

DALS Newsletter No.8

*Construction of  
DEATH and LIFE STUDIES  
Concerning Value and Culture of Life*

21<sup>st</sup> century COE Program, The University of Tokyo  
January 1<sup>st</sup> 2005

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## “Even Our Cat Died”

Sumihiko Kumano

My family had a cat. It was over twenty five years ago.

The cat especially took to my mother. It seems that my mother found a substitute outlet for her excessive love with which she had cared for her children before they grew up to be independent. Not only that, but it was this cat that brought together me and my aging parent, when only the youngest one, who was sulky most of the time, stayed home after my brother and sister left one after the other. It was just like what Kitarô Nishida wrote in his later years, “Every move of the cat becomes the central topic of conversation out of which an untimely wave of laughter flows as if a little wave is generated out of nothing in the pond in a peaceful forest.” (“From the Side of the Fireplace”).

The cat became ill after ten years in our home. Its movement had become visibly slow. Because it was a very energetic cat, so energetic that it often challenged my father who was its rival, I felt all the more pity to see the cat in this state of illness. I was reminded of a passage from Soseki Natsume’s novel that I read long time ago, “The cat seems to stay there without moving because if it moved, it would feel more sorrow even though if it does not move, it still feels sorrow” (*Spring Miscellany*). Our cat, too, seemed precisely like that.

Soon after, my old parents took the cat to the hospital carrying it between them. The cat returned home with its eyes firmly shut. I heard that it had died immediately after it was given an injection. It had an incurable kidney failure.

The following day it snowed in the Metropolitan area unseasonably. My old mother cleared the snow, dug a grave in the garden, and buried its body there all by herself refusing my helping hands. Uttering, “Sorry, sorry,” the tears that ran down her cheeks produced many small holes on the snow.

Chikara Rachi, a historian of Social Philosophy whom I secretly admired, contributed an essay “The Spring and the Cat’s Grave\*,” in *Mirai* a year before he passed away. Himself already suffering from cancer, Mr. Rachi buried his beloved cat called Pepe after it had left him behind. He concluded his essay with the following sentences: “When I said with out thinking too much, ‘It has already been two moths since Pepe died. Has he already become a skeleton?’ My wife upset said, ‘What on earth are you saying? Pepe is still sleeping with its same pretty face just as when it was born!’ I shut up. I could not help but think about my own transient fate in mourning Pepe that was sleeping under a tree.” When my parents decided to move out of the house, my mother worried about what would happen to the cat’s grave. I showed her a copy of the article by Mr. Rachi. She silently read the essay and returned it to me without saying anything.

I display only one photograph in my office. It is of a photograph when the cat was about to jump on me from the top of the stereo. Sometimes when my eye catches this photograph, many things are conjured up. Is the cat still sleeping in the corner of the small garden of that house in which I spent the years through high school to master’s program of the graduate school when left to live by myself, and my parents left not before too long? Would we have chosen the method of putting to sleep by injection a being who

suffered from a terminal disease, if it had been say, our parent, child, or loved one? Such questions come and go from my thoughts. I am not looking for an answer to them. It is only that I think about these questions repeatedly.

\*The title was also taken after Nishida's essay as well.

## **Report on Professor Crisp's Lecture and Workshop**

Masaki Ichinose

Professor Crisp's Lecture and Workshop "How to Allocate Health Care Resources: QALYs or the Virtues?" was held at 3 p.m., October 14, 2004, in Classroom 215, faculty of Law and Letters, Bldg.1, the University of Tokyo. Notwithstanding a weekday, about 20 people including those from other disciplines participated. Dr. Roger Crisp is a Fellow of St. Anne's College, the University of Oxford. He is well known for his research on utilitarianism such as that of John Stuart Mill, and is considered to be one of the leading young scholars of contemporary British Philosophy. On this occasion, his visit to Japan was made possible as one of the activities of the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education, with which he has been deeply involved. I have had a few opportunities to meet him or hear his lectures at Oxford, so I was glad to see him again.



Professor Crisp

Professor Crisp discussed a rather practical and pressing issue: on what grounds health care resources, which are inevitably limited qualitatively, financially, and also in terms of labor force, should be allocated. He first explained the notion of QALYs (quality-adjusted life years), and then examined the possibility of determining the allocation of health care resources by this notion. For instance, assuming that the quality of a year for a) healthy person, b) a person who has to walk with a walking stick, and c) a bed-ridden person are different, Dr. Crisp's proposition calculates QALYs by multiplying each year by a quality, expressing the year of a being in numerical values making clear their differences in quality (in this example, the number for the quality of life will be  $a > b > c$ ). If this notion of QALYs is implemented, the allocation of health care resources will be determined by asking how to maximize the total sum of QALYs. The QALYs is clearly a notion in line with the utilitarian tradition as Mr. Crisp mentioned. Mr. Crisp argued that utilitarianism tended to ignore the individual perspective thereby slighting justice under the banner of happiness of the society as a whole. He concluded the lecture by pointing out that wisdom would be necessary to tackle such complex situations. It was a stimulating lecture in which traditional ethics and awareness of contemporary problems were beautifully merged together.

The discussion session that followed was a heated one and many questions were asked one after another from a variety of perspectives. For instance, when Medical School Professor Kai asked about the difficulty in implementing EBM-like suggestions such as QALYs in actual settings, Mr. Crisp answered that it has actually been implemented in England. Also, in response to Professor Shimazono's opinion that such a process decision-making by numerical calculation feels rather cold-blooded, Dr. Crisp insisted that the calculation of quality could include individual sensitivities. I challenged Dr. Crisp's assumptions in introducing the notion of QALYs that the QALYs of death was defined as zero and that the QALYs of life of a person suffering from strong pain could be calculated as below zero. I pointed out that his notion of QALYs presumes that pain would disappear in death, which meant that a high value had to be assigned to death from the beginning. I then asked him whether this might fail to satisfy the basic scheme of medical decision-making. Mr Crisp's answer was that there was surely a case in which death had been given a positive value, citing the example of euthanasia.

Granted there still remain many problems to be explored, Dr. Crisp's survey of up-to-date research in such an interdisciplinary field was extremely valuable for our project "Construction of Death and Life Studies." I want to express a great gratitude to Dr. Crisp and the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education. The lecture and workshop closed with a promise to meet again at the end of the discussion session.

### **Report on Dr. Huth and Dr. Kippes' Lecture and Workshop "Medical Care and Spirituality"**

Susumu Shimazono

Dr. Huth and Dr. Kippes' lecture and workshop was held on October 30, 2004, in Classroom 215, Faculty of Law and Letters, Bldg.1, Hongo Campus, the University of Tokyo. A clinical doctor of mental health in the psychoanalytic tradition practicing in Munich, Dr. Werner Huth is also a writer on spirituality. Dr. Kippes is also a German, a Catholic priest who had lived in Japan for many years and is now Director of the Clinical Pastoral Education and Research Center in Kurume-city. This event was co-sponsored by the Tokyo Medical Association and the Social Gerontology Department of Graduate School of Medicine in cooperation with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century COE project "Construction of Death and Life Studies."



Dr. Kippes



Dr. Almuth Huth

Dr. Werner Huth

The first speaker was Dr. Waldemar Kippes, who explained the significance of the practice of pastoral care for dying people, citing concrete examples. Needless to say, adequate medical care must be offered to dying people. Recently, moreover, many have come to recognize the necessity for providing kinds of care that go well-beyond medical care in its strict sense particularly on the spiritual level.

The concern of this issue is not limited to those dying. Although the hospice movement has shed some light on it, it is still necessary to consider the profound relationship between medical care and spirituality.

Dr. Werner Huth's lecture then followed, while his wife Dr. Almuth Huth read parts of the lecture manuscript. The audience listened to their lecture as they read through the manuscript prepared in both German and Japanese. Dr. Megumi Shimura, German Literature Lecturer at the University of Kanazawa served as a translator for the discussion session. Dr. Huth, a Protestant as well as a doctor who studied meditation in Tibet and still practices meditation, presented arguments on the basis of his experiences as a psychiatrist within the scope of the historical development of medicine. The central topic of his talk, moreover, was grounded in his theoretical investigation of the human mind and body and the question of what medical care was about; this characteristically reflected the unique viewpoint of Dr. Huth, who once considered becoming a philosopher.

Dr. Huth defined spirituality in the contemporary sense as "a way of living in accord with Geist that attends to all aspects of life." He contends that the notion of spirit involves questions such as "who am I?" and "What is humanity?" In that sense, it is a notion that is the basis for individual autonomy and individuality while it also must be posited within interpersonal relationships with others. It can also be said that the notion of Geist can be distinguished from body and matter, while it is simultaneously experienced as an integral part of them. Although an objectifying attitude cannot be avoided in the triad relationship among the doctor, the patient, and the disease, the dimension of spirituality always emerges in the practice of medical care. We need to develop medical studies that can bridge the two foci of biological indexes and biographical understanding. Modern medicine, which has been biased in favor of natural scientific approaches, must transform itself into a practice that will recover the spiritual dimensions and relates to the holistic wellness of human beings as a whole. Particularly impressionable was the way in which Dr. Huth responded to a question from a medical student, saying that such transformations in approach would also be required in medical pedagogy.

## **Report on the Symposium “Learning from Bethel”**

Chizuko Ueno

Bethel finally came to the University of Tokyo! This dream project came true thanks to the COE Death and Life Studies Project.

Bethel sent an all-star team of seven members to this symposium, which was held in the newly built Tetsumon Auditorium, School of Medicine, with over 400 participants including many people standing. The fact that only half the participants were the University of Tokyo affiliates indicated a strong interest outside the university as well, although, regrettably, not many participated from the Faculty of Medicine despite the location. This might mean that we should have made more effort to appeal to natural scientists, even when the project was sponsored by Literature Department.

Bethel is a self-help organization for work and living organized by schizophrenic patients in Urakawa, Hokkaido. It practices a “descending way of life” in which the patients co-exist with their illness, protecting the sovereignty of themselves. By contrast, Todai students are considered as the practitioners of an “ascending way of life.” What kind of chemical reaction can occur when these two groups of people meet? In the following, I report segmented parts the symposium.

In the beginning, a series of “Bethel quotations” came from the speakers on the platform: “I can’t disobey my own illness” (Hiroshi Kawasaki, a Bethel member); “The analysis is over. Then what?” (Mizuho Watanabe, a Bethel member); “A comfortable relationship that just being there is enough” (Kiyoshi Hayasaka, a Bethel member); “The doctors need to have fear and deliberation. They should not try to control too much” (Toshiaki Kawamura, Director of Neuro-Psychiatric Department, Urakawa Red Cross Hospital); “It is difficult to countenance the doctor’s pride” (Eriko Ito, Social Worker, Urakawa Red Cross Hospital); “I despair and just believe” (Ikuyoshi Mukaiyachi, Social Worker, Urakawa Red Cross Hospital; Assistant Professor, Hokkaido Medical University); “The families of the parties have become the forces of resistance” (Randy Taguchi, Writer); “To research is to write what actually happens” (Yasutaka Ichinokawa, Assistant professor, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo).

In order to share reactions from the audience, let me cite some comments from the questionnaires: “What a unique symposium!”; “Two and a half hours have passed in a flash”; “I have never experienced such a delightful symposium before”; “I cried when I heard their singing. It was worth taking a day off from work”; “I was moved by the sight of the patients publicly expressing themselves”; “I hope that more and more people will come to think that being ill is neither bad nor unhappy”; “I am still between ‘willing to ascend’ and ‘willing to descend’.”

There were some enthusiastic participants who were “chasing” Bethel people, one of whom later sent me the following e-mail: “Having always been impressed by Mr. Mukaiyachi’s charismatic power, attending Bethel symposiums used to make me resigned to thinking that I had to go to Urakawa no matter what. This symposium was different, however. It was the first time for me to feel ready to create something like Bethel in areas close to my own.”

This kind of message was indeed exactly what I was aiming for as a coordinator.

I wanted it because I myself wondered why despite its popularity, institutions like Bethels have not spread to the other areas, and if there is a resistant force, what that could be.

The symposium began with the singing of a Bethel's parody song by Bethel member Ms. Mieko Kibayashi, which was not originally scheduled in the program. It ended with Ms. Kibayashi's parody song again. The song produced much laughter and sensation. The prepared scenario was gone within the first few minutes, and the symposium was full of surprise from the participants and those wandering around. Part of this was also reported in Asahi shinbun newspaper (December 1, 2004.) Please look forward to a report to be published soon for further details.

### **Report on Mr. Victor Shnirelman's Workshop 'From the 'Soviet People' to 'Organic Community': The Russian and Ukrainian Neo-Pagans' Outlook'**

Susumu Shimazono



Dr. Shnirelman

Dr. Victor Shnirelman's Lecture and Workshop was held on December 3, 2004, in Classroom 215, Faculty of Law and Letters Bldg.1, Hongo Campus, the University of Tokyo. Mr. Shnirelman is Chief Researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, a cultural anthropologist who has many achievements on Neo-Paganism in Russia and Ukraine. The lecture was titled "From the 'Soviet People' to 'Organic Community': The Russian and Ukrainian Neo-Pagans' Outlook, "In which he aimed at tracing changes of time-space recognition and perspectives on death and life in the context of today, within the context of the conspicuous rise of Neo-Paganism in Russia and Ukraine since 1980s."

Russia and Ukraine since the 1980s has seen the rise of Neo-Pagans, who are seen in groups in every large city, and the total number of whom is said to be almost several thousands. Taking advantage of the fact that the term "pagan" originally referred to any religion that was considered alien and inferior to Christianity, it has now been used to signify authentic ethnic religious traditions before foreign religions arrived. Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist world, socialist universalism, humanism (populism), and progressivism lost their authority. Along with the tide of returning to a variety of traditions, those who support Neo-Paganism have been trying to return to a slavish tradition of what can be called "eternal ethnic blood." It can be characterized as "ethnic nationalism," whose political orientations are not uniform. Some are inclined to anti-semitism and xenophobia, while others show moderate and reconciling stances. These groups are mostly small and varied.

Though not uniform, these groups have many commonalities in their

world-view. A feature that is rather widely shared is the idea of organic community. This idea insists that and “immortal community” with its basis in common ethnic blood has lasted for a long period of time and whose origin is sometimes claimed to be 10,000 years B.C. While such an idea of the continuity of eternal organic life is frequently advocated on the basis of the notion of linear time, the cycle of death and resurrection and eternal return are also claimed on the basis of a circular notion of time. Some other positions that have inherited Western esoteric traditions sometimes cite such names as Mircea Eliades and Rene Genon and sometimes advocate the arrival of “the Golden Age of Six Races.” In itself, the rise of Neo-Paganism is a world-wide tendency. Some of its expressions have features in common with the Aboriginal movement. The dominant position in the English speaking world is the one associated with feminism. However, in Russia and Ukraine, Phallocentrism is particularly notable, and the interactions with xenophobic movements, which might lead to Neo-Nazism, cannot be ignored as well.

In the discussion session, questions and answers were exchanged, first from the viewpoint of research on contemporary Russian and East European societies, and then from the viewpoint of trends in contemporary perspectives of death and life. Our age has often been characterized as dominated by a culture that keeps death away from us, and as tending to lose perspectives on death and life. Many movements have developed to remedy this helpless situation. This workshop proved to be a fruitful one that encouraged us to attend to such movements from a world-wide perspective, and to recognize their political implications.



## **Report on the Symposium**

### **“Consent and Decision Concerning Death and Life”**

Masaki Ichinose

The International symposium “Consent and Decision Concerning Death and Life” was held for two days, on December 11 and 12, 2004, in Lecture Hall 1, Literature Department, the University of Tokyo. This symposium mainly focused upon medical decisions, aiming at discussing those matters which surround them. It was not only a project that dealt with highly theoretical aspects as compared with other COE symposiums. It was also an event with great scholarly expectation that it would be the first occasion in this country to clarify interdisciplinary themes which reside in philosophy, ethics, medicine, law, economics, and psychology concerning death and life. The symposium consisted of two parts: Part I (December 11) was devoted to philosophical and theoretical examinations, to which we invited speakers from England and elsewhere; Part II (December 12) was a panel discussion among Japanese researchers concerning practical issues. In the following, I will only outline how it went. Further details will be discussed in the proceedings that we are planning to publish later.



## **Part I “The Philosophy of Facing Uncertainty: Epistemic Limits, Probability, and Decision”**

At 11 a.m., COE Program Leader Professor Susumu Shimazono delivered the opening remarks beginning the two-day symposium. English was generally used as an official language, supplemented by simultaneous interpretation. As a starter, the present writer Ichinose presented a paper “A Decision Theoretic Approach to Problems of Confirmation: In View of Medical Decision,” with Mrs. Hide Ishiguro as Chair. In this paper, I discussed Bayesianism, which has been an influential theory of confirmation. I argued that in order to overcome difficulties of Bayesian theory, we need to pay attention to the decision-making aspects inherent in the processes of confirmation, citing diagnoses in particular as examples of confirmation. In response, Mr. Daisuke Kachi of University of Saitama commented on my conclusion about Bayesianism. Mr. Colin McKenzie of Keio University then compared the examples that I had given and examples in economics. A question and discussion session followed.

The afternoon session began with Mr. Graham Priest of the University of Melbourne and the University of St. Andrews, who presented the paper “The Limits of Knowledge,” with Mr. Kazuyuki Nomoto as Chair. Mr. Priest is a British logician, famous as a founder of Paraconsistent Logic. Against the paradoxical “Fitch’s argument” that the knowable is actually known, he argued by using not-logic that it is not necessarily true and that unknowable truths exist. While it was extremely logical, his argument, in a sense, was closely related with religion and metaphysics. After Keio University Mr. Takashi Iida commented on the option of acknowledging Fitch’s argument, a lively discussion followed.

Mr. Colin Howson of the London School of Economics then presented the paper “The Logic of Probable Inference,” with Mr. Shun Tsuchiya as Chair. Mr. Colin is a world class promoter of Bayesianism, which makes one suppose, as a first impression, that he takes the position that emphasized subjective probability. In this symposium paper, however, he argued that probabilistic inference could be understood as deductive an inference, that is, as deductive logic, offering a variety of interpretations. It was a great pleasure that our COE Program could offer an opportunity for an expert to discuss such a highly scholarly theme as the logicity of practical inference. Mr. Kazuo Shigemasu of the University of Tokyo commented to the effect that probabilistic inference had by nature an empirical and practical character. This comment became the basis of the discussion that followed.

Lastly, Mr. Donald Gillies of University College London presented the paper “Subjective and Objective Probabilities in Medical Decision,” with the present writer Ichinose serving as Chair. Mr. Gillies is an expert on the Philosophy of Probability, whose latest book “Philosophical Theories of Probability” has just recently been translated into Japanese. In his presentation, he developed an argument that, while objective probability measured by frequency had to be generally used in a computer system that supported diagnoses, subjective probability had to be employed as well under the circumstances where there were only a limited number of cases. It was a presentation that was unique to Mr. Gillies, who had been advocating a pluralistic approach to probability. Afterwards Mr.

Nobuharu Tanji of Tokyo Metropolitan University challenged the speaker by posing the question of whether the probability calculated by the doctors could be considered as a subjective probability in a philosophical sense. Discussion continued in a lively manner.

Later on, a reception party was held at Forest Hongo, with Professor Hiroko Akiyama as M.C., Vice Dean of Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology Professor Yoshikazu Nakaji delivered opening remarks, which began our get-together party.

## **Part II “Choices about Life and Death”**

The second day started at 1 p.m. After the present writer made a short speech to bridge Part I and Part II, Mr. Hisatake Kato, chancellor of Tottori University of Environmental Studies, presided over the panel. The first speaker was Mr. Isao Kamae of the University of Kobe (also a doctor), who presented “Decision-Making in Medicine and Medical Care.” Mr. Kamae is one of the few experts on medical decision-making. He first offered an excellent exposition of so-called EBM (evidence-based medicine.) In so doing, he referred to a few presentations in Part I, making visible a strong linkage between theoretical problems and practical problems. Having analyzed with fairness the advantages and disadvantages of EBM, he concluded his presentation with the impressive phrase, “From consent to shared decision.”

Next, Mr. Tetsuro Shimizu of Tohoku University presented “Decision-Making Processes in Medical Settings.” Famous for his “Philosophy Facing Medical Scenes,” Mr. Shimizu had been implicitly expected to make a presentation from the patient’s point of view. He argued that decisions in medical settings were nothing but “an agreement” jointly reached by all the parties concerned. He also suggested the possibility of seeing the body not biologically but biographically. He further raised the issue of the applicability of fitness theory rather than dual outcome theory concerning choices about life and death.

Mr. Toshihiro Suzuki of Meiji University (also a lawyer) presented “Choices about Life and Death: From the Scenes of Medical Lawsuits.” A medical suit specialist, Mr. Suzuki outlined several typical Japanese medical lawsuits, including a lawsuit concerning blood transfusion to Jehovah’s Witnesses and a case of euthanasia at Tokai University, on the basis of his own experiences. It was basically a presentation from a perspective that emphasized the right to self-determination. Nonetheless, he also mentioned some cases where the patient had had no capacity for self-determination, pointing out the many difficulties there.

Finally, University of Tokyo Researcher Takashi Asao presented “From the Perspective of Health-Care Economics.” Here, needless to say, the Health-Care Economics perspective means one of designing medical policies with consideration for the financial dimensions of medical conduct. By examining phenomena unique to medical care such as regional differences in medical costs and changes in disease structure, Mr. Asao succeeded in delineating subtle relationships between health-care economy and the market principle. Like Mr. Kamae’s opening presentation, it was an

approach to the problem from the viewpoint of a medical practitioner.

Panel discussion and a question and discussion session to which participants from the floor were welcomed, followed the presentations. The discussion session was particularly lively, partly due to many questions by those with practical experience in relevant matters, such as doctors and medical students, and partly because of the rich and witty chairpersonship of Mr. Kato, who should have been identified as another participant.

The symposium came to a gránd finále with Ethics Assistant Professor Sumihiko Kumano's closing remarks.

Let me conclude this interim report by emphasizing two things: that, despite our choice of rather scholarly and difficult themes, more participants attended the symposium than we had initially anticipated; and that the symposium has made new aspects of "Death and Life Studies" visible.

**"Journal of Death and Life Studies" (vol. 4, Autumn, 2004)  
has been published!**

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## **Program Leader**

SHIMAZONO Susumu <Religious Studies>

## **Section 1: Re-thinking Death and Life Studies from the Perspective of Practical Philosophy**

TAKEUCHI Seiichi <Ethics>

KUMANO Sumihiko <Ethics>

ICHINOSE Masaki <Philosophy>

MATSUNAGA Sumio <Philosophy>

SEKINE Seizo <Ethics>

SAKAKIBARA Tetsuya < Philosophy >

## **Section 2: Images and Perspectives on Death and Life**

OSANO Shigetoshi <Art History>

KINOSHITA Naoyuki <Cultural Resources Studies>

ONUKI Shizuo <Archaeology>

## **Section 3: Civilization and Values Concerning the Perspectives of Death and Life**

SHIMODA Masahiro <Indian Philosophy>

TADA Kazuomi <Japanese Literature>

ICHIKAWA Hiroshi <Religious Studies>

IKEZAWA Masaru <Religious Studies >

## **Section4: Investigation of the Perspective on Human Being as and Expression of Life Activities**

TAKEGAWA Shogo <Sociology>

YOKOSAWA Kazuhiko <Psychology>

TACHIBANA Masao <Psychology>

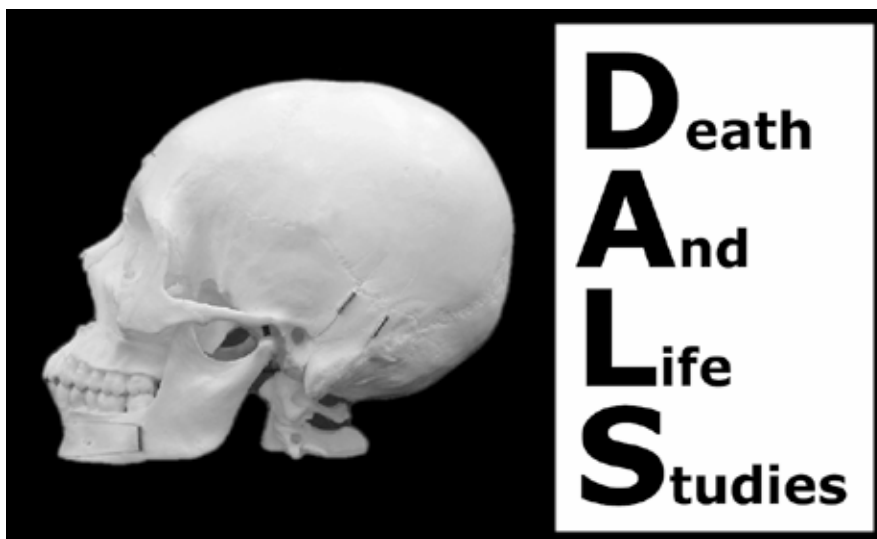
HAYASHI Toru <Linguistics>

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KAI Ichiro <Health Sciences>

NISHIHIRA Tadashi <Education>

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21<sup>st</sup> century COE program

“Construction of Death and Life Studies concerning Culture and Value of life”

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