature of biotechnology or to radically refute “ethics” that Bioethics advocates. On the contrary, Buddhist or culturally endorsed bioethical discourse can in fact preclude a critical glance at Buddhism or Japanese Culture itself. It puts aside other innate possibilities of Buddhism or Japanese tradition. It may even dull our imagination for other cultures.⁵

As an example of this, let us consider Umehara Takeshi’s discussion. The issues of brain death and organ transplants provided an impetus for

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² As for the difficulty to define univocally the Buddhist viewpoint, see Keown 1995. As for the difficulty to argue Bioethical Problematics from a Buddhist viewpoint, see Nagata 1996.
³ Hayashi 2002: 254ff.
⁴ Kagawa 2000: 214ff.
⁵ Deguchi 2001: 161ff.
the birth of Bioethics in Japan. Umehara served as a member of the Prime Minister’s Special Investigative Committee on Brain Death and Organ Transplantation (1990–92). He advanced an overtly Buddhist pattern of discourse and played a regulative role for the enactment of the Law of Organ Transplantation (1997).

According to Umehara, Japanese judgment in particular neither recognizes brain death as death nor positively promotes organ transplantation. This Japan-specific or non-Western judgment has been informed by both Shintoism and Buddhism. Shintoism does not distinguish humans from plants and animals, all of which are purported to live in co-existence with Nature. Buddhism is a doctrine of equality as well as altruism. Japanese judgment, therefore, is a moral judgment based on the “Japanese sensibilities respecting Nature.” Umehara has come to the following conclusion: “I am worried that those who recognize brain death as death and promote organ transplantation do not have an idea of being in awe of Life.”

The point of Umehara’s argument lies in “Nature” and “Morality.” Umehara has disapproved of criteria for brain death in view of a concept of Nature that does not regard brain death as natural death. If this is the case, it should logically lead to determined opposition to organ transplantation. To our great surprise, however, Umehara has endorsed it by appealing to Morality: “provided that those who accept brain death as death and promote organ transplantation are fully in awe of Life, we could go ahead with organ transplantation from brain death.”

Such Morality pertains not only to promoters of brain death and doctors but also to donors. Given a donor’s strong will, an organ transplant can proceed, for this is counted as Buddhist bodhisattva practice.” It is finally approved when his family members consent and the doctor’s moral integrity is assured. In short, Umehara’s argument has served as a bioethical guideline. One should not, however, ignore problems inherent in Nature as in “Japanese respecting Nature” and organ transplants supported by altruistic Morality in Buddhism and doctors’ moral integrity.

Nature is no more than a concept constituted from a certain ideological standpoint. Umehara has famously mentioned that “Japanese sensibilities respecting Nature” have received almost everything from abroad, except eunuchs and bounded feet in China. Neither have they tolerated “homosexuality, drugs, and vices in the modern West.” Nature here seems to be a strong self-universalizing foundation that renders specific values into the natural and the absolute.

Yet Socratic “logical coherence” will not permit the co-extensiveness of “Nature” and “unnatural [so it seems in every respect] organ donation.” The key to this apparent paradox lies in Morality.

2. Offering One’s Body

In order to justify donors’ self-immolation, Buddhist scholars often adduce the episode of Mahatma offering his own body to a tiger. This episode is found in a Buddhist sutra called Suvarna prabhasa. When Buddha was still Mahatma, he did bodhisattva practice. He offered his own body to a mother tiger, which was so hungry that it was about to eat its own child. Its archetypal form can be reduced to an offering of one’s own body to whatever or whoever wants to eat flesh; more simply put, it speaks of the fact that human beings eat animals and vice versa. If we try to find a trace of Morality here, it could be a pure self-offering as a simple altruistic act. In Buddhistic terms, however, the self-offering is re-interpreted, according to the logic of self-sacrifice that takes advantage of imminent crisis brought out by the drama of self-mutilation, as survival after death. The tiger episode is a story narrated from the afterlife where one’s survival is guaranteed. The self-offering is no longer pure as it is utilized by one’s desire to survive death—a desire to cleave to life obstinately. It has been transformed into the Morality of self-sacrifice.

Similar logic applies to organ transplantation. Should there be any organ transplantation as a pure self-offering, it must be donation free.

from any desire to survive after death. In actuality, however, it is only an offering desirous of survival beyond death mediated by the concept of a “relay of life.” It merely recounts the logic of self-sacrifice that non-donors would repeatedly narrate.

Furthermore, pure donation ought to be available to anyone, free from any interest, be it personal or financial. Organ transplants, however, can only take place at the forefront of contemporary medicine where every possible assumption is taken into account and no disinterested party is involved, though donation itself is carried out anonymously and impartially with due respect to those concerned. Nevertheless, Buddhist discourses attempt to moralize to those concerned. For example, they often draw on tri-mandala-parisuddhi as a condition of donation. This commands that the donor, the recipient and the offering each be free from any attachments. Being free from any attachments, which itself is commendable, can be easily abused to identify those who cannot break with their own attachments or obsession.

If the donor (the offerer) gives his organ (an offering) out of pure kindness of heart, but if the recipient (the offeree) has the slightest desire for the other’s death for his own survival, the donation shall be deemed unhallowed. In terms of the Buddhist doctrine that recommends freedom from any attachments, the donation is regarded as an unhallowed act and no offering takes place.  

The recipient must be as morally strong as the donor. Once he “becomes aware that life is in a circle of ‘giving life to others and receiving life from others’, the barrier between the donor and the recipient will collapse.” That is to say, when the recipient does not take an “arrogant attitude towards the donor, taking a gift of organs for granted,” an “ideal tri-structure [the donor, the recipient and the doctor] tied by Faith” will supervene. Buddhist discourses thus request not only the doctor and the donor but also the recipient to uphold Morality and Faith.

What Faith is requested of the one who is in an extreme situation of suffering from his illness and must wait for someone’s brain death? Given public knowledge that only organ transplantation can save his life, he would naturally wish to have an organ transplanted and could be morally correct by all means. This already gives rise to the problem of calculation at the nucleus of self-interest. To say the least, demanding the recipient’s personal Morality in a critical condition is not ethical. This also applies to the donor. It is morally questionable to discuss organ donation in the moralistic tale of self-sacrifice. Organ donation is a problem that advanced technology has generated and should therefore not be replaced by the issue of the personal Morality of those concerned. Buddhist discourse, however, links up with the concept of self-determination and continues to develop its stronger view of Bioethics.

3. Self-determination

According to Umehara, organ donation must be stated in the form of a living will if it is to be designated as Bodhisattva practice. If it is a genuinely pure offering, it will be carried out most secretly, renouncing any possibility for survival beyond death. (Incidentally, did Mahatma state in his will that he would “offer his own body to the mother tiger”?) Stating formally and officially that I will offer my organs to somebody, therefore, cannot fall within the category of pure offerings. Furthermore, the site of organ donation is governed by advanced medical technology, leaving little room for pure donation. Organ donation cannot constitute itself as the problem of donation or religious offerings. Nevertheless, it successfully simulates a self-offering, thanks to the apparatus of the living will.

The living will in bioethical terms is the expression of self-determination to dispose of one’s own body by way of the testamentary disposition of immovable or movable properties. It has raised a number of fundamental questions as to, for example, the identification of one’s body with personal properties or the dubious nature of self-determination.  

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15. Concerning possession of body, see Washida 1998.  

Komatsu Yoshihiko has been criticizing minutely the concept of “self-determination” [Komatsu 1996]. Still, we must note that the meaning of “self-determination” differs accord-
these and other questions notwithstanding, in order to maintain the concept of the living will at all, the donor needs to be sufficiently informed before he gives consent to donating his own organ and must be in such a condition as to be able to determine his own death. 16 Who can on earth accept a brain death brought forth by science technology as “his own death”? Who can ever decide to give somebody else his own body already defined as a “dead body”? Medical doctors, perhaps. They apparently satisfy these conditions and moreover monopolize medical knowledge. (This is also relevant to the question of medical ethics.) They can even create an ideal situation in which they become members of a “Bodhisattva Association,” as opposed to an association of donors, to make their own organs available to the public. 17

Evidently, doctors would not become donors as they can professionally exercise the right of self-determination. Who, then, are most likely to be forced to do so on moralistic grounds? Recipients and their family members. In a number of texts including Buddhist discourses, they are requested to courteously receive donors’ self-sacrificial offerings while almost condemned to criticism that they look forward to others’ deaths. What is most disconcerting here is that such moral expectation towards the recipient can be readily transposed to the donor as well. Here is the logic. I am waiting for other’s death. When I brush with death, I therefore must offer my body to those who are waiting for others’ deaths; I am moreover well informed of my physical condition and hence can have no objection to self-sacrifice. Ironically enough, the recipient can satisfy more conditions for exercising the power of the living will than the donor. If he is put under tangible and intangible pressure of the logic, he can be hard-pressed to refuse self-sacrifice through self-determination. 18

Let us look at Buddhist discourses again. Nakano Tozen has played an important part in establishing a framework for dialogue between Buddhism and Bioethics. He has mentioned that the organ offering is considered, for both the donor and the recipient, as a practice of anatta (devoid of self) to reach nirvana (liberation). 19 He has reached the following conclusion: “It might be Buddhistic wisdom to offer an organ as a practice of gratitude and mindlessness and to intuit realistically brain death.” 20 This also seeks to moralize or religiousize the donor’s and the recipient’s attitudes towards death. Nakano has further related this to the living will and self-determination. 21 He of course has explained how self-determinism emerged within the context of Bioethics and also criticized “religious self-determination” that “is left to religious truth.” He however positively admits “self-determination under the principle of individual freedom” or “self-determination to realize what is truly good.” The focus of Nakano’s discussion thus shifts to “surrogate determination” by the donor’s family members. He even lists some conditions that enable “surrogate determination” to become the “affectionate supposition of the will.” He offers an example of “self-determination” by the parents of an anencephalic child. The parents can take either of the following “self-determined” attitudes: “let nature take its course” or “let us offer our child’s organs to others.” While Nakano does not mention which is more desirable, he registers the possibility of the parents’ offering organs of their child who has “no faculty of decision-making” through their “self-determination.” He is considerate enough to give the following advice: “if you offer [the child’s organs] with affection and wisdom, you will never suffer from the sense of guilt.” 22 “Self-determination” can thus be extended to “surrogate determination.”

4. Buddhist Counter-Discourses

As we have seen above, some of the Buddhist discourses in Japan accept organ transplantation as a religious offering under the conditions that those concerned are morally correct and can determine by themselves. However, there are Buddhist counter-discourses.

22. Ibid: 207.

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16. Concerning the right to hold off on “self-determination” and the obligation of disclosing information, see Ikeda 2000.
18. There is an example of being forced to offer the body when a recipient was dead. See Fukuda 1992: 332.
Yamaori Tetsuo for instance has critically remarked that it is opportunistic to draw on the episode of “offering one’s body to a tiger.” This episode cannot be reduced to the humanistic idea of self-sacrifice or “religious humanism” called offerings. It is intended to caution those who kill and eat animals against the relentless possibilities of being killed and eaten up by animals.

Never make so beautiful a story out of organ “offerings,” without approving the fate of being eaten up by animals. We had better stop preaching the Morality of brain death and organ transplantation while exempting ourselves from the food chain. 23

Yamaori here finds the radical idea of equality and mortality in Buddhism, although he still maintains a humanistic “manner of death.” Buddhist mortality states that “human beings die like stones, dogs and cats” and this can even be applied to the “site of medical transplantation” in which “typically, the transplantation of animal organs is no different from that of human organs.” 24

It can hardly seem right to revive a “manner of death which is left only to human death” 25 as recommended by Yamaori; this would avoid Buddhist radicalism only to let humanism under attack return. What is required is to reconsider the “manner of death” as something open to everything and everybody, so that we can follow through the logic of the non-use of dead bodies in order to serve the dead (humans and animals alike) as the dead.

On the other hand, retracing Buddhist compassion/benevolence, Ogawa Ichijo has stated that it is not man but Buddha who does an act of compassion. 26 He has denied compassion in “Bodhisattva practice”:

Offering one’s organs to others might come out of good will, which is not however considered as compassion. The Jataka story does not suggest compassion through which the truth of life becomes known. It is just a fable recounting a good deed of saving someone’s life or animal’s. […] Needless to say, all who have offered their organs cannot be Buddhas in the afterworld. The Jataka story, therefore, cannot be deployed to suggest that organ donation is an act of compassion. 27

Ogawa has argued that good deeds have no causal relationship with Buddhahood [satori or spiritual enlightenment], and that self-sacrifice does not provide a guarantee for Buddhahood [enlightenment] after life. As Ogawa has made it clear, he has formulated his harsh criticism against the background of the doctrine of Jodoshinshu (浄土真宗 “True Pure Land School”). This doctrine denies the existence of spirit and refuses samsara 輪廻転生, assuring the secular ethics of retributive justice 因果応報. Thus, Ogawa’s position is completely different from that of the new religion or the neo-new religion that, believing in the existence of spirit, commends the passing-over to the other world as quickly as possible, even though he rejects the idea of organ transplants as the latter does.

Ogawa’s criticism can be summed up as follows: The present Buddhist discourses that “tie Buddhism to Morality” 28 should not be applied to biotechnology, and Buddhism must be dissociated from Moralization. 29

What should be considered is the radicalism of Buddhism which neither Nature nor Morality can domesticate. We have to open a field of Ethics distinct from Bioethics. In order to realize this, we must make a detour via two debates in which Buddhism trembled and was shaken at its core.

Serve the Dead

1. The Moment of Death

When it became a serious problem to ask whether or not brain death was accepted as human death, the advocates of brain death adduced the

29. There is a criticism toward a discourse of moralizing organ transplantation. As long as there exists an asymmetry between donor and recipient, the direction of a donor’s good will
truly murderous nature of death manifests itself: by whom, when or how
can one be killed? Death is not a physiological phenomenon but is vio-
lence emerging in a social relationship. Brain death makes it clear that
violence is present before physiological and natural phenomena.

Let us now return to Shen mie bumie lun. Buddhists attempted to
accept the unnatural death by coercive murder as death. This would have
been possible only if the murdered had been worshipped as the dead.
Worship here does not necessarily mean the ideal worship in China, i.e.,
the ancestor worship in which descendents honor their ancestors’ bodies
as those through which the “ancestral blood flow into them
for worshipping the murdered implies the retention of the memory of
murder in society and therefore cannot be reduced to “natural death”
under the ancestor worship. 

In this sense, Buddhism (at least in sixth-
century China) had a route to metaphysics (after-nature) by worshipping
others (who were expelled from the blood-based communal morality) as
the dead.

The same debate was also concerned with dead bodies. It essentially
regarded the dead bodies as something that could disappear only gradu-
ally. The dead body subsists unyieldingly and tells us that death is not reducible to an instantaneous event, i.e., the sudden disappearance of
spirit, but that it is a process lasting for a certain period of time. Death is an uncanny event that no ordinary concepts...

Death is neither an isolated nor an abandoned phenomenon. Through
murder as the essence of death, it is inevitably involved in a relation-
ship with others. And through the dead body decaying slowly, it
continues to make us grieve. Needless to say, this structure of death never
alleviates the solitary process of death. It only announces that death is a
process that involves a relationship with others at its solitary bottom.
When Buddhists criticized Fan Zhen, they should not have attempted
to break up the relationship with others at the moment of death.

2. After-Nature or meta ta physica: Coercive Murder and Dead Bodies

The most significant issue of the debate centered on murder and dead
bodies. Its principal question was whether or not those who lost their
lives by coercive murder could return as ghosts. Fan Zhen, who denied
the survival of human spirit after death, did not hesitate to dismiss the
question. Buddhists, on the other hand, admitted the ghostly for the self-
existence of spirit. What was at stake in the debate was not only the
problem of the existence of “ghosts” but also the question of whether
dead was natural at all.

The brain death controversy has interested me because it can bankrupt
the concept of “natural death.” Now, the opponents of brain death pre-
tend to “die as naturally as possible,” rather than “to die artificially.”
Whether we die in a hospital or out of it (since someone has to make a
decision as to taking a dying person out of a hospital), it is already dif-
ficult to die naturally. In such an extreme situation as brain death, the

31. Concerning detailed particulars of this debate, see Nakajima 1992.
32. See Nakajima 1997.
3. Organ Transplantation and Cannibalism

The word “cannibalism” is often used in discussions of brain death and organ transplants. For example, Umehara Takeshi has stated that “organ transplantation is no doubt today’s cannibalism.” 33 Nakano Tozen, for his part, has acknowledged “cannibalism in a good way” in the sense that the recipient inherits the donor’s life through transplanted organs. 34 What we would like here to consider is not the problem of whether organ transplantation is cannibalistic but the mechanism of moralistic discourses producing “cannibalism in a good sense.”

Lu Xun wrote in his Diary of a Madman that the word “cannibalism” had been found in the history of moral virtues. This suggested to him that because there might have been no one who had not eaten humans, it was all the more necessary to save children who have not eaten them yet. While the act of eating human flesh has been regarded as the taboo of cannibalism or has been regulated by social ethics, it is reinforced in a perverse manner: eating human flesh in a moral and spiritual dimension or in a commodity economy. Organ transplantation is a perverse example of cannibalism.

However, the act of eating human flesh should not be regarded as the taboo of cannibalism or regulated by social ethics. As Takeda Tarjun has depicted in his novel Luminous Moss, eating humans is a final decision made in an extreme situation and therefore is beyond any ethical judgment. Nevertheless, those who affirm eating human flesh would moralize it, whereas those who refuse it would turn their gazes away from the simple fact of eating flesh. The former group anticipates such an immanent and extreme situation, and utilizes it under “ifs,” e.g., “if someone is brain-dead” or “if there is no other way to save someone except by organ transplants.” They incorporate cannibalism into a bioethical program and even develop accurate equations for it. The latter, on the other hand, deprives us of the opportunity to re-consider the immanent Ethics of eating human flesh.

Let us re-phrase the question. Can we accept the transplant of animal organs? Can we eat any animal flesh as long as it is not human? The answer must be in the negative according to the Buddhist principle in which hunting and fishing are prohibited. It is this prohibition, however, that many have found fault with, notably Matteo Ricci at the end of Ming dynasty. 35

4. Prohibition on hunting and fishing: debate with Christian Missionary

Matteo Ricci criticized Buddhists in Tianzhu shiji 天主実義 on the ground that “it was nonsense to prohibit killing animals.” The strongest reason was that as long as men ate meat, “it was nonsense to prohibit killing animals.” Buddhist offered rebuttals to Ricci’s attack, among which we can find the following two particularly significant. Firstly, our “sense of pity” for animals testifies that animals do not exist to be killed and eaten up by human beings. Secondly, if killing animals is allowed freely, then killing can easily turn its fire on human beings, resulting in the license to destroy the weak at will.

If Buddhists could have thought of the possibility of Buddhism’s radicalism, they could have taken a further step to prohibit the indiscriminate killing of others in general, including humans, animals, and even plants. Buddhists, then, could have turned its criticism back against Christianity itself: it was Christianity that fell into anthropocentrism. But they did not strike back without apparent reason. As Ricci criticized, Buddhists may have prohibited only killing human-like animals and would have winked at the simple fact that people are all kinds of flesh and killed others before eating.

5. Serve the Dead as the Dead

We would like here to reconsider the unrealized possibility of Buddhism. The seriousness with which one devours food is beyond Good and Evil. At the very moment of eating, we do not care what meat we

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eat. We don’t eat to live, but we live to eat; living is eating. At the extreme point of such egoism, an anti-/super-natural dimension intervenes simultaneously. This dimension emerges with the consciousness that the food I am eating right now is the dead, previously murdered. More precisely, the consciousness arises with Time and Others. The dimension is diachronic, opened up against the saturated moment of “Nature.” It might therefore be called a meta-physical (in the sense of after-nature) dimension. If we use Ethics as a metaphysical attitude towards others in the Levinasian sense of the word, the metaphysical dimension could be an ethical place, where we serve others as others and the dead as the dead with reverence. Here Ethics is not reducible to Morality but is “core-ethics,” as opposed to Morality, which can only be found after the fact of murder in the midst of satiation.

Serving the dead as the dead shows a fundamental and deadly relationship with others: being involved in a relationship with others after murder. Therefore, the imperative “you shall not kill” would derive from this Ethics, which is always found afterward. Retrospectively, it must be placed before the murder that severs our relationship with others. Man is doomed to kill, but as we have to serve the dead as the dead, we shall not kill. The delay as the essence of the imperative will never be sublimated, because the imperative is not an a-priori normative proposition to conduce a moral doctrine, but an a-posteriori judgment invented after the murder.

What is necessary is to serve all of the dead as the dead against the Time order. The dead are not limited to human beings. The dead refer to all those who have died coercive deaths so terrible as to make Nature tremble. Herein lies Buddhist radicalism, advocating the drastic equality of everything and everybody, and paving the way for the prohibition on hunting and fishing. Contrary to such a radical possibility of Buddhism, most Buddhist discourses on Bioethics reduce death to natural death and allow organ transplantation to remain cannibalistic by appealing to the ethical doctrine. They never serve the brain-dead as the dead and therefore never discuss the prohibition of all types of killing (including killing for organ transplantation and animals utilized in animal experiments).

36. Morioka Masahiro has already touched upon the issue of regarding a brain-dead person as dead. [Morioka 1989; Morioka 2001]

Conclusion

What if Buddhism accepts the brain-dead as the dead, and proposes to serve them as the dead? This would force the social norm to change into the imperative of “you shall not kill.” If killing still must be committed, Buddhism would at least require a proper manner of serving the dead as the dead. It is only here that biotechnological ethics are questioned for the production of the brain-dead (biotechnological ethics are different from Bioethics on the adequacy of biotechnological procedures). In so doing, we will have to face almost insurmountable technical difficulties or limits; in order to serve the dead as the dead, we need time to be with the brain-dead—time to “deepen death.” This time for deepening death cannot be derived from brain death, defined as the instantaneous and irreversible point of change. If biotechnology still wants

to produce the brain-dead with all its ethically refined procedures, this is no longer the question of Morality, let alone that of Nature.

The same holds true to other bioethical “problems” such as the use of human embryos or aborted fetuses. The recycled embryos must be admitted and served as the dead. The aborted fetuses must be received and served as the dead. One ought to reject whatever runs counter to this principle on ethical grounds.

Opinions differ as to the presence or absence of personhood in the human embryo. It has been generally agreed, so it seems, that the human embryo has no personhood and can be utilized for medical purposes. The personhood issue matters little. What does matter, however, is a manner of serving the killed/dead embryo, regardless of the presence or absence of personhood. This is not resolved by holding a memorial service for killed embryos or clones. We must squarely face the realities in which we produce and kill what we cannot worship. Biotechnological ethics averts our gaze from death.

Japan has seen a number of unintended pregnancies and hence abortions because of persistent gender bias in society as well as the ban on birth-control pills. Surprisingly enough, abortions are not done through mothers’ self-determination in consideration of their health or the quality of their lives. In such a situation, they can sense little or no tension in killing fetuses. Still, there must remain a sense of disquiet murder as aborted fetuses are widely worshipped as “Mizuko 水子.” In most cases, however, the Mizuko worship is closed in private consolation, so it does not reach the ethical norm. Rather, it loses the intensity of the ethical norm by worshipping killed fetuses. 39

Serving the dead as dead cannot be achieved by simply enshrining the dead. It means that one keeps, hesitantly and trembling, standing by or in front of that which cannot be enshrined or that which one cannot worship. Kuyo or holding a memorial service signifies service which one renders to others with respect. It originally goes back to the Sanskrit term upa-sāthā, meaning standing by others. If Buddhism can open up the

39. As a matter of fact, “Mizuko” is a good business for consolation, as “service of Mizuko,” by appealing to its disquieting character. Concerning Buddhism and “Mizuko,” see Nakano 1997.
III. Flickering Shadows of China in Japanese Modernity

Like tongueless men, without uttering a word, they [coolies] kept ascending to the third floor and descending from there, carrying these heavy sacks of beans on their shoulders. Their silence, their regular movements, their patience, and their energy are almost like the shadows of fate.

(Natsume Soseki “Travels in Manchuria and Korea,” 1909) 1

1. *Like Tongueless Men*

“Country of the Dawn” 2 is a documentary film, which happens to contain scenes of the “Cultural Revolution” between August 1966 and February 1967. The film crew intended to show “daily life” in the New China, along with its rapid technological progress. They did not understand what they were shooting at that time.

“Country of the Dawn” opens with a scene showing young Red Guards arriving from throughout China and gathering in Tian’an men Square. In the following scene a train appears with a plate indicating “Wansui Maozhuxi [long live Chairman Mao];” it is an express train traveling from Beijing to Shanhai Guan. The narrator of the film tells us that the young people clustering around Shanhai Guan station are tourists going to see the Great Wall. However, Tsuchiya Masaaki suggests that

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these young people teeming around the station are not tourists, but are going to Tian’an men Square to see Mao Zedong. It must be easy to reach such an understanding if we could comprehend the meaning of August 1966, or at least if we could grasp the meaning of the opening scene of the young Red Guards gathering in Tian’an men Square. However, the film presents the opening scene like a picnic or a school excursion, when they take souvenir photos and write their names in Mao notebooks and exchange them. It is “daily life” in the New China, which is regarded as being similar to daily life in Japan where people enjoy having fun. Following this line, the second scene at Shanhai Guan station is to be understood as showing tourists going to the Great Wall. Likewise, if we go to the third scene, it shows people bathing in the Songhua River in Ha’erbin City. In short, “Country of the Dawn” is edited to make the unusual event of the Cultural Revolution become normal and understandable to a Japanese audience.

Let us stop and think about what connects the three scenes at the beginning of “Country of the Dawn:” Tian’an men Square in Beijing, Shanhai Guan station, and Ha’erbin City. The connection is a railroad. If we recall history, we realize that this railroad was the oldest main line operated by Mantetsu [South Manchu Railway Company, founded in 1906].

In 1909, Nakamura Yoshikoto, the second president of Mantetsu, invited Natsume Soseki to travel in Manchuria. Soseki’s travel essays “Travels in Manchuria and Korea” and his diary tell us that he visited major cities along the Mantetsu railroad such as Dalian, Lühun, Ying-kou, Shenyang, and Fushun. Colonists in those cities, Soseki reported, enjoyed evening parties, dance parties, baseball, and rowing. In Dalian, an amusement attraction powered by electricity and named “Electric Park” was in course of construction. Chinese slave labor, who were regarded as being “dirty,” were behind construction of this “amusement” attraction. It is noteworthy that Soseki represented them as being “quiet,” “never uttering a word,” and having “expressionless faces.”

For example, when Soseki wrote a scene in which an old Chinese man was struck by a coach, seriously injuring his leg, he described both the man and the bystanders around him as silent or expressionless men. Soseki wrote: “I was happy to feel that I could finally get rid of the cruel Chinese,” when he returned to his hotel after leaving those expressionless Chinese. The voices of the Chinese men never reached Soseki, who was a close friend of the president of Mantetsu, and a colonist also in another coach. Soseki did not yet realize that his own colonial Ear System divided people into two groups, i.e., people who spoke the imperial language and the tongueless people to whom Soseki refers in the epigraph.

The last scene of his travel essays is located at Fushun Coalmine. Soseki accompanied his friend to visit Fushun Coalmine, a big source of profits for Mantetsu. He happened to meet two ... to others unless they are introduced. Accordingly, we [never speak to them because we] are as proud as Englishmen.” At that very moment, Soseki should have been expressionless as well as speechless. He had unconsciously shifted from the side of the colonist to that of the colonized.

After lunch, a mining engineer took Soseki and the other visitors inside a pit. As they descended an incredibly long tunnel, they were all lost for words. “Everyone stood silently. No one sat down. We traveled in silence. That was remarkable.” What compelled Soseki and the Englishmen to be at a loss for words? It should have been the “cruel” silence of a tunnel dug by Chinese workers. In the heart of darkness of the Coalmine, Soseki eventually faced Colonial imperialism, which sounded through the silence of the “tongueless people.”

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5. Soseki traveled in Manchuria and Korea between September 2 and October 17, 1909. He stopped writing his travel piece at Fushun, but he continued his travels all the way to Pusan, through Changchun, Ha’erbin, Andong, Phyongyang, and Seoul.
6. “Travels in Manchuria and Korea:” 244.
From this point, Soseki stopped using a flippant tone in his writing. And, a few pages later, all of sudden, he ends his travel essays, even though he had not yet described his travels in Korea. He said: “I have still something to write about, but it is already New Year’s Eve today, so I will stop writing.” 12 This is indeed a strange way to close the essays. He could not utter a word after the “cruel” silence of Fushun Coalmine.

2. In front of the Innumerable

Let us turn back to “Country of the Dawn.” We can find the same scene at Fushun Coalmine in the last part of this film. Takeuchi Yoshimi referred to it in his cinematic review.

Along an inner slope of an open-pit mine at Fushun, there are laid almost innumerable rails, on which long trains of freight cars travel this way and that as if they were superimposed on each other. Such a natural landscape (there is no other way to say it) itself impresses me. I admit that I am sentimental, but then my impressions are out of control, and it is difficult to explain their content. 13

As mentioned above, Fushun Coalmine was never a “natural landscape.” It was a man-made place where Soseki was lost for words and where the sweat and blood of “tongueless” Chinese “coolies” infiltrated. Takeuchi, as a leading Sinologist, should know this better than anyone else. Moreover, he criticized Japanese naturalism, which reduced human experiences including war, politics, and morality to a natural process, and regarded them as a fatal consequence [even Soseki referred to the “fate” of tongueless men]. He should know the danger of naturalistic literature manipulating human emotions and impressions. Contrary to such naturalism, he emphasized the dimensions of norms such as “responsibility,” “morals,” and “law” as resisting powers, through which we could barely make our “war experience” a “true experience.” Man-made revolution in literature, he believed, was ineluctable for the realization of that true experience.

We cannot help but wonder why Takeuchi, an anti-naturalistic critic, said that his impressions were moved by a natural landscape, and stated: “I was overwhelmed by a flood of emotions.” There should have remained an inextirpable inclination towards naturalism in Takeuchi. Or it seems that the strength of Japanese naturalism was so insistent that even Takeuchi could not resist it. However, before rushing to a conclusion, we are going to examine how Fushun Coalmine is represented in “Country of the Dawn.”

Like the experience of Soseki, the scene at Fushun Coalmine in this film is abruptly put into silence. First, it shows “traces of an overmine from a previous time” 14 with the narrator saying: “Those who have been working since Japan’s militaristic era never utter a word about the Japanese period.” Then, the narration is suspended for a long moment. We face a silent scene of freight cars traveling on rail tracks and endless grave mounds. The narrator resumes here, saying: “these grave mounds are called ‘myriad graves,’ because myriad means innumerable.” The silence in this scene is symbolic. Overall, the narration in this film is either excessive or too loud to allow us to hear the voices of the Chinese people. However, it is in this silent scene at Fushun Coalmine that the film “Country of the Dawn” faces up to the reality of the past. We are not allowed to give any ready-made meaning to the enormity of the past when confronted by the innumerable.

However, Takeuchi interpreted this silent scene as a mere continuation of the previous form of representation in this film.

Current movie fans, who love extremes, might feel hypothermal to this scene. They would say that it is nothing compared to Auschwitz. I admit this too. However, I stand in opposition to this view of humankind, which advocates that we can only grasp humankind in an extreme situation. On the contrary, I fully assent to a view of humankind affirming that a human being is human in daily life, thus love and hate would be exercised to the fullest in daily life. In this regard, I endorse the producers

15. Ibid.
of this film who seem to have a common viewpoint with me.  He reaffirmed this hypothermal scene as representing daily life. However, how can we understand the extreme silence of Fushun Coalmine and the old Chinese workers as hypothermal or normal? Takeuchi’s impression and tears dulled the extremity, and made it acceptable like daily life or a natural landscape.

3. Daily Life

What did daily life mean at that time in China? As mentioned above, the film crew had tried to understand it in a similar way to daily life in Japan, but that was rather out of focus. Tokieda Toshie, the director of “Country of the Dawn,” testified to an extraordinary daily life during an interview.

But there were other problems as well. One time we went location hunting to plan for the next day’s shoot. When we brought all of the equipment to the site—a factory—the next day, the sayings of Chairman Mao were hung on all of the machinery. I told them, “Maoist philosophy should be realized in practice. This stuff is in the way of the lighting so please take it down.” I guess I said too much (laughs). The workers stood in front of me sobbing, saying that they had spent all night preparing it. What a mess.

As this testimony says, what should be shot as “daily life” is not just a scene for which everyone has had a haircut and smartens up their appearance, but also scenes where the sayings of Chairman Mao were hung on all of the machinery. That is, the director faced a daily life in which it was carefully calculated how one should be represented. To be sure, we do not want to say that a documentary film has to shoot a kind of naked daily life that is not representative. It is noteworthy that people sponta-

neously came to be shot in a way that showed their happiness [the name of the “Happiness/happy People’s Commune” is symbolic]. The scene with the sayings of Chairman Mao hung on all of the machinery is necessary for them to fulfill the meaning of their lives, and to prove them to be happy.

The Cultural Revolution aimed to touch the hearts of the people. It founded itself on people’s spontaneity. In other words, the Cultural Revolution was the politics of representation, which governed the interiority of the people through their self-representation. In this sense, it is crucially important to shoot people’s self-representation in a film. However, this will not bring out what the Cultural Revolution was about, because cutting out daily life from self-representation could never lead to a grasp of the system of the Cultural Revolution. The system of the politics of representation was on the blind side of daily life.

4. China is Immeasurable

Tokieda Toshie and her film crew, nevertheless, became aware that daily life in China was different from daily life in Japan.

That’s right. Kobayashi Isamu had wanted to do this project for a long time, following Iwanami Shigeo’s wishes. Since there were no diplomatic relations, for over twenty years after the war, and seventeen years after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, nobody had seen the real China. There was one film made by an Italian team, called “Behind the Great Wall” (“La muraglia cinese,” 1958), but that didn’t show the real lifestyle of the Chinese people. Watching it as Asians, the film seemed to be stuck in a point of view that ... For our film, I got to go to a country I wouldn’t have been able to see otherwise, and I just wanted to record everything

18. For example, we can find a Chinese camera crew shooting a demonstration in Changchun. The film of the demonstration must have been used in performing the politics of representation. Shooting with camera is a performative revolution per se. For the Cultural Revolution, even a Japanese film crew is a part of this politics of representation. “Country of the Dawn” is integrated into it.
I saw. But, China is really big (laughs). We brought a huge platform by boat from Japan and tried to use it to take extreme long shots in a farming village. Usually, if you put together seven or eight platforms you can get enough height to take extreme long shots. But, even when we put the platforms on the flatbed of a truck and shot from up there, the view didn’t change a bit (laughs). Fujise Suehiko, the cameraman, said, “the effect of the lens is totally different when you use it in Japan!” The first 5,000 feet of film we shot was all useless. The scene was so vast; you couldn’t tell what we had filmed in any of the shots. That was a truly strange experience. We had brought a 600 mm telescopic lens as well, but we couldn’t get faraway objects to come any closer. The Chinese staff insisted, “Telescopic lenses are for when you are filming the enemy. Filming (so far away) that you can’t be seen is a very hostile approach.” We debated that point day after day. 19

Tokieda looks back on her first impressions of China: “we wouldn’t have been able to see otherwise,” China appeared to be an immeasurable “object.” “China is really big;” “The scenery was so vast;” “We had brought a 600 mm telescopic lens as well, but we couldn’t get faraway objects to come any closer.” In another interview, she also said that it was hard to measure China with a Japanese ruler, because it was too vast and its Nature was too severe. 20

On the one hand, if we do not regard China as a dream country from the point of view that emphasizes its attractions to a foreign culture, we should shoot its daily life, which is similar to daily life in Japan. On the other hand, Chinese daily life must be different from Japanese daily life, because China is vast and immeasurable. If “Country of the Dawn” was just constituted by this reasoning, we would just find Japanese naturalism in it again. We could paraphrase Japanese naturalism in “Country of the Dawn” as follows. The point of view that cuts out daily life from an object is like a telescope that just looks upon an object in a natural process, while keeping a distance from it. In other words, this point of view treats the object like an enemy. It is not willing to become involved in a relationship with others as equal friends, to whom I or we had already been deeply related, at least ever since the dawn of modernity. If we use Takeuchi’s terminology, there should be a moment of “responsibility,” “morality,” and “law.” However, we hardly find the dimension of the norm or the effort to step into a dialogue in this film.

Nonetheless, we had better call the silent scene at Fushun Coalmine to mind. The film “Country of the Dawn” has another possibility of touching “responsibility,” “morality,” and “law” in front of the common history of China and Japan. It might be better for us to think about a failure of the naturalistic representation of the immeasurable China in this film.

5. The Dream of Goodwill Colonists

It was Takeuchi who sniffed out the failure of the naturalistic representation of the immeasurable China.

The producer intended to describe how to accept unskilled agricultural workers in a People’s Commune as one of the main spotlights of this film, but it is hard to say that she succeeded in grasping the overall picture of this vast farm village, as is to be expected. Nonetheless, once a huge tractor, which was many times as big as a Japanese one, appeared on screen, I caught my breath. It was a wide tractor with a monstrous claw driven by a single young girl. The surrounding area is an uninhabited plain as far as one can see. Oh, Manchu! Allow me to call it “Manchu.” I can’t help thinking that the dream of goodwill colonists (not of colonialists) has come true in a splendid way. 21

For Takeuchi, China should be bigger than that represented in this film. The film “Country of the Dawn” could go further to grasp the overall picture of this vast farm village, but in vain. However, Takeuchi did not open the dimensions of “responsibility,” “morality,” and “law” from the

Regardless that it depends on generational or individual differences, it is undeniable that there exist two parties: those who stick to the war experience and those who declare they wish to break away from it. Each of them, I think, has its own raison d’être. So, what is a common term that covers the two parties? There is no doubt that the question is a burning issue for the experiential discourse of War. I do not have any ready-made answer, but I imagine that the key might be to find a method of reliving the experiences of someone else. Such a method would derive from neither the tradition of the I novel nor the tradition of repeating the discourses of our ancestors. A new framework is necessary. In order to find a method to grasp the evacuation of schoolchildren through the eyes of teachers, parents, and schoolchildren at the same time, I place my hope on a young generation that is going to start from the experience of evacuation.

In order to relive the experiences of someone else, this method should be an allegorical one, grasping the event from different viewpoints at the same time. In other words, it is necessary to superimpose temporal moments such as past, present, and future.

If the allegorical method had been applied in this film, we could superimpose some other voices of the silent people behind the heroic leader of the People’s Commune, the evacuated young people of the film company’s Manchuria and the goodwill colonists’ Manchuria to Manchuria at the very moment of the Cultural Revolution.

However, “Country of the Dawn” hardly stepped up to this level, excluding some exceptional scenes including the silent scene at Fushun Coalmine. The main reason might be a lack of a method to see historical events from an allegorical viewpoint.

6. Method of Superimposing Different Aspects and Moments

As mentioned above, Takeuchi was convinced that it was necessary by any means to find a method to make the Japanese war experience a true experience. If we had this method, we could have had an opportunity to bridge the gap between the different viewpoints, such as of interested parties, bystanders, and postwar generation. This is a method of reliving the experiences of someone else.

22. Ibid.
23. Maruyama Masao, Japanese Thought: 120.
too innocent for the previous Manchu. This resulted in their failure to grasp the overall picture of this vast farm village. Meanwhile, Takeuchi was rather conscious of the historical moment. But, he did not try to relive the experiences of others, especially those of the Chinese workers. He sank into a sea of impressions where he seemed to be integrated into the absolute of Facts.

7. Silence at Fushun Coalmine

“Like tongueless men.” In order to resist this terrible phrase of Soseki, we have to return the voices to others by changing our Ear System. Soseki himself finally realized the fact that he was also a tongueless man when he stopped writing. However, we need to start writing again from the point of Soseki’s abrupt break, and return the voices to the Chinese as well as the Japanese.

In this way, the silent scene at Fushun Coalmine in “Country of the Dawn” has a chance of returning these voices. Even though the film was too naïve to close in what was happening and what had been happening in China, it is certain that it was overwhelmed by the innumerable eyes that looked back towards the camera: suspicious eyes of children at play; gloomy eyes of young men near the fine faces of the leaders of the People’s Commune; the eyes of an exhausted young women in the transportation team carrying film equipment on a mountain.

How can we find a method to relive the experiences of someone else? This is an eternal question, which has been asked since Soseki’s silence for almost a century. Without sinking into naturalism, we are demanded to invent a new method to return voices to the silence at Fushun.

References:

IV. The Moment of Tears: *Reflecting* European Philosophy
1. Die „ursprüngliche Differenz des absoluten Ursprungs“—über die lebendige Gegenwart

Derrida schreibt im Schlußkapitel von Husserls *Weg in die Geschichte am Leitfaden der Geometrie* (wir zitieren als HWGLG) in Ausrichtung auf den Gedanken der ursprünglichen Differenz des absoluten Ursprungs (vgl. HWGLG 203) wie folgt:

Die Unmöglichkeit, in der einfachen Jetztheit einer lebendigen Gegenwart zur Ruhe zu kommen; der einheitliche und absolut absolute Ursprung der Tatsache und des Rechts, des Seins und des Sinns, der jedoch in seiner Selbstidentität stets wechselt; das Unvermögen, sich in der Einheit des ursprünglichen Absoluten, das nur gegenwärtig ist, indem es sich ununterbrochen aufschiebt [se différant], einzuschließen; dieses Unvermögen und diese Unmöglichkeit werden zu Gegebenheiten in einem ursprünglichen und reinen Bewußtsein der Differenz (HWGLG 202–203).

An dieser Stelle begreift Derrida die lebendige Gegenwart des Absoluten als Bewegung der Differenzierung. Damit das Jetzt das Jetzt ist, muß zur gleichen Zeit gesagt werden, daß dieses Jetzt gleich einem anderen Jetzt und verschieden von einem anderen Jetzt ist. Das heißt, die lebendige Gegenwart, welche absoluter Ursprung ist, ist die Vereinheitlichung von Andersheit (Differenz) und Identität; tiefgreifender formuliert ist sie die Bewegung, welche vermittels von Wiederholung (itération) trächtiger Differenz Identität konstituiert. Dementsprechend...
„konstituiert (die absolute Ursprünglichkeit der lebendigen Gegenwart) das Andere als Anderes in sich und das Selbe als Selbes im Anderen“ (ebd. 114).

Der absolute Ursprung befindet sich in der ursprünglichen Differenz. Derrida, der in der lebendigen Gegenwart diese Struktur erblickt, beschreibt deren Unentbehrlichkeit für die Intersubjektivität wie folgt:

Die Möglichkeit, innerhalb der einmaligen und irreduziblen Form lebendiger Gegenwart, die in sich unmodifizierbar und ihrem „Inhalt“ nach stets anders ist, ein anderes Jetzt und, darin fundiert, ein anderes Hier, einen anderen absoluten Ursprung in meinem absoluten Ursprung zu konstituieren—diese Möglichkeit wird an anderer Stelle von Husserl als die „Würzel der Intersubjektivität“ vorgestellt (ebd. Anm.20).


Wollen wir uns die Diskussion aus „Gewalt und Metaphysik“ (im folgenden zitiert als GM) in Die Schrift und die Differenz in Erinnerung rufen. Hatte Husserl in der fünften Meditation seiner Cartesianische Meditationen das andere Ich, das alter ego, mit Hilfe der Einfühlung verstanden, so kritisierte ihn Levinas in der Weise, als daß solches den Anderen auf das Selbe reduziert und die absolute Andersheit des Anderen neutralisiert werde. Im Gegensatz dazu jedoch denkt Derrida, für Husserl handele es sich darum zu beschreiben, „wie der Andere als Anderer sich mir in seiner irreduziblen Andersheit darstellt“ (GM 187).


Nur die transzendentale Gewalt ermögliche den Widerstand gegen die Gewalt der Nacht, gegen die schlimmste Gewalt, gegen die Gewalt des Schweigens (vgl. ebd. 197); nur sie mache die Begegnung mit dem Anderen möglich. Gerade weil ich und der Andere im Punkte des Ego symmetrisch sind, stelle dies ein Akzeptieren unserer Asymmetrie dar und sei die „Minimalgewalt“, die mit dem Anerkennen der Kontamination zwischen Identität und Differenz beginnt. Ohne diese wäre auch gewöhnliche Gewalt unmöglich; und weil es sie eben gibt, wird die gewöhnliche Gewalt dem Verhör unterzogen und ist überwindbare Gewalt. Benjamin hätte sie „göttliche Gewalt“ genannt, von der er die „mythische Gewalt“ unterschied. Ihm gemäß durchbricht die


Von einem anderen Standpunkt aus betrachtet verwendet Derrida das Wort „transzendent“ bereits losgelöst von derjenigen Bedeutung, die als Gegenstück zu „empirisch“ die Bedingung der Möglichkeit von Empirie erfragt. Was nun aber ist die transzendentale Dimension (l’ordre), die Derrida zu untersuchen unternimmt?

2. „Transzendentale Geschichtlichkeit“ und »Transzendenz«


Bedenkt man, daß die Idee hier einen transzendentalen Sinn hat und, wie wir gleich sehen werden, nur hinsichtlich konstituierter transzendentaler Subjektivität »übertranszendentalsubjektiv« ist, so fällt auf, daß Husserl—jenseits der kantischen Bedeutung und zugleich in Fortentwicklung Kants—den ursprünglich scholastischen Sinn des Transzendentalen wiedergewinnt (unum, verum, bonum etc., als das Transkategoriale der aristotelischen Logik) (HWGLG 194–95 Anm.13).

Wenn Derrida sagt, Husserls Ansinnen stelle „den ursprünglich scholastischen Sinn des Transzendentalen“ „jenseits der kantischen Bedeutung“ wieder her, so versteht er „das Transzendentale“ als »Über « oder Jenseits (» au-delà «), eben als »Transzendenz«. Wir wollen paraphrasieren und sehen, in was für einem Sinne es sich jedoch um „Transzendenz“ handelt? Derrida denkt die Idee als etwas, das über das Konstituieren der transzendenten Subjektivität hinaus nochmals transzendental ist, als ursprüngliche » Faktizität «, die dem Recht der Möglichkeitsbedingung vorausliegt. Im Gegensatz dazu, daß die Faktizität des Objektes jurisdik der transzendentalen Subjektivität nachfolgt, gehe der transzendenten Subjektivität die » Faktizität « der Idee jurisdik voraus. 2 Transzendenz in dieser Einschränkung, das heißt » Transzendenz «, die von der Transzendenz des Objektes unterschieden wird, bezeichnet Derrida als „den ursprünglich scholastischen Sinn des ‘Transzendentalen’“.

Wenn wir uns jedoch vergewissern, so ist diese Idee keine, mit einer—platonistisch verstanden—stenkaren Identität. Sie ist vielmehr eine, welche ideelle Identität hervorbringt, welche Identität und Differenz vorausliegt. Es ist die vom Platonismus befreite Idee. Um dies herzuleiten, beginnt Husserl zunächst mit der Frage, wie der bereits konstituierte Gegenstand Objektivität besitzen kann. Dabei betrachtet er Sprache und Intersubjektivität, die beide eine notwendige Bedingung für die Objektivierung


Dementsprechend ist diese transzendentale Idee, da sie Bewegung der Idealisierung (sowie als deren Pol Idee) ist, geschichtlich.

Gewiß sind die Idee und die in Geschichte und Mensch als „animal rationale“ verborgene Vernunft ewig. Husserl sagt es des öfteren. Aber diese Ewigkeit ist nicht als Geschichtlichkeit. Sie ist die Möglichkeit der Geschichte selber. Ihre Überzeitlichkeit—angesichts empirischer Zeitlichkeit—is nur Allzeitlichkeit. Wie die Vernunft ist die Idee nichts außerhalb der Geschichte, in der sie sich exponiert, d.h., in der sie sich in ein und derselben Bewegung enthüllt und gefährdet (ebd. 188).


6. In Sauf le nom, Galilée 1993, das den Untertitel „Post-Scriptum“ trägt, sagt Derrida die negative Theologie erörternd, die transzendentale Phänomenologie als eine, welche sämtliche doxa, sämtliche Standorte der Existenz und sämtliche Thesen suspendiert, wohne im gleichen Element wie die negative Theologie, was auch Jacques Colleony in „Déconstruction, thèologie négative et archi-éthique (Derrida, Levinas et Heidegger)“ erwähnt.


3. Die transzendentale Ökonomie der Zeit

Tatsächlich hatte Derrida die transzendentale Geschichtlichkeit bereits als „transzendentale Göttlichkeit“ diskutiert. Es ist dies die Suche nach einer Göttlichkeit, die auch dem Mechanismus der negativen Theologie nicht einzuordnen ist.

Durch die konstituierte Geschichte hindurch geht und spricht Gott, für die konstituierte Geschichte und alle konstituierten Momente [des transzendentalen Lebens] ist Gott jenseits. Aber er ist nur für sich seiender Pol konstituierender Geschichtlichkeit und konstituierender historisch transzendentaler Subjektivität. Die Dia- oder Meta-Historizität des göttlichen Logos durchquert oder überschreitet die „Tatsache“ der Geschichte nur als „fertige“, aber er selbst ist nur die reine Bewegung
eingeschrieben. Daher ist auch nichts gegen die Formulierung einzuwen- 
den, die am Ende der Reduktion ausfindig gemachte „absolute 
transzendente Subjektivität“ sei „reine passiv-aktive Zeitlichkeit, als reine 
Selbstverzeitlichung lebendiger Gegenwart“. Denn der der » Ursprung « 
seien den transzendentalen Göttlichkeit gegenüber ist die transzendentale 
Subjektivität strukturell nachlaufend und hat jene beim Auffinden be-
reits vergessen.

Die absolute transzendentale Subjektivität ist reine passiv-aktive 
Zeitlichkeit, als reine Selbstverzeitlichung lebendiger Gegenwart, d.h.
schon, wie wir gesehen haben, als Intersubjektivität. Diskursive und

dialektische Intersubjektivität der Zeit mit sich selber in der unendlichen 
Vielfalt und Implikation ihrer absoluten Ursprüng, die jede andere

Intersubjektivität autorisiert und die polemische Einheit von Erscheinen 
und Verschwinden irreduzibel macht. Die Verspätung ist hier das 
philosophisch Absolute (HWGLG 202).

Damit die transzendentale Subjektivität, die ich bin, absolut ist, ist der » 
Ursprung «, der vergessen werden muß, noch ein weiterer notwendiger 
anderer Absoluter, den man Gott nennen kann. Wichtig aber ist, daß er

plural ist und eine "unendlich Vielfalt" besitzt. Jedoch bedeutet dies nicht,Pluralität heiße die Möglichkeit eines Aufzählens der Mehrzahl bei 
Zahlen, sondern daß die Besonderheit-Einzigkeit als solche sich plural-

isieren kann. Deswegen ist die Intersubjektivität kein Zusammenbestehen
mehrerer Subjektivitäten, sondern der Sachverhalt, daß es ein Recht gibt,
welches innerhalb einer gänzlich besonderen Subjektivität andere gänzlich 
besondere Subjektivitäten zu konstituieren vermag.

Wenn wir das Gesagte zusammenfassen, können wir die transzen-
dentale Ökonomie der Zeit wie folgt formalisieren: Das flüchtige 
Sehenlassen des absolut anderen » Ursprungs «, der die überzeitliche sowie 
allzeitliche sowie transzendentale Göttlichkeit ist, in der lebendigen Gegenwart als 
transzendente Geschichtlichkeit verschließt sich nicht, da die transzen-

Dengegenübersätzlich, denn die Reduktion ausfindig gemachte „absolute 
transzendente Subjektivität“ sei „reine passiv-aktive Zeitlichkeit, als reine 
Selbstverzeitlichung lebendiger Gegenwart“. Denn der der » Ursprung « 
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reits vergessen.

Das lange Zitat spricht von der „nicht zufälligen“ Analogie der Ide-
alität und der » Göttlichkeit « im Punkt der verborgenen zeitlichen 
Einheit von Über- und Allzeitlichkeit. Und während beide transkate-
gorial sind, sind sie „Tranzendentalien“ im scholastischen Sinne, die für 
alle Seienden gelten. Bis hierher ist alles wie bereits ausgeführt. Jedoch 
wohnen wir ins Auge fassen, daß im obigen Zitat betont wird, die

»Göttlichkeit« sei der Pol für die transzendentale Subjektivität. „(Gott)
ist nur für sich seiender Pol konstituierender Geschichtlichkeit und kon-
stituierender historisch transzendentaler Subjektivität.“ Ob es sich um 
Gott oder die Idee handelt, diese werden nicht eben so erschlossen, son-
dern sind stets der Pol für die transzendentale Subjektivität. Von letzterer

isoliert gibt es keine » Transzendenz «. 7

Versuchen wir diesen Sachverhalt von der Seite der transzendentalen 
Subjektivität her zu formulieren. „Die Zeit als solche“, welche sowohl 
überzeitlich als auch allzeitlich ist, kann man an sich nicht sehen. Sie 
is jedoch stets immer schon in der transzendentalen Subjektivität

7. Vgl. zudem auch folgende Stelle, wo es heißt, der Pol als » über « oder jenseits sei stets jen-
seits für das Selbst des transzendentalen Bewußtseins. „Er [der Pol] ist sein Jenseits. Er wird 
iemals wirkliche Transzendenz sein: „von jedem Ich aus ... führt der Weg als sein Weg 
(...), aber alle diese Wege führen zu demselben überweltlichen, übermenschlichen Pole Gott « 
(erb. 195 Anm.17).

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8. Tani Tôru untersucht die Gewichtigkeit dieses Sachverhalts und bestimmt ihn als „Plurali-
sierung der Welt“. Vgl. ders., Ishiki no shizen (Die Natur des Bewußtseins) 3. Teil, Kap.6 
„Fussanu to sógoshukanseit“ (Husserl und die Intersubjektivität), Keisô Shôbô , Tôkyô 1998.
dentale Subjektivität immer schon verspätet ist und es—entgegengesetzt formuliert—innerhalb der lebendigen Gegenwart oder der transzendentalen Subjektivität nie präsente andere absolute Ursprünge gibt, zur gleichen Zeit, da es reine Selbstzeitung ist, in sich selbst, sondern ist in der anderen lebendigen Gegenwart eröffnet und kann pluralisiert werden.

Nun zur nächsten Frage. Was für eine Bedeutung mag diese Erschlossenheit der transzendentalen Ökonomie der Zeit haben? Sie unterscheidet sich von der zirkulären Ökonomie der in Jahren, Monaten und Tagen berechneten Zeit und dürfte wohl nicht bei einer dieser gleismar loslösenden die transzendentale Struktur der Zeit beschreibenden konstatierenden—wobei es sich um eine seltsame „Wirklichkeit“ handeln müßte—Erklärung stehen bleiben. Das Herauslöslen der Idee oder der die lebendige Gegenwart als transzendentale Vergangenheit konstituierenden transzendentalen Göttlichkeit sowie das Erfassen der radikalen Bedeutung von Intersubjektivität ist an sich performativer Sprechakt. Aber auch wenn die transzendentale Subjektivität erschließt, die Initiative liegt nicht bei der transzendenten Subjektivität. Hier bedarf es von Seiten der transzendenten Göttlichkeit her irgendeiner Gabe. Denn ohne eine Gabe gäbe es weder eine Passivität noch eine Aktivität der transzendenten Subjektivität. Was nun aber ist diese Gabe und was heißt es, sie anzunehmen?

4. Gabe ohne Rückgabe


Wann jedoch hat sich wohl eine solche absolut vergessene reine Gabe ereignet? Wenn man den ökonomischen Zirkel durchtrennt, wird er deshalb selbstverständlich keine Zeit besitzen. Es ist zeitlose Zeit. Der Augenblick, der die Zeit zerreißt. Derrida nennt ihn „den Augenblick der Entscheidung“.

Damit es ein Ereignis (wir sagen nicht: einen Akt) der Gabe gibt, muß sich etwas zutragen, und zwar in einem Augenblick, der ganz gewiß nicht zur Ökonomie der Zeit gehört, in einer Zeit ohne Zeit, so daß das Vergessen vergibt, sich vergibt, aber auch so daß dieses Vergessen, ohne etwas Präsentes, Präsentierbares, Bestimmbares, Sinn- oder Bedeutungsvoiles zu sein, doch nicht nichts ist (ebd. 29).

Eine Gabe könnte nur möglich sein, Gabe kann es nur geben in dem Augenblick, wo ein Einbruch in den Kreis stattgefunden haben wird: in dem Augenblick, wo jede Zirkulation unterbrochen gewesen sein


Derridas Denken der Gabe und des Ereignisses gehört jedoch keineswegs zur Erde oder der Fülle, insoweit Levinas diese kritisiert. Denn ordnet das Seiende dem Sein nicht unter, definiert die Besonderheit der Seienden an deren Grenze und fordert von »mir« die Absolutheit einer Antwort darauf sowie die Verantwortung dafür (Diese Absolutheit ist ein Wahnsinn). Ein Derrida, der Levinasscher ist als Levinas. Wollen wir uns in Erinnerung rufen, daß die transzendentale Göttlichkeit und die transzendentale Subjektivität reziproke Pole sind. Es hätte sich ergeben, daß ersterer nicht ohne letzteren erscheinen kann. Dann jedoch, wenn Derrida noch weiter bis vor die transzendentale Ökonomie der Zeit zurückgeht und die transzendentale Göttlichkeit als Gabe der Zeit denkt, erhebt dies zur gleichen Zeit auch »mir«, der ich transzendentale Subjektivität bin, gegenüber die der Gabe der Zeit entsprechende Forderung. In dem Sinne jedoch, daß man, insofern die Gabe reine Gabe ist, ihr gegenüber den Umfang der Rückgabe nicht bemessen kann, handelt es sich um eine unerhöhte Forderung. Was denn aber ist die der Gabe der ursprünglichen Zeit entsprechende unerhöhte Forderung? Was ist die mit der transzendentalen Ökonomie der Zeit zusammenfallende und dennoch minimal hervorstehende Ökonomie, welche wohl auch wieder eine Ökonomie ist?

5. Ökonomie des Opfers und Opfer der Ökonomie


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In Donner la mort (wir zitieren als DM) führt Derrida neuerlich die oben angeführte Wendung Kierkegaards, der Augenblick der Entscheidung sei ein Wahnsinn, an.


Dieser „völlig Anderer“ bedeutet aber nicht allein den einzigen Gott.


Absolute Ausgezeichnetheit bedeutet unerreichbar, einsam, transzendent, nicht manifest, meinem *Ego* nicht originär präsent zu sein. (So hat Husserl vom *alter ego* gesagt, welches sich meinem eigenen Bewußtsein niemals originär präsentiert und das ich nur auf appräsentative und analoge Weise erfassen kann). Das, was es von der Beziehung Abrahams zu Gott heißt, heißt es von der eigenen Beziehung ohne Beziehung zu allen Anderen als gänzlich Andere, insbesondere zu meinem Nächsten oder den Meinen, die mir auch unerreichbar, verborgen und transzendent sind wie Jahwe. Alle Anderen (im Sinne eines jeden Anderen) sind gänzlich Andere (absolute Andere) (DM 76–77).


IV. The Moment of Tears


Gott beschließt den Opferprozess auszusetzen. Er wendet sich an Abraham, der zu ihm gesagt hat „Ich habe im Augenblick gesehen, daß du begriffen hast, was die absolute Pflicht dem Einzigen gegenüber ist, daß man zu antworten hat, wo es keinen Grund zu verlangen und keinen Grund zu geben gibt. Ich sehe, daß du dies nicht nur in Gedanken verstanden hast, sondern, und das ist hier die Verantwortung, daß du gehandelt hast, daß du ins Werk gesetzt hast, daß du im selben Augenblick bereit warst, zum Akt überzugehen. (Gott hält ihn in dem Augenblick zurück, wo es keine Zeit mehr gibt, wo Zeit nicht mehr gegeben ist). Dies ist gleichsam so, als hätte Abraham Isaak bereits getötet: Der Begriff des Augenblicks ist stets unerläßlich.“


6. Die transzendente Ökonomie und das Opfer der Ökonomie —Der Moment des Tränenvergießens

Nun publizierte Derrida etwa zeitgleich zu dem Kolloquium, in dem Donner la mort erörtert wurde, Mémoires d’aveugle (im folgenden zitiert als MA). In diesem Text diskutiert er angeleitet von eigenen familiären


Erinnerungen und einem aufgezeichneten merkwürdigen Traum (Erinnerung oder Traum hängen mit dem Ereignis zusammen), eine alte Geschichte aus dem *Alten Testament* von einem Blinden und dessen Sohn. Dieser ist Abrahams einziger Sohn, der aus Alter erblindete Isaak. Er möchte, bevor er stirbt, seinen Sohn Esau segnen, jedoch segnet er den durch seine Frau Rebekka heimisch ausgetauschten anderen Sohn Jakob. Derrida sagt, was hier in Frage steht, sei das Wie der Wahl zwischen den beiden Brüdern, wobei die Abraham vorgehaltene Frage, „wie einen Sohn opfern?“ (MA 30) verdoppelt sei. Es sei schwerer, als zwischen den Pupillen seiner beiden Augen zu wählen, die einander ersetzen können (vgl. ebd.).


Weshalb jedoch kann man das? Derrida nennt es „Glauben“.

Ob es sich um Schrift oder Zeichnung, um das *Buch Tobit* oder die sich darin befindlichen Vorstellungen handelt, die Anmut des Verlaufs bedeutet, daß es im Ursprung des *graphein* eher Schuld und Gabe gibt, als eine repräsentative Genauigkeit (fidélité). Präziser formuliert heißt dies, die Treue (fidélité) des Glaubens ist wichtiger als die Repräsentation, die sie befiehlt, und geht folglich der Bewegung voraus. Und der Glaube ist in seinem eigenen Moment blind. Er opfert das Sehen, selbst wenn dies zuletzt um zu sehen geschieht. Das Performativ, welches sich hier in Szene setzt, ist, eher als das sichtbare Objekt, eher als die konstruktividen Beschreibung von dem, was ist, oder von dem, was man vor sich bemerkt, dasjenige eines »Zurückzugebens des Sehens«. Die Wahrheit gehört zur Bewegung der Schuldbegleichung, die vergeblich darum bemüht ist, sich adäquat ihrer Ursache oder ihrer Angelegenheit zurückzugeben. Diese erscheint im Gegenteil nur im Bruch der Disproportion. Das rechte Maß der »Rückgabe« ist ausgeschlossen—oder unendlich. Zurückzugeben ist Sache der Toten, des gegebenen oder verlangten Todes (ebd. 36).


Erstere ist Blindsein als Möglichkeitsbedingung (bzw. Unmöglichkeitsbedingung) des Schilderns oder Sehens und letztere notwendiges

Was aber für ein Augenblick mag es wohl sein, in dem zwei Blindheiten gleichzeitig als notwendig bestimmt werden? Anders gesagt, was geschieht wohl im Augenblick des Wahrnsins der Entscheidung, der gleichzeitig die transzendentale Ökonomie und das Opfer der Ökonomie verlangt? Es ist das Tränenvergießen. Eigentlich bedecken die Tränen genau im Augenblick des Augenschlags den Augapfel, unterstützen gleichsam die Atmung desselben und sind für das Sehvermögen unentbehrlich. Da es hier jedoch bereits um ein Sehen, das die Sehkraft übersteigt, geht, stehen Tränen, die aus dem Grund der Sehkraft hervorströmen, zur Diskussion.

Im Grunde, im Grunde des Auges, dürfte dieses nicht zum Sehen, sondern zum Weinen bestimmt sein. Selbst in dem Moment, in dem die Tränen das Sehen verschleiern, entschleiern sie wohl das Eigentümliche des Auges. Das, was sie außerhalb des Vergessens, wo der Blick die Wahrheit verborgen hält, hervorquellen lassen, ist nichts anderes als die aletheia, die Wahrheit der Augen, deren oberste Bestimmung sie so auch enthüllen. Nämlich, lieber die flehende Bitte statt des Schauens zu beabsichtigen, lieber zu beten, Liebe, Freude oder Traurigkeit zu verbreiten, als zu blicken. Die Offenbarung ist der Moment der „Freudentränen“ noch vor der Erhellung (ebd. 125).

(...) Im Gegensatz zu dem, was man zu wissen glaubt, ist der beste Gesichtspunkt (der point de vue [oder das nicht-Sehen] wird unser Thema gewesen sein) ein Quell- und Wasserpunkt, der zu den Tränen zurückkehrt. Die Blindheit, die das Auge öffnet, ist nicht diejenige, welche den Blick verdunkelt. Die offenbarende Blindheit, die apoka-

14 Vgl. MA 96 und 123.

lyptische Blindheit, diejenige, welche die Wahrheit der Augen selbst offenbart, dies dürfte der mit Tränen verhüllte Blick sein (ebd. 128).

Der Augenblick des Tränenvergießens ist derjenige des Gebets, der Liebe, der Freude und der Traurigkeit. Ob Abraham in diesem Augenblick wohl keine Tränen vergossen hat? Und ob er den „sehenden Tränen“ (ebd. 130) wohl nicht geglaubt hat? Wollen wir abschließend einen flüchtigen Blick auf das werfen, was die herablaufenden Tränen im Augenblick, da man weint, sehen.

7. Die kommen müßende Zukunft wird plurale reine Besonderheiten wohl erneut verknüpfen—die Zeit der Gerechtigkeit


Nun war die Erlösung und Heilung, deren Eintreffen in der Zukunft ersehnt wird, aber die Ankunft des Sohnes. Und dieser Sohn, obwohl der Ökonomie angehörend, zerstört sie in ihrem Innern. ... um in das „Messianische“ und formuliert wie folgt diesen Namen auch in „Foi et savoir“ (wir zitieren als FS):

21 Erster Name: das Messianische oder die Messianität ohne Messianismus. Dies ist wohl die Offenheit (ouverture) zur Zukunft oder zum Kommen des Anderen als Beginn der Regenschaft der Gerechtigkeit, jedoch ohne Erwartungshorizont und ohne prophetische Präfiguration.
Das Kommen des Anderen kann nur plötzlich eintreten als eine singuläre Begebenheit, da, wo keine Antizipation greift, da, wo der Andere und der Tod—und das radikale Böse—in jedem Augenblick überraschen können (FS 27).

22 (…) Diese abstrakte Messianität gehört von Beginn an zur Glaubenserfahrung (l’expérience de la foi), zur Erfahrung des Glaubens (du croire) oder zur Erfahrung eines auf Wissen irreduziblen Vertrauens (un crédit) und zur Erfahrung einer Vertrauenswürdigkeit (fiabilité), die sämtliche Beziehungen zum Anderen im Zeugnis »fundiert« (ebd. 28).


15. Der Entschluß hier ist aber bereits keine Selbstentscheidung. Er ist stets eine „Entscheidung des Anderen“, (...) durch eine Entscheidung, die darin bestehen kann, den Anderen kommen zu lassen und scheinbar die passive Form einer Entscheidung des Anderen anzunehmen. Zudem ist die Entscheidung selbst dort, wo sie in sich erscheint, in mir, stets die des Anderen, was mich aus keiner Verantwortung entfaltet“ (FS 27–28).

16. Vgl. hierzu insbesondere De l’existence à l’existant (im folgenden zitiert als EE), 153ff. Später

nennt Levinas „die Zeit der Gerechtigkeit“, „die unendliche Zeit“ oder „messianische Zeit“.


18. „Es (das Heil) kann nur von anderswoher kommen, wenn alles im Subjekt hier ist (ebd. 159).“
göttliche Dimension, die den positiv verstandenen Religionen, was sie auch immer sein mögen—etwa den als „abrahamische Religionen“ verstandenen Wüstenreligionen—, nicht zugehört.


Es handelt sich wohl um eine Bindung, die nicht einmal der jeder Gemeinschaftlichkeit vorangehenden Brüderlichkeit (fraternité), von der Levinas spricht, entspricht. Derrida nennt sie „die Wüste“, bei der es sich überdies nicht um die „Wüste der Offenbarung“, sondern um „eine Wüste in der Wüste“ handele.

Wenden wir uns hin zur Wüste... In diesem Augenblick werfen nicht trocknende „sehende Tränen“ möglicherweise einen flüchtigen Blick auf die „Wüste in der Wüste“. Nur Tränen werden diese wohl flüchtig erblicken. Wenn demnach in dieser Wüste ohne jedweden Trost und Kompensation Wasser hervorquellen sollten, so wären dies sicherlich Tränen. 19


Abkürzungsverzeichnis:

[„Violence et Métaphysique” in L’écriture et la différence, Le Seuil, Paris 1967.]
[Donner le temps 1. La fausse monnaie, Galliére, Paris 1991.]
1. La différence

den Verbrauch“ (perte) sowie den Tod (vgl. ebd.). Zur gleichen Zeit, da dies zum einen die Möglichkeitsbedingung von Gegenwart, Präsenz und Identität ist, ist es des weiteren die Umnöglichkeitsbedingung von Identität, weil sie zur Zeitlichkeit (zur Verzeitlichung), die konzentriert in Gegenwart und Präsenz nicht sein kann (vgl. die „Vergangenheit“, die niemals präsent gewesen ist (ebd.22)) und zur Andersheit, die auf das Selbst zurückgeführt nicht sein kann (vgl. die gewisse Andersheit, der Freud den metaphysischen Namen des Unbewußten gibt, die sich definitiv allen Prozessen der Präsentation entzieht (soustraite) (ebd.21) geöffnet ist.


2. Le don


ein reines Opfer, das einzig mit der reinen Gabe korrespondiert.


3. Die kommen müssende Zukunft (à-venir)

Derridas Denken entwickelte sich durch den Problembereich von „différence“ und „Gabe“ hindurch, welche die zirkuläre Ökonomie der Zeit zwar ermöglichen, diese aber auch hervortreten lassen. Von da aus wurde die transzendentele Ökonomie der Zeit, bei der sich die Beziehung zu einem singulären Anderen als eine „Vergangenheit“, die niemals präsent ist, in der Gegenwart festmacht, aufgewiesen. Hierbei ist es jedoch wichtig, daß diese gleichzeitig mit der „Zukunft“ (avenir) in Beziehung steht. Derrida akzeptiert die Dimension der Gabe, die „vor“ (pré) der „Gegenwart“ (présent) oder aber der Anwesenheit (présence) die absolute Vorgängigkeit (précédence) oder Zuvorkommenheit (prévenance) des Anderen bedeutet und schreibt, die Heterogenität des pré bezeichne zwar gewiß das, was vor einem, vor aller Gegenwart und folglich vor aller vergangenen Gegenwart komme, jedoch auch das, was aus der Zukunft oder als Zukunft komme: als die Ankunft selbst des Ereignisses (vgl. „Spectres de Marx“ (Galilée, 1993, 56). „Zukunft“ ist hier etwas, das man niemals erwarten kann, stets „Kommen-müssendes“ (à-venir), Ereignis.


François Jullien, dans *Fonder la morale*, n’a pour propos ni de justifier la morale, ni de la nier, mais de raviver—de désenliser, dit-il—le débat sur la question. Pour inventer une autre manière de parler de la morale, il fallait relativiser notre désir de lui trouver un fondement, en critiquant le cadre métaphysique de la pensée européenne. Mencius se voit assigner le rôle d’interlocuteur dans ce dialogue opposant deux traditions philosophiques différentes.

Cependant, ce rôle lui est assigné dans un cadre bien délimité. François Jullien approuve Nietzsche lorsque celui-ci affirme qu’il vaut mieux comparer des moralités que fonder la morale. C’est pourquoi, à la suite de Nietzsche, en comparant les conceptions européenne et chinoise de la morale, il part à la recherche à travers ce dialogue du fondement de la morale—la question de fond de la morale. Ce mode unique de comparaison revient en fait à mettre en branle ces deux cadres de pensée, dont l’entrecroisement de leurs problématiques respectives : ce qui est pour chacune d’entre elles le préjugé, la motivation, l’évidence même de la morale. Les positions de chaque camp ne sortent pas raffermies de cet ébranlement, chacun voit au contraire ses points d’appui s’effondrer un par un. ¹

C’est sans doute pour cela que Mencius nous présente dans cet ouvrage un visage relativement inconnu, que ce soit à « nos » yeux d’Européen, de Chinois ou de Japonais. Nous sommes loin ici des discussions familières du maître sur le « sentiment d’insupportable », les « quatre bouts » et la « bonté naturelle ».

1. Le sentiment de l’insupportable

François Jullien commence ce livre en citant des anecdotes bien connues tirées du *Mencius*: celle du bœuf sacrifié, celle de l’enfant sur le point de tomber dans un puits, et la discussion du sentiment provoqué en nous par ces scènes. Mais au lieu de les considérer comme des leçons à suivre, il se lance dans une comparaison entre ce sentiment et la « pitié » européenne, il s’en sert pour élucider le caractère « transindividuel » des existences. Le « sentiment de l’insupportable » est une « réaction » venant de l’Autre, un phénomène « transindividuel » qui ébranle le moi intérieur et provoque l’émotion. Il diffère sensiblement de la pitié telle que Rousseau l’explique, à savoir une variation de « l’amour de soi »—une idée qui repose sur l’isolement fondamental de l’ego; il n’a pas non plus grand chose à voir avec la pitié selon Schopenhauer, qui lui dénie tout autre statut que celui de mythe. Ce sentiment devrait pourtant sans doute permettre de démêler l’écheveau des difficultés rencontrées par ces deux philosophes dans leur traitement du phénomène de la pitié, dont les Européens se demandent simplement s’il provient du Moi ou de l’Autre, et s’il est intersubjectif ou non. Dès lors que ce phénomène est replacé dans la logique mencienne, nous arrivons à mieux élucider le processus de la communication avec l’autre qui est en cause. Mencius précède ici l’interrogation européenne.

Cependant, il est à noter que Jullien n’oppose jamais de façon immédiate la pensée chinoise au schéma européen de l’individualisme. Car s’il affirme à plusieurs reprises que la pensée chinoise n’est pas individualiste, il affirme également qu’elle ne nie pas l’individualité. Il nous faut penser l’individualisation autrement qu’à travers les notions d’individualisme et repenser la relation avec l’autre.

Si l’on pose pour principe que le « sentiment de l’insupportable » est effectivement un sentiment et qu’il relève de l’expérience, on peut lui reprocher, comme Kant, de manquer du caractère universel qui rend l’action moralement obligatoire. Par contre, si l’on sépare morale et

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2. Ibid., chapitres 1, 3, 4 et 5.
3. Ibid., p. 40.
4. Ibid., p. 34.
5. Ibid., p. 39.
expérience comme le fait Kant, il devient impossible d’expliquer comment l’homme peut s’intéresser à l’injonction morale. Jullien dit que Kant ici est obligé de recourir encore une fois à la tradition religieuse et de laïciser le commandement de Dieu en tant qu’impératif catégorique.  

Alors, comment faire pour éviter la dichotomie entre pitié et devoir, sentiment et raison, entre l’expérience et ce qui la dépasse ? Sur ce point, Jullien remarque que la définition mencienne du « sentiment de l’insupportable » nous permet d’avoir accès à un « bout » de notre conscience morale. Le « sentiment de l’insupportable » ne fonctionne pas comme des « exempla de la moralité » , mais plutôt comme des « indices » où se montre à nous au cœur de l’expérience une « logique » (li) qui appartient à une autre dimension que l’expérience. Pas d’opposition ici entre « sentiment » et « logique ». Par une réaction qui relève du « sentiment », malgré nous, nous touchons d’un coup le fond de l’immanence. La nature humaine est en elle-même une injonction morale, et relève de la « Voie du Ciel ».  

2. La concordance entre le devoir et l’être  

Arrêtons-nous un instant sur l’idée mencienne de bonté de la nature humaine. Elle signifie que l’homme est doué d’une tendance à la bonté, elle n’implique en rien que l’homme soit né bon. L’homme devra donc déployer des efforts considérables pour que sa bonté s’épanouisse à chaque instant de sa conduite. Sur ce point donc, dit Jullien, la critique de Xunzi, qui réduit la bonté de la nature mencienne à une bonté innée est hors de propos. De plus, bien que Xunzi veuille faire exercer la morale par l’action artificielle du Sage et la transformation de la nature humaine, il ne parvient pas à expliquer de façon convaincante pourquoi le Sage aurait la faculté de pratiquer cette morale. D’accord, peut-être la critique de Xunzi contre Mencius est-elle infondée sur ce point. Mais comment résoudre en ce cas la question du mal : comment l’homme peut-il être  

6. Ibid., p. 47.  
7. Ibid., p. 52.  
8. Ibid., p. 66.  
9. Ibid., chapitres 6, 7, 8 et 9.
La réponse de Mencius à cette question est bien connue: l’homme aurait perdu sa nature originelle, il se serait donc corrompu. Sur ce point, il n’existe guère de différences entre Kant, Rousseau et Mencius. Mencius se distingue cependant des Européens qui interprètent cette corruption comme une fatalité—le péché original, et qui proposent de recouvrer leur vraie nature par l’intermédiaire du Christ. Pour Mencius, cette perte se produit au niveau individuel, tout comme chacun d’entre nous peut redécouvrir sa nature individuellement, s’il sait maintenir sa conscience en éveil. Il ne s’agit donc pas de se plier à un devoir qui pose la moralité comme un but que l’homme serait contraint de viser, mais d’obéir à l’injonction de sa nature et de se mettre en accord avec elle. Si telle action convient à telle circonstance, moralement c’est bien suffisant.

En un mot, cette concordance entre le devoir et l’être peut se résumer par la formule « l’homme est humain » ou encore « l’homme est ren ».

Jullien dit : « Être non-ren, c’est être gourd. Être ren, au contraire, se montrer humain, c’est sortir sa conscience de son engourdissement vis-à-vis des autres, être réceptif à ce qui leur arrive, sentir renforcé son lien vital avec eux ». 10 Grâce au « sentiment de l’insupportable », le cœur qui s’était refermé sur son individualité commence à rétablir le lien vivant avec l’Autre. L’ordre politique lui-même est garanti par cette « solidarité ». De cette façon, en suivant une voie immanente, l’être, la morale et la politique ne font qu’un. Je crois pourtant que cette théorie ne suffit pas à résoudre le problème du mal.

La difficulté ne tient-elle pas de la différence du cadre de pensée existant entre l’Europe et la Chine ? Sur la responsabilité, par exemple, la tradition chrétienne européenne veut que l’homme exerce librement sa volonté en choisissant de commettre ou non un péché. Le sentiment du péché et du remords est donc inséparable de la notion de responsabilité. La notion de responsabilité chez les Chinois fait dépendre la responsabilité du regard d’autrui, et s’accompagne par là d’un souci du monde extérieur. Autrement dit, dans la tradition chrétienne européenne, la notion de responsabilité acquiert une dimension métaphysique devant

un Autre, transcendant comme Dieu, mais la responsabilité vis-à-vis du monde extérieur est reléguée au second plan. En Chine, par contre, la responsabilité peut aboutir à la soi-disant « subjectivité » humaine grâce à la coïncidence entre morale et politique, mais elle n’arrive pas au stade de la rencontre totale et intériorisée avec l’autre ou l’Autre.

3. Volonté et liberté contre spontanéité

En d’autres termes, les notions de volonté et de liberté sont absentes de la pensée chinoise. La notion de volonté est apparue en Europe chrétienne avec celle de péché, conçue comme le pouvoir de dire « non », de désobéir à Dieu et de s’en éloigner. Par la suite, la volonté fut définie comme le pouvoir de choisir et de décider, ou bien comme une causalité, puis a fini par être critiquée avec Nietzsche. La pensée chinoise s’est toujours passée de cette notion. L’homme n’est pas interprété en fonction de ses choix et ses actes, mais selon le modèle de la plante qui pousse toute seule si on la met dans un terreau favorable. L’homme progressera naturellement s’il réduit de lui-même ses désirs individuels, si on assure la suffisance de ses biens matériels, et si on le place dans un environnement moral, comme une plante pousse et porte des fruits si on lui en fournit les conditions nécessaires. Ici, encore une fois, l’être, la morale et la politique sont donnés pour équivalents, s’unissent « spontanément ». Mais, dans un tel cadre de pensée, une réflexion sur le mal est difficile, surtout le mal radical. La pensée chinoise n’aurait-elle pas évité la difficile question du mal ?

Le même schéma se répète par rapport à la notion de liberté. L’Europe suppose que c’est la liberté qui rend possibles le choix et l’action, et le moi est posée comme une cause libre. Par contre, la Chine idéalise la spontanéité dans la nature humaine à l’instar du modèle de la poussée végétale. En Europe, Kant ainsi que Rousseau divisent le monde en deux: le monde sensible soumis au déterminisme des lois de la nature ; et le monde intelligible où règne la liberté, division qui a pour parallèle celle du corps et de l’âme. Mencius, lui, ne dédouble ni le monde ni l’homme,

11. Ibid., chapitres 10 et 11.
il n’y a pour lui qu’une différence de valeurs, et non une différence d’essence. Il suffit de prendre conscience de cette réalité et d’agir en conséquence.

4. Le Ciel : l’absolutisation de l’immanence

Ainsi, dans la pensée chinoise, ce qui est moral, c’est très exactement la réalisation dans ce monde de la justice et du bonheur. La vertu est en ce monde ce qui convient le mieux à l’intérêt général. Il n’y a pas de compensation dans l’autre monde pour ce que la vertu a accompli, parce que c’est en ce monde que la vertu est récompensée. On pourrait dire que c’est l’alliance de la vertu kantienne et de la virtu machiavélienne. C’est pourquoi Mencius dit qu’« un prince humain ne saurait avoir d’adversaire dans le monde entier ». Cette affirmation nous laisse perplexe: qu’est-ce qui lui permet de dire ça, qu’est-ce cela présuppose comme fondement?


Néanmoins, nombreux sont les exemples d’hommes dont la conduite morale reste sans récompense. Il existe un mal qui ne serait pas enfermé dans la coïncidence idéale entre l’être, la morale et la politique. Jullien dit

12. Ibid., chapitres 12, 13, 14 et 15.
que Mencius a entrevu ce problème, et qu’il a recours alors au Ciel au sens traditionnel (religieux) du terme. Tout comme Kant et de Rousseau, qui recourent à la foi quand la morale atteint sa limite. Mencius ne s’écarte cependant jamais de la dimension existentielle, de la voie de l’immanence. Pour connaître l’injonction qui vient du Ciel religieux, il nous faut tout d’abord connaître notre nature. Pour servir le Ciel, il nous faut maintenir notre conscience et nourrir notre nature à tout prix.  

5. Des limites de la pensée chinoise

En somme, on dirait que Jullien juge Mencius incapable de s’opposer suffisamment au mal. Même Kant et Rousseau, qui ne purent s’affranchir de la théologie, ont su traiter en profondeur la question du mal. Il est sûr que Jullien a beaucoup d’estime pour la pensée chinoise, qui tente à ses yeux de fonder la morale sans recourir à la dimension métaphysique, qui trace son chemin sur la voie de l’immanence et reste dans une dimension naturelle, sans transcendance. Mais en même temps, il semble y trouver comme un manque de souffle. Pour penser le mal en tant que mal, n’est-il pas inévitable de passer par une confrontation entre la foi et la raison, ou encore par des problématiques européennes comme la volonté, Dieu et la liberté ? Autrement dit, n’est-il pas nécessaire de douter de l’identité entre l’être et la morale dans la pensée chinoise ?

Une autre limite de la pensée chinoise constatée par Jullien concerne l’ordre politique. Tout en reconnaissant l’importance de voir dans la politique le prolongement de la morale, il se demande si la pensée chinoise n’en perdait pas toute possibilité d’asseoir un ordre politique légitime sur un fondement juridique, ou d’inventer l’institution politique (en l’occurrence la « démocratie »). Sa critique est formulée de la façon suivante: « Entre les deux [rite et norme], il n’y a rien: ni lois ni institutions, à proprement parler, mais les seuls rouges du pouvoir (la machine étatique). Et ce vide se mesure encore aujourd’hui ».  Il regrette particulièrement que Mencius ait fondé l’injonction du Ciel sur l’opinion du peuple sans pouvoir développer le concept d’institutions démocratiques. « Mencius

15. Ibid., p. 204.
16. Ibid., p. 106.
lui-même, après avoir été si avant pour penser un fondement autonome de la morale, est contraint au retrait.  

6. Xunzi: une alternative à la voie mencienne de l'immanence

Toutefois, la situation n’est sans doute pas si simple. La pensée chinoise ne parvient pas à cerner le problème du mal dans sa totalité. Le discours sur le mal radical chez Kant est supérieur dans le sens où il peut confronter le mal en tant que mal, en le fondant sur une volonté libre et une tendance naturelle. Mais comme le remarque justement Jullien, Kant est finalement tout de même obligé de recourir au dispositif théologique. Et surtout, ni Mencius ni Kant n’ont fait l’expérience du mal absolu que nous a apportée le 20ème siècle. Notre réalité pourrait dépasser le dialogue entre Mencius et Kant.

Lorsqu’il évoque la pensée chinoise, Jullien fait avant tout dans cet ouvrage mention de Mencius, et Xunzi n’est évoqué qu’en passant. Or une autre lecture de Xunzi nous semble possible que celle proposée par Jullien.


17. Ibid., p. 182.
18. Ibid., p. 68.
Ces objections ne sont pas très originales. Si nous nous risquions ici à défendre Xunzi, nous rétorquerions en disant que ces critiques sont elles-mêmes fondées sur l’essentialisme, qui présuppose la nature comme une sorte d’essence. Elles réduisent la dynamique de la poiesis ou du pouvoir (situé dans une dimension autre que l’essence) à la dimension de l’être. Autrement dit, Xunzi, en critiquant tout discours essentialiste, cherche à la morale un fondement extérieur. Évidemment, ce fondement extérieur n’est pas une instance transcendantale comme le Ciel. Xunzi arrache l’homme du Ciel et rejette toute forme de Ciel, aussi bien le Ciel en tant que Dieu personnel que le Ciel transcendance qui surgit de l’absolutisation de l’immanence. Donc, ce fondement externe se place au niveau de la poiesis, et pourrait être défini par le terme de « quasi-transcendantal ». Car il ne s’agit pas d’une extériorité substantielle qui s’opposerait à l’intériorité de la nature humaine (et qui risquerait d’ailleurs facilement d’y être réduite), mais plutôt d’une différence posée par rapport à la nature humaine, et qui concerne les conditions de la possibilité de l’action humaine.

Les rites, les normes et les règles (les langues aussi) produits par l’action humaine ne sont jamais des créations ex nihilo. Ils prennent modèle sur les actions passées en « apprenant l’action d’autrefois », ils ne sont qu’historiques. Donc cette communication, cette transmission créatrice présuppose dès le début la possibilité de la transmission à l’autre. C’est dans cette perspective que Xunzi peut disserter sur le pouvoir du souverain, sur les notions de contrat et de promesse (concepts qui selon Jullien sont absents dans la pensée chinoise).

Bien sûr, même si on peut défendre Xunzi là-dessus, il y a certains points sur lesquels il ne pourra pas échapper à la critique. Par exemple il faut bien reconnaître que Xunzi dépend trop des facultés du Sage, une espèce de surhomme. Les autres hommes trouvent tant bien que mal leur place dans ce schéma, mais sont privés de l’accès au fondement de la morale trouvé dans la dimension poétique. De ce point de vue, il est utile de reconsidérer encore une fois la voie mencienne de l’immanence.

19. Le Xunzi : chapitre « xinge ». 
7. D’autres tentatives pour poursuivre la voie mencienne de l’immanence: Wang Longxi et Li Zhuowu

Toutefois, pour cela, nous ne devons dépasser le texte de Mencius, et nous pencher aussi sur les discours postérieurs. Il est indispensable de faire dialoguer Kant et Rousseau avec les penseurs chinois qui leur sont contemporains. Ici je voudrais m’intéresser surtout à la réflexion de Dai Zhen (1724–77), un lettré connu pour son rôle prépondérant dans l’école herméneutique des Qing, et qui avait le même âge que Kant.

Avant de discuter de Dai Zhen, abordons brièvement la question du désir. Des penseurs appartenant à l’aile gauche de l’école de Wang Yang-ming (Yangming-xue) se sont efforcés d’aller jusqu’au bout de la voie mencienne de l’immanence. Parmi eux, Wang Longxi (Wang Ji 1498–1583), connu pour sa thèse du « ni bien ni mal » ou du « bien suprême »: puisque tous les hommes sont au-delà de la dualité du bien et du mal, ils ne sont que bons. Lui aussi admet que le fondement du bien remonte à la nature originelle de l’homme, mais, pour y retourner, celui-ci doit aller jusqu’au bout de sa nature grâce à la « bonne connaissance ».

Savoir que l’appétit et le désir sexuel relèvent de la nature humaine ne suffit pas pour s’assurer que la nature humaine provient du Ciel. S’en tenir là nous entraîne vers la satisfaction immodérée de nos désirs, ce que l’homme de bien ne saurait considérer comme la « nature humaine ». 

Autrement dit, Wang Longxi ne considère pas les désirs; par exemple l’appétit et le désir sexuel, comme positifs en soi, mais les approuve seulement une fois qu’ils ont été modérés par l’action de la « bonne connaissance ».

Quand on voit de la nourriture, on sait ce qu’est l’appétit. Quand on


voit un objet sexuel, on sait ce qu’est le désir sexuel. Mais une telle connaissance n’est pas « bonne ». La bonne connaissance se plie spontanément à la règle du Ciel, s’adapte à l’instant, modère avec mesure, et prévient l’excès. Mencius, tout en disant qu’il est dans la nature humaine que la « bouche recherche le bon goût et l’œil recherche le beau, affirme d’autre part qu’il y a là un ordre ». C’est précisément pour aller jusqu’au bout de la nature humaine que cet ordre est nécessaire.

La nature humaine n’est pas bonne en soi, telle qu’elle, elle le devient seulement quand l’homme va jusqu’au bout de sa nature, guidé dans son jugement par sa « bonne connaissance ».

Li Zhuowu (Li Zhi 1527–1602) a lui aussi cherché à fonder la morale sur le désir.

S’habiller et se nourrir sont des actes moraux sans lesquels aucune morale n’est possible. […] Celui qui parvient à la compréhension lucide et atteint le vrai vide agira guidé par cette morale; ceux qui n’y parvient pas ne fera que pratiquer cette morale et sombrera dans l’incohérence, sa conscience ne s’éveillera jamais.

L’important est de ne pas approuver le désir tel quel, et de devenir moral à travers une compréhension lucide de nos désirs, sans laquelle on se contentera de pratiquer une morale préétablie, ce qui n’est jamais moral.

8. L’espace public : Dai Zhen

Wang Longxi et Li Zhuowu, loin d’un discours simplificateur sur la bonté de la nature humaine et l’essence positive du désir, insistent avec force sur le passage indispensable par la connaissance ou la conscience.

25. Ibid.
C’est sur ce point que Dai Zhen les a rejoints.

Dai Zhen aborde la bonté naturelle menciennée sous un angle nouveau, par la distinction qu’il opère entre la « nature », que tous les êtres vivants ont en commun, et la « bonté naturelle », spécifique elle aux humains. La « nature » s’applique aux plantes ou aux animaux également, mais la « bonté naturelle » est le propre de l’homme. Quelle différence y a-t-il donc entre les deux?

Le désir est le naturel du sang et de l’énergie, et il est aussi le naturel de la conscience de se réjouir de la vertu excellente, ce que Mencius formule par le terme « la bonté naturelle ». Il n’existe personne qui ne se réjouisse de connaître le sens des choses grâce à la conscience naturelle. Mais à ce stade, on n’est pas encore parvenu à en saisir totalement le sens et à faire sien le sens du juste. Partir du naturel du sang et de l’énergie, puis l’examiner minutieusement, pour en comprendre le nécessaire, voilà en quoi consiste le sens des choses. Le naturel et le nécessaire ne sont pas deux dimensions distinctes. C’est le nécessaire qui éclaire entièrement le naturel, et qui permet de surmonter tout regret et de parvenir à la paix de l’esprit. Telle est la loi suprême du naturel. Si on laisse libre cours au naturel, on finira au contraire par le perdre, et par aller à l’encontre du naturel. C’est donc par le retour au nécessaire qu’on accomplit le naturel.  

La distinction opérée ainsi par Dai Zhen entre la « nature » et la « bonté naturelle » revient en fin de compte à celle opérée entre « naturel » et « nécessaire », deux dimensions moins différentes qu’il n’y paraît, puisque le nécessaire est la « loi suprême » du naturel. Pas de différence substantielle entre les deux, donc, et le nécessaire apparaît comme en simple décalage avec le naturel. Dai Zhen désigne aussi l’achèvement du naturel par le nécessaire sous le terme de « déploiement », qui nécessite une connaissance appelée shenchá (examen minutieux du naturel). De quoi s’agit-il ? Ici Dai Zhen, comme Wang Longxi, fait appel à la notion de goût.

27. Dai Zhen, *Commentaire critique du sens des termes dans le Mencius* : chapitre « xing ».
Le Zhongyong dit que « tous les hommes mangent et boivent, mais il y a peu d’hommes qui savent savourer le goût des choses ».

Manger et boire est une métaphore de la vie quotidienne, être capable de savourer le goût des choses signifie mener une vie sans faute de conduite. Si, en quittant la vie quotidienne, on essayait de penser le « dao », ce serait comme essayer de rechercher la saveur au-delà de la nourriture.

Dai Zhen exige donc le jugement du goût au sens kantien. L’important n’est pas de manger, mais de savourer.

Dai Zhen paraphrase ce jugement du goût en recourant au terme de « jugement » (quan): « le « jugement » est le moyen de distinguer la légèreté de la gravité, qui permet à la conscience éclairée d’aboutir à la distinction des choses et à l’équilibre ». Le « jugement » est la force qui détermine les événements individuels et leur rend leur sens propre. Donc, plus qu’à une situation normale où le degré de légèreté et de gravité est déjà fixé, il convient surtout à une période de changement, où les échelles de valeur sont perturbées. La plupart des hommes ne s’attachent qu’à la légèreté et la gravité préétablies, ils n’essaient pas de porter un jugement sur les événements par eux-mêmes. Surtout, les lettrés confucéens des Song « s’attachent au « principe » (li) et n’ont pas de « jugement » ». Il ne faut pas commencer par le principe, mais par le jugement concret et à travers lui atteindre le principe.

En ce qui concerne la vie quotidienne, le Sage connaît bien le sentiment de tous les hommes et il sait remplir ses désirs. Porter un jugement et ne pas perdre le principe partagé, là est le principe.

En fin de compte, on pourrait dire que Dai Zhen, en allant jusqu’au bout dans la voie mencienne de l’immanence, cherchait à ouvrir une sorte d’espace public. En effet, le principe, qui s’obtient au travers des jugements concrets, est ce qui peut être possédé en commun. Tant que ce principe

30. Dai Zhen, Commentaire critique du sens des termes dans le Mencius: chapitre « dao ».
31. Dai Zhen, Commentaire critique du sens des termes dans le Mencius: chapitre « quan ».
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
n’est pas un principe préétabli, cet espace public reste dans le domaine de la subjectivité, en deçà d’un espace public objectif, mais condition première de sa possible réalisation.


9. Le politique dans la pensée chinoise

Les penseurs que nous allons maintenant évoquer plus en détail pour étoffer cette affirmation sont deux membres dans l’académie de la Forêt de l’Est, Miu Changqi (1562–1626) et Huang Zongxi (1610–95).

Miu Changqi dit que « l’opinion publique vient du naturel du cœur humain » . 36 Le cœur humain dont il s’agit ici n’est pas, précise-t-il, celui du Fils du Ciel ou des ministres, mais celui des gens du peuple « yufu yufu 優夫優婦 ». Puisque ces gens du peuple ne sont pas en position d’exprimer cette opinion publique, ils doivent se faire représenter par des ministres. En d’autres termes, puisque le naturel en lui-même n’est rien, il faut recourir pour le représenter à l’espace politique doté d’un pouvoir politique.

Cette idée se retrouve plus développée et formulée de façon encore plus nette chez Huang Zongxi, qui mentionne l’apparition du prince.

34. Immanuel Kant, Kritik der Urteilskraft, § 6 „Das Schöne ist das, was ohne Begriffe, als Objekt eines allgemeinen Wohlgefallens vorgestellt wird“.
36. Miu Changqi, Congyetang Cungao: « l’opinion public est l’énergie de l’état ». 
Au premier stade de leur vie, les gens n’agissaient que par intérêt. Personne ne travaillait au bien public, ni ne s’efforçait d’éliminer ce qui était détrimentel à tous. À ce moment survint un homme qui œuvra non pour son intérêt personnel mais au bénéfice de tous; et œuvra pour éviter non son propre détriment mais ce qui portait tort à tous.

Le prince était donc conçu à l’origine comme un dispositif d’ajustement qui permettait à tout le monde de poursuivre « ses intérêts » comme il le fallait. Aujourd’hui, au contraire, dit-il, il fait obstacle à la poursuite des désirs légitimes du peuple, et « considère ses intérêts supérieurs personnels comme l’intérêt public suprême ». Par conséquent il faut mettre en place un autre espace public, qui puisse restreindre le pouvoir politique du prince: « l’école [xuexiao 学校] ».

Ce que le Fils du Ciel juge être bien n’est pas nécessairement bien, et ce qu’il juge être mal n’est pas nécessairement mal. Il ne doit pas porter à lui seul un jugement sur le bien et le mal. Le jugement sur ce qui est bien et mal se porte à l’école et publiquement.

Cette réflexion de Huang Zongxi sur la démocratie attira plus particulièrement l’attention au début du vingtième siècle, ce qui lui a valu le surnom de « Rousseau chinois ». Même s’il y avait là une certaine exagération tenant à la situation politique de l’époque, pour en revenir à l’histoire des idées en Chine, il n’en reste pas moins qu’il s’agit là de la preuve qu’il a bien existé une pensée capable d’imaginer autrement le « politique ».

10. Redécouvrir une pensée chinoise plurielle

Bien sûr, nous ne prétendons pas pour autant que l’idée du « politique » que nous venons de déceler dans ces textes s’est ensuite épanoui autant qu’il aurait pu. À se contenter de dire qu’il a existé des germes de pensée démocratique en Chine on risque de tomber dans l’autosatisfaction. Ce

37. Huang Zongxi, Mingyi daifanglu: « le plan pour le prince ».
38. Ibid.
39. Huang Zongxi, Mingyi daifanglu: « l’école ».
qu’il faut remettre en cause, c’est le cadre fondamental de la pensée chinoise, qui a décrété l’équivalence de la morale, de la politique et de l’être. Les velléités de politique, comme les occasions de penser la morale autrement, se sont perdues dans l’adéquation entre l’être, la morale et la politique. Cette remise en cause ne se fera pas simplement en empruntant à la philosophie occidentale des catégories comme la transcendance, la volonté ou la liberté, utilisées pour donner des coups de boutoir et faire vaciller le cadre de pensée chinois. Il nous faut aussi être plus attentifs à la pluralité chinoise, ne pas négliger les tentatives, internes à la pensée chinoise, visant à s’échapper hors de la voie mécénienne de l’immanence (comme par exemple celle de Xunzi qui rejette l’équivalence être = morale = politique et propose une dimension ni immanente ni transcendantale), ni celles qui visent à aller jusqu’au bout dans cette même voie de l’immanence (comme par exemple le fait Dai Zhen en donnant une interprétation différente à cette équivalence). C’est seulement, nous semble-t-il, quand nous aurons exploré toutes ces possibilités en germe dans la pensée chinoise, quand l’onde de choc provoquée par l’interpellation du mode de pensée chinoise viendra ébranler à son tour le cadre de pensée européenne, que le dialogue souhaité par Jullien pourra se poursuivre.

Sur ce point particulier de la pluralité inscrite à l’intérieur même de la pensée chinoise, il nous semble que le Japon peut apporter une contribution intéressante au dialogue entamé par François Jullien. Nous pourrions serer de plus près l’actualité de la pensée chinoise, suivre jusqu’au bout les pistes qu’elle nous indique, investir ses notions et son cadre de pensée pour mieux s’en servir, les rendre utiles à « notre » réalité…

Mais à vrai dire, je suis un peu pessimiste sur le réalisme d’un tel projet. Peut-on vraiment mettre en pratique cette démarche au Japon, un pays où n’existe plus qu’une curiosité nostalgique pour la pensée chinoise? Est-ce que cela a encore un sens d’évoquer la pluralité de la pensée chinoise dans ce pays indifférent à la dimension philosophique de cette pensée?

Au milieu de tous ces doutes et de ce pessimisme, la pratique en apparence « anachronique » de François Jullien a son rôle à jouer. Elle nous donne le courage, sur fond de « globalisation», de mettre en œuvre ce dialogue.
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