死生学

Newsletter No.13

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

CONTENTS

The Philosopher's Face

Masaki Ichinose (Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy)

There is a certain face that suits philosophers: deep thought; penetrating powers of observation; a transcendental gaze; an attitude of detachment from the self; a perfect naturalness and spontaneity towards one's own life and death; a thorough understanding of the vacuity of words; firm resolve; and an unimpaired and pure ability to gaze at the big picture. This, most likely, is the face of the philosopher. Of course, however, no one embodies all of these attributes. Among so-called philosophers, it is only Socrates, perhaps, who, in that he had never written a single book in his life, comes close to being such a person. The act of writing is nothing more than a vulgar a baseless one. Accordingly, even today, philosophers do not criticize Socrates; he continues to reign as a special and absolute philosophical hero; he is the face of the philosopher.

But even with Socrates it is difficult to say that he is the true face of the philosopher. He, as well, used language in his dialogue with others to lead them to the philosophical aporias. Such a person could never have the actual face of the philosopher.

Is the face of the philosopher, then, just a non-existent ideal? No. I witness the philosopher's face every single day: my dogs (Shizuka and Ushiwaka). They stare at me directly, without a single hindrance in their gaze, and they see into and through me. They gaze at the sky and off in the distance, standing resolutely, tails curled behind them, accepting their fate. They accept that the truths of this world can never be captured by words. And they show their acceptance of this fact, overwhelming me in the process. Is this not the face of the philosopher? Of course, I do not mean to sound like a dotting dog owner. But dogs lack vanity and desire for fame, and they do not fear their own deaths. Some dogs, their hindquarters swollen from malignant tumors, unconditionally enjoy the few moments they are taken out for their daily walk. Some of you may say I'm getting carried away. True enough. Dogs noisily bark, are easily excited, piss on the fence, and messily and rudely eat their food. In the day, they lazily nap. What carefree things! What impudence! But Dogs accept life as it is, without being aware of good or evil. They embody existence itself. And this is why they allow humans to know the philosopher's face. If so, even If one wants to be 1% of a philosopher, we can only learn from the dogs.

Those of you who are laughing at this know nothing about philosophy. Diogenes of Sinope, who furthered Socrates path, lived "like a dog" (and in a barrel) and sought to be a philosopher. Searching for one's values in a dog's life is one of philosophical traditions. It may be said that one can learn not only from dogs but also from horses, dolphins, cats, pigs, cows, elephants, and so forth. This is true. But dogs are especially close to humans. Stanley Coren, author of *What Do Dogs Know?*, writes how Native Americans have a legend that tells how after God created living things he drew a line between humans and other animals. A rift in the ground opened [signaling this divide]. Only the dog, it is said, jumped over the rift and came

to the side of the human (p. 132). Having being chosen by the dog is perhaps the only blessing we humans have.

Meet the Parents?

Yoko Nojima (Kato) (Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, Japanese History)

I am currently teaching a course on Japanese foreign diplomacy from the Japanese-Russian War to the end of the Pacific War, and in my free time have been reading the diaries, autobiographies, and biographies of diplomats and military members.

I occasionally realize that I have lost track of time, engrossed in these works, reading until late at night in preparation for my classes. Embarrassingly, what fascinates me are not the moments where one can see the recesses of history or depictions of foreign places and people. No, what interests me most are the passages where these diplomats and soldiers, sent to the far reaches of the Earth and entrusted with grave responsibility, face the fact that they cannot be present at their parent's death.

Mokichi Saito, who penned one of the most famous requiems in modern *tanka* (Japanese traditional short poem) history, received a telegraph on May 16th, 1913, informing him that his mother was "in a grave condition." He left Ueno Station the next day at 9 pm, reaching his home in Uenoyama, Yamagata Prefecture at 8 am the next day: a total of 11 hours (this is according to Yoshi'ichi Sato's *Railway Literature* [Chuko Shinsho, 2006]). In his *Red Light*, it is this distance—close yet far—that led him to write "The life of my Mother in Michinoku. To see her for a moment. To see her for a moment. I must hurry." For those further away, such a poem couldn't be written.

When one encounters such stories, one may argue that the correct response on the part of the reader is not to be engrossed or amazed but to be filled with sadness. True.

But what fascinates me is the inexorable inevitability of the natural world. These men are faced with an unbearableness that separates them from their parents: a responsibility from which they cannot leave and a distance they cannot cross. Faced with such an unbearable state, these men found a kind of resolve and resolution.

Today, it is difficult to imagine a parent demanding that their child, working for the Japanese state, not be informed of their death or illness until after the funeral.

In the pre-War period, however, there were such parents who asked for this. In fact, [the diplomat and politician] Koki Hirota's mother died in such a manner. Ippei Okamoto, who lost his wife Kanoko Okamoto [author, Buddhist writer], sent a series of letters designed to slowly reveal the news to his son Taro in

Paris. Your mother became sick; sadly, your mother's sickness now appears grave; your mother has passed.

I believe people with such parents are, in a way, fortunate. Last October I spent a month in Moscow. Tokyo and Moscow are only some 7500 km apart. Today, some mobile phones can, through dialing the Japanese number, be reached almost anywhere in the world. Has, then, not being able to see your parents at the moment of their death become a part of the past?

Although aging means one slowly approaches illness and death, the more one ages, the more one may forget that sickness and death are a natural phenomenon. The doctor and author Keishi Nagi wrote that aging was about the basic nature of life becoming apparent in the face of fading youth. But can anyone, against our basic human nature, protect us from these facts? The object of my fascination [the romantic death of one's parents while abroad], it seems, is becoming no more.

Book Review: Akira Fukushima, *A Sickness called Murder : Personality Disorders, the Brain, Medical Evaluations* (2003, Kongō Publishing)

Satoko Matsumoto (Reseacher of COE Project, Mental Health)

In Japan there is the belief in the so-called *kotodama*: words themselves contain spiritual powers. For example, it is held that some personal names contain magical powers, and by simply knowing a person's name one can obtain spiritual control over them; the Heian aristocracy often referring to themselves by their official titles and not their own names is a well-known example of this. The popular tale of "The Carpenter and Oniroku," in which a carpenter is able to guess the name of a demon and accordingly control him is a well-known example. However, this belief is not only limited to Japan's past. In modern psychiatry, the diagnosis of mental illness is based on DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) and ICD (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems) guidelines.

As such diagnosis is based on the principle of detecting visible signs of illness, classification of illness is not affected by the practitioner's own subjectivity--and the same diagnosis should be obtained regardless of who performs it. In other words, illness is classified into various groups and--through attributing a specific name to each illness--illness is conceptualized and objectified; it also becomes possible to view illness as a subject for research. As a beneficial result, the most appropriate form of treatment can be discovered through this continued research. Although this is not analogous with the aforementioned example of *kotodama*, in either form or function, there is a commonality in that by naming something one is able to gain knowledge and control over it. Based on this, the author Akira Fukushima (a 30-year veteran psychiatrist) observes the phenomenon of the murder and introduces us to his attempt at formulating a concept known as "murderer's insanity."

The author begins by noting that in the case of murder the frequency of

multiple psychiatric diagnoses agreeing is rare; often these diagnoses differ from previous diagnoses made by the convict's previous doctor. The reason for this is not simply that doctors make mistakes, but, according to the author, that clinicians often attempt to categorize criminals and murderers based only on general clinical knowledge.

For example, in the case of DSM or ICD, there is the danger that one attempts to define an illness not in the guidelines by artificially recognizing an illness as categorized by the guidelines.

Of course, there is the category of "undiagnosable," but the difficulty in attempting to treat an illness that has been diagnosed using these artificial categories is still present. In fact, this violates the basic point of the guidelines: helping find a suitable method of treatment. Accordingly, the author argues, Clinical Modification (CM) of ICD and DSM is needed based on the various cultures and characteristics of each country. Similarly, the author states that CM for Judicial Psychiatry, Criminal Psychiatry, and Corrective Psychiatry is also needed. That is, murderers often do not fit the diagnostic categories currently in place. Through creating these new categories, and the concept of "murderer's insanity," the author argues that more reliable diagnosis and appropriate treatment can be discovered.

The author's concept of murderer's insanity, however, is not, as a medical illness, entirely clear; it seems to encapsulate a number of illnesses, personality types, etc. For example, as causes of "murderer's insanity," the author cites brain trauma, experiencing abuse or neglect as a child, and emotional trauma. Symptoms cover a broad spectrum--everything from personality disorder and dissociative disorder to schizophrenia.

The author does note that "murderer's insanity" is atypical and non-normative, as it could be possible that those currently afflicted with dissociative disorders could be categorized as having this affliction as well. Here, however, one wonders if such an "atypical," "non-normative," or "special" kind of category differs from the DSM category of "undiagnosable." One also wonders if the merit of creating this category of "murderer's insanity" is not mitigated in its vagueness.

That being said, although those afflicted with "murderer's insanity" evince a varying number of patterns (symptoms, personality, etc.), they all share one salient: all murdered. In this sense, it is possible to treat this as a single illness and, through continued research, find useful forms of therapy. Further, along with the obvious drive to kill others, murderers often have the desire to kill themselves. It is also known that murderers often lack the ability to control these drives.

For the victim, murder is the forced end of life. For the murderer, the act can often lead to deep trauma and, of course, severe social punishment. In order to prevent such tragedy (for both parties), it is vital that new ways to stop murder must be discovered. This is one of the reasons for the marked increase in interest in the mentally ill. And, in this sense, the author's attempt at creating the concept of "murderer's insanity," which may help those who were originally just diagnosed and treated (or diagnosed as not needing treatment) as having personality or dissociative disorders, is a useful one.

Report: International Symposium
"Death and Beyond: Dying with Willingness and Living with the Dead"

Kazuomi Tada (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Japanese Literature)

In conjunction with l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), the symposium "Death and Beyond: Dying with Willingness and Living with the Dead" was held on February 18th-19th. Nine participants from France joined us, making for some 20 participants in all.

Papers focused on Japan, China, South America, and Europe; spanning from antiquity to the present day. The scope of the papers allowed us to consider the interaction between the living and the dead on a broad scale, and helped us realize that we have a number of themes to further pursue in dialogue with our French colleagues.

The following is a brief summary of the papers presented and themes dealt with at the symposium.

Facing Death

First, Tsunehiko Sugiki and Marine Carrin, who both brought up examples from the Indian subcontinent, broached the question of a "good death." Kazuaki Komine, who examined the question of how the afterlife was imagined in Medieval Japanese pictorial scrolls, followed.

Unnatural Death

This was followed by the main lecture (which concerned unnatural death), given by Franciscus Verellen (director, EFEO). Verellen's lecture dealt with how the dead were seen in Daoist thought and how angry ancestral spirits were pacified; Masaru Ikezawa, in a similar fashion, dealt with examples of how the dead were dealt with in pre-modern China; Valérie Robin discussed this problem as seen from her fieldwork in Peru. One salient point was that, through rites of pacification, those who suffered unnatural deaths could be transformed into the "good" dead, who would also be beneficial to the living. Emiko Namihira, another panelist, cited

specific examples from contemporary Japanese society as to how rituals concerning the "unnatural" dead have changed along with changes in the structure of Japanese society.

Living with the Dead **Yoshimasa Ikegami talked about the proximity or closeness of the dead in Japanese religious culture. Agnès Fine discussed Christian baptism and the spiritual relationship between God-parents and God-children. Finally, Claudine Vassas spoke on exorcism as seen in the Jewish practice of the Dibbouk.**

Jean-Pierre Albert (director, Centre d'anthropologie de Toulouse), who also delivered a keynote speech, dealt with the important problem of voluntary death: is martyrdom or a "heroic" death suicide?

In the final discussion period it was noted that ample time was not spent on addressing the "beyond" portion of our symposium. Perhaps this is indicative of our own contemporary situation, in which our image of the beyond is impoverished.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank Professor Anne Bouchy for her kind help and dedication in organizing and bringing together our French colleagues for this event.

A Report on the Next Generation Death and Life Studies Conference

Norihiro Nihei (Researcher of COE Project, Sociology)

The Next Generation Death and Life Studies Conference was held at Shirahama and Kumano, Wakayama Prefecture, on November 3rd-5th, 2005. A total of 46 scholars participated (28 from the DALS program; 7 graduate students from Professor Carl Becker's (Kyoto University) graduate course; and 11 other professors and former DALS members).

The three-day conference consisted of individual paper presentations, a plenary session, and a tour of Kumano. 35 papers were presented in the first part of the conference. The papers were divided into 8 sections: "The Culture and Representation of Death and Life," "Considering Life (*inochi*)," "Religion and Spirituality," "Life, Relations, Care," "Images of Life and Death in Japan," "Life and Death Education," "Memory, Life, Death," and "Philosophical Views of Life and Death." The papers covered a wide variety of topics, many dealing with timely problems such as the current state of and ethics concerning organ transplant, the variety of views on life and death throughout Japanese history, and the question of dealing with death in medical and educational facilities. Unlike typical academic conferences, which share a specific topic or disciplinary orientation, this conference allowed for an interdisciplinary approach. Many of the papers were presented in manner understandable even to non-specialists and this created lively debate.

The plenary session began with Professor Carl Becker's talk concerning the future of death and life education. Professor Becker noted the need for such a form of education, citing such issues as the decline of traditional Japanese beliefs concerning life and death; medical-care cost cutting; and an increase in people being faced with such choices as having to decide whether or not to donate organs and also whether or not to undertake life-prolonging medical procedures.

Professor Becker offered a systematic vision of how this education could be designed. First, he noted the need for a tri-partite scheme which would cover human rights/ self determination/ self responsibility, support and counseling, and, finally, improvements in social welfare in an age of mounting cost cuts. Professor Becker further offered a clear plan as to how this should be broken into five sections, each dealing with different levels of education (primary, secondary, advanced, continuing education, and education for specialists). Professor Becker's speech covered a great number of topics and offered a number of pertinent issues for participants to consider.

This speech was followed by Ken'ichi Maegawa of the DALS program. Maegawa's talk was on the development of conceptions of life and death in Kumano. Notably, this talk focused on the connection between the monk Ippen and Kumano, and offered a detailed analysis of the meaning it has for Religious History.

These papers were followed by commentators Atsushi Iida (Kamakura Women's University) and Yumi Furusawa (DALS Research Assistant). Both discussed how society is looking for practical answers and solutions from Death

and Life Studies; both also broached the question: "Based on just what standard should individual research—notably, historical research, philosophy, and the history of ideas—attempt to meet?" A poignant debate followed in which it was asked just what was meant by "answering the needs of society."

On the final day, a tour of the sacred site of Kumano and its environs was conducted. Proceedings from this conference have been published (see below) and a number of other related papers will be published in the Spring 2006 DALS journal. Lastly, let me say that although these publications and the papers presented are the fruits of this conference, it was the three days in Kumano, where many young researchers and graduate students were able to have dialogue and debate, which was the real success of this project. I believe that this conference will be an important one for the future of Death and Life Studies.

Publication of *The Next-Generation Death and Life Studies*

We have recently published *The Next Generation Death and Life Studies*, a collection of papers from the "Next Generation Death and Life Studies Conference." This collection features expanded papers and a transcript of the group discussion held during the conference. Notably, the second portion of this work features 32 papers, offering a broad and unique collection of research. We believe that this work is fitting of the "Next Generation" (i.e., young scholars) title that we have given it. We hope that you will find it useful in your research.

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Section 1: Transcript of the Nov.4th, 2005, "Japanese Society and the Significance of Death and Life Studies" Symposium

Chair: Masahiro Shimoda (COE member)

A. Carl Becker (Professor, Kyoto University), "Death and Life Education for the Next Generation: Reasons, Methods, and Content"

B. Maegawa Ken'ichi (COE member), "Ippen and Kumano: Reexamining the Kumano Oracle"

Commentators: Iida Atsushi (Associate Professor, Kamakura Women's University)

Furusawa Yumi (COE research assistant)

Section 2: New developments in Death and Life Studies (eight parts: 32 papers)

"The Culture and Representation of Death and Life"

"Considering Life (*inochi*)," "Religion and Spirituality"

"Life, Relations, Care," "Images of Life and Death in Japan"

"Life and Death Education," "Memory, Life, Death"

"Philosophical Views of Life and Death."

Section 3: Kumano and Death and Life Studies

Asao Takashi (COE member)

"Faith and Belief in Kumano"

Yoshie Akio (Professor, University of Tokyo), Special Contribution:

"Mentalities towards kamis and buddhas held by the People of the

Heian Period"

Cooperation with UTCP (The University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy)

Fumihiko Sueki (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Buddhist Studies)

The University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy (UTCP) is an interdisciplinary 21st Century COE research program based at the Komaba campus and headed by Professors Yasuo Kobayashi and Hide Ishiguro (University of London, Professor Emeritus). The program, which is composed of the following five areas, seeks to create an international research center for philosophy.

1. Reconciliation with Nature (Chair: Jun'ichi Murata)
2. New Paradigm of Cognition (Chair: Shunsuke Kadowaki)
3. Common Aesthesia (Chair: Yasuo Kobayashi)
4. System for Dialogue (Chair: Tetsuya Takahashi)
5. Co-existence among Cultures and Religions (Chair: Hisao Miyamoto)

Originally, this program focused on Western philosophy, inviting a great number of renowned foreign scholars to participate in our symposiums. Unfortunately, our program was not especially strong in promoting the study of traditional Japanese and East Asian philosophies. In order to rectify this, we have started (beginning in 2005) a third research program focusing on Buddhism. In 2005, the "Seminar on Contemporary Buddhism," which I chaired, was held as part of this program. I, along with Professor Yasuo Kobayashi, served as the planners and overall coordinators. The seminar spanned five sessions, and featured discussion with faculty from the Indian and Buddhist Studies department at Hongo.

1. (10, 24) "Considering Buddhism Today"（Fumihiko Sueki, Yasuo Kobayashi）
2. (11, 28) "The Development of Modern Buddhology and Asia" (Masahiro Shimoda, Susumu Shimazono)
3. (12, 12) "Buddhism and the Other" (Hajime Okayama、Tsuyoshi Kojima)
4. (1, 30) Special Lecture: "The Buddhist Concept of Time" (Zuiho Yamaguchi, Professor Emeritus; Commentator: Ko'ichiro Uemura; Chair: Shigeki Noya)
5. (2, 20) "What is Emptiness?"(Akira Saito, Hiroshi Marui)

These presentations, which began at 6:00 PM and lasted for 2 hours, received a great deal of attention. It was covered in the culture section of the evening edition of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* (11, 28). At every meeting, about 50 people attended and a lively discussion was held.

One goal behind this project was to increase interaction between the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology. Another goal was to increase interaction with the Construction of Death and Life Studies program.

Susumu Shimazono, head of the Construction of Death and Life Studies

program, and Masahiro Shimoda, associate professor, also participated in this seminar, helping us in this interdisciplinary approach. We are currently planning for a number of other symposiums and research meetings in 2006, which we hope will further realize our goals. Plans are as follows:

1. New-Student Welcome Symposium: "Beyond Life and Death: Rethinking Buddhism"
Time: April 24th (Monday), 18:00-19:30
Location: Interdisciplinary Hall, Komaba Campus
Presentation: Fumihiko Sueki, Yasuo Kobayashi
Discussants: Takahiro Nakajima, Seiichi Takeuchi
Chair: Shunsuke Kadowaki

This symposium will 1) allow us to wrap-up "Seminar on Contemporary Buddhism" and 2) allow us to rethink Buddhism from the perspective of death and life.

2. Bernard Faure（Professor, Columbia University, Buddhist Studies): Workshop (May-June)
3. Leora Batnitzky (Associate Professor, Princeton University, Levinas Research): Workshop (July)

We hope that these programs serve to better link together the two COE programs and provide for a fruitful discussion. We ask for your kind assistance and contributions.

Future Events

1: Dr. Nick Zangwill (Oxford) will present a series of lectures in May. They are as follows:

1. The Indifference Argument
2. Perpetrator Argument: Some Reflections on the Browning/Goldhagen Debate

Time: May 9th (Tuesday), 10th (Wednesday), 17:00
Location: Lecture Room of Philosophy, Faculty of Law and Letters Bldg.2, Hongo Campus

The first lecture will offer a critique of Kantian ethics; the second concerns ethical issues surrounding genocide. (Chair: Masaki Ichinose)

2: Professor Bernard Faure (Columbia University, Buddhist Studies) will present a lecture in June.

Title: The Jewel and the Sword: Symbols of Life and Death in Medieval Japan
Time: June 12th (Monday) 17:00-19:00
Location: Room 215, Faculty of Law and Letters Bldg. 1, Hongo Campus
Chair: Masahiro Shimoda (The University of Tokyo, Buddhist Studies)
3: Professor Peter Singer (Princeton University, Bioethics) will present a lecture in June.

Title: Changing Ethics in Life and Death Decision Making
Time: June 15th (Thursday) 17:00
Location: Auditorium 1, Faculty of Law and Letters Bldg. 2, Hongo Campus
Chair: Masaki Ichinose (The University of Tokyo, Philosophy)

4: A seminar and a symposium will be held as related events of a special exhibition "To Live with the Bible: from the Compilation of the Pentateuch to the Formation of the Rabbinic Judaism" at Komaba Museum (from May 25th to July 23rd).

Seminar: "How did the Bible come to be accepted as the Canon by the Jewish People?"
Time: June 5th (Monday) 16:30-18:30
Location: Seminar Room, Komaba Museum, Komaba Campus

Symposium: "Prayers in the daily life: aspects of the interaction between God and Human in the monotheistic religions"
Time: June 24th (Saturday) 14:00-16:30
Location: Interdisciplinary Hall, Administration Office, Komaba Campus

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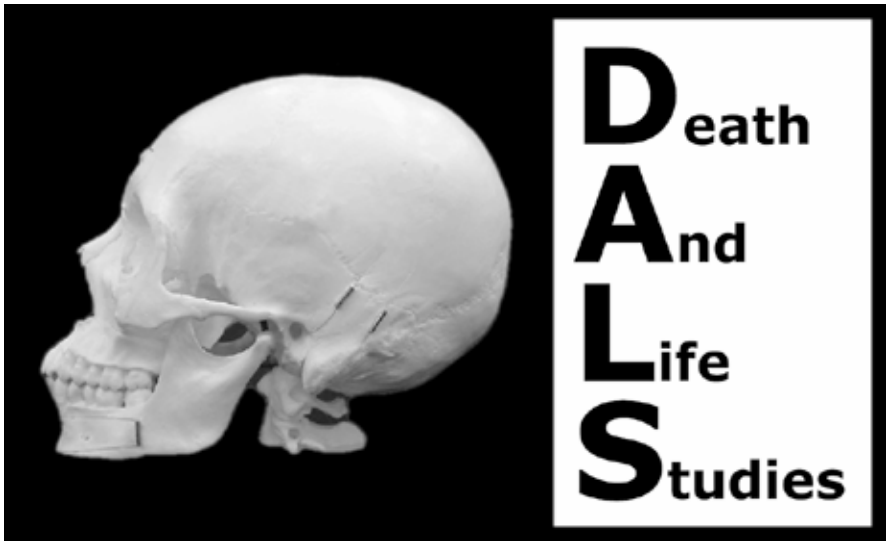

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