How Western Philosophy Was Received in Japan Compared to Western Music*

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Abstract: *Western philosophy and music came to Japan at around the same time when Japan opened her border after two and a half centuries of seclusion. There is a certain parallelism in the developments of both in modern Japan; until the 1960s both Japanese philosophers and composers had been much preoccupied with creating works which represented Japanese national character, but this ceased to be their main concern thereafter. I argue that this change was caused by the decline of the ideology of nationalism on one hand, and the radical reconsideration of the nature of music and philosophy on the other.*

Despite their parallel development Western music and Western philosophy have come to occupy different places in modern Japan. I end the paper with some thoughts on what may have brought about this difference, and one proposal for the future of philosophy in Japan.

1

I have recently read three thick volumes that deal with the history of "classical music"[1] in postwar Japan[2]. While I was reading them, I was constantly reminded of the history of Japanese philosophy during the same period.

One striking fact I learned from them is that, even as late as the postwar period, the most important question for a Japanese composer for many years was

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[1] The name "classical music" here is used in distinction to "popular music". It goes without saying that this way of marking the distinction between the genres of music is unsatisfactory; for one thing, some "classical music" is not classical but contemporary in its origin, and some "popular music" is not popular at all. Other names like "art music" and "serious music" have similar shortcomings.

[2] [Nagaki 2010], [Nihon-sengo 2007a], and [Nihon-sengo 2007b].

how to express something specifically Japanese in a work composed in the style of Western modern music which had come to Japan in the late 19th century.

A similar situation held in philosophy; it was an important motive in Japanese philosophy to achieve some sort of synthesis of traditional Japanese or broadly Oriental philosophies and newly imported Western philosophy, even though there had been a backlash just after the defeat of Japan against a "nationalistic" tendency during the war years.

In this connection, an observation which I find particularly interesting is that a big change in postwar Japanese music took place around 1970, after which many Japanese composers ceased to seek consciously for something Japanese in their work. The reason why this observation has a special interest to me is that, when several years ago I had occasion to think about the development of a philosophical language in Japan, I came to the conclusion that it was not in the prewar era, as is generally thought, but in the 1960's that such a language came to maturity in Japan[3]. The above observation about the music scene in postwar Japan suggests another parallelism between philosophy and music: philosophy in Japan freed itself from the obsession with things specifically or essentially Japanese only in the late 1960s, when we finally came to possess a philosophically matured language.

Of course, there are many differences between music and philosophy. First, just as any other culture, Japan had its own musical tradition before Western music came. This traditional music is called *hō-gaku* (邦楽) and had been a part of everyday life of a Japanese until a half century ago. It greatly differs from Western modern music in its tone system, instruments and vocalization. Still, no one would refuse to call it *on-gaku* (音楽), a Japanese word for music in general.

Although Japan had also a philosophical tradition derived from Buddhism and Confucianism before Western philosophy was introduced, a Japanese word for philosophy, *tetsu-gaku* (哲学)[4] was coined to designate a learning that was thought never to have existed in Japan. Thus, those people who first used this term emphasized the difference between Western philosophy and traditional schools of thought like Buddhism and Confucianism rather than the similarities between them. Even now in the 21st century, it is common that *tetsu-gaku* (哲学) is exclusively used for philosophical activity that is supposed to have its origin in the Western

[3] I proposed this hypothesis in a session at the World Congress of Philosophy at Athens in 2013. See [Iida 2013].

[4] Although *on-gaku* and *tetsu-gaku* seem to have *gaku* in common, it is not really so, as you can see from the difference between the Chinese characters 楽 and 学.

world, and that another word *shi-sō* (思想) is reserved for other philosophical traditions that originated in China or India.

Another difference between music and philosophy is a more general one. Philosophical activity should be conducted in some particular language, just as its results should be expressed in one. If one wishes to understand a philosophical work that is not expressed in one's own language, a translation is necessary. Some might compare different tone systems with different languages, but there is no need for anything similar to translation between languages for appreciating the music that belongs to a different tradition.

In the history of modern music in Japan you can find many attempts to incorporate melodies or rhythms of traditional music into a piece composed in the Western style, as well as reverse attempts to introduce a Western musical form to a piece of traditional music. These attempts are essentially different from the translations in philosophy which try to express a concept that is originally expressed in another language in one's own language.

It is true, however, that language in the ordinary sense is very important in one central area of music, namely, vocal music. In it, words and music are closely linked to each other. Frequently, performing a song originally composed for words in one language with words in another poses a big problem. Not only that. The rhythm and intonation of a language have a great effect on the music of the people who speak it. Hence, it has been one of the tasks of a Japanese composer to accommodate Western styles of music to the Japanese language.

In this paper, by considering the similarities and differences between the acceptance of Western music and that of Western philosophy in modern Japan, I hope to shed some light on the place of philosophy in our present society. For that purpose, I will proceed in the following way. In the next two sections, many parallelisms between the reception of Western modern music and that of Western philosophy will be pointed out, first, in the prewar period (§2), and then in the postwar period (§3). In §4, I take up the question why the coming to maturity of a philosophical language in Japan coincided in time with philosophy's growing out of the obsession with what is Japanese. In the last two sections, I discuss what has made the difference between the fates of Western music and philosophy in modern Japan.

2

In the middle of the 19th century, Japan opened her border to the outside world after she had closed it two and a half centuries before. During that period of seclusion, Western medicine and sciences like astronomy and chemistry had not been unknown in Japan, but opening the country brought about a great change. The West that Japan encountered for the first time in two and a half centuries had a powerful presence with an enormous military power, which was made possible by the Scientific Revolution and the subsequent Industrial Revolution.

It was absolutely necessary for the newly formed Meiji government to develop domestic industries so that it could create armed forces that were strong enough to stand up to the Western powers. For that, the government tried to import Western learning and technology in a short time. There were two ways to do that; either by inviting a foreigner who had such knowledge and was able to teach it, or sending a Japanese overseas in order to learn it and teach it to others after he or she came back to Japan. Both ways were tried in any area that Japan was thought to need to learn from the West, and philosophy and music were no exception.

Let us start with those Japanese who were sent to Western countries. For philosophy, the most important figure was Nishi Amane (1829-1897), who is sometimes called "the father of modern Japanese philosophy". He stayed in the Netherlands from 1862 to 1865. Though his official mission was to study jurisprudence, the knowledge of which was thought essential to deal with Western countries, he had an interest in Western philosophy and studied it privately during his stay in the Netherlands. After he came back to Japan, he spread Western philosophy through lectures and writings, in one of which he coined the word *tetsu-gaku* as a translation of "philosophy", which subsequently became established practice.

As for music, a similar figure must be Izawa Shūji (1851-1917), who played a decisive role in introducing Western music to the educational system of Japan and was the principal of Tokyo Ongaku Gakkō (Tokyo Music School), which later became Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku (Tokyo University of Arts). He was sent to the United States from 1874 to 1877 for the purpose of studying its educational system. It was his experience there that made him realize the importance of musical education[5].

[5] For the crucial role which Izawa played in the introduction of Western music to Japan, see [Okunaka 2008].

The two pioneers, one in philosophy and the other in music, had also a keen interest in the latest ideas in the West. This is shown by the fact that Nishi translated J. S. Mill's *Utilitarianism* (1861) in 1877 and that Izawa translated T. Huxley's *On the Origin of Species* (1863) in 1889.

As the names of Mill and Huxley suggest, German influence had not become overwhelming yet, but it would be so by the end of the 19th century both in philosophy and music. One important factor which contributed to the change was the existence of foreign teachers who were brought to Japan to teach these subjects. Among them, the most famous was Raphael von Koeber (1848-1923), a German-Russian, who came to Japan in 1893 and taught philosophy at Tokyo Teikoku Daigaku (Tokyo Imperial University, the predecessor of the present Tokyo University) until 1914. He was also a pianist with professional training and taught at Tokyo Ongaku Gakkō, which hired a number of German teachers as well.

Up to the end of the Meiji Era (1868-1912), Japan had been too preoccupied with importing Western philosophy and music, and it did not produce any original philosophical work or musical composition. It is generally thought that the change came with the 1911 publication of *Zen no Kenkyū* (An Inquiry into the Good) by Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) in philosophy, and the 1914 premiere of two musical compositions by Yamada Kōsaku (1886-1965): the symphony in F major *Kachidoki to Heiwa* (Triumph and Peace) and the symphonic poem *Mandara no Hana* (Flowers of Mandara). It may not be just a coincidence that the two dates are only three years apart.

In spite of the difference between philosophy and music, it is not difficult to draw similarities between these works. In them, Nishida and Yamada both succeeded in expressing some core parts of their personalities which had been formed through their experiences of having lived through the period in which Japan underwent many changes. And they did so in frameworks which were influential at that time in the West: in the case of Nishida, various contemporary trends in the West which fell under *Lebensphilosophie* in a broad sense, and the late Romantic musical language in the case of Yamada. These two people had been the central figures in their respective fields until the end of World War II, and their influences were strongly felt even after it.

There are dissimilarities between the two fields as well. In the case of music, there was a movement among Japanese traditional musicians – in particular, performers of shakuhachi (bamboo flute) and of the string instruments called *sankyoku* (三曲), that is, shamisen, sō (or koto), and kokyū – to create a new style of

music inspired by Western music. The most famous among them is Miyagi Michio (1894-1956), whose composition *Haru no Umi* (The Sea in Spring, 1929) is well-known. His first compositions were heard in a concert in 1919, not long after the Japan premiere of Yamada Kōsaku's orchestral music.

Miyagi Michio was at the center of the modernizing movement of traditional music in the 1920s and 1930s. Its aim was to create "New Japanese Music" by introducing new ideas from Western music to traditional Japanese music. In order to realize this, various attempts were made to improve traditional instruments, make an ensemble of Western and Japanese instruments, and introduce Western compositional methods[6]. But, in the end, it had to succumb to the current of the times, according to which the only music warranting that name should be music based on the modern Western tone system.

Can we find a similar development in philosophy? There was a modernizing movement among Buddhist thinkers, but few must have thought that it was a movement to create "New Japanese Philosophy" like "New Japanese Music". It is rare even now that a modern Japanese thinker who has a Buddhist background is called a *tetsu-gaku-sya* (哲学者, philosopher); there is another word for such a person, namely, *shi-sō-ka* (思想家, thinker)[7].

Rather, the people who wished to create "Japanese Philosophy" intentionally were found among those whose starting points were in Western philosophy. It seems that the philosophers of the Kyoto School, including Nishida Kitarō, thought that Western philosophy was the only framework for philosophy, and tried to incorporate into it some elements which were specifically Japanese or Oriental.

3

The defeat of Japan in 1945 brought about great changes both in music and philosophy.

First of all, Marxist thought came back to life after its suppression before and during the war, and it wielded a strong influence on music as well as philosophy. In music, on one hand, this took the form of activities like mobilizing musicians for

[6] See [Chiba 2007].

[7] [Sueki 2004] studied how Japanese Buddhist thinkers in the Meiji era came to grips with Western philosophy. In it they are called *shi-sō-ka* (thinkers), not *tetsu-gaku-sha* (philosophers).

Rō-on (Worker's Union for Music), an organization for bringing music to workers, and forming workers' choirs through Utagoe-Undō (Singing Movement), and on the other, it set composers the task of creating music which was "accessible" and dealt with "progressive" themes.

Secondly, Japanese composers came to know what was happening musically in Europe after a decade's forced ignorance. They also had a first contact with American musical culture through the occupation forces. New compositional methods like Twelve-tone music, *musique concrete*, and electronic music, were introduced and tried. This marked the beginning of "avant-garde" music in Japan.

As the Cold War deepened, the contrast between these two trends in postwar music became more pronounced. Composers and performers who promoted "avant-garde" music actively campaigned for their music in order to secure its audience, but it was a forgone conclusion that it could not get a wide audience considering its nature. In spite of the support of NHK, that is, Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), its audience remained small; it consisted of those who got tired of the limited repertoire of Western music concerts, which had become more commonplace in metropolitan areas by then.

On the other hand, aiming for "accessible" music with "progressive" themes hardly agreed with creating an innovative musical style. It encouraged compositions that used folk material supposed to have roots in the people, and hence, the prewar concerns with what is Japanese in music lived on among the "progressive" composers. This made a strong contrast to the musical "avant-garde" that was of international character. For most of the composers of this group, the prewar concerns were no longer theirs, and they learned to use traditional elements in their compositions as just one part of their material.

A similar contrast can be clearly seen in philosophy during the same period. One important factor that contributed to this situation was that logical positivism, which had been known before the war without getting any academic footing, came again to Japan from the United States. It was a philosophical movement which did not find much value in the traditional philosophy, and in this respect it had much in common with the avant-garde music of postwar Europe. Two books introducing logical positivism were translated in the mid1950s, namely, H. Reichenbach's *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (originally published in 1951) and A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936).

Both Marxism and logical positivism professed a philosophy based on a "scientific" point of view, and claimed that philosophy had the same universality –

and validity, irrespective of the differences between people or culture – that sciences had. They differed, however, in what they thought was the paradigm of a science; for Marxism it was a social science like economics, while it was a natural science like physics for logical positivism. This difference led the members of the two schools to different ways of understanding themselves as philosophers in modern Japan. On one hand, the philosophers influenced by logical positivism or analytical philosophy had no particular interest in creating a Japanese philosophy with distinguishing features, because they thought that there could no more be a Japanese philosophy than a Japanese physics. In contrast, it must have been an important task for most of the Marxist philosophers to understand the local, that is, Japanese situation, and adjust their philosophical activities to the "reality" of modern Japanese society, including the traditional thought it had inherited.

The period from the 1960's to the beginning of the 1970's saw several changes in both music and philosophy, the importance of which was not apparent at the time but is now clear with the knowledge of later developments. In music John Cage's visit to Japan in the fall of 1962 has been singled out as a decisive event that brought about such changes among Japanese composers[8]. By posing the question "What is music?" he helped Japanese composers to recognize anew that Western modern music is not the only music there is and that it is not universal either. Such a recognition freed them from the obsessive quest for a "Japanese" music in the Western musical idiom; it was an illusion to think that this was a worthwhile goal.

We may discern a similar development in philosophy from a number of books that were published in the same period. They clearly showed that it was possible to do philosophy without any obsession with being a Japanese philosopher. By this time, analytical philosophy had taken the place of the logical positivism in vogue one generation ago. The former discarded many dogmatic elements of the latter and started to deal with much wider subjects in philosophy beyond the philosophy of mathematics and natural sciences. Beginning with two books published in 1963, *Tetsugaku-teki Bunseki* (Philosophical Analysis) by Ichii Saburō (1922-1989) and *Gendai ni okeru Tetsugaku to Ronri* (Philosophy and Logic Today) by Sawada Nobushige (1916-2006), continuing with the three volume anthology *Kagaku Jidai no Tetsugaku* (Philosophy in the Scientific Age, 1967) with contributions from many philosophers and scientists, and culminating with *Gengo, Chikaku, Sekai* (Language, Perception and the World, 1971), the first collection of papers by Ohmori Shōzō (1921-1997), this school of philosophy produced many

[8] [Nihon-sengo 2007a], p.340.

influential works, which definitely showed that there was a way of doing philosophy which was neither studying some particular figure in the history of Western philosophy nor reflecting on the self in the style of the Kyoto School.

As I am going to argue in the next section, it is no coincidence that a philosophical language in Japan finally came to maturity in this period. Though within a small circle only, it became possible for the first time to conduct a philosophical discussion using a language which was not far from everyday one, without citing any past philosophers or current trends in overseas philosophy.

4

The time of the modernization of Japan, namely, the latter half of the 19th century and the earlier half of the 20th, was also, from a global perspective, a time of nationalism. Nationalism had various manifestations in the cultural realm. In literature, the idea of national literature was promoted in many parts of the world, and it was also imported to Japan. Thus, many Japanese writers tried to create a new form of literature that could be called the literature of modern Japan. Such a trend was even clearer in music. Musical nationalism was the dominant ideology in music throughout the 19th century and beyond. It was natural that Japanese composers embraced this ideology together with Western modern music.

I suspect that the Japanese philosophers who were not satisfied with only learning what Western philosophers past and present taught must have been strongly influenced by this sort of nationalism. They must have wished to create a "Japanese" school of philosophy that was to be the philosophy of the nation. Thus, there resulted various attempts at the "synthesis" of Western thought and Japanese or Eastern thought. If someone was pursuing such a goal, then she could not help regarding herself as doing philosophy as a representative of her nation and its tradition.

To make matters worse, what was available to her was a transitional language in the making. As Japanese at the time did not have words for various abstract concepts, new words had to be coined from the linguistic material that was available then. Japanese already had a long history of importing words that expressed concepts new to them from China; these imported Chinese words were written in Chinese characters and pronounced in a Japanese way. The same method was applied; the Western words for abstract concepts were translated into the

abstract nouns written in Chinese characters and pronounced in a Japanese way. A person who has to use such a transitional language is just like someone who is given a set of tools which are only imperfect reproductions made from the material which happened to be at hand, and told to use them in spite of the fact that she does not have precise information as to their purpose or usages.

In such a situation, a philosopher has to face a far greater difficulty than a natural scientist or a novelist does. In the case of natural science, you can point to concrete objects or situations to which a concept newly learned will apply; in a novel, if there appears an abstract concept, it must appear through some concrete instances. In philosophy, however, it is not always the case that abstract concepts are illustrated by some concrete examples. They may be explained only by connecting them with other abstract concepts and describing their histories of usage by various philosophers that may go back centuries.

Thus, for many years, a Japanese philosopher could not help thinking that she did not have a full understanding of a philosophical term she was using, because it had its origin as a translation of a Western word, which might have an intricate connection with other abstract concepts that had not been fully understood by her, or have a long history hidden to her.

You may imagine how liberating it must have been for such a philosopher to hear that in reality there is nothing substantial or meaningful in this elaborate system of abstract concepts and that you could use your words with your meaning without worrying about whether your understanding of them was right or not. Of course, such iconoclasm met much resistance from many philosophers in Japan at the time; for them, someone who had no regard for the "great" figures in Western philosophy could never be doing philosophy; philosophy was above all a subject that should be "studied" through the writings of past philosophers[9].

However, the appearance of a group of philosophers whose main concern was advancing and criticizing arguments for some conclusion or other as clearly as possible, instead of being "specialists" of some Western philosopher who had died long ago, had an effect on Japanese philosophy. A number of philosophers realized that it was possible for them to use a philosophical term with a meaning which they themselves put into it if they had taken care to define or characterize it in sufficient detail; they discovered that they could use philosophical terms on their own. It was very fortunate for them that there existed a language which they could use for their

[9] Moreover, they should be studied in their original languages like ancient Greek and German.

purposes, namely, modern Japanese with many new words coined in the 19th century.

In this respect their situation was crucially different from the one Nishida had found himself in when he was composing *Zen no Kenkyū* (An Inquiry into the Good) at the beginning of the 20th century. Two developments had taken place in the meantime. On one hand, as newly coined words circulated among a wider population, they became familiar, their Western origins becoming inconspicuous, if not forgotten. This made it possible to use them without too much regard for their origins. On the other hand, as many Japanese scholars became more familiar with the history of Western philosophy, its concepts came to be understood much better, and the best of these scholars succeeded in distinguishing various different meanings associated with the same term and explaining them in clear Japanese. This means that when a Japanese philosopher happens to wish to use some concept of Western origin she may be able to explain its meaning to the extent that is necessary for her purpose.

Thus, almost one century after Western philosophy came to Japan in the 1860s, it became possible for Japanese philosophers to be the masters of their own philosophical language.

I think that this development would not have been possible if every Japanese philosopher was still seeking after the "synthesis" of Western thought and Japanese or Eastern thought. For such a project, a philosopher should always be aware of the two traditions with their entire histories, and as every word she might use has a history, it would be out of the question to use a philosophical term on her own without any consideration of its origin and history. Thus, in order to be a master of her own philosophical language, it was necessary for a Japanese philosopher to cease to consider herself as a representative of a Japanese or Eastern tradition.

5

We have been talking about the similarities between the reception of Western music and that of Western philosophy in modern Japan, focusing on "classical" music and academic philosophy. But if we consider how Western music and philosophy in general were received by the public in the same period, then a different, much more contrastive, picture emerges.

What we now understand by *on-gaku* (music) is music written in the staff notation, based on harmonic progression, and performed on instruments like piano and guitar; this applies not only to "classical" music, but also all sorts of "popular" music including *enka*, J-Pop, and rock[10]. Thus, we may say that Western music now has complete domination in Japan. How this came about is a theme that has attracted many musicologists and historians.

Similarly, the Japanese word *tetsu-gaku* refers to the philosophy which had its origin in ancient Greece, was influenced by Christianity, and developed further in modern Europe, while another word *shi-sō* is reserved for the philosophical traditions that go back to ancient China and India. Does this mean that Western philosophy is dominant now in Japan just as Western music is?

The parallelism does not hold here, I think. For, there are fundamental differences between Western modern music and Western philosophy as regards the extent to which they have become part of modern Japanese society and the roles they play in it.

On one hand, as was remarked just now, the Western musical language is now so familiar that it is found in every aspect of our lives. Various musical activities are now an important means of self-expression for many people and the music played in them is based on it. On the other, although Western philosophy has dominance in academic circles, it is not true that philosophical activities are something we frequently meet in an everyday context. It seems that most Japanese have the impression that philosophy is something very remote from the life of ordinary people. This divergence may partly come from the intrinsic differences between music and philosophy, but for the most part it is due to some special circumstances that obtained when they were imported to Japan. Two factors seem to be most relevant: the ways they were introduced into the educational system, and the roles of language in them.

The real reason why Japan imported Western music was for the sake of the creation of a modern army; modern Western music was necessary for a military band, which was considered indispensible to a modern army. Another important feature was school songs (*shō-ka* 唱歌). Before the Meiji-era, large group of people singing together was unheard-of. Many school songs composed in the Western scale were introduced into elementary education in order to make a national identity, and in this way people quickly became familiar with Western music[11].

[10] [Okunaka 2008], p.i.
[11] See [Chiba 2007] and [Okunaka 2008].

The introduction of Western philosophy had nothing to do with the army or elementary education. Nishi Amane was sent to the University of Leiden to learn jurisprudence, economics and statistics, and he learned philosophy as his personal interest and outside his official curriculum. The people who introduced Western philosophy in the early Meiji period, including Nishi, were now classified as enlightenment thinkers. Some of them opposed in vain as the primary subject into elementary education the introduction of *shū-shin* (修身, moral training). It was based on Confucian thoughts, and it was not a subject which encouraged the students to hold a discussion with due regard to each other's opinion, although such activities must have been the foundation of Western philosophy.

It is not true, however, that Western philosophy had no impact outside the academic world. There were at least two areas where the new ideas coming from contemporary Western philosophy were eagerly sought after and made use of. They were literature and journalism. Let us start with the former.

There are two questions that should be asked about the relation between Western philosophy and modern Japanese literature.

1. How did Western philosophy contribute to the development of modern Japanese literature?
2. What role did the literature play in creating a popular image of philosophy in modern Japan?

I suppose that many scholars have already tried to answer the former question. It branches into many specific questions, all of which are extremely interesting and worth pursuing further. Questions like the following immediately come to mind. There are many figures of a philosopher in the novels of Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916); why is this? In the works of Mori Ōgai (1862-1922), another great novelist in the Meiji-era, we find many references to contemporary German philosophers like Edward von Hartmann (1842-1906) and Hans Vaihinger (1852-1933); how serious were his interests in these thinkers and did they influence his creative work in general? Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886-1942), who is arguably the greatest poet in modern Japan, wrote many "philosophical aphorisms" that show influences from Nietzsche and other modern philosophers of the West; how do they relate to his poetry?

But in the present context, the more relevant question is 2. In thie case, what we should ask is rather: how did the figures of a philosopher in Natsume Sōseki's novels contribute to a popular image of a philosopher in Japan?; what impressions did a reader of Mori Ōgai's works get from his references to contemporary German

philosophical ideas?; what idea about philosophy did Hagiwara Sakutarō's prose give rise to in its readers?

Though we should wait for systematic and through research, we may anticipate that the images of philosophy and a philosopher which we get from Japanese literary works in the modern period will vary greatly to the extent that they almost contradict each other. Thus, the conceptions of philosophy these images suggest should differ from each other. Among them we may discern two contrasting ones. According to one of them, philosophy was something which came from the very heart of a person's being; a philosopher was essentially a lonely being who conducted his[12] thinking far from the common run of mankind, and practicing philosophy was a lonely occupation that could not be done in the company of other people. According to the other, the aim of learning philosophy was to find a world view which one could identify with. As Japan had become a place where every new development in Western arts and learning was quickly known, plenty of candidates for such world views were always available. Under such a conception of philosophy, it was something that existed independently of a person who professed it, and hence, you could adopt or discard it for whatever reason you thought appropriate. We may term this a "pre-existing" conception in contrast to the first, which may be called an "inner essence" conception of philosophy.

Journalism played a significant role in spreading Western philosophy, promoting "pre-existing" conception of philosophy for the most part. Of course, journalism was not unconnected to literature or academic philosophy; many literary figures and academic philosophers contributed articles and essays with a philosophical content to newspapers and journals[13]. But the most frequently debated philosophical topics in journalism were concerned with social justice and how to achieve it in modern Japan, and it was journalists, not academic philosophers who introduced the enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau and more recent developments in the social philosophy of the West. The most important of them was Nakae Chōmin (1847-1901) who promoted Western democratic ideas through a liberal newspaper which he helped to start.

After the Russian revolutions which resulted in a communist regime, Marxism started to attract the attention of many young people. In academic circles

[12] A philosopher was thought to be male as it was thought so in the West at the time.

[13] The relation between academic philosophy and journalism is an important topic that should be explored in detail. It might be argued that journalism has played a greater role than academic organizations like various philosophical societies in the development of modern philosophy in Japan.

which had sympathy with Marxism, Marx was regarded as an heir to German idealist philosophy from Kant to Hegel. Miki Kiyoshi (1897-1945) belonged to one such circle; he studied philosophy under Nishida Kitarō in Kyoto Imperial University, and became a journalist when he was unable to get an academic post[14].

In the area of social and political philosophy, one was confronted with a number of "schools" or "-isms", like liberalism, anarchism, and Marxism. In the 1920's and 1930's, when young students had a discussion, the likeliest topic was which philosophical school or which –ism they should commit to. Thus, the conception of philosophy that underlined such discussions was the "pre-existing" one. But here a person was compelled to choose, unlike a novelist or a poet who wished to have some theoretical background or was just curious about the contemporary thinking in the West, and the main choice was between Marxism and non-Marxism. Commitment to Marxism at that time meant a lot; it meant giving up a privilege one had and facing a real danger of being persecuted. This gave rise to yet another conception of philosophy, which was, as it were, a hybrid of the "inner essence" one and the "pre-existing" one; philosophy was something which existed independently of you and it was up to you to adopt it or not, but if you adopted it, you had to completely identify with it so that it ended up an essential part of you.

Except for an ideal figure of a philosopher, which was more like an Eastern idea of a wise man, the images of philosophy in non-academic contexts suggested more or less the "pre-existing" conception of philosophy[15]. For most Japanese, philosophy was something that had newly come from overseas, and hence, it lacked the reality the traditional morality had, which was taught in a *shū-shin* class of an elementary school. It could not hope to be a part of popular culture.

The situation was very different with Western music. Even in the prewar period, Westernization of popular music in Japan had been well under way. While

[14] As was mentioned above, Marxist philosophy was completely suppressed during the war. But after the war, it became the most influential social philosophy among Japanese intellectuals and remained so until the 1970's in spite of many criticisms. In the academic world, Marxist philosophy was rarely taught or studied in a philosophy department, but many philosophy students chose to study German Idealist philosophy only because they thought that understanding it was necessary to get a better understanding of Marxist philosophy.

[15] This "pre-existing" conception of philosophy was found not only in non-academic contexts but also in academic ones. It persisted well after the war; I remember that most of the philosophy students I met when I was one in the 1970's were studying some philosopher or other of the past because they felt some sympathy with the figure. I seldom encountered a student whose motivation to major in philosophy came from a particular philosophical problem.

the traditional music continued to have a big audience, new styles of popular music which showed an influence of Western musical idiom had been attracting younger people. They may not have felt this kind of music as foreign, because they had already been exposed to the Western tone system through *shō-ka* (school song) they learned in school. Thus, Western music was already a part of popular culture in Japan before the war, in contrast to Western philosophy.

6

The "pre-existing" conception of philosophy and the "inner essence" one both miss an essential fact about philosophy, namely, that it is above all an activity which a person engages in with others. It could not remain a solitary enterprise as the "internal essence" conception has it; discussion is an essential part of philosophy, and discussion should be done with others. Philosophy cannot be a matter of finding some world view to your liking, either, as the "pre-existing" conception supposes. Sometimes a person comes to have an interest in philosophy, not because she is attracted by the outlook or personality of a certain philosopher, but because she is intrigued by some problems discussed in a work of philosophy. For her, the point of doing philosophy is to understand a philosophical problem better and solve it. In fact, the world views that past philosophy offers are often the final products of attempts to solve various philosophical problems.

If you think philosophy should be like this, then it consists of presentation, refinement and solution of philosophical problems, and the chief means of solving the latter is to advance arguments; discussing with others is important for philosophy because an argument should be tested for its validity by seeing whether or how well it withstands counterarguments.

Already in the prewar period, there were some people who found delight in discussing philosophical problems; their main concern was no longer to find out "the true meaning" of the "great" work of some past master, but to solve some particular philosophical problems to their satisfaction; in a word, they started to think their own thoughts. Surely those in the circle of Nishida and his students were among such people. There might have been some other circles like Nishida's which engaged in philosophical discussions, whether it was within the academic world or not.

In the same period, those who practiced this way of doing philosophy were also under the influence of the idea of creating a "Japanese" school of philosophy, which was comparable to various "schools" of Western philosophy. This produced biases in the goals and directions of their arguments, which sometimes had undesirable consequences. Still, the realization of the centrality of arguments in philosophy was an important achievement of prewar academic philosophy.

But it must have been difficult for an ordinary person to appreciate the importance of arguments in philosophy for two reasons. First, she had no experience of philosophical discussion comparable to that of *shō-ka* (school song) in the case of music. Secondly, there was a problem of language, which we discussed above in §4.

Of course, language is also important in music, both in a literal sense and a metaphorical one. In the early phase of the introduction of Western music, people got accustomed to Japanese words sung with a melody written on the Western scale, through the teaching of school songs (*shō-ka*) in elementary education. This experience made it possible to combine Japanese words with Western musical idiom without much awkwardness in many popular genres of music[16]. In terms of language in the sense of musical style, the Western one was fundamentally different from the Japanese traditional one, and Japanese experienced many difficulties in accepting it, as many studies have attested. However, as is shown by the fact that a piece of music in the traditional style may strike many Japanese now as alien, Western musical style has taken place of traditional one over the last century and a half.

In contrast, philosophy can be done only in one's own language. Hence, unless you exchange Japanese with a Western language[17], it is necessary to have a Japanese expression for a concept that is originally expressed in a Western language. For that purpose, many words were coined as translations of these Western words, and added to Japanese. It was not enough to have new words; it was also necessary to create a literary style that makes it possible to express new thoughts and arguments in a clear manner. For a long time, philosophical arguments had been conducted in a language which was far from that of an ordinary person. They were written in a style for the initiates. It must have been very hard for an outsider to

[16] The problem seems still unresolved in the case of "classical" music, if we think that there does not yet exist a truly successful "Japanese" opera, that is, an opera sung in Japanese. However, it might show only that opera is no longer a viable genre, no matter which language is used.

[17] It is notorious that Mori Arinori (1847-1889), the first Minister of Education, proposed to adopt English as the national language of Japan.

understand them. As I have argued above, it was only in the 1960's that Japanese philosophy came to have a more understandable style.

Now, the changes that took place after the 1970's may mean a lot to both music and philosophy in Japan.

The commercialization and diversification of music are worldwide phenomena, and they have turned "classical" music into just one of various musical tastes. It no longer has the prestige it used to have in Japan. But, irrespective of their origins, most of the various styles of music owe their notation, instruments and harmony to Western modern music. In this respect, musical life in Japan has experienced an irreversible change.

Even though in Japan it was generally thought that philosophy has little in common with an ordinary person's life, there used to be a time when philosophy had a certain prestige. This is seen from the fact that philosophy was taught in every Japanese university until the 1970's, because it was supposed that its knowledge was indispensable to general education. That time is now past, and philosophy is now just one subject among the variety of subjects offered in a university.

This turn of events was very ironic, because it happened at the time when we came to have a well-informed and flexible language for philosophical discussion, and there appeared a number of writers and their books which taught a reader what philosophy is about in an interesting and accessible way[18].

Moreover, many concepts that had their origin in Western philosophy and have gradually become part of the Japanese language are now indispensable to our thinking in various areas including everyday life, and in that respect it may be said that Western philosophy has had a success comparable to Western modern music here. The big difference, however, is that philosophy as such is still remote from our everyday concern.

I suspect that this is because we have been living in a society in which it is not customary that people with different opinions express themselves and discuss the point at issue in order to reach some rational solution. To some this may look like an essential trait of a Japanese society, but it is always risky to say such a thing. Just as the introduction of *shō-ka* (school songs) in the Meiji-era had changed the musical life of Japanese, it might be possible to change the way a Japanese thinks and acts

[18] Another irony is that when Japanese philosophers finally came to possess a reasonably good language of their own to do philosophy, the "globalization", that is, the elevation of English to the status of the internationally common language in many areas including philosophy, was in progress. I discussed this in [Iida 2013].

together with other people. Moreover, the current trend of internationalization within and without Japan, may make such a change in our society even necessary.

Now that one of the two obstacles which had made philosophy remote from the ordinary life of a Japanese, namely, the absence of a philosophical language accessible to her, has been removed, we might try to remove another, that is, the absence of philosophy in elementary education. Introducing philosophy to much younger students than those at university may contribute to a change that is necessary in our society. At any rate, the main issue is not when the acceptance of Western philosophy will be complete, but whether we will participate in philosophy as an indispensable activity for any human being in the future.

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