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***Meditation and Intuition from the point of view of
Chuang Tzu and Plato***

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In my paper 'Cosmology of Plato' [*Celestia*, 2011, University of Athens, scheduled], I mentioned that Plato stood at the junction between Asian and European philosophies. Still more, Plato insisted on the movement of soul in the cosmos. Well the true other meaning of soul 'ψυχή is life. From the viewpoint of Chinese philosophy, the movement of the soul is the flow of life in the universe. In ancient China, life is the origin and movement of the universe. Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu named it the Way, The Great and One. As it was so great that man cannot express it by words, it was called Nothingness. Plato intuited Nothingness. And his master Socrates intuited nothingness as a lack of knowledge (Docta Ignorantia). As he inquired the truth of life, he thought deeply and meditated, intuited. His meditation is common with Zabū (the Japanese meditation practice of *Zazen Zen* on a flat cushion named *Zabutō*) by Chuang Tzu. Therefore, Socrates attitude for life is nearly that of Chuang Tzu. In here, I want to treat of the Zabū of Chuang Tzu and the meditation of Socrates and Plato. Then I will argue with the Idea that is transcendental-being in Greece.

Zabu of Chuang Tzu

The next dialogue was very famous about Zabu between Confucius and his first disciple Yen Hui (Ganen, Japanese pronunciation):

Yen Hui said, 'I am making progress.'

Confucius replied, 'What do you mean?'

'I have ceased to think of benevolence and righteousness,' replied Yen Hui.

'Very well; but that is not enough.'

Another day, Yen Hui again saw Confucius, and said, 'I am making progress.'

Confucius replied, 'What do you mean?'

'I have lost all thought of ceremonies and music' said Yen Hui,

'Very well, but that is not enough.'

A third day, Hui again met Confucius and said, 'I am making progress.'

'What do you mean?'

'I sit and forget everything.' Replied Yen Hui.

Confucius changed countenance, and said, 'What do you mean by saying that you sit and forget everything?'

Yen Hui replied, 'My connexion with the body and its parts is dissolved; my perceptive organs are discarded. Thus leaving my material form, and bidding farewell to my knowledge, I am become one with the Great Perceiver (*Tao-te ching* or the *Mother of all Things*). This I call sitting and forgetting all things.'

Confucius said, 'One, you are free from all likings; so transformed, you are become impermanent. You have, indeed, become superior to me! I must ask leave to follow in your steps [Chuang-tzu, 1994: 215].'

In this part, Confucius and his disciple Yen Hui appeared. It is believed that through this appearance, Chuang Tzu developed his theory. As a matter of fact, the theory of Confucius is contrary to that of Chuang Tzu. Confucius preached benevolence, rites and righteousness. This theory is the essence of Confucius. Still more, Confucius loved music. On the contrary,

though Chuang Tzu learned the theory of Confucius, he criticized it. For Chuang Tzu the theory of benevolence, rites and righteousness by Confucius was the artificial and technical knowledge that is against nature. According to Chuang Tzu, as Confucius did not have the virtue of benevolence and righteousness, he preached them with sweet exaggeration. One needs to understand such background. Therefore, the appearance of Confucius and his disciple is quite ironic. The most excellent disciple is Yen Hui. He forgets benevolence, righteousness and rites. Furthermore he forgets music. Confucius asked his disciple what is Zabū (Zabō, to sit and think)? The meaning of Zabū is to unite with nature forgetting his body, hands, legs and all other things and various affairs. It is a uniting and transcendental experience with the universe and like the spiritual awakening and enlightenment (Satori) of Buddhism. Confucius scrapped his theory and followed his disciple. This is quite comic. There are some scenes like that. Chuang Tzu preached Zabū through the critic of Confucius. The important thing is not words but uniting experience with the universe, nature. The man that experienced Zabū is called True man. That is as follows:

About the way to live

'What is meant by 'the True Man?' The True men of old did not reject (the views of) the few; they did not seek to accomplish (their ends) like heroes (before others); they did not lay plans to attain those ends. Being such, though they might make mistakes, they had no occasion for repentance; though they might succeed, they had no self-complacency. Being such, they could ascend the loftiest heights without fear; they could pass through water without being made wet by it; they could go into fire without being burnt; so it was that by their knowledge they ascended to and reached the Tào.

The True men of old did not dream when they slept, had no anxiety when they awoke, and did not care that their food should be pleasant. Their breathing came deep and silently. The breathing of the true man

comes (even) from his heels, while men generally breathe (only) from their throat...' [Chuang-tzu, 1994: 175-176].

About the viewpoint of life and death

'The True men of old knew nothing of the love of life or of the hatred of death. Entrance into life occasioned them no joy; the exit from it awakened no resistance. Composedly they went and came...' [Chuang-tzu, 1994: 177].

A state of perfect self-effacement

'Being such, their minds were free from all thought; their demeanour was still and unmoved; their foreheads beamed simplicity. Whatever coldness came from them was like that of autumn; whatever warmth came from them was like that of spring. Their joy and anger assimilated to what we see in the four seasons. They did in regard to all things what was suitable, and no one could know how far their action would go...' [Chuang-tzu, 1994: 178].

In these sentences, there are some conditions or states about Zabو and the True man. The state is like that of the Satori (Spiritual Awakening and Enlightenment) in Buddhism. In effect, the thought of Zabо influenced Zazen in China. To forget oneself is to concentrate on thinking. It means the transcendence of life and death. This state is like that of the condition of Socrates. Plato described the situation through the dialogue by Alcibiades in *Symposium* [The Loeb Classical Library, 1961] (220CD).

Zabu of Socrates

Socrates practiced Zabо standing

'So much for that: ' but next, the valiant deed our strong-souled hero dared ' on service there one day, is well worth hearing. Immersed in some problem at dawn, he stood in the same spot considering; and when he found it a tough one, he would not give it up but stood there trying. The time drew on to midday, and the men began to notice him, and said to one another in wonder: ' Socrates has been standing there in a study ever since

dawn!' The end of it was that in the evening some of the Ionians after they had supped - this time it was summer - brought out their mattresses and rugs and took their sleep in the cool; thus they waited to see if he would go on standing all night too. He stood till dawn came and the sun rose; then walked away, after offering a prayer to the Sun'(220CD).

Socrates began thinking, it continued from morning, night to dawn. He thought while standing. It was extraordinary. He never slept, ate and paused. He forgot all other things and researched the truth of life. It is transcendental experience. As he was aware of his ignorance (nothingness), his thought continued to infinity, eternity, Transcendental-being (idea of the Good) and love. I called this the principle of nothingness and love [Nakatomi, 2002: 380-381], [Nakatomi, 2005]. As he inquired infinity and eternity, he never stopped to think and stand. He continued to meditation and intuition. In this case, I can say that Chuang Tzu, Socrates and Plato experienced *Zabu*. This is the same and uniting experience between Chinese and Greek philosophies. They stood same base. The attitude for life and death is typical. Socrates saved Alcibiades and though their army was rout, Socrates walked from the last position standing proudly.

'Then, if you care to hear of him in battle – for there also he must have his due – on the day of the fight in which I gained my prize for valour from our commanders, it was he, out of the whole army, who saved my life: I was wounded, and he would not forsake me, but helped me to save both my armour and myself. I happened to be there on horseback, while he marched under arms. The troops were in utter discover, and he was retreating along with Laches, when I chanced to come up with them and, as soon as I saw them, passed them the word to have no fear, saying I would not abandon them. Here, indeed, I had an even finer view of Socrates than at.

Potidaea – for personally I had less reason for alarm, as I was mounted; and I noticed, first, how far he outdid Laches in collectedness, and next I felt – to use a phrase of yours, Aristophanes-how there he stepped, as his wont is in our streets, 'strutting like a proud marsh-goose, with ever a side-

long glance,' turning a calm sidelong look on friend and foe alike, and convincing anyone even from afar that whoever cares to touch this person will find he can put up a stout enough defence. The result was that both he and his comrade got away unscathed: for, as a rule, people will not lay a finger on those who show this disposition in war; it is men flying in headlong rout that they pursue (220E~221BC).

Socrates was a foot soldier who wore in full heavy armor. Alcibiades was a mounted soldier. Alcibiades was in a better condition. But Socrates saved Alcibiades and his weapons. A weapon is the symbol of a soldier. In Japan, if a Samurai lost his sword, it meant that he lost his soul and honor. Probably the situation is the same in Greece. Socrates helped his friend and saved his weapons. Still more, he kept the final position that is the most dangerous. Ordinary, man wants to run away in a hurry. But it is a proof that he is a weak man. An enemy attacks such weak man. Socrates strutted like a proud marsh-goose. Socrates did not fear death, he transcended hotness and coldness. In winter he walked on the ice without his shoes. Really, he transcended severe reality. The attitude is like that of the true man of Chuang Tzu. The true man accepts all difficulties and his reality in nature. Well, what did Socrates intuit? Of course, it is the idea of Good or Beauty as transcendental-being.

Intuition of Idea

Socrates intuited nothingness as indefinite. Nothingness continues to infinity, eternity, transcendental-being. Idea of Good is transcendental-being as infinite-being. The idea of Good is so great, beautiful and infinite that man cannot understand it at a stretch. It needs negative word 'no', nothingness as finite. The next sentence is a very famous expression of Idea of beauty.

'When a man has been thus far tutored in the lore of love, passing from view to view of beautiful things, in the right and regular ascent, suddenly he will have revealed to him, as he draws to the close of his dealings in love, a wondrous vision, beautiful in its nature; and this, Socrates, is the

final object of all those previous toils. First of all, it is ever-existent and neither comes to be nor perishes, neither waxes nor wanes; next, it is not beautiful in part and in part ugly, nor is it such at such a time and other at another, nor in one respect beautiful and in another ugly, nor so affected by position as to seem beautiful to some and ugly to others. Nor again will our initiate find the beautiful presented to him in the guise of a face or hands or any other portion of the body, nor as a particular description or piece of knowledge, nor as existing somewhere in another substance, such as an animal or the earth or sky or any other thing; but existing ever in singularity of form independent by itself, while all the multitude of beautiful things partake of it in such wise that, though all of them are coming to be and perishing, it grows neither greater nor less, and is affected by nothing (210E~211B).

In this part, there is an expression about the essence of idea of beauty. In that time, it is very impressive that the negative words as not, nor and neither are used many times. (It) neither comes to be nor perishes, neither waxes nor wanes. Next, it is not beautiful in part and in part ugly, nor is it such at such a time and other at another, nor in one respect beautiful and in another ugly, nor so affected by position as to seem beautiful to some and ugly to others. It seems like that it deny primitive definition of idea by words. This is like the utility of nothingness by Buddhism. Buddha reached spiritual awakening and enlightenment (Satori) by Zen. At that time, he was attempted by the Devil, e.g. young women. He denied all attempts by the word, not, nothingness. The ultimate state of nothingness reached Satori, and then he intuited Dharma, Truth of the Universe. In other word, he faced transcendental-being, infinite-being. This explanation is adequate to intuition of idea. As man cannot express the essence of idea at a stretch, man can express the essence of idea through the parts or definitions by utility of not, nothingness. As the transcendental-being is beyond words, we can say nothingness. The essence of idea is same as nothingness. (If man says the existence of Idea from the viewpoint of physics, man cannot confirm it by an experiment of Physics. If man says that it is, it exists. If

man says that it is not, it does not exist. But man cannot say whether something exists or does not exist. As this logic transcends nothingness and existence, I call it the logic of “transcendental nothingness”. By this logic, I could succeed to establish the next essay ‘On the synthesis of the theory of relativity and quantum theory’ (in: *Człowiek w kulturze*, University of Finance and Management in Warsaw, Poland 2007).

Therefore it needs definitions and negative word by not. The succession of negations continues to infinity, infinite-being. This is my principle of nothingness and love. Plato intuited transcendental-being, infinite-being. Then he expressed it by negative words, not, nothingness. Therefore, he used the negative word, not many times persistently. Nothingness functioned as the negative word in the movement of thoughts by Socrates, Plato, Buddha and Chuang Tzu. Meditation and Intuition are the origin of Asian and European philosophies and the important experiences that unite the transcendental-being with humans in the present days, still now.

- [1] *Celestia*. 2011. University of Athens, scheduled
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- [5] The Loeb Classical Library, *PLATO* with English translation the rev. R.G. Bury LITT. D. William Heinemann LTD, Harvard University Press 1961.