In Search of Transversal Values

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Hiroike Chikuro offered the following suggestions about what led him to try to explain 'scientifically' what he obtained by experience.

> *There are four ways to explain universal truth or principles. The first is revelation—when the reality in the universe, called God in religions, coincides with the spirit of a certain person who, being human, is possessed of supreme benevolence. It reveals to him imperative laws to improve and bring mankind to salvation. This has very rarely happened since ancient times, and there have been many cases of false revelation. Revelation is different from inspiration, which is born from temporary emotional excitement such as everyone can experience, while revelation is a phenomenon that can be shared only by a person of truly spontaneous benevolence; and so it is an extremely valuable mystical phenomenon in the universe.*
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> *The second method of explaining universal truth is through the teachings of the sages, great men, founders of religious sects, and the like.*
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> *The third way is through the accumulation of the experience of many common people throughout the age. Methods of obtaining food, clothing and shelter and of curing diseases and other factors of material and spiritual life today often derive from the diverse experience of many people.*
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> *The fourth way is through the study of philosophy and science. This approach is even more sound than simple ancient lessons and the experiences of ordinary people, because the former is a systematic study of truths or phenomena in the universe through the co-operative division of labour by many professional scholars in their particular fields of approach* (*Treatise,* I, 87).

For Horoike, then, 'science' was that which reveals the laws governing all phenomena of the Universe, and he lists four methods that can explain the truth or the principles of the universe: revelation; the teachings of the sages, great

historical figures, and the founders of the world religions; the experiential data gained by ordinary human beings from ancient times to the present; and philosophical and scientific research. He argues that only when these four elements come together can we recognize the truth, i.e. 'Universal Morality' or 'Supreme Morality'.

The order in which he mentions the four factors is important, for 'Philosophy and Science' occupies the final place because it is essential to determining the veracity of the other three. Moreover, in his writings Hiroike used phrases such as "rational thoughts" or "rational explanations" many times.

We must ask, however, if values, i.e. the bases of morality, can in fact be reached scientifically, for modern science stakes a fundamental claim to be 'value-free', as was pointed out in the communiqué of the symposium 'Science and Culture; Common Path for the Future' organized by UNESCO and the U. N. University in 1995. This communiqué, known as the 'Message from Tokyo,' was written by the participants themselves and adopted unanimously at the end of this important meeting. It states:

> *Mechanistic science, which reached its peak in the last century (the 19th century), sought to separate the dispassionate observer from the object of inquiry. This led to a concept of blind progress that favored a materialistic view of civilization. Thus, today we can identify two competing ideologies: a technological concept of 'progress' through standardization (globalization) of civilization, as opposed to the preservation of cultural identities and values through respect for diversity. Behind these powerful ideas is the untested belief that [science] and [culture and tradition] are incompatible with each other and separated by an unbridgeable gulf...*
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> *We believe that this apparent incompatibility is due to the fact that for the past 300 years—only about one ten-thousandth of human existence—Western science has moved away from an earlier, more holistic, view of nature. This movement of science was characterized by a mechanistic and value-free view of nature that produced material, technological abundance, but led to increasing specialization and compartmentalization.*

The accuracy of this statement, made by those at the forefront of modern science, is clear when we recall the recent invention of that weapon of mass destruction, the atomic bomb. But it would probably have been unthinkable in Hiroike's time.

The Historical Background to Hiroike's Thinking

To understand Hiroike fully, one must set him in the context in which he existed. The Meiji era in Japan belongs to the 19th century and so was contemporaneous with the era of science and progress in Europe. European science at that time was the successor to what is now called 'classical' or 'Newtonian science'. This had flourished in the century of enlightenment when people became divorced from their own spiritual tradition and separated reason from the rest of human capacities and accorded it complete supremacy. All this permitted Europeans to make great advances in the field of technology, engendering the industrial revolution on their continent. In fact, though, the industrial revolution of the 18th century was the extension of the so called 'scientific revolution' of the 17th century, whose representative figures were Descartes and Bacon. The 'scientific revolution' was in turn the outcome of a bitter fight between the traditionalist Roman Catholic Church and the newly emerging natural science of the 15th and 16th centuries, the era just after the Renaissance, which in turn had come about through the rediscovery of classical Greek science as transmitted by the Islamic world. The ascent of natural science after its victory over the Church was amazing, like that of a space shuttle launched from Cape Kennedy.

We must make particular note of the radical change in values that occurred at that time, the shift of values from 'Etre' ('to be') to 'Avoir' ('to have'), a development that 'objectivates' the world. Human concern turned from what one is to what one has. The sharp distinction drawn by Descartes between 'subject' and 'object' created a new world view in which the Earth was an object to be observed, analyzed and, finally, conquered, i.e. possessed.

The colonization by the West of the rest of the world was nothing other than the concrete realization of this new way of thinking; possession. The concept of 'having' began to spread all over the world in the 19th century because of the apparent success of western powers who aimed to colonize the whole world under the guise of pretended Christian spiritual values.

The government as well as intellectual leaders of Japan in the Meiji Era were conscious of the danger posed by western powers seeking to colonize the East, and chose imitation as the best form of defense in seeking to make their country a strong power. Among those pushing the western model of development in the 19th century were figures like Fukuzawa Yukichi ("Quit Asia and Join Europe") and Shibusawa Eiichi ("Capitalism based on the Analects of Confucius instead of Christ for Saint-Simon").

Other scholars, though, were convinced that their country should be reconstructed through the promotion of native Japanese values, which they consid-

ered to be at least equal in quality to Western values. Into this category we can put Okakura Tenshin (Art) and Nitobe Inazo (Bushido), as well as Hiroike Chikuro (Shinto).

One thing common to all these thinkers was that they looked at Europe with keen attention and so had to come to terms with rationality and logic, the underpinnings of Western power, whether they used or resisted them. Hiroike, for instance, called his study a 'science' and emphasized 'causality', a key term of 18th century scientism.

The Metamorphosis of the Occident—the Domination of the Civilization of Power

In evaluating the West of this period, Japanese scholars have, however, missed one important aspect, namely the metamorphosis of European identity which occurred in the period from just before to the aftermath the scientific and industrial revolutions. The colonialists of the 19th century were no longer the same Europeans as those who had first appeared in Japan in the 16th. This was another Europe, one transfigured by two crucial experiences: the French Revolution, which had abolished not only the monarchy but also the Church; and the British Industrial Revolution, which had transformed men into numbers and human richness into quantity. Those who confronted Japan in the 19th century differed greatly from their forebears, being members of nations with newly created values or even, we may say, nations which had lost their values. Indeed, the tragedy of colonialism was not so much the economic as the spiritual domination under which a people that wished to conserve its spiritual values submitted to those who had lost their own.

However, struck by the vigorous manifestation of Western power, Japan opened its doors in the manner symbolized by the *Rokumeikan* building (a Western style ballroom). It cannot be denied that the 'Black Ships' and their cannon had made a huge impression.

The Discovery of Tradition by Those at the Forefront of Science

During the past 300 years, humankind, guided by the value of 'having' and with the modern West, permeated by scientific values that accord supremacy to reason, in the vanguard, has moved away from its earlier, more holistic view of nature to a belief that the only right way to reach the truth is the scientific method with its sharp distinction between subject and object. The result is an unmistakable distortion in how the world and human beings are viewed.

It is clear that classical science cannot treat the question of value effectively, for it is 'value free' by nature. Such a science lacks any ethical dimension.

But in the second half of the 20th century, leading scientists began to raise the possibility of a dialogue between science and tradition, as was revealed in a series of symposia which I took the initiative in organizing under the auspices of UNESCO as a result of my involvement with that organization.

The famous 'Venice Declaration,' the final communiqué of the Symposium "Science and the Boundaries of Knowledge: The Prologue of our Cultural Past" organized by UNESCO in Venice in March 1986 was the first important step forward in this direction. Point 2 of the communiqué affirmed:

> *Scientific knowledge, on its own internal impetus, has reached the point where it can begin a dialogue with other forms of knowledge. In this sense, and while recognizing the fundamental differences between Science and Tradition, we see them as complementary rather than contradictory. This new and mutually enriching exchange between science and the different traditions of the world opens the door to a new vision of humanity, and even to a new rationalism, which could lead to a new metaphysical perspective.*

The message from Tokyo in 1995 stated:

> *During the 20th century, on the basis of empirical findings, leading scientists—not theologians or philosophers—began to reverse the assumption of the previous three centuries. This reversal was led by the originators of quantum physics who found that there exists in the universe an order of wholeness that is akin to those occurring in earlier views that science had abandoned.*

As Henry Stapp, a Berkeley physicist, said at the symposium on 'Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values' organized at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris in 2005, "The path to Ethics which had been closed to classical science is now opening up to cutting edge science."

Reconsidering the Enlightenment and the Concept of Universality

The 17th century scientific revolution prepared the way for the globalization of civilizations by 'reason/Ratio'. By the early 21th century, this same principle was causing crises by the financial meltdown caused by hedge funds, and the world wide destruction of the environment. Under the banner of 'Freedom', those who promote the principle of the market focus on 'Avoir/to have' and not on 'Etre/to be'. The belief that "'having' enriches human existence" is an illusion because, as Gabriel Marcel clearly pointed out in his study, "Etre et Avoir," 'Avoir' is in inverse proportion to 'Etre', which means that as one's 'having' increases, one's 'being' diminishes. The limitless pursuit of 'having' gave birth to greed, the real cause of the destruction of our planet, for

as Mahatma Gandhi maintained, "The world has sufficient resources for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed."

The Concept of the Universal

The concept of the Universal was born in the 18th century, the era of the Enlightenment. The word is composed of 'one' (uni) and 'toward' (verso). So 'toward one', the 'one' being rational truth and nothing else. This concept created segregation; first, 'universal' is superior to 'particular'. We should also note that the word 'catholic' is a synonym for 'universal'. This makes the Catholic Church the Universal church toward which all religions should finally converge. Hence any dialogue that presupposes that the Vatican could be 'tolerant' is not built on the soil of real 'mutual respect'. The late John Paul II was a great Pope who promoted dialogue among religions, for which he deserves our reverence. But his authentic greatness resides not so much in his repeated meetings with other religious leaders as in the fact that he departed from the long-held myth of Papal Infallibility in his prayer, at the very dawn of 21st century, asking pardon for the faults committed by the Church over several centuries.

The 18th Century, termed the 'Siècle des lumières' in French, was the century *par excellence* in which reason enjoyed absolute supremacy. It witnessed the birth of the notion of the Human Rights as an agreement among men (more strictly, among citizens); a rational law based on Occidental values. In the 1776 American Declaration of Independence we can still detect the existence of God as the origin of human rights, but we cannot find a single shadow of God in the Declaration of the Rights of Man issued during the French Revolution. This was purely an agreement between man and man (not woman), those who had become 'citizens' (i.e. the elite of Paris).

The Principle of Discrimination

Reason was described by Descartes as 'the thing most equally shared by all people'. It is above all the capacity to divide. It divides A and Non-A, and, most notably, subject from object. Even in Japanese we say "wakatta" ('I understand'—literally "divided"); "kotowari" ('dividing a thing') means 'reason' or 'logic'. This use of the brain to divide engenders the dualism of 'observer/subject' and 'observed/object'.

Human beings as observers, observing Nature now as an object, discovered and applied the laws of nature, thereby stimulating the development of technology and making great advances in the field of material civilization. But we cannot ignore the fact that the Enlightenment which made such progress

possible was at the same time an agent of discrimination. It discriminated against both women (seen as beings in whom reason was muddied by its permanent interaction with sensibility) and children (seen as half mature human beings who could not utilize their reason fully). Last but not least, this Enlightenment world view discriminated against all non-occidental nations. These 'oriental' nations, the present and future targets of colonialism, lived in the age-old unity of reason, sensibility and spirituality. The term 'Orient' used to describe them now had a pejorative character completely different from the Occidental-Oriental Church of the Roman Era. We can detect here the masked gradations of a hierarchy which gave birth to the boom in 'Orientalism', whose real meaning was in fact 'The West and the rest".

The Significance of the Renaissance; From 'a being seen by God' to 'a being who sees God'

The ground for the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century had in fact been carefully prepared by the Renaissance that began in Italy in the 15th century. At that time the self-conception of man shifted from 'a being seen by God' to 'a being who sees God.' The fine arts in Renaissance show this clearly. God the Father, who had never previously been represented, being invisible like sacred nature, was now depicted as a human being. Even God became an object. The technique of perspective born at this time helped to make possible a view of the human as seen by a subject/observer standing at a single point.

The 'Universal' was nothing other than scientific truth, which asks to be considered unique. Hiroike had no qualms about using the term 'universal', living as he did in an age of scientism, a time when the Renaissance was interpreted as a brilliant era, the rebirth of Europe made possible by the rediscovery of Greek reason after a long period of darkness called the 'Middle Ages'. This was the common interpretation in Japan during the Meiji Era, based as it was on history textbooks written by Protestants. Although we can see in his writings that Hiroike was also aware of the negative effects of the Renaissance (and of the French Revolution) he still lived at a time when the faults of science mentioned above, now so obvious, had not yet been pointed out.

The 'universal', as we have seen, can be a destructive movement toward the 'One'. But it can also serve as the principle for a constructive globalization. Hiroike employed the term, albeit as one based on logic, to expound his doctrine, and his use of it reflected his conviction, indeed his prayer, that the truth which he had discerned after such trials was truly global in nature, one universally appropriate for all civilizations. This is reminiscent of Arnold

Toynbee, late in life, suggesting a society of higher religions as the goal of humanity.

Cultural Diversity

Diversity made itself felt as a major theme at the end of 20th century. The 'Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity' adopted by UNESCO in 2001 was a pointed warning against the globalization (standardization) of cultures being carried out in accordance with market principles. It addressed environmental problems squarely; its 1st article clearly stipulated that "*cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature*". Others too (Cousteau 1995, Levy-Strauss 2005), have also recently elucidated not only the resemblance, but also the organic liaison, of cultural diversity and biodiversity.

From Universal to Transversal

The preservation of cultural diversity has become a vital problem for the survival of humankind today. Aware of this fact, we must identify the transversal values shared by all civilizations. The symposium entitled 'Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values' held in Paris in 2005 (co-organized by the Research Center for Moral Science, UNESCO, and the International Research Center for Japanese Studies) was a tentative step towards verifying the reaction of world scientific circles to a new approach aimed at replacing the penchant for the Universal. On the same lines, a proposal for a fundamental paradigm shift was put forward in Tokyo in 2007 at another symposium with the theme, 'New Stakes for Cultural Diversity—In search of Transversal Values through Dialogue' (co-organized by the Research Center for Moral Science, UNESCO, the U.N. University and the Kyoto Forum).

Seeking the 'transversal' is not a negation of reason. It is rather a new rationalism. It revives the sensitivity to beauty and the spirituality lost in the modern era, allowing us to rediscover what our ancestors possessed; it is Reason in harmony with Sensitivity and Spirituality, a holistic approach to truth instead of an intellectual employing reason alone. Once embarked on this voyage towards the Transversal, one's attitude to civilization and culture changes drastically. In contrast to the Universal ("toward the One", i.e. "unify, not harmonize"), the Transversal aims to "harmonize, not unify", an outlook in which one has mutual respect for all other civilizations.

Interconnectedness and the 'Law of the Included Middle'

Once one adopts this outlook, one can understand the world view of 'interconnectedness' that Hiroike learned from experience in the form of 'the law of

interdependence of all phenomena'—the 'network of interdependence' as described by N. Iwasa (2007). This ontology also corresponds closely to the 'interconnectedness' of John Miller (2007) and to the important recognition clearly enunciated in the 1995 'Message from Tokyo'; "*This new holism recognizes the enfoldment of the whole in its 'parts' and the distribution of the 'parts' over the whole*." This is a most meaningful declaration, coming as it does from the lips of those at the cutting edge of science.

The 'wholeness' to which the sages of old bore witness is still alive in our modern consciousness or unconsciousness, as we will realize if we pay proper attention to the fact that we are part of the universe. In Japan today we can still detect this feeling of 'wholeness' in everyday expressions like '*mottainai*' or '*okagesamade*'.

Accepting the account of the evolution of human civilization given above makes possible a proposition which had been impossible. For it permits us to see how the logic of the transversal enables us to overcome the Aristotelian 'law of the excluded middle', i.e. "one thing cannot be at the same time A and non-A," a thesis that has been the cause of many conflicts in human history. We find it, for example, in the words of President Bush in the wake of 9/11, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Such words do not reflect a holistic view; they are, rather, the product of a logic born in ancient Greece, where the straight white lines of the temples seemed to sunder the azure of the skies, leaving no 'middle'. But today we recognize that the important thing is the '*in-between*'.

The "law of the included middle" will attain realization as the logic of the future; it is the concept put forward and discussed at the symposium on 'transdisciplinarity' in Locarno, Switzerland, in 1993, where quantum physicists in particular affirmed that there are several dimensions to the recognition of reality.

'Ma' or 'Between'

The concept of *ma*, of great importance in Japanese culture, also deserves attention here because, like other key words of the 2007 Tokyo symposium—'In-between' (J. Miller), the 'Middle' (Palencia-Roth) and 'Chuubai' 中媒 ('media', Kim Tae-Chang) —it does not admit of the simple dichotomy, 'A or non A'. What matters is the 'in-between,' *ma*. The middle is no longer a grey zone, but a field of light. Why do the sunflowers of van Gogh shine so, why are they so luminous? It is because his technique consists of the juxtaposition rather than the mixing of several colors. The sunlight is born 'in between'!

The logic of the 'Included Third' is present too in the "self identification of

absolute contradiction" (*zettai mujun no jiko-doitsu* 絶対矛盾の自己同一) of Nishida Kitaro; the "Being is at the same time Nothingness" (*shiki soku zeku* 色即是空) of Hannyashingyo; in the Praña heart sutra (般若心経); in the "All is one and one is all" (*issai soku itsu* 一切即一) of the Kegon school (華厳宗) in Mahayana Buddhism. It also corresponds to *tawhid*, the Islamic concept that all beings are apparitions of God. Once we admit the logic of the included third, we are able to recognize what was previously invisible. "Holistic education is the understanding of the invisible whole," as John Miller (2007) affirmed at the Tokyo symposium.

Maternal Culture and the Recovery of Holistic Being

Nature has the power to absorb and recover; its essential property is balance. Transversalism, basing itself on nature, is a holistic approach that asks for a balance of cognition, sensibility and will, one that accepts both the paternal and the maternal. According to Jaspers, in the Axial Age (the era of the 'spiritual revolution') four leaders preached an ethics which has remained valid down to the present era. Hiroike, likewise struck by this fact, advanced his theory about basic values that were transversally valid across the ancient civilizations of Israel, Greece, India and China. But we must note that four of the sages he mentions took their stand on the paternal principle. Only the fifth, the symbolic ancestor of Japanese civilization, represented the maternal one.

The morality and ethics of a maternal culture was not a Japanese monopoly, though, but a value shared by all those living in what I call the 'West Pacific Crescent of Fertility,' the monsoon zone to the west of the Pacific Ocean. Morality there was founded on a world view that perceived humankind as part of nature and attached the greatest importance to *wa* (和—harmony, concord). This value resides in the most profound part of the soul of these peoples who see the 'Great Cycle of Life' in the cycle of water and who know that there is soul in rice with eternal life. Thus the maternal principle here is based on a grasp of the reality of the succession of life called *Musuhi* (産霊).

The Omnipresence of the Maternal Principle

Faith in the maternal principle has in fact existed in many regions of the world, even in those later ruled by the paternal one, as is clearly in the circular, cyclic and spiral motifs that characterized the Aegean and Celtic civilizations in Europe long ago. The maternal principle also underwent a revival from the Renaissance period onwards in the form of the cult of Virgin Mary in a Europe which has today become an ecological leader. What people saw, albeit uncon-

sciously, in the Mother of Christ was nothing other than the Magna Mater of old in the lands where Celtic culture held sway.

If we accept this account of our history and undertake to search for transversal values in our different spiritual traditions, we will recognize the need to go back to the period beyond the Spiritual Revolution when the Great Mother (Magna Mater), the Sacred Feminine, was omnipresent and when the dominant value was respect for Life and its succession.

Deep Encounters

The term 'transversal' was first used in the 1970s (by Roger Caillois, President of the International Council for Philosophy and Social Sciences attached to UNESCO). Had been available some forty years earlier, I think Hiroike Chikuro would have used it instead of 'universal'.

The Moral Science of the future will involve the study of the integral human being. While respecting the identities of all civilizations it will focus on the possibility of encounters in depth between them, acknowledging the differences in their shallow structures while recognizing the mutual resonances in their deep ones. Such possibilities have been predicted by Levy-Strauss in structural cultural anthropology and Noam Chomsky in linguistics.

As early as 1997, the Valencia Symposium, organized by the Third Millenium Foundation, criticized so-called modern science for putting too much emphasis on reason, and recognized 'compassion' as the new ethics being sought for by the whole of humanity. This must replace national egoism and the globalization of 'having'; such a shift is indispensable if a compassionate globalization that respects the traditional values of all nations is to be realized.

Conclusion

The goal of a new moral science should be the recovery of the balance between reason, sensibility and spirituality that was originally our common property, rectifying in the process the present distorted view of the world and humankind by restoring the balance between the paternal and maternal cultures. Only in this way will an authentic understanding of benevolence and agapĕ become possible. And once we pay attention to the fact that balance is the essential property of Nature, we will understand how seeing humankind as part of Nature is a truly ecological approach.

Many voices are being raised in alarm about our current environmental crisis. Human history has never witnessed a period like ours that stands in such great need of self-criticism on the part of a scientific civilization which has endured for 300 years under the absolute supremacy of reason. So the

message that Japan and East Asia need to send out is one that will awake the world's consciousness to the 'Great Cycle of Life,' the eternality of life in its interconnectedness.