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Beyond the Difficulties of the Huge Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan. Bushidō and Philia Saved Japan

Abstract

It is noted that in the context of globalization of the modern world the dialogue between different cultures is an essential requirement of the XXI century. Social barriers that impede the development of intercultural dialogue, which can not be carried out subject to the socio-cultural identity of various ethnic groups, nations and countries, are characterized. The modern paradigm of intercultural dialogue is based on the recognition of the increasing role of national culture and open, trusting, friendly interchange of cultural values in a multicultural society.

Key words: youth, value, value orientation

The huge earthquake and Tsunami assaulted Japan on March 11, 2011. The Great East Japan Earthquake, at it is known today, destroyed several cities immediately and devastated a quarter of the Japanese land. The damage in Japan is similar to the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923) and the destruction of World War II. Still more, nuclear plants lost their cooling equipment systems and as a result hydrogen explosions occurred. These are the triple catastrophes. We, the Japanese people, are facing a desperate crisis. But many countries support us, Japan. The rescue-teams and assistance from over 130 countries gave us a big encouragement and hope. How highly the civilization and sciences do develop, they are powerless against the might of nature. Some of the strongest embankments in the world that were 10 meters high were immediately wiped out by a tsunami tidal wave of up to 40 meters high. We have the emotion of fear for nature and we recognize the powerlessness and nothingness of human beings. But we helped and supported each other in these times of hardship. Rescue and encouragement are hope and light in the darkness. We learn that though the sciences develop highly, we need benevolence and philia (friendship). Infra I wish to expound on these hardships.

HARDSHIPS OF JAPAN AND BUSHIDŌ

The Japanese victims who lost their families and houses are in the depth of sorrow. But they are recovering little by little with the help and support from foreign countries.

Once Japanese people were called 'economic animals' skillful at earning money and were often criticized as being 'working bees' as they scarcely take holidays. Through the explosion of the bubble economy and the Lehman Brother's shock, Japan has become a little modest. Unfortunately new hardships have hit Japan, but we are thankful for the help received from all over the world. It was very impressive that the helicopters of the U.S. forces delivered supplies from the aircraft carrier for the Japanese people. We are learning the spirit of mutual assistance and we continue to work hard and live a frugal existence. In this time of major damages and tragedies, panic did not occur in the stricken area. This is not the lack of emotion of the Japanese but the expression of patience and the spirit of consideration. In the Japanese spirit, the teaching of Confucius lives with Bushidō. Instantly there were some plunders or robberies, but they were not occurring daily. Almost all Japanese people do know that as the Japanese land is very small, social punishment returns quickly. They understand that plunder and robberies are folly. It is clear that man endures the difficulties with his neighbors and keeps cool. The calmness of the Japanese people cannot be formed in a day or two. It relies on the Bushidō and Confucianism in the long history and tradition. Bushidō is the essence where the strong man helps and saves weak people. The sword is not the instrument for killing but the tool of self-protection. In the Edo era, in the towns, Samurais did not cut down people who did not bear swords. This is common sense for Japanese people. The symbol of Bushidō in modern times is Jūdō.

Now Jūdō is an international sport. The founder of Jūdō is Jigorō Kanō (1860-1938). He opened the road of Jūdō and education in Japan. As the first president of Tsukuba University and Kōdōkan that is the place for Jūdō training and expansion, he taught educational programs and Jūdō to students. When he was young, his body was weak. Therefore he tried to train his body. He learned the techniques of martial arts and perfected them by himself. He had the enthusiasm to be strong in his body and spirit. Still more he was excellent in his studies. He entered Tokyo University to learn liberal arts, philosophy, political science and economics. He was a scholar and a Jūdō instructor. So many students learned philosophy, ethics and Jūdō under him. The students taught his theories and Jūdō. Now in almost every school of Japan, Jūdō is mandatory. Lu Xun (the pen name of Zhou Shuren, 1881-1936), one of the leaders of the Chinese revolution, studied under him. Kanō made efforts to spread Jūdō and Japanese sports in the world. Strictly speaking, Kanō was a great scholar, pedagogue, diplomat and Jūdō instructor. In 1909 he became the first Japanese member of the International Olympic Committee. He invited the Olympic games to Tokyo in 1940, but World War II suspended the Olympics. His dream was realized 24 years later. In 1964 the Tokyo Olympics were held. He was a father of the Olympics in Japan and a philosopher of Jūdō. When he was young, the reading of the Four Confucian Texts was his duty in his family. He

was very accustomed to the teachings of Confucius. Therefore he always showed respect and bowed to others and was courteous. Further I wish to expand the essence of Jūdō and Bushidō.

Yen Yüan asked about benevolence. The Master said, 'To return to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence. If for a single day a man could return to the observance of the rites through overcoming himself, then the whole Empire would consider benevolence to be his. However, the practice of benevolence depends on oneself alone, and not on others.'

Yen Yüan said, 'I should like you to list the items.' The Master said, 'Do not look unless it is in accordance with the rites; do not listen unless it is in accordance with the rites; do not speak unless it is in accordance with the rites; do not move unless it is in accordance with the rites'

Yen Yüan said, 'Though I am not quick, I shall direct my efforts towards what you have said.' (Confucius, *The Analects* -1, Penguin Classics, 1979, London)

Jūdō begins by bowing to each other. The first step is Ukemi, or break-falls. Several distinct types of break-falls exist, including rear break-falls, side break-falls, front break-falls and rolling break-falls. One needs to play these break-falls freely. Then the person second step is Nage-waza or throwing techniques. There are many kinds of them. The third step is to learn the holding techniques, strangulation techniques and lock techniques. By these techniques, body and spirit are trained. The motto is "Maximum efficiency, mutual welfare and softness controls hardness". The purpose of Jūdō is not the victory of the game but to polish the body and spirit. Therefore professional show games such as wrestling are not the essence of Jūdō. This spirit of Jūdō is the same as Kendō, Karate and the Japanese martial arts (Budō). Through these Budō, Japanese people learn patience and consideration. In ordinary life, Japanese people are working hard and living busily like 'economic animals'. As they are too prudent and conservative, they are sometimes weak at making discoveries and creating new ideas. Still more, they shy from foreigners. But when they faced disaster, they could be calm by the traditional Budō and Confucianism morals. The reason of Japanese calmness is not incompetence in the face of disaster. I want to insist on this.

After the disaster, there were so many volunteers from all areas of Japan. This is the teaching of the Great Hanshin Earthquake (Jan.17, 1995). Though the Japanese people were called egoists, so many volunteers got together and considerable donations were provided. From this year on, all national public servants donate 10% of their salaries for the next three years. Where is the philanthropy spirit coming from? Of course it is the possibility of the influence of Buddhism and Christianity. How about Confucianism? The next part is famous for that human beings are all brothers.

Ssu-ma Niu appeared worried, saying, 'All men have brothers. I alone have none.' Tzu-hsia said, 'I have heard it said: life and death are a matter of Destiny; wealth and honour depend on Heaven. The Gentleman is reverent and does nothing amiss, is respectful towards others and observant of the rites, and all within the Four Seas are his brother. What need is there for the gentleman to worry about not having any brothers?' (*The Analects* XII- 5)

Ssu-ma Niu had lost his brother who was an outlaw. He felt lonely. At once, Con-

Confucius said to Tzu-hsia, "Life and death are a matter of Destiny". It means that Ssu-ma should accept his Destiny. But the word of Confucius did not end there. The following sentence is very important to express the foundation of Brotherliness (love of brothers). "All within the Four seas are his brothers". As for this, by practice of benevolence and rites, elder and young people, the ruling class and the farmer class can become brothers to each other. Confucius has already spoken of brotherliness with people in the world. This is friendship that helps all people. Where there is friendship, weak men, children and women get together. The master said:

'How pretty Fan Hsü! is! When those above love rites, none of the common people will dare be irreverent; when they love what is right, none of the common people will dare be insubordinate; when they love trustworthiness, none of the common people will dare be insincere. In this way, the common people from the four quarters will come with their children strapped on their backs....' (The Analects, XIII-4)

From my philosophy point of view, such spirit is similar to the *philia* of Aristotle. At all ages and in all places, people always help and support each other. In here, we can see the movement of love, benevolence and *philia*. When human beings face difficulties, they reflect about their situations and how to break the obstacle. Then we find the movement of benevolence and *philia*. Benevolence continues to *philia*.

CONFUCIUS AND ARISTOTLE

Great philosophers face difficulties often. Confucius and Aristotle are not exceptional. Confucius was an orphan. According to Shizuka Shirakawa - the first class scholar of Chinese classics in Japan - the origin of his family is unknown (1). Sima Qian intentionally forged the family name in his book. The identity of Confucius by the Grand Historian of Sima Qian is a fiction. The difficulty of Confucius is not only poverty but also the lack of parents and a family name. As he is under such difficulties, he desires true love – benevolence - instead of parent's love. But though he was experiencing this difficulty, he intuited nothingness and would study to compensate nothingness. The earnest passion for study depends on the depth of nothingness.

The master said, 'He has not lived in vain who dies the day he is told about the Way.'
(The Analects IV- 8)

This passion for truth is similar to the resolution of death by Martin Heidegger and lives in today. Aristotle lost his parents in his youth. It is said that his brother-in-law took care of him. As members of family were doctors, he was probably well off. But Aristotle did not know parents love. Instead, he researched truth and love, friendship. When he was seventeen years old, he entered the Academy of Plato. Though he studied under Plato for twenty years, he was not satisfied. As Confucius did, he faced the lack of parent's love, darkness, and nothingness. Then he searched the truth with infinite and eternal passion. Nothingness continues to infinity, eternity and Transcendental-being still more to love. This is the principle of nothingness and love (2). After the search and thought with infinite and eternal passion, he formed the foundation of logics and opened the road of all sciences.

At the same time, he intuited God. Then he preached love that is philia. Confucius intuited Heaven or 'Ten'. Then he preached benevolence. Though Aristotle and Confucius were born in quite different places and times, their philosophies are synthesized by my philosophy. I argued the benevolence of Confucius in one of my publications (3). *Infra*, I want to treat of philia, the friendship of Aristotle.

What is the philia of Aristotle? It is the desire to be good for others.

'The perfect form of friendship is that between the good, and those who resemble each other in virtue. For these friends wish each alike the other's good in respect of their goodness, and they are good in themselves; but it is those who wish the good of their friends for their friends' sake who are friends in the fullest sense, since they love each other for themselves and not accidentally. Hence the friendship of these lasts as long as they continue to be good; and virtue is a permanent quality.'

(Nicomachean Ethics, translated by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, 1934, Harvard University Press, 6 .p. 461)

This part is famous for the definition of philia of Aristotle. Friendship, philia is to respect each other and wish the best for others. It lasts as long as one continues to be good. Such as is eternity. Well, benevolence of Confucius continues to philia because philia presupposes the honesty for others. When we wish the best for others, we need to know their condition and personality correctly in advance. To omit idols, gossips and prejudices is needed.

Fan Ch'ih asked about benevolence. The Master said, 'Love your fellow men.'

He asked about wisdom. The Master said, 'Know your fellow men.' (The Analects XII-22)

In philosophy, the procedure is the phenomenology reduction. We face the others with honesty. At that time, if man wants to be best for others, at least man should not do what man does not wish. If man reverses this sentence, it means: 'Always treat others as you would like them to treat yourself.' This is the Golden rule and benevolence itself. The man who holds honesty, consideration and scholarship is a man of virtue. According to Aristotle, he recognizes the virtue of mean.

MEAN OF ARISTOTLE AND CONFUCIUS, THE MIDDLE WAY

Mean is the condition to avoid the extremes of deficiency and too many. Confucius said; 'Supreme indeed is the Mean as a moral virtue. It has been rare among the common people for quite a long time.' (*The Analects*, VI-29)

The meaning is to avoid the extremes of shortage and excess and 'self-sufficient or being enough'. In Asia, the notion of Mean and Middle way is famous. In traditional philosophy, these notions are not related. Mean of Aristotle is only the condition about amount and relation. But the notion of the Middle way is Buddhism and often it means enlightenment. Therefore most philosophers insist on the difference between Mean and Middle way. But according to my philosophy, these are synthesized. First, I consider the notion of mean of Aristotle. It begins by the recognition of the condition of amount.

‘Now of everything that is continuous and divisible, it is possible to take the larger part, or the smaller part, or an equal part, and these parts may be larger, smaller, and equal either with respect to the thing itself or relatively to us; the equal part being mean between excess and deficiency. By the mean of the thing I denote a point equally distant from either extreme, which is one and the same for everybody; by the mean relative to us, that amount which is neither too much nor too little, and this is not one and the same for everybody.’ (*Nicomachean Ethics*, II. 4-5. P.91)

This definition is quite simple and is the equilibrium. It seems that man can understand it easily by mathematics. Automatically, it is adequate with the notion of average. But later in the course of the sentence, Aristotle explains that the notion is not the average of mathematics. As Aristotle thought of wide and deep applications, the meaning of mean is not mathematic. It aims to balance in all conditions. It reaches to virtue of action and emotion. The mean is the state between the two vices of excess and defect:

‘Virtue then is a settled disposition of the mind determining the choice of action and emotions, consisting essentially in the observance of the mean relative to us, this being determined by principle, that is, as the prudent man would determine it.

And it is a mean state between two vices, one of excess and one of defect. Furthermore, it is a mean state in that whereas the vices either fall short of or exceed what is right in feelings and in actions, virtue ascertains and adopts the mean. Hence while in respect of its substance and the definition that state what it really is in essence virtue is the observance of the mean, in point of excellence and rightness it is an extreme.’ (*Nicomachean Ethics*, II. 15-17. p. 95)

In this sentence, the theme is virtue. First, it is the problem of equilibrium and average. The moderation of this is adequate with material life. These are moderate resources. In here, the theme is more developed. It reaches to virtue and moral. As the typical virtue of mean, Aristotle points out courage. It is mean between fear and confidence. The courageous man endures before the death like Socrates. Before death, man who is confident is a saint. The mean of Aristotle aims to hold higher personality and virtue.

This notion of mean of Aristotle is similar with mean that is ‘self-sufficiency or being enough’ by Confucius. As the child of a shrine maiden, Confucius worked at funeral ceremonies. Strictly speaking, it was the processing of dead bodies. The person in such a social position is the lowest. He experienced the poor and low rank life. On the other hand, he obtained the position of Minister of Justice at 53 years old. He experienced a luxurious life. But as he insisted on the theory of peace, he was dismissed of his post. He experienced shortage (deficiency) and luxurious life (excess). After he abandoned his richness, he entered the self-sufficiency (being enough). This is life of mean. Though he lost his position of minister, he built his school and educated his disciples. The next paragraph from Aristotle clearly expresses the spirit condition of self-sufficiency of Confucius.

‘The temperate man keeps a middle course in these matters. He takes no pleasure at all in the thing that the profligate enjoys most, on the contrary, he positively dislikes them; nor in general does he find pleasure in wrong things, nor excessive pleasure in anything of this sort; nor does he feel pain or desire when they are lacking, or only in a moderate degree, not more than is right, nor at the wrong time, et cetera. But

such pleasure as conduce to health and fitness he will try to obtain in a moderate and right degree; as also other pleasures so far as they are not detrimental to health and fitness, and not ignoble, nor beyond his means. The man who exceeds these limits cares more for such pleasures than they are worth. Not so the temperate man; he only cares for them as right principle enjoins.' (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 8, p.183)

It seems like Confucius wrote this sentence himself. The key words are 'a middle course, in a moderate degree and right principle.' The temperate man enjoys the proper things at the right time and at the right place with a moderate degree. This is the essence of the thought of self-sufficiency. Is this an accident? The mean of Aristotle is adequate with the middle way of Buddhism.

The middle way or middle path is to abandon the extremes of pleasure and penance. Buddha describes the middle way as a path of moderation between the extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification. First Buddha was born in the family of a king. As he was very rich, he had three villas for different seasons. He ate gorgeous foods and was dressed in gorgeous silk clothes every day. But he felt the meaninglessness (nothingness) of life. Then he abandoned his family and his position of prince. He wandered to search the truth and did penance. The hardest penance was fasting. During many days, he lost consciousness by lack of nutrition. A girl saved him and gave him milk and yogurt. Buddha experienced the extremes of excess and deficiency. After that, he reached enlightenment by Zen meditation on the stone. That is the Middle way. The meaning is to avoid the extremes of pleasure and penance. The essence of that is moderation and right principle. This is the same as the mean of Aristotle and Confucius. They experienced nothingness as the extreme of deficiency and infinity as the extreme of excess. The intuition of nothingness and infinity continues to eternity and Transcendental-being, love. This is my principle of nothingness and love. The notions of nothingness and infinity are not independent but continuous. Blaise Pascal said that human is middle being between nothingness and infinity. Therefore man intuitively nothingness and infinity. It continues to eternity and Transcendental-being (God), love. In traditional philosophy, the notions of mean, self-sufficiency and Middle way are independent. We cannot find the common point. But my philosophy synthesizes these notions. The intuition of nothingness as the extreme of deficiency and infinity as the extreme of excess bore the notions of mean, being-enough and middle way. In these conditions, man can be a man of virtue or truth. According to Aristotle, I can summarize it as follows:

Though a man of virtue does not want to be helped and supported, he is willing to save and help others. His behavior is arrogant to famous and great successful men, but he is moderate to common people. His heart is not moved by the fame and success. If he faces a difficulty and he is unlucky, he behaves calmly. As his heart is in peace, he does not pay attention to other's gossips. He has no interest for admiration and blame. When he faces an enemy, he does not boo him. Regarding wealth, he likes to own beautiful and useless things, rather than thing that bring a financial return. He searches invisible (eternal) things more than visible (temporary) things. The traits of a great souled man are a slow gait, a deep voice and deliberate utterance, to speak in shill tone and walk fast. This is the abstract of a true man and a man of virtue from *Nicomachean Ethics* 26-34 (pp223-225). The

character is similar with the benevolent man (gentleman) of Confucius and the true man of Chuang-tzu. A man who aims to live by means, self-sufficiency and the middle way becomes a true man and a man of virtue. He is an ideal person. In all ages and places, in community, more or less, he needs to be the ideal image of a person. A true man and a man of virtue probably help others in the case of accidents and natural disasters. The sages who intuited nothingness and infinity indicated the direction of conducts that is the mean, being-enough and the middle way. By these practices, man could be a man of benevolence and a man of virtue. He knows the way of life in community.

‘Hence some friends drink or dice together, others practice athletic sports and hunt, or study philosophy, in each other’s company; each sort spending their time together in the occupation that they love best of everything in life; for wishing to live in their friends society, they pursue and take part with them in these occupations as best they can.’ (Nicomachean Ethics, 2 p575)

Same as the communication of Confucius, the friend practices archery. Confucius does not want to compete and cross sword with others, but archery is exception. After he practices archery, he likes to drink with another participant. But when he faces the crisis, he is brave.

‘One can, perhaps, be satisfied with a Gentleman who is ready to lay down his life in the face of danger, who does not forget what is right at the sight of gain, and who does not forget reverence during a sacrifice nor sorrow while in mourning.’ (The Analects, 1).

Such a gentleman and a man of virtue can save and encourage people in the case of difficulties. It is his mission; a rich man knows his self-sufficiency and shares his richness with poor people. Aristotle and Confucius recognized their mission. The rest of their lives, they devoted to educate young men. Such way of life is still the light in contemporary age.

NOTES

- (1) Shizuka Shirakawa “ Confucius biography “, Chukou library p. 26 ,Tokyo
- (2) Kiyokazu Nakatomi, *Philosophy of Nothingness and Love*, Hokuju company, Tokyo 2002; Kiyokazu Nakatomi, ‘ A Philosophical Synthesis of Christianity, Buddhism and Islam ‘*Bulletin of The Russian Philosophical Society*, 2005. “*Parerga*”-International philosophical studies-, No2 /2005; University of Finance and Management in Warsaw, Poland, [http:// parerga.vizja.pl/wp-content/uploads/.../parerga_02_2005.pdf](http://parerga.vizja.pl/wp-content/uploads/.../parerga_02_2005.pdf); <http://teme.junis.ni.ac.rs/teme2-2008/teme2-2008-06.pdf>; “*Discourse-P*” 2005, Russian Academy of Science, Ural, Russia (Russian version); <http://discourse-pm.ur.ru/discours7/kiekazu.php>.
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