Making Japanese Thought More Intelligible to the West

Ar nas Gel nas Interviews Thomas P. Kasulis

Ar nas Gel nas: How did it begin? What was your motivation of choosing to study philosophy, seemingly such a “useless” discipline?

Thomas P. Kasulis: I got interested in philosophy when I was in college because it allowed me to think about a lot of different things without focusing too narrowly on any one subject. I was interested in science, in religion, in literature, and in arts. Any of these things could have been specialties but with philosophy it seemed I could study anything. I could also study politics or ethics, a field of great social concern in 1960s America. So, I think that was one factor – philosophy was a way to avoid the specialization and to fulfil all my various curiosities.

Another thing is that I thought of myself as a quite emotional person. I thought philosophy, with its emphasis on rational clarity, would help me control those emotions so they could be channeled, rather than have them control me, leading me willy-nilly from one place to the next.

And the third point about philosophy is that I felt that in modern society something is missing. Religion has stepped into the background and is no longer the driving force it used to be in Western society. But there are still basic spiritual needs, concerns, worries, problems, possibilities. I thought philosophy might be a way to address those issues without being committed to the metaphysical ideas in traditional religions that most people today find difficult to believe.

AG: Why Yale?

TK: There are a few reasons. One is that I grew up near Yale and it seemed to me like a place I would aspire to attend. My home was only about hundred kilometers from Yale.

Another reason is that when I was in high school, Yale offered a special program for high school students. Yale selected a number of high school students from all around the country and designed a summer program for them. Mainly these were the children from high schools in disadvantaged areas where they did not have the opportunities

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some of the richer cities and richer schools would have. It gave them a chance to develop their potential. I became fond of Yale starting back in those days.

And then the third thing is that, unlike some other places that I had a possibility of going to, Yale had a strong emphasis on the teacher-student relationship, even with undergraduates. Other schools, such as Harvard, emphasized the graduate relationship between the student and the faculty. Yale always had the tradition of being strong even with undergraduates, so I was attracted to that idea. The kind of community Yale has is somewhat modeled on the British university communities: Yale has a dozen undergraduate colleges and students live in those colleges, getting to know very closely their fellow students. Also, students can interact especially closely with the faculty affiliated with their college. All these things make Yale a very attractive place.

There was one final thing that everyone laughs at, but I think it is actually a very important criterion. When I narrowed my spectrum of colleges to three, I spent a week at each place and ate the food, and Yale had the best food! I thought that it was very important, and it turned out actually to *be* very important. We used to go to the dining hall at 5.30 and stay there until 8.00. Usually there would be twelve of us, from different parts of America and, in some cases, the world, and we would often be from various different fields and specializations. We'd sit round the table eating and talking about all kinds of subjects. Sometimes I think I learned more from my dinner conversations than I did in my classroom. So Yale turned out to be a very good choice.

AG: In what way did you benefit most from your studies at Yale? Was it good classes, good library or good fellow students? Whom do you consider your mentor and who were the "big names", the influential figures at Yale at your time of studies?

TK: Well, the library was tremendous! It was one of the two or three best libraries in America and it always had whatever I needed. So that was a major plus. In terms of my mentors, I had a few people who deeply affected me in one way or another. One was John Edwin Smith who is famous for the work he did in both American pragmatism and in the philosophy of religion. Both fields appealed to me a great deal. As for the pragmatists, theirs was the time of the great blossoming of American philosophy. Such thinkers as John Dewey, William James, George Herbert Mead, and Charles Sanders Peirce brought a distinctively American approach to philosophy. A hallmark of pragmatic philosophy was to interact with the everyday as well as with the theoretical. I think this ideal is America's great contribution to the history of Western philosophy, but unfortunately, since the 1950s it has pretty much faded away in America. So-called neo-pragmatism is not at all the same thing because it is far too theoretical and not nearly practical enough. So I do not see it as a rebirth of pragmatism, but as yet another escape from it.

From John E. Smith I learned a great deal about American philosophy and the worldview behind the pragmatic approach. For the philosophy of religion, he and

William Christian were the ones to influence me a lot. The study of the philosophy of religion allowed me to tie together some of my early interests in both religion and philosophy. In the field of phenomenology, which included existential phenomenology, I was influenced by John N. Findlay and also Edward S. Casey and Karsten Harries. I had a strong interest in existentialism and phenomenology partly because of the times – I went to college in the sixties when it was easy to be an existentialist in America: there was all the political activity at that time. I was also intrigued by phenomenology as the way of getting at the nature of experiences such as religious experiences without committing oneself to a certain metaphysical set of presumptions. Phenomenology puts metaphysics in brackets while analyzing the experience. This struck me as a fascinating approach to analyzing religion. Also, there was Robert Brumbaugh who was a classicist in philosophy with special interests in the philosophy of education. His ideas on the philosophy of education influenced me later as a teacher.

AG: Could you please specify more about the structure of the studies at Yale, the "technical" aspect? Like, what subjects did you learn from the first year on?

TK: Well, my first two years as an undergraduate were filled with intense study in the liberal arts. We had classes strictly limited in size to twelve students. We very thoroughly went through the Western intellectual tradition in the first years. First year, we had courses in the history of Western philosophy, history of politics and political theory, history of Western literature, a mathematics course, and a science course. The second year was more a continuation of the history of Western philosophy and a continuation of the history of literature. Then we had the option to begin the study of various other fields like psychology or sociology or, in my case, religious studies. Then we had to round out the general studies with a few other courses: some courses in social sciences, some in humanities, some in natural sciences. Then we started concentrating on our majors for our final two undergraduate years. We took four or five courses at one time each semester. And three or four of these would be courses in philosophy. For example, I might have taken a course in ethics, a course in political and legal philosophy, a course in poetry – I was very much interested in poetry and I took two or three courses in modern Western poetry – and a couple of courses in theology and Biblical studies.

Then there would be courses that I took out of sheer curiosity, like, for instance, the course in ancient Egyptian and Babylonian mathematics! It was interesting to see how Egyptians developed geometry and Babylonians developed algebra in two different regions of the world. Yet, because of the separation of the cultures, these approaches were never combined until Descartes, thousands of years later, developed analytic geometry to combine geometry and algebra. One great joy as a student was our learning fairly quickly to read simple Babylonian mathematical texts. The texts were mainly numbers, of course. So, if you knew how to read numbers and the operations of basic

science and arithmetic, you could figure out the text. One day our professor – Professor Asgar Aaboe from Denmark – brought to class an actual clay tablet from Yale's rare book collection of Babylonian culture. He asked us what it was. And we puzzled over it, because it was different from all the other Babylonian texts we had seen that had been so very clearly laid out. In this case all the columns in it were a little bit crooked and the numbers were a little bit uneven. Also the content was rather simple mathematical equations. We looked at it without knowing what to do next, and the professor said "work the problems!" We worked the first six or seven problems and they all turned out to have the same answer: "six"! Why would all these simple problems have the same answer? And then one of my fellow students suddenly realized what it was. He said it was a child's homework assignment! And that is what it was! This explained why the writing was so uneven – the child was still learning how to write. That is also why he or she did several problems having the same answer "six." If he got another answer he immediately knew he had made a mistake and would go back over his work to see where he was wrong. All the problems had the same numerical answer, so he knew if came up with a different answer, he must have made an error.

AG: Your story sounds like Umberto Eco's novel *Foucault's Pendulum*: finding the old document and having all kinds of prejudices of what it is!

TK: Yes, that is right! In this case, I think, it was also the matter of making all this study very human. We tend to look at the past only by the high points of achievements by its greatest intellectuals or artists. We forget that there were also children just learning how to add or to subtract! And given this, our study of the past becomes very real and very concrete. So I never forgot my lesson in the history of ancient mathematics!

To come back to the study system at Yale, in graduate school all I did was Western philosophy and, in particular, certain areas in the history of contemporary philosophy. We had to pass exams in three areas out of four: Metaphysics and Epistemology; Ethics, Politics and Philosophy of Art; Logic and Philosophy of Science; History of Western Philosophy. It was a written exam. We were given blank books with the exam questions and four hours to write our answers. Then we handed in our answers to a committee of the nine professors reading every exam. The student's name was not on the examination sheet, so the professors did not know who wrote what.

One interesting experience was when I went to the director of graduate studies afterwards to see whether I had passed or failed. He looked it over and said, "Oh yes, you did fine, you have passed the exams. But your examination in Epistemology and Metaphysics was very interesting in the way it was graded: I have never seen such a disparity in the grades by the professors! Some professors graded it "A-", which is about the highest grade anyone ever gets, and other professors graded it "C-" which is about as low a grade that you can get and still pass. So you had this total range! And I

wonder why?" I said, "I think it was my answers…". For example, one of the questions had been: "Can a metaphysical system successfully sustain a contradiction?" I remember that the first sentence of my answer was "Not only *can* it – it *must*."

AG: (laughs)

TK: So I think some professors thought my ensuing argument was convincing and some – not at all (laughs).

AG: Now let us move to your major. What would be a particular area of philosophy you were interested in back then? What was your BA graduation thesis called and what did it deal with?

TK: For my undergraduate thesis the topic came about in a rather accidental way. When I was a sophomore we had a visiting professor whose name was Ross Thackwell. He was at Yale for just for one year. He was a rather young professor and taught part of our History of Western Philosophy course. During that course, every so often he would make a reference to Buddhism along the way. Some of us students were intrigued by this – we did not know much about Buddhism at all, – and so we were always asking questions. He would give us some readings about the questions that interested us. Some of us were also interested in learning how to do Buddhist meditation. So he invited us to his house and once a week we would sit and do some Buddhist meditation.

AG: What kind of Buddhist meditation were you practicing? Was it Zen?

TK: No, it was a Vip ssan Therav da kind of meditation – an awareness of breathing mainly.

AG: Mainly Pr í y ma?

TK: Yes, but a Therav din version of it called " n p na-sati" in Pali.

AG: Would you say it was the beginning of your interest in the Great Other, East Asia? Could one say this Englishman, Ross Thackwell, was your first key to it?

TK: I think that is right. It came time for me to start thinking about the topic for my senior thesis: you submit your topic in the middle of your third year and then you write it in your fourth year. So, in the middle of my third year I was thinking about a topic for my thesis. Yale had a special program for giving a scholarship for students to go to Europe for the summer between their junior and senior year to work on their BA thesis. I had traveled very little in my life up to that point as I came from a rather poor family. I was only able to attend Yale because of a rather large scholarship support from the university. So I was thinking: if this special program is a way I can get to Europe, that would be wonderful! But what kind of topic could I pick that would convince the members of the scholarship committee that they should send me to Europe to do research?! I came up with the project proposal that a couple of the professors on the committee later said was the most bizarre proposal that anybody had ever submitted for this program: the project I proposed was that I wanted to go to rural Scotland to study Tibetan Buddhism. They thought it to be such a wild and crazy idea that certainly it

should get funded! My rationale was that at just about that time some Tibetan Buddhist monks, who had been forced into exile by the Chinese, had found their way to Scotland. Many of the Tibetans had gone to Switzerland, but one small group, led by a man called Trungpa Rimpoche, had established a small community in Scotland. Of course, years later Trungpa moved to America, specifically Colorado, and became fairly famous as the founder of the Naropa Institute and author of many books in English. But at that point he was relatively unknown, and I only heard about him from Ross Thackwell, my professor one year earlier at Yale. I had sent him some letters asking whether there was a way I could do something interesting with Buddhism in Europe and the Scottish Tibetan community was one of his suggestions. So I wrote my senior thesis on what happens to Buddhism when it goes from an Asian culture to a Western culture.

AG: So your perspective was comparative from the very start?

TK: Yes, that is right. It turned out that it was my interest right from the very start.

AG: Could one say that your focus was what happens when some major part of a major culture travels to an other culture and thus becomes decontextualized and disembedded?

TK: That is exactly right. To put it in other words, what has been behind my work ever since then is the issue of the relationship between thought and culture or, if you want, philosophy and culture.

AG: Did it have also something to do with people mispronouncing your name and you being aware of your really far-away and really “strange” roots?

TK: (laughs) Well, this was an interesting thing. Even though I lived in America and I only spoke English, all of my neighborhood, people around me, and my grandparents were Lithuanian. I had not realized at that time that there is a value system of some kind, a worldview that would accompany this. I thought that I was living according to the same worldview that all Americans had until, basically, I went to college and started reading into the history of Western philosophy.

I felt very comfortable with the ancient Greek philosophers and I felt comfortable with the medieval philosophers as well. But as soon as we started moving into the area of modern Western philosophy and the Enlightenment, I felt increasingly alienated – what I was reading was not the way that *I* looked at the world. Private property, the primacy of the individual, the idea that the state was constituted by individuals who contracted somehow to be a group rather than the group’s being primary – all these ideas were very difficult for me. I remember having to read sentences by John Locke or David Hume over and over again in order to try to understand: “Why are they saying this?” Only later, as time passed, I realized that probably in many ways I was encountering a worldview that was very different from my Lithuanian-American worldview.

AG: The educational background acquired with the so-called "mother's milk"?

TK: Yes, that is right! I think it was crucial for me that I had to almost repress my upbringing's worldview and push it aside in order to think like those modern Western philosophers. Although I was not aware of it at the time, I almost started thinking that I was simply stupid and this new worldview I was learning was *the Truth*. I was taught that we are born into this world as individuals and that we somehow contract to become groups. I was taught this as if it were *the Truth* – the basis of Western liberal democratic thinking and the basis of the American Constitution! And I accepted it that way, repressing in many ways my own intuitions.

This attitude changed only many years later when I first started studying Japan. When I first went to Japan, I felt very comfortable again – I thought that the part of me that I had repressed now was again foregrounded. I remember reading a line by the 20th century Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro where he said how strange this Western idea of individualism was. He said something to the effect, "These Westerners think that they come into this world as individuals. Don't they know they had mothers? And if they did not have mothers, they would not survive? We come into the world *dependent* on other people and the maturation of a human being is kind of shifting from this strict state of dependence into the state of *inter*dependence." Only then did I realize for the first time that what I had been taught as *the Truth* in a modern Western intellectual tradition was nothing more than one cultural view. And it was contrary to the Japanese worldview. What I knew about the Lithuanian view from my grandparents and what I knew from my readings in ancient Greek and medieval Western thought were just other ways of looking at the world. And those premodern Western thinkers were in many respects more like the Japanese in their ideas and values than were the modern Western European thinkers.

This discovery became one of the fundamental points in my own thinking: I recognized this issue of cultural perspective to be one of the most important questions for a philosopher. Philosophers think they ask fundamental questions, but the most fundamental question is "where does my fundamental question come from?"! And then always we find that there is a cultural context for that question. To be really fundamental, philosophy must factor in the cultural context within which it is operating. Otherwise, it is fundamentally unreflective and does not really interrogate its basic premises in the way philosophy is supposed to do.

AG: How did you move from your studies in Tibetan Buddhism in Scotland to your further philosophical perspective which, perhaps, one could call "philosophy East and West"?

TK: Well, in Scotland I only spent a couple of months and did not get very deeply into the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Initially, we beginners had to learn two or three kinds of meditation, one of which was again based on the Theravada tradition of

n p na-sati, the awareness of breathing, which was also part of Tibetan tradition. But my experience in Scotland was more to address my personal interest in Buddhism. So, when I went back to Yale, wrote my thesis, and went on to graduate studies, I still primarily kept studying Western philosophy.

AG: What was it called, your thesis back in Yale?

TK: Oh, I don't even remember that anymore... But it could have been something like "Jungian Archetypes in the Use of Buddhist Discourse as It Becomes Western" or something… At least that was the general topic!

AG: As a matter of fact, such experts of Japanese philosophy as James Heisig have also shared great interest in Carl Gustav Jung's writings. Could you, please, specify more on how and why Jung was important in your early philosophy?

TK: There was a group called "Friends of the Western Buddhist Order" which I was familiar with when I was in Britain, and its leader was – and, in fact, still is – a teacher named the Venerable Sangharakshita. He was an Englishman who went to Northern India as a young man, as a teenager, to stay there for some twenty years studying various kinds of Buddhism. Then he came back to Britain and established some Buddhist groups, which are still going very well today. I think he was the one who had first mentioned Jung to me. I had a couple of rather intense experiences in meditation while working with him – there was something dark, some kind of strong perception of otherness, in the middle of this meditation – and at one point he said to me that I would have a trouble understanding the power of these experiences. Thus he suggested I read some Carl Jung, especially his discussion of the *archetype of the shadow.* In trying to understand Jung, especially his psychology of the archetypes, I tried to form a deeper understanding of collective unconsciousness in hopes of its explaining how Westerners practicing Eastern meditation could have similar experiences to those of the Asians even though they grew up in very different cultural worlds. How could that be? I wondered if Jung's theory of archetypes was a way to try to explain that. And even though I do not much believe in that anymore, the Jungian model was my first model for trying to study comparatively the relationship between culture and experience or culture and thought. Reading Jung played a very important role for me in that way. That is why, when I went back to Yale I read every single thing that Jung had written, and used a great deal of Jungian ideas in my model for understanding East / West phenomena and the way Buddhism was coming into a Western context.

However, I have to admit that my senior thesis was absolutely terrible – no more than a bunch of half-thought-through ideas and struggling. But I was happy that my professors thought the struggle was more important than the product. They understood the questions I was asking were going to be important to me later, and that I had to go through the stage of trying to find my own way. If I had just taken some established idea or topic and dealt with that very pointedly, I could have written a nice thesis, but it

never would have had meaning to me. What I did write about has continued to drive some of my fundamental interests.

AG: What was your next step after you graduated from Yale? Who or what were the influences in your next stage, after you had left the academic structures?

TK: To be more exact, I have to fill in one more step in my academic training. I completed my exams in Western philosophy so I was ready to start a dissertation after about two years – I went through the program very fast. I was ready to start a dissertation, but I did not have anything I wanted to write about! And again a response to circumstances led me into a new intellectual direction. One day, after discussing with my graduate studies director some possible topics for my doctoral dissertation, I left the philosophy department office and saw a poster on the wall advertising an East-West Philosophy conference on Wang Yang-ming. I was always deeply interested in Asia and somehow I felt particularly struck by the fact that there was going to be this conference at the East–West Center, University of Hawaii. I was reading an announcement for a conference on an Asian philosopher (Wang Yang-ming) who was so important that people from all over the world were gathering in Hawaii for a conference. Yet, despite my previous interest in Asian philosophy, I had no idea who Wang Yang-ming was! So, I wondered, maybe it was time for me to start studying Asian philosophy seriously. I went to my adviser John Smith and he was extremely encouraging. He helped me receive a fellowship from the East–West Center so I could spend one year and a half studying Asian philosophy both in Honolulu at the University of Hawaii, and also in Japan.

My reason for studying Japan was rather interesting. I knew I wanted to study Asian philosophy, but the East–West Center said I had to choose a particular area of focus – India, China, Japan or Korea. They wanted to be sure that I received proper language training – without language training one could not go very far in any field of Asian studies. Obviously, I would not have time to study *all* the Asian languages. I had studied some Indian philosophy in English because of my interests in Buddhism. I found that, basically, Indian philosophy is very understandable: if you change a few premises, Indian reasoning becomes not all that different from Western reasoning. So, I thought to myself, India was not the best tradition to study if I want something really different. China was a little bit more intriguing. Its social philosophy and strong ethical emphasis attracted me but, very importantly for those times, communist China was closed to Americans. So, going there was out of the question. Of course, there were studies in Hong Kong and Taiwan, but this seemed to be more diaspora Chinese or exile Chinese to me rather than real Chinese. In contrast to China, Japan was completely open. Furthermore, everything that I have read about Japanese philosophy in English – the things by D. T. Suzuki, for example, – did not make any sense whatsoever. So if I wanted to study something different, that seemed to be the best

thing to study: either I would study that for a while and then come back and say: "Well, the Japanese, whatever they are doing is so different… I do not know what to call what they are doing, but it is not philosophy. It makes no sense; there is no reasoning behind it; they are anti-rational" (which would sound like D. T. Suzuki). Or, alternatively, I might come back from Japan saying: "We Westerners are studying Japanese thought all wrong! There are all kinds of philosophy in Japan! We simply did not have a proper access to it in the West – we are looking at this tradition in a wrong way." Either alternative reaction would be an interesting conclusion. So I decided to focus on Japan.

Unlike almost all my American friends who were in the field of Japanese studies and who were fascinated by some aspect of Japanese culture – *samurai*, *geisha*, *haiku* poetry or Japanese woodblock prints – I had no interest at all in anything Japanese. So I did not approach Japan with any particular love for Japan. I suspect that when I started studying Japanese philosophy and finally went to Japan, the way I related to "things Japanese" had something to do with my pre-college training and acculturation as Lithuanian American. I would see things in Japanese culture that would remind me of my grandparents who were Lithuanian, not Japanese. There was more of Lithuania that was like Japan than the modern Western, post-Enlightenment worldview was like Japan. So I found a way by which I could relate to Japan very directly because of my ethnic background. I was able to understand many things very quickly and intuitively. The Japanese language was very strange and it was still very awkward for me at the time, but the way in which people related to each other and the assumptions they brought to their thinking were often quite familiar to me. So, I did not have much trouble in acculturating into the Japanese context.

And so partly because of that, and working out those differences, I realized it was part of my destiny to make Japanese thought more intelligible to the West. I remember when I was writing my first book *Zen Action / Zen Person* in 1980 and I sent one copy of the manuscript to a Japanese philosopher who read English very well: Yuasa Yasuo. And I sent a second copy to an American philosopher who had no access to Japanese sources but knew all the writings on Zen in Western languages and had himself written some things on Zen – Paul Wienpaul. Paul Wienpaul wrote back to me that it was unlike anything else he had ever read on Zen Buddhism. The Japanese scholar said that he found it all very good, but was surprised by how traditionally Japanese the book is! So at that point I knew my manuscript was ready to be published: I was not saying anything that was radical from a Japanese point of view but yet the West had never heard it before.

AG: After you had published your book so successfully, did it encourage you to move further? And in what way did it mean to you "to move further" – was it, for example, gaining deeper knowledge in the Japanese language or meeting some other people that would influence you?

TK: After I finished my dissertation, parts of which related to the book "Zen Action / Zen Person", I had a couple of alternatives: I could go into Japanese studies more deeply (my Japanese language was still very weak at that time) or I could return to the Western philosophical studies and use Japanese philosophy as an interesting comparative example. The most important factor in the final decision was that I was offered the job at the University of Hawaii to teach courses in Japanese philosophy. It was 1975, and there were not too many job possibilities in America at that time. So, I felt the decision was being made for me and I should go more deeply into Japanese studies.

As I studied Japanese things more thoroughly, I started realizing that one could understand Japanese culture quite well if one had the right sensitivity on the superficial level. But the more deeply one penetrated the culture, the more complicated and different it became. I also started seeing how most Western scholarship seemed to be aimed at making Japanese culture look as complicated as possible and that, in fact, so many books written by Japan specialists were intended to be read only by other Japan specialists. I started moving in that scholarly direction, because I needed the expertise, but I did not want to become a Japan specialist of that kind – I always wanted to have a comparative standpoint. It was a rather difficult time for me to find exactly what I wanted to do and I turned to writing articles rather than books on a sort of point-by-point basis. That way I could write articles that were a little technical and meant for other Japan scholars.

For example, I wrote a couple of articles on D gen that were on quite specific points such as D gen's own hermeneutics (the essay was called "D gen on how to read Sh b genz "). The essay showed that in his writings he gives the reader guidelines on how to read a Zen text like his. No one in Japan had ever thought of approaching D gen that way and no one in the West had thought of studying the text that way, so I tried to be careful in showing that my interpretation was based on D gen's own writings and not on something that I made up. It would not be as strange to read the essay now when we are used to evaluating things in a more postmodern perspective but back in the late 1970s, some of my points seemed quite startling to some readers. At this point I was already leaving Hawaii and moving to a small college in Northern Wisconsin.

AG: How long did you teach at the University of Hawaii?

TK: I stayed there from 1976 till 1981, with the exception of one year when I was at Harvard as a visiting professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and in the Divinity School's Center for the Study of World Religions, a center with a history going back to the 1950s, by the way.

AG: I apologize for a short digression: when was the East–West Center in Honolulu established?

TK: It was under Lyndon Johnson – the middle of the 1960s.

AG: Could you say the goals of the East–West Center somehow coincided with your own goals? Why would one need to establish such a Center?

TK: When you think about the mid-sixties, the Cold War era, it was becoming clearer that after the experience of the war in Korea and then America's getting very deeply involved in Vietnam that the way America related world was not just going in the direction of Europe and the Soviet Union, but also going in the direction of Japan, China, Korea, India. The US had two shores facing two opposite directions of the Eurasian continent and our interactions with Asia would be just as important as our interactions with Europe. This was the crucial point – the emergence of a global economy and geopolitics. It would be very foolish to think that the world's economy today is somehow centered only in the West. It is interesting that the East–West Center's full name was something like "Center for the Technical and Cultural Exchange Between East and West". So the idea was that we needed to exchange technology, but also that this had to be based on understanding culture. The cultural difference was the basis for the human relations while the technological and economic exchange would follow from that.

AG: So it was not at all a merely academic interest but very practical political-economical interests behind it?

TK: Oh, absolutely! I would say right from the start: two thirds of the Center's activities were more practice-oriented. I remember when I got there in 1972 I saw a list of various on-going projects and there were topics like "Peanut Farming in South-East Asia" or "Population Growth and Its Effects on the Economies of the Pacific Countries", or "The Distribution of Radio and Television Stations in Southeast Asia", and so forth. That would be two-thirds of the activities, and only one third would be related to the humanities, arts, or culture in general.

AG: Given this "statistics", were you not tempted to turn into some more "practical" direction? How, do you think, philosophy's general attitude can be meaningfully situated in such pragmatic affairs?

TK: Philosophy aspires to get to the foundations of the premises on which we build on our worldviews. I realized that most Western philosophy today does not do that because it is actually culturally blind to what is and is not Western. Most Western philosophers today do not realize that they have made assumptions that in fact are culturally based assumptions. This realization has led me to the conclusion just how important it is now to do philosophy on a comparative basis. If you think that you are born into this world as an individual and some others think that they are born into the world already as a group because they had mothers, – this can deeply and profoundly change your understanding of human nature. All your premises will then be different. And also the way you do business or politics will be different! And this is why in my book *Intimacy or Integrity*, I have tried to show that even very small differences in

assumptions at the basis of a cultural way of thinking have profound effects on how you would do philosophy, how you would answer the questions like "How do I know what I know?", "What is the best way to persuade a person rationally?", "What are the norms of ethics or politics that I should follow?", "What are the standards or norms in art?" The answers to these questions we formulate differently, depending on very simple and fundamental premises we make from our cultural standpoint. And unless you do comparative philosophy, you will remain blind to all this because everybody around you will have the same assumptions and you will think these are *the only* assumptions. When you study another culture you start realizing that in fact these assumptions were learnt as part of your acculturation while growing up.

AG: It is often maintained that the predominant ancient model of interaction between different civilizations or essentially different cultures was, however sad it is say, war. And now this model is totally transformed: we have diplomatic interactions, we are studying each other. So my rather provocative question would be: do you or do you not think that it is actually Western culture that is studying other cultures more than it is other cultures studying Western culture to try to enter into diplomatic relations, to understand *the Other* in the way West does? Or would it be hypocritical to maintain so?

TK: There are two points here. One is that the Western European and American worldviews have established their presence all around the world because of the hegemony of the powerful economic and military system behind it. So, in a way, everybody around the world knows something about America – they cannot help it, they have no choice. The American mentality is very interesting, because America is primarily made up of people who came from all over the world and immigrated to America and then formed a new culture based on certain general principles. Most European countries, for example, arose out of ethnic connections, linguistic connections, religious connections, or a common cultural history. I think Americans often assume that the whole world will become like America. To the rest of the world this seems like the most extreme arrogance: the very idea that the whole world wants to become like America! But from an American historical standpoint the crucial point is this: the whole world came to America and became America! So it is very easy to make the assumption that the rest of the world in a global economy will become more like America. America already set the model for how to merge radically different cultural strains into a single system. So this is certainly one reason most Americans study the world very superficially. Their expectation is: "If we can just help the other countries get started, they will eventually undertake a sequence of thinking about things or doing things in a certain way. Then ultimately they will become more and more like America". Not because America has something special that it uniquely has because of its ethnic history, or its religious history or its blood or its superior genetics, but rather because America was made by people coming from all over the world, coming together and

saying, “How can we all live together?” So America was the test-case for globalization. This is something that, I think, the rest of the world does not understand about the American psyche. They think that we are imposing American culture and, in fact, when I look at the global situation as an outsider that certainly seems to be the way things are. But to a great extent it is also true that the world wants to be a part of a globalized world and, if they do, America has been a test-case of how to do that. The problem is that Americans are very naïve about all this and confuse their Americanism with the more abstract principles of global cooperation.

AG: Thinking “Everybody loves us because we have representatives of all the countries in America”?

TK: Yes, but what Americans typically do not realize is that those “representatives” in America are actually people who wanted to *leave* their country and come to America! There were, of course, also those who disliked America and went back home – like, for instance, one of my great uncles. But Americans don’t typically focus on those who did not like the New World and went back home. Still, the American Dream was a real dream for many people. My own grandparents thought it wonderful that people could move through different classes, that they could own their own land, that no one was better than anyone else because of birth, that it was possible for their children and grandchildren to get educated and achieve so much. So many Americans think other people would also like it to be that way and they do not realize how important for many people ethnic identity is. For example, the war in former Yugoslavia is really puzzling to Americans! Or the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants or Sunni and Shiites. Americans feel like “Yes, generations ago we too had these old hostilities in our American neighborhood and then they virtually disappeared as people blended into the ‘American melting-pot’”. All the ethnic and religious differences got somehow included in the larger belief system, the system of American universal principles. There continue to be, of course, problems like racism in America, but it is amazing to see what a big advance has been made in the last fifty years. Racism is at least no longer as institutionalized in the blatant ways it used to be (segregation in schools, separate drinking and eating places for black and whites, and so forth). So, although I would never say racism has disappeared, at least we have made some notable progress.

AG: Now let us return to the “safer side” – to the realm of academic knowledge. Could you specify more on the life in the East–West Center and on what effects the University of Hawaii period had on your work, in what way you were influenced by the University or had an influence on the University?

TK: The University of Hawaii Philosophy Department started doing something called “East–West Philosophy” back in the 1930s. Then it was under the direction of a man named Charles A. Moore. He worked very hard to make the early East–West

philosophy conferences possible, for example. The first conference was organized in the 1930s and all the participants from all over the world had to come to the conference by boat. Many of them had to travel for two or three weeks to reach Hawaii! So, for the sake of convenience, the conferences were five weeks long. Participants would stay together for five weeks in Honolulu, eat meals together, share their opinions – that was a real exchange!

AG: It also sounds very medieval!

TK: This is how it started, and the journal "Philosophy East and West" was launched shortly after World War II. However, a major development began when Eliot Deutsch came to Honolulu in the late 1950s. Then a real curricular development started: if you came to University of Hawaii to study philosophy, you studied Western philosophy, Asian philosophy and then comparative philosophy. All three would be interrelated. By the time I was a student there in 1972, half of the faculty of the Philosophy Department specialized in Asian philosophy, the other half in Western philosophy. Comparative philosophy was happening everywhere, in all the subfields of philosophy. When I was hired by Hawaii, I actually was coming back to Hawaii where I had been in the graduate school for eighteen months, getting my second MA degree. When my mentor Robert J. J. Wargo left Hawaii, they needed someone else to come in and so they invited me, his former student.

What I did in the curriculum when I came to Hawaii was to change the understanding of the *history* of Japanese philosophy. Although Wargo always said that philosophy in Japan goes back to ancient times, he only focused on the post-Meiji, the 20th century developments. Though he always made references to some ancient Japanese thinkers like D gen, K kai, Shinran, etc., he had really never taught them. I proposed we made them part of the curriculum and later developed a three-course sequence in Japanese philosophy that started with Ancient and Medieval Japanese Philosophy, then Medieval and Tokugawa Philosophy, and, finally, Modern Japanese Philosophy. And it was first time in America (and, to my knowledge, in Europe as well) that the history of Japanese Philosophy was conceived as a historical progression from the 7th or the 8th century up to the present. Even in Japan this is not the way they do it because of the division of specialties: if you study *Nihonshis shi* ("the history of Japanese thought"), it tends to start with the Tokugawa period, around 1600. For philosophy before that one would have to study *bukky shis shi* (history of Buddhist ideas). Shinto has a funny kind of place – Japanese scholars generally do not treat ancient Shinto ideas as philosophy until they get up to *kokugaku* ("native studies") thought in the eighteenth century. For Shinto ideas before then, one has to study *minzokugaku* – ethnic studies, folklore, and so forth. Also, the ideas behind the Japanese arts are not studied as "philosophy" in Japan but in separate departments of Japanese art and aesthetics. Even more strangely, ethics – whether Japanese or Western

– is taught in its own departments. So, everything we might call "Japanese philosophy" is divided into separate fields. Hawaii was the first place to unite all these various fields of Japanese philosophical tradition into a single curriculum that stretched from the study of ancient times up to the present.

As I mentioned before, after Hawaii I moved to a small college in a rural area of northern Wisconsin, a beautiful part of the country but very cold and isolated. One of the reasons for this change was my wish to be less specialized than I was in Hawaii, to allow myself to think of things in a more interdisciplinary way. In Hawaii I could only teach Japanese philosophy, as there were many other specialists in all other fields of Japanese studies (over seventy faculty members spread throughout the University!). In contrast, in a small college I could teach anything about Japan that I wanted. This allowed me to expand some of my interests. For example, I could teach a course in Japanese film, or course in Japanese cultural history, a course in Japanese aesthetic theories, etc.

Now let me return to your question about what kinds of articles I wrote in Wisconsin going back to my article "D gen on How to Read Sh b genz " in particular. These were the times before the post-modern ideas of interpretation had become popular, and I was reading it strictly from the standpoint of what D gen himself had said about language and interpretation. When the article was published, a couple of colleagues called me and asked if I was feeling all right; or, perhaps I was losing contact with academia living so far in the North? Why I was writing such odd pieces? However, if we read this article today it may seem as a rather straightforward piece on the modern use of hermeneutics for reading text. Also during that same period in Wisconsin I also wrote an article on "Nirvana" for the "Encyclopedia of Religion," edited by Mircea Eliade. Writing that article was quite challenging and I enjoyed writing it quite a bit. It forced me to think about various kinds of connections among different schools of Buddhism that went far outside what I had been teaching in Japanese philosophy at the University of Hawaii, but fit quite well my broader-based courses I was teaching at a small college in Wisconsin. Many people told me they found this article very useful.

While teaching at Northland College in Wisconsin, I also gradually moved into the field of comparative religion. Because our small department covered both religion and philosophy, I did not have to worry about which it was I was teaching at any given time. Because in many works I tried to examine the relationship between practice and religious doctrine, I found very quickly that my writings were understood and appreciated by certain people in the field of religious studies, often more than in philosophy (which was still so Eurocentric in its focus). The problem of bodily involvement in religion was important to me: philosophy tended to ignore the importance of body and to emphasize philosophy as just intellectual ideas. In that

period I also worked on the translation of Yuasa Yasuo's book *The Body: Towards the Eastern Body-Mind Theory* with Shigenori Nagatomo. That also created some interest among American scholars as a new kind of topic to explore from a philosophical standpoint, but within the context of comparative religion. I also did some editing work. I edited anthologies of essays written by various people resulting in a three-volume set of books edited together with Roger T. Ames, a sinologist, and Wimal Dissanayake, an indologist: *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, and *Self as Image in Asian Theory and Practice*. I was very much interested in bringing together various kinds of scholars from the variety of places and disciplines to comment on the topics like that. All that kept me busy with my new research without at that point having to write a new book of my own.

AG: Now let us turn to your book *Intimacy and Integrity*. Could one say it is the work that reveals best what you wanted to do in theory? It is a book on philosophy: both a very general and at the same time a very exhaustive model of how things come to be organized in different cultures. It bears on many Japanese examples, but it is a philosophy book, which can be used in Introduction to Philosophy classes, or Aesthetics classes. Could you tell more about this book of yours and how it harmonizes with your general concept of what a theoretician could and should do in the present day?

TK: For decades I have been using the concept of "intimacy" on and off when talking about Japanese culture. I also published an article in the *Philosophy East and West* journal called "Intimacy: A General Orientation in Japanese Religious Values." So, I had had this idea about "intimacy" for some time and I had been using it in lectures and course work. And then I received a phone call from Trent University in Canada which hosts the Gilbert Ryle lecture series. They asked me whether I would be interested in giving a series of lectures, which would be in philosophy but also be in some sense comparative, bringing in some Asian aspects. It was at that point that I realized it was the time to pull together my ideas on "intimacy" more tightly and develop a more coherent and comprehensive theory of what I was doing when I was talking about "intimacy" in relation to Japan. In my lectures people were often asking: "If Japan is a culture that emphasizes and foregrounds intimacy, what is the background and the foreground of the modern Western philosophical tradition?" It was quite a while before I finally came up with the idea of "integrity" as the opposite. So by this point I was ready to talk about "intimacy" and "integrity" as two different models of cultural orientation that would then set up basic paradigms for philosophical thinking. These orientations would affect not just particular philosophical ideas – which many people had done before – but, in fact, would affect the whole way in which philosophy is done systematically whether the field is epistemology, or metaphysics, or persuasive argument, or logical analysis, or aesthetics, or politics, or ethics.

Philosophizing then would be seen as a cultural activity: within a certain cultural orientation one would tend to philosophize in a certain way regardless of which of those discrete subfields of philosophy one is in. So, in a way, it was an attempt to set the theoretical basis for understanding culture and philosophy in their most abstract and therefore generalizable form. I use in my book many examples from Japan, but there are also many examples from other cultures and subcultures, too. I did this because I am sure no culture is totally a culture of intimacy or a culture of integrity, but rather it is always more a mixture, wherein one tends to be the more default position and the other aspect would be in exceptions. I did try to draw on various different cultural phenomena in developing the book, so it was not just the book about Japan *versus* Western thinking. In that way I also hoped to avoid the problem of essentializing Japanese thinking and Western thinking as if they were "totally *Other*" for each other.

AG: What would be your major Western examples of "intimacy" comparable with the Japanese ones? You may be well aware of attempts to compare Meister Eckhart with Zen or, as Jung does, to draw parallels between Ignatius Loyolas' "Exertitia Spiritualia" and Asian meditation. We also have certain trends of Greek thought, especially in pre-Socratic philosophy, that seem to be comparable to the East Asian thinking. How would you specify on that?

TK: My general impression is that early Greek thought probably emphasized the idea of "intimacy" as foreground, but Aristotle had started the line of argument that later led to the dominance of the model of "integrity" (at least, I think Aristotle more than Plato). I wrote an article many years ago, dealing with the idea of what constitutes distinctively philosophical language, what would be the rules of talking philosophically. In the article I saw some similarities in ancient Greek culture and ancient Japanese culture. When K kai developed a first coherent philosophical theory in Japan, he very clearly favored the "intimacy" point of view. The turning point in the West was certain ideas that Plato expressed in his "Cratylus". And even though Plato in his dialogue and even throughout his life was a little more leaning towards the "intimacy" side than the "integrity" side, the seeds were already there, and Aristotle moved to the "integrity" side in developing the rules of logical reasoning. However, what happens with the influx of Christian ideas, with the influence of Jerusalem on Athens as it were, is that there was some kind of reopening of the psychological sense of religion by its emphasis on Jesus's referring to God as love. This was quite different from Aristotle's abstract God as final cause. This new psychological dimension was introduced into Western thought via Christianity. So, even though the Aristotelian view was predominant to start with, the Neoplatonic tradition began to gain influence. So, I think much of the Medieval Western thought had more to do more with "intimacy" than with "integrity". Then, again, in late medieval times the rediscovery of Aristotle through the Arabs gave birth to Scholasticism. There began a slow movement towards the "integrity model"

which then blossomed fully with the birth of modern Western thought, Cartesianism, and so forth. This integrity emphasis became concretized and institutionalized as the dominant mode of Western philosophy by the time of the Enlightenment. Throughout the modern period, though, we can find exceptions: in epistemology we have Michael Polanyi arguing for expert knowledge and tacit knowledge – something more like the "intimacy" point of view. He says this type of knowing exists in the practice of science. So, even in science, intimacy plays a role, a role that he wanted to emphasize. In aesthetics, it is really quite common to find intimacy modes discussed in relation to various kinds of things. In ethics, with situational ethics and its emphasis on *agape*, Joseph Fletcher's attempted to make ethics something more intimately based. And, of course, as you mentioned, in religious thought, the mystical tradition of people like Meister Eckhart fits the intimacy model as well.

AG: How about the "intimacy" tendencies in the contemporary thought?

TK: In the development of newer movements, several elements of post-modernism and of feminist epistemologies tend to be more intimacy than integrity oriented. All of this goes to show that no culture is monolithic or hegemonic, but there are always currents, sub-currents, and countercurrents existing all together at the same time. And now, with certain moves of postmodernism and post-colonial thinking, there are the attempts to recapture some intimacy-based concepts. The post-colonial endeavor is based on the interpretation and often goes something like this: "We used to be an 'intimacy-based' culture; we were then colonized and forced to adopt the 'integrity model'. Now in our post-colonial phase we can go back to restore some of what we lost." Therefore, some aspects of Western thinking that were once completely dominated by integrity orientations are now slowing shifting closer to some modes of intimacy-based thinking. It is quite possible that this tendency will become even stronger during the next 50 years.

AG: Some rather well acclaimed theories in social psychology tend to assert that, at least in the West, the intimacy-based, cooperative and mutually supportive model of thinking and behavior is more characteristic of women and the integrity-based model of rivalry and warship and aggression – of men. What would be your opinion about such a rather sharp division? Would it hold true interculturally?

TK: I think there is quite a bit of truth in such a division. But this reflects mainly on how traditional Western thought developed. The West developed gender roles in a certain way and then tried to read those roles back as universal signs of a gender difference in human nature. How could this difference come about evolutionally, they wondered? One way of addressing the problem was to argue that originally there were hunting and gathering cultures. The men were hunters, whereas women had to work cooperatively, agriculturally, and communally in raising children. This explanation was used to justify the historical "truth" of the traditional Western gender distinction.

Yet, I have argued that in Japan, by contrast, males have traditionally been more intimacy-oriented and females more integrity-oriented. That may seem like a strange thing, but when you think about it it is not so strange. In Japan, the men are taught that they have to be cooperative: that they have to cooperate with their fellow workers and that they have to spend a lot of time with their fellow workers developing human relations as the basis of business and political relations. Thus they learn to identify with the group, learning to be reflective of the whole in a kind of holographic way. So, the company they work for becomes an intrinsic part of their own identity. Their business cards delay what their identity is: it shows the corporation or the organization to which they belong and their specific role within that organization. Studies have shown that Westerners identify themselves in quite an opposite way: the role of the individual first, organization second. So, if I ask a Japanese what he does for a living, he says something like "I work for Sony." Then, I ask what he does at Sony and he says, "I'm an engineer." Studies show, however, that the answers are reversed in America. People say first, "I am an engineer" and then only if asked, they add "I work for General Electric." As for family structure and child-rearing, I have argued that aspects of both intimacy and of integrity are needed in a society, so in the Japanese family the boys more strongly gravitate toward the intimacy side and the girls are brought up to be more independent. Women in traditional Japan are the ones who have to leave their house and to join their husband's house when they marry. That means they have to transport their identity across different intimacy groups. It requires a strong sense of integrity to be able to do that. If her identity is attached to her own family, when she has to leave that family and join another family she is at a complete loss – the woman would have lost all of her identity. But if she has some core of integrity that is context-independent, she can take that with her from one family to the next. Secondly, women do not have business cards and Western feminists are quick to say, "See, women are unimportant, they do not have an identity!"; but if the identity of women is tied not so closely, in a holographic way, to the organization to which they belong, then the business card is irrelevant. So, as we can see, when examined cross-culturally the gender constructions are very complicated, and gender divisions in one culture do not have to necessarily correspond to those of the other.

AG: Let us now return to the role of philosophy which is said now to become a "servant" or "assistant" to Western science, that *philosophia perennis* has turned into scientific methodology. It has definitely stopped playing the role in Western society it used to play. In your article "Sushi, Science and Spirituality: The Views of Science in Modern Japanese Philosophy" you give an exciting example how a careful, attentive look at the nature – intimacy, if you want, worked better in developing the mechanism of VCR at the Japanese VCR producing company than did mathematical calculations and theoretical methodological strategies. Could you, please, comment on the

differences in the role of theoretical reasoning and practical attitude both in contemporary Western and in East Asian context?

TK: I think philosophy in the West has kind of lost its way. It used to be trying to get at the basic assumptions and methods needed for understanding life and living in the world, living with other fellow beings, living with nature, etc. Then the individual sciences could develop the practical details and applications. What happened was the development of, particularly, logical positivism in the West. It started in Great Britain (and Vienna), spread into the United States and then took over much of the Western world. In it we have the idea that somehow philosophy should be a scientific enterprise rather than a philosophical enterprise in the old sense, that philosophy is a kind of scientific thinking rather than science is a kind of philosophical thinking. (That scientists receive a PhD, a "doctor of philosophy," is a remnant of the old viewpoint.) This reversal, to my mind, was really fundamental to what happened to philosophy in the academy. This position was already expressed very well in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* when he gave a very narrow definition of words such that they should correspond in a one-to-one relationship with things or events. Then logic would perfectly model the way that the reality was put together. And that would be it – everything else that we speak of that does not fit that model. As he says in the last line of his *Tractatus*, "we must forever pass over it in silence." That phrase – that philosophy only is what we can talk about scientifically and everything else we should remain silent about – became a rallying flag of logical positivism. Even though Wittgenstein himself in his later writings explicitly rejected that view, it had an enormous impact on philosophy, particularly in the English-speaking world, but to some extent also on Continental philosophy as well. What has happened then, is that philosophy has become, in my model, mono-orientational. This is to say that philosophy only can see relations in one way. It limits itself to only one way of talking about reality. And in so doing it becomes only a kind of scientific thinking. Yet, the possibility of using the other orientation, even in technological and engineering context – the context that I am talking about in my article you have mentioned that includes the example of the invention of the home video tape recorder – this shows that things can be related in other ways. And, as a matter of fact, this has been a long tradition in Western philosophy!

It has also been the dominant tradition in most of the history of Japanese philosophy. In the modern Japanese context, what they have done with the idea of technology is in some ways to incorporate both: the more traditional intimacy foregrounded way alongside the Western scientific, analytic, more integrity-based model. Interestingly, and going back to our former topic, this was the way it used to be in America, at least until the 1940s. That is, Americans were successful in what they called "Yankee ingenuity": the ability to look at specific cases – not to develop new scientific theories

but to find new ways of applying scientific theories to practical things. Therefore, we found that so much of the great American inventiveness was done by people without scientific degrees: the Wright brothers invented the airplane and they were not aeronautical engineers but bicycle-makers; Thomas Edison had very little formal scientific training and he invented the light bulb; the phonograph-recorder, the film-projector – all of these things were invented by people who were not thinking through some scientific-theoretical model first but rather used the application and "tinkering model", as we called it, within their engineering process. And this was dominant in American science until the period of the late 1930s and into the 1940s and beyond. At that time America had experienced a wave of immigration by highly educated, very sophisticated, scientifically-oriented individuals. Many of them were Jewish refugees escaping Nazism – Einstein, for example, – who came to the United States so that they could pursue their science freely; they introduced the most theoretical aspects of science to America. And suddenly in American universities we taught a very theoretical model of science based on highly sophisticated mathematical reasoning. Gradually, from that period on, more and more Nobel prizes were won by Americans and no longer only Europeans, because the Americans had picked up this form of reasoning and developed it in their universities. This age of the cutting-edge science came to be called an emphasis on "basic science" (as opposed to "applied science"). Whether this science had immediate commercial application or any practical application was irrelevant. Increasingly, as American science dominated the more theoretical side, the practical application was left to be developed in places like Japan. "Yankee ingenuity" was switching to Japan! Americans were developing the theoretical models and the Japanese were finding the ways of turning these models into engineering projects. This scientific phenomenon led to the rise of the emergence of Japan as the center for high-tech engineering in manufacturing new products – electronic, automotive, optical, and so forth. However, fairly recently, in the last fifteen years or so, the Japanese have decided that they want to win Nobel prizes too. So, they have imported European and American scientists to train their young scientists how to do basic scientific research. The Japanese have, in fact, started winning more Nobel prizes as they focus more on the theoretical side that is not directly aimed at engineering and developing new products.

AG: Let us linger more on this topic of the practical side of knowledge, but this time in the Lithuanian cultural context. As you are already aware, there is a Center of Asian Studies at Vilnius University. Notwithstanding the fact that the community of Asian inhabitants in Lithuania is still very small, what practical perspective would you see in the activities of our Center, even though it is almost entirely humanities-oriented?

TK: I think it already has more practical importance than might be evident to many Lithuanian intellectuals. This importance derives from what will happen in the

economic and technological developments of the 21st century. There will be a massive and complex collaboration among the major world centers of engineering and scientific thinking. These centers obviously are not located only in America and Europe, but also in Japan and, increasingly, in India and China. You will find that major breakthroughs in science and technology will be in joint global enterprises that will be coordinated across Asian and Western lines. It is predicted that in ten years from now, there will be more websites in Chinese than in European languages. What are you going to tell your students: “Sorry, you cannot read these languages because we are only concentrating on the West”? They would inevitably be behind, as Western students in other countries are already learning those languages! Thus I think it is very important and valuable that in Vilnius University you have the Asian Studies Center for learning those languages. This will without any doubt help you not only to become more educated, but also to foster Lithuanian economical and technological development as a part of the European Union as well as a member of the global economy.

AG: Now let me turn to a completely other side of knowledge – to the so-called “unnecessary” sciences, the Humanities. It seems to be an increasing tendency to diminish resources, to diminish funding for humanities and arts; how can they justify themselves at the beginning of the 21st century, which tends to be more and more pragmatic?

TK: We could use two ways – the integrity-oriented methodology and the intimacy-oriented methodology – to argue why the humanities have to remain important. According to the integrity point of view, it is often maintained that science and technology are value-neutral. This standpoint has sometimes been interpreted to mean “scientists can do whatever they want, because they are not value-dependent”. This, of course, is ridiculous. Consider this analogy. Another phenomenon that supposedly has nothing to do with values is language: languages are neither full of value nor lack value. But what makes language moral or immoral, constructive or destructive for humanity, is what we *say* in the language. So, to apply the analogy, if we start thinking of science and technology not as something like a value-neutral language, but instead think of science in terms of what scientists say and doe, there always should remain such questions in science as “Should we?” or “Ought we?” And these questions should be answered in terms of what human beings have been to each other, have done to each other, and what they are and can be. The answers, therefore, are interwoven with the traditions of the humanities and arts. Even though the questions have to be answered on behalf of issues arising from science, science itself can never decide what it should do anymore than the grammar of a language can guarantee moral speech. In the end, the scientists must look for direction outside their own discipline.

AG: If I am correct, the well-known philosopher of science Stephen Toulmin has once said that after Oppenheimer there can be no such thing as the value-neutral science. Would this be close to your point of view?

TK: Toulmin is exactly correct. The idea that science can do whatever it wants because it is value-free is ridiculous. Why? Because what it does affects the entire world. So if the scientist refuses to answer the question of what should be done, the agenda for future directions in scientific and technological development should be set by humanists who are interested in the questions such as "What should be or ought to be?" and not only "What *can* we *do technically*?" So, even from the integrity standpoint, we have arrived at the conclusion that the directions for science should be influenced by people with a humanistic orientation.

By contrast, the intimacy standpoint assumes from the very start that there is no such thing in the world as the value-free knowing. Knowing always involves some kind of interaction with the thing that you know. Therefore, there is some kind of responsibility and morality that is built into the very act of knowledge. Thus, from the intimacy standpoint, the idea of value-free science is in fact an oxymoron, a contradiction: you can not *know* without *entering into* the thing that you are knowing or to the other person that you are knowing. There is an empathic form of knowing that is behind even the most fundamental or basic knowledge: as Heisenberg showed, even in knowing about the nature of the electron, the observer cannot be separated from the observed. If you want to view it into this more intimacy-based model – the model that Michael Polanyi talks about when he uses the term *tacit knowledge*, – from that standpoint humanities and science cannot be separated in the first place. It is not the matter of one overriding the other or one being separate from the other, but rather the obvious fact is that they cannot be separated. So, from either standpoint – that of either integrity or intimacy – science cannot be left as something that is value-free. In no way can it ignore the more humanistic values.

AG: One could imagine someone from the Anglo-Saxon analytical philosophy "camp" saying that claiming that the "intimacy model" should take more and more over knowledge amounts to claiming a more aesthetic and more romantic worldview. It was Nietzsche who pointed out the damaging impact of "Socratic rationalism" on Greek tragedy and the aesthetical worldview of ancient Greeks, on the healing power of the Myth or, if we translate it into your own terms, the "intimacy model", that helped Greek society to be at home with nature and with each other. As we have just finished the conference on "Art and World Religions", what would be your opinion about the prospects of art in the 21st century? Would you see art as one of the main "healing powers"?

TK: I think that there is a tremendous possibility with art but that art can lose its way just as easily as philosophy did. Art can become just a fractured, disjointed, disconnected, sparking response to every stimulus that comes by. That would give it a lifetime of nanoseconds and give us a glimpse of the world that is gone by the time the paint is dry. That is one kind of art – art so subjective that the observer feels that there is

no content there at all that has to be somehow listened to, but rather that the artwork itself is just another blinking neon sign pointing me in one direction that I can accept or reject and go off elsewhere any which way I want. If I do not like this piece of art, I turn to that piece of art, like changing the channels with the remote control on the television. Art can be all that and serve no useful function in ways that we were talking about in setting values for the 21st century. It could be the product of the 21st century and not something that drives the 21st century. Because the 21st century lends itself to this instantaneous gratification, we could have the aesthetic pleasure that lasts for a moment and then is gone without in any way trying to find something deeper in some values behind it.

On the other hand, art can be quite the opposite: art can search for those deepest resonances that come with understanding the artistic tradition up to now. This does not mean just being bound by that tradition, but also being responsive to the new conditions that we find ourselves in, in our present situation. In each case the past, the present and the future all come together, in the moment of the artist's setting the brush to canvas or the musician's writing the first note of the concerto, or the poet's first finding the words that spark the writing of the poem. In that moment there is the connectedness of the past, the present and the future. I fear today sometimes that art and certain kinds of philosophical criticism can be so busy deconstructing the past that they never listen to the past. However, that is not the real deconstruction, because you have to first take the construction, make it your own and only then deconstruct it. Only then you know the value of that on which you are building, even as you are deconstructing the manifestation of that in the past.

In Lithuania you have passed, hopefully forever, the period of Soviet art, the kind of art that serves only a preconceived ideological function. That leaves a vacuum. Nobody tells you what the ideology is that you are to serve: do you develop a new ideology? Or do you see art as in itself so creative that ideology reflects art rather than art reflects ideology? All of these are now open issues in a place like Lithuania. It will be very interesting to see whether art will lead us into the 21st century or whether it has so lost its soul that all it can do is to produce something like posthumous convulsions, mere neurological sparks left over from the past tradition, and a jerky, incoherent, unvisionary sense of the future. Which path will be taken is left to the generation of Lithuanian artists in the next decade or two.

AG: Your comment sounds rather Benjaminian to me; I mean his dictum that when art becomes secularized, when it frees itself from religion it inevitably falls into the lap of ideology, that it is very difficult for the art to be completely ideology-free. Let us turn now from art to religion for a while. Vytautas Kavolis has written an article called "The Humanisation of Morality and the 'Return of the Sacred'". What would you think will be the role of religions – institutionalized or non-institutionalized – in the future

world? Will morality become "humanized," secularized and based on universal human rights, globalized and unified throughout the nations, separating itself from any particular religion?

TK: The problem with religion is that its institutions very often reflect an aura that has been dead for a very long time. The institutional structures that religion finds itself entrapped in often become something that can no longer enliven. Instead those structures become a way to reinforce some status quo with all its reactionary aspects. On the other hand, when we think about the spirituality that led religious institutions, the religious spirit that was behind the original formation of those institutions, can that spirit be once again enlivened to generate new kinds of institutions and new kinds of values and new kinds of contexts? In English we have a saying: "To throw away the baby with the bath water". The spiritual impulse is that baby, just new-born, innocent, but capable of developing in such different ways. The dirty bath water is the water of religious institutions that has to be thrown away and renewed so that the baby once again can be itself and go out into the world clean and fresh, but yet still bringing with it some genetics and some of its past history and tradition. Religion has to be reborn into new kinds of religious institutions to suit the 21st century. The same way as art has to find new kinds of expressions, so religion has to find new kinds of expression. And as we saw in the conference, going back to the question of where art comes from and where religion comes from, there is a meeting point. So the sources for both religion and art are intimately related and discovering the source of one can very often lead to discovering the source of the other. In this way the task of going back to the inspiration at the beginning – of either art or religion – can be very much a joint enterprise.

AG: Thank you very much for your interview!

TK: It was my pleasure!

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