

## Plato and the Environmental Philosophy of Kuki Shûzô: Nature, Love and Morality

YAMAUCHI Tomosaburô

Professor Emeritus

(Received March 31, 2011)

The influence of the Platonic theory of Forms (*eidos*, *idea*) on traditional Western thoughts and ideas is so immense that one may think it impossible to accept Western philosophy without accepting the Forms. However some contemporary environmental philosophers are critical of Platonic philosophy, and shed new light on the traditional nature-oriented philosophies. Kuki Shûzô was one of the most influential philosophers who attempted to combine the traditional philosophies of East and West, having critically inherited Platonic philosophy, psychology and especially theory of love. In this paper we shall examine how Kuki developed his theories of philosophical anthropology, aesthetics and Japanese culture on the basis of his nature-oriented metaphysics. This is a preliminary consideration for a new environmental philosophy combining the social ethics with nature-oriented philosophy.

**Key Words:** environmental ethics, nature, love, morality, the three aspects of the soul, philosophy of contingency, nothingness.

Über allen Gipfeln  
Ist Ruh,  
In allem Wipfeln  
Spürest du kaum einen Hauch;  
Die Vöglein schweigen in Walde.  
Walte nur, balde  
Ruhest du auch.  
Goethe <sup>1)</sup>

Comparing a pre-industrial society, where the natural world flourished, with today's environmentally-degraded setting for the industrial society, one observes that a characteristic difference between the two societies originates from the attitude towards Nature. Concomitant with the problem of environmental decay, today's pressing concern for all global villagers must surely be the widening gap between rich and poor. <sup>2)</sup> If this situation is not reversed, matters can only get worse for future generations. One of the breakthroughs from this impasse would be, I think, to redirect the love of money toward a love of 'green' instead, - that is, to exchange the priority of care in people's minds, since no one can serve two masters: both Green and Mammon.

In this article I shall first introduce the Platonic view of three aspects of soul, and the order of love (*ordo amoris*), then compare it with that of Kuki. The valuer (the moral agent in the case of ethics) is the person who

loves (desires, or prefers), and the object of love is some entity that exists in the world or at least in the mind of the valuer. That will lead me to compare the basic structure of ‘being’ and ‘non-being’ (nothingness) of both Western and Eastern philosophies, - a basic structure that is deeply connected with the human-to-nature relationship in today’s environmental philosophy.

Kuki Shūzō (1888~1941) was a unique figure in the philosophical circle known as the Kyōto School led by Nishida Kitarō. Kuki mastered French, German, Italian, and English and understood classical Chinese, Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit languages. He was well-read and able to compare both Eastern and Western cultures and thoughts. He taught modern Western philosophy at Kyōto University. Although he rejected the existence of the Platonic Forms (*eidōs*, *idea*), he was greatly inspired by the Platonic theory of Love (*erōs*), as can be seen in his theory on anthropology and aesthetics and in his analysis of traditional Japanese cultures. His first book *The Structure of Japanese Taste “Iki”* has been widely read and become a classic of Japanese studies, having been translated into Western languages.<sup>3)</sup>

## I

In Platonism, a separate intellectual world of Forms is proposed that is different from this phenomenal and sensible world; it is, like the celestial world of Christianity, different from the terrestrial world. Platonism is, accordingly, referred to as the two-worlds theory. This theory sees this world we actually live in as inferior to the ideal world of Forms where absolute, universal, eternal ideals exist and provide the ultimate criterion of all beautiful, just, and true things of this secular world. The world of Forms has the highest value; human society is of a lower value, and the natural environment is of the lowest, instrumental value.

The first critic of Platonism (along with Christianity in the Western tradition), was, it is said, Nietzsche. Criticism of Platonism by K. Popper and E. Topitche was also known to the Japanese academic circles. J. Mackie and R.M. Hare, from the viewpoint of analytic ethics, rejected the existence of Forms. V. Plumwood also criticised Platonism from an environmental ethics viewpoint.<sup>4)</sup> Today Platonism is a philosophy of the past. Yet the influence of Plato’s view of humans and social ethics on Western thought and cultures is too immense to be neglected, especially when one of the central themes of today’s environmental ethics is the problem of the human-to-nature relationship. The human attitude toward nature in societies with different cultures from Western modernism, would be worthy of considerations.

Let us first start by examining the Platonic theory of Love that underlies his psychology, anthropology, and politics. In arguing about justice, in the *Republic* (368c, ff.), Plato divides people into three classes: rulers (philosophers), guardians, and common people. And he argues that the justice of the state (*polis*) consists in the unity or harmony of these classes, each being wise, courageous, and self-mastering. Further, there are three elements of the soul (*psychē*): reason (*vous*, *logistikon*), spirit (*thymos*), and appetite (*epithymētikon*). (*Rep.* 434c ff.) Justice in individuals consists in the control of the appetitive element by reason helped by the spirit, thus each element retains its own virtue of wisdom, courage and self-mastery.<sup>5)</sup>

There lies, in the three elements of the soul, Platonic ‘love’ (*erōs*), since three types of people are called respectively ‘lovers of wisdom or learning’ (*philosophos*, *philomathes*), ‘lovers of fame or victory’ (*philotimos*, *philonikos*), and ‘lovers of gain or money’ (*philokertes*, *philoxrēmatos*). (581c.) Here, love (*philia*, *erōs*) or the desire of soul is divided into three elements according to its object: wisdom, fame, and gain or self-interest. And the three types of people spring from the three elements of the soul in the different types of individuals.

Thus the soul is divided into three aspects. And the ultimate object of Platonic Eros is in the Form of truth, good, and beauty. Therefore when the theory of Form is abandoned, there only remain the shadowy, relative values of the sensible, phenomenal world. Then the reason (*nous*) that yearns for and pursues the absolute ideal of Form will lose its object of love; and remains as a steersman (*kybernētēs*) and take over the role of guiding the whole soul.

In another of Plato's picturesque similes, the whole soul is likened to a person within whom there abide three elements: reason, spirit, and desire; each element being likened to: a small person within, a lion, and a monster like Scylla, Chimaera or Kerberos. The combination of them has the external appearance of a person. (*Rep.* 588bff.) Then a good and right person is one whose small person within controls the monstrous beast by the aid of the courageous lion; and an evil, unjust person is one in whose soul the evil desires of the monster dominates his whole soul. If one compares just and unjust persons in this simile, one would find that the former is most happy and the latter most unhappy. (576cff.) In the Platonic individual-state parallelism, this simile is applicable to the types of state. The just state is the one in which three classes are in accord, philosopher-rulers leading common people with the aid of guardians, and an unjust state is the one where the most evil tyrant dominates.

In describing the ideal state, Plato at first pictures the very simple state consisting of people with only necessary food, clothing, and housing. Although he recognizes such a society as a healthy one, he proceeds to create a more highly-developed state where the division of labour is effective, where rulers and guardians are needed. (372 cff.) This means that he did not always deny human desires as wrong, but accepted natural desires as necessary for people to live. He agreed with a minimum essential lifestyle, but certainly he would have disagreed with the gorgeous luxurious lives of today's affluent societies, compared with the life style of his extremely poor master, Socrates.

In his parallelism of individual and state, the best and just persons/ states are those that are ruled by reason and thus by philosophers (*aristocracy*), and more unjust persons and states are in order of degradation: timocracy, governed by desire for fame, *oligarchy* or *plutocracy* governed by the love of money, *democracy* governed equally by all elements of the soul, all desires being anarchically liberated, and *tyranny* governed by the worst desire, avarice. (Cf. *Rep.* Vol. 8.)

In this classical ethico-politics in the sensible world, all beautiful, right, and valuable things are of relative value that are only a reflection of the absolute value in the intellectual world. (*The Form of Good* is somehow the origin of being, knowledge, and value.) There is no space for the estimation of Nature or love of Nature here, neither in the ethico-politics, nor in the mind of individuals.

The noteworthy fact is that Plato considered that 'the essential mark, and internal motive force of the soul is *Eros*, the stream of desire which may be directed into different channels'<sup>6)</sup> Then, when the stream flows mainly into one channel, the flow toward other channels will weaken (*Rep.* 485d.). In Plato's Form-oriented ethics, the restraint of desire for fame or self-interest can be attained by changing the flow of *Eros* towards the Form (that is the very origin of the absolute truth, goodness, and beauty.) Here one can see that the person whose innate three elements of soul are in order is to be called a just and good person; that is, it is the order of love or desires (*ordô amoris*), not the order of the objective values, that divides people of justice from those of injustice.

Then, if people in the Form-oriented society diverge from the belief in objective value (that was considered as absolute, universal, and eternal), they tend, losing control over desire that was once controlled by reason, to pursue power for power's sake, money for money's sake. This is what can be seen as the source of the current, pressing problems of environmental ethics where, in the time of our ecological crisis, we need to discover how to redirect selfish desire towards desire to care for nature. We must seek a way to channel desire away from fame and money and towards nature, of which we are a part.

## II

In traditional Japanese thought and culture, Nature was considered as a living entity, as expressed in such mottos as 'Everything was born from *Yin* (masculine principle) and *Yan* (feminine principle),' 'Heaven and Earth are our great father and mother,' 'All things are one body,' and so forth. Humans are, as a part of nature, and inseparable from nature. So, the Human-to-Nature relationship was considered fundamental

to being human. Nature is, in this sense, the very basis of human society, from which originated all sorts of culture, ideals, values, institutions, religions, thoughts and so on. If everything was considered to be born from 'Heaven-Earth-Nature (*ten-tsi-sizen*),' then personal love among humans might be considered only as a miniature of or an imitation of such a cosmic love.<sup>7)</sup>

Nature was, in such an ecological sense, the basis of traditional Japanese culture. Japanese people's attitudes are, I think, restricted by the natural conditions, since people had to live in small islands nourishing a large population without destroying the natural environment. They did not only maintain it, but enhanced nature, making it more productive, creating a symbiotic culture with nature. Hence *the welfare of humans and nature as a whole* - not only human nor only natural welfare separately - was the supreme imperative of their morality. Thus naturalness or obedience to nature had become their second nature, so that people did not feel it as compulsory conformism but only as natural when they had to live simple lives restraining from surplus self-interest in order not to destroy the natural environment.

Let us next examine Kuki's views on anthropology. According to Kuki, all human have three aspects: metaphysical (*homo metaphysicus*), historical (or social, *homo historicus*), and natural (*homo naturalis*).<sup>8)</sup> Humans have these three elements in a unitary fusion. In discussing the Japanese character and culture, Kuki mentions three "moments" that are found in them: 'Nature', 'spirit', and 'resignation', each corresponding to Shintō, Confucianism, and Buddhism. (III, p.18.) One can surmise that these three moments originated from Plato, since he refers to the Platonic and Aristotelian three aspects of the soul more than Augustine, Pascal, Maine de Biran, Buddhism, and Confucianism. (III, p.18.) He argues that Japanese culture is originated from Shinto as the material cause and from Confucian idealism and Buddhist unrealism as formal causes. (Cf. III, p.281.) The Australian philosopher, Damon Young, in his article on *bu-dō* (the way of samurai), analyses some aspects of Japanese culture expressed in the martial art, *jū-dō*. He attributes *bu-dō* to its spiritual background of Shintō, Confucianism, and Buddhism.<sup>9)</sup> Considering that he does not refer to Kuki's philosophy, it is indeed a happy coincidence that his deep insights into Japanese culture resonate interestingly with Kuki.

Kuki's age did not know of the forthcoming environmental crisis; and that he founded his anthropology on the basis of nature may show the nature-oriented character of traditional Japanese culture. This may be seen more clearly in his analysis of traditional taste of *iki*, a mode of love born in Edo-era, a characteristic of Japanese culture in the refined, detached, heterosexual love. (The Japanese language of 'iki' means originally breathing, life, anima, high spirit, morale, and gallantry.) The three moments of *iki* is, by Kuki, 'coquetry', 'spirit', and 'resignation'. *Iki* is created on the basis of 'coquetry' (or amorousness) as material cause, with 'spirit' originating from Confucian idealism (from which Bushido, the way of samurai originated) and 'resignation' from Buddhist unrealism both being used as formal causes. (Cf. I, p.22.) *Iki* comes, in this sense, between celestial Platonic love and terrestrial eros *à la* Aristophanes' fashion.

These three characteristics are seen also in his analysis of traditional aesthetics of 'hū-ryū' (etymologically meaning 'wind-flow') expressed in the natural, elegant, and simple lifestyle. Three elements of *hū-ryū* are: 'nature', 'unworldliness', and 'aestheticism'. Love of nature is especially expressed in the wandering journey (*tabi*). (IV, p.60ff.) Thus *iki* and *hū-ryū* are expressions of Japanese character and culture in the shape of Nature-oriented aesthetics and lifestyle.

'In every Japanese art,' Kuki writes, 'in short poems (*waka*) and haiku, also in paintings, calligraphy, architecture, from the way of tea (*sa-dō*, tea ceremony) and the way of flowers (*ka-dō*, flower arrangement) to garden designing, the aim is the unified fusion of nature and the arts. Needless to say, this characteristic comes to the fore remarkably, when one compares Japanese and Western flower arrangements or landscape gardens.' (III, p.277.)

Here let me compare briefly Kuki's view with that of Plato's:

Plato	Kuki			
(Three aspects)	(anthropology)	(Jap. culture)	(iki)	(hūryū)
Reason ( <i>vous</i> ):	metaphysical,	resignation,	resignation,	aestheticism
Spirit ( <i>thymos</i> ):	historical,	spirit,	spirit,	unworldliness
Appetite ( <i>epit.</i> ):	natural,	nature,	coquetry,	nature

We can see that Kuki's views are quite different from Plato's from whom Kuki critically inherited the framework of views on humans. Comparing Platonic ethics with Kuki philosophy, one will find what is relevant to today's environmental ethics, as follows:

- 1) In Platonic view, the world of Forms (i.e. the objective value) comes top and it seems to dominate all beings. Kuki's view is in the reverse direction; Nature is the most basic, on which all beings are founded. This is most relevant to today's environmental ethics.
- 2) In this phenomenal world, where another world of objective values is not supposed, all values are relative to each other and it is basically love (desire, liking, or preference) of the valuer or moral agent, not the objective values, that decides good and evil, right and wrong, beautiful or ugly, since the orders of objective values are different from culture to culture, from religion to religion.
- 3) For one who loves Platonic objective values and absolute ideals, morality would not be compulsion but pleasure. Likewise, for one who loves ethics originating from a love of Nature (a sort of unification of humans with Nature), morality would not be felt as compulsion but must be joyful, like deep ecological self-realization will bring joy.
- 4) Kuki shares the utilitarianism at the social ethical level with Plato. In creating his ideal polis, Plato wished people to devote their efforts to making the whole polis happier, instead of pursuing their own happiness. (*Rep.*, 420cff.)

In Kuki's anthropology and social ethics, the valuer or moral agent is concerned with human society along with nature. A sort of holism colours Kuki's view of society and nature so that he aims for the welfare of humans and nature as a whole, because it is the presupposition of his ethics that human society and thought are founded on the basis of Nature. Kuki's philosophy is, in this sense, suggestive for social ethics to be combined with environmental ethics. Our stream of love may be limited within a certain degree that if it flows the more towards, say, love of money and fame, energy flows the less toward love of nature and vice versa. To make nature greener and to make more money at the same time would be ethically impossible.

If we Japanese people are qualified to take any role in conserving this planet as Professor Callicott suggests,<sup>10)</sup> it might be, if anywhere, found in the traditional Japanese character and culture as Kuki featured, that are so unique and different from both cultures of East and West that they can hardly be explained intelligibly unless one is well acquainted with both cultures. Let us examine next Kuki's view of Nature:

Environmental ethics is embedded in Kuki's life style in the love of Nature or *hūryū*. Kuki's aesthetic of *hūryū*, reflect of traditional wandering poets such as Saigyō (1118~1190)<sup>11)</sup> and Bashō (1644~1694), and other followers of them. Their lives were, for love of nature, those of wondering poets, of whom Kuki was a spiritual follower; we can liken him to these wandering poets especially when he stayed in Paris, writing many poems including love poems. *Hūryū*, characterized by Kuki as 'nature', 'unworldliness', and 'aestheticism', the very opposite of 'fame-and-gain' (*myō-ri*), used to permeate the spirit and lifestyle of common people.

If we trace his spiritual background to Buddhist resignation, we would find it partly in certain traditional Zen-Buddhism seen in such thinkers as Dōgen (1200~1253)<sup>12)</sup> and Ryōkan (1757~1831). While Dōgen was being given a fresh light by Western environmental philosophers, Ryōkan, nicknamed 'Great Fool' (*tai-gu*), is, though most popular among Japanese people and with many English versions of his poems, unknown to the overseas public. He was a first rate calligrapher and poet; renowned for having lead a very simple life living in a hermitage in the mountainside, often played with village children, having nothing with him except clothing and a bowl for begging. This is a model of perfection in the religious life of *hūryū*, - an aesthetic who is unworldly

and has a lifestyle symbiotic with nature. In his later years, he communicated and exchanged poems with a nun called Teishin-ni, a sort of Platonic love with a flavour of *iki*. If one searches the Buddhist correspondence of St. Francis who is today known as an environmental saint, we cannot imagine other than Ryōkan. When Kuki was young he was an admirer of St. Francis.<sup>13)</sup> Although Kuki was not a very religious person in the customary meaning of the word, his philosophy of resignation and love of nature originated from Japanese Buddhist traditions.

On the other hand, Kuki was of an amorous character and enjoyed, in Paris and in Kyōto, philosophy, music, arts, literatures, dance, and love coloured by *iki*; he writes in his short poem that 'I am from the country where cherry blossoms and people die for love.' He might have thought that to live is to love. He showed a Protean aspect of his lifestyle: sometimes as Stoic sometime as Epicurean, according to the change of the channel of his love. One can imagine the distress in which Kuki found himself as an eccentric philosopher in a conventional academic circle.

He mentioned in an essay the first of all his favoured books, the *Symposium* of Plato, in which the ascent of Eros towards Forms is the central theme; Kuki writes that in *Symposium*, "the core of morality, arts, religion, and philosophy is captured straightforwardly and shown." (V, p.45ff.) One can, if one only tries, reverse the direction of the order of love: that is, to change the channel of love for money and fame towards love of nature. For however much one may be smart in a prestigious position, once he clings over-much to fame, he is, by the nature-oriented standard, nothing but a worldly-minded snob. A philosopher must be, as stated by Plato, apart from money and fame. (Cf. *Phaidōn*, 68c, 82c.)

Kuki once wrote in an short essay entitled 'On Form and Content' that those who are ardently attached to fame and position, and those who wish for social success cannot be free people; and that free people will stumble and be rejected; yet 'the axis of the earth goes round the free person.' 'To cling to the ready-made forms is the common way of snobbish people. To proceed earnestly towards the living substances is the task of the philosophers. How lamentable it is when the majority of philosophers are only snobbish people.' (V, p.6.) Attachment to fame and gain was often despised by people in Edo-society; while merchants pursued money, bureaucrat samurai were mostly poor but honoured and prepared to die for honours' sake. They resemble strikingly Platonic guardians. (Cf. *Rep.*386ff.)

So far, as we saw, if one will control the monstrous desire within, one could change the direction of flow of desire towards unworldly love of nature, like today's much celebrated environmental philosophers such as Arne Naess, B.J. Callicott and others, who recommend us to find joy in union with Nature.<sup>14)</sup>

### III

Today, given the critical situation of the global environment, one of the urgent tasks for our ethical deliberations must be what we ought to do in order to make our society sustainable; and how we are to live for that purpose. This task seems most difficult, since the difference of rich and poor in the global scale today is too huge, the surplus desire of people being accumulated into huge systems of political and economical dominion over oppressed people and nature to be controlled by human reason.<sup>15)</sup>

Today's equivalent of the Platonic monsters in soul and state, takes the shape of industrialization, international enterprise, supremacist power states, self-interest-oriented economy, and so forth. Although the Platonic individual-state parallel is no longer applicable in today's environmental ethics, these environmentally destructive monsters originate from the desires in each person's mind, what today's environmental ethics should address, I think, is, at least theoretically, such situations. We cannot, in order to find a breakthrough, rely on Platonic Form or a Christian God any more.

What we have found in Platonic ethics that is relevant to today's much advanced social ethics for creating the framework of new environmental ethics is this: Plato considered the essential function of the soul is in



love (*erôs*) and the roles of reason as a steersman or moral agent who controls or orders the desires of soul, and make the person morally right. Since Platonic order and harmony in the human mind are nourished by seeking Forms, Forms are considered as the very origin of order and harmony.<sup>16)</sup>

One can, apart from Forms, see that reason as a steersman controls and orders the whole soul. In order to judge rightly one has to know rationally the circumstances; that is, facts about oneself, society, the world, and especially about nature in the case of environmental ethics, these activities being the role of reason. In order for reason, moreover, to be capable of being the steersman of the soul, it must, as *the moral agent*, judge morally which course of action is right or wrong, good or evil and act accordingly when it is possible to do so, because it is the function of moral judgements to lead one's action. In environmental ethics it must be the moral agent who decides right and wrong, or good and evil; he will decide according to facts and logic. In the case where there is no objective value, it is a moral agent who decides which course of action is right or wrong, and that there is, in situations where critical thinking is needed, no criterion of right or wrong presupposed. Since the role of the moral agent is to order the love or desire in the mind, if we can locate our love and desires on the basis of love of Nature, it comes close to the environmental ethics embedded in the traditional Japanese environmental thoughts and culture.

One of the most urgent problems for our environmental ethics is, as stated earlier, the global environmental crisis: that is, how are we to change our course of action in order to create a sustainable society? There must be various ways to answer the question and solve the problems; our own answer to the question must be ethical, as follows: suppose the alternative courses of action we confront ethically are, for one instance, A and B. A is to continue the present state of affairs towards the death of earth. B is to change our course towards a sustainable future. In this presupposition, we certainly will choose B, if we are impartial and prudent enough to imagine the earth and its future residents. What prevents us choosing B is mainly the desire for money, fame, lust and conveniences, all unnecessary compared with our basic needs of foods, clothing, living, and so on. If Plato saw today's situation of the global village dominated by monstrous powers and money, he would certainly see it as a corrupt and most unjust state.<sup>17)</sup> If one reduces it to the individualist level, it looks like weakness of will; that is, say, in an addicted person who cannot but continue the status quo, in spite of knowing the alternative course to be better.

Concerning the human-to-nature relationship, Kuki's philosophy is suggestive for today's environmental philosophy. It could be safely said that Kuki founded his philosophy on the basis of the human-to-nature relationship. Although people might have, it seems, been very poor and not liberated from social and natural restraints in pre-industrial feudalistic Edo-era Japan, people are reported as fairly free and happy, compared with those in other pre-industrial societies.<sup>18)</sup>

Kuki mentions, as the characteristics of traditional Japanese morality, nature or naturalness as follows: 'In the ideal of Japanese morality, "spontaneous nature" is seriously meaningful. People dislike what is intentional and esteem what is natural. Morality is not considered as perfect if it does not reach the stage of naturalness. In this respect it is quite different from Western morality. In Western thoughts at large, nature and freedom are often considered as opposing to each other. In Japanese practice-experience, contrarily, nature and freedom tend to be embodied in harmonious fusion. Freedom is what breaks forth naturally in spontaneity. Freedom is not what is born as the result of confined deliberation. What was brought forth naturally according to the heart of Heaven and Earth as it is, is the freedom.' (III, p.276).

Here one can find that the image of morality for Kuki is nature-oriented. 'Nature' (*sizen*) in Japanese, translates in two ways: outer nature that is, different from 'environment', a living macro-cosmos on the one hand, and the naturalness that means something like 'automatic behaviour', 'spontaneity', or 'self-so' on the other hand. These two aspects of nature coincide presumably if Nature is considered as a sort of living organism that is the origin of all life.

Kuki was from a rich samurai family and very well versed in traditional Japanese culture. He started his

philosophical career by studying Western medieval and modern philosophies. He stayed in Europe from 1921 until 1929. While in Heidelberg his concerns were traditional German philosophy, after he moved to Paris, there occurred a sort of struggle in his mind between traditional philosophy and emerging new philosophy, - in today's term, between Western modernism and an ecological worldview.

He had, as a reforming philosopher, broken through the conventional way of traditional thinking in order to cut open the way to start a new pattern of thought - a new worldview that would change the order of love in one's own mind. The reformatory way of thinking is not often achieved without sacrifice. He found himself extremely lonely, which he called 'metaphysical solitude' in his poems, from which emerged, it is said, his own metaphysics and aesthetics.<sup>19)</sup> He wrote the first draft of *The Structure of Iki*, and many poems. The excessive sense of solitudes he felt was, I surmise, related with the break down of the Western modernism in his mind, with which he was so deeply webbed and with which he found himself at odds while staying in Paris, a quite artificial city, much apart from Nature.

After returning to Germany he turned his course of philosophy towards those of Husserl and Heidegger. He was very interested in both Buddhist and Heidegger's metaphysics and introduced existential philosophy into Japan; we can find in Kuki's metaphysics an important milestone for changing our view of nature. Having returned to Japan, he lived in Kyoto, the medieval capitol, and as a professor of Western Philosophy, devoted himself to create his own philosophy and established his aesthetics and his philosophy of contingency, that combines the philosophies of the East and the West

Although ethics was not the main concern for Kuki, he agreed with utilitarianism in his social ethics mentioning 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' (III, p.102). Besides utilitarianism what Kuki cited in his writing from modern Western ethics was the Kantian moral of duty for duty's sake, which for Kuki resembled the strong-will-ness, shared with Confucian morality as seen in common people like farmers, craftsmen, and especially in samurai. (Cf. III, p.196ff. and V, p.22) These moralities are, on the social ethical level, concerned with historical (or social) humans in Kuki's term. Yet Kuki's ethics did not conflict with the care for nature, since human society was considered as 'only a member of the land community' (Leopold). Human society was, in main stream Japanese thoughts, considered to exist on the basis of nature, and nature to be precious and miraculous, but fragile and transitory, since it emerged by chance from nothingness. Hence the culture of restraint before nature emerged, which was mixed with Western modernism after Japan opened its doors to the West in the Meiji-era (1868-1912), and replaced by the Western modernism in the post-war age.

Today's self-interest-oriented economy and culture may be too deeply rooted in and dominant over the modern mind to convert attitudes towards nature-oriented thoughts and life style. However, one will think, if he does not escape confronting his own death, what is most important for him to do - i.e. the ultimate object of his love; and he will, resigning the other desires, prepare for death by accomplishing his last will. If people confront the environmental crisis squarely, being terrified by the death of the earth, they will sincerely consider the matter. They will consider when they are prudent and impartial, the survival of the global village and its future residents, resigning their worldly desires which accumulation has today monstrously swollen without control.

#### IV

Platonic metaphysics expressed in the Theory of Form is, it is said, is the philosophy of Being (*on*, or *u*), compared with the so-called Buddhist philosophy of nothingness (*mê on*, *mu*). Seen from the world of Forms that is supposed to exist eternally, this phenomenal world is, like a reflex (*eikôn*) of real Being, not non-being but a world of becoming (*genesis*), between being and non-being (*mê on*). Accordingly human society is valuable, as long as it participates somehow in the ideals originating from Forms. While cosmos is, since it is created by the demiurge, for Plato invaluable, natural environment being out of sight.



The traditional religions have treated the problem of death and salvation of the soul as one of their central teachings; that is to save mortal people from the fear of death, while in the Platonic myth the human soul goes to another world reincarnated. People yearn to leave ascendants or posthumous honour from love of eternal existence in this world. Today people may see the continuity of life in the shape of their own genes. All these salvations or consolations are concerned with the death of the individual person, not with the death of the earth itself. In case of the death of the earth, all humanity and nature will die, which was not assumed, nor can be coped with, by traditional religions. Once the earth involving all humans and nature begins to die, terror will strike all global villagers, being faced with hunger, disease, crimes, war, and all sorts of catastrophes.

Confronting such a catastrophe, people will think of there being nothing; that is, no existence of anything. While traditional religions taught us to face personal death squarely, and asked us to think of the transience of life, saying 'remember that you have to die' (*memento mori*) or 'all is vanity of vanities' (*vanitas vanitatum*), traditional religious thought cannot cope with the death of earth - the problem of nothingness. Let us see next Kuki's philosophy of contingency, a sort of philosophy of nothingness that is related with Kyoto School. The question of Being and Nothingness is: what is being, why does something exist at all, and why not non-existence? It was such a metaphysical question on which Kuki based his philosophy. When he mentions metaphysical humans, it is shadowed by the philosophy of nothingness and his exhortation of resignation originated from Buddhism, which is also backed by the philosophy of nothingness.

In everyday life people usually think that everything occurs necessarily, as an apple falls from the tree according to the law of gravity. It may be considered only natural and a matter of course, not by chance or just happening that I live here and now thinking and writing, since everything has its own cause. I was born in this country and raised as the matter of course. I worked as a public servant sustaining my family with the salary I got rightfully from the government; and then retired from the jobs according to my age. It is only natural that I had the rights to live in health, to work and so forth.

On the other hand, if we imagine other distressed people's situations, we will see the matter from another perspective. There are more than eight hundred million starving people in this global village; and the future residents of this village are destined to suffer from starvation and all sorts of miseries before humankind will perish by environmental catastrophes. Then, is it a matter of course that this will occur necessarily with right causes? That one can imagine another situation means that one can put oneself on the other's shoes. This again means that there are possibilities that other circumstances could occur for us.<sup>20)</sup> I could have been born one of poverty-stricken people in the third world, dying from hunger. If everything occurs automatically according to the law of necessity, then we cannot change anything even slightly by our own will, let alone changing the world.

'It is contingent' Kuki writes citing a passage from the Buddhist classics, 'that we are born as Japanese. It is even thinkable that we were born insects, birds, or animals. It is contingent that we are human being, not insects, birds, or animals. In the depth of a great ocean, a blind tortoise comes up to the surface once in a hundred years. And there is a piece of floating wood that has only one hole drifting on the sea at the mercy of the wind towards east and west. To be born humans could be likened to the happening that the blind tortoise when he raises his head meets by chance this hole of the wood. This parable has the metaphysical meaning inexhaustible.' (III, p. 140.)

Opposing to the law of necessity, if I look at the matter from another perspective, this world is full of contingency. Although it was possible that I died from hunger, killed by war, or lived in a refugee camps, it is only by chance that I myself exist here and now thinking and writing. There was a possibility that the earth perished before my birth. Now I just exist - sooner or later reducing to non-existence. Of course we can detect in retrospect the cause of our existence. There must have been our ancestors and the sound Nature that supported them; and before that the earth had been there from which every thing involving all humans and nature emerged; and before that the big bang from which this planet emerged; and then - thus tracing the

cause of whole courses of the matter, we reach ultimately the original fact that something, not nothing, exists, and we are astonished - as Aristotle said, philosophy was born from wonder. (Cf. *III*, p.176.) To the question of why something, rather than nothing, exists, there is no answer. It is only contingent fact, according to Kuki, that there occurred Being, not non-Being, - as if by a thrown dice. In Japanese 'existence' means 'aru' and 'hard to exist' means 'ari-gatai' hence 'ari-gatai' bears the meaning of 'thankful'. It just happened that existence came about, happily. Kuki calls this fact 'original contingency' (*Urzufall*) according to the German philosopher Schelling. (Cf. *III*, p.162.)

According to Plato, this sensible world of becoming is considered to have originated from 'the Form of Good' as eternal Being (*ontôs on*) with the eternal objective value, like the world that is for Christians created by God and accordingly become valuable. Therefore it is called the philosophy of Being. Contrarily enough, in the philosophy of Nothingness, the world of becoming emerged from nothingness, shadowed by nothingness, and will be reduced to nothingness. In this world of becoming and disappearing, being and nothingness are both sides of the same coin. 'Being has' according to Kuki, 'relative meaning to nothingness. Being is non-nothingness as the negation of nothingness. Nothingness is non-being as the negation of being.' (*III*, p.119.) The possibilities for humans and Nature to shape other ways of existence are innumerable; it was possible that they would not exist at all, and it is miraculous and full of wonder that they actually exist. For something to exist means that it happened to exist along with the possibility that it did not exist. Thus the existence is contingent; and therefore the existence is, so to say, supported by non-existence. 'Nothingness as the negation of being, so to say, threatens being and calls it into question. The other sciences presuppose being as something self-evident and start to explore and develop under the presupposition. It may safely say that they don't call being itself into question and explore it. The philosophy as metaphysic cannot, however, presuppose being as self-evident and start to explore from this presupposition'.<sup>21)</sup>

Compared with Platonism, Kuki replaced Platonic Form with Nature, changing the order of love reverse direction from Plato's, thus making love the basis of values; if one compares Kuki-philosophy with Platonism some such scheme would be imaged as follows:

Platonism :	Kuki-philosophy :
Forms (Being)	Becoming and Nothing-ness
Necessity	Contingency
Objective values (ideals)	Relativism (resignation)
Humans apart from Nature	Humans a part of Nature
Form-oriented Reason	Nature-oriented Reason
Eros for Forms (eternity)	Love of Nature (transitoriness)

While this phenomenal and sensible world is, compared with the world of Being, not so valuable and meaningful, when this world is founded on the basis of nothingness, it becomes very high in the degree of being-ness (*ousia*). For being, that is possible to be or not to be, to exist means that it is contingent and quite difficult to exist. For the philosophy of nothingness, the world of becoming is certainly world of transient and ephemeral. Yet it is, compared with nothingness, incomparably valuable. While humans and nature are, from the perspective of eternal Being, not so valuable; they are, from the perspective of nothingness, invaluable. In this world of 'secular as sacred',<sup>22)</sup> every thing in nature is ordered and beautiful so that the transient life in this valley of the shadow of death is inexhaustibly meaningful. In the traditional Japanese paintings the painted objects are balanced by the background of vacant space; and the sound in Japanese music must be harmonized with silence. Shadow is important as light in the Japanese culture.<sup>23)</sup> So, being is supported, so to say, by nothingness. As it is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the view from nothingness may be more valuable, more beautiful than that from celestial value and beauty.

In conclusion, people in Edo-society lived with culture of restraint before nature. Kuki introduced, as Japanese character and culture three motives of resignation, spirit, and nature, each corresponds respectively

with cognitive, conative, and affective function of mind. (Cf. *III*, p.288.)<sup>24)</sup> Today in order to change our society towards sustainable future, to enforce love of nature is not enough but to let it, with strong will of Stoicism, override the humanly surplus desire called a monster, retaining the minimum necessities. One needs here three motive of Japanese culture as Kuki put it: we must nourish love of nature (affective) with strong will to survive (conative) under the guidance of rational resignation of surplus desire (cognitive).

If one compares philosophy of being with that of nothingness, one would find that the hierarchic order of value in the former philosophy is reversed in the latter; the hierarchy of value in the philosophy of Being and Nothingness may be tentatively expressed in the following, the hierarchic order being reversed:

Platonism: Being > Becoming (society > nature) > Non-being,

Kuki's Philosophy: Nature > Society > Nothingness.

In the hierarchic order in the philosophy of being, human society is superior in value to Nature, since in human society is reflected the absolute value of Forms. The value of nature in the philosophy of Nothingness, contrarily, occupies a superior position to that of the human society, since nature is considered as the basis that founds human society. Thus the social value of fame and money (*myōri*) can be resigned as inferior to the natural value expressed in *hūryū*. This idea can enforce people's love of nature and resignation of desires.

Today, in Western ethics, environmental ethics, represented by Arne Naess and Callicott on the one hand, and the humanist social ethicists represented, for instance, by Hare and Singer on the other are, it seems, regrettably opposing each other and considered as different special fields with different disciplines. This unhappy situation is not only confusing for us from another tradition, but is certainly deterrent to progress; some ways of combination of both tendencies would be necessary for our ethics to be more influential and effective. I hope we have found at least one of possibilities for such synthetic ethics in Kuki's philosophy as we interpreted it so far, where social and environmental ethics are not separated.

When one does not pre-suppose objective values, one need not decide whether humans or nature are more valuable, but only what one is to love and in which order. Environmental ethicists will, for love of nature, restrain from surplus desires, not only because of love of nature for nature's sake, but also because nature can sustain humans. On the other hand, humanists will refrain from surplus desires in order for humanity to survive, because it cannot exist without the support of nature. Thus both camps must, for the purpose of a sustainable future, coincide in the last resort, since what is at stake today is either humans or nature, but the inseparable unity of Humans and Nature as a whole.

### Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks go to my colleagues who have reviewed this paper: Dr. Karen Mather, Dr. Damon Young, Professors Obama Yoshinobu and Abe Hiroshi.

### Notes

- 1) The verse is carved as an inscription on the tomb of Kuki at Honen-in in Kyoto, translated and written in noble calligraphy by Nishida Kitarō. This verse and inscription: '*The Tomb of Kuki Shūzō*' was Nishida's last writing. Goethe who taught us resignation (*Entsagung*) was a most popular poet and novelist in pre-war Japan. Goethe, Nishida, and Kuki meet here.
- 2) Cf. P. Singer, "Rich and Poor" in *Practical Ethics*, 2 Edition, 1993, Cambridge.
- 3) Cf. His writings are fairly well introduced to overseas readers as follows: *Propos sur le temps: deux communications faites a Pontigny pendant la decade 8-18 aout 1928* / par Shuzo Kuki. -- Philippe Renouard, 1928, *A study of Japanese taste with an observation concerning Fūryū and the structure of Iki* by Kuki Shuzo, Masaru Victor Otake -- University Microfilms International, c1957. *Le probleme de la contingence* / Kuki

- Shuzo* ; traduction et introduction par Omodaka Hisayuki. -- Editions de l'Universite de Tokyo, 1966, *Ensayos filosoficos japoneses* / traduccion, seleccion y prologo, Agust in Jacinto Zavala. -- Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1997, *The structure of 'IKI' / Shuzo Kuki* ; translated by John Clark. -- s.n.], 1978, *Structure de l'Iki / Shuzo Kuki* ; traduit du japonais par Maeno Toshikuni. -- Maison franco-japonaise, 1984, *Reflections on Japanese taste : the structure of iki / by Kuki Shuzo* ; translated by John Clark; edited by Sakuko Matsui and John Clark. -- Power Publications, 1997, *Shuzo Kuki and Jean-paul Sartre: influence and counter-influence in the early history of existential phenomenology* by Stephen Light ; foreword by Michel Rybalka ; pbk -- Southern Illinois University Press, c1987, *La struttura dell'iki / Kuki Shuzo* ; a cura e con un saggio di Giovanna Baccini ; pbk. -- 2a ed. -- Adelphi, 1992. -- (I peradam ; 1), *Temporalities, spatialities, subjectivities: Kuki Shuzo and the poetico-ontology of the nation*, Gerry Psomiadis -- UMI Dissertation Services, c1996, *Die Struktur von "Iki" von Shuzo Kuki: eine Einfuhrung in die japanische Ästhetik und phänomenologie*, Minoru Okada (Hrsg.) ; aus dem Japanischen übersetzt und mit einem Vor- und Nachwort versehen von Minoru Okada -- Hänsel- Hohenhausen, 1999, *La structure de l'iki / Kuki Shuzo* ; traduit du japonais, annote et presente par Camille Loivier; postface de Atsuko Hosoi et Jacqueline Pigeot. -- 1re ed. -- Presses universitaires de France, 2004. -- (Collection libelles), *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shuzo with a Translation of Iki no Kozo*, 2004, University of Hawai 'i Press, Honolulu, Kuki Shuzo: a philosopher's poetry and poetics, translated and edited by Michael F. Marra -- University of Hawaii Press, c2004, *Time, space and ethics in the philosophy of Watsuji Tetsuro, Kuki Shuzo, and Maritin Heidegger*, Graham Mayeda ; Routledge, c2006.
- 4) Cf. K.R. Popper, *The Spell of Plato, Vol. I of Open Society and its Enemies*, Princeton University Press, 1950, E. Topitsch, *Von Ursprung und Ende der Metaphysik: Eine Studie zur Weltanschauungskritik*, 1958, Springer Verlag, Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, Penguin Books, 1977, R. M. Hare, *Plato*, 1983, Oxford University, and V. Plumwood, *Feminism and Mastery of Nature*, Routledge, 1993. T. Yamauchi, 'The Nature of the Soul in Plato's Republic', *The Memoires of Osaka Kyoiku University*, Vol.19, 1970.
  - 5) This sounds as if there are three parts in people's mind; but if we examine the text, we will find that so-called three part-theory of the soul doesn't explain well the matter and that what Plato mainly used is 'three forms or aspects, *tria eides*, 504a, 580d, 595a), besides 'part' (*meros*, 442c, 444b), and 'kind' (*genos*, 441a,c). Cf. T. Yamauchi, Die Natur der Seele in Platons "Politeia" : Harmonia und Phronesis, *Journal of Osaka University of Education*, Vol.19, 1970. (Written in Japanese with German abstract.) p.42.
  - 6) W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol., IV*, pp. 425, 475. Cf. T. Yamauchi, op. cit. p.43.
  - 7) Cf. Plato, *Symposium*, 188a. ff.
  - 8) *Complete Works of Kuki Shuzo* in 12 Vols., 1980~1982, Iwanami, Tokyo.
  - 9) Damon A. Young, 'Bowling to Your Enemies: Courtesy, Budō, and Japan, In *Philosophy East & West*, Vol. 59, No. 2, April, 2009. Some titles of each section is 'the etiquette of purity: Shinto, sincerity, and courtesy,' 'rites of authoritative conduct: Confucianism, ritual propriety, and practical wisdom,' and 'the etiquette of nothingness; Zen, mushin, and courtesy.'
  - 10) Cf. J.B. Callicott, *Earth's Insights*, 1994, University of California, p.107.
  - 11) Cf. J.B. Callicott, op. cit. p.63. p.97. See also W.R. LaFleur, "Saigyō and the Buddhist Value of Nature" in J.B. Callicott and R.T. Ames, eds., *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, 1989, State University of New York press, Albany, and W.R. LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon: A Selection of Poems by Saigyō*, New York: new Directions, 1978.
  - 12) Cf. J.B. Callicott, op. cit. p.100.
  - 13) His Christian name is Franciscus Assisiensis Kuki Shuzo. Cf. Obama Yoshinobu, *The Philosophy of Kuki Shuzo: A Wandering Soul*. 2006, Showado, Kyoto. p.14. See also Kuki Shuzo, *Complete Works*, V. p.47.
  - 14) Cf. F. Mathews, 'Deep Ecology' in D. Jamieson ed., *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*, Blackwell, 2003, p.230ff.

- 15) See P. Singer, Chap. Three 'Using up the World', in *How are We to Live? Ethics in an Age of Self-interest*, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne Australia, 1993 see also P. Singer, 'Rich and Poor', in *Practical Ethics, Second Edition*, 1993, Cambridge.
- 16) T. Yamauchi, 'An Ethical Study of Plato's Eros-theory, *Journal of Osaka University of Education*, Pat I, Vol.26, No.3, 1978.
- 17) See P. Singer, Chap. Two, *op. cit.*
- 18) Cf. Watanabe Kyoji, *The Image of the Past World*, Heibon-sha, Tokyo, 2005.
- 19) Cf. Obama, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
- 20) Cf. R.M.Hare, *Moral Thinking: Its levels, Method and Point*, Oxford, 1981. p.113ff.
- 21) Obama, *op. cit.* p.165 ff.
- 22) Cf. Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, 1985, State University of New York Press, Albany. p.24.
- 23) See Obama, *op.cit.* p.18ff. See also Tanizaki Junichirō, Tr. by T.J. Harper & E.G. Seidensticker, *In Praise of Shadows*, 2004, Vintage Classics. Near Kuki's tomb at Honen-in there rest Tanizaki. The double tombs of the Tanizaki couple are, backed by a cherry tree, simply two natural stones, on which one can read calligraphy of *Kū* (meaning vacancy or Nothingness) and *Jaku* (meaning stillness or Nirvana). One can see here a symbol of Japanese culture, *huryu*, in the shape of Tanizaki's grave.
- 24) On the unity of 'cognitive', 'conative', and 'affective' functions of mind, see Hare, *op. cit.* p.93 and also Tu Wei-ming, *op. cit.* p.25 and p.31ff.

## プラトンと九鬼周造の環境哲学 —自然・愛・モラル—

やまうち　とも　さぶ　ろう  
山内　友三郎

名誉教授

現代の環境倫理学では、行詰った西洋近代主義に対する批判が起こってき、東洋哲学や先住民の文化を見直す傾向がある。プラトンの倫理学における価値序列ではイデアに最高価値が置かれ、イデアを見ることのできる人間の理性が次に位置していて、その他の自然はその下の位置を占めている。これは殆ど西欧の倫理学のモデルになるほどの影響力を持った思想である。ところが現代倫理学の大勢では、プラトンのイデアは批判されて、イデア論なしの倫理学が普通になってきた。他方、京都学派に属する九鬼周造は東西哲学の総合を図った哲学者である。九鬼は早期からプラトンの影響を受けたが、イデア論は受け入れずに、代わりに自然を基礎にした人間論や文化論を考えていた。プラトンの魂三層説である理性、気概、欲望の三相の代わりに、これを批判的に継承して、「いきの構造」では「いき」を媚態、意気、諦念によって分析し、人間論では人間を自然的人間、歴史的人間、形而上的人間に分け、「日本の性格」としては自然、意気、諦念の三契機を挙げている。これはイデアの代わりに自然を置いた考察であると考えられる。形而上学においてもプラトンのイデア中心主義（一種のイデオロギー）に対して、九鬼の偶然性の哲学では、無の哲学を背景とする自然基底哲学になっている。このことは現代に生まれた環境倫理学が直面している難問に対して有力な示唆を与えるものである。本稿は九鬼哲学に見られる自然、愛、モラルを手掛かりにして、九鬼哲学を自然基底的な新しい環境倫理の構想に役立てるための予備的な考察である。

キーワード：環境倫理，自然，愛，モラル，イデア論，魂三相，無の哲学，偶然性