

THE ASYMMETRY OF HISTORICAL ACTUALITY: ITS DOUBLE FOCUSING ELLIPTIC STRUCTURE

Makoto OZAKI¹

ABSTRACT. *The classical Chinese idea of change, composed of negativity and positivity in opposition, implies the asymmetric rotation of the universe with the attainment of a higher triadic unity of the opposed elements. In modern physics the universe is conceived of as the distorted elliptic space with the double focus, being generated from the collapse of the symmetric balance between matter and contra-matter in the primary inception. In western intellectual history Plato's eternal ideas are contrasted to the Aristotelian actual individual as substance. For Hegel, history is the self-manifesting process of God, in which essence appears and potentiality becomes actuality, arriving at the state existence, and Heidegger prepares and waits for the coming of the last God in the other beginning concealed in the depth of the first beginning. As Schleiermacher and A. Ritschl expound, Christianity has the double focus of Jesus and the Kingdom of God in prolongation to the eschatological future. The Buddhist logic of non-duality does not exclude duality as well in alteration of the Buddha qua the effect and the Bodhisattva qua the cause in history. Nishida's notion of self-identity of absolute contradistinction as symmetry in the vertical static dimension of the eternal present differs from Tanabe's negative conversion in action aiming at a higher unification of the opposed, e.g. relativity and quantum theories, Christianity and Buddhism in the historical development. For Tanabe, eternity in potentiality occurs as an actual event in history through the mediation of human subjective action in the way of self-negation. The fact that the hidden eternal origin is revealed by the historical Buddha might bear a resemblance to the retroactive establishment of the eternal divinity of the human Jesus from the historical perspective. All these facts are indicative of the asymmetry of the elliptic structure of historical actuality with the double focus.*

KEYWORDS: *asymmetry, double focusing ellipsis, Jesus/Kingdom of God, change, Buddha/Bodhisattva, cause/effect, eternity/history*

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¹ Sanyo Gakuen University, Okayama, JAPAN.

Introduction

Why do the sun and the moon change alternately? This fact is fundamental to the ancient Chinese thought of change which is composed of negativity and positivity and applicable to not only natural phenomena but also human affairs in general. The mutual rotating movement of the sun and the moon is supposed to be caused not by the symmetry of a perfect circle with the only one central point, but by the asymmetry of the double focusing elliptic structure of the cosmos. This may also be supported by the modern physical theories of relativity and disparity. Whitehead's analysis of experience into subject and object with the irreversibly asymmetric time of the immortal past accumulation is a speculative cosmology reflective of modern relativity and quantum theories.

The elliptic structure of the cosmos with the double focus might be analogous to the Christian theological scheme of Jesus and the Kingdom of God prolonged to the future end as well. The fact that the human way of thinking is prevailed by the dichotomy may be suggestive of such a double focusing movement in history which is analyzable into the opposition or reaction between, e.g., Plato and Aristotle, Confucianism and Taoism, Nishida and Tanabe in the modern Japanese philosophy, and so on. Heidegger's ideas of the other beginning and the last God vis-à-vis the first beginning might correspond to the double focusing asymmetric structure in the Christian theological background. The Buddhist logic of non-duality and duality, Emptiness and appearance, might also be not exempted from such a scheme. The Aristotelian concepts of potentiality and actuality, together with the triadic unity of them, i.e. *entelecheia*, are highly significant in consideration of the matter in question. In keeping with the general strategy of the Biocosmological Association, Aristotle's *Organon* Kosmology (among the Three main Types of rationality) – is treated as “essentially bipolar, dynamic, cyclic, inherently changeable (driven *from within*), triadic, ascending; while the latter (Monolinear) is unipolar (reducible to Plato's Dualism) and uniform, and static (although progressive), and which is driven *from without* (by external causes and forces).”²

All this might be parallel to the idea of change entailing the integration of opposed elements in the prototypical dialectic. The idea of Incarnation, i.e. God's eternal being in historical becoming in the double focus of potentiality and actuality might be implicit of the elliptic structure of the moving universe. The history of human ideas displays the dichotomic opposition and its further development of the triadic unification in the asymmetric direction of the elliptic movement.

1. Change and motion (μεταβολή και κίνηση)

Einstein's general theory of relativity expresses the universe as the double focusing elliptic space, i.e., the Riemannian space. According to the theory of disparity advocated by the two Japanese Nobel prize physicists Dr. Kobayashi and Dr. Masukawa, although matter and contra-matter were equally balanced, i.e., symmetric, at the very beginning of the cosmos, nevertheless, then matter has prevailed over contra-matter with the result of presenting our cosmos. This idea

² Khroutski, 2016, p. 398.

might be implicitly influenced by the most ancient Chinese thought of change which is entailed by the alternation of the positive and the negative elements. Therefore, the idea of God (kami) originally means the infinite multiplicity of change in the whole universe, i.e., the immanent principle, contrary to the western idea of the transcendent God.

The idea of change, constituted by the opposed elements of the positive and the negative, is the proto-type of the dialectic integrating the opposed elements into a higher stage. But, why does change occur? This is because the entire universe is prevailed by the alternation of the opposed elements of the negative and the positive, and they are not in the symmetric balance but rather in the asymmetric movement. If the universe were the perfect circle with the one center, then there would be no movement. But, on the contrary, the universe is always in the movement, and this is entailed by the disparity or asymmetry of the opposed elements. As a matter of fact, the cosmos is not static but dynamic in character as shown in the fact that the sun and the moon alternately change into each other.

The ancient Chinese idea of change is based upon the observation of their rotary movement. The natural fact is also reflected on the human behavior as well, particularly in the language in which the sentences are structured by the pair, and hence the way of thinking is expressed in terms of the pair of the opposed elements such as principle and fact, matter and spirit, essence and appearance, substance and activity, cause and effect, origin and trace, eternity and time or history, potentiality and actuality, being and becoming or event, identity and difference, subject and object, and so on. These two opposed elements are not equally retained, but on the contrary, move and change into a higher dimension of the integration of them with the attainment of a harmony as peace resulted from the opposition or conflict. This is the proto-type of the subsequent course of intellectual history, including even Buddhist thought.

2. Essence and Appearance

The Buddhist logic of non-duality signifies the symmetry of the intrinsic essence, while at the same time displaying the duality in the extrinsic appearance. If the Buddha or God and human beings were identical to each other, i.e., symmetric, then there would be no need for Him to incarnate in the human form. Even though God or the Buddha and man are essentially identical with each other, however, as a matter of fact they are different from each other, and the difference should be elevated to the level of identifying of them. Although they are identical to each other in essence, nevertheless, they are separated from each other in actuality, and in need of further unification of them to realize the original essence of self-identity. There arises the movement of realizing the potentiality into actuality, essence into appearance in the space-time dimension of existence. When the self-identity of essence and appearance, potentiality and actuality, without difference, is realized, it is the perfect symmetry of them in a circle with the one center: in other words, the eternal present or the Aristotelian concept of *entelecheia* as the opposed unity of potentiality and actuality.

In the temporal course of actuality, however, there is always the difference between them, and this entails the delay of attainment of self-identity of them. In fact, there are the two focal points in Christianity, i.e., Jesus and the Kingdom of God; whereas Jesus believes in the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, the latter is postponed to the indefinite future end of the world history accompanied by the second coming of Jesus as the Christ. There is a delay as the difference between Jesus himself and the future coming of the Kingdom of God. Christianity has the double focusing structure of the asymmetric ellipsis in the actual course of history. The difference between Jesus and the future coming of the Kingdom of God is termed *différance* à la Derrida. The self-identity of God or the Buddha and human beings in the eternal original essence is to be realized as the reconciliation of them in the historical existence of space and time as the telos or aim of history as the recovery or retrieval of the lost identity.

3. The Other Beginning

The double focusing structure of ellipsis is relevant to Heidegger's idea of the other beginning vis-à-vis the first beginning as the pre-Socratic origin of western history of metaphysics. For Heidegger, Being itself at the first beginning has not yet fully been revealed but still deeply hidden up to now, and hence is expected to reveal itself completely in the present era of a new history whereby the last God may appear. The tension between the first and the other beginning has been strained and remained until the present time, and hence the other beginning as well as the last God are delayed in history. Even though the other beginning is not different from the first one in the original depth, however, they are distinct from each other on the surface. When the other beginning is realized, it is no other than the first beginning as fully revealed, and this is the *entelecheia* as the complete reality à la Aristotle. But in effect the other beginning is still potential in the present. Therefore, in so far as the first and the other beginnings are opposed to each other, they are asymmetric in structure in the historical process. If they come to convergence, they are turned out into the perfect same one circle. In the temporal process of sequent events they are different or even *différance* à la Derrida, while being essentially identical with each other in the deep original dimension the realization of which is anticipated to come in the indefinite future.

There might be a parallel between the Christian dichotomy of Jesus and the Kingdom of God and the Heideggerian opposition of the first and the other beginning on the historical horizon. When the Kingdom of God is realized in history, Jesus comes again as the resurrected Christ, and hence there is no tension or delay as the difference between them. So, when the last God comes to us, it is the actualization of potentiality in fullness. In other words, the hidden origin of the first beginning is realized as the other beginning of a new history together with the coming of the last God. The hidden essence of the first beginning is transited into the other beginning as the same one ultimately. This is the dialectical development of the duality of the first and the other beginning, culminating in the appearance of the last God so far unseen. The transition and movement from the asymmetry of the double focus in ellipsis to

the symmetry of the one centered circle is the triadic unification of the double focal point in the end.

4. Identity and Difference

The double focusing elliptic structure of history may be found out in the appearances of the Indian Vedantic philosophy of Sankara's doctrine of *Advaita*, i.e., non-duality, and the subsequent Ramanuja's doctrine of the limited non-duality, Confucius represented by being vis-à-vis Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu asserting nothingness, Shushigaku in search of the universal principle vis-à-vis Yomeigaku orienting towards practice, and Nishida's contemplation of truth vis-a-vis Tanabe's active mediation in history within the ambit of modern Japanese Kyoto School, etc. For example, whereas Nishida's basic idea of the self-identity of absolute contradistinction reflects the symmetric static circle, Tanabe's concept of perpetual negative conversion refers to the asymmetric movement of subjective action towards the future as a reaction to the former. Nishida's starting point of pure experience of non-duality of subject and object is the symmetry in structure before diverging into opposition, while Tanabe stands by practical action in the direction of the future ideal to be realized. Therefore, on the one hand, Nishida stresses the eternal now in which the past and the future are in coincidence with each other without distinction, i.e., the perfect symmetric circle, and on the other hand, Tanabe places the emphasis on the subjective free action of the individual in cooperation with the others in the socio-historical dimension of human existence. History has the linear structure from the past to the future as the cumulative propensity for irreversible current. On this point, Tanabe's thought may be akin to A.N. Whitehead's concept of process as the irreversible time towards the future based upon the past objective immortality. While Nishida contemplates the inner truth of the historical world with intuitive wisdom, Tanabe strives to realize the truth by practical action in the actual extension of space and time. In contrast to Nishida's symmetric position of the vertical dimension of essential non-duality, Tanabe's one pertains to the asymmetric horizontal direction towards the future in the form of a triadic dialectical unification of the opposition between the ideal and the real, perpetually attaining the opposed unity of potentiality and actuality in every present time of history in the last analysis.

Even though Heidegger's idea of the other beginning vis-à-vis the first beginning is asymmetric in character, however, as Habermas and Marcuse point out, his search for Being itself tends to be involved in the concept of essence as a-temporal static origin without historicity. And this criticism may be valid to Nishida's standpoint of the integral intuition of the whole in which opposition is the same as coincidence, difference or contradistinction is nothing but identity as the symmetric structure of a perfect circle, despite his allegation of the historical formation of the world. In contrast, Tanabe's standpoint is the active mediation of the past to the future in and through negation as an infinitesimal realization of eternity in the ever present with the asymmetric tendency of irreversible time. So, Tanabe's grand project of a dialectical unification of Christianity, Japanese Buddhism and Marxism has the propensity for asymmetric integration into which the three elements or moments are

negated and sublated in the historical development with the attainment of a complete reality of hidden potentiality in anticipation. Even if so, however, it has not yet arrived at in history in the same way as the Heideggerian last God. By contrast, in Nishida's perspective, there is no such a creation of a new form of world religion resulting from historical progress, but rather he merely remains to contemplate his own inner essence intensively, i.e., the Zen practice.

5. Cause and Effect

The contrast between Nishida and Tanabe may be parallel to the opposed standpoints of the Lotus Sutra: one is truth as appearance and the other is the revelation of eternity in history. The former is static and symmetric, whereas the latter refers to dynamic movement from potential eternity to actual event in history with the asymmetric structure, and hence the Lotus Sutra constitutes the self-identification of difference and identity. While the former is expressed by the Tendai's position of intellectual contemplation of truth, the latter is represented by Nichiren who proclaims the reincarnation of the anticipated Bodhisattva in attainment to come in the post-perishing of the historical Buddha *Sakyamuni* as the attained effect. In terms of the relationship between eternity and time, the latter perspective might be highly significant in the consideration of the historical entity and eternal origin in their reciprocal mediation in and through the personal activity of human existence. According to Hegel, although cause and effect are identical with each other, the cause is more primal than the effect resulted from the cause. Here it is obvious that causality has the double structure of non-duality and duality, i.e. symmetry as well as asymmetry within itself. The relation of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva corresponds to causality in terms of the double focusing elliptic asymmetry on the historical horizon: the Buddha on the ontological status of effect and the Bodhisattva on the ontological status of cause, making asymmetry between them, though being identical with each other ultimately. After completing the saving activity of the Buddha, he turns out to transform himself into the Bodhisattva as the cause evoking the potentiality to actuality in action as the norm or paradigm to follow up of others in his salvation history. In other words, the Buddha is converted into the Bodhisattva in and through self-negation in terms of the principle of Emptiness (*sunyata*) which perpetually empties itself. This negative conversion from effect to cause signifies the return to the origin from which effect arose, and this occurs on the cosmic scale beyond human history on earth, according to the Lotus Sutra. As Heidegger asserts that the primordial origin occurs at the end and Hegel holds that only at the end is the beginning first achieved, the Buddha attained should be returned to his primordial origin of the Bodhisattva in attainment to recommence his saving activity for others in the entire universe.

Even in Christian theology, God does not directly operate in the human world but only through the mediation of Jesus Christ as the Incarnation of God which is the self-negated other form, i.e. *kenosis*. The Buddha also takes the secondary form of the Bodhisattva indirectly to save human beings who are situated in the place of innocence without hearing any Buddha's voice or teaching. As God humiliates

Himself in the form of human being, so the Buddha also does not directly appear as such, but rather assimilates himself to human beings, transfiguring himself into the other mode of existence. This is the *upaya* (hoben), i.e. the expedient being vis-à-vis the true being with the aim of promoting other beings to attain their own potential Buddhahood, and this is the way of the Bodhisattva practice. Even though the Bodhisattva is inferior to the Buddha on the rank, nonetheless, they are identical with each other in essence, but only in appearance differing from each other with the asymmetric direction of striving to realize the potentiality as the actuality.

6. Eternity and History

History is the field where eternity is revealed through the mediation of human action, and this triadic structure is symbolized by the Bodhisattva who is in search of attaining Buddhahood. For Hegel, too, God emanates Himself in different modes of being, manifesting Himself in other forms in history through the negative mediation, maintaining the self-identity in otherness; the last form of the Divine self-manifestations is supposed to be the state existence in his time which is assumed to be in accord with the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth.

As Heidegger's other beginning is the repetition and retrieval of the hidden origin of the first beginning more primordially, so upon the Buddha's termination of salvific activity at the last time of revealing his own eternal origin hidden so far, he stands on the same status as ordinary human beings in the other form of the Bodhisattva than himself to repeat the soteriological activity of attainment of enlightenment to extend his fruit to all other beings who remain in the future after the extinction of the Buddha attained. This might be tenable in terms of the self-negating conversion in action entailed by the principle of Emptiness *qua* eternity performing its perpetual self-negation in history. When the historical Buddha's eternal origin is revealed, the event of the eternal return of the same occurs in such a way that the Buddha restarts his new course of salvation for those who have never attained enlightenment. This is the coincidence of the eternal origin and the historical present as the cyclic return of the effect to its cause as the primordial origin for opening of a new era of the following history.

The return of the end to the beginning, of the last to the first, is also the general principle of ontological time commonly elucidated in classical Chinese such as Confucius, Lao-tzu and so on, though classical Chinese thought never goes beyond the mundane world affairs contrary to Buddhist thought. In this regard, Heidegger also confines his scope of view within western history, i.e. finitude, never reaching infinite eternity.

In Hegel, the Infinite Absolute appears in the finite relative existence as the self-becoming of truth in the historical process, i.e. the self-manifestations of essence in appearance. This may echo to the Buddhist relationship between essence and appearance, substance and activity in such a way that the eternal Absolute can appear in diversity of relative finite beings, and hence truth as essence and its multiple appearances in space and time are identical to each other in the ultimate dimension. Therefore, it is even asserted by Nichiren that all saints and wise men born in the

world are none other than the transfigurations of the one eternal original Buddha in the end. This assertion is obviously entailed by the logic of non-duality of the mutual identity of one and many, though actually truth as essence and its appearance as operation are different on the plane of space and time, i.e., on the horizontal process of history with the asymmetric direction structured by the double focus. That is, essence does not appear at once as a whole, but rather gradually step by step achieves its aim in the temporal process of the world. Even so, however, in Hegel the Absolute Infinite is presupposed at the outset and emanates Itself in history in and through self-negation, whereas in Buddhist thought the eternal origin has been concealed until the historical Buddha discloses and reveals it at the last stage of his soteriological activity of the immensely long journey. In short, the perspectives are contrary to each other: from above of eternity or from below of history.

7. Religion Itself and its Concrete Forms

Schleiermacher makes a distinction between religion itself and its multiplicity of forms, i.e. individual historical religions from the perspective of individual's expression and embodiment of the infinite divine reality. Although those concrete religions appeared in history may contribute to the whole of self-manifestations of divine reality, it may be uncertain whether there is the difference or the same in value, in the formation of the subsequent development of different religions, according to Goichi Miyake. The Swedish philosopher of religion Boström also distinguishes religion as such from its historical appearances in terms of substance and activity, and claims the superiority of Christianity among them. This kind of distinction of religion as such and its particularized forms in history might be parallel to the Buddhist logic of non-duality and duality, essence and appearance, in that the eternal original Buddha assumes the diverse forms in history for edifying human beings to attain their own Buddhahood by their own practice of the Bodhisattva way in accordance with their own cultural and historical circumstances.

Schelling also holds the multiplicity of advancing self-revelations of God in history, and this is compatible with the Indo-Buddhist idea of incarnation or *avatara* in general. For Vedantic thought, even Jesus is included in the series of incarnations of God, and hence it is not curious for Indians but suspicious of its only oneness. Even within Judeo-Christian tradition, there are the two opposed views of Jesus: one is the prophet, and the other the Christ as the Incarnation of God. While Judaism is in search of the Messiah in the infinitely prolonged future, Christianity recognized Jesus as the expected Messiah already come in the present. The difference between them has the affinity with the Buddhist view of the possibility of reincarnation of the eternal original Buddha on the turning point of history in the post-era of the perished Buddha. In terms of essence and appearance, substance and activity, it would be tenable to assert such a claim in comparison to Heidegger's idea of the other beginning as the potential to be activated to actual entity as well as in analogy with the Aristotelian concept of *entelecheia* as the dynamic unification of the potentiality and actuality in the movement.

The double focusing elliptic structure of movement might be applicable to the

relationship between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva, the effect and the cause in reverse, by returning to the primordial origin from the attained actuality, as the cyclic return of the universe or multiverse, as suggested by the Oxford physicist Dr. Penrose's theory of the identity of the beginning and the end of the universe as cycles of time. Even Jesus's divinity is retrospectively recognized from the viewpoint of the resurrection, though the ontological order is reversed from the epistemological one. From below of history, from the end of the world as the given fact, we can recognize the ontological priority in the way of return in retrospection. This might be because human beings are inevitably involved in the asymmetric situation of historical actuality with the double focus in the last resort.

Conclusion

Plato's transcendent eternal ideas vis-à-vis Aristotle's individual existence as substance immanent in actuality, the eternal God and the historical Jesus, Jesus and the Kingdom of God to come in the future end, the other beginning vis-à-vis the first beginning in Heidegger, Karl Barth's idea of the eternal pre-existence of Jesus in the vertical static dimension vis-à-vis the Messianic expectation for the future arrival in Moltmann and Pannenberg, the irreversibly asymmetric future-oriented time based upon the accumulation of the objective immortality of the past in Whitehead, the Buddha as the past effect and the Bodhisattva as the cause in action and the eternal return of the same, Nishida's concept of the Place of Absolute Nothingness as the self-identity of contradistinction vis-à-vis Tanabe's active conversion in negation in the historical process, might be comparable to the double focusing elliptic structure in asymmetry reflecting the rotary movement of the universe, which is constituted by the opposition between the positive and the negative elements with the triadic integration of them in the changing process, as suggested by the classical Chinese idea of Change and the modern relativity and disparity physics as well.

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