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The Foxy Lady and the Forest of Words

Writing and Japanese Philosophy

This paper was a keynote address for the European Network for Japanese Philosophy conference, hosted by University College Cork in Ireland, on 9 September 2023. The topic of the conference was "Taming the Wild Fox," an allusion to the Zen *kōan* admonishing us not to confuse conceptual understanding with realization. The call for papers invited us to use this moment to reflect on our work as mediating the tension between Western-style philosophical analysis and a tradition (Japanese philosophy) that mistrusts ordinary rational discourse as an ultimate reflection of reality. In that spirit, I have left my presentation in the format in which it was presented, as a personal response, rather than forcing it into a formal written article.

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I accepted the invitation to address the European Network of Japanese Philosophy as a keynote speaker, but I couldn't find the words to begin. So I did what I always do in such cases: I took a stroll along my Path of Philosophy, my *Tetsugaku no Michi* 哲学の道. I don't mean the famous one in Kyoto, but something more modest, though by me at least, much more frequently trodden. There's a special side trail I would seek, and I thought back to when I discovered it many years ago.

The tale of the foxy lady

Rays of afternoon sunlight filtered through the trees. As I strolled with staff in hand, a rustling from a thicket interrupted my reverie. I peered into the underbrush, glimpsing a reddish gray tail scurrying into the wood. It ducked behind an obscured sign, covered in dust and partially concealed by wisteria branches. In *katakana* it read *kotoba no mori*, "The Forest of Words." It pointed into—nothing.

But wait! Concealed in the thick undergrowth of kudzu was indeed the trace of a trail I had not seen before. The overgrown path faded into a grove of trees. Aha! There it was again—that reddish gray streak! This time I could clearly make out a gray fox up ahead where the grove began. It turned toward me a moment with its piercing brown eyes, showing its teeth in a sly smile before vanishing into the woods. I accepted its invitation and followed.

I pushed forward a few minutes, trudging through the entangling kudzu, using my staff in a swirling motion to make the kudzu curl up, causing it to choke itself in knots so I could pass.[1] At last, I reached the woods. I spied

1. Dōgen refers to "slicing through *kattō* with *kattō*" in his *Shōbōgenzō* "*Kattō*" fascicle. For

the fox again, its tail disappearing behind an imposing tree encircled with a *shimenawa* rope. I raced to look behind the tree, but there was no fox to be seen. Instead, a short distance ahead floated the outline of a gray-haired woman, shimmering of white gossamer. She whispered to me in a voice too soft to hear. Yet, I somehow comprehended every word with crystal clarity:

> I will guide you on your journey to the *Kotoba no Mori*. Your Way begins at the cave of Kūkai in the foothills of that mountain ahead. You can locate his Womb Cave by its sound.

Before I could utter a word, a puff of breeze dispersed her gossamer presence into a smoke-like wisp, leaving behind only a faint scent of sandalwood. I heard a whoosh in the undergrowth as I spotted the fox scampering toward the hillside. I followed.

Even as I approached the foothills, I could see no cave. Yet, I could sense its location, not so much with my eyes as with a rumbling, vibrating throughout my body. Its intensity grew until I realized I was no longer so much hearing it as resonating in unison with it. When I looked up at the hillside, the Womb Cave opened in front of me. As I worked my way up the rocky path into the cave, the blur of the fox darted in ahead.

The interior was dark, made visible only by a soft inner light, the source of which at first baffled me. Negotiating the space of the cave, my arms swam through layers of ethereal cobwebs which, I came to realize, were the source of the illumination. Their light pulsated with the rhythms running through my body. As I penetrated farther into the cave, the gossamer grew more dense, assuming forms and shapes in response to my arm-and-hand gestures as I negotiated my way.

Toward the center of the Womb Cave, the gossamer swirled into the shape of the foxy lady, this time seated on a lotus throne.[2] Around her was

a brief excerpt, see JPS, 161–2. *Kattō* 葛藤 literally means "kudzu and wisteria" and in Zen the term commonly refers to entanglements in words or concepts, often in *kōan* praxis. Dōgen, however, adds the sense of "intertwining" to its meaning, including the way master and student become intertwined by practicing Zen together, especially via language. For a discussion see EJP, 236–7. For a possible contrast between Dōgen's use of language in Zen praxis and Musō Soseki's more typical Rinzai use, see the comment in EJP, 642, note 141.

2. For an analysis of the ontological role of the Womb Mandala in Kūkai's system, see EJP, 122–3.

an aura of other seated figures shimmering in the darkness. In her voice of silence she spoke:

> You have reached the womb whence words and things originate in conference[3] with each other. Linger a while, sitting with me in stillness amidst the resonance.[4] When I tell you, leave this cave through Izutsu Toshihiko's Magic Tunnel of Language and Things[5] to cross into the *Kotoba no Mori*. Witness how the forest comes into being through the power of *kotodama* (言霊), the creative force of words.

She intimated nothing more. The rumbling continued, strands of light pulsating into the darkness. Then her index finger came out from the grasp of her other hand and pointed to the ground as she disappeared again into a wisp of dissipating gossamer. Looking to where she had pointed, I saw the fox staring at me, panting in expectation, before scurrying into Izutsu's Tunnel. I followed.

As I traversed the subterranean passage, I felt a magic world coming to life. Words and things started taking form in the tunnel. When the word for a flower resounded in the chamber, the flower itself appeared. The same happened for birds, for gems, for moss, for mist. Anything I mentioned immediately appeared before me. My slightest feeling or thought became tangible as it resonated in the passageway. "Awe!" "Wonder!" "Joy!" "Delight!" Izutsu's Magic Tunnel of Words and Things was marvelous, but also terrifying as formerly unacknowledged feelings burst forth as names and forms. It was at once both awesome and awful. "Surprise!" "Shock!" "Gloom!" "Fright!" Sensing my anxiety, the fox yelped and scampered toward the light at the end of the passageway. I did not dawdle. I ran toward the mouth of the tunnel.

My eyes took a moment to adjust to the brilliant light. I had entered an enchanted world filled with *ki* 氣, a surging life-force coming into being and becoming being. The fox was gone, but the silent voice of the foxy lady spoke, I know not from where.

3. For the distinction between conference and reference as the relation between words and reality, see EJP, 28, 111, 144, 333, 354, 490, 565–6, 588, 617 n. 110, 625–6 n. 19.

4. On Kūkai's theory of resonance (響) as linking voiced sound, word, and reality, see EJP, 116–23.

5. Cf. Izutsu 1956.

> You are in the boundary between the wordless and the *Kotoba no Mori*. Just ahead is the forest itself. You can explore it freely on your own and discover its riches. It has no exit gate, but on the right occasion, you will find the way out and return to the *Tetsugaku no Michi* whence you came. For now, I leave you. But you may return whenever you need to do so.

I passed through the liminal area into the deep forest, exploring its many treasures: the Confucian Grove of Ogyū Sorai and his comrades, the hillside Systems Precinct with the towering edifices of the Kyoto school and Watsuji Tetsurō, the Hollow of Ueda Shizuteru which serves as a camping retreat for wordsmiths, mystics, and poets. Scattered throughout the forest are individual Way Stations fashioned by philosophers like Dōgen and Shinran to attend to pilgrims in need.

I have returned many times over the years to the *Kotoba no Mori*, taking advantage of the distinctive virtues of each area. For example, since discovering the Confucian Grove, whenever I need to make my words more clear or precise, I return there. Sorai and his companions are happy to help me "true up the terms" (正名) by unearthing their original meanings and most pertinent implications.[6]

When my philosophizing lacks cohesion, I visit the Systems Precinct and climb the towering edifices constructed by thinkers like Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime, and Watsuji Tetsurō. From there I can overlook the whole *Tetsugaku no Michi* and its various trails as well as the layout of the *Kotoba no Mori* it encircles. The elation of the rigorous ascent and panoramic vistas tempts me to stay in those lofty, transcendent heights. But my personal odyssey always calls me back to the rough terrain of the everyday. For me, surveying the flattened panorama of philosophy from above is only knowledge *about* philosophy. My goal is to navigate the topography for myself—to *philosophize*. It helps to know of previous explorations, to locate trails blazed by predecessors. *My* mission, though, is to make my own journey. Otherwise, I'd be a historian or literary critic.

Back on ground level, plodding its ups and downs, negotiating its twists and turns, running into dead ends and circling back, I often stumble. When disheartened, bruised, and discouraged, I may turn down Tariki Lane to stop at Shinran's Way Station for Deluded Fools. It sits on the shore of

6. EJP, 352–4.

the Lake of the Oceanic Vow into whose choppy waves I leap. I soon tire of keeping myself afloat as the waves batter and push me under. At the point of drowning, I surrender myself to the waters of the Vow and instead of drowning, am held aloft by its buoyancy. I let the waves carry me to the shore.[7] Revitalized, I can then continue my Way.

At other times, absorbed in thought or dreams, I lose sight of where I am and I lose my Way. My mind scattered and unfocused, I am unable to comprehend what is present right in front of me. Fortunately, everywhere in the *Kotoba no Mori*, there's an entry to the Zen Circle where Dōgen has his Wayside Center for Bodymind Unity. It's a simple hut where I go to just sit a while, abiding for the time being without thinking or agenda. I reengage the presence anew.[8] Soon enough, I am ready to be on my Way again through the *Kotoba no Mori*.

Usually, when I need to find the right words, my ultimate destination in the *Kotoba no Mori* is Ueda's Hollow, the campsite for word crafters. The little community centers its activities around a blazing bonfire tended by Zen master Ikkyū Sōjun. Since people go there when the words don't come, there's always an autumn wind blowing through, an 秋の風. Everyone in the hollow appreciates Ikkyū's vigilance in keeping the fire aglow to mitigate the chill. Between burning wooden statues of Buddha and one sutra after another, Ikkyū accepts anyone's dead words to add to the flames. If there is any question about the vitality of the words, Motoori Norinaga can help sort out which *kotoba* are lived words (活きた言葉) and which dead (死んだ言葉).[9] Only dead leaves burn well.

I understand that Martin Heidegger, sometimes but only infrequently, drops by to burn some now-dead, used-up poems marked in a bag called "everyday language."[10] He stays for only the briefest of visits. He does not seem much at home being with others, but prefers to wander off into the woods alone, seeking out new clearings. Kuki Shūzō eventually goes off

7. EJP, 210–11.

8. EJP, 219–35.

9. EJP, 380. For Norinaga, a word's vitality depends on its creative origin. Contrast that with Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 in his distinction between living and dead words based on their referents: JPS, 352.

10. See the discussion in KASULIS 1981, 136–8.

onto one of the paths to look for him, trying to cajole him into returning to where the other folks are, the 民族存在.[11]

As the ashes collect from the fire, like the old Chinese Master Danxia Tianran (丹課天然), Ikkyū picks through them to check for Buddha relic bones. In the rare instance he finds one among the cremated remains, he sends it over to Ueda Shizuteru to be sure the word-bone is indeed hollow. Nowadays whenever I tread the *Tetsugaku no Michi* and find myself at a loss for words, I attach to my walking staff a bag of notebook leaves filled with my dead words. I take the branch trail leading through the *Kotoba no Mori* until I come to Ueda's Hollow and Ikkyū's bonfire. I empty my leaves of dead words into the conflagration.

While waiting for the firewood to turn to ash (but never again back to firewood), I typically amble over to the poet's corner in Ueda Hollow. There I join Fujiwara Teika and his comrades practicing their *kotodama* breathing techniques, as they prepare to write *waka darani* 和歌陀羅尼.[12] Yosano Akiko has her washboard handy for the *waka* group so when a creative word is born, she can use it to "wash our lives clean."[13]

At other times while I wait, I listen to the plucking music that fills the air of the Hollow. I recall my naïveté the first time I heard that music. I followed the sound until it led me to where the musicians were using the leaves of words piled on the ground like strings from an instrument. Pointing at the instrument of leaves, I asked, "What is that thing?" Kimura Bin replied in a kindly but firm voice, "It is no *thing*. It is not a *mono*; it is a *koto*. In this Hollow, living words express *koto*, never *mono*." Sakabe Megumi and Hiromatsu Wataru nodded in agreement.[14]

Once the fire has reduced my bag of dead words to ashes, if Ikkyū finds among them any Buddha bones, he brings them to Ueda to verify their hollowness. If Ueda confirms a hollow bone or two, he will invite me over and gently place them in my bag, so that I can return home with them to begin

11. EJP, 471–2.

12. See discussion in YUASA 1987, 100–1.

13. EJP, 568–9; JPS, 1147.

14. For Kimura, Sakabe, and Hiromatsu on the significance of the mono/koto distinction, see EJP, 562–3, 589.

my writing anew. Ueda-sensei always reminds me that hollow words are the core expressions that bear truth in philosophical writing.[15]

Meanwhile, to amuse himself, Ikkyū collects the non-hollow bones from the ashes, reassembling them into skeletons. He makes them the stuff of ghostly dreams of dialogue on death and impermanence.[16]

As the foxy lady had foretold, when the time was ripe to leave the *Kotoba no Mori* on my first trip, the exit revealed itself as a gaping emptiness in Ueda's Hollow. Zen Master Takuan Sōhō, his sword drawn, guarded the exit and only allowed passage if appropriate words be spoken. He glared at me and recited Bashō's haiku:

物いへば　Whenever I express something,
唇寒し　The lips are cold;
秋の風　The autumn wind

Then he stared at me, awaiting response. I blurted out:

事いへば　Whenever I express an event,
息暖し　The breath is warm;
春日の出　The spring daybreak.

"That's awful!" Takuan slashed me with his sword. But it was his Sword of Oneness that cuts in one, not two. Body and mind dropped away (身心脱落) and I could pass through the barrier with no gate.

The trail through the *Kotoba no Mori*, it turns out, was a loop returning to the Path of Philosophy at the point of entrance. But the journey had quieted and reunified my bodymind. I could now see the forest as well as the trees more clearly. Being time to write, I found my Way home.

Four guiding principles

I've been treading the Japanese Path of Philosophy for half a century. Since that first visit, whenever I find myself at a loss for words, I return to that hidden detour leading to the *Kotoba no Mori*. After cutting through the *kattō* with *kattō* and reaching the forest, I am seldom disappointed. It is where the words of Japanese philosophy come to life. I will now take this

15. EJP, 567–8, 589. JPS, 766–84.
16. JPS, 172–7.

opportunity to reflect on four principles that have guided my work over those fifty-odd years.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE ONE

Whereas "tetsugaku" (哲学) *means "philosophy," "philosophy" means more than mere* "tetsugaku." *The two terms are not necessarily equivalent and, therefore, not always interchangeable.*

Much perplexity arose from the circumstances surrounding the introduction of the Japanese term *tetsugaku*. The Meiji intellectuals were not only seeking a neologism to render the Western word *philosophy*, but also an appropriate name for the department or discipline within the newly minted Japanese universities. Inspired by Wilhelm von Humboldt's German model of the modern, research-based university, the Japanese thought of the disciplines as *Wissenschaften*, using the Japanese sinograph 学 as a suffix much as we use *-ology* in English. Hence, after some debate and experimentation, they settled on rendering "philosophy" as *tetsugaku*, "the *Wissenschaft* of wisdom" or "wisdom-ology."

That decision muted some original nuances of the Western word suggesting love, engagement, and personal transformation. Instead, it shifted the focus to objective, scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) detachment that contributes to the progress of human knowledge. As such, it paralleled how the other disciplines functioned within the university. Hence, in many contexts I translate *tetsugaku* as "academic philosophy" instead of simply "philosophy." We often did so in *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (JPS), for example.

In many Japanese situations, *tetsugaku* became a technical, scholarly exercise of studying past philosophers not so much to learn *from* them as *about* them. (This has often been the case, of course, in Western academic philosophy as well in the modern period.) Certainly, it is legitimate to study historical thinkers in the *wissenschaftlich* way as figures in the history of thought and culture. For philosophy *per se*, however, the primary value in studying the philosophies of old was to determine how their ideas and methods might help in solving today's philosophical problems. Since those philosophical problems were of Western origin and couched in Western terms, the Japanese academic philosophers looked to previous Western rather than Japanese thinkers for the resources. Hence, the meme arose that "there were no philosophers in premodern Japan." If by "philosophers," we mean

tetsugakusha 哲学者, the assertion is tautological. There obviously could be no Japanese academic philosophers before there was the modern Japanese university and its departments of academic philosophy to house them.

If by "philosophers" we were to mean instead *tetsujin* 哲人, that is, people committed to a regimen for attaining wisdom, it would then be plainly false to claim there were no premodern Japanese philosophers. Suppose the Meiji intellectuals had rendered the word "philosophy" not as wisdomology, but as, for instance, the "Way of Wisdom" (*tetsu no michi* 哲の道 or *tetsudō* 哲道 perhaps). Then Japanese philosophers would not be limited to modern *tetsugakusha*. They might include, for example, many premodern Japanese thinkers who followed the Way of Wisdom in any coherent system of thought and practice such as the Way of the Buddha(s) (*butsudō* 仏道), the Way or teachings of the Confucian scholars (*judō* 儒道 or *jukyō* 儒教), the Way of the *kami* (Shintō 神道), the Way of the warrior (*bushidō* 武士道), or the Way of the arts (*geidō* 芸道) such as the Way of tea (*chadō* 茶道). That would certainly draw a very different picture of philosophy in premodern Japan than the current popular one. In fact, it would more resemble China's understanding of "philosophy" in its own culture as extending from the present back to ancient times, a tradition it named *zhexue* (哲學), using sinographs borrowed from the Japanese word *tetsugaku*.

Despite the entrenched habit in Japan, many Western scholars now favor using the term "Japanese philosophy" to include the premodern as well as the modern period. I agree for two reasons. The first relates to a blind spot in much early scholarship about modern Japanese philosophy; the second to a general problem in meta-philosophy. Those two reasons relate to my guiding principles two and three. Let's start with the blind spot.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE TWO

For a full picture of modern Japanese philosophy, we must study premodern Japanese philosophy.

When we approach modern Japanese philosophy as if it lacked Japanese antecedents, we forget its thinkers were *Japanese* philosophers. They were human beings living in a specific time and place. How can we profoundly analyze Nishida's treatment of the "historical world," for example, if we do not consider Nishida's own Japanese historical world as existing before 1868? Why ruminate over Tanabe's sophisticated treatment of the

cultural dimension in his logic of the specific, but ignore the specifics of the Japanese historical and cultural context that inspired his ideas? Can we fully fathom Watsuji's theory of *fūdo* (風土) without considering what in the traditional Japanese intellectual *fūdo* might have led him to think about *fūdo* as he did?

We do not think it inappropriate to consider the respective cultural and historical roots of British empiricism or German idealism. Why is it taboo to inquire in the same manner about Japanese philosophy? What in premodern Japanese culture led the modern Japanese philosophers to gravitate more toward Bergson and James rather than Frege and Russell? Modern Japanese philosophy is not hermetically sealed within modern Japan. Even to come into existence, it had to serve thinkers previously steeped in premodern Japanese thought and culture.

My initial interest in Japanese philosophy began, as for many of us, with Nishida. I couldn't figure out, though, how to get from Bergson, James, Fichte, and Hegel to Nishida's core concept of pure experience in *An Inquiry into the Good*. I was missing something. People told me that something was probably linked to Zen Buddhism. Yet, almost everything I read said that Zen was unphilosophical or even anti-philosophical. In response, I engaged Zen not only by looking into its texts and its traditional history but also by engaging in its praxis.

The result was my book *Zen Action/Zen Person*. Although a philosophical work, it situated Zen in its proper cultural and historical settings as well as its traditions of discipline and practice. By doing so, it could distinguish varieties of Zen language: practical instruction, meta-practical justifications of practice, epistemological theories, phenomenological descriptions, heuristic expressions, and so forth. Viewing Zen in that comprehensive way, I showed it to be a coherent system of thought and action. Zen practice and its justification—its metapraxis—was the nearly invisible link to premodern Japan missing in my first reading of *Inquiry*. Paradoxically, once that connection became clear, I better understood why Nishida would find some Western thinkers more relevant than others.

That led me to wonder if a similar holistic view of theory-praxis-metapraxis might lie behind Japanese philosophies at large in both the modern and premodern periods. A breakthrough came when I met Yuasa Yasuo and, working with Shigenori Nagatomo, started translating his book *The*

Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory.[17] I was struck by Yuasa's explanation about his book's genesis. He said that in writing a book on modern Japanese philosophers,[18] he realized they all had assumed a somatic aspect as foundational to philosophical insight. That distinguished them from almost all modern Western philosophers he had studied. He traced that theme in Japanese philosophy at least as far back as Kūkai. Yuasa had confirmed for me my initial intuition in reading Nishida and other modern Japanese philosophers. To understand them more deeply, I had to dig further into the historical roots of Japanese thought, even roots that the philosophers themselves did not always explicitly acknowledge.

To understand Tanabe Hajime and Takeuchi Yoshinori, I read more deeply in premodern Pure Land thinkers like Shinran, Hōnen, and even Kakuban. The same for Nishitani, Ueda Shizuteru, and premodern Zen figures. In modern Japanese philosophical texts, I also came across many allusions to Confucian ideas and terminology (sometimes interlaced with Bushidō and State Shintō vocabulary as well). Hence, I began researching precedents in Edo philosophy.

Eventually, this haphazard approach would not do. To keep the connections straight both for me and my audience, I organized the historical connections into a chronological narrative of Japanese philosophy. That allowed me to emphasize the themes, ideas, and methods that made their way from ancient times into the modern period. Such histories of Indian and Chinese philosophy had long been available in various Western languages. Why not do the same for Japan? That was the original impetus behind my writing a history of Japanese philosophy over thirty-five years ago. With few models even in Japanese to emulate, I had to work on my own, beginning from scratch. The project did not reach fruition until the publication of *Engaging Japanese Philosophy: A Short History* (EJP) in 2018.

In fairness, I should add that I did not spend that whole time exclusively on writing EJP. Both *Shinto: The Way Home* and JPS were spinoffs that appeared along the way. My point is that I never intended EJP to be a comprehensive history of Japanese philosophy. Its original purpose was

17. Yuasa 1987.
18. Yuasa 1970.

only to provide a background for a fuller picture of the origins of modern Japanese philosophy. That is why I always thought of it as "a short history."

The lack of a sense of premodern history was only my first criticism with how most scholars up to my time were approaching modern Japanese philosophy. The second brings me to my third guiding principle.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE THREE

Philosophy is most authentic when it thinks philosophically about pressing human problems, not when it limits itself to analyzing philosophical problems.

As noted in my earlier discussion of the term of the term *tetsugaku*, philosophy has two senses. First is philosophy as philosophiz*ing*, which is an activity, a *koto*. As such, it systematically and critically reasons about almost any everyday problem that deeply concerns our human existence. The other sense of philosophy is the body of works, ideas, and arguments that philosophers have previously produced. That treats philosophy more as a *mono*, a collection of now dead texts. Adjunct to that secondary meaning of philosophy is the critical evaluation of those writings in terms of clarity, coherence, and probative value. It is an autopsy that dissects past philosophizing, detached from the practicality of everyday concerns, often identifying pathological aberrations in the corpus of previous philosophical efforts. As such, its primary target audience is professional academic philosophers and intellectual historians.

As my study of Japanese philosophy continued, I concluded most scholars had been approaching the field of Japanese philosophy as if it were a *mono* and not a *koto*. Books and articles on Japanese philosophy were Japanese philosophy-ology, scholarship limited to what Japanese philosophers had said, what they argued, and what (mostly Western) philosophers they had cited. Scholars barely touched on the process of the philosophers' *philosophizing*. Why had Japanese philosophers focused on some experiences rather than others? How did their way of thinking lead them to consider some examples more relevant than others or certain arguments to be more persuasive? Why did some Western philosophical problems attract their attention and not others? Why did Japanese philosophers sometimes raise questions of a philosophical nature that seldom occurred at all in the Western tradition? It seems as if the scholarship on Japanese philosophy focused

only on *what* it had to say about reality, not about *how* it thought about reality. It was a detached, *wissenschaftlich* treatment of Japanese philosophy as itself a *Wissenschaft*.

In response, my writings addressed the *how* of Japanese philosophizing in two major ways. One approach is formal, epitomized by my 1998 Gilbert Ryle Lectures, published as the book *Intimacy or Integrity: Philosophy and Cultural Difference*.

I had noticed many Japanese philosophers throughout history had highlighted a cultural orientation of intimacy rather than integrity. That is not to say there is something especially Japanese about intimacy itself. My book explicitly showed that intimacy-driven thinking and behavior appeared in most, if not all, cultures and even in subcultures within societies that are otherwise integrity-dominant. Most of the book's examples are not from Japanese culture or indeed from any other Asian culture. *Intimacy or Integrity* argues the prevalent way Japanese think is how anyone thinks under the right circumstances. In that respect, *Intimacy or Integrity* is not a book about Japan at all, but a book about the relation between culture and thinking. Yet, if I had not studied Japan and try to understand and explain its philosophies, I never would have been able to see the distinctions necessary to formulating the argument of the book.

Japanese philosophers may have developed various logics or *ronri* (論理), but those logics are not inherently Japanese. Logic is logic. It may adjust its form to suit different purposes, but it remains logic. Analogously, Newtonian physics serves us well for designing an elevator, while quantum physics works better for a cyclotron. Still, they are both physics. When discussing any Japanese philosophy, it helps to explain the context and use of the philosophizing behind it. The more we explain our philosophers' zeitgeist, the particularities of their time and place, even the issues of their biographies, the more concrete we make their philosophizing. However abstract and universal the conclusions of philosophy may be, the philosophizing itself is always concrete.

This guideline about philosophizing as a *koto* rather than *mono* also underlies the structure of EJP. Specifically, it dedicates an entire chapter to each of seven major Japanese philosophers from different historical periods and traditions. I called them "engagement" chapters to distinguish them from traditional historical surveys of philosophers in the other chapters.

The engagement chapters invite the reader to join the thinkers in the *koto* of their philosophizing. Hence, those chapters try to explain the larger historical, political, cultural, and biographical context of each philosopher. To interpret the motives and goals behind their philosophizing is not enough, however. Because I want my readers to think along with the Japanese philosophers, I also needed to help readers engage the philosophers' issues as, at least in some way, the readers' own issues. That involves adapting my text to the audience. This brings us to my fourth and final guiding principle that I will discuss today.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOUR

Unlike writing about philosophy as a thing, writing about philosophizing calls for heuristic expression (hōben方便; S. upāya).

To make Japanese philosophy a detached study of a corpus of works requires little imagination on the part of either the writer or the reader. Primarily an intellectual enterprise, it connects only tangentially to the problems of everyday life. To make Japanese philosophy an engagement with Japanese philosophizing, however, is both more difficult and more rewarding.

Of the reader it requires not only intellectual rigor but also empathy or *Einfühlung*, which involves imagination and affect. The writer's task is even more complex because the writer must have an *Einfühlung* not only for the Japanese philosopher being discussed but also for the reader for whom one is writing. To the extent the task is successful, however, the rewards are obvious.

To study or present philosophizing is itself to philosophize. Japanese philosophy then becomes part of one's own philosophizing, transforming oneself in the process. Indeed, this personal transformation via immersion and emulation of a text was the primary meaning of the sinograph *gaku* 学 before its modern use as an equivalent for *Wissenschaft*. That was certainly the case in classical Confucianism and may explain why Inoue Tetsujirō was comfortable labeling the Edo-period Confucian schools *tetsugaku* in his famous trilogy on the subject. For him, perhaps, the classical Confucian sense of *gaku* was still vibrant enough in his thinking that he considered *tetsugaku* not just "wisdom-ology" but also an immersion in and emulation of the patterns of wisdom preserved in traditional texts.

Once we recognize our goal is to engage the reader in Japanese philosophizing and not merely to relate facts about the corpus of Japanese philo-

sophical writings, more imaginative techniques for writing become possible, even advisable. For example, translation may demand the communication of an extra dimension of meaning. We are no longer limited to translating only what the Japanese words refer to (the *Bedeutung*). Such references may point to objects so alien to non-Japanese that they require copious and cumbersome supplementary explanation or notes. Nor are we limited only to their meaning as sense or nuance (the *Sinn*), which embeds the term in a larger complex of other Japanese terms which may be equally alien to the foreign reader. For example, if we translate *hosshin* 法身 as "dharma body," must we not also translate "dharma"?

If we embrace the *hōben* function of our writing, however, we also assume the responsibility for translating what the words *do* for the foreign reader's philosophizing, making that match what the words *do* for the Japanese reader's philosophizing in the original language. Keeping with the German vocabulary, we might call this dimension of translational meaning more akin to *meinen* or *Meinung*. Even better, in English we might call it the meaning of a statement in terms of its "intent" or "drift" as when we say "I know what you are saying but I don't get your *drift*."

The Buddhist principle of heuristic expression is that we do not openly convey the truth to the audience. Instead, we give them the resources so they can find the truth on their own in their own way within their own circumstances. That suggests we sometimes must translate the *drift* or *Meinung* even if it means sacrificing some of the *Bedeutung* or *Sinn*. For example, although we could say the Zen terms *nyoze* (如是) and *inmo* (恁麼) have the same referent and sense (as-ness or *tathatā*), what the terms *do* can be quite different. This may require a difference in translation. *Inmo* comes from an ordinary Chinese word that acquired a slang sense and special usage in Song-dynasty Chan monasteries. It became associated with a challenge to engage the presence of what is happening here and now. In contrast with *nyoze*, it has a *kōan*-like function in praxis. Hence, I translate *inmo* not as "as-ness" or "suchness" but as "howzit."[19]

Along the same lines, we must be wary of using translations that are sometimes satirically called Buddhist Hybrid English. These are terms like "*dharmakāya*," "buddha nature," and even "bodhisattva" that appear in

19. EJP, 221–2, 232–4.

Western translations without explanation as if every foreign reader would know their meaning. Even if we were writing for only for our fellow experts, where the word 法 or *dharma* appears in an English passage, for example, I wonder if all buddhologists would agree on which of the seventeen meanings for 法 in Nakamura's *Bukkyōgo daijiten* is applicable in that particular case. By not translating such words and resorting to Buddhist Hybrid English, are the translators disguising the fact that they themselves are not sure? Wouldn't it be better if the translator would hazard a guess that it here means, say, "teaching" rather than "phenomenon" or "law?" If the translation is going to help the reader philosophize about the philosophy, then the translators themselves must begin the process of philosophizing, making decisions about what the text is actually *doing* in the original, not simply what it is referring to or what other concepts it is connecting with. You cannot translate philosophizing without yourself philosophizing.

Once we focus on philosophizing, on the *koto* rather than the *mono* of philosophy, many other norms about how to write about philosophy also shift. For example, hagiographies are notoriously unreliable accounts of what actually happened in the biography of a saintly thinker. Yet, their persistence through history often indicates they reveal something critical about *how* the thinker thought and lived. The hagiography's crucial meaning is not in its factual reference or even its conceptual nuance, but in relating the general course of the thinker's intellectual and spiritual life. It also may intimate how the figure impacted his or her spiritual and intellectual community. As long as we alert the reader with some admonition like "tradition says...," such hagiographical statements can be useful in helping the reader follow the ideas of the thinker under discussion.

Anachronistic comparisons can also be effective. For example, I found that today's runaway, naïve scientism can be compared to the rationalistic *hakarai* (計らい) that Shinran targeted in support of *tariki* (他力) and *shinjin* (信心).[20] Scientism and *hakarai* are by no means identical, but how Shinran was skeptical of *hakarai* resembles how many of us today are skeptical of scientism. The skeptical attitudes are similar even if the objects of the skepticism differ. The philosophizing is alike, although what is being philosophized may not be the same.

20. EJP, 186–7.

Conclusion

I will conclude this discourse—one-third *monogatari*, one-third treatise, one-third apologia, one-third absolute nothing—by circling back to the *Kotoba no Mori*. All Japanese philosophizing, or *nihon tetsugaku* in its richest sense, thrives there. The *Kotoba no Mori* is the one all-encompassing philosophical *basho*, the *topos* whence all philosophical judgments arise and find their place. The *Kotoba no Mori* is the *basho* or field for philosophers and poets to play their language games. It is the *basho* for the great sumō match of contending ideas among the classical *gakusha* of Japanese philosophy.[21]

The wild fox invites us to take a respite from writing *about* Japanese philosophy and to engage in Japanese philosophizing. The fox knows the *Kotoba no Mori* is an ideal site for doing that. When you are at a loss for words, leave the main path of the *Tetsugaku no Michi* to seek the signpost pointing to the *Kotoba no Mori*. It's hard to find, covered as it is with the dust and cobwebs of library shelves. But follow the fox. Even when you locate the path, its initial steps will be treacherous, requiring you to slice through the *kattō* with *kattō*. My experience has been that the Way to the *Kotoba no Mori* is always there, ready to engage. Just remember to look for it. As the Romans used to say: *Memento mori*.

References

Abbreviations

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21. For an Edo-period comparison of philosophical competition to sumō, see EJP, 287.

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