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Dreams, Nightmares, and Green Reflections on Kurosawa and Confucian Humanism

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Introduction

In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, G. W. F. Hegel allows, with no more enthusiasm than due deference to Leibniz enabled him to muster, that the teaching of Confucius "is a moral philosophy." Elsewhere Hegel adds, less graciously, "Cicero gives us *De Officiis*, a book of moral teaching more comprehensive and better than all the books of Confucius." He continues by observing that in Confucius "there is no speculative philosophy. ... We may conclude from his original works that for their reputation it would have been better had they never been translated" (Hegel 1963: 120-121). In his *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel tacks to arrogance and condescension if not worse:

> ... when we say that the emergence of philosophy implies the consciousness of freedom, philosophy requires one people whose very existence is based on the principle mentioned above. To this end we needed thinking to be at home with itself, and consequently a separation of spirit from nature, from its immersion in matter, in intuition, in natural or non-rational willing, etc. The shape preceding this stage is ... the stage of the unity of spirit with nature. This unity ... is not the true one. Therefore they all err who assume that the unity of spirit with nature is the most excellent mode of consciousness. On the contrary, this stage is the lowest, the least true; it is not produced by spirit itself. It is the nature of the Oriental world in general. On the other hand, the

> first form of free and spiritual self-consciousness, and therefore the beginning of philosophy, is to be found in the Greeks. ... [I]n the Oriental world there can be no question of philosophy strictly so-called. The reason is that ... the spirit does not arise there, but the situation is that the subject, the individual, is not a person but has the character of being submerged in the objective (Hegel 1985: 166-167).

In recognizing the "radical immanence" of Confucius' thought (Ames 1987: 12-21), Hegel was perceptive. However, whether his positioning of Oriental philosophy at the bottom, as "the lowest, the least true," has merit other than as eloquent ethnocentrism is surely questionable.

With the rise of environmental philosophy and increasing credibility of what the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (1912-2009) calls "deep ecology", or recognition, in principle, of the integrity of all organisms and a degree of "ecological egalitarianism" (Naess 1973: 95-100),[1] appreciation of the intrinsically generative, life-affirming, and cosmologically close-knit nature of Confucian philosophical thinking has also risen to levels higher than ever during the last two centuries, certainly since the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution and crumbling of traditional China with the Opium Wars and beyond. In light of these philosophical developments, the possibility of turning Hegel on his head once more might well be considered, not to affirm the dialectical materialism of the mechanical Marx but rather for the sake of exploring the possibility of cultivating a deeper, more profound understanding of the crucial importance of ethical sensitivities for the

1. Also, Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy,* David Rothenberg, trans, (Cambridge University Press, 1993); Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living as If Nature Mattered* (1985); and, Warwick Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology* (1990). Deep ecology has attracted many critics. For example, see Eric Katz et al., eds., *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000). Deep Ecology has been discussed vis-à-vis Hinduism (see Knut A. Jacobsen, "*Bhagavadgītā*, *Ecosophy T*, and Deep Ecology," *Inquiry*, 39, 219-238), and vis-à-vis Buddhism (see Deane Curtin, "A State of Mind Like Water: *Ecosophy T* and the Buddhist Tradition," in *Beneath the Surface*, 253-267). This paper helps pioneer understandings of Kurosawa and Confucianism as expressing perspectives akin to *ecosophy*.

transformative forces of heaven, earth, and the ten thousand things not of our anthropocentric world, but rather the world in which we live, one that might be understood in organic, biocentric terms. In these more expansive ethical sensitivities something akin to what Naess calls *ecosophy*, or "a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium" might be found. A haunting cinematic statement somewhat proximate to Naess' position, one apparently affirming precisely what Hegel haughtily dismissed in favor of the Greek legacy, appears in one of the last films of Kurosawa Akira 黒澤明 (1910-98), *Dreams* (夢 *Yume*, 1990). That film will be the conduit for the analyses presented herein. Before turning to an analysis of Kurosawa's *Dreams*, however, another set of dreams merits brief attention due to its relevance to the interpretive analysis offered here.

Dreams, Memories, and Reflections presents the end-of-life reflections of the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung (1875-1961), including detailed accounts of the dreams that prompted his development of his theory of archetypes. According to Jung, archetypes, not unlike Plato's forms (εἶδος), consist of primordial types or motifs, or, following Lévy-Bruhl, "représentations collective" (Jung 1989: 199-200, 210-219; 429; 473-475; Jung 1969: 4-6). Jung distinguishes archetypes as *a priori* cognitive forms, motifs, or intuitions from their *a posteriori* expressions in particular dreams, but he also casts archetypes in terms that are not entirely *a priori*, often citing specific formal qualities. For example Jung speaks of the archetype of "the old man who has seen enough", offering instances ranging from an old peasant to "the great philosopher Lao-tzu". (Jung 1989: 429) When describing archetypes in *a posteriori*, content-specific terms, Jung sometimes stipulates that he is addressing "archetypal images" instead of archetypes. Examples of archetypal images are the anima, the animus, the mandala (symbolizing "the wholeness of the self"), "the mother", "the child", "the One" (a philosophical notion, not a numeral), "the archetypes of Wagner" (hubris, perhaps), the "self", the "God-image", and the "trickster". Yet even these are sometimes referred to simply as archetypes (Jung 1989: 285, 372, 401, 471-474, 476, 482; Jung 1969: 54-74; 81-112; 151-180; 255-289).

Despite ambiguities and inconsistencies, Jung's notions help

hermeneutically in identifying and interpreting recurring motifs and the specific individuating subjectivities distinguishing them. Jungian psychological theorizing, especially claims regarding the universality of archetypes in the collective unconscious, is bracketed off here in order to deploy notions of archetypes and archetypal images for philosophical analyses exploring broader East Asian nuances significant to a set of dreams Kurosawa presents in *Dreams*. *Dreams* left many, including not a few of Kurosawa's faithful admirers, perplexed by its philosophical and spiritual symbolism, so far removed, as it was, from anything in his earlier samurai corpus. Some of the seemingly opaque symbolism in Kurosawa's *Dreams* can be rendered intelligible by interpreting it vis-à-vis archetypal expressions of motifs in Confucian, Buddhist, and Shinto philosophical notions. Without casting Kurosawa in any one-dimensional or narrowly doctrinaire manner, this study further contributes to the recognition of how Confucian themes resonate particularly with many archetypal motifs evident in *Dreams* (Wu 2008).

The archetypes explored include those of (i) the father-remonstrator, (ii) the dream, (iii) the innocent child, (iv) the axed tree, (v) ghosts and spirits, (vi) the old man, (vii) the village of cosmic harmony and oneness, and (viii) the apocalypse. The circumscribed, de-psychologized appeal to Jungian archetypes – minus claims about the "collective unconscious" – is offered in part because "archetypes" themselves resonate deeply with forms of philosophical thinking. Jung even mused about how his ideas could have been developed by a philosopher, but insisted that he, as an empiricist, would not go down that mistaken path. Jung's unhappy view of philosophy follows from his thinking that a philosopher often fails to recognize that his own "'personal equation' conditions his philosophy" (Jung 1969: 75-76). Given the global approaches to philosophical issues that have emerged recently and philosophers' increased readiness to recognize their subjectivities and how they inevitably color their analytic lenses, some of the failings Jung describes might well be avoided. With this in mind, Kurosawa's *Dreams* will be explored via these archetypes with resulting analyses laying bare a decided resonance with motifs, tropes, and archetypal images in Confucianism, especially those integral to what

Wing-tsit Chan 陳榮捷 (1901-94), Tu Wei-ming 杜維明 (1940-), Ro Young-chan 노 영찬 (No Yŏng-ch- an 1943-), Mary Evelyn Tucker and others have discussed as "Confucian humanism". As noted at the start, the paper also considers the relevance of Kurosawa's *Dreams* and Confucian humanism for broader understandings of deep ecology and environmental issues facing the world. As this is an early, experimental effort on my part and in recognition of my specialization in Confucian thinking and likely predisposition to find ecologically relevant ground in it, I refer to my thoughts here as "green", acknowledging their perhaps naïve and tilted nature. Efforts are made to contextualize Kurosawa's *Dreams* vis-à-vis Buddhism and Shintō, but with more far depth as a scholar of Confucian thinking than those areas, my conclusions – that Buddhism and Shintō motifs are not as prominent in archetypes expressed in *Dreams* as are Confucian ones – are conceivably reflections of cognitive patterns I bring to the project rather than wholly objective, final statements about the film or the film maker.

With the analysis of Kurosawa's *Dreams* as a springboard, this study considers the extent to which Confucianism in particular remains an operative, relevant, and even meaningful approach to contemporary issues in Japan, East Asia, and the global community. Frequently misinterpreted as a body of thought privileging the interests of rulers, Confucianism is too often imagined over simplistically, in decidedly closed ideological categories as little more than a narrow system geared toward establishing order, control, domination, and power, even under the guise of harmony, humaneness, ritual, and music. Space does not allow a rebuttal of such unnuanced misconstruals. Instead the study highlights a significant dimension of Confucianism relevant to the cosmos of heaven and earth (天地), and its ontologically generative and intrinsically ethical interrelationships with humanity. If this dimension generates, in turn, any contemporary ideology, it could – though not necessarily would – be one pertinent to a more environmentally aware if not ecologically active position such as Naess' *ecosophy*. Using Kurosawa's *Dreams* as a bridge for exploring these ideas, the paper acknowledges that while no scripted protagonists in *Dreams* declare, "this is Confucianism" or "we are e*co-philosophers*," the archetypal images evident in the film project what is arguably a central and abiding

role that Confucianism might fill in Japanese, East Asian, and perhaps world culture, that of encouraging greater respect for the cosmos as an organism.

Kurosawa's Unpopular Films: *An Account of a Living Thing* and *Dreams*

The Father/Remonstrator

Situating *Dreams* within Kurosawa's corpus requires first revisiting a film he finished in 1955, entitled, in the U. S., *I Live in Fear* (*Ikimono no kiroku* 生きものの記録). The American title captures the protagonist's tragic angst but an equally meaningful and more literal translation would be *An Account* (記録) *of a Living Thing* (生きもの). Because the latter gloss highlights nuances central to later analyses, those of life and living (生生), it is used here. The film portrays a patriarch, Nakajima Kiichi 中島喜一, hyper-anxious due to fears of imminent nuclear warfare and so determined to spend his substantial resources to relocate his entire family to Brazil. Nakajima's selfish kin, fearing their father will be squandering their inheritance, preempt the move by taking their complaints to a family mediation board and having Nakajima ruled incompetent. Ultimately Nakajima does lose his senses, sets fire to the foundry that he founded, is institutionalized, and finally finds peace in imagining that he now lives on another planet. At the end, Dr. Harada, a dentist on the mediation board and one of the few who actually pities Nakajima, visits him only to discover Nakajima peering out his window at the sun, declaring the world is ablaze.

Of course Kurosawa never billed this film as a "Confucian" statement, but in portraying Nakajima as a father seeking to provide guidance, care, and protection for his family, and as a member of society determined to alert his complacent community about a threat – nuclear war – that might spell doom, Kurosawa develops archetypes – that of the father and the remonstrator – often apparent in Confucian literature and praxis. Dozens of times, the *Analects* (論語) of Confucius emphasizes the roles of the father (父), the parents (父母 – with the father, the first of the parents), and filial piety (孝) as the foundations of the family, ethics, and the political order (*Analects*

1986: 1/7; 1/11; 2/6; 4/18, 19, 20, 21; 9/16; 11/5, 11, 20, 22; 12/11; 13/18; 17/8, 19; 18/2; 19/18). The determined importance of the father to the family, the community, and the world below heaven pervades the *Analects* and to an extent *An Account of a Living Thing*, although in the latter context in problematic, even disturbed ways. The world presented in Kurosawa's film is one turned upside down, where traditional Confucian relations, grounded in the authoritative role of the father, the revered and respected protector-progenitor of the family, are upended so as to empower greedy, self-serving children who preside over the emasculation and enforced confinement of their father. Rather than filial piety and deference from kin and a respectful hearing from his community, Nakajima receives a declaration of mental incompetence as his dire warnings are summarily ignored. With Nakajima the father-remonstrator as protagonist, Kurosawa's *An Account of a Living Thing* develops anew an archetype that resonates tragically with Confucian interpretations of the father. The Confucian emphasis is on the moral leadership of the father within the family coupled with social education in ethics and propriety so as to preclude the possibility of rebellious children who murder their parents (子其の父を弑する) and ministers who murder their rulers (臣其の君を弑する) (Itō 1985:106, 164; Tucker 1998: 244-245). Nakajima's children do not kill him, but in prompting his institutionalization, they are hardly exemplars of filial piety, the virtue that the *Analects* recognizes as the foundation of humaneness (孝弟也者, 其為仁之本與) (*Analects* 1986: 1/2, 1).

Buddhist texts such as the *Lotus Sutra* portray the father in similar roles, expressing concern for the safety of family members and the world at large, as with its parable of the burning house. There, however, humanity's relationship with the empirical world is profoundly different. In the *Lotus Sutra*, the burning house symbolizes the world of *samsara*, a world to be gotten out of completely because of the suffering, ignorance, and illusion that characterize it so fundamentally (*Lotus Sutra* 1993: 56-78). With Kurosawa and his development of the father archetype, the world is real (even when Nakajima imagines that he has left earth, he only escapes to another planet) and the focus of Nakajima's profound concern and care for his family and community.

Confucius, as presented in the *Analects*, is not a cosmological theorist, arguing for or against the reality of the world (Ames 1987: 195-249). Post-Buddhist Confucians from Song times forward, however, emphasized the real and vital nature of heaven, earth, and humanity (天地人) as "generative force" (*qi* 気 *ki*), in contrast to Buddhist claims that everything is *śūnya*, or empty (*kong* 空 *kū*) of *svabhāva*, "self-substantial being" (*zixing* 自性 *jisei*). If Nakajima proposes an exit, it is to safer ground, in Brazil, not a flight to an otherworldly paradise supposedly more real than this one. In portraying Nakajima warning others about serious threats he envisioned, *An Account of a Living Thing* echoes Confucian sensibilities about the righteousness of remonstration and ethical nobility of speaking truth to those unable to see it themselves. In *The Trouble with Confucianism*, William Theodore de Bary explores this dimension, emphasizing the prophetic role often evident in Confucian praxis reflecting Confucius' accounts of "the noble man [君子] as one who stands by his professed principles, his dedication to the True Way, no matter what ignominious fate he may suffer" (De Bary, 1991: 1-23). Indeed, Confucius' fate parallels that scripted for Nakajima: both sought to speak what they believed was truth, truth that needed telling, not for their own glory but rather for the best interests of all. Nakajima, like Confucius before him, was ignored, even mocked and deemed crazy. Yet that he remained an unheeded prophet links him all the more intimately and tragically with Confucius. Considering that *Account of a Living Thing* was a box-office failure greeted with mostly negative, even harsh reviews, Kurosawa might well be interpreted along similar lines.

The Dream

Despite the poor reception *An Account of a Living Thing* received, Kurosawa hardly forgot the topic or the motifs. Three and a half decades later with *Dreams*, he presented a series of surreal vignettes depicting dreams that he had, ones he felt compelled to share visually. In offering these as final cinematic autobiographical statements, Kurosawa shares some archetypal ground with Jung who featured accounts of his dreams in his final autobiographical reflections as well. If "the dream" is itself an "archetype", resonance appears in Daoist texts such as the

Zhuangzi 莊子 where awakened consciousness is compared to a "great dream" (*da meng* 大夢), or where Zhuangzi muses about his uncertainty whether he is a butterfly dreaming he is Zhuang Zhou 莊周, or Zhuang Zhou dreaming he is a butterfly 胡蝶 (*Zhuangzi* 1986: 6-7). These Daoist layers of significance are relevant insofar as they highlight the profound difficulties one faces in providing any definitive account of dreams and their meanings, but the Daoist thoughts on dreams are surely less relevant when we consider that Kurosawa was not confused about what was real and what was dream: every indication suggests that his dreams were meant to reveal the depths of his concerns about the common-sense, real world of everyday experience and the challenges it faces.

Another site of resonance is in the *Analects* where Confucius regrets that his dreams about the Duke of Zhou 周公 are becoming infrequent (Analects 1986: 7/5, 12). According to the *Book of Documents* (*Shujing* 書経), the Duke of Zhou, one of the sages of Chinese antiquity, was instrumental in establishing the Zhou 周 (1046–256 BCE) dynasty, selflessly contributing to its foundations at a juncture when political stability could have been undermined by power struggles. D. C. Lau relates that Confucius had "profound admiration" for the Duke of Zhou, finding in him a source of inspiration for his efforts in promoting the right way for ordering a moral state and society (Lau 1979: 17). As Confucius realized with advancing age that his aspiration of becoming an advisor to a ruler intent on establishing ethical rule was not successful, he regretted his increasingly infrequent dreams about the Duke of Zhou, relating as much in a terse, late-life reflection on his work and its fate. Similarly Kurosawa returned to disturbing motifs that had not attracted audiences, but he did so with a conviction that the message needed dramatic reiteration. Whether the dreams presented in *Dreams* were ones Kurosawa saw with less frequency in old age is not clear, but that he had them recorded for posterity is. That Kurosawa's dreams conveyed some sense of mission communicated as a late-in-life testament is a variation on Confucius' poignant comment on the infrequency of his dreams about the Duke of Zhou, and on Jung's accounts in *Dreams, Memories, and Reflections*. Only a one-dimensional analysis would suggest that the Confucian

interpretation of the dream archetype is exclusively relevant, but dismissing resonance between Kurosawa's *Dreams* and motifs embedded in Confucian lore seems even more narrow.

The Child, Axed Trees, and Ghosts and Spirits

The first episode of *Dreams*, "Sun shower" (*Hideri ame* 日照り雨), relates Kurosawa's dream about a five-year old boy (Kurosawa) disobeying his mother's instructions by wandering into a forest during a sun shower and there witnessing a fox (*kitsune* 狐) wedding, something strictly taboo by fox custom. Later the boy learns that a fox has left a knife with his mother, presumably so that the boy might atone for his offense. The boy's mother allows, however, that he might seek forgiveness from the foxes and so the vignette concludes with the boy wandering off once more. Via the *kitsune*, this dream resonates deeply with many nativist tales and forms of spirituality (Blust 1999: 487-499). In violating a taboo with mortal consequences, the boy's behavior conjures up archetypes of the fall, but with nothing more than a child's innocence and curiosity to blame, that surely seems too weighty and farfetched a reading. At the very least, however, the opening dream depicts the often uneasy, even egregious interrelationships of the natural, human, animal, and spiritual worlds, a topic variously explored in *Dreams*.

In its second dream, "Peach Orchard" (*Momohata* 桃畑), *Dreams* introduces a slightly older boy, again, a fictionalized version of Kurosawa, whose family cut down a peach orchard to harvest its wood. In early spring after the axing, when peach trees often blossom in tandem with the doll festival (*hina matsuri* 雛祭り), the boy visits the site and regrets the felled trees, now lost. In his regrets, the boy expresses, awkwardly perhaps, a vague sense of kinship if not nostalgic oneness with things around him. Gazing at the bare slopes where peach trees once stood, he sees a company of life-sized festival dolls appear before him. Sensitive to the boy's remorse and cognizant that the boy had not chopped the trees down, the festival dolls grace him with a dance of forgiveness. The story concludes with a peach tree sprouting before the boy's eyes, suggesting the prospect of regenerative transformation.

With its focus on a stripped mountain slope where an

orchard once thrived, *Dreams* reworks archetypes apparent in ancient Confucian texts addressing, at one level or another, mountains, trees, and their ontological and ethical relations with humanity. The *Analects* presents Confucius stating that the humane man finds happiness in mountains (仁者樂山), while the wise man finds happiness in water (知者樂水) (*Analects* 1986: 6/23, 11). More meaningfully, the *Mencius* (孟子) recalls how the trees on Mt. Niu (牛山之木), though once beautiful, were axed (斧斤伐之) by woodcutters, presumably for the sake of profits. Mencius likens the loss of the trees to the hewing of one's moral consciousness (所以放其良心者, 亦猶斧斤之於木也), which results in the mind's loss of its sense of humaneness and rightness (無仁義之心) (*Mencius* 1986: 6A/8, 44). Yet in neither case is the loss final. With cultivation and nourishment, the trees and the moral mind might be recovered, preserved, and even brought to flourish. With "Peach Orchard," the boy – still with the mind of a child – another Mencian motif symbolizing the moral mind uncompromised by selfishness: 大人者, 不失其赤子之心者也 (Mencius 1986: 4B/12, 31) – regrets the fallen trees, suggesting that he has not abandoned the ethical sensibilities that Mencius affirms all people have at birth. Mencius does not explicitly state that human ethics apply directly to trees, grasses, and mountains, but his botanical similes – elsewhere likening humaneness to the "five grains" 五穀 (*Mencius* 1986: 6A/19, 46), moral behavior to growing "barley" 麰麥 (*Mencius* 1986: 6A/7, 43-44), and so on – suggest overall that ethics relates not just to human relations, but – to speak somewhat anachronistically – to the larger bio-network consisting of a continuum embracing the myriad things of generative transformation including humanity. Mencius also endorses ethical government in terms of conservation-minded agricultural and wildlife policies such as "regulating times when woodsmen go into mountain forests" (斧斤以時入山林) with the result being, through regulated cutting, "an overabundance of lumber" (材木不可勝用也) (*Mencius* 1986: 1A/3, 1). Admittedly, Mencius warns – in a way disparaging continuity of humanity and animals – that people ignorant of ethical relations resemble birds and beasts (近於禽獸) (*Mencius* 1986: 3A/4, 20). Yet even this reference, with its linkage of humanity, birds, and beasts hinting at real closeness, suggests an intrinsic

ontological relatedness. This ontological bond in turn points to shared ground between human relationships and the ten thousand things that might serve as a compass for a more ethically sensitive engagement of heaven, earth, the myriad forms of life, and humanity. In these respects the "Peach Orchard" episode echoes basic Mencian themes such as likening mountains stripped of their forests to the axing of humanity's ethical sensibilities. Although the "Peach Orchard" vignette does not engage in preachy moralizing, the ethical significance of the regrettable if not tragic loss of the orchard appears clear enough.

Whether Kurosawa realized the philosophical fecundity of the vignette and imagined some would recognize its allusion to the *Mencius* and need no reminder of the ethical teaching intrinsic to it is surely open to question. There can be little doubt, however, that rather than dwelling on Mencian themes, *Dreams* is distanced somewhat from ancient Chinese philosophical texts, more contextualizing its motifs and images to resonate with nativist sensibilities. Yet in significant ways, the Mencian theme is "naturalized" (Nakai 1980: 157-199) by overlapping levels of allusion, as with the introduction of the boy whose ties to peach trees recalls the boy-hero of Edo lore, Momotarō 桃太郎.[2] In dramatically portraying the spiritual dimension of trees, *Dreams* also remotely alludes to the tree-kami, Kuku-nō-chi-no-kami 久久能智神, son of Izanagi 伊邪那岐 and Izanami 伊邪那美, revered in *Records of Antiquity* (*Kojiki* 古事記, 712) and *Historical Records of Japan* (*Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 720), as the spirit of the trees

2. Momotarō 桃太郎 emerged from a peach that an elderly childless woman found while her husband was cutting wood. So the boy was named Momotarō, "Peach Boy." For an English translation of one version of the tale, see Seki Keigo, ed., *Folktales of Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 40-43. Robert Adams' translation there is based on the text in Seki Keigo 関敬吾, ed., *Nihon no mukashibanashi* 日本の昔ばなし (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1956). Prior to Momotarō, the peach – but not the peach tree – had been "kamified" by Izanagi in the *Nihon shoki* 日本書記 after Izanagi defended himself from bolts of thunder by throwing peaches at them. According to the *Nihon shoki*, this was the origin of the practice of warding off evil spirits with peaches. Inoue Mitsumada 井上光貞, ed., *Nihon shoki*, Nihon no meicho vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūō kōron sha, 1971), p. 69-70. See W. G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1896), p. 30. Somewhat similarly Chinese legends about Xi Wangmu西王母, the Queen Mother of the West, link peaches to immortality.

(*Kojiki* 1982: 27).[3] Explaining the significance of trees vis-à-vis nativist spirituality, Holtom suggests that "there are good reasons for thinking that trees were the original shrines of Shintō, and that trees were not added to ... god-houses to give the latter greater dignity and loveliness, or to commemorate ancestral graves ... but that god-houses were provided for trees because trees were spirits or because they were the haunt of the Kami" (Holtom 1931: 1-19; Holtom 1938: 27). Nativist notions thus enrich understandings the spiritual side of the trees, an aspect of *Dreams* that might otherwise appear opaque.

With Buddhism, there is overall ambivalence toward trees and the world of generative transformation. The latter is after all the world of *samsāra*, a world of illusion, attachment, ignorance, entrapment, and suffering (*dukkha* 苦 *ku*), one to be liberated from through *nirvāṇa* rather than devoted to as an ultimate concern. The realm of trees and other forms of worldly life is not the realm of ultimate, but rather only that of provisional truth. Nevertheless, it was under a Bodhi tree that Siddhārtha Gautama (ca. 563- 483 BCE), the historical Buddha, realized the Four Noble Truths (*Shitai* 四諦), giving trees exceptional standing by association. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* (律藏), an account of rules and regulations for Buddhist monks, presents the Buddha asking, after hearing that monks were cutting down trees, "How can these recluses ... cut down trees ... ? These recluses ... are harming life!" (Horner 1940: 226). Notably, chapter five (葯草喻) of the *Lotus Sutra* compares the *Tathāgata* to plants and trees, noting how the "thus gone one" (the Buddha) adapts to circumstances of his environment (Watson 1993: 97-106).

Later developments in Mahāyāna Buddhism, however, contributed new perspectives. In the dharma contest deciding who would be the sixth patriarch of Chan Buddhism, Shenxiu 神秀 (607-

3. According to the annotations, 久久 was an ancient written form of 木木. The spirit of trees is named just before the spirit of the mountains, Ōyama tsumi no kami 大山津見神, is designated. Basil Hall Chamberlain, trans., *The Ko-ji-ki, or Records of Ancient Matters* (Tokyo: Asiatic Society, 1906), p. 28. After relating the names of the *kami* of seas, mountains, water, the *Nihon shoki* adds, "the spirit of trees (木の神) is called Kuku-nō-chi 久久廼馳." Inoue, ed., *Nihon shoki*, p.65. Aston, *Nihongi*, p.18. Kuku-nō-chi-no-kami is the main deity of the Moriyama jinja 護山神社, where a *matsuri* celebrates "sacred trees" (*goshinboku* 御神木).

706) offered the following poem,

The body is a Bodhi tree,	身是菩提樹,
The mind is like a bright mirror.	心如明鏡臺。
Always polish it diligently,	時時勤拂拭,
And let no dust alight.	勿使惹塵埃.

But the winner of the dharma contest was Huineng 惠能 (638-718), whose poem read,

Bodhi originally is without any tree;	菩提本無樹,
The bright mirror has no stand.	明鏡亦非臺。
Essentially there is not a single thing	本來無一物,
Where would any dust dwell?	何處惹塵埃.

(Yampolsky 1967:129-132)

Speaking more from the perspective of absolute truth, Huineng suggests there are no trees to be concerned about. Ultimately there is nothing whatsoever apart from emptiness. Lore from the Tōfukuji 東福寺, one of Kyoto's grandest Zen temples, relates that Chō Densu 兆殿司 (1352-1431), a respected bonze and brilliant painter, was troubled that the temple's cherry trees attracted many attachments and so had them cut down (Paine 1981: 163-165). Later, maple trees – for which the temple remains famous – were planted instead. Even today, the Tōfukuji has no cherry trees. More positively Kūkai 空海 (774-835), earlier affirmed that plants and trees (*sōmoku* 草木) attain Buddhahood (*jōbutsu* 成仏) (Hakeda 1972: 254-255). Still, one might question whether Kūkai's remark means that, apart from their Buddhahood, plants and trees *qua* plants and trees should or should not be cut down. The Sōtō Zen master, Dōgen 道元 (1200-53), in his *Sutra on Mountains and Water* (*Sansui kyō* 山水經), suggests that mountains and rivers, the stuff of landscape paintings, attain a level of Buddhahood, but Dōgen also speaks in enigmatic, symbolic ways with remarks such as, "green mountains are always walking (青山常運歩); a stone woman gives birth to a child at night" (石女夜生児) (Dōgen 1970: 141-155), making their relevance to Kurosawa's *Dreams* real

but somewhat figurative. Ultimately it would seem that the Buddhist discussions of mountains, trees, and plants have unquestionable relevance to the "Peach Orchard" episode, but their significance – whether cutting trees is sanctioned or not – is hardly crystal clear (LaFleur 1989: 183-212).

Numerous Song (960-1279) and post-Song Confucian notions are relevant to the archetype of trees, cut or standing, manifest in the "Peach Orchard". More abstractly than nativist accounts, the spiritual vitality of all things, trees included, is evident in Song accounts of ghosts and spirits (鬼神). The latter are, Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077) explains, "spontaneous activities of the two generative forces [of yin and yang]" (二氣之良能). Thus understood, the spiritual embraces not simply trees but every substantive thing that exists since all things are seen, ontologically, as transforming modalities of the two generative forces (*qi* 氣 *ki*), yin and yang. Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) offers another explanation of the spiritual in observing that *kishin* are "the traces of transformative creation" (造化之迹) (Beixi 1986: 143). With his account, Cheng Yi suggests that *kishin* are integrally related to the ongoing generative activities giving rise continually to the cosmos. Such comprehensive understandings of ghosts and spirits leave little doubt that mountains and trees, like all of the ten thousand things of transformative creation (造化), have an integral spirituality.

Dreams' concern over trees and regrets about cutting them echoes sensibilities in *Reflections on Things at Hand* (*Jinsilu* 近思録 *Kinshiroku*), an influential Song anthology edited by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137-1181). There, in one passage, Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085) remarks that his teacher, Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073), refrained from cutting the grass outside his window (窻前草不除去). Asked why, Zhou replied: "My family shares similar thoughts with them" (與自家意思一般) (Cheng 1979: 65). Zhou's feelings achieved some circulation in Japan due to the popularity of *Reflections on Things at Hand*: commentaries on that text were written from the mid-17th century through the 20th. For example, the Kyoto scholar, Nakamura Tekisai 仲村惕斎 (1629-1702), noted Zhou's sympathy for grass in stating:

The generative and regenerative intent of heaven and earth

> flows and nurtures without cease. Moreover, the humane man's feelings of compassion always fill their hearts accompanying their experiences so that there is nothing that they do not respond to. Thus when a humane person sees grasses and trees, their minds realize the generative intent of heaven and earth (Nakamura 1910: 459).
>
> 天地生生の意、流行發育してやむことなし、而して仁者惻隱の情、つねに胸中に充満して感ずるに隨、應せずと云ことなき所、天地の生意、草木に見るると一機にして、心に會することあればなり.

Tekisai's account of Zhou's compassion – with grass now accompanied by trees – conveys unambiguously an ontologically grounded ethical sensibility based on the all-embracing breadth of humaneness. Highlighted is the living, generative intention (生生の意) of heaven and earth pervading everything and thus linking all in a continuum of ceaseless procreation and commiserative solidarity. With Zhou Dunyi in Song China, Tekisai in Tokugawa Japan, and Kurosawa's "Peach Orchard," a lineage of ethical sentiments toward the myriad things in transformative generation and regeneration, expressed specifically vis-à-vis the cutting of grasses and trees, points to an abiding relevance of Confucian ontological and ethical thought in relation to contemporary issues that well transcends archetypes of *Dreams*.

Like his teacher, Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085) reportedly refused to cut the grass outside his window, wanting to see its expression of the "creative purpose" (生意) of heaven and earth rather than destroy any part of it (Chan 1963a: 535). Advancing this ethics recognizing the integrity of myriad forms of life and living, Cheng Hao adds that one approach to understanding humaneness is by "looking at chicks" (觀鷄雛此可觀仁) (Cheng 1979: 3/1a, 65). Overall Cheng Hao affirms a life-centered approach to ontology and cosmology, discussing principle (理) and the way of heaven (天道), not abstractly but rather as generative vitality, *sheng sheng* 生生 *seisei*, literally "life-generation and regeneration" (Cheng 1979: 2A/23b, 28a, 44, 47). Continuing this theme, he adds, "by feeling one's pulse, one

can embody humaneness" (切脉最可體仁) (Cheng 1979: 3/2a, 65). It should come as no surprise that Cheng Hao states that the humane man considers heaven, earth, and the ten thousand things as one body so that there is nothing with which he does not identify" (仁者以天地萬物為一體莫非己) (Cheng 1979: 2A/3b, 35). His brother, Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) likened humaneness to "seeds of grain" (穀種) (Cheng 1979: 4/3a-b, 142), correlating the moral efficacy of humaneness with the vital capacity of seeds, a microcosmic analog of the living potential of the myriad things. Zhu Xi agreed with the gist of this thinking by identifying humaneness with the *Book of Changes* (易經) virtue, "originating" (元). In his "Essay on Humaneness", Zhu adds that "the mind of heaven and earth to produce things 生物" is precisely the mind endowed in humanity as humaneness (Zhu 1985: 67: 20a-21b), thus providing an ethical, epistemological, and metaphysical ground for the unity of heaven, earth, humanity, and all things.

Zhang Zai's 張載 "Western Inscription" (*Ximing* 西銘 *Saimei*) classically affirms the Confucian vision of the kinship of humanity, heaven, earth, and the myriad things, but the emphasis is clearly on the unity of humanity and the cosmos, with considerably less on the myriad things. Grasses and trees, for example, are not specifically mentioned in Zhang Zai's text. "Things", which presumably would include animals, plants, trees, and inorganic things, have a relatively minor presence in Zhang's vision of human and cosmic unity. His text states,

> I call heaven my father (乾稱父) and earth, my mother (坤稱母). Even a small creature such as I has a place among them. What fills heaven and earth, I take as my body (故天地之塞吾其體) and what directs heaven and earth, I consider as my human nature (天地之帥吾其性). I, along with all people, emerge from the same womb and all things join with me (民吾同胞. 物吾與也).
> The great ruler is the eldest son of my parents [heaven and earth], and the great ministers are his stewards. Respect the aged – this is the way to treat them as elders should be treated. Show love toward the orphaned and weak – this is the way to treat them as the young should be treated. The sage unites his virtue [with that

> of heaven and earth] and the worthy is recognized as outstanding among men. All of those below heaven, even the tired, the infirmed, the crippled, and the sick; those who have no brothers or children, wives or husbands; those who are in distress and have no one to turn to, they are my brothers (Adapted from Chan 1963: 48).

Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian included Zhang Zai's "Western Inscription" in their anthology, *Reflections on Things at Hand*. As a result, that text was reiterated and expanded via commentaries, including one by the noted Korean Yi T'oegye 李退溪 (1501-70) (T'oegye 1977: 388-389), and others by Tokugawa Confucians including Kaibara Ekken 貝原益軒 (1630-1714), Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇斎 (1618-82), and Nakamura Tekisai.[4]

Tekisai's account, for example, first explains that key words in the opening lines of the "Western Inscription," *qian* 乾 (*ken*) and *kun* 坤 (*kon*), allude to the *Book of Changes* and refer to "heaven" 天 and "earth" 地. Tekisai next relates how heaven generates the ten thousand things, serving as the lord and father of things, while earth receives this generative activity 氣化 from heaven and nourishes the myriad things,

4. Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙, "Essentials of Learning" (*Wei xue* 爲學), W. T. Chan, trans., *Reflections on Things at Hand*, pp. 76-77. A modern reprint of Kaibara Ekken's *Kinshiroku bikō* 近思録備考, the first Japanese commentary on the *Kinshiroku* is in the Kinsei kanseki sōkan wakoku eiin, shisō 3, hen 6 近世漢籍叢刊和刻影印; 思想3, 編 6, (Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1977). Yamazaki Ansai, *Kinshiroku* (Kyoto: Jubundō, 1774 An'ei 安永 3, reprint of an undated edition published by Katsumura Jiemon 勝村治右衛門 in Kyoto). Nakamura Tekisai, *Kinshiroku jimō kukai* (Kyoto: Yamagata denbei, 1701 Genroku 元禄 14), is in the Kanseki kokujikai zenshū 漢籍國字解全集, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1910), pp. 103-105. Nagasawa Kikuya 長沢規矩也, *Wakokubon kanseki bunrui mokuroku*和刻本漢籍分類目録 (Tokyo: Kyūkoshoin, 1976), pp. 99-100, lists over two-dozen printings of Tokugawa woodblock editions of the *Kinshiroku*. For a Meiji edition, see Naitō Chisō 内藤耻叟, *Kinshiroku kōgi* 近思録講義 (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1893). Japanese editions continued to appear in both halves of the twentieth century: Tsukamoto Tetsuzō 塚本哲三, ed., *Kinshiroku* 近思録/*Denshūroku* 傳習錄 (Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1925); a modern translation of the text was published with Katō Jōken 加藤常賢, trans., *Kinshiroku: Gendaigoyaku* 近思録: 現代語譯 (Tokyo: Kin no hoshisha, 1929). Also, Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋轍次 and Yasuoka Masahiro安岡正篤, general editors, *Kinshiroku*, in Shushigaku taikei朱子学大系, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Meitoku shuppansha, 1974).

serving as their mother. This "generative transformation" provides humanity with its place in the ongoing procreative activity as children of heaven and earth. In recognizing *ki* 氣 here, Tekisai introduces an ontological notion into his discussions of the "Western Inscription", one absent from the text itself. *Ki* is the stuff providing for the continuity of all, the substantial ground for our oneness with heaven, earth, all people and all things. In explaining "things" 物 (*mono*), Tekisai notes that things encompass "birds, beasts, grasses, trees, metals, rocks, water, and earth (鳥獣草木金石水土) – all sentient 有情 and non-sentient 無情 beings. In fulfilling our individual natures, we see all things as our brothers and sisters, and follow the "natural principles" (*shizen no li* 自然の理) of things in assisting the transformative and nourishing activities of heaven and earth (天地に參り化育を賛くる*tenchi ni majiwari kaiku o tasukuru*) (Nakamura 1910: 103-105). Tekisai's interpretations thus render explicit and overt the ethical and ontological commonality of humanity and the cosmos with "birds, beasts, trees, plants, metals, stones, water, and earth". In this way, Tekisai makes the "Western Inscription" more explicitly relevant to Kurosawa's "Peach Orchard". Considered vis-à-vis the latter, arguably the boy regrets the cut trees due to his deeper feelings of his essential oneness with them. They were, in Zhang Zai's view as well as Tekisai's, living members of the boy's family.

Wang Yangming's 王陽明 (Ō Yōmei, 1472-1529) "Questions about the Great Learning" (*Daxue wen* 大學問 *Daigaku mon*) continues the cosmological vision – suggested by Zhang Zai and furthered by later thinkers such as Tekisai – linking heaven, earth, humanity, animals, plant life – including grasses and trees – plus the inorganic world. Wang states,

> The great man considers heaven and earth and the ten thousand things as one body (大人者以天地萬物為一體者也). He sees all below heaven as one family and the middle kingdom as one person (其視天下猶一家, 中國猶一人焉) .... The great man does not intentionally see heaven, earth, and the ten thousand things as one body, but rather finds the original humaneness of his mind to be like this (其心之仁本若是) .... Upon hearing

> the distressed birds cry or seeing trembling animals about to be killed, the great man can never bear their suffering (必有不忍之心焉). Thus does his humaneness form one body with birds and animals (是其仁之與鳥獸而為一體也) . . . . When the great man sees plants and trees cut and broken to pieces (見草木之摧折), his mind always feels sorrow and pity for them (必有憫恤之心焉). Thus does his humaneness embrace plants and trees as one body (是其仁之與草木而為一體也) . . . . From rulers, ministers, husbands, wives, and friends down to mountains, rivers, ghosts and spirits, birds and animals, and plants and trees (君臣也, 夫婦也,朋友也, 以至於山川鬼神鳥獸草木也) none should not be truly loved (莫不實有以親之) in realizing my humaneness that forms one body with them (以達吾一體之仁) (Wang 1911: 521-523; Chan 1963: 270-280).

Wang Yangming's teachings and those of the Zhu Xi school, although cast as polarities in Confucian philosophical history, share ground in regarding humaneness as an ethical sensibility relevant to all things, including plants and trees.

Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619-91), an advocate of Wang Yangming's philosophical vision in Tokugawa Japan, manifests this shared ground with his text, *Yamato Nishi no mei* 大和西銘 ("Western Inscription for Japanese"), a commentary on Zhang Zai's text. Banzan's text was published in 1650 (Kei'an 慶安 3), when he was 31. Banzan begins by noting, much as Zhang had, that heaven is the father (*ten wa chichi nari* 天は父なり) and earth, the mother (*tsuchi wa haha nari* 土は母なり). Expanding the "Western Inscription" cosmology, Banzan adds that the yin and yang of heaven produce the four forms (四象) – the sun, moon, stars, and constellations – that produce hot and cold weather, day and night, all of which mix together to form the years. Because of its greatness, these are called "the way of the father" (*chichi no michi* 父の道なり). The hardness and softness of the earth give rise to the four transformations (四化) – fire, stones, water, and earth – the generative forces (*ki* 氣) of which produce wind, thunder, rain, and dew, receiving what heaven provides and nourishing all things. Because of its abundance, earth embodies "the way of the mother" (*haha no*

michi 母の道なり). From the generative forces of yin and yang and the five processes (*gogyō* 五行) evident in the way of heaven and earth, our bodies are formed. With numinous eyes and ears, we become one with heaven and earth. Our minds (心) refer to what is within the emptiness abiding within us, provided by heaven as the master of our whole bodies (*isshin no shu* 一身の主). Chinese sages call this "bright virtue", while the Indian Śākyamuni calls it Buddhahood. At the time before our physical selves existed, when heaven and earth had not yet separated, the great vacuity (*taixu*大虚 *taikyo*) alone was generating (生), and from it all things came. With the separation of the generative force of heaven and earth, this body is formed, and with this the mind of heaven and earth comes to be the mind of all people in the world. Everyone thus emerges from one womb as brothers and sisters. This includes everything from fish, birds, and beasts, to grasses and trees – all generated by the same generative force (*onanji ki yori umare* おなじ氣より生れ), which excludes nothing. Thus, even when we see non-sentient (*kokoro naki* 情なき) things such as plants and trees cut and broken, our minds sense their pain (*kokoro o itamashime* 心をいたましめ); when they flourish luxuriantly, our minds are pleased (*aoyaka ni sakaenuru o mite wa, kokoro o yorokobashimu* あおやかにさかえぬるを見ては心をよろこばしむ). Yet Banzan also affirms that heaven and earth provide plants, trees, fish, and fowl for the sustenance of humanity (草木鳥魚は天地の人をやしなひたまふそなへにして). Humans are distinguished from the rest since they are endowed with "the [ethical] mind of the way" (*michi no kokoro* 道の心あり) and propriety (*rei ari* 禮あり) (Kumazawa 1941: 117-118).

Banzan's concerns for trees, mountains, and rivers is also evident in his *Questions and Answers on the Great Learning* (*Daigaku wakumon* 大学或問), completed in 1687 (Jōkyō 貞享4) and subtitled *Governing the Realm and Bringing Peace to the People* (*Chikoku hei tenka* 治国平天下). Overall Banzan advocates "humane government" (*jinsei* 仁政), a political notion Mencius developed calling for an ethical concern for the physical and moral interests of the people. In chapter ten, "Restoring Forests and Deepening Riverbeds in the Domains" (*Shokoku sanrin shigeri, kawa fukaku narubeki koto* 諸国山林茂り, 川深く成可事), Banzan addresses the following proposition,

> Mountains and rivers are the foundations of our country (山川は国の本なり). In recent years, mountains have been treated roughly (山荒) and rivers are becoming shallow (川浅く). This is a great loss to the state (是国の大荒也). Since antiquity, when such things occurred, chaotic times followed (昔より如此なれば, 乱世と成). During the Warring States period (戦国) many people died ... there was little timber or firewood cut (材木薪を取事も各別すくなく) and few halls and temples were built. Mountains were soon covered with verdant growth (山々本のごとく茂り) as before and the stream beds became deep (川々深くなる). Without waiting for another age of disorder, with [humane] government (政にて), might we make the mountains verdant and deepen the rivers (山茂り川深く成ことあらんか)? (Kumazawa 1941: 254; *Daigaku wakumon* 1971: 432).

Banzan responds that with humane government, mountains and rivers would be restored within a century. Banzan's solution involves ordering farmers living near mountains to burn grasses from their fields for fuel rather than cutting timber to fuel their hearths. Banzan also proposed relocating people from mountains to less populated areas such as Kyūshū. Over time, such socio-economic engineering would result in green mountains and a better balance of resources. On bald mountains, Banzan proposed sowing oats to attract birds whose droppings would fertilize soils for trees. Within thirty years Banzan predicted there would be timber and firewood for generations to come (Kumazawa 1941 254-259; *Daigaku wakumon* 1971: 432-438).

For Banzan, mountains, forests, and rivers are matters of utmost importance. His interlocutor first declares that "mountains and rivers are the foundations of our country," a position Banzan himself affirms in *Yamato Nishi no mei* (Kumazawa 1941: 118). In his *Shūgi gaisho* 集義外書, however, Banzan modifies this, stating, "Mountains and forests are the foundations of our country" (山林は国の本なり *Sanrin wa koku no moto nari*), emphasizing the importance of trees – far more vulnerable than mountains – to the polity as a whole. In his *Shūgi gaisho*, Banzan addresses the damage that the salt and pottery

industries, which devour wood to fuel kilns and salt ovens, do to mountain forests. Banzan explains that spring rains are those of the transformative generative force of heaven and earth (天地の気化の雨), followed by evening showers of summer that nourish fields. These rains come from clouds that the spiritual generative forces (*shinki* 神気) of mountains and rivers produce. When covered with trees, mountains abound with spiritual generative force. On bare mountains, this spiritual generative force diminishes, as do evening rain clouds. Without grasses and trees, mountains loose soil, with much of it washing into riverbeds, elevating them higher. When more rain falls, flooding and famine will also follow. These result from ignorance of the geo-principles of mountains and wetlands (*yamazawa no chiri* 山沢の地理) and of the metaphysical principles of spiritual luminosity (*shinmei no kotowari* 神明の理). Banzan suggests that those [administrators] who intend to be loyal to the country (*kuni ni chū aran hito* 国に忠あらん人) should never allow increases in manufacture of pottery and salt. Banzan ends with a proverb relating how those who deplete mountains will also be destroying their family lines (*yama o tsukusu mono wa shison otorō* 山をつくすものは子孫おとろふ) (Kumazawa 1941: 7).

Banzan's concern for mountain forests and rivers was not random. He revisits the topic repeatedly observing that bare mountains and flood-prone rivers signal poor administration resulting in egregious circumstances for samurai and the people at large. Metaphysically, spoiled mountains mean disharmony in the five processes of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. Politically, they are fateful. Some rulers, without being immoral or abusive, have nevertheless lost their realms. Before that happens, the end is evident in the mountains of their realm. Just as they are a country's loftiest points (山は国に有て第一高きものなり), mountains symbolize those who rule (君の象なり). When mountain forests are destroyed and soil erodes into riverbeds, the wealth and status of those above and below will soon be lost as well (Kumazawa 1941: 124).

Much that Banzan says regarding the world of generative transformation and humanity's place in it derived from his study under Nakae Tōju 中江藤樹 (1608-1648) (Inoue 1924: 222), the first major advocate of Wang Yangming teachings in Japan. Tōju cast his grasp of

the cosmic oneness of all things in relation to the ancient Confucian notion of filial piety (*xiao* 孝 *kō*) rather than humaneness. Additionally Tōju described filial piety not simply in terms of children respecting their parents, but as the single-most important subject of study, one integral to the generation of all things including heaven, earth, humanity, and the ten-thousand things (生天生地生人生萬物只是此孝). Tōju even related filial piety to trees and grasses (*sōmoku* 草木), remarking for example that if filial piety, which is the root of humanity (人根), were destroyed, one would be living like grasses and trees without roots (無株之草木), and so fortunate if long lived at all (Inoue 1924: 106).

With the razed orchard, *Dreams* presents the onset of pre-modern apocalypse at the local, micro-level, with the beginnings of a lost mountain and ruined rivers residing in the cut trees. The boy regrets the loss, missing the trees, relating to them as though they were part of his world, perhaps himself, or along Tōju's line of thinking rather than Banzan's, the boy relates to the trees with filial piety, as though they were his own kin, and interestingly, the trees relate, in spiritual form, to the boy as if they were his parents, with gracious forgiveness and mercy, permitting him to see them one last time before providing for regeneration anew in the form a peach sprout. Apocalypse is averted by the filial, humane oneness linking the boy, the lost peach orchard, and the mountain stripped of one of its beauties. Rather than disaster, the kami of the peach trees – conceivably manifestations of the generative forces of heaven and earth provided by filial piety and felt through our sense of humaneness, or as the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* suggest, as expressions of the tree kami, Kuku-nō-chi-no-kami – show compassion toward the boy, forgiving him and his family for the loss, and offering them hope of renewal through the mysteries of regeneration. In the "Peach Orchard", Confucian and Shinto philosophical motifs echo repeatedly as Kurosawa develops archetypes related to the cut tree, the young boy, and the spiritual side of reality.

The Apocalypse

Following his acclaimed samurai films, Kurosawa, with "Red Fuji" (*Aka Fuji* 赤冨士), a vignette on nuclear apocalypse, surely

prompted some to wonder whether he, at 80, was producing cinematic aberrations of old age, or whether like Mr. Nakajima, he had lost touch with reality. The Tōhoku disaster tragically and posthumously illuminated his foresight, some two decades after the release of *Dreams*. If he had lived to see the nightmare, more horrific in its sheer surreal reality and instantaneous destructive force than anything he envisioned on film, Kurosawa would have surely redoubled his warnings against the dangers resulting from disregard for humanity's fundamental relationship, ethical, ontological, and familial, with the larger cosmic continuum.

In *Dreams*, Kurosawa revisits motifs in *I Live in Fear*, offering not a prediction of gloom this time, but rather an apocalyptic vision of nuclear disaster near Mt. Fuji, with six reactors exploding in succession, emitting radioactive clouds billowing into adjoining seaside towns with inescapable death. This Daliesque tale, entitled "Red Fuji", precedes another surreal episode, "Wailing Ghosts" (*Kikoku* 鬼哭), depicting a demonic spirit relating how nuclear disaster mutated it into a new hellish phenotype. Kurosawa's cinematic expressions of the archetype of apocalypse have counterparts in East Asian philosophical thought in Buddhist eschatological visions of human and cosmic time degenerating into *mappō* 末法, the final age of the Buddhist teachings, concluding one *kalpa*, or cosmic aeon. This degenerative age ends with cosmic destruction, yet is followed by cosmic reincarnation bringing in a new world order along with the future Buddha Maitreya (Miroku 弥勒菩薩). The *Lotus Sutra* alludes to this apocalypse, stating, "sentient beings see themselves amidst a conflagration at the end of a *kalpa* ... ravaged by fire and torn with anxiety and distress" (*Lotus Sutra* 1993: 229). Memories of this along with flashbacks to graphic details of suffering in hell (地獄) that Genshin 源信 (942-1017) detailed surface in Kurosawa's "Wailing Ghosts", while final age eschatologies come to mind with the nuclear end depicted in "Red Fuji". Significantly different in the latter is that the "Red Fuji" apocalypse is the product of a secular society, driven by its determination to master the cosmos and its resources for its own ends rather than being a karmic conclusion of a cosmic unit, brought on by ignorance and attachments, and resulting in humanity's demise, provisionally at least, as with the Buddhist view

of the end.

Confucianism is not known for eschatological or apocalyptic theorizing, but neither is it without these themes. Ancient classics, including the *Book of History* (書経), provide visions of political history supervised by a compassionate, providential, and life-affirming heaven (*tian* 天) that appoints certain virtuous men as rulers but withdraws its mandate or decree (*ming* 命) when they abandon their charge to rule on behalf of humanity and instead indulge in abusive, oppressive misrule. Profoundly wrongheaded rule prompts heaven to send calamities down as warnings that, if unheeded, are followed by the occasionally brutal dislodging of the false ruler and his replacement by someone heaven appoints. The change of decree results in the end of a dynasty, an often violent end that could entail warfare and widespread suffering. However this sort of violence, meant to punish a wrong doer and elevate virtuous rule, is not fully comparable to the senseless end presented in "Red Fuji" where people face death due to calculated risks accepted for the sake of short-term gains fueled by nuclear power plants. Times of political chaos, disorder, and destruction were hardly unknown – Kurosawa examined a late-medieval manifestation in his film, *Ran* 亂 – still the parallels here are weak. Rather than a cosmos fated to eventual destruction, Confucian cosmology provides for an essentially benevolent and infinitely generative and regenerative heaven and earth presiding and procreating providentially for flourishing of the ten thousand things, providing for their sustenance, growth, vitality, and development, and doing so without significant beginning nor ultimate, cataclysmic ending. "Red Fuji" offers a vision of the end brought on by human arrogance and imperfections in its attempts to control lethal forces – nuclear power – for its greater domination of the cosmos, with the resulting hubris-driven gamble revealing how much more powerful the cosmos, in the form of unbridled nuclear explosions, is than humanity.

The Old Man and the Village of Cosmic Harmony and Oneness

Dreams ends idyllically with "Watermills Village" (*Suisha no aru mura* 水車のある村), a vignette modeled on Tao Yuanming's 陶淵明 (365-427) utopian short story, "Peach Blossom Spring" (*Tao hua*

yuan ji 桃花源記). Here a boy – again recalling the Mencian "mind of the child" – leads a lost traveler over a bridge to an isolated, eccentric village. There the sojourner meets an old man repairing a watermill. The old man explains that the villagers had quit the hectic, technologically driven world to live in simple harmony with nature. Recalling the *Zhuangzi* 莊子on funerals (*Zhuangzi* 1986: 46), "Watermills Village" ends with a festive procession of villagers celebrating the good life of a now passed neighbor, rather than marking their loss through dreadful mourning with grief, tears, and wailing. That there is a funeral at all, even an unconventional one, also recalls Confucianism because it was the Confucian ritual that the *Zhuangzi* mocked by presenting Zhuangzi marking the passing of his wife by sitting on the ground and singing loudly while beating a pot. That aside, Kurosawa's utopian vignette suggests *Dreams'* sympathy for Daoist primitivism and a naturalistic following of the *dao* rather than an artifice-driven, nuclear-fueled modernity. The old man who relates the circumstances of the village shares significant ground with Laozi 老子, the old philosopher of Daoism, as well as Jung and Kurosawa, both in their 80s when their dreams and reflections were recorded. But then again, the *Analects* arguably first pioneered the motif of the old man articulating late-life reflections by presenting Confucius, past seventy, ruminating over his years, noting,

> By age fifteen, I set my mind on learning 吾十有五而志于學.
> By thirty, I had established myself as a scholar 三十而立.
> By forty, I had no doubts 四十而不惑.
> By fifty, I understood the decree of heaven 五十而知天命.
> By sixty, I could listen well 六十而耳順.
> By seventy, I could follow my heart's desires without excess
> 七十而從心所欲, 不踰矩 (*Analects* 1986: 2/4, 2).

Without denying that Laozi expresses the archetype of an old man who has attained great wisdom, there are also reasons for seeing the old man of "Watermills Village" vis-à-vis Confucius, and for seeing Confucius as a model for Kurosawa's own late-life reflections on himself and his work.

The village described recalls the Daoist utopia in the *Daodejing* 道德經. One reason is the village's name: when asked, the old man responds that the village has "no name". The *Daodejing*, of course, advocates notions like "no-action" (*wuwei* 無為), "no-mind" (*wuxin*無心), "no-desires" (*wuyu* 無欲), and, significantly enough, in its opening chapter, "the name-less" or literally, "no name" (*wuming* 無名) as "the beginning of heaven and earth" (無名天地之始) (*Daodejing* 1963: 1,3; *Zhuangzi* 1986: ch. 12). Kurosawa's "no-name village" might be read as an allusion to the *Daodejing*, suggesting a way of life that is the starting point of right relations between heaven, earth, and humanity. But then again the *Analects* records Confucius stating that he "prefers to be without words" (予欲無言). When asked why, Confucius responds with a question: "Does heaven speak? As the four seasons unfold through it and the ten-thousand things are generated by it, what [words] does heaven speak?" (天何言哉? 四時行焉, 百物生焉, 天何言哉) (*Analects* 1986: 17/17, 36).

That aside, the *Daodejing* account of a Daoist utopia relates the following:

> In small countries with a few people, [the ruler should] allow them to have hundreds of utensils, but there should be no reason to use them.
> [The ruler should] cause people to view death with gravity so that they will not [risk their lives to] go far away.
> Even if people have ships and carriages, none will have cause to ride them.
> Even if there are armor and weapons, none will have cause to use them.
> [The ruler] should have people return to tying knots [rather than writing (Müller 1891: 122)], enjoy their food, decorate their clothing, be at peace in their homes, and be happy with their customs.
> Neighboring states might be able to see one another and hear each other's cocks crow and their dogs bark, but people in those areas will grow old and die without ever visiting one another (*Daodejing* 1963: 80).

The utopia described above differs from the no-name watermills village in that, implicitly, a Daoist ruler responsible for "allowing" certain things to happen in certain ways presides over it. No doubt the result is similar to the watermills village, but the motive force behind the reality is different. This is all the more evident when another *Daodejing* passage about the government of a Daoist utopia is considered. It explains,

> The sage in governing (聖人之治) empties people's minds (虛其心), but fills their stomachs (實其腹); weakens their sense of purpose (弱其志), but strengthens their bones (強其骨), causing them always to have no knowledge and no desires (常使民無知無欲).
> He also makes things such that those with knowledge will never dare to use it (使夫知者不敢為也).
> By acting according to non-action, the sage thus leaves nothing that is not governed (為無為則無不治) (*Daodejing* 1963: 59).

In light of these passages, the Daoist utopia appears profoundly less idyllic insofar as the happiness and satisfaction realized results from guiding people to have emptied minds, weakened wills, and practically no knowledge.

In *Dreams*, the watermills village consists of people who intentionally quit the hectic world to live in harmony with nature. Its origins, as related by the old man, were quite purposeful, based on willful decisions reflecting knowledge, deliberation, and personal choices. There appears to be no ruler, other than the old man, whose accounts suggest a community of informed, intelligent, understanding individuals banning together to forge a better life. The purposeful, artifice driven origins of the watermills, the village, and the intellectual qualities evident in the villagers suggest not so much a Daoist utopia as a Confucian village of high-minded individuals finding harmony with heaven, earth, and one another. That the villagers have retreated from elsewhere to found their community is not inconsistent with Confucian teachings. In the *Analects*, Confucius praises Qu Boyu 蘧伯玉 as a "noble man" (君子) because "when the way prevailed

within his state, he took office (邦有道, 則仕); but when the way did not prevail, he could bundle things up and keep them to himself (邦無道, 則可卷而懷之)" (*Analects* 1986: 15/7, 31). Confucius' life story was that of a man wandering in search of a community wherein the way either prevailed or might prevail. Similarly, although the community described in Tao Yuanming's "Peach Blossom Spring" is often interpreted rather superficially as Daoist, when the people of the Peach Blossom Spring community relate how their ancestors "fled the chaotic times of the Qin dynasty" (避秦時亂) and that ever since, no one had left, the tale attributes to the people of that village a unique sort of historical consciousness, an understanding of political activism and resistance to tyranny, and an ongoing sense of individual willpower and cognitive, ethical intent that far more characterizes Confucianism than Daoism.

That these communities – Tao Yuanming's Peach Blossom Spring village and Kurosawa's watermills village – seemingly have no coercive government and rather strive for harmony with nature does not necessarily distance them from Confucianism either: the *Analects* first recognized "non-coercive government" (*wu wei er zhi* 無為而治), well before the Daoists, as characteristic of the ancient sage ruler Shun 舜. Also ancient Confucian texts, such as the *Analects* and *Book of Rites* 禮記, repeatedly recognize the cosmic, ethical, familial, political, and aesthetic importance of harmony in life. When the mentality of the watermills villagers is considered along with the large-scale civil engineering projects (the watermills – echoing visually the reels of film on Kurosawa's cameras), we find hints that the watermills village might be more a Confucian expression of the archetype of the village of cosmic harmony than a Daoist one. After all, the *Book of Rites* (禮記) describes an ancient age of "great unity" (*datong* 大同 *daitō*) in which all people lived together in perfect harmony and equality with one another and the environment around them, without need of ethical or ritual teachings of any sort. Julia Ching describes this utopia as a "true fellowship, a *Gemeinschaft*" (Ching 1972-1973: 4). The late-Qing thinker, Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927) made this vision the focus of his *Datongshu* (大同書), a quasi-socialistic exposition of the *Book of Rites*' vision, projecting it into the future rather than leaving it

a moment of golden antiquity. The first two chapters of Kang's work were published in Japan in the early 1900s during Kang's exile there. Later his thoughts circulated, albeit controversially, among scholars of Confucianism in prewar Japan (Tyng 1934: 67-69). In a twist of philosophical fate that turned the utopian ideal into something very different, the notion was also advanced by Zheng Xiaoxu 鄭孝胥 (1860-1938), a collaborationist with the Kwantung forces in Manchukuo (満州国), in articulating his political vision of an ideal Confucian future for all (Smith, Jr. 1959: 188-196). Kurosawa's "Watermills Village" might be viewed as yet another attempt at revisiting this utopian community and depicting the best of its ideals for contemporary Japan and its future.

The Question of Philosophy and Confucian Relevance

Without discounting Daoist motifs in "Watermills Village" or other allusions made to various layers of Japanese and East Asian philosophical cultures, this analysis of Kurosawa's *Dreams* suggests that its expressions of archetypes resonate considerably with themes intrinsic to Confucian perspectives on heaven, earth, the ten thousand things as well as father-remonstrators, dreams, old men, innocent children, axed trees, and utopian communities. Skeptics might object that citing Confucian ideas – centuries if not millennia old – to establish thematic resonance in late-twentieth-century films is farfetched at best. Others might object that Confucian ideas don't amount to philosophy and never did.

Responding to these objections involves introducing the work of Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855-1944), the first Japanese professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University who all but single-handedly created and gave considerable substance and concrete meaning to the field of *Tōyō tetsugaku* 東洋哲學, or Asian philosophy. Having studied Hegel and German philosophy in Heidelberg and Leipzig between 1881 and 1890, Inoue apparently was influenced by Hegel's limited and often derogatory recognition of Oriental philosophy. Given Hegel's admission that there was such a thing, Inoue

did not seriously question whether *Tōyō tetsugaku* existed, the question for him was what it consisted in and how might it be interpreted more positively. Inoue answered these questions on a monumental scale with his trilogy: *Nihon Yōmeigakuha no tetsugaku* 日本陽明學派之哲學 (1900), *Nihon kogakuha no tetsugaku* 日本古學派之哲學 (1902), and *Nihon Shushigakuha no tetsugaku* 日本朱子學派之哲學 (1905). Those three volumes, reprinted frequently prior to 1945, presented the first major exposition of the historical and theoretical contours of *Nihon tetsugaku*, or Japanese philosophy, as arguably the premier expression of *Tōyō tetsugaku*. Inoue cast Japanese philosophy largely if not exclusively in Confucian terms. Buddhism and Shintō were, in his view, primarily religion. By identifying Confucian theorizing in Japanese history as Japan's philosophical history, Inoue defined forthwith for modern Imperial Japan a substantial "tradition" of high-level philosophical thinking comparable, in sheer volume and dialectical complexity, to the traditions that Britain, Germany, France, and the United States might have boasted, suggesting that Imperial Japan was in no philosophical way lacking. Inoue's accounts of Japanese philosophical history were highly nationalistic, more concerned with establishing that Japan had such a tradition of thought – not to be outdone by any major power – than they were with defining the greater contours of Asian philosophy. This is especially evident in his trilogy which, while recognizing the Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming schools, far more celebrates the third development, the so-called School of Ancient Learning (古学派), as the philosophical victor over the other two and, in the form of Yamaga Sokō's 山鹿素行 (1622-1685) thinking, one of the most excellent and distinctively Japanese expressions of philosophical ideas. In part Inoue found Sokō's ideas compelling because, in works such as *Bukyō honron* 武教本論, they focused on the samurai estate of Tokugawa Japan, enabling Inoue to declare Sokō "the constitutional theorist of *bushidō*," despite the fact that Sokō never claimed such status for himself, nor was he recognized as such by his cohorts. Even more significant, Inoue found in Sokō's ideas, especially in his *Chūchō jijitsu* 中朝事実, ethically-based reasoning extolling the unbroken imperial line of Japan as the true "Middle Kingdom" (*Chūka* 中華). In making this claim for Japan, Sokō was denying China's traditional status. While few today

would endorse uncritically Inoue's views on Japanese Confucianism, there can be no question that the first philosophical tradition defined for Japan, modern or otherwise, was one that was Confucian at its very core. A voluminous literature, much of it by Inoue and his students, declaring the existence and identity of *Nihon no tetsugaku* surely exists attesting to this.

Inoue's writings soon shifted from cataloguing the philosophical tradition of Japan to formulating decidedly nationalistic expressions of ethical thought: *kokumin dōtoku* 國民道徳, or "National ethics", and *bushidō*. In 1905, Inoue and Arima Sukemasa 有馬祐政 (1873–1931) co-edited a three-volume work, *The Bushidō Library* (*Bushidō sōsho* 武士道叢書). In 1912, Inoue published *An Outline of National Ethics* (*Kokumin dōtoku gairon* 國民道徳概論), elevating the imperial throne, Japan's military spirit, and its purportedly superior moral virtues. In 1925, he published *Our National Essence and National Ethics* (*Waga kokutai to kokumin dōtoku* 我が國體と國民道徳). A decade later, coinciding with Japan's occupation of Manchuria, Inoue published *The Essence of the Japanese Spirit* (*Nihon seishin no honshitsu* 日本精神の本質, 1934). The same year Inoue returned to *bushidō*, publishing the first volume of *The Collected Works of Bushidō* (*Bushidō shū* 武士道集). The second volume appeared in 1940. Inoue was reportedly working on volume three when he died in 1944. In 1939, following Japan's invasion of China, Inoue authored *East Asian Culture and the Future of China* (*Tōyō bunka to Shina no shōrai* 東洋文化と支那の将来). In 1941, he coedited, with Nakayama Kyūshirō 中山久四郎 (1874–1961), *Fundamental Meanings of the Battlefield Code of Behavior* (*Senjin kun hongi* 戦陣訓本義), a commentary on the text, *Senjin kun*, that General Tōjō Hideki 東條英機 (1884–1948), commander of the Imperial Japanese Army, ordered all military personnel to study. In 1942, Inoue published yet another volume on *bushidō*, *The Essence of Bushidō* (*Bushidō no honshitsu* 武士道の本質).

Through these later writings, Inoue refashioned much of Confucian philosophical thought into what he and others labeled "National ethics", something later non-Japanese scholars and many Japanese scholars of early-twentieth century Japanese thinking would call nationalistic ideology, if not simply propaganda. Maruyama Masao

丸山眞男 (1914-1996) notes that Inoue was not alone in this, though Inoue was perhaps, in Maruyama's view, "the representative figure" in the movement (Maruyama 1974: xix). One of the many byproducts of this form of philosophizing was *Kokutai no hongi* 國體の本義, a nationalistic title used for various publications, the most famous (or infamous) of which was published by the Ministry of Education in 1937 (Gauntlett 1949). Arguably, in *Kokutai no hongi* much of Inoue's legacy and beyond came in to prominence, unfortunately, by association with myths about the origins of the Japanese people, islands, and all things – including grasses and trees (Gauntlett 1949: 61) – so that few of Kurosawa's generation would have escaped that subject matter. *Kokutai no hongi* includes many objectionable passages and others that are hardly so. It is cited here to establish that Confucian archetypal motifs, including many evident in Kurosawa's *Dreams*, remained in circulation well into the twentieth century as vital expressions of what was surely then considered as a philosophical vision. A full exploration of the early-twentieth-century representation of these motifs would be excessive. However, in order to show their relative longevity, two archetypal themes – (i) humanity's oneness with the ten thousand things including grasses and trees, and (ii) the generative nature of the cosmos – are examined. If from no other sources, Kurosawa's awareness of these motifs might well have been mediated by prewar texts such as *Kokutai no hongi*.

Grasses and trees are mentioned in six paragraphs in the Monbushō *Kokutai no hongi* text: first as the generative products, along with *kamigami* 神々, of Izanagi and Izanami, suggesting their spiritual nature (次いで山川草木神々を生み); second, as the offspring of Izanagi and Izanami who generate them along with the realm's mountains and rivers (大八洲國及び山川草木を生めり); third, in a passage discussing the Japanese homeland (我が國土), which credits Izanagi and Izanami with birthing everything from "the same womb" (同胞), including land, grasses, and trees in a "familial harmony of kinship from the same womb" (我が國土は、語事によれば伊弉諾ノ尊・伊弉冉ノ尊二尊の生み給うたものであつて、我等と同胞の關係にある。我等が國土・草木を愛するのは、かゝる同胞的親和の念からである) (Gauntlett 1949:

124). Significant here is that while *Kokutai no hongi* contextualizes the generation of grasses and trees in relation to Izanagi and Izanami, its use of the words, "same womb" (*tongbao* 同胞 *dōhō*), alludes distinctively to Zhang Zai's "Western Inscription" where those words appear in reference to the familial oneness binding all things generated by heaven and earth, i.e., their commonly shared body in the generative force of the cosmos. Morohashi's *Dai Kan Wa jiten* explains that prior to Zhang Zai's text, the words "same womb" had appeared in the *History of the Han Dynasty* (*Hanshu* 漢書), referring to people related by birth. (Morohashi 1943: 812) *Kokutai no hongi*'s use of those words in explaining the common kinship of all things reveals how nativist spiritual narratives drew on Confucian philosophical language, here that of Zhang Zai's "Western Inscription", wherein "same womb" is used in reference to the commonality of all things.

A fourth reference to grasses and trees surfaces in Fujita Tōko's 藤田東湖 (1806-1855) poem, *Seiki no uta* 正氣の歌, extolling the "proper generative force" (正氣) of heaven and earth. Much as *Reflections on Things at Hand* included Zhang Zai's "Western Inscription", *Kokutai* incorporates Fujita's poem as an elegant affirmation of commonality. Although reminiscent of Zhang Zai's "Western Inscription", Tōko's poem extols only the glories and destinies of the "divine land" (*shinshū* 神州), praising the beauties of its "essential spirit" (精神), including "the trees and grasses of our homeland" (國土草木) (Gauntlett 1949: 130, Monbushō 1937: 92.3). Generally speaking, Tōko's writings did much to anticipate *Kokutai no hongi*, especially in combining Confucian ethics with nativist thinking. In his *Kōdōkanki jutsugi* (弘道館記述義), Tōko observes that while heaven and earth are the beginning of the ten-thousand things, the generation of humanity (生民) is grounded in heaven and earth (天地に原づく) as well as in the heavenly *kami* (天神に本づく), thus merging Confucian cosmologies within nativist expressions (Tōko 1973: 261). The fifth reference to grasses and trees appears in *Kokutai no hongi*'s discussion of Buddhism where it relates how the Tendai Sect holds that "grasses and trees and the soil of our homeland all have Buddha-nature" (天台宗が草木國土も悉皆佛性をもち) (Gauntlett 1949: 147; Monbushō 1937: 112.4). A final reference occurs in a discussion of Japan's "harmony with nature"

(自然と調和) in its art and culture where *Kokutai no hongi* states, "As with the construction of temples and shrines, the beautiful fusion ... of nature's mountains, rivers, grasses, and trees is well revealed" (寺院建築の如きも, よく山川草木の自然に融合して優美なる姿を示し) (Gauntlett 1949: 156; Monbushō 1937: 125.4).

Kokutai no hongi thus reiterates the consciousness of grasses and trees that had circulated in Confucian philosophical discourse of the Tokugawa period and beyond. Although *Kokutai no hongi* has been described in the worst of ideological terms, and even compared to *Mein Kampf* (Gauntlett 1949: 7-8), it is not an utterly misguided work. Its consistent critiques of contemporary western thought (西洋近代思想) and especially individualism (個人主義) and individualistic cultures (個人主義文化), coupled with its readiness to affirm Fascism and Nazism (ファツショ·ナチス) as movements intent on revising these individualistic approaches (是正する) (Gauntlett 1949: 181; Monbushō 1937: 154.1-2), surely make for disturbing reading. Yet in rearticulating sentiments related to trees and grasses, harmony, and degrees of universal oneness, albeit along parochial lines, the text hardly seems egregious. Whether Kurosawa was aware of these sentiments through *Kokutai no hongi* or otherwise is open to question – though reportedly 2,000,000 copies of *Kokutai* were sold by March 1943 as required reading for the national teaching staff (Kublin 1950: 365) – their presence in that text illustrates one means by which they remained important expressions in early-twentieth-century Japan.

Along with grasses and trees, *Kokutai no hongi* emphasizes generative vitality (*musubi* むすび), explained as "the generating of things" (ものの生ずることである), but illustrated in terms of Japanese subjectivities via reference to the work of Izanami and Izanagi "generating the various kami and the national homeland" (神々·國土を生み給うた) (Gauntlett 1949: 95; Monbushō 1937: 52.4). *Kokutai no hongi* also affirms a cosmological oneness with all things, expressed in terms of *makoto* (まこと), often translated in English as "truth" or "sincerity," but explained in *Kokutai no hongi* as "the purest part of the human spirit" (人の精神の最も純粋なもの), the basis of human life (生命の本), humanity's oneness with the ten-thousand things (萬物と一體となり), the generating of the ten thousand things (萬物を生

かし), and the harmonizer of the ten-thousand things (萬物と和する) (Gauntlett 1949: 100; Monbushō 1937: 59.2). This celebration of *makoto* in cosmological terms has its ancient counterpart in the Confucian text, the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸), which explains "sincerity" (誠), read in Japanese as *makoto*, as "the way of heaven" (誠者天之道也), "the way of humanity" (人之道也), and ultimately as a quality enabling those who possesses it to assist heaven and earth in the transformative cultivation of things (贊天地之化育), thus participating in the work of heaven and earth (可以與天地參矣) (Legge 1971: 413, 416). Fully exploring the extent to which other echoes of Confucian thinking circulated, albeit refashioned as nativist ethical ideology, in early twentieth-century Japan is impossible here. Suffice it to say, however, that in the decades of Kurosawa's youth and early adulthood, such ideas achieved very wide circulation, making it not unlikely that Kurosawa would have known this kind of thinking. That reverberations of Confucian and nativist themes surface regularly in the expressions of archetypal motifs in *Dreams* should not, then, seem surprising.

Reflections on Chinese Humanism and Cosmology

The Confucian themes evident in *Dreams* are also ones that Tu Weiming 杜維明 (1940-) emphasizes in his discussions of "New Confucian humanism". Tu suggests that the Confucian concern for the world, describable as "ecological", has long been recognized by Confucians under the rubric of "the unity of heaven and humanity" (天人合一). Tu observes that heaven, within Chinese thought, embraces earth, so that the vision of unity is ultimately one of heaven, earth, and humanity. Tu adds that twentieth-century scholars such as Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) in Taiwan, Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978) in Hong Kong, and Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895-1990) in Beijing, have also recognized the unity of heaven, earth, and humanity as central to Confucian teachings (Tu 2001: 243-264). In this connection, Tu further suggests that "the Enlightenment mentality" has become untenable insofar as it elevates the anthropocentric view of the universe,

with the universe extant for the sake of man to do with as he wishes. Instead Tu advocates the Confucian vision of an "anthropocosmic" perspective recognizing the importance of humanity, but within a cosmology respecting heaven and earth as dimensions within a whole that includes humanity. The anthropocosmic vision affirms, Tu adds, the unity of humanity and the universe (Tu 1998: 3-9). Tu's vision of the "New Confucian Humanism" is not far, then, from the "deep ecology" thinking of Naess and others who profoundly question the "man-in-environment concept", in favor of a more relational, "total-field image" understanding of the biosphere (Naess 1973: 95).

Well before Tu, Wing-tsit Chan called attention to these themes in observing that "if one word could characterize the entire history of Chinese philosophy, that one word would be humanism – not the humanism that denies or slights a Supreme Power, but one that professes the unity of man and Heaven" (Chan 1963a: 3). As if to conjure memories of Kurosawa's "Watermills Village," Wm. Theodore de Bary expresses this tendency in Confucianism more pastorally in stating,

> Chinese and Confucian culture, traditionally, was about settled communities living on the land, nourishing themselves and the land. It is this natural, organic process that Confucian self-cultivation draws upon for all its analogies and metaphors (De Bary 1998: 32).

Mary Evelyn Tucker, editor of several volumes exploring the relevance of religio-philosophical traditions to ecology,[5] similarly relates, "The whole Confucian triad of heaven, earth, and humans rests on a

5. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John A. Grim, eds., *Worldviews and Ecology: Religion, Philosophy, and the Environment* (Orbis, 1994); Mary Evelyn Tucker et al., *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds* (Harvard University Press, 1998); Mary Evelyn Tucker et al., *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans* (Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, 1998); Christopher Chapelle and Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water* (Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000); Mary Evelyn Tucker and Judith Berling, *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase* (Open Court, 2003); Thomas Berry, author, and Mary Evelyn Tucker, ed., *The Sacred Universe* (Columbia University Press, 2009).

seamless yet dynamic intersection between each of these realms. Without harmony with nature and its myriad changes, human society and government is threatened" (Tucker 1997: 120). Noting the recent contributions of Tucker and Tu, Korean scholars have explored similar themes in Korean Confucianism. Edward Chung's study of Yi T'oegye 李退溪 (1501-1570) examines T'oegye's notion of "reverence" (*kyŏng* 敬) and its ecological implications for a "holistic" ethics that fulfills "the human role in 'forming one body with heaven, earth, and all things'". Chung notes that T'oegye wrote nature poetry drawing on Confucian themes, combining aesthetic and ethical motifs in communicating his "profound belief in the harmonious oneness of human, natural, and spiritual realities". Expanding on this tradition and relating it to the contemporary ecological crises facing Korea and the globe, Chung calls for a "'Green Confucianism' that will protect the earth and preserve the healthy future of the world" (Chung 2011: 93-111; Kim 2011: 149-193).

Young-chan Ro, in addressing this discourse, claims that understanding the nature of ecology necessitates a cosmological understanding. Ro asserts that the scientific worldview encourages grasping the universe from an anthropocentric perspective, as an object to be exploited for selfish human benefit. Ecological issues are, in Ro's view, essentially cosmological ones, making the ecological crisis a cosmological crisis. Addressing the Tōhoku disaster, Ro states, "The March 11, 2011 earthquake in Japan was a powerful reminder of the fact that we can no longer afford the idea that human beings are the center of all beings and the measure of all things (Protagoras)". Ro proposes a "cosmoanthropic" perspective, one going beyond anthropocentric and anthropocosmic visions which ultimately emphasize the primacy of humanity over the cosmos. Ro thus advocates beginning with the cosmos and situating humanity within it. Ro sees Yi Yulgok's 李栗谷 (1536-1584) essays, *Treatise on the Way of Heaven* (*Ch'ŏndoch'aek* 天道策) and *Treatise on Numeric Changes* (*Yŏksuch'aek* 易數策), examining the interrelationships of the cosmos and humanity, as valuable resources for rediscovering the cosmological dimension of Korean Neo-Confucianism and understanding its relevance for developing an "eco-cosmology" or "a new cosmology ... emphasizing the interrelationship

of human beings and the universe" (Ro 2011: 113-123). Ro's notion of "cosmoanthropic" indeed approximates Naess' thinking about how the cosmos and humanity might be best conceptualized.

Admirably, these scholars have focused on China, Korea, and more generally, the world. There is no escaping the macrocosm here since, as de Bary has noted, we live in a much larger world because "ecological problems can only be managed on a global scale" (De Bary 1998: 32-33). To the extent that Kurosawa's *Dreams* can be viewed as subtly developing the earlier mentioned archetypes often via distinctively Confucian motifs, it too, in a somewhat distinctive Japanese register, calls attention, cinematically, to Confucian humanism as a sort of cosmic humanism, whether understood anthropocosmically or cosmoanthropically. In doing so, Kurosawa arguably salvages themes with deep historic roots in Confucian – and also Buddhist and nativist – traditions, but which had been appropriated as ideological motifs in works such as *Kokutai no hongi*. Kurosawa's samurai corpus, including films such as *Seven Samurai* (七人の侍), mock romantic notions about *bushidō* and its purported spiritual role in Japanese history, and so stand in stark contrast to teachings in *Kokutai no hongi*. With archetypal themes evident in *Dreams* related to Confucian humanism, those expressing respect and appreciation for trees and grasses, their spirituality, as well as the world of heaven and earth, Kurosawa again appropriates motifs earlier included in the hyper-nationalist concentration of *Kokutai no hongi* and a host of other works, for re-presentation and reaffirmation in *Dreams* as more environmentally relevant expressions of his understandings of some of Japan's and East Asia's highest, most seminal, and most compelling ideals. Cosmological sensibilities that were perhaps tainted by association with philosophical ideologies of prewar times, Kurosawa reclaimed and nourished, perhaps in the mode he thought most appropriate, not as a set of truth claims that would be subjected to scrutiny, logical analysis, and expectations of verifiability, but rather in the aesthetically powerful psychological manner of many ideals – as dreams and nightmares, both projecting details of utopian possibilities and the horrible consequences of ignoring our immersive situatedness in the world. In this way *Dreams* repositions cosmological formulations expressed verbally and projects

them as compelling visual statements affirming a version of mysticism, that of achieving oneness with all things on the grandest scale, and commonality with trees and grasses on the more particular, even as it rearticulates in film idyllic scenarios such as the watermills village. Along the way, *Dreams* rescues some of the more profound expressions of cosmic idealism in East Asian philosophical culture.

Maruyama on Nature and Modernity

Awareness of the intimate connection between Confucianism and the natural order, including humanity, is perhaps nothing new: seemingly echoing Hegel's *Lectures*, Maruyama Masao's 丸山眞男 (1914-1996) *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan* (*Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* 日本政治思想史研究) describes the so-called "Zhu Xi mode of thought" (朱子學的思惟樣式) as "thinking about the natural order" (自然的秩序思想) (Maruyama 1952: 22-30; 200-206; 209-240; Hane 1974: 21-68; 189-205; 206-238). Unlike Kurosawa, who envisioned that unity favorably, Maruyama saw it in a basically Hegelian dimension as fundamentally wrongheaded, amounting to little more than expressions of a static, feudal way of thinking that would have to be surpassed if Japan were to achieve a modern political consciousness. The latter, in Maruyama's view, is defined not by an ontological and ethical continuum with nature, but rather by the predominance of human artifice and invention (*saku'i* 作為), independent of nature and morality. Within Japanese intellectual history Maruyama saw this move away from naturalistic conceptions of humanity, ethics, and the cosmos and toward a separation of the human and the natural, as beginning significantly with Ogyū Sorai's 荻生徂徠 (1666-1728) emphasis on the artifice of the ancient sages as opposed to the naturalistically oriented Confucian conceptions of humanity, ethics, and the cosmos.

Maruyama later explained that the essays comprising *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan* emerged as allegorical expressions opposing *kokumin dōtoku*, and in particular the ideas of Inoue Tetsujirō. There is every reason to credit Inoue with the first

invention of philosophy as an academic discipline in Japan insofar as he identified it with Japan's Confucian traditions. Yet by tying Confucianism as philosophy to the interests of a misguided militarized state, Inoue contributed unwittingly to the discrediting of Confucianism and the notion that Japan had ever developed philosophical thinking prior to its introduction from the west during the Meiji period. Into the vacuum, Nishida Kitarō, a former student of Inoue's, rose with his synthesis of Continental philosophy and Zen, not Confucianism. In the postwar period, scholars such as Maruyama quickly emerged vocally opposing Inoue's claims, especially those associated with *Kokumin dōtoku*. In the process, they cast Confucianism in Japan as little more than an ideology, or at best as "thought".

While Maruyama's claims remain, for many, the starting point of studies of Tokugawa thought, increasingly few affirm that breaking with nature is a necessary condition for realizing modernity or post-modernity (Thomas 2001: 3-31). If anything, attitudes of confidence in human artifice and arrogance toward the earth have been severely compromised by developments such as the invention of nuclear weapons, advanced technologies for mass destruction, and other non-natural specters that haunt humanity and its future. No doubt artifice is inevitable, but if not contextualized within a concern for nature as family, as many Confucians have suggested, modernity as an artifice driven force soon presents us with the prospect of further trauma and human suffering. If there is a persistent reluctance to consider the possibility that the naturalistic thought of Confucianism still bears significance in the twenty-first century, it might in no small degree be another reflection of the legacy of Maruyama's Hegelian-inspired critical interpretations of Confucian humanistic thinking as essentially pre-modern.

Kurosawa's *Dreams*, however, proposes a different vision for Japan in opposition to *kokumin dōtoku* and the most egregious ideas of *Kokutai*. Kurosawa apparently recognized the intrinsic value of closeness to the world of heaven and earth, trees and grasses, mountains and rivers, birds and beasts, so that rather than dismiss continuity with them cosmologically, ontologically, and ethically, he affirmed those sensibilities, salvaging them from the fate of so much in *Kokutai* and

associated with *kokumin dōtoku* that was not wrongheaded, but had nevertheless been expressed in tandem with what was. Kurosawa's vision of an ideal modernity, arguably conveyed in *Dreams*, affirms unity of spirit and nature – the very form of thinking Hegel described as the lowest. In this, Kurosawa's modernity is more akin to that of Naess' calls for "deep ecology" and recognition of the rights of all living things to life and integrity as living forms. In his implicit understanding of the living and spiritual integrity of trees in "Peach Orchard," *Dreams*, without being a statement of ink and paper, affirms in a cinematic way a philosophical position which merits ongoing consideration if nightmares worse than any Kurosawa dreamed are to be avoided. If traditional forms of thought indeed remain relevant as sources of empowering theoretical inspiration for those struggling to envision a balanced path forward, and Kurosawa's *Dreams* implicitly affirms as much, we might find assistance in conceptualizing our proper place in and relationship with the universe in what has been referred to, via reinterpretation, as "Green Confucianism". The latter is surely preferable to the apocalyptic hues of a "Red Fuji".

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