死生学

Newsletter No.10

Construction of Death and Life Studies Concerning Value and Culture of Life

CONTENTS

Death and Life Studies that Removes Attachment

Hiroshi Ichikawa

When we consider the relationship between Death and Life Studies and religion, what should concern us is not just questions of fundamentalism and martyrdom but issues that relate to each and everyone of us. One religious question is how can we go about removing our attachment to this world. Perhaps there is no need to restate this. Here, though, I would like to discuss this issue and how it relates to my recent interest in Japanese culture.

For some time I was often going to see Kabuki and Bunraku. Lately, however, I have become interested in Noh. Of course, I haven't studied or seen so much Noh that I can lecture on it.

Several years ago, just as my interest was beginning, I visited Daigo-ji Temple in Yamashina Ward of Kyoto. It was March, but already the season for flower viewing. One would look out at the Sanbo-in garden, which was built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and listen to the explanation. According to this explanation, the pond of this garden is related to a Noh play *Fujito*. This peaked my interest, and yet there was something about the explanation that made little sense.

Although the story itself is set in the Genpei era, it seemed too much on the side of the warrior class. The murdered fisherman and the old lady who was left behind seemed to have been sad creatures. But, through torture and great hardship, the fisherman, after having spoken of how he was no longer attached to this world, receives a Buddhist funeral and quickly becomes a Buddha.

Regardless of the story, if one changes their view of it slightly, one is moved by how Noh is focused on observing the hate, jealous, attachment, etc., that can occur in all of us. Art, through taking this attachment to its extreme, has, for us, a cathartic effect. Through giving us something to think about, each of us is able to face our own self-attachment. Of course, all of this was only possible because those who wrote Noh plays were writing from the perspective of Buddhist thought.

And it is here where religion comes into play. How, then, can we remove this attachment, is the question we must ask. This is the problem of how to be saved. Although there are degrees of difference, the various religions of the world have all dealt with this issue. Buddhism is perhaps most typical of this religion undertaking of placing our state of mind at the center of its doctrine. It is when we have understood the Four-Noble Truths and removed our attachment that we finally return to our original spiritual state and where the Eightfold Path appears.

At the popular level, it is difficult for one, as an ascetic would, to cut off their attachments. Here, various methods and competing arguments by which to deal with this problem unfold (i.e., nenbutsu, vinaya, zen, chanting the daimoku). All these practices, although simple, require a total commitment. Although these practices do not in themselves destroy attachment, they do change the direction in which one is facing. Emotions like attachment and hate are very powerful ones, and thus through skillfully re-orientating one's focus, a powerful effect can be obtained. Through the resolved and repeated chanting of myogo and daimoku one is able to shift the focus of their mind.

I am currently researching how the various religions have attempted to practice destroying this attachment. Of course, we must realize that a given religion, based on various kinds of theory and practice, may employ both means by which to destroy attachment and also to shift this attachment to something else. Further, such research must also be examined from the question of the political, the nation, and theories of value.

Nichiren once wrote “Life is limited; we must not begrudge it. What we should ultimately aspire to is the Buddha land.” In the *Analects*, one of Confucius' disciples states, “From antiquity, all humans have [faced] death. Without faith, one cannot carry on.” In Deuteronomy, which the Jewish people often used as a confession of faith in the morning and night, we find the following famous passage: “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Here, the soul represents one's life and might is one's wealth. One must follow the creator's 613 Commandments even if this means throwing away all wealth. In Christianity, where we find the same creator, it is through the death and rebirth of Christ in which all of humanity is saved. It is through faith in Christ that Christians are, like Christ himself on the cross, able to overcome attachment to the self and obtain salvation.In terms of method, we are faced with a great difference. For Islam, it is absolute refuge in Allah in which the massive energy of the faithful is focused on.

But, in Judaism, there are methods outside of the highly defined practices of legalism. The very method by which the Talmud is studied is representative of the religious cause and through this mystical way of learning one receives a certain kind of pleasure. Even though this text is a legalistic document, it has an epically poetic rhythm and refrain which gives the reader a mystical feeling. This is true the more one studies this text, and accounts for its allure.

There it also Hasidism, a highly logical and popular mystical movement. Here, through focusing one's attachment on God, one strives to not allow harmful thoughts to arise. Recently, I have been somewhat attached to this movement – in an academic sense, of course.

Constructing Death

Seiichi Takeuchi

Many problems were posed this June during “The Clinical Aspects of Death and Perspectives on Death and Life” symposium. Kunio Yanagida, Yoshinori Hiroi, Masahiro Morioka, and Kazumi Wakabayashi all spoke on these problems (See the booklet *The Clinical Aspects of Death and Perspectives on Death and Life* published this April).

Although both Yanagida and Hiroi spoke of the necessity of creating a “narrative concerning one's death,” they greatly differed in their perspectives. Yanagida argued that it is important for individuals to feel as if they have completed their lives in order for the possibility of being able to accept death. Hiroi noted that a nihilistic view of death, in which death was seen as nothingness, is spreading in contemporary Japan. He argued that it is necessary for all of us to, in some sense, rethink death through the notion of death as being “a place in which the soul returns home.” Hiroi's version of this narrative includes what happens after death, whereas Yanagida's narrative is focused on completing of one's life before dying. The question, then, is how these two narratives relate: how are the completion of one's life and the narrative of the afterlife connected? Bluntly put, Yanagida's narrative evinces Hiroi's criticism of “death = nothingness,”in that one must complete their life while still here, because nothing remains once you die.

Although this is somewhat abrupt, allow me to quote from the *Heike Monogatari*, in what is almost the last scene of Taira no Tomomori’s life.

“I have seen what there is to see. Now I will die.”

The question here is what exactly was it that Tomomori saw? One interpretation is that Tomomori, as head general of the Heike family, had seen the end and the fate of his entire family. All that needed to be done was done. He had seen, in this world, the conclusion of things. This is the standard interpretation, but there is another. “Seen what there is to see” means that he had seen the other side. Such an interpretation holds that he had desired to see the other world. What is interesting about “The Last Moments of Tomomori’s Life” is that both of these interpretations are possible.

Based on this, I first asked Yanigida for his opinion on this.

Although he did not directly answer my question, he discussed Yoko Sano’s picture book *The Cat that Lived a Million Times*.Yanagida himself, from when he was young, was interested in the words of *The Heart Sutra*:“Color is emptiness.” All that has

color and shape is empty. With Sano's book, however, he felt as if he had finally understood these words.

In this work, we have a cat that dies a million times and is reborn a million times. In the cat's final rebirth, he falls in love with a female cat, they have numerous kittens, and, then, the female dies. Finally, the male, as well, dies, never to be reborn again. The story ends with a picture of an empty field filled with red flowers. Yanagida commented that this fit perfectly with his image of the phrase "Color is emptiness."

The following is my own interpretation. The male cat, to put it this way, completed his life here, and, thus, would not be reborn again. But I also feel as if this completion somehow leads to the next place. The tranquil field filled with red flowers represents completion in this life as well as the first step towards the next.

"Even if I knew certainly the world would end tomorrow, I would plant an apple tree today."

These are words [attributed] to Martin Luther, which Yanagida quotes in his work. Even if the end is upon us, one must still finish their task. Of course, for Luther, this work here also ties in with what will happen over there.

There is a certain line of thought that holds that a degree of completion in one dimension already leads to the next. Without knowing what is next, perhaps, we are already connected to that which is over there.

As I mentioned above, the phrase "Color is emptiness" is part of the famous line ("Color is Emptiness, Emptiness is Color) from *The Heart Sutra*. The question of how to express these words in modern terms is important. Kaneko Daiei, a priest of Shin Buddhism, simply wrote:

"Flower petals fall
But the flower does not"

Thus, even with the scattering of petals, the flower (i.e., the fact that one lived) does not disappear. (May 28th, Gogatsu-sai, public speech)

Book Review: Kenichi Tanigawa, *Chased by the Gods* (2000, Shincho-sha)

Hiroe Shimauchi

This five-chapter work, which depicts popular beliefs in the deities of the southernmost Japanese islands, was written by folklorist Tanigawa Kenichi. Although this work is written as fiction, it is based on the author's several decades of field work (and his vast imagination). Thus, the writing and descriptions has a thick and lifelike quality to it. In the introductory chapter "A Crisis of the Spirit,"in an attempt to relativize his examples, the religious experiences of the spirit mediums("yuta") of the southern islands, which at times seems nonsensical, is compared with Christ's experiences in the Gospels.

In the following chapters, “The Path to Becoming a Spirit Medium of the southern islands” and “The Goddess of the Grotto,” the protagonist Kana Nema of Miyako-jima Island and her younger brother Takahiko’s daily routine is interrupted by the beckoning voice of the deities and, following a long and tortuous process of being possessed (what is known as the “Kami Daari”), she becomes the spirit medium “Kankakariya.” This work is sent around 1970, just when Okinawa was being returned to Japanese possession. In the latter half of this work, however, the chapters entitled “The Little Girl who Battles an Evil Spirit” and “The Forest of the Deity,” are set in the 1990s – with Kana and her brother appearing as veteran mediums.

Kankakariya and those like her by no means sought this way of life. Tanigawa writes, “They were chased by the gods and, when they could no longer escape, gave their souls to them.” The language that these mediums use when speaking of these deities is often sad and filled with pain. But just what kind of gods chase after people? The god that appeared to Kana was, like Oya-gami in the *Fudo-ki*, a shabby-looking fellow who transformed himself into a white-bearded old man. Kana’s brother is confronted by alluring female deities. The deity of Lucia, the little girl who battles the evil spirit is, like Kana’s, is also a grey-bearded old man.The gods cannot be seen by all; and for those who can’t, disbelief may occur. Kana experienced two failed marriages, as her husbands did not have the power to see the gods.

When one writes using ethnological and anthropological concepts, a socially based approach is vital. Thus, the image that one gets is, as if one uses a wide-lens camera, of the big picture and not of the fine details. Here, though, Tanigawa has made a special effort to focus on Kankakariya and other practitioners of popular religion with a zoom lens, which gives us an accurate portrayal that borders, at times, on vulgarity. Although Tanigawa’s stance is similar to the knife-like gaze of the psychoanalyst examining a patient, there is a fundamental difference. This, I think, is based on the fact that Tanigawa understands (or is even a part of) the society of the southern islands. In contemporary medicine, it is common to deal with religiously influenced phenomenon like possession as being an illness. In opposition to this, Tanigawa, as an folklorist, views this directly from the context of Okinawan culture, and works to peel back the membrane between madness and normality. As long as this is so, there is a fundamental difference between the religious experience of the mediums and clinical knowledge, which sees them as being in need of a process of recovery.

Based on the context, the voices of those who may be marginalized as being “mentally ill” can, as in the southern islands of Japan, be seen and cared for as children of the gods. The cultivation of this sense of spirituality is based in the forests of the Southern islands, where, despite the ravages of time, there still exists a place where the gods are accepted. If this view of illness is part of the Southern landscape, then perhaps, here, we can have a fleeting glance of the Southern view of life and death.

Public Symposium: Life and Death in Confucianism

Tsuyoshi Kojima

A public symposium entitled “Death and Life in Confucianism” was held on April 23rd (Saturday) in the Tetsumon (Steel Gate) Auditorium of the Medical School. This was the main event and primary reason for inviting Professor Tu Weiming as a special invited COE professor. Professor Tu's keynote speech was designed to allow for discussion concerning problems of the concept of life and death in Confucian thought. More than a hundred people attended. Professor spoke in English and simultaneous interpretation was provided.

Professor Susumu Shimazono introduced Professor Tu, explaining that this was a chance for all of us to share our thoughts on concepts of life and death in East Asia. Professor Tu's speech was entitled “An “Anthropocosmic” Perspective on Creativity.” The term “anthropocosmic” refers to the mutual relationship between humans and the heaven, which is seen in the Chinese classics. Although Professor Tu's pre-distributed paper dealt primarily with Confucian concepts of life, his speech also covered many aspects of Confucian thought on life.Following this, I gave a paper, “Defining Death: Confucianism, Bushido and philosophy of action” in which he discussed the process of rationalization by which a synthesis of Bushido and Confucianism allowed for the idea of giving one's life for a specific cause. Although this was also a keynote speech, it was designed to provide the intellectual and historical background of modern Neoconfucianists, like Professor Tu.

This was followed by a short break and then responses. First, Professor Megumi Sakabe of Obirin University (Prof. Emeritus, University of Tokyo) discussed how “anthropocosmic” philosophy also existed in the pre-modern West and it was with the loss of this conception that modernity began. He pointed out that this was also an important problem when Western thought entered Japan after the Meiji era. Next, Professor Masaya Mabuchi of Gakushuin University discussed how the Confucian notion of death was also related to popular beliefs such as Taoism. He also pointed out that the study of popular practices towards the dead would become an important issue in the future.

Under the direction of Professor Hiroshi Watanabe (Professor of the Faculty of Law and Politics, former vice-dean), we offered each thoughts. Notably, we discussed on the traditional Confucian concept of the body and its relation for bioethics (which is one of the main pillars of the COE program).

Professor Tu Weiming Visits Tokyo

Tsuyoshi Kojima

In addition to lectures (4th, Komaba Campus of the University of Tokyo; 7th ,Tokyo Campus of Tsukuba University; 14th Hongo Campus of Univ. of Tokyo; 23rd, Medical School's Testumon Auditorium, Hongo Campus of Univ. of Tokyo), Professor Tu Weiming was extremely active and energetic in meeting with scholars of Chinese Studies during his stay. In the following, I would like to introduce some of what he did while with us.

March 2nd (Saturday): Professor Tu attended Mizoguchi Yuzo's (Prof. Emeritus, Univ. of Tokyo) Song/Ming Research group, which is held monthly at Musashi University and is currently working on a translation of the *Chu-zi wu-lei*(Analets of Chu-zi). After listening to the various discussions on how to best translate the various terms in this text into Japanese, Professor Tu, at the request of Professor Mizoguchi, talked on his understanding of the term "tai-ji(taikyoku,in Japanese)", which was the topic of debate for the session.

March 5th (Tuesday): Today was the Qing-ming Festival, in which many Chinese visit ancestral graves. Professor Tu and I visited the Otsuka Confucian Grave, which is next to Gokoku-ji Temple. This grave was where many Confucian scholars of the Edo period who did not want a Buddhist burial were buried. Professor Tu is also versed in the history of Confucianism in Japan, and he was moved when he examined many of the familiar names etched on the gravestones. Professor Tu also had lunch and spoke at length with Professor Yuzo Mizoguchi.

March 6th (Wednesday): Professor Tu visited Rikugi-en (Komagome) early in the morning and examined the site where Ogyu Sorai taught Confucianism (in Chinese) to the Shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi and his political advisor Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu. Professor Tu then visited the nearby Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library), where he was given a personal tour by the director, Yoshinobu Shiba. As the Harvard-Yenching Institute, where Professor Tu is director, also serves as Harvard's East Asian library, he was very interested in the practical workings of Toyo Bunko and asked many questions to Professor Shiba.

March 7th (Thursday): Before his talk at Tsukuba University, Professor Tu visited the Toho Gakkai (Association of Eastern Culture), where he met with the staff and director, Yoshiro Togawa (Prof. Emeritus, University of Tokyo), and specifically talked about exchange between scholars of East Asia in Japan and the United States.

March 14th (Thursday): Before his talk at the University of Tokyo, Professor Tu visited Waseda University, where he met with Kenjiro Tsuchida. Professor Tsuchida is a scholar of Confucian thought – primarily Chu-zi. The creation of a new department at Waseda was announced on this very day, and was the subject of much conversation.

March 18th (Monday): Professor Tu visited Nisho Gakusha University, where he introduced the current state of Chinese Studies in the United States to Professor Togawa and his colleagues. At 4 PM, Professor Tu returned to the University of Tokyo, where he gave a lecture entitled "Multiple Modernities: Implications of the Rise of "Confucian" East Asia" at the main conference room at the Institute of Oriental Culture. Approximately 30 scholars participated.

In addition to the above, Professor Tu also visited a number of other scholars. Due to constraints of space they have been omitted. In summation, Professor Tu had a very packed schedule and he contributed greatly. He returned to the United States on March 25th.

Dr. Ann Mongoven: Gift of Life versus Relay of Life: Implications of Organ Donation Rhetoric

Susumu Shimazono

On May 9th (Monday), from 5-7 PM, in room 333 of the Medical Library, University of Indiana Associate Professor of Religion Ann Mongoven gave a talk entitled "Gift of Life versus Relay of Life: Implications of Organ Donation Rhetoric." This event was held in conjunction with the Tokyo Society of Medical Sciences, which meant that a great number of doctors and those in the health field were able to attend. Professor Mongoven, who has experience in public policy concerning organ transplants, began a comparative project last fall to examine conceptions of organ transplantations in Japan and the United States. For this reason, she is currently living in Japan and has been involved with a number of CDLS("Constructin of Death and Life Studies") projects. Her talk, which was based on her fieldwork in Japan, focused on clarifying some of the characteristics of the rhetoric of organ transplantation in both Japan and the United States.

In the USA, it is commonly held that there are many ethical issues concerning organ transplants involving living hosts, whereas in Japan this is not a problem. Many of the interviews that Professor Mongoven conducted provided an edifying look into why this discrepancy occurs. This seems to be directly related to the question as to whether one sees what makes us "human" as being located in the brain or in the heart. But it is also related to two different images.One is an image of a single gift, placed in a box. The other is a picture of a warm, human-to-human, connection – a relay.

In the USA, the approval of organ donation by the brain dead is, whether people realize it or not, connected to the Christian rhetoric of "rebirth through sacrifice." Unfortunately, the lack of awareness of this influence often leads to prejudice against those who choose not to donate organs.Further, although the USA is known for being fond of multiculturalism, the problem of this one-dimensional view of of brain death as being analogous to death itself is often not understood. At the same time, in Japan, problems of the donation involving living relatives are not recognized. The lack of feminist critiques of this problem in Japan is also related to this fact.

Dr. Mongoven argued that the way in which religious studies should engage in bioethics is through examining the symbolic patterns of thought contained in various cultures. Such an approach is also useful for a comparative study of organ transplant in the USA and Japan.

We believe that such a vision, while expanding original definitions of death and life studies, takes our project a step further by placing our field in the broader context of the diversity of all our cultures. In this sense, we hold that such research has helped to attain the goals set out by the COE program. This presentation lead to a rich dialogue and there were a great number of questions from the floor – many from medical professionals, health care workers, and members of religious organizations. Dr. Mongoven's unique methodology and research style, which places a great emphasis on fieldwork, showed us the possibility of new paths to be taken in the humanities.

Dr. Neal Krause: Religion, Aging, and Health

Megumi Kaneko,Hiroko Akiyama

A public lecture featuring Dr. Neal Krause was held on May 31st (Friday) at 5 PM in the main auditorium of the Department of Literature. Dr. Krause is a professor of public health at the University of Michigan and also a research professor at the school's Institute for Gerontology. Dr. Krause has been at the forefront of research involving connections between religion and health for many years. His talk, entitled "Religion, Aging, and Health,"focused on how religious activities and faith has a connection with health in the elderly, who are at an age when interest in religion often increases. Despite his talk being on a weekday, over 80 attendees (many of whom are involved with social welfare, psychology, religious studies, and gerontology) showed up, which is indicative of the growing interested in this area of study.

Through a discussion of the eminent psychiatrist Erik Erikson's theory of development, Dr. Krause introduced factual evidence and the fruits of his own research on the relationship between religion and health in the United States. Originally, Erikson held that at the end of one's life, people reflect on the past and attempt to unify their previous hopes with the reality of their life. However, in his later years, Erikson moved from using the term "integrity" and instead used "faith."As people age, an awareness of death increases and many look for a "spiritual home." It is because religion provides such an answer that it is important for many elderly people.

Dr. Krause also noted that those who attend church on a regular basis have a much lower rate of death. He pointed out that it is vital that we address in what way religion plays such a role. Based on multiple interviews and social surveys, Dr. Krause picked out three main factors of religion involved: "God-mediated control," "Church-based social support," and "religious doubt."

A feeling of control over one's life (i.e., one is not simply a victim of fate, others, or outside forces) is linked to a person's health. As we age, this sense of control gradually

subsides. When one has faith, it is possible to borrow the strength of God to help overcome many problems. This is “God-mediated control.” It is at this point, where, by having faith, one is able to overcome various life problems through the power of God. Hence unity is obtained

It was further shown through data obtained in the United States that effects on health due to financial difficulties were lessened when people attended church, where there are others who listen to one's problems, show concern for a person's health, and offer emotional support. Dr. Krause stated that although he did not find a broad person-to-person support network at shrines and temples, those Japanese with high degrees of faith tend to build close personal relationships. In fact, a national survey of the elderly showed Japanese men with deep-seated faith as being prominent providers of emotional support to others. The survey also showed that these men had high levels of mental health. Data also showed that younger adults had a greater tendency of being suspicious of religion.

Finally, Dr. Krause noted that religion – which has, in many forms, existed in all cultures – has always served an important role in our societies and that one of those might just be promoting the physical and spiritual health of the elderly.

Dr. Krause's talk was very significant in that we were able to learn that it is important for both us as individuals and for society in general to study the health of the elderly, who face the loss of their own physical well-being and of those around them, from the perspective of religion and spirituality.

A reception was held following Dr. Krause's talk. This provided a forum in which attendees not only were able to speak with Dr. Krause but also to meet with people involved in other areas of research and work as well.

●Future Events●

Symposium “Health Care and Self-Determination”

Sumihiko Kumano

Date: November 26 (Saturday) 13：00－17：00

Location: University of Tokyo Faculty of Medicine Bldg. 2 Main Lecture Hall
Speakers: Shinya Tateiwa

（From the perspective of those involved in movements for the handicapped）

Takashi Kawamoto

（From the perspective of those involved in care for the elderly）

Tetsuro Shimizu

（From the perspective of terminal care）

Respondents: Chizuko Ueno, Kiyokazu Washida

The concept of “self-determination” is currently used in many situations and, accordingly, there is a broad number of issues at hand. When battling epidemics made up

the front line of medical care, the main form of medical treatment was to isolate those infected without their own consent. This policy of isolation, however, has come to be reconsidered, and, simultaneously, the main concern of medicine has moved to lifestyle-related diseases and the question of quality of life (QOL). These problems are also being considered from the theory of self-determination. The majority of those with lifestyle-related illnesses are considered adults possessing competent judgment. Further, and in difference with epidemics, these diseases are not held to violate the "principle of not harming others."

This shift in the concern of medicine is related to the rise of traditional bioethics. As a result, in a broad sense, the problem of self-determination in traditional bioethics has been argued from the position of the existence of a "strong" subject (this is also related to the criticism of paternalism). Thus self-determination was considered as the problem of the "majority" (the "healthy") who became the "minority" (those who suffer from illness).

The problem of self-determination, however, is most pressing for those who have been considered "minorities" and "powerless" under the traditional framework. The so-called "physically challenged," for example, have for a long time had their own right to self-determination partially or totally denied. Even today, the right to self-determination held by the "elderly" is, for various reasons, still limited. In the case of so-called terminal care, this right is limited to patients who are suspected of not possessing competent judgment.

When we examine the problem of self-determination from the point of view of the above-mentioned parties the fact that this cannot be separated from the issue of health care becomes apparent. In this sense, health care must, in the broad sense, provide necessary care for these people, but also, in another sense, must be health care that supports self-determination.

If the argument is put in this way, the only point of debate is the problem of the "weak" subject and of the "minority." That being said, we are all born powerless, needing the help of others and, as we age, we all face death. Amid this process, or through sudden illness or an accident, we all equally face the possibility that our own physical freedom may at some point be limited. All of as can become the minority.

In this symposium, papers will be given from those working in movements to assist those with "physical disabilities", "gerontology", and "terminal care." We are joined by two experienced respondents and hope that we can hear your thoughts as well in dealing with this issue.

This symposium is open to the public and does not require pre-registration. We hope that those suffering from illness, those in the medical field, those in social welfare, students, and faculty will attend.

More information can be found online at:（http://www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/shiseigaku）

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

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Section1:Re-thinking Death and Life Studies from the Perspective of Practical Philosophy

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ICHINOSE Masaki <Philosophy>

MATSUNAGA Sumio <Philosophy>

SEKINE Seizo <Ethics>

SAKAKIBARA Tetsuya < Philosophy >

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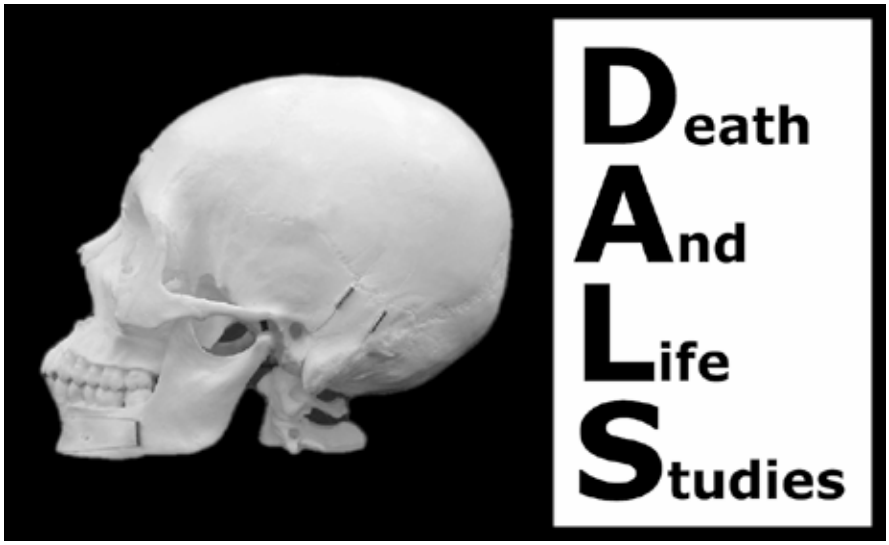

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