Cross Currents

Cross Currents:
Comparative Responses
to Global Interdependence

Edited by

Ian M. Sullivan and Cindy Scheopner

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The corridors of Sakamaki Hall host a continuous philosophical conversation in many languages that carries over from week to week and semester to semester. The Uehiro Cross Currents Philosophy Conference allows us to welcome guests into that conversation, and this book invites you to join it as well. We wish to recognize the importance of that milieu to this project: the undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, alumni, and staff of the Department of Philosophy who inspire, encourage, and challenge us as comparative philosophers. We would also like to thank those friends who support this endeavor: the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education, the Hung Wo and Elizabeth Ching Foundation, and the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Finally, we would like to thank Ruth Kleinfeld-Lenney for her support of the graduate students and the warmth she brings to our hallways and classrooms every day.

INTRODUCTION

Aloha and *e komo mai.*

This anthology is a selection of essays submitted to the 2011 Uehiro Cross Currents Philosophy Conference held at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. This annual conference is the premiere graduate student conference for comparative philosophy. The 2011 conference focused on comparative responses to contemporary issues of global interdependence, where "global" entailed both the socio-political and ecological senses of the word. As with any thorough philosophical investigation, our conference approached the issue from a variety of vantage points, with panel topics ranging from conceptions of selfhood and comparative epistemology to critical studies of the philosophy of banking. Our goal was to bring the discussion to the frontier of comparative philosophy and provide timely and engaging responses to political and environmental issues facing the world today, as the addresses by our keynote speakers, Dr. Sor-hoon Tan of the National University of Singapore and Dr. Carl Becker of the Kokoro Research Center at Kyoto University, brought into focus. The four parts into which these chapters have been organized are meant to progress from inquiries into pressing global issues, such as the increasingly critical relationship between humanity and nature, to cross-cultural conceptualizations of selfhood. Epistemology and the ethics of both interpersonal and institutional relations constitute the intermediary steps on this journey. The remainder of this introduction serves as the background against which this conference took place.

Our home: the Department of Philosophy at UH Mānoa

The Department of Philosophy at UH Mānoa was established in 1936 by Charles A. Moore and Wing-tsit Chan. It has grown steadily in prominence since its humble beginnings and is now considered to be the center for comparative philosophy. In addition to a world-class faculty specializing in Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Islamic, and Korean philosophy, as well as a host of specialties within Western philosophy, the department also boasts a graduate student population of over forty up-and-coming scholars. The University of Hawai'i Press publishes the flagship journal in

comparative philosophy, *Philosophy East and West,* and the Mānoa campus hosts the East-West Philosophers' Conference, which is held approximately every five years on the island. This concentration of interest in and support of comparative philosophy makes UH Mānoa the premiere location for the study of comparative philosophy.

Moore convened the first East-West Philosophers' Conference (EWPC) in 1939 with six participants from three countries. The following two conferences were held at ten-year intervals and showed a steady increase in participation, growing to forty-two participants from ten countries by 1959. Eliot Deutsch convened the sixth EWPC in 1989, after which the conference has been held on a roughly 5-year cycle, with the lone exception being the 2011 conference, the tenth EWPC, which followed six years after the 2005 conference. Since 1995, the EWPC has consistently enjoyed representation from thirty countries worldwide, with the total number of participants growing from 130 in 1995 to 260 in 2011. The EWPC, like the Department of Philosophy at UH Mānoa, has enjoyed robust growth over the last several decades and continues to be the principal conference for comparative philosophers.

In addition to convening the first East-West Philosophers' Conference, Moore founded *Philosophy East and West* (*PEW*) in 1951 as an extension of the EWPC and he served as its editor-in-chief until 1967, when he handed the reins to Deutsch. Deutsch worked tirelessly to bring *PEW* to a diverse international readership before handing it over to Roger Ames in 1987. Ames remains the editor-in-chief today. After sixty years of circulation, *PEW* has become a world-class showcase for contemporary comparative philosophy.

Our friends: the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education

Of course, the Department of Philosophy at UH Mānoa does not operate in isolation, despite what its geographic location might imply. In addition to the enrichment it enjoys through the EWPC and *PEW*, as well as through its collegial ties with departments around the world, much of the Department's success of late is due to generous support from the Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education. Founded following the conclusion of the Second World War, the Uehiro Foundation has served as a patron for scholars and institutions around the globe. Pursuant to the wishes and conduct of its founder, Hiroshima survivor Tetsuhiko Uehiro, the Uehiro Foundation and the scholars it supports have endeavored to promote the integration of practice and knowledge. The philosophy of the

Uehiro Foundation is profound in its simplicity: Use ethical discourse and education to bridge the gap between academics and society, i.e., cultivate practical wisdom within populations and the world will flourish.

The Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education has continued to grow and expand under the stewardship of Tetsuhiko Uehiro's son, Eiji, and his grandson, Tetsuji. Today, the Foundation has a global presence that UH Mānoa is honored to share in. The first Cross Currents conference was held in 2003, and since 2006 the Uehiro Foundation has generously supported the annual conference. As Tetsuji Uehiro has said, "Without wise men, wisdom cannot flourish, and without patronage, the wise cannot contemplate. The quest for wisdom involves patronage."[1] The patronage of the Uehiro Foundation has certainly allowed the wisdom displayed at Cross Currents to flourish. With each year, our conference and our relationship with the Uehiro Foundation have only grown stronger.

Our event: the 2011 Uehiro Cross Currents Philosophy Conference

At the 2008 and 2009 conferences, it became clear that Cross Currents had reached a new level, and in response, an expanded circulation of the 2010 call for papers was undertaken. As expected, we began receiving submissions from the wider philosophy community and our conference continued to grow. A dedicated fundraising effort through 2010 boosted the budget for the 2011 conference and the results were quite favorable.

In 2011, we received nearly double the submissions we had received in past years, with applicants sending papers from countries as far away as Spain, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and Japan, as well as numerous submissions from Canada and the United States. For the first time in the conference's history, we were able to offer partial travel subsidies for the top submissions, which helped to ease the burden of travel costs for several students.

The conference itself consisted of two full days of panels, each culminating with a keynote address by one of our visiting scholars. On the first day, Carl Becker of the Kokoro Research Center was preceded by a morning of two panels: one on selfhood and experience and another on economics and politics. Ana Laura Funes Maderey's "Self or No-Self?: The Ethical Dimension of Selfhood in Paul Ricoeur," Sydney Morrow's "Ethical Responsibility in Modern Islamic Banking," and Joshua Stoll's "Does 'Pure Experience' Exist?" are all contained herein. The afternoon featured a panel comprised of Matthew Izor, Ryan Shriver, and Kevin Taylor in which these graduate students explored the relationship between

humanity and nature. Their papers—"Nishida Kitarō and Nature: Recognizing the Importance of Difference," "A Rhythmic Sense of Nature," and "Classifying the Inhuman: Flora and Fauna in Japanese Buddhist Cosmology"—comprise Part I of this volume. Becker's keynote address focused on achieving sustainability in a globalized world and the resources comparative philosophy has to offer.

Sor-hoon Tan of the National University of Singapore delivered a keynote address to close the second day of the conference. Her talk on the epistemology of Confucian democracy sparked a lively discussion, a discussion that was no doubt primed by the student panel on contemporary comparative philosophy preceding her address. Joseph Harroff and Stephanie Adair's papers—"A Daoist Critique of Reification" and "Reconciling Oneself to the Limits: Daoism, Feminism, and Necessary Boundaries"—are published in Part III of this volume. Two panels opened the day that morning: one on power and moral practice and the other on violence and evil. Anna Ezekiel's contribution, "Power, Relativism, and Society in Zarathustra's 'Of the Thousand and One Goals,'" rounds out Part III and Laura Specker Sullivan's paper, "Rule-Following and Moral Practice," is published in Part II.

This is the second volume to be published as a result of a Cross Currents conference. In 2007, co-coordinators Geoff Ashton and Josh Kimber collaborated with fellow student Sarah Mattice to edit a volume. The book, *Comparative Philosophy Today and Tomorrow*, was released in 2009 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. As Cross Currents continues to grow, we find ourselves this year with another opportunity to continue the lively and erudite conversations from the 2011 conference in print. Ian M. Sullivan and Cindy Scheopner have collaborated to edit the present volume. Scheopner coordinated the 2010 conference, and Sullivan the 2011 conference.

Our hope: a continued dialogue

At the time of our conference, two major events colored many of our discussions. First and foremost, our conference was held in the shadow of the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami that had devastated Japan just days earlier. It brought not only an air of solemnity to several of the conference panels, but also an added sense of urgency to our inquiries into our place in the world and our relationships to each other and the environment. A second major event was the ongoing economic recession that was threatening the stability of much of the Western world. As both of these events continue to reverberate across the global community, it seems

that awareness of our place in the world and wise engagement in our practices has never been more important.

It is our hope that, in reading through this collection, the reader will engage in these cross-cultural dialogues and help to deepen and broaden the discussions where possible. Part I begins our journey where the problem seems most pressing, the human-nature relationship. From this discussion, we move to ethical and socio-political issues in Part II. Part III deals with the relationship between power and knowledge, and Part IV concludes this volume with a series of investigations into the nature of the self and experience. With this course charted, we wish you a happy and fruitful journey through this volume and send you on our way with a heartfelt "*Aloha.*"

Mahalo nui loa.

Ian and Cindy
Honolulu, March 2013

Notes

[1] Tetsuji Uehiro, "Preface: The Quest for Wisdom," in *In Quest of Ethical Wisdom: How the Practical Ethics of East and West Contribute to Wisdom*, ed. Julian Savulescu (Oxford: The Faculty of Oxford, University of Oxford, 2007), ix.

PART I:

ETHICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The global community today finds itself in a unique position, where the individual's sense of community often encompasses global dimensions. Advances in technology have closed distances between people through less costly and more efficient means of travel as well as more reliable, high-quality telecommunications. Never has it been easier for an individual in rural Europe to develop a relationship with someone on the Indian subcontinent, or for a college student from China to travel to an remote village in South America for a semester of study. But with this technological boon has come greater responsibility. The proliferation of technology has put huge demands on mineral and energy production, and economic and industrial projects can now grow faster and on a larger scale than previously imagined. Our impact on the environment is not only growing larger but occurring faster. As members of the generation of scholars inheriting this situation, Ryan Shriver, Kevin Taylor, and Matthew Izor draw on the cross-cultural resources afforded by our global community to reconceptualize the relationship between humanity and nature. The hope is to remind ourselves of our interdependence with the world in which we live and to begin a discussion that will result in a shift in attitudes and a revision of our practices.

Shriver begins Part I with a chapter on the relationship between human beings and nature as a whole. He utilizes the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and John Dewey to develop the concept of *deep rhythm* and articulates the cosmos in terms of syncopation and nested rhythms. Shriver's aim in this chapter is to bring humanity and nature into a relationship of interdependence through a gestalt shift from logical analysis to aesthetic holism. Our reflection on everything from our particular actions to our ways of life becomes a matter of being "in-sync" or "out-of-sync" rather than "right" or "wrong." And with this, Shriver highlights the significance of a felt connection in the human-nature relationship.

Taylor's "Classifying the Inhuman: Flora and Fauna in Japanese Buddhist Cosmology" follows Shriver's essay with a selective survey of the human-nature relationship in Buddhist philosophy and literature.

Taylor opens his chapter with a perennial question regarding the value of life: Is life, human or non-human, something quantifiable? This may seem to be a strange question with regard to human life, outside of the context of military or political strategy, but with regard to non-human life, the "strangeness" of the question seems to be due to the "obviousness" of the answer: Of course it is. This assumption about the value of non-human life is at the center of many debates in contemporary environmental ethics. Through an interrogation of the relationships of *Buddha-nature* and karma to flora and fauna, Taylor develops an alternative conception of the relationship of humankind to the natural world, where the privileging of human life over non-human life does not entail an instrumentalization of the natural world. In valuing Buddha-nature in all its forms and in recognizing the karmic mechanisms involved in cycles of reincarnation, the Buddhist cosmology blurs the lines between human and animal life, as well as animal life and plant life.

Izor's contribution complements the preceding chapters, drawing primarily from the works of Nishida Kitarō, Imanishi Kinji, and Aldo Leopold to reframe the human-nature relationship in terms of *nested unities*. In articulating the notion of nested unities, the significance of interdependence again comes to the fore. Izor argues that when this interdependence is properly cognized and acted upon, the differentiation between humanity and nature becomes a co-creative force for healthy growth and development. He applies this philosophical perspective to an analysis of contemporary biodiversity projects to illustrate that adopting this perspective is not simply a viable option as we continue to develop as a global community, but that it is a particularly attractive one that figures, quite literally, to make a world of difference.

CHAPTER ONE

A RHYTHMIC SENSE OF NATURE

RYAN SHRIVER

Ambivalent nature

In one sense, nature is defined as other than human, as in the distinction between what is artificial and what is natural. An inherent difference is built into this terminology. Something artificial is human-made. Something natural is what arises absent of human influence. Trees are natural, and plastic is artificial. The outcomes of human action are unnatural. The terms "human" and "natural," in this sense, are mutually exclusive.

But in another sense, the more we study nature, the more we reveal how bound up with its processes we are, as Darwinian evolution indicates. It seems that, in this sense, a human is thoroughly natural and no more than an exceptional primate. And at the same time many of our actions are readily deemed unnatural by the common person, e.g., cloning, synthetic chemicals, food preservatives, etcetera. This is the image of humans as both *a part of* and *apart from* nature, and it describes a relation of ambivalence.

In Maurice Merleau-Ponty's article, "The Child's Relations With Others," there is a discussion of a pathological behavior trait called "psychological rigidity." A key characteristic of someone exhibiting this trait is the harboring of a deep ambivalence in their relations to things and other people. Merleau-Ponty writes, "Ambivalence consists in having two alternative images of the same object…without making any effort to connect them or to notice that in reality they relate to the same object."[1] There is no discourse between the two alternative images as to what it is that they actually do relate to and are images of.

Broadened from the psychological context, the same kind of ambivalent pathos seems to be at work in the current understanding and experience of nature. If nature is the object and one corresponding image is of the evolving human animal and the alternative image is the

reductively analyzing manipulator and these two poles are not in dialogue concerning what it is they are actually engaged in, then one may draw the analogy between the ambivalence of psychological rigidity and the current understanding of nature. It is in such a sense that ambivalence prevents one from ever getting in touch with the thing in its full expression and potentiality of meaning; by conceiving of something only in terms of mutually exclusive opposites, the possibility of fruitful interaction between the poles becomes impossible. There can be no dialogue, no cross-pollination; wherever the one position holds, the other is absent by necessity.

In order for there to be ambivalence there must be some kind of a dichotomy. If there is to be indecision and irreconcilability between two alternative images regarding a single thing, there must be dualisms. It is in the forming of these dualisms that one may say that this pathological ambivalence toward nature has roots in traditional philosophies of nature.

The traditional substance/attribute ontology sets up just this sort of dichotomy. In the ontological depiction of a thing, what is experienced are shifting and changing attributes, and an eternally enduring, identical substance remains tucked away beneath this plethora of flux. Thus in this description of what it is to be a thing there results a difference between appearance and reality, image and truth, illusion and essence. Furthermore, with the depiction of the rational soul as the substance of a human and the sensuous world of body and perception considered mere illusion, nature as a collection of objects becomes utterly different from the meaning of humanity. They fall on opposite sides of the dichotomy.

Our ambivalent attitude toward nature consists in, in concrete situations, not putting that part of ourselves we identify with nature into dialogue with that part we feel goes beyond it. To the extent that this divergence persists, to say "nature" does not have a recognizable reference (the term does not distinguish for us the reference to what is natural and what is not) or a directly felt immediate or immanent meaning. As a result of this ambivalence, nature does not make "sense." Here I use the term "sense" as explained by John Dewey in *Experience and Nature*:

> Sense is distinct from feeling, for it has a recognized reference; it is the qualitative characteristic of something, not just a submerged unidentified quality or tone. Sense is also different from signification. The latter involves use of a quality as a sign or index of something else, as when the red of a light signifies danger…The sense of a thing, on the other hand, is an immediate and immanent meaning; it is meaning which is itself felt or directly had. When we are baffled by perplexing conditions, and finally hit upon a clew, and everything falls into place, the whole thing suddenly, as

> we say, "makes sense." In such a situation, the clew has significations in virtue of being an indication, a guide to interpretation. But the meaning of the *whole* situation as apprehended is sense.[2]

Take for example the situation of getting one's bearings by looking at a map upon arriving in a foreign city. When the various signs on the map link up and attain continuity with the landmarks in the city and one wholly understands the little "You are here X" in that context, then one can say that this situation makes sense. But if it is not clear that this map is related to the city in which one stands, then one can hardly say that the situation of looking at the map in this city makes sense. To be in a situation in which one is, in a mutually exclusive way, both a part of and apart from nature does not make sense; in this situation, everything certainly does not just "fall into place." It does not make sense in the holistic sense of Dewey and it does not make sense logically; it is a contradiction. In order to make sense of nature it is helpful to explore rhythm.

Rhythm

Ambivalence is a barrier to meaningful, healthy action. The rhythmic negotiation of patterned and ambiguous situations helps to make sense of what would otherwise be an ambivalent attitude toward nature. In this sense, rhythm is a tool, but more accurately it is a way. By sensing the patterns and undulations of the world around one and responding with stylized projections of one's own, a sort of efficacious life-dance occurs between person and environment.

Rhythm is capable of bringing out a sense of nature that is inclusive in that it stays in touch with and allows for a variety of rhythmic experiences. This deep, phenomenological rhythm leaves aside aporias created by rigidly established dualisms entailed by analysis-driven, reductive ways of thinking. *Deep rhythm* involves temporal patterns, variations of pulse and rest, tension and release, and an accumulation of growing meaning. Experience can unfold rhythmically and subvert potential dualistic conditions for pathological ambivalence in that it highlights the continuous, co-definitive relationships within the environment of human experience. This holistic aspect is prefigured into any seemingly clear distinction between humans and nature. Deep rhythm is an aspect, mode, or dimension of nature understood as eventual rather than objective, and holistic rather than analytic. The context of deep rhythm subtends the artificial, natural boundary as a processual unfolding of living events. My rhythm, your rhythm, earth's rhythm, and the resonance between, are deep rhythm.

Dewey in *Art as Experience* discusses the more inclusive aspects of rhythm quite intensively, and its significance in his philosophy could hardly be over-emphasized given such strong statements as: "rhythm is a universal scheme of existence, underlying all realization of order in change."[3] Thus anywhere there exists order in change there is rhythm, but without variation it is nothing but repetition. Indeed, Dewey's succinct definition of rhythm is "ordered variation of changes."[4] Thus rhythm is all around us and within us, *is* us. We are rhythms embedded in larger rhythms. To act rhythmically is to negotiate a balance between larger and smaller rhythms in terms of scale and dimensionality of field.

The earth is rhythmic; consider how the same seasons always come about but that no two winters are ever alike, the greeting of everyday with sunrise and its parting as sunset, the cycles of the moon and the ocean as the ebb and flow of tides, the stars, pulses of hearts beating, reproduction and death, the inhale and exhale of breath, and the feedback and mutual influence of sleeping and waking life all illustrate the larger rhythms of the world and their permeation into all of its parts. Humans engage rhythm with life and earth as partners engage in dance with a song.

Dewey writes, "The larger rhythms of nature are so bound up with the conditions of even elementary human subsistence, that they cannot have escaped the notice of man as soon as he became conscious of his occupations and the conditions that rendered them effective."[5] Seeing the impact of larger rhythms on human lifestyle and subsistence and the extent to which certain sensitivities to these rhythms can prove bountiful or detrimental thus "induced him [man] to impose rhythm on changes where they did not appear."[6] As humans and societies evolved, they modeled their patterns of life around these cycles and created events and festivals around their significant punctuations and alternations. This is the indigenous birth of ritual (holidays, coming of age, harvest, seasonal change) and of arts (mooncharts, offerings, talismans), that is to say, this is humanity becoming comfortable in the larger rhythms of life through awareness of how one's own rhythms interact with them. Rituals and arts in this sense are efforts to keep these rythmic cycles in balance.

Rhythmic life happens *in between*: in between nested levels of larger and smaller temporal patterns, in between the played and a player, in between self and others, in between work, family, friends, and community, and in between the heavens and earth. It is with this attention towards interacting nested levels of ordered variation that a cluster of words revolving around "sync" helps convey rhythmic life. What is meant by living "in-sync" between larger and smaller rhythms involves not only "synchronization," as in like-timed or aligned among the levels, but also

sensitivity to and capacity for "syncopation."

In its musical usage, "syncopation" refers to music in which accents associated with the meter are set askew by emphasizing what are normally unaccented beats. It is a shifting of normal accents from being dictated by the precondition of the structure to lesser-played, peripheral beats. Syncopation may be effected by accenting normally weak beats in a measure, by resting on a normally accented beat, or by tying over a note to the next measure. It is a move toward the unexpected. It is a maintenance of novelty and adds a sense of freshness. Syncopation is a play with the unexpected that leads music and life not to sameness, imitation, and repetition, but to style within convention, adding accent to the accent, shifting the pronounced, emphasizing the undertone. It is a complementarity, an ever-reinvigorating harmony. Life becomes a continuous pursuit of harmony and melody among various levels of temporal patterns of behavior and action. With syncopation, life becomes more rhythmic.

Discussion of syncopation also brings up another characteristic of deep rhythm. This characteristic is the continuous interplay of tension and fulfillment. According to the 2008 Encyclopedia Britannica, syncopated music consists in "the displacement of regular accents associated with given metrical patterns, resulting in a disruption of the listener's expectations and the arousal of a desire for the reestablishment of metric normality." Syncopation creates tension in that those anticipated accents are withheld.

Adding a degree of syncopation to the rhythm of one's life adds variation and creates the dynamic of tension and resolution, struggle and consummation, intake and output, surrender and reflection. Dewey writes, "Each beat, in differentiating a part within the whole, adds to the force of what went before while creating a suspense that is demand for something more to come."[7] In rhythmic life there is always tension and release. This is evinced in the common sentiments expressed by: "Christmas is coming," "I've almost lost that weight," "I just have to hear back from the head of the department," "The quiche is almost done," "We won the game!" "I'm glad that's over," etcetera. This collection of phrases points to how commonly there is some project undertaken, some anticipation toward fulfillment, some tension and also moments of consummation, when things come together and events are brought to a close.

It is thus that deep rhythm as nested levels of ordered variation, with attention to living "in-sync" among the various levels, accommodates the sentiment of belonging to nature and explains that as one becomes out-of-sync with larger rhythmic cycles, a feeling of detachment from nature can arise. We can become out-of-sync in the sense of neglecting synchronization

or syncopation. If one neglects to synchronize, things "fall out of whack" and do not seem to "go my way"; projects resist completion, and at every turn conditions are not right for a given intention or activity. If syncopation is lacking, things may stagnate because there is nothing to introduce novelty or tension, both of which are important catalysts for growth. In such a state one may yearn for a new hobby, a change in career, be perpetually bored, have no zest, and attempt to integrate new habits. To live rhythmically is to live out one's individual rhythm and the world rhythm in-sync, in the sense of a stylized dance.

Rhythmic life is a temporal pattern of behaviors and habits that negotiates and integrates fluctuating day-to-day patterns of interaction on various levels of involvement and control. It is a sensitivity toward pattern and a comfortability with flux, a power within flux. Because it is often temporality that renders things indistinct and non-rigid flux, is bound up with ambiguity, if one can discern patterns within flux then one can anticipate and participate, thus reducing resistance and frustration. Patterns of flux are ordered variations of change that are never exhausted. Having a way to manage the patterned flux in one's life is a matter of rhythm.

Ambiguity, sense, and nature

Merleau-Ponty writes, "Ambiguity is ambivalence that one dares to look at face to face."[8] This is to say that to confront ambivalence is not to deny multiple conflicting images for a single object or idea, but to directly acknowledge the possibility of multivalence, i.e., the existence of multiple true senses for any given event or the ambiguity of the experienced world.

This is a world of non-fixed entities, of things as events, not a mysterious agglomeration of qualities attached to some inaccessible essence. It is a concentration of energy and a coming together of active overlapping fields of action and perception. There is non-dual, holistic experience. There is no more man and nature, just a meaningful life of spontaneous events.

Thus the ambivalence involved with nature dissolves with the predicament. Rhythm resolves the tension of ambivalence to give one organized patterns that deal with the inevitable ambiguity that arises among things in day to day life. Developed rhythm in one's life is an adaptable order that harmoniously integrates the unexpected, unclear, and conflicting aspects and situations into the whole.

Since rhythm takes one from ambivalence to ambiguity, what then of the rhythmic sense of nature? Taking a cue from Dewey's explication above, sense as the immediately felt meaning of a situation is direct, but it

is not explicit or clear; it is a feeling, not a cognition, and thus lacks the rigidity of language or determinative conceptual signification. Because sense has a holistic situation as its reference, every aspect of that situation plays a role in creating that sense. So while the situation itself is the reference, there is a fecundity of possible senses embedded within to potentially serve as a "clew" that acts as interpretive guide for the sense of the whole.

Rhythm can signify nature. In this context, rhythm is significant as the "clew" or the "guide to interpretation." It is a continuously reinventing pattern that invites us to re-interpret the nature of our experience.

Rhythm lets us know how, at times, it seems as if the passing of the seasons has little or nothing to do with human endeavors, how sometimes we get caught up in our professional, educational, or familial affairs and our tasks and patterns of behavior seem basically the same, whatever the case with nature. At the very same time, all life events take place within nature, which has its various levels and systems of organization that interact rhythmically within themselves and with other organizations and organisms. To the extent that there is sync and harmony between one's own rhythms and that of the surrounding situation, one gets that sense intended in the expression "one with nature." But sometimes the artificiality of plastic, television, cloning, and food preservatives is so glaring that one gets a detached sense of nature.

But with a rhythmic sense of nature, the ambivalence between humans as both a part of and apart from nature reformulates itself into patterns of behavior, both socially and privately. We are active in these situations of negotiating nested rhythmic patterns on a day-to-day basis. The impetus to make personal, social, and natural patterns harmonize constantly shows itself at work, in school, on teams, with politics, with friends, with lovers, in summer, at night, and in the rain and snow. These patterns are in-step or out-of-step, in varying degrees of harmony, synchronization, and syncopation with the more inclusive, larger rhythms of various situations and contexts in which they play an integral role. In this context, natural and unnatural become senseless. There is rather being in-step, in-sync, or on beat with the flux of processual events, and an off-beat, out-of-sync struggle to make things work.

Being more conducive to a holistic rather than an analytic sense, rhythmic nature can incorporate, or perhaps defuse, the contradiction of "a part of and apart from." To state the facts of this contradiction is to recognize a sense of nature as that which is both most intimate and ultimately distant at one and the same time. Logic falls short of explaining nature. For direct experience, there is no inherent conflict. This is simply

the way nature makes sense. Nature makes "meaningful" sense in that it does not make "logical" sense. Nature makes sense as that which is ambiguous, multivalent, and open to possibility. This sense of nature is its ambiguity and plurality; when it all falls together what makes sense is that there is no one sense. Thus the sense of nature becomes *senses* of nature or *senses* of natural events. Hence nature becomes sublime, useful, precarious, and relentless. In the rhythm or rides of our lives, we often feel how the patterns and interactions between us all stretch well beyond our control and comprehension and could very well squash us at any juncture. Fluctuating patterns of life, as well, can be thoroughly contained and manageable. Sometimes rhythm takes us out on a limb, sometimes it threatens to crush us, and sometimes it is as fragile and fleeting as the moon reflected in a dewdrop. It is in the cultivation of a sensitivity to deep rhythm in one's own patterns of conduct and in one's relations with others and the world that these seemingly disparate meanings and feelings about nature come to make sense.

Notes

[1] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations With Others," in *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*, ed. James M. Edie (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 102-3.
[2] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), 260-1.
[3] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005), 156.
[4] Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 160.
[5] Ibid., 153.
[6] Ibid., 154.
[7] Ibid., 161.
[8] Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations," 103.

CHAPTER TWO

CLASSIFYING THE INHUMAN: FLORA AND FAUNA IN JAPANESE BUDDHIST COSMOLOGY

KEVIN TAYLOR

Introduction

With the escape from the cycle of rebirth as the chief concern of Buddhist philosophy, the notion that life could be conceived of as quantifiable seems to be abhorrent, and yet, traditional Western ethics has been wrestling with this dilemma for centuries. Western ethics has not shied away from these issues but, although great strides have been made, neither has it found agreement. Environmental ethics, for instance, still has much work to do in terms of animal rights and land ethics. Western ethics is often couched as coming out of a Judeo-Christian tradition of stewardship. Humans are given a privileged status in relation to nature and animals because they were chosen by God. While these views have evolved and widened to consider non-human interests, it does limit the debate to a small but influential portion of the global population. Yet the question remains, how should we view life?

Buddhism strictly prohibits the taking of life, and yet tales abound wherein even this prohibition is brought into question. In the Jataka tales, the Buddha kills someone in order to save the life of another person. This prevents the Buddha from achieving enlightenment in that particular life, but he minimized suffering through the results of his actions. Since Buddhism seeks to minimize suffering, on the one hand, and escape from the endless cycle of suffering, on the other, it seems to run the risk of quantifying life. Despite obvious discomfort with speaking in such terms, Buddhist literature and doctrinal debates have unintentionally given insight into just such problems. For instance, does Buddhism privilege human life over animal life?

The first part of this paper will explore a Japanese Buddhist doctrinal

debate on the longstanding question of whether or not sentient and non-sentient things in nature have the capacity for attaining enlightenment. The debates on the *Buddha-nature* of plants (i.e., what would allow them to become Buddhas), although originating in China, received more scholastic treatment in Japan and were summarily promulgated by notable Buddhist figures such as Saichō (767-822 CE), Kūkai (774-835 CE) and Ryōgen (912-985 CE). The debates intended to explore the concept of Buddha-nature, that is, what it meant and what were its limitations. These debates give some insight into how early Buddhist thinkers conceived of man's place in the natural environment by giving a proto-ecological sense of man's place in nature in terms of an ontological status.

The second part of this paper will explore selections of early Japanese literature that are primarily concerned with explaining the causes of suffering in terms of the Buddhist notion of *karma*, or action. One's karma could explain the suffering in terms of reincarnation, punishment, and reward. Animals certainly did not occupy a privileged space in Buddhist literature. Even though perceptions of animals changed, their cosmological position within the hierarchy of existence did not. What it meant to be an animal was therefore anything but static. Animals were sometimes pitiable creatures, reincarnations of loved ones who slipped down the karmic ladder, and at other times they were seen as an opportunity for karmic merit, creatures deserving of respect and reciprocity. In literature, animals were didactic figures used to explain karmic merit through the cosmological schema of *rokudō*, or the six realms of existence.[1] How animals were perceived in this cosmological framework changed significantly from Kyōkai's assorted tales in the *Nihon Genpō Zen'aku Ryōiki* (Tales of Immediate Reward for Good and Evil in Old Japan; *Nihon Ryōiki* hereafter) to Chingen's *Hokkegenki* (Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra), and again in the Kumano Mind Contemplation Ten Worlds Mandala (*Kumano Kanjin Jikkai Mandara* 熊野観心十界曼荼羅).[2] The cosmological view of nature in Japanese Buddhism is certainly anthropocentric, but it offers an existential approach to human-animal-nature interaction with karma as the channel for movement up and down, or out, of *samsaric* existence.

In following the Buddha-nature debates as unintentionally engaging with a debate about non-human, biotic life and also William LaFleur's writing on karma as medieval Japanese epistemology, one finds in medieval Japanese Buddhism a proto-ecological concept of nature whereby the phenomenal realm is re-interpreted in light of the ontological status of Buddha-nature as well as the karmic epistemology arising from *samsaric* existence. In so doing, these debates establish an ontological

order that privileges the human place in the cosmos as a condition for attaining enlightenment.

Framing modern day environmental problems in a Buddhist context despite the absence of a concept of nature in early Buddhist literature is therefore not problematic in so far as (1) the concept of karma—understood here as the results of volitional acts—can pragmatically explain and correct wrong actions, and (2) the cosmological framework can establish a hierarchy of value that emphasizes the need for human responsibility while also blurring the distinctions between human and animal realms by placing both in the same chain of being.

Buddhist cosmology and philosophy

This essay focuses broadly on Buddhist cosmology in terms of the cycle of life, death, and rebirth within the Buddhist understandings of reincarnation. Therefore, at times examples will be used from monks living "in this very life," while at other times the focus will shift to the transitory time between life and death, i.e., the Buddhist "afterlife." But since there are many interpretations of the Buddhist afterlife, each example may need to be contextualized. This is, unfortunately, outside the scope of this paper. The rules and actions that determine what causes a person to be reborn to a higher or lower position are not easy to explain. The *Hokkegenki* by Chingen provides an eleventh century account while the *Nihon Ryōiki* by Kyōkai provides an earlier eighth or ninth century account partly to solidify the legitimacy of Buddhist monks. The Kumano Mandalas are certainly the newest of the sources used in this essay, which, according to Keller Kimbrough, are from the seventeenth and eighteenth century.[3] This essay, therefore, analyzes Buddhist cosmology broadly insofar as it deals with the popular literature and artwork produced by Japanese Buddhist monks from varying traditions.

This essay does focus more narrowly on the Buddhist cosmological concept of *rokudō*, the six realms of existence. This six-part classification of existence has roots in Indian religion and philosophy, but this fact is less important than the Buddhist appropriation of this schema and the value judgments implicit in the privileging of the human realm over any other. Considered vertically, the human realm is the first of the "good" realms with gods and titans occupying higher, though not necessarily better, positions than humans. The animal realm is the first of the "evil" or "unfortunate" realms followed by the realms of hungry ghosts and hell beings. The Buddhist monks who wrote about the six realms of existence essentially passed value judgments on actions in this life (in terms of

karma) to explain someone's good luck or hardship in this current life (as in the case of Kyōkai and Chingen). The use of the lower realms of existence served, alternately, as a warning to those who do harm to Buddhist monks or as a warning of what was to come if one did not change his or her ways. In this way, the six realms were didactic devices to convince lay practitioners that they would do well to follow the *Buddha dharma*, lest they suffer from their karma. The six realms must therefore be understood within the Buddhist philosophical conceptions of rebirth and suffering, and thus as part of the Buddhist soteriological project that seeks to transform suffering.

This essay looks to the six realms to scrutinize the prejudices Buddhist monks may have had to the animal realm. Much of the preference for the human realm comes from the early debates on Buddha-nature, here addressed in the debates over the Buddha-nature of rocks and trees. These early debates ask fundamental ontological questions about the nature of the Buddha, and while historically the debates eventually faded away, they left a lasting mark in that they seemed to privilege conscious beings, humans specifically, for their ability to preach the Buddha dharma. One upshot of these debates and the preoccupation with the six realms is that Buddhism devoted a substantial amount of time and energy to the role of non-human life within their cosmology. What this paper hopes to accomplish is a further discussion of the role of the non-human world in the Buddhist worldview.

Sentient and non-sentient beings

The Buddhist views of nature in Japan must be distinguished, as the two realms discussed from here on are treated differently. The first camp makes cognitive distinctions between sentient and non-sentient beings. *Rokudō* includes only sentient beings, such as animals and humans, leaving the rest of the phenomenal realm (mountains, rocks, streams, trees and plants) to be recognized as non-sentient. However, this was not always the case.

The question of whether or not Buddhahood could be attained by non-sentient beings begins in China with questions regarding the universality of Buddha-nature. Huayan and Tiantai developed a cosmological view envisioning all things as empty of independent existence and mutually interpenetrating. This cosmological view required new views of dependent origination. Fazang's (643-712 CE) formulation contributes two views of arising, both of which see the phenomenal world as illusory and arising from delusion. This notion of arising grounds origination in the mind; it is

"the one pure mind and thus originally pure."[4] By contrast, Tiantai denies that the mind is prior to anything else, the mind and dharma are non-dual and mutually inclusive. The mind and the dharmas are therefore both pure and impure. Within this context, Fazang's formulation could be challenged on the grounds that if all beings arose from identical suchness, then it is meaningless to assert that sentient beings have Buddha-nature and non-sentient beings do not.[5]

Original enlightenment thought in Japan begins with Saichō and Kūkai. Both monks spent time studying Buddhism in China and brought back with them elements of the Buddha-nature debate that would prove formative. While Saichō's treatment of original enlightenment is minimal, his contributions to Tendai (Chinese: Tiantai) Buddhism and his understanding of the one vehicle are significant. Kūkai's contribution is his appropriation and transmission of continental *hongaku* (original enlightenment) thought.

Saichō was responsible for the transmission of Tiantai thought to Japan and, although his treatment of original enlightenment is minimal, he was "the first Japanese to use the phrase 'the Buddha-nature of Trees and Rocks' (*mokuseki bussho*)," unfortunately without explanation.[6] Saichō presumably utilizes the phrase in conjunction with Tendai universalism.

According to William LaFleur and Jacqueline Stone, in developing the notion of the Buddha-nature of plants and trees, Kūkai is not so much interested in following the logical conclusion of universalism in Buddhism as he is interested in forming an ontological union of the absolute with the mundane.[7] The result of Kūkai's argument is the possibility of Buddhahood for plants and trees, because they belong to the phenomenal realm and are therefore ontologically one with the Absolute. This dissolves the distinction between the sentient and the non-sentient and frames the phenomena of the natural world as "both symbols of the Absolute, the Tathāgata, and as themselves the reality of the Tathāgata."[8]

The Tendai school debates concerning the Buddha-nature of plants continue with the public debates of which Ryōgen was a principle participant. Among his approaches, Ryōgen cites phrases he interprets from the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* to support his position that all beings have Buddha-nature. While Ryōgen's use of the *Lotus Sutra* provides temporal and final authority—the *Lotus Sutra* is said to be chronologically the final word—it also emphasizes the universality of salvation.[9] Ryōgen goes further, however, and develops a correlation between the life cycle of plants and the process of enlightenment. He sees sprouting, growing, reproducing, and dying as corresponding to aspiring, undergoing discipline, reaching enlightenment, and nirvana. In this way,

Kūkai's distinction is more radical, because the distinction between sentient and non-sentient is dispensable. The universality of Buddhahood extends to mountains, rocks, and rivers as well as to plants and trees. Ryōgen, by contrast, maintains the distinction between sentient and non-sentient beings but includes plants within the realm of sentient beings.

The longstanding debate regarding how nature is to be viewed in Buddhist cosmology may be said to be largely influenced by the numerous folk religions in Japan that were by and large Shinto oriented. The Shinto belief that spirits inhabit nature, whether it is something as grand as Mount Fuji or as inconspicuous as a tree or a river, was and remains a pervasive element of Japanese religious thought. Mutual influence between Buddhist and Shinto thought has been widely acknowledged. *Honjisuijaku* thought (literally "original ground, manifest-trace") focuses on the distinction between Buddhist gods and Shinto *kami* (native Japanese gods or spirits). Traditionally, Buddhist deities were considered "true" gods (the original ground) while *kami* were merely their manifestations in the phenomenal world (trace manifestations). In this portrayal, the *kami* were considered to be the protectors of the Buddhist dharma. However, in the Muromachi period (1337-1573 CE), *Honjisuijaku* theory did experience a reversal, *Han Honjisuijaku*; that is, the *kami* were given original ground status and the Buddhist deities were considered trace manifestations. This reversal occurred when the phenomenal world became more heavily emphasized; the *kami* were more naturalistic than the transcendent Buddhist deities.[10]

As the debates regarding Buddha-nature continued to develop, the implicitness of *Honjisuijaku* thought and pilgrimage practices came to the foreground in the evocative poetry of the wandering mendicant Saigyō (1118-1190 CE). Saigyō's poetry challenges the ascetic conception of what it means to be a Buddhist monk, making it difficult to call him a monk and not a poet or vice versa. Certainly it seems that Saigyō himself made little of the distinction. Similarly, Saigyō's valorization of nature seems to situate itself within a tradition of hermitages and wandering monks, where nature itself appears salvific. Lafleur writes,

> We find in this verse a conception of pilgrimage by implication, but it is one which coheres precisely to that found in other of his poems, one which suggests that the goal of a pilgrimage is often found within the natural world through which the pilgrim-poet travels rather than at some distant place deemed and designated as "sacred" by the consensus of the cultus-concerned religious community.[11]

For Saigyō, nature was sacred in a way drastically different from how it was conceived by his contemporaries. Evident in his poetry are examples