

Do you know why 1+1=2?

(draft copy – the occasional explanations of Japanese matters are to be footnotes)

“THE ANSWER” by G.P.S. © [gosuke@gps1999.com]

Reader Response

The names are temporarily withheld until the author or publisher obtains the permission of the individuals. The first response is excerpted from a book-review published in the major newspaper, THE MAINICHI SHINBUN on 15 September, 2002 and may be freely cited. The entire review is appended to the back of this draft.

“An ambitious challenge for the contentious, logic-loving reader” – Ooka Akira (Akutagawa and Mishima Prize-winning novelist)

“This is bound to be controversial. Were it another age, it would be a prime candidate for book-burning.” – _____ (COMING: contacting reader for details)

“It gave me goose bumps!” – _____ (volunteer clerk at the National Diet, age 29)

“This book might just be able to save the entire human race.” – _____ (preparatory school manager, age 33)

“When I decided to make this truth my truth, I trembled from terror and from being deeply moved.” – _____ (secretary, age 32)

“The back-side of my brain is thrilled, or, that’s how I feel anyway.” – _____ (high school student, age 16)

“One part of the book helped me from a part of my mind so deep down I didn’t even know it was there.” – _____ (University of Tokyo student majoring in molecular cognition, age 22)

“I was deeply moved. This is the best masterpiece since Kawabata Yasunari’s *Snow Country*.” – _____ (university student majoring in biology, age 23)

“This is breathtaking undertaking in its scope. May this significant book be read and reread by many, especially young students who suffer nausea in old classrooms.”
Minoru Hasegawa (Professor Emeritus in Computer Science, Lakehead University, Canada)

“This book took a lot of work to read and digest, but the after-taste was refreshing. I enjoyed it.” – _____ (housewife, age 66)

“I was profoundly moved and enormously stimulated. – Hirata Taneo (University of Tokyo professor of forestry, retired, age 80)

“There is no way this book will be a best-seller in 21st century Japan. Its content is too advanced, too stimulating and too **dangerous!**” – _____ (newspaper company employee, age 35)

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“THE ANSWER”

by

Gosuke Suzuki.

[catch-phrases]

a skillfully crafted philosophical work that solves all problems with convincing logic

like a good mystery novel,, it leads you unsuspecting but unerringly to “the answer”

[inside jacket]

“While enlisting logical thinking to cope with various problems arising at a nursing home, I came upon philosophy’s ultimate answer, a solution for all the world’s problems; but unable to gain the understanding of those around me, I became increasingly isolated and ended up mentally unbalanced. I traveled to Canada for rehabilitation, where I became acquainted with a woman, “my perfect soul-mate” and here I am . . .”

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[quotes]

“I’m my captain. I’m my private. Alone, I am an army, totally invincible. Where I go, I see sights no one has seen. What joy! Sheer joy!” – The High-Lows (*I-army, Dawn Attack*)

“You want to know what is really interesting? A dead-serious man intent upon his business.” – Shiriagari Kotobuki (*Lost Old Man, Don Quixote*)

“What really matters is not so much the big things that come from the heads of other men as the small things you think up yourself.” – Murakami Haruki (*Sputnik Sweetheart*)

What is the Universe? Time? Nothing? Self? Mind? Insanity? Philosophy? Truth?

How should we live and what should we do to live without any regrets?

Why is it wrong to kill people?

What should we do to end all war?

What would the ideal social system be?

How can we realize artificial intelligence with human cognitive/judgement ability?

How did apes evolve into humans?

How did the world begin and how will it end?

Is everything one or many?

How can time and space be unified?

Are Big Bang and Super String Theory correct?

Why does $1+1=2$?

Why can't Achilles ever overtake the tortoise?

What is the real identity of the elementary particle?

Why does π appear in places unrelated to the circumference of circles?

What was it that the authors of the Old Testament and Buddha saw? And,

What is absolutely correct?

This is the story of the love, tears and laughter of a man who (believes that he) has found the answer to all those questions.

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ACT

I

Love Letter from Canada

Dear Sayo,

Welcome back!

How was the Alaskan Cruise? To tell the truth, I worried about you just like you worried about me. I couldn't help thinking what if that ship pulls a Titanic and, well, I am relieved to know nothing happened and you are here.

You have no idea how much I wanted to greet you, have a long talk and go together as we had planned to loll on the beaches of Cuba. But, at the last minute, I decided to return to Japan.

Please, forgive me. It is all I can do just to sit here and write this letter. I just don't want to deal with people. I don't want to listen to anyone and I get very tired trying to explain myself. My mental reserve is quickly dropping to nothing and it is all I can do to keep a cool front for others. If I could, I would let myself explode in anger, destruction and violence.

For that reason, as soon as I am back in Japan, I will commit myself. Until I meet with the doctor in charge, I can't really say, but I think I will need to stay in the hospital anywhere from a week to a half-year or so.

So, I think we must wait on getting married, too. I love you with all my heart and my need for you is intense as ever, but it is clear that in my present condition marriage is out of the question.

It's not like we have been dating for five or six years. We still have so much to learn about each other and I just do not feel it would be right for me to become totally dependent on you. I would feel horrible about putting you through it and that would just add to my stress and I cannot begin to imagine having to meet your parents in this condition. Of course, it is something that we should decide together. Please send me a letter c/o my permanent address, or come to visit me at the hospital after you return to

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Japan and let me know how you feel about this. After I get out and am well enough, I will meet you in Shinjuku or Chiba. As you wish.

You might say that there I go, ahead of myself again, but let me tell you what I think comes next. After treatment, when I've recovered my mental stability, I will find some sort of job and after gaining a modicum of economic stability (I pretty much used up all of my money over here), I'll fix up a large room where you can come over to play and stay whenever you want to and eventually we could take the plunge. And, then, in the near future, we could take that honeymoon in Cuba.

The worse case scenario. If, upon reading this, you decide to break off our engagement, I will understand. Or, if you wish to have more time to observe me after learning you are engaged to a sick man, it cannot be helped. Though we could blame the sleeping pills and tranquilizers for lapses in my consciousness, urinating in the kitchen, running around naked, sleeping outdoors and shouting at people who don't exist made me no different from a senile old man. My behavior put you in the position of having to defend me and I showed you that ugly side of me. If you want out, I will just have to swallow my tears and bear it. I don't want you to worry. Whatever decision you make, I promise not to get angry or hold it against you.

But don't get me wrong. For all of this, I still am strongly drawn towards you as my life partner and not counting this damned glitch in my brain, I feel I am still pretty close to the ideal man for you.

There is one more important thing. Both my doctor and the Tanigawas are of the opinion that I am not mentally ill. So, then, what am I? That is hard to say. The only word that comes to mind is "philosophically ill." You can call it a delusion if you wish, but I am convinced that my talent for philosophy exceeds that of all the philosophers of the past.

Nietzsche went crazy, Socrates quaffed his poison, Zeno bit off his tongue. Real philosophy is that type of thing, radical, anarchical, sick. That is how it must be, for science is built upon previous theory but philosophy begins by its destruction.

So, rather than waiting for my recovery, as I told you a while ago, I really should wait for the world to change its opinion of me. For better or worse, that's how I feel. I know this sounds conceited, but the Tanigawas, at least, agree with me.

I may well be a genius. I may be crazy. Or, I may be an ordinary person. Whichever it is, if I am to live as a member of society, I will need to have a label, some sort of identity. No communication with other people is possible without it. None. But, what can I do when there is no one – and I tried thirteen university professors! – capable of evaluating me!

You are a simple soul, in the most complimentary sense of the word. For that reason, I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the human being called Sayo. But, the inside of my own head is so complex that not even I can make any sense of it, so if you are still thinking about marriage and want to get an objective opinion about the disease and character of this person called "me," please visit the Tanigawas in West Vancouver.

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I left good ole Mother Mucker with the Tanigawas. Do visit him to say goodbye before leaving for Japan. After all, the Mucker was our match-maker. Think about it! If it weren't for that long mass-transit strike and my having to take you to and from the farm every day in Mucker, we wouldn't have grown close, right?

So, if you will only give that big dirty body (like me, right?) a big kiss – a French one would be fine!, I, or it, will have no regrets! Of course, I would be delighted if you could take Mucker out for a spin now and then while you remain here. As you can see, the key is in the envelope. Sure he's falling apart and hard to drive, but once you get used to him, you'll like the feeling, sitting so high up. Just be careful to keep checking the oil, for it has a slow leak and every once in a while tighten the wire holding the door on. Don't worry about the side-brake or fuel gauge for, if you recall, they never did work. Since you can't trust the odometer, just keep giving it propane. Do it often, a bit at a time. Remember, none of the filling stations downtown have propane. The Shell near the farm should be the cheapest. Feel free to strip off the electric lights and other decorations if they embarrass you.

Sorry for wandering on, but did you know that the greatest discovery in my English-language life was that there was a word for us cleaners of farm manure, "*muckers*." Think about it. When I am asked "What are you doing in Canada?" instead of replying that I am cleaning up animal poop and stuff, I can hold up my head and say "I'm a *mucker*." Now *that* sounds cool!

The other day, Kenji, speaking in his usual gruff monosyllables – "This. For you." – gave me a watch from a numbered series by designer Yokoo Tadanori. It has a skull in the face and crosses on the band (Very punk, you might say cool). The little pamphlet that comes with it includes this:

"As soon as we are born we start heading second by second, minute by minute toward death. Very few people are aware of this time. To live fully in the present we must nurture this awareness of death."

He bought it at that shop on Robson street. It couldn't have been too cheap. What a pleasant surprise! I wouldn't have expected him to recognize such class, much less buy it for me. Now, I don't know if he bought it after reading the pamphlet or not, but, Sayo, you know it's true. If we really want to live a quality-time life, we must constantly remind ourselves:

"I might die tomorrow!"

I mean, really. That possibility is there. It's always there, right?

As far back as elementary school, I found myself thinking things like "What am my living for, anyway?" But for years, I never could find anything I wanted to do, something to really throw myself into. Like Kenji, now, I got desperate about it and kicked in my harness a bit but ended up following convention, going to college and getting employed by a company good enough to satisfy my ego. I did the usual workaholic thing, drinking with the guys and playing around. But it didn't do it for me.

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No matter where I looked, I couldn't find anything that told me "this is it!" Then, one day, I said to myself

"How about dying, tomorrow!"

It wasn't that I was short of money or women. I wasn't in deep despair about anything in particular. I just couldn't see much difference between being alive or dead. I thought that choosing to die was just one more lifestyle, that's all.

Then, after I settled the concrete details and knew exactly how I would commit suicide, I suddenly thought to myself,

"So what shall I do tonight?"

Since this is *it*, I'll do *that*. Since I'll be dead, I might as well do something absolutely reckless. As I thought about things to do that would ordinarily be unthinkable, but made sense if I was going to die, things came to mind that I could do if I only had a week to live. Then, things I would do if I only had a month. The scale of my preposterous schemes kept expanding and I came to see possibilities, to feel the reality of things (like becoming a mercenary and dying in the battlefield) that I gave no thought to before and, suddenly, I *knew*.

"There is no meaning or goal in life."

I'd probably said or heard the same many times while drinking and I got deep enough into postmodernism in college to know that the question such a statement supposes was itself meaningless. But somewhere inside me, too deeply rooted to pull out, the idea that life, human life at any rate, was about accomplishing something, about building up something remained intact. And, now, suddenly, as I faced the end of my life, I got over this hang-up and realized what was what:

"I am my own toy."

My hands, my legs and my head are priceless toys. How we use them to play, to enjoy ourselves is *the* essential question of our life. It is no exaggeration to say that this hit me like a revelation.

In limit, there is a 100% positive attitude

I'm not talking about our living for momentary pleasure. No, it's something different. Just as the number of people committing suicide falls drastically during wartime, things taste better the hungrier you are and desire rises the more it is repressed. If my desire for life was thinned by expectation of a 70 or 80 year life span, I knew I could thicken it by settling on only 1 more year or 10 more years. More life less desire, less life more desire – as a saying, it may seem trite, even childish, but put into practice, it provides real ground for a rich life.

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If you feel death is always near by, waiting there if you want it, nothing can scare you. You have no reason to search for the meaning or value of life. That's when, that's when I stopped reading the newspaper and watching TV.

Are you with me?

What I mean is, if it was certain that you would die tomorrow and you think that in that case you wouldn't be doing what you are doing, then the way you were living at that time would be wrong. *That's all.*

So, when I set a day to kill myself, suddenly a million things I wanted to do came up and I just went bananas trying this, that and everything and when the dust settled, there I was in far-off Canada where you found me mucking up after horses and cows and happy enough to say that if I died tomorrow I would do so without regret. I could because I found something 100% original, something only I could come up with.

I am thinking about publishing a book some day about what I have discovered. The title will be 'THE ANSWER'. I have no leads on publishers now, but when it gets published, Sayo, I want to you to be my first reader!

What more can I say. Goodbye, for now.

I cannot express my gratitude for all you have done for me in words. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.,

Your best friend

p.s.1

If you have time, please buy me a pair of size 12 (28.5cm) sandals. Cheap ones will do fine. In Japan, it is nearly impossible to buy large ones.

p.s.2

The time you, me and Kenji lived together as if we were a family was real fun. I mean, *really*. Especially, the feeling of each making up for what the other lacked. If we were in Japan, neither you nor I would have had any opportunity to spend time talking with a teenager. So it was a valuable experience for us. Before, I was sure that if I had a kid, I wanted it to be a girl but, living with Kenji, I came to think that a boy might be alright, too.

If Kenji wants to go to a university in Tokyo, I think it would be nice to live together again, the three of us, but what do you think? Ah, come on, *momma*, take care of our boy! If you just let him be, he'll just sit around and do nothing, you hear!"

p.s.3

Please give my thanks to everyone on the farm for all they have done for me. I'm just not in a condition where I could meet Jack.

p.s.4

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If Jack is serious and says something like “I’m going to sue this crazy bastard for defamation of character”, use my “Proposal” for evidence of my mental condition. Granted, my brain was addled, but the content is reasonable enough.

p.s.5

Through what happened at the farm, I’ve certainly learned one thing: You should not count on others. Disappointment and anger come from counting on others. If you don’t count on others, when they do something good you feel gratitude.

p.s.6

I’m not going to bother you with all the details of the run-ins between Jack and me. I don’t even want to think about it because it still makes me so mad. At least, he should stop that stupid “absence court!” When an owner does stuff like that, the teamwork of the staff is shot to hell. He always has a good explanation for why he does things but, in his heart, he must think we’re all his slaves. It makes me think of Steinbeck’s book – *Sayo*, if you haven’t read it, you should read *The Grapes of Wrath* sometime.

p.s.7

Well, I take it back. There is a bit more I want you to hear. Inside of me right now there is a struggle going on between two feelings. One side says, “Don’t repress it. You should let your mind just go with the anger. If you are injured, bare those tusks and fight for what you believe in or they’ll run all over you!” But the other says “Warped or not, he has a viewpoint, he has his position, too. And it has not been easy for him, either. It’s best to just forget about what happened.”

Whether we are talking about my positive feelings for you – I could never have dreamed that I would cry when you told me “yes” – or my negative feelings for Jack – that was the first time I came close to using my fists outside of the ring – until I met you, I had lived without any feelings to speak of for all my life. It was as if I was born without them. So now, I am totally confused for it is hard for me to decide which side to fix them on. Mrs. Tanigawa said that plus or minus, I should value my emotions. *Sayo*, what do you think?

No matter how long I think about it, the main fault lies with that lying hard-assed old man and about the best I can say on his behalf is that the incident arose from a systematic fault in the farm’s organization. Or, to be less grandiose about it, the farm has no Operating Manual. The responsibilities and rights of the staff are unclear. So differences arise between our view of things and Jack’s. So long as that farm is run by volunteers alone, the rules must be open. That’s why I wrote that Proposal. And, as it turned out, that’s what made me lose it.

It was like that when I was with the pr firm, when I was in the Self Defense Forces, when I worked at the Tsukiji fish market* and in the nursing home. When you say “manual,” most Japanese feel uncomfortable, but when you don’t have one, a difference of opinion can go on and on without knowing who was correct and create emotional stand-offs that can poison the atmosphere of the entire organization. More or less the same sort of thing happened at all these places. Come to think about it, it even

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happened to the Shorinjikenpo team* at my university. And I was team captain, but that was no help.

* *Shorinjikenpo Team* Japanese university teams might well be called clubs, for the students play a much greater role in running them than is the case with university sports teams in the USA. Shorinjikenpo is a type of kung fu with a style somewhere between aikido and karate that harks back to a small temple in China pronounced Shorinji in Japanese.

* *Tsukiji Fish Market* Tsukiji, on the outskirts of Tokyo, is synonymous with the world's largest fish-market. The atmosphere is brisk and manly, full of shouts and brushing shoulders.

Let me give an example of how things go wrong.

At the nursing home, when a resident assistant, a junior high graduate with 35 years of on-job experience has a quarrel with a new staffer just out of some institute with a master in social work degree over the correct way to put diapers on the bedridden client, how do you decide who is in the right? It just won't do for everyone working in a nursing home to care for the elderly however he or she sees fit. The clients want a unified system of care. When things just keep going on though one side is really wrong, the patient or fish market may lose a client; but in the case of the self-defense force or a nursing home, human lives may be lost because of it.

Ok, we are only talking about one small farm. But if it doesn't fix that basic problem, the staff that is seriously trying to do their best are going to suffer for it. We are not getting any wages and they are not even putting us up so we don't owe anything to Jack. So why should we care! I mean, we could always just quit. But for the sake of people that nevertheless feel attachment for the farm and want to stay on and do their best, it bears saying.

I'm not pushing these things on the farm from righteous indignation so much as from pure logic. Sayo, what do you think about this?

p.s.8

I know it sounds ridiculous, but for all of that, I like Jack. When no serious business demands his attention, the old guy wags a hell of a sharp tongue. It is really fun getting him going on dirty subjects. But, I just can't forgive him for kicking my Mucker. I bet he did it from out of pure spite.

p.s.9

Let me try again, to give you the details of my present condition.

- 1) My brain is overheated and I can't sleep.
- 2) I can't see myself objectively and feel like I might explode.
- 3) I can no longer discriminate much of the data from my senses and I am nearing a state of aphasia (lose-language-syndrome)

Of these, the first is often experienced by people doing creative work. The second is true for anyone who is short-tempered. But, you have to remember that I was, until this happened, one of the most long-tempered people in the whole world, so I have no idea how to control myself. The third, my aphasia, can't be helped, for symbolic language is made of difference – e.g., a red signal may mean “stop” but there is no basis for that in

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the “red” itself, etc. – and once you have persuaded yourself that there are no differences (once you become a *tabula rasa*) that’s what happens. To put it more simply, I feel like I’m returning to infancy, the time before I learned language. That’s why joy, anger, sadness and pleasure have sprouted in my character. But, I think I will recover if I have a well-grounded life, you know, move to the right place, get married and raise children . . . I hope so, anyway. All these symptoms are pretty much the same as the ones the last time I was admitted.

p.s. 10

What really upsets me is not so much that my mental condition worsened and I had to rely on medicine again, but that I found myself starting to go through the same thing I’ve been through before.

Thinking back, I can see that the pattern I follow is the same each time, the time I found the Final Theory, the time I tried to reform the nursing home, and now with the farm incident. All went like this:

Step 1 – I removed the lid from a problem that was on everyone’s lips in private but that no one would openly take up (a problem everyone thinks is ridiculous to even consider, eg. Why does $1+1=2$?)

Step 2 – I analyze the problem, pursue its cause and seek a solution.

Step 3 – I put the result in writing, make copies of it and pass it around (push it on those around me).

Step 4 – Failing to gain their understanding, I feel isolated and fall into total despair.

This just keeps repeating itself on me. But, this time, because of you, I still have hope.

Each time what I think, what makes me feel like a fool, is that everyone really likes to grumble and complain and nobody really wants an “answer.” So, looking objectively at this, all I am doing is pushing on others something that gratifies me. And now, this is how I’m paying for it. You once told me “things are not black and white, grey is what really matters.” Well, whenever things happen, someone always tells me something like that and I get what it means, but I can’t help myself. That’s where I’m sick.

So, even if I get my job back at the nursing home, the same thing is all too likely to happen again. Even if I were in an administrative capacity, if I were listening to opinions on the job and attending meetings, sooner or later the “General Problem Solver” within me will wake up. Probably, that would be the case no matter where I worked. So what can I do?

Mrs. Tanigawa told me I should become a freelance. I should work for myself at something.

As for me, I think I’d like to return to the fish market.

Tell me, Sayo, what do you think?

p.s. 11

My original purpose for coming to Canada was to rehabilitate my mind and body. Until the incident, especially thanks to your cooperation, things were progressing really

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well and I was happy. I was able to sleep without any drugs and shed the excess flesh (that precious sweat shed in healthy labor, not to mention our sex!) I gained when I was in the hospital. Yes, every day was a delight and life couldn't have been any better. For a man like me, who had girl friends to burn but couldn't find one I wanted to stay with, meeting you – someone I could really love – was nothing less than a miracle for which I thank God. (Philosophically speaking, I am a committed atheist, but this makes me feel that there must be a God of Love out there somewhere!)

p.s.12

I wrote before that it can't be helped if you break off our engagement. But, to tell the truth, I really would hate it if you dropped me after we have come this far together. I don't know if I could take it. After a half day of frenzied thinking, I came up with a "Final Marriage Theory." I hope it can be the icing on our wedding cake:

Proposition I	Objectively speaking, there is no correct marriage.
Proposition II	With marriage, there is no way to predict success or failure ahead of time.
Proposition III	There is no perfect marriage
Conclusion	Based on the above propositions, if you think "Hmm, why not?" you might as well get married.

p.s.13

I just thought of a song for you. It popped right out of my mind. The title is called "*OraOra**."

Because you love an *OraOra* man, an *OraOra* is what I shall be!
Because you love an *OraOra* man, I'll try to *OraOra* you will see!

What is this *OraOra*?
I haven't got a clue!
But in some way, I guess, I guess I really do!
Because I *OraOra*, oh, you know I do for you!

OraOraOraOraOraOraOh!

I'll do my *OraOra* 50% for you.
I'll do my *OroOro* 50% for me.
We are really something, really something, you and me!
The best couple in the universe, "U+I" is "we!" Oh, *oui!*

* *Ora-ora and Oro-oro* "*Ora-ora*" is an adverb meaning "bold" and "gungho". The *Oro-oro* that pops in one line near the end describes a pitiful condition close to tears being flustered. It confesses that the bold outside persona of the protagonist has a soft side that he admits but keeps to himself. Japanese has many psychological onomatopoeia that sometimes defy translation. The translator compensated with punning, suitable, he hopes, for the personality of the character but was unable to convey the message requiring this note.

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I've only got the first part done, but when I finish it I'll send it to Marchy (base, side-vocal), and if after all of this, you still want to marry me, make ballad-punk music for it in time for our reception. After a long time away from a mike, my throat should be really itching for it! I'll get the Bad Trip back together. I think the members will go along with it. I mean we were pioneers of comic-punk. We had our pride. It didn't matter if our record audience was two people.

p.s.14

At first it was a real drag to have to write this letter, but as it went on, my writing instinct kicked on and now it's running away with me. I started writing this yesterday at 3:00AM and now it is 1:25 in the afternoon. I've been going three days without sleep and I'm not even tired. Talk about hyper, my mind is so overheated it's liable to blow up for good. I'd like to swallow some pills, but I'm worried about losing consciousness again. So, I am out of control. Don't have any idea when this letter will end, but please stay with me a little longer!

p.s.15

It was almost certainly on the day when you left for the Alaska cruise. I had this real deep discussion with Professor Tanigawa. I can't remember if I told you, but he taught statistics at the university. Now he is professor emeritus of computer science. Professor Tanigawa told me, "As far as I know, nobody is thinking about the things you think about." I wasn't sure if I should be happy about that or sad. Originality is something to be proud of, but the reverse side of it is that there's no place for me and my thoughts. If you recall, we talked about my non-category theory and how it didn't fit in the usual complex systems and general systems analysis. Unfortunately, in this increasingly specialized world, what I am doing no longer qualifies as philosophy. But, originally, this thing called philosophy was general. So I think of myself as a philosopher. Or should I say *I must* because if I didn't think I was, I couldn't go on. That's what I meant when I wrote that I needed a label, an identity.

The professor told me that the only thing I could do was write an essay, one as simple as possible, in English and put it on the internet. Then, he said, he, too, could be of some help. He has been here now for over thirty years and while conversation doesn't give him much trouble, it seems he has to make a big effort to read Japanese. The idea was to first target the West where logic and originality are highly respected rather than Japan which is ruled by sentiment and authority. The professor himself left Japan because he was fed up with the closed nature of academic societies there. So, he can sympathize for me.

But, I'm too Japanese for that. I have to make my first try in Japanese. Then, I can think about reaching the rest of the world.

p.s.16

A while ago, while I was reading over and polishing (a little, anyway) this letter, the Tanigawa's boy, Naoya came and talked away for an hour or so doing his best to be

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encouraging. Because he couldn't speak any Japanese whatsoever, it was really tiring trying to catch it all, but he taught me some important things.

“Life is an adventure.”

The way he said it, the words stuck in. Yes, that is life. Sometimes, you fall into ravines and sometimes you stand on mountain tops. You never know what comes next. He was quite the philosopher. His little brother, Shinya (the boy with Down's syndrome who we played basketball with that time) came in. I gave him a hug when we parted, and I felt he taught me something, too. Seeing his bright smile made it clear that the way to solve our differences is not through power or words.

“Smile beats theory.”

Smiles are more important than theories. That's a fact. But a smiling face is not always enough for a solution.

p.s.17

Let me try to give a more proper explanation of my idea. You don't have to understand. I'd just like you to read it. Read as much as you can. I know that the name “Final Theory” might put you off, but it's really not at all difficult or complex. Putting it simply, it means this:

The problems of theoretical physics and philosophy, religious hostility, wars between nations, confrontation within companies, marital quarrels . . . all of these things are the products of language=thought. Because of this, if one could go back to find out why $1+1=2$, or go back even further and find out how human language got started and explain things logically by starting from Point Zero, ultimately, all of the structural elements – all things and people involved – will end up in 100% agreement, total consensus with their differences radically removed. That's it. Another way of putting it is this that I want to make clear the basis for all the ways we see and think about things. This sounds moralistic, but it has nothing to do with a sense of justice or responsibility or anything like that. My desire comes from a need, the same one that originally gave birth to philosophy. I just want to do it. It's what I happen to like.

Of course, emotion is important and fine in your personal life. But when you discuss something at work or in a public capacity, only the logical part of your argument has a chance of convincing people, right? The important thing is to really convince people. If you can convince them from the inside out, from their minds, people won't have any grounds for feeling resentment or disagreement.

I know that this idea that my Final Theory will solve everything may be nothing more than a grand obsession, so I am half-kidding when I call myself the G.P.S. (General Problem Solver). At this point, there is not a soul in the world who really understands my theory. Only Professor Tanigawa has some idea of what I am and understands where I'm heading with this.

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I forgot to say my motto is Occam's Razor. This ancient saying to the effect that "the simpler the hypothesis that explains a broader phenomenon, the closer it is to the truth" sums up in one line the philosophy at the core of my theory.

"Human cognition/thinking is not a matter of knowing but of deciding."

That, too. To put it in other words so you can understand: "Man cannot understand what is absolutely correct, but he can decide." Or, putting it another way, "we can make artificial intelligence (theoretically speaking, technological problems are another matter) with more logical and systematic cognition/judgment than that enjoyed by man as soon as we can clear these philosophical hurdles.

When people talk about artificial intelligence, the question is always "Can a machine have a mind?" and that inevitably leads to "People can't even tell for sure if other people have minds," but this sort of exchange wouldn't be necessary if we started from a different premise, namely, that "people arbitrarily *decide* that other people have minds." So, the problem of cognition* is really very simple. Just say that *cognition is deciding* and just like that it disappears. "What is mind?" is another matter altogether.

**Problem of Cognition* The original is "problem of *epistemology*," but, unlike the easily read Japanese equivalent, specialized language in English is opaque to all who are unfamiliar to it, so the translator changed to a more recognizable word, "cognition."

The machines in Kubrick's "2001," "BLADERUNNERS" and "AI" wake up to their selves and, in some sense, came to have feelings. But if artificial intelligence does become reality, its practical value will be that it won't act that way, it won't give in to feelings or follow selfish wishes.

So, even if my theory remains unknown to the world for my lifetime, within a hundred years or so, it will happen. There will be a world where all problems will be resolved in black and white. They say that if Einstein had not existed, the Theory of Relativity still would have been discovered within five or ten years. It's like that. Einstein began as an amateur and had a real hard time, too. The Indian savant mathematician Ramanujan (I doubt if you've heard of him, but he discovered countless original mathematical solutions) had to spend eight years struggling all alone without any recognition, and Hamilton, who discovered the quaternion, spent twenty years in solitude to do it. But the most pitiful of all, is Charles Babbage, the mathematician who was the first to come up with the fundamental concepts of a computer. Let's face it, the Theory of Evolution and the Theory of Relativity don't mean much at all to most people. But computers – now that's a different story! Though they have this great of an influence in our lives, how many people have heard of Babbage? They know about Darwin and Einstein, but no one knows about him! (Professor Tanigawa did, but he's the exception). And this Charles is a billion times greater than Bill Gates! As long as I'm off my subject, a word more on Charles. Hoping to let a machine calculate the navigation tables to rid them of the large number of errors that accompanied manual calculation (causing many shipwrecks!), he invented the Difference Engine, a type of automatic calculating machine. Then, understood by no one, he died in solitude and despair. The last thing he said as he slipped into unconsciousness was "How I would like to see the world 500 years hence!" Well, I would systematically process and solve social problems, so as a fellow Problem-

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Solver, I feel a deep sympathy for what he went through. But, I sure don't want to end up the same way.

I know I may be over-rating myself by putting me next to him like that. But you never know. An idea big enough to bring about a paradigm shift (like the sun around the earth changing to the earth around the sun, that type of thing) is never accepted at first. After all, it is all about flipping over something that everyone has believed until then. Or, to put that conversely, any theory that is easily understood is nothing much.

That's the type of thing I think about when I need consolation – like right now.

Ok, let me get back to what I was saying. Just like you so aptly put it at the time of the farm incident, most people (Japanese, at any rate) like grey. But, if you are serious about solving something, in the final event, you must reach a settlement, and that is black and white. And whether I am here or not, the human world is inexorably headed toward its final form, The Last Society.

p.s.18

I had better add something. This social system I am talking about is not a type of fascism that will force black and white on people. It will suck up all shades of opinion and form a 100% consensus built upon logical persuasion. My idea is a bottom-up system with a self-regulating loop (This ties in with what I once told you about Complex Systems.), not a pyramidal hierarchy, and it will give us an objective (I better not get started on so-called "objectivity" now!) judgment about things that matter,

A world without grey is heaven, and it's hell. I know that all too well. That's why I feel that I am cursed. A cursed man.

To tell the truth, I can see how the world began and how it will end. I guess it means I am crazy.

Because I'm a bit crazy, I can unify time and space in a paragraph. Why can I do it? Because they were not different things back when language started. When I say that, someone always gets upset, "No," they say, "time and space were there before words, you idiot!" That's the normal way of thinking, but the physicist philosopher Mache, (he's the one whose name remains as an airspeed measurement), who was a big influence on young Einstein, said "time is only an abstract construct made by men who observed that things change;" and Einstein, who himself harbored a strong wish for a Final Unified Theory, said something like "the divisions between past, present and future are artificial" and "someday science and religion will become one." Speaking of religion, I've read that the future and the past are reversed in the original Old Testament.

This is getting too complex and I am afraid I'll make you stop reading, so I won't go on but if you wish to understand more about what I'm trying to say, the easiest way is to read the 11th volume of VAGABOND, a Miyamoto Musashi *manga** by Inoue Takehiko (the guy who wrote SLAMDUNK), where Musashi asks Yagyū Sekishūsai "What does "the world's strongest" mean?" He replies "The world's strongest? It's just words." In the final event, "time" and "space" and "self" and "mind" *are* just words. By the way, you just have to read this comic. It's full of classic phrases – this old fogy says "Super-cool. That's me!" And Musashi says "I just love this old fogy!"

**Manga*. Japanese's most popular genre of literature today is often translated as "comics" or "cartoons," which is misleading because they are aimed at an adult audience and includes much work of literary merit that might better be called visual novels. Partly for this reason,

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afficionados in the West call them by the Japanese word *manga*, the term that will be used from now on in this book. Inoue Takehiko's *manga* is based on a Yoshikawa Eiji's classic novel MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, and has sold 40 million copies. Miyamoto Musashi is the most famous and beloved swordsman in Japanese history. He was also an extraordinary strategist, calligrapher and painter.

p.s.19

What can I say? The more I write the further I get from what I'm really trying to tell you!

Reading this stuff, you must already know, but what it comes down to is this: my theory is more important to me than you (and our marriage) are. That is just the type of man I am. That's me. Exactly as you have described me – “a childish egoist who's only concerned with himself.” I have long understood that much with my head, but now, for the first time, I can *feel* it's true, deep down in my heart. Still, my love for you is deep. I love you more than anyone (except, maybe, your parents), I'm sure of it. If any guy were to hurt you, I would kill him without a second thought, even if it cost me my life. That sounds really dumb, like the type of thing a rap-song might say, but I mean it.

p.s. 20

Another thing, just to be certain. If we get married, and you should cheat, you must be certain to tell me. I know you'd say it's better to keep quiet about it, but I would tell you everything if I did it. I don't mind cheating itself, but our first priority must be to keep one another first in our hearts.

p.s. 21

When you asked me on the eve of your Alaskan Cruise, whether it would be better if you stayed to be with me and I said “No,” off you went, looking cheerful as can be, with the rest of the staff. I don't mean that as a putdown, that's one of the things I really like about you, and why you are so easy to be with. That's why I can really say my mind with you. Mrs. Tanigawa, because she doesn't know you well, said to me “I guess that's the end of it.” That's a part of you that people can easily misunderstand. Usually, someone would be afraid of what people might say (“Boy, she is one cold cookie!”). I think your pragmatism, the way you are oblivious to what people think and just keep doing your thing is just beautiful. It's possible that you are not really as hooked on me as I am on you. When I think about that I feel a bit sad, but if, even so, you became my wife, it makes me happy to think that I could keep longing for you – enjoying my one-sided love affair – as long as I live.

p.s. 22

If you are not against it, you can show this letter to Kenji and ask him to write me his impressions of it c/o my permanent address. Fax is OK, too.

This isn't from a sort of exhibitionism as it might seem. I'd just like to know what a competent young man will think about our marriage, my illness and my theory.

The core target for THE ANSWER is young men and women from 18 to 29 years old. The catch-phrase will be, “To all the innocently cruel children of the world!” The image I want isn't a good kid like Sophie of *Sophie's World*, but a bad kid, like those

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street urchins in *Black and White** – I doubt that you have read either of these but, anyway. The honest heart of a child before he or she is dyed with convention. An innocent child killing some one, laughing as if to say “What’s wrong about killing people?” Kenji may not have the gutsy heart of a child, but he does retain some of that naïve bluntness.

**Matsumoto Taiyo’s Manga. Black and White* is the title of the English translation. It comes from the names of the sibling protagonists, the boys Shiro (White) and Kuro (Black). The French translation published by Tonkam (1996), *Amer Béton*, means "bitter concrete," a pun on "reinforced concrete" (béton armé) which is not inappropriate for the original title (*Tekkonkinkurito*= ReinConForcedCrete) is a spoonerism. The English serialization in *Pulp* (Viz Communications) is summarized: "Mean kids practice random violence and senseless acts of ugliness on the mean streets." Either the English translation fails to convey the high quality of the work or the Pulp editors haven’t read it. If *Black and White* is a controversial manga in Japan (writes XaV, at the site www.pipo.com/du9/du9/english/manga1.html), “it is due not to excesses of violence or sex, but to an excess of realism.” The manga might be described as fabulous philosophical surrealist naturalism with nihilistic winks. "You find me ugly?" asks Itachi. "But I speak the language of truth."

p.s.23

I don’t know if I am giving birth to something new or just getting crazier by the minute and, though I know it won’t do me any good to think about it, I start doing it and that makes me feel like saying to hell with it all, I just want to die! I’m not exaggerating. But I won’t die. Because I have you. Still, I have no idea what lies on the other end of my manic ride.

p.s.24

I’ve got two messages for Kenji:

- 1) Have faith in your own ability!
- 2) You may stick out but don’t get stuck-up!

Of course, this applies to me as well!

p.s.25

When I get into one of my natural writing hyped-up condition, for some reason I get horny.

p.s.26

Probably, I am shaving off years from my life by writing this letter! I don’t know why, I just feel that way.

p.s.27

This is the last p.s.. You must be fed up by now, but persevere just a little longer and read on! This is a super-simple history of philosophy and my stance toward it:

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“A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away”

The beginning of beginning was God. No, let's be more logical about this! In simple protest, philosophy was born. Of course, at this time, there was no division of philosophy, science and religion. But, right after this start, philosophy split into two schools:

- 1) The all-is-one school
- 2) The all-is-many school

90% of modern theory and ideas, including Christian theology is built upon 2). My Final Theory, Buddhism and Eastern thought is based on 1). My hypothesis of the origin of language is similar to Zen in that we both would send ways of thinking and seeing constructed from language right back to Point Zero. But Zen is not theory, it's technique. So all I'm trying to say is that by logical persuasion I did for myself something like what Zen does by its practices.

Seeking absolute objectivity (absolutely correct way of seeing things, absolutely correct standards for judgment), philosophy made something called metaphysics. Now, this metaphysics is a system of scholarship that tried to find an ultimate basis for this absolute objectivity in the existence of God or similar transcendent entities, or, again, a universal something people were thought to be born with. Plato and Kant are representative metaphysicians. I'm sure you've heard of them.

Separate from this, there is this off-shoot of existentialists (Kierkegaard, Sartre, etc.) who think about things like “how should man live?” They don't cover much at all – in essence, their writings amount to little more than frank talk on life like you find in Itzuki's never-ending *Hints for Living* books – hardly worth more discussion!

Well, metaphysics, for a long, long time was worshipped as the muse of all learning, but Nietzsche jumped right in and punched her out and Saussure – though he was a linguist – demolished what was left so completely that not a trace remains. So now philosophers studying metaphysics are only engaged in a hobby, an amateur's game. But that's still something. Here in Japan, there are no philosophers, if a philosopher is someone searching for the truth (an answer). They are all too busy having fun criticizing someone or poking into the corners of drawers or parading around their fancy specialized vocabulary. To borrow the words of Nakajima Yoshimichi, “In Japan, there are scholars of philosophy, but no philosophers.” There are many scientists in the West who are seriously trying to find out the truth. But, unfortunately, none of these people speak Japanese. And even if I'd graduated from a top university, it wouldn't mean a thing outside of Japan, but that's neither here nor there for there is no way a single professor of any worth would lend an ear to a drop-out assistant in a nursing home. Ah, shit. I'm sorry! All these complaints. But I'm not alone on this. I once heard the mathematician Fujiwara Masahiko say something like this on TV: “mathematicians don't go to conferences to learn about other people's work but because they want to find someone to praise their own work.” Scholar or not, we are all humans. I want someone to praise me, too! But nobody praises me. All they ever do is get mad at me. Sorry, again! Complain, complain. But it's true. My professors got mad at me. They got mad at me at the nursing home. And even at the farm. *Shit!* Here I go getting all pissed off again. This destructive drive of mine

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I just took two tablets of Halcyon.

.....

Wheew, that's better.

Ok, let me get back on track.

Let me say, there is just one thinker I think is really worth listening to, Ferdinand de Saussure.

What he said was that "the bond that men establish between things exists before the things themselves and actually serve to determine them. From this perspective, people can only create things in a secondary manner. At no time, do any things, or objects, instantaneously manifest themselves." (I'm relying here on a *Small Dictionary of Saussure* edited by Maruyama Keizaburo.) Can you see what he's driving at? Remember, I talked to you about it once, the way a rainbow can have two colors or seven depending on the language you happened to acquire? That's what it's about.

Saussure's thinking became the foundation for semiology, the study of symbolic meaning where "everything is difference" – which is as good as saying "difference is everything" – and saying everything is different is not much different from saying that everything is the same, so the world fell into the chaos called relativism.

So why is relativism a problem? It seems like the perfect protection against fascism because it lets people form a consensus based upon agreement to disagree: "We have different ways of thinking about it, that's all!" But, the other side of the coin is that it means the loss of all standards of judgment, for no one is supposed to have any idea about what might be correct and this leads to concluding that there simply is no right – you get the picture: workplaces thrown into turmoil, high-school students stabbing people (shooting them, if you are in the USA), wars popping up everywhere and no matter what measures are taken, it's as futile as mole-bopping.*

**Mole-bopping*: The translator could have created a new metaphor such as cutting heads off the hydra, but he hated to lose this picture of a game found in Japanese fairs and in some storefronts where the player desperately tries to bop artificial moles on the head with a mallet as they pop up here and there from too many holes to keep track of when it picks up speed.

That's where The General Problem Solver comes in.

Up to now, philosophy has struggled to *know* and to *understand*. But, in the final event the truth (what is correct) must be *decided*. Right? In that case, the only problem is *how to decide*. If you could clear that, the conclusions you derive from it will never cause conflict. Ah, but that leads to another problem, how can we decide upon the way to decide? Well, you'll get to read about that another day!

Recently, I've finally come to know the answer to the question "What is philosophy?" Philosophy is the endeavor to find some hyper-logical bullshit that will hold up a million years. So, here I sit alone, raving on and on about my *Final Theory*, but if you really think about it, it's all bullshit. No wonder I was a damn good mucker!

It's 8 at night. Exactly.

... I guess that's really it. Why does no one understand something so simple? I think it's because what I say is too easy to understand yet contrary to common sense. But, you know, most great physicists say it: "The truth is always simple." Something you could put on the chest of a T-shirt. In the West, they call the Final Theory many think

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will eventually be discovered “The T-shirt Theory.” Really, I’m not making this up. So I really got into making T-shirts for a while, but I only sold ten.

I have this unshakeable confidence of my ability. That confidence, if nothing else, is every bit a match for Ichiro’s. But, even though I am getting used to living like this, this solitude is hard to take. Sayo, I need you. I need some one to stick by me, someone on my side, by my side.

p.s.28

I LOVE YOU!

A LOT!!

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ACT

II

In Hazelwood (three years ago)

The car made a small start as it reached the hump of the hill and all of Hazelwood came into view. The fiery sea of autumn leaves continued all the way to the far-off horizon where it vanished into the maw of the light blue sky. It is a beautiful forest, deep enough to reject the advances of man. The air coming into the open windows was very dry.

Now and then, the branches of the white birch trees crowding in from the side of the road smack the windshield as if to try to stop our progress. The so-called “road” gradually narrowed and each time a tire struck a rock, the dark ponytails hanging in front of the Indian driver’s shoulders did a dance.

“That’s where a bear sharpened his claws. Can you see the mark?” Gary said without expression as he downshifted.

“Just drive as far as you can,” I replied.

*

What I am going to write now may be nothing more than the grumbling of a complainer, the soliloquy of a fool, or, at best, crying wolf. I don’t really know. But, since thirteen scholars couldn’t determine whether it was the truth or a lie, this story, complaint or boast though it might well be, is worth telling. In the final event, it is you, not me, who will have to decide that.

Be that as it may, when was it decided that philosophy holds no “answer” – and who decided it?

*

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“You sure you don’t need a rifle? This has been one lean year in the forest. I’d think twice about it if I were you.”

“No, I’m fine. It will just be more to carry.” I said, with one boot up on the bumper as I laced up.

“Well, Okay. Do what you want. My job’s to guide you up to here. What you do after that – it’s not my responsibility,” humphed Gary as he returned the big-bored hunting rifle to the shotgun seat.

“I’ll be back for you in five days. I’ll wait for a half day, and even if you don’t show up, I’m gone. You got that?”

“Yeah,” I replied.

The blue had already left the sky, and starlight was starting to leak through. I hurried to the back of the jeep and lifted out my tightly bound sleeping bag by the rope. One roll of toilet paper from the motel was hidden inside. That was all I carried. From behind, Gary shouted loud enough to catch my attention.

“Man, I gotta admit, you’re one hell of a strange Japanese. Nobody fasts in the woods these days! Are you a Buddhist or something?”

“No, I’m a philosopher!”

That’s no lie. I am still a philosopher. But that will end soon.

After a short silence, again a voice from behind.

“Hey, so what’s a philosopher?”

I turn about and there’s Gary standing arms crossed looking up vacantly at the sky. I waited for his eyes to look back down and said,

“It’s someone who demolishes common sense Like Einstein I guess.”

“Wasn’t he supposed to be a scientist?” Gary protested.

“Nah, it doesn’t matter what you’re called. It’s *how* you seek that counts. Your stance.”

I looked up over the treetops for a moment and searched for words.

“How should I put it? Okay. It’s the difference between people who search for things on the leafy branches of trees and those whose only interest is searching out the bare roots. In Japanese, words are called “leaves”. Well, those grown-up people with

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their heads in the treetops get hung up on those word-leaves and end up splitting twigs. People like that make good specialists, but they sure won't do for philosophers. A philosopher is like a little child who just can't stop asking *why? why? why? why?* The child who doesn't accept what is obvious to others as obvious at all and just wants to *know*. He just wants to know what is and how come it is. That's it. The only thing dividing religion, science, philosophy and literature are their different methodologies. Indians do their searching with intuition, philosophers do it with logic. You follow your feelings, we follow lines of thought. But what we are seeking is probably the same."

Gary put his hands on his hips and half-closed his eyes as he digested what I said.

"What *we* are searching for has no branches *or* roots. We just try to be one with nature. That's all.

"And, 'all is one.' That's what the ancient philosophers said. So I'd say we all end up at the same place!"

"Okay, then what's that "root" stuff?"

"It's the essence of things after the leaves and branches are all lopped off. The way it was in the beginning. The beginning of time. The beginning of the world."

I stretched as I said this. There was no wind but the temperature plummeted as it grew dark.

Gary seemed to scowl as he pulled a turkey wing from his pocket and rubbed it lightly against his neck and after an awkward moment of silence, he narrowed his eyes a bit and said,

"You're not talking about God, are you?"

"Not exactly. Time began the moment an ape turned into a man." I kept stretching.

"You mean the idea of time, right?"

"Nope. I mean physical time. Time in every sense of the word."

"Come on! How do you *know* you've got it correct?"

I stopped my stretching and looking the indian straight in the face said,

"The problem is not if it is *correct*. It is whether it is *convincing*. But, let's forget about it. I'm talked out."

I put a hand on each temple and pressed hard and closing my eyes thought how nice it would feel to scoop out all that grey matter in my cranial cavity and polish up my skull inside and out!

Do you know why 1+1=2?

“I don’t get what you’re saying, and I don’t know that I want to know, but . . .”

I opened my eyes and saw Gary with his face scrunched up like he was troubled, searching for the next word.

Not again! I clucked to myself, at myself. How many times had I seen the same face, the same expression before me. Enough already! I spit out some words as fast as I could.

“That’s okay. It’s no big thing. Let’s just forget I said anything”

“I do understand that bit about our way of doing it being different but what we seek is the same. Yeah, I get that.”

The indian dropped the turkey wing into his chest pocket and patted my shoulder twice with his large cracked hands.

“You know, one thing’s sure, this world is full of stress, all kinds of it. It won’t do to fight against yourself. If you fight, some day you’re bound to lose. If you don’t fight, you can’t lose.” He laughed. “Come by again to eat some day!”

“Thanks, Gary. Give my best to your wife!”

Shortly later, I heard three short horn beeps, but I didn’t even turn my head. I just kept walking. I had no destination. Relying on my compass, I ploughed on, heading for the deepest reaches of the forest.

As the sun set, the birds quieted down and before I knew it the forest was wrapped in silence. The dusk rapidly deepened and cut off the world around me. As I tripped over raised roots and brushed away low-hanging branches, I began to be gripped by a terror unlike any I had known before. Not that of losing one’s place in society, or falling from the grace of love, but of losing everything – this was absolute physical solitude. I had no way to convey this terror for there was no one to convey it to. It was the feeling of being the last man left on earth. Here, darkness was darkness, forest was forest and I was I, and nothing else.

People quickly get use to any environment.

I told myself that as I trod a step at a time over the springy forest floor. No regrets. This is what I wanted. It’s the only way.

Don’t think of what you have lost, think about what you have.

This motto for living that I must have read somewhere came to mind.

I still have hands and legs and hair on my head. I could do without those unruly gangs of words running wild inside my cranium. They are what I’d really like to lose.

Do you know why 1+1=2?

Return everything to zero again. Return to my cat, my bike and my friends. Yes, I'll do it all over.

I must have walked for an hour or so. There was no moon or starlight, no dark navy-blue sky; an utterly black night filled the forest. It didn't make me feel one with nature. Far from it. This pure darkness had nothing to feel one with.

I crammed the compass into the pocket of my jeans and pissed on the roots of a tree, from the feel of the bark, probably a birch. I felt the warm clouds of steam rising from the flow of liquid from my body and heard the rivulet being sucked into the earth through the leaves by my left boot. As the steam vanished, my body temperature seemed to drop several degrees.

I groped my way a short distance and, after feeling about and readying the ground with my boots slipped down to the base of a broad tree. The thick spongy ground was full of moisture. A piercing chill shot up from my buttocks and I began to shake from the marrow of my bones. My teeth began chattering. As I rubbed each goose-bumped arm in turn, I lit up my last cigarette and, as I slowly exhaled, threw my old worn Zippo as far as I could.

The red glow of the cigarette each time I inhaled heightened the blackness of the night-sky. There was still no wind and there was not even the hoot of an owl to break the perfect silence. Still smoking, I tightly hugged my sleeping bag with the toilet paper roll in it and pressed the side of my face against it. Suddenly, I was filled with overwhelmingly deep feelings of nostalgia and regret, and my eyes were bleary with tears.

Do I still have a place to return to? Will they still be waiting there for me? Am I making a terribly mistake? These hopelessly negative feelings came one after another. My freezing heart beat, or rather creaked, loudly. I knew my time for indulging in sentimentalism was limited. It would last until I fell asleep, no more. First, in the morning, my fingers, seeking nicotine, would begin to tremble. By nightfall, hunger pangs would wrack my belly and, finally, the dryness in my throat. That would be hardest to take. Halfway through the second day, my lips will swell and my mind will become a slave of my body. My brain will fill with images of juicy apples and lemons and all thought will come to a full stop. If I can stay put and endure this for five days, it should be possible to forget everything. That is, if my starving body can hold up to this unfathomable cold.

The cigarette burned down to the butt. After putting out the stub against the back of my clinched fist*, I snuggled into the sleeping bag and pulled the zipper up to my neck. My shaking didn't stop. I should at least have brought a vinyl sheet with me. Maybe I should have been a bit less headstrong. If it rained, I would freeze to death for certain. I'd be eaten by bears and wolves. Fine. But how would I hold up to pain with no end in sight?

* *Putting Out Cigarettes on Oneself.* The cigarette is almost always put out against the back of the hand. This seems rather sadistic, but in Japan, showing ones will-power or guts in this manner is common enough to be idiomatic (*konjo-yaki* – guts-burn). Japanese gangs and men practicing tough sports (boxing, martial arts, etc.) do it as a sort of initiation or simply to prove how tough they are to others and to themselves.

I heard myself saying something.

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Just a fool! You're just a fool! A stupid fool! . . .

It would be great if I were to go mad, just like this! I wished it. But was this any different from a girl cutting her wrists -- or pretending to cut her wrists -- to call attention to herself?* And, haven't you, yourself, despised such people? I asked myself.

* *Suicide for Attention.* Women in many cultures make more attempts to commit suicide but succeed less than men. Young women in late twentieth century Japan, took attempted suicide a step further by turning it into a sort of fashion, and even women who did not attempt to cut their wrists wore gauze bandage-like bracelets as if they had! The practice was common enough – or, covered enough – to create something English lacks with respect to cutting one's wrist, a word: “wrist-cut” (*risuka*)!

Keep it up! Keep it up! I told myself. Chew your heart out! Wallow in your self-pity! Hate yourself all you want! It will all come to an end soon enough.

I opened my eyes and looked up at the sky. I thought of the faces of my friends far away at work, one at a time and wondered who was on night shift tonight.

I liked the night shift. You had a bit more freedom to do your work as you pleased and it was fun to hear the late-night bitching and bullshitting that went on in the staff room. It took me back to middle-school excursion days.

After getting the change of shift report from the nurse in the conference room, ascending to the second floor and putting my food into the refrigerator, I would walk from room to room greeting the residents.

“Good evening! I'm staying over tonight. I'm counting on your cooperation!”*

* *I'm Counting On Your Cooperation.* This is a lame translation for a normal original. Unfortunately, English lacks an equivalent for *yoroshiku o-negai-shimasu*, one of the most common idioms in Japanese used in speech or writing whenever one is counting on enlisting the cooperation of others or simply indicating you will be doing something together with others.

Then, I'd go to the cafeteria and pour tea into cups for the residents from the ridiculously large tea-pot, while the food buses came out of the kitchen. The clamorous preparations for dinner begin. I'd think of how much nicer it would be if someone could put on some BGM. But we were always too busy even for something little like that. Not enough people. Not enough time. Also, the radio-CD in the cafeteria was always breaking, and CDs disappeared as soon as they came. Still, once in a while, there was music and the old people totally enjoyed it.

Once, quite a while ago, an old woman invited me to dance a waltz with her in the empty cafeteria. The waltz was a number from an old movie. Leaving her wheel-chair by the wall, she gently led, helping me follow the rhythm. Cane in one hand, dragging one leg, yet she gracefully circled my body. “You never forget what you are good at,”

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she said. “I used to go to the dance halls of Ginza* almost every day. You need to go out and get some practice. Then, come back and I’ll treat you to another dance.”

I wonder if she still remembers her promise.

At an assisted living facility for the elderly, there wasn’t much philosophy could do. In that place, a person’s life might hang on the matter of whether or not you put kelp in their miso soup. And someone has to shoulder that responsibility. Us. So we had to have something to cling to.

Everyone says, “It’s just a matter of where your head’s at.” But people are not able to forget their misgivings that easily. Such was particularly true for me. All of this stuff weighed heavily on my mind.

* *Ginza* Ginza, a district in Tokyo, was the center for avant-garde culture in Japan from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, when it may well have been the top night-spot in the world. The Japanese were self-conscious of their own Occidental airs and the young men and women who frequented Ginza were dubbed *mobo* and *moga*, short for “modern boys” and “modern girls.” The old woman was one of the last living *moga*.

Take this example. There’s something called “functional exercise.” It is necessary to keep old people’s physical skills from deteriorating. But there are, of course, old people who don’t want to do such exercise. There are nursing home staff who abide by the wishes of the old people and there are relatives who tell us to make them do the exercise. Some of the staff do all they can to compromise, others try just as hard not to. Then, there is the matter of insurance

Everyone wants what’s best for old people. But people come from different places and hold different philosophies and these give birth to confrontations that end up creating deep-felt antagonism that poisons the atmosphere of the work-place. When arguments leaving no way out clash over and over again, feelings of helplessness and irritation with no release begin to fog up the participants’ consciousness. And that is a perfect description of the entire modern condition born of relativity.

“What is absolutely correct?”

“There’s no way *anything* is!”

But, if I was going to fight this unhappy reality, I could not afford to join those howling over – celebrating or mourning – the death of philosophy. For me, philosophy changed from being something to think about to a problem I needed to solve. Then, one day, epiphany! My workplace was a perfect microcosmos of the society and, not only that, the individual and the human species were perfect analogues from birth to death. That is to say, a baby grows into a man taking the same path as that by which apes evolved into humans. And, at the moment this happens, time, space, the universe is born. Yes, all existence is an analog that converges at a single point.

It felt like I had instantly dropped from the top of a soaring tower, where I could see the entire world, down to the ground. *Thud*. With nothing happening in between, the tower upon which I had stood now stood in front of me.

Instantly, the scene before my eyes changed and I was looking at the whole tower, looking up I could see people in it, busily working. Determined to make that tower taller,

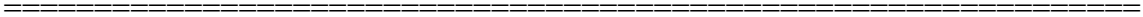
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if only by a tad, they were all deeply absorbed in their respective activities. But each time one rock was added to the pile, a different place buckled and a rock fell out.

“Watch out!” I yelled. “That’s not the right place to build a tower! It’s standing on quicksand!”

But my voice didn’t reach them. I searched but there were no entrances. I couldn’t find anyway to get back inside. I gave up, stopped my shouting and sat down on the spot. Then I turned on my laptop and began pounding keys. I was writing a letter to my dead mentor.

This was a half year ago.



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act

III

A letter to my mentor

Dear Sensei,*

Sorry for being out of touch for such a long time! I hope this finds you in good form.

No, that isn't quite right, is it? Let me try again. How is life treating you up there? My memory has you briskly moving about as always from student to student, hearing out our dumb complaints. Or, is it wrong to have you coaching boxing in heaven just like you did here?

Whenever the alumni get together (once every three years, now) you are always one of the main topics for talk. Your image that time when you could have avoided being hit by the Takeyama's wooden sword* but choosing, instead, to let it come down right in the middle of your forehead, remained perfectly still as blood poured down your face — it remains indelibly etched in all of our memories. After that, Takeyama went cold turkey. Today, he is a father of two kids and still off drugs. I got a New Year's card from him the other day. He never comes to the alumni meetings, but I know he is working as a fireman in Fukuoka. To think that one of those Hachioji* bad boys (with their "Society for Blood-viewing!") is now a *bona fide* protector of society!

* *Sensei* Personal names are rarely used in Japan. All teachers from nursery school to graduate school are called "sensei". The term is respectful and is also used for all who have wisdom to impart, be they artists or coaches.

**Wooden Sword* Japanese high-school and university PE includes a form of sword-play called *kendo* (students wearing masks and some body armor duel using round-bladed "swords" of split bamboo that make splendid sounds when they whack each other). *Sensei* was struck by a far heavier, solid wooden sword generally used for *kendo* exercise.

* *Hachioji* A suburb of Tokyo. Fukuoka is hundreds of miles to the South in Kyushu.

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Sensei, I really had to write this letter to you. You see, I finally figured out the answer for that question you gave us for summer homework fifteen years ago!

Write a composition on “Why is it wrong to kill a human?” – you may ask anyone you want, read anything you want. I don’t know the answer myself, so I want to hear what you come up with!

To tell the truth, at that time, I thought “What an crazy question for an adult to come up with! Is *that* the type of thing a teacher should ask a student?” But after the Sarin in the subways* and the “drunken devil rose”* and other incidents where even high-school students are out killing people, I have come to think your wish to have students think about the meaning of taking human life was remarkably prescient.

* *Sarin and the Subways* The indiscriminate act of mass murder committed by members of the Aum Shinrikyo (alpha-omega truth-religion) in 1995. The charismatic leader of the cult claimed to have a monopoly on the truth and his brainwashed believers came to live in a world so completely their own that they became oblivious of the morality of the greater world.

* *Apostle Sake Devil Rose* A janitor at a junior high-school found the head of an 11 year-old retarded boy in front of the school. The note stuffed in the victim’s mouth and others sent to the newspaper had a symbol reminiscent of that used by the Zodiac killer of San Francisco, taunted the “dumb police,” claimed “I find killing people a thrill” and threatened that the “game” would go on. The killer’s strange pen name suggested he had a literary bent and an older psychopath was imagined, but the killer turned out to be a 14 year-old student. The tremendous coverage given to the 1997 incident is thought to have inspired a wave of copycat crimes by teens in Japan. (Crime wave or not, the amount of killing was not a fraction of what is found in the US)

We were also busy with college entrance exams so when summer came to an end, it turned out that only one of us, Sawada, handed anything in. Perhaps he got some help from someone else, but I can recall he came to class with a copy of Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason* (at the time, I didn’t know K about Kant) and plopped it down on the podium with a loud thud. After a moment of silence, here is what you said:

“I don’t know if you have read this and I don’t really care. I don’t want to hear Kant’s opinion; I want to hear *your* opinion. I don’t want to read Kant’s treatise; I want to read *your* composition. I don’t care if you may have been influenced by this or that, so long as you have thought it through yourself, using your own head.”

Thinking it through, using your own head

When I think back, your words at that time are what turned my tendency to ask “why?” into a full-blown pathology, you might call a *Why? Why? Compulsive Disorder*. Maybe I didn’t write even a line in reply to your request, but questions like, “Why is it wrong to kill people?” or “Is there anything that is absolutely correct?” or “What’s truth?” never left my head. Because of you, when I went to college, I started reading like crazy from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to Descartes, Kant, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, then, Saussure, Derrida and Foucault. Later, after starting to work, I studied various fields of hard science, and for the same reason even started boxing. What I learned from all this was just one incontrovertible fact: neither “*Black Jack*”* nor specialized knowledge

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do a thing to help someone suffering from a bad case of the *Why's!* It is just like you taught us. The amount of knowledge we have means *nothing*. What counts is thinking with our own heads.

Note "*Black Jack*." The name of a work by the Walt Disney of Japan, Tezuka Osamu, who more than anyone else set the tone for post-WW II *manga*. Black Jack is an unlicensed surgeon who gets astonishing rewards for performing surgery that makes the impossible possible. Tezuka is known in the USA for the Lion King controversy (The Disney folk borrowed too much from Tezuka's Kimba the White Lion (1965-6, *aka* Jungle Emperor)) and for *Astro Boy* (1963, *aka* Tetsuwan Atom) which is now being considered by Hollywood.

(I just finished proofing, which is to say rewriting this letter. Once I started fussing with it, I couldn't stop and it grew to a monstrous length. So, I am dividing it into parts. This is how it goes: a philosophical case study from the nursing home I worked → thoughts on an ideal society → on the history of human thought → on making artificial intelligence → on the beginning of the world → on insanity → on the end of the world → on theoretical physics → on math → on religion. Only the first has anything directly to do with the homework, after that you can call it my masturbation and I won't complain if you want to skip it.)

Sensei, so long as people use words to think with, all problems, whether they involve philosophy, hard science or religion ultimately come down to one question: *How did language start?* Or, to put it another way, the ultimate mystery of how apes became humans must be solved before we get around to asking why it is wrong to kill people. And, you will be amused to know, the "Answer" for all of this came to me from a purely metaphysical conundrum: "Up to how many cigarettes should M smoke?"

Philosophical Observations at a Nursing Home

1

Let me give an overview of the circumstances. There was this exceptionally amiable old man, M, who lived on the second floor of the special-care nursing home, Swallow House, where I worked. He was 74 at the time. He was wheelchair-bound, but had no obvious mental disabilities and lived peacefully, enjoying his one hobby, if it can be called that, of smoking. Then one day, the nursing staff, thinking his smoking might be why the bedsore on his hip (it was so deep the bone was showing) was not healing, ordered that he should be forbidden to smoke for a while. The care staff at the nursing home split into two parties, we might call the DAPs (Daily Activity Planners) and the QOLs (Quality Of Lifers). The first, the "party" holding power, held that it was too bad for the patient, but a rule made on sound medical grounds had to be enforced whatever the patient might think. They were in favor of prohibiting smoking. The second, the "party" out of power, held that the staff had no right to act against a patient's wishes, regulating his life where he was not causing any trouble for those around him and were

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against prohibition. These DAPs and QOLs were drawn into an endless argument. M, for his part, was naturally worried about this, and there was the broader matter of the overall responsibility of the nursing home which had, after all, permitted him to smoke all he pleased despite its proven damage to health, while this was offset by the simple logic that a person who might die at any time should be allowed to smoke all he pleased After numerous conferences, a conclusion was reached: “Mr M is to be permitted 7 cigarettes per day.” This was a compromise the two parties had to make to get on with business, but neither side was at all happy with it, tempers continued to smolder and the situation only grew more aggravated.

As time passed, some of the QOLs secretly giving cigarettes to M were told off by DAPs who caught them red-handed, while many “unaffiliated” employees, knowing full well that *rules are rules*, could not help giving in to their feelings on a day to day basis. Meanwhile, the intentions of the lead in this drama, our client M, were quashed by the corporate debate, and the inevitable result was that he came to read the expression of each and every one of the staff before lighting up. He looked pitiful, like someone begging for a smoke. A number of the staff, fed up with this ongoing situation, keep making appeals for “unified care,” but it never got anywhere and, in the end, we had no choice but to live with that unhappy compromise.

Just think about it, Sensei. This ugly picture can be found at any workplace, in any government, in the United Nations, even in the Astrophysics Society. And in the end, when there is an impasse, the one who wins is the side with the most clout (look at the Japanese Long-term Care Insurance system!*) or, when that’s not the case, a compromise (like the Superstring Theory in particle physics) is reached that only ends up creating more problems.

**Long-term Care Insurance System.* This system, instituted in 2000 is often translated as “nursing care insurance,” but the translator uses the English term recommended by the Ministry of Welfare. Modeled on the system developed as economizing measures in the late 1970’s and 80’s in Germany, the funding for this Long-term Care Insurance has switched from welfare funds collected from taxes to one paid for by insurance. This is bringing about an improvement for at-home care and other services contributing to the welfare of the middle class and up, but it is taking away from the assistance available for the weaker members of society, the poor, the elderly, the homeless and other marginal people. In the Swallow House, where the protagonist worked, there were four clients per room.

In modern society, where relativism has become our very blood and flesh and all beliefs and assertions hold equal value, who can claim that his opinion (for example, that it is wrong to kill a person) is definitely correct? This may be ideal for deconstructing the Truth Establishment and preventing fascism, but it also means the end of all guiding principles. Any argument may be overruled by simply saying “It’s only a difference of opinion, right?” Socrates was called a philosopher for advocating “the wisdom of ignorance,” i.e., knowing you don’t know; but no one gets anywhere in particular by forming a consensus based on mutual ignorance. In the real world, we must make judgments of one sort or another all of the time. Take that smoking problem at the nursing home, for example, what could “the wisdom of ignorance” have done there?

Because of this 7-cigarette affair, I suffered a relapse of my *Why? Why? Compulsive Disorder*, that had been dormant for some time. “In the final analysis, which

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side is correct? Why in the world does M have to smoke in secret to avoid being scolded by some staffer young enough to be his grand-daughter? As I dug for the root of the root of this 7-cigarette mess, I ended up punching right through the semiological fault-line, clear down to the molten magma core of the earth. That is, I arrived at a hypothesis of the origin of language, which is to say, answered the question of what happened at the moment an ape became a man. As language leaves no fossils, this question must remain unanswered by archeology. But if Alan Turing's theoretical thought experiment formed the basis for real artificial intelligence research, likewise, it should be possible to prove or disprove my hypothesis of the origin of language depending on whether or not AI can clear its epistemological bottleneck. This thing we call "artificial intelligence" is really an attempt to make machine proxies of human intelligence. Here, too, the huge riddle of consciousness has been long neglected. Of course, I did not study philosophy in order to make AI. I just wanted to do something about the problems that arose at work. But Sensei, if apes could get a mind through evolution, don't you think that machines can get minds with the help of philosophy?

Don't get me wrong. Solving the origin of language will not bring us a new God or a new Truth. The idea is to bring the real face of "intelligence" out into the open and, making the limits of human-held truth evident, allow "the real truth" to be settled here and now.

2

Philosophy, science and religion all seek "the real truth" and each speaks about their truth in different ways. But, are their truths really so different from each other? Or, are they ultimately the same? What is this thing called "truth" anyhow?

Thinking about this word called *truth*, we cannot avoid a discussion of something called *rules*.

To start with, we have social rules called "laws." The basis for these laws (theorems) is the Constitution (axiom). But we don't have any basis for the Constitution itself. The Constitution says you better "respect human rights." But no one teaches us *why* we must obey basic human rights. Though a society needs rules and we must obey them when we live in it, unless we reach a consensus on how these rules (Euclid's geometry) were determined, individuals can't help choosing other rules (un-Euclidean geometry) sometimes.

Think about it.

Because boxing has worldwide rules and a worldwide consensus, even if Joe kills Rikiishi* in the ring, it is, in a word, accepted as something that can't be helped. No one thinks the worse about Joe. No matter if Joe's match becomes a brawl, or if boxers in the real world themselves regret or feel guilty about some of their actions in the ring, in this world with clearly established rules, those who win remain "good men" forever.

**Joe and Rikiishi* This is an example from a *manga* book series (and, later, animation) called *Tomorrow's Joe* (ashita no jo), considered the masterpiece of boxing comics –Japanese *manga* have a tremendous number of genres – was first published about thirty years ago and is known by most Japanese. When Rikiishi died, the leading playwright Terayama Shuji helped organize a

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public funeral for him! Yabuki Joe, who learned to box while growing up in an orphanage, fought his way up from the grueling country circuit and himself, ends up dying in a fight with José Mendoza for the World Title.

On the other hand, Rambo, just back from Vietnam, suddenly changes from hero to outcast. Soldiers who were wounded while serving their country following their country's orders, with the shift in values in a new era find themselves personally rejected. "Bad deeds" committed in wartime, become bad because society lacks universal rules. Here, there is no place for justice. Life's not fair, is it? Poor Rambo!

To put it bluntly, unless "War is not allowed" is actually written down somewhere, there is nothing wrong with making war. That "killing one person makes you a criminal, while killing thousands makes you a hero" is not a problem of conscience, instinct or selfish genes, but simply the result of the absence of truth, which is to say, the fact universal rules are not in place.

The establishment of an absolute standard of judgment – this is the original mission of philosophy. If, over the long history of philosophy, most philosophers have submitted to religion, that is why. Religion is, to those who believe it, something absolutely correct. But, so long as this religion cannot encompass all mankind, all cultures and all languages over all eras, we can't call it The Truth. A local truth is not *the* truth. So what is the *true* truth?

Sensei, if you have had an argument with members of any faith, you know how easy it is to bust their arguments with some relativistic counter-punches. But, even though their arguments are destroyed, does any believer change his beliefs? No. That's because religion is a tool for happiness while philosophy is logic meant to convince all men, every human being in the world. So, what, then, *is* there common to all human beings over the ages? It is *language*.

Religious truth is "what is absolutely correct within the world defined by your belief." Mathematical truth is "what is absolutely correct within the world defined by mathematical notation." By the same token, philosophical truth is not something that holds true for everything, but "what is absolutely correct within the world defined by the use of language."

When a believer judges something, the standard for judgment is not *good/bad* but whether it accords with the dogma or not. It is "0" or "X," period.* Following the dogmatic premise "the founder (and whatever he says) = absolute-good," the act of scattering sarin in the subways is a "0." In the world of mathematics, too, "1+1=2" is not judged as *good/bad* but "0" or "X." That is to say, within a limited world, things are judged not in terms of "good or bad" but "correct or incorrect." The world defined by words is the actual society we all live in. There, too, judgments about questions that should be answered in black and white like "Is this really a cup?" or "Is it wrong to kill people?" are all questions that can be answered by "0" or "X." And, here is my main point: if all men could be persuaded to accept mathematical formulas such as "This object is a cup = 0" and "It is good to kill people = X" then, it would not be too much to say that the mission of philosophy was over.

*Note "0" or "X" In the United States, "X" means "incorrect" but there is no sign always identified with "correct." Some teachers may informally circle the correct items, some may check them, some write "OK" and others may write "C." In Japan "0," or "O," always means "correct."

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The translator follows this and hopes his country (perhaps teacher associations could take the lead) may standardize its sign for correct.

I may be getting off track with this, but Furuya Makoto's manga *With Me (Boku to Issho)* – Furuya is the author of that famous manga “*Go Get ‘Em, Inatoyo Junior High Ping Pong Team!*”^{*} – has this conversation, you really should see:

“Get ready! I have this super thing to say!”

“Uh oh Spare us all!”

“Are you listening? – What’s life?”

“Hmm. That’s the type of thing . . . you really should think about it after you’ve experienced sex! Be seeing you ...

“Whoa, there! I can’t agree with that! What does *sex* have to do with it? If you ask me, that’s a *stupid* thing to say!”

“Okay, damn it, I’ll tell you! You haven’t lived long enough for that “life” you talk about to have *any* meaning! You, idiot! We are all apes and we have no business asking such questions, anyway! People who drivel on about *meaning meaning meaning* just show they have nothing better to do and are intellectually rotten. You might as well ask “What’s the fucking universe?”! If you’ve time to waste on that rot, you’d be better off screwing! Got that, you idiot? You Tazmanian devil! You super wart-hog! Ah, what’s this? Is my little girl crying? (deleted)”

“I, I . . .still don’t agree! Noooo way!”

“Wha . . . what! You *still* don’t agree?”

“No, I *don’t!*”

^{*} “*Go Get ‘Em, Inatoyo Junior High Ping Pong Team!*” This humorous ping pong manga extremely popular with young readers because of its creative use of language has become a television animation. The Japanese title is *Ike! Inachu Takyubu*.

So, when it comes to matters of the truth, what really counts is not so much whether proof is possible or not, or whether the proposition is coherent or not according to the rules of logic, but simply whether or not you are persuaded. If we are talking about something anyone finds convincing, there is no need for clashes of opinion or evaluations of validity. If everyone thinks that is the way it is, beyond a doubt, within the limited world of such a society, everyone can state outright that things are “absolutely correct” without need for proof or, for that matter, disproof. *That* is what “truth” is.

The TRUTH is something 100 of 100 people are 100% agreed about.

For example, to go back to our earlier example, to say that “he who gets the KO of a boxing match = the winner” is not just correct but *absolutely true*. On the other hand, the formula “one who kills the enemy in a war = the winner” is not true for it can change depending on date and circumstance.

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When we are pressed to make a real judgment, we first think, unconsciously, “is it good or bad?” (For example: Is Mr. M’s freedom to smoke “good or bad?” Is killing an enemy “good or bad?”) . Meanwhile, the big guns of reductionist legal philosophy are still squabbling over whether man has a good nature or a bad one! But if Truth is not what is good or even true, but what is correct, matters such as whether, on the private side “we should or should not engage in assisted-dates*” or, on the public side, “we should or should not intervene militarily in the Middle East” will not be judged in terms of whether it is “good or bad,” but whether it is “right or wrong,” which is to say *correct* or *incorrect*. It will be either “O” or “X.” In other words, the root cause of all the evils that have thrown our society into confusion is neither our leaders, our government nor ideology, but the conflation of standards of value and standards of judgment on the part of philosophy.

**Assisted Dates*. A euphemism for prostitution by high school and college girls who “dated” older men in exchange for “assistance” for buying clothing, jewelry, expensive dinners, and so forth. Mass media in the 1980s and 1990’s sensationalized this practice, making it seem like every high school girl was or was thinking about selling herself.

Standards of Value = Is it *good* or *bad*?

Standards of Judgment = Is it *correct* or *incorrect*?

So, it is wrong to bring unproven standards of value coming from religious faith and personal beliefs into the public arena as a standard for judgment.

3

With this in mind, at a Swallow House case conference one day, I said something like this:

“Putting myself in the shoes of either party, I must say that both sides are certainly correct. But, at the same time, working in the same organization, unless you can come to a common understanding it will be impossible to supply consistent care. So, the standard for judging whether or not to regulate M’s smoking must not come from your values or your on-job experience. It must come from a rule both sides share. And, it so happens that in our corporation’s business plan report for this fiscal year, something we were all given a copy of, the following words are clearly written: “We provide care that respects the wishes of our clients to the utmost, regardless of their physical or mental disability.” Therefore, whatever the opinions of the staff may be, so long as other clients are not troubled by it, M should be allowed to smoke all he wants to. That is the *absolutely correct* solution for this case.”

Of course, smoking can give rise to serious health problems. But, for a problem where no answer is forthcoming from thinking about whether it is “good” or “bad,” all we can do is to do what is *correct*. And if we can only get it through our heads that “absolutely” should not be used in any *other* way, we will be able to make judgments about whether the opinions of others are “absolutely correct” or “absolutely incorrect.”

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At this point, the staff at the meeting nodded their heads and went along with me. They even clapped. And the next day, M was free to smoke again. Furthermore, the staff stopped clashing and the atmosphere improved overnight.

Or so I thought. But the story has a postscript. One day about a half year after the smoking stand-off began – I had been shuffled to the office by then – I visited M’s floor and what did I see? Now they were enforcing a regulation restricting him to 10 cigarettes **77** a day. Talk about a shock! In the end, all my effort amounted to was 3 cigarettes. Why do we always have to end up right where we started?

On the Ideal Social System

1

M’s cigarettes were not the only problem. For example, our rules say that for safety’s sake at least two staff should be used to move a bed-ridden client, but more and more of the staff, pressed for time, have taken to doing it alone, as best they can. The nurse aids and the nurses have quarreled about the practice of digital fecal stimulation (sticking fingers into the anus to remove fecal matter and encourage bowel movements) and there was even a conflict over whether the office staff should help out around the house more, or not be permitted to even stick in their noses to see what is happening. Then insufficient communication between duty posts didn’t help when there was a series of cases where money was missing from the wallets and purses of clients and staff alike that ended up triggering a debate about whether or not to call in the police.

As you can probably guess, this type of thing is where mole-bopping (see note pg ___) just won’t hack it. You bop one and another pops up and there is no final end to it. These problems, like the incidents that pour without respite from the TV and newspapers, are soon lost in the busyness of everyday life and apparently forgotten. But we should not forget that they are not solved to anyone’s satisfaction. For that, a solid organizational foundation must be constructed. There is no other way.

2

Just a glance reveals that our society overflows with problems of every sort. It may be thought that the thinking of humans is too complex, indeed, too weird and incoherent to be tackled. But, when it comes to the causes of social conflict and the logical process of judgment by which humans cope with these problems, the reality is that the causes are finite and the process has limits.

“input – information-processing – output”

This process is the same for biological life, machines or institutions. The organization of an assembly of individuals comprises four components:

Do you know why 1+1=2?

- 1 a receptacle for opinions
- 2 a standard of judgment
- 3 responsibility / bounds of decision
- 4 a route for transmitting information

After coming up with this, I discovered that the classifier system used for bottom-up style artificial intelligence is, in essence, run by this algorithm. Conversely put, the cause of all social problems stems from the imperfection of at least one of these four components.

So the system I hoped to put together at Swallow House at this time was simplicity itself. Namely, 1) Securing a pipeline to suck up all of the staff's opinions, without condition; 2) Establishing a common absolute standard of judgment neither too high nor too low, after which; 3) Responsibility and the right of decision-making will be restored to individuals and, 4) clearly stipulating the routes for transmitting information. With this in place, the workplace would not have to be a hotbed of chaos and stress. So I thought. And at the same time, it occurred to me that if this system worked effectively in the old folk's home (which has, in miniature, a judicial, legislative and administrative capacity) it might be expanded to cover the entire nation or even the world, our "all folk's home."

In order to actually institute the system at the nursing home, I enthusiastically wrote a plan. I was ablaze when I wrote it – like Tom Cruise in "Jerry Maguire", – and passed copies around to about a hundred other employees but, unfortunately, the message just didn't get through to them.

"I'm sure it's a good thing, but to tell you the truth, I can't figure out what you're driving at!" I got some sympathy, to be sure, but no comprehension.

Right about that time, as if to second my misgivings about what was happening, ISO began to grab the spotlight in welfare policy circles and we had to consider whether or not to adopt it at Swallow House.

Sensei, in case you are not acquainted with the ISO, I'd better explain that it stands for the International Organization for Standardization. Originally, it was a national standard for guaranteeing product quality in the UK that had been requisitioned by Thatcher from the US military for the purpose of reviving English industry. Put simply, this was an organizational management system, that used manuals to completely spell out job procedure and preserve the uniform quality of goods and services.

Since ISO membership was thought good for Japan's reputation, all industries were encouraged to qualify and our management naturally decided that "as long as this is the wave of the future, we had better comply now or we'll miss the boat," but I was dead against this.

Here's why. ISO is a top-down operation that imposes system on things all the way to the lowest levels, while I thought that if we were to create the best possible working environment for the staff, the services offered our clients would naturally improve.

In POUR YOUR HEART INTO IT, the Starbuck's CEO, Howard Schultz repeatedly says that the important thing for an organization is "to give an ear to the voices of all the employees, not to fear innovation and share common values." What the ISO

Do you know why 1+1=2?

seeks is workers who “do their jobs in faithful accordance to a fixed procedure.” For example, if this ISO were brought into the schools, a teacher like Kinpachi* would be attacked and many good things would be spoiled. My dreams were all about a bottom-up system self-organized from the continual inputting of the workers’ opinions. At least, as far as Swallow House was concerned, no one was doing slipshod work for lack of caring. All were conscientious about their work and gave it their best. The only problem was that their energy was disparate and their efforts did not always point in the same direction, so the whole was unmanageable.

I did not think of an organization as hardware needing to be fixed into a solid system, but as software. If the minds of all the staff were properly prepared, which is to say the OS was properly installed and enabled, the organization would self-organize. All that was needed was to unify our process of decision-making.

**Kinpachi* The name of a junior high-school teacher in a television series that enjoys cross-generational popularity and has continued for more than twenty years. The teacher, played by Takeda Tetsuya, sympathizes with his students of *Homerom B* and goes all-out to help solve their problems, including pregnancy, birth and other serious issues.

3

As I already wrote, the way people think is not so complicated as we tend to think. Human judgment can be roughly divided into three types.

- (1) Metaphysical judgment that can ask the question “What is _____?”
- (2) Individual judgment making a comparative evaluation of alternative merits and demerits, suitability for the purpose/goals and grounds.
- (3) Social judgment of “correct” or “incorrect” with respect to specific rules

The types of judgment in (2) includes “Should I accept Maeda’s proposal?” or “Did dinosaurs die out because of a meteor or because they were evolutionarily unfit?” If you ask “Is the Self Defense Force Constitutional?”* as an individual it falls under (2), where a social judgment on the same would fall under (3), instead. (1) concerns questions like “What’s good?” and “What’s bad?” but explaining it would take too long, so for now, all I’ll say is that if this level of judgment (1) – asking things like “What is correctness?” – is carried into the level of everyday life, it creates disorder.

With such thoughts in the back of my head, one day right in the middle of changing a patient’s diapers, I came up with an antithesis for ISO, my QAS (Question and Answer System), a comprehensive problem-solving system based on my unified bottom-up organizational foundation construction framework, i.e., a process for making up your mind, as opposed to the ISO-style top-down framework.

* *Self Defense Forces* Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution bars the country from raising an army or making war. The existence and definition of the Self Defense Forces is therefore a matter of perpetual controversy.

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“Should or should not M’s smoking be limited?” “Should or should not the national flag be flown at graduation ceremonies?”*”Is the Theory of Relativity incorrect?” “Do or do not God, UFO’s and Nessie exist?” “What is a good choice from tonight’s menu” and, even, “Is it, or is it not okay to kill people?” – Any question is fine for the QAS. But let me take you through the basics of my system before going into instances:

**The Japanese flag* In Japan, some identify the national flag with the militarism and enforced patriotism of the World War II and feel it does not belong at such ceremonies.

Q1 Who should ultimately assess and decide the question/matter?

– Yourself.

– Another.

Q2 Which of the following methods should that person use to assess and decide the question/matter?

– Assessment and decision in accordance with a specific text.

– Assessment and decision between alternatives by a comparative evaluation of their merits/demerits, suitability for purpose and grounds.

– Assessment and Decision on the basis of the opinion obtained from a specific individual or group.

Q3 How will the items up for assessment and decision be communicated, and to whom?

– The target of the communication (an individual or a group).

– The method of communication (a medium or a meeting).

Q4 Does or does not the item up for assessment and decision necessitate any revision in the pre-existent text?

– Yes (Specify the text at issue and the person with responsibility for revising it).

– No.

Q5 Should or should not the assessment and decision be recorded?

– Record it (The item recorded and the person responsible for recording it)

– Don’t record it.

Q6 Can you or can you not agree with the judgment/decision?

– Yes (the problem is solved).

– No (go back to Q1).

These are the specs for my thinking device for the purpose of constructing an organizational foundation fully equipped with the four components – 1) a receptacle for opinion, 2) a standard of judgment, 3) a scope of responsibility/decision-making, 4) a route of communication – that will bring about the logical and objective unified understanding of all problems (all clashes of opinion).

The reason we uniformly agree on the outcomes of contests in sports or mathematics is because they start from the same premises and are fought according to the same rules. This being so, we may assume that if social problems also arose under the same premises and were argued out under the same process, the result would not give rise to conflict as it does now.

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I made a proposal that a piece of paper with this QAS written on it be distributed to all the staff, but the managers just laughed it off (worse, many of them actually got angry). They just don't get it. Sensei. As long as people in any society use words to think and decide things and to act, they all use this QAS process to one degree or another, whether they know it or not. That argument and conflict nevertheless continue is not because this QAS is absent so much as because the process has become so obscure it is not recognized and people try to force a consensus. If only the process by which X came to be thought of as the "correct" answer for, say, Problem A – the perception, the thinking, the evaluation, the decision, that is the entire process – were to be out in the open for all to see and share, in the end, every one would fully accept the result and reach a unified understanding, and the creation of a society without conflict would, theoretically, be possible.

The workplace and society are analogous systems. International conflict and personal quarrels are essentially the same. And the relationship between a nation and its citizens is identical to that between a facility and its clients.

In this world, there is no God or gods and people are not born with any *raison d'être*. From this, it follows that the *raison d'être* for a state is not the pursuit of profits like a corporation, but to support the lives of its clients, as is the case with care facilities. So, if the government thinks the ISO and its quality control will raise the quality of the service offered by corporations and care facilities, then why doesn't it try adopting it for its own operations? Be that as it may, we should know that the ISO is based on a PDCA (Plan – Do – Check – Action) *modus operandi* that requires an inflexible top-down system only good for breaking down problems into pieces run by a pyramidal "we-talk, you-listen" leadership. If, instead, the process of assessment and decision on the part of all members of the organization could, through the incorporation of my QAS, become the norm, society would behave like an automatic problem-solving device with feedback loops and assume the form of a pie rather than a pyramid.

Another problem with a top-down system is that if the core collapses it is irreparable, where a bottom-up complex-system is an organic network with the ability to repair itself if part is destroyed. As is the case when all the components of a complex-system's digital simulation share the same algorithm, when the members of an organizational body operate from the same algorithm, problems automatically resolve themselves.

4

Malaysia's prime minister Mahathir says that so long as there is anger in the hearts of oppressed people, wiping out terrorism with military force will not fully solve the problem" I fully agree.

On the floor of any workplace, there is the justice of the work-floor – what the worker feels is right – and the justice of the administration – what the executives feel is right. At any workplace, there is the justice of the worker, and in any administrative office, the justice of the executives.

Terrorists have a terrorist's sense of justice and nation states have theirs. Put yourself in the positions of either party and each is right, but so long as they stick to promoting their respective rights, there can be no true solutions for our problems and

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history will just keep repeating. It doesn't matter who is right or wrong. The problem here is the rightness or wrongness of the method of consensus.

A society is an assembly of people, and an assembly is either a group or an organization. A group is an assembly of people without a clear-cut objective/purpose and an organization is an assembly of people with a clear-cut objective/purpose. Human society should be a combination of these two. At this time, "the world" is little more than a loose circle of money-grubbers. It is a far cry from an organization with a shared objective. If we want to find a real solution to its problems, rather than mole-bopping each problem as it comes up, the world must be remade into a bottom-up organization with the same objectives and rules. All of this boils down to a sentence:

World Peace = The Organization of the Entire World with a Single Process of Decision-making.

I am not, of course, advocating the unification of the values of individuals or of the world's diverse cultures. I am just explaining what is needed to ensure logical – which is to say reasonable – debate in official forums.

If a receptacle for individual opinion is provided, a format for debate is realized, a route of communication is clarified and all of the responsibility and right of decision are restored to the individual, when there is a failure to reach agreement, it will be possible to immediately determine that information is not being shared or easily identify bugs (cheaters) in the system.

Today, many people are trying to make new sense of the world as an economic or information system. But the only thing giving value to money is a temporary consensus formed by and based on language. It is not information but a proper structure that we need to share.

Sensei, the people at my workplace were all good men and women, strongly conscientious and enthusiastic about their work. But as they each did their own thing as they worked, all that effort only resulted in spinning their collective wheels and many of the most talented of them ended up burning themselves out. It's not a matter of anyone being bad and I am not saying it would be better if they were robots. It is important we care for each other and note where we are each sticklers about one thing or another. It is a fact that a single smile can save the otherwise lost mind of another person. But, it still comes down to this: if problems could be solved by caring, simply by raising our individual levels of consciousness – war would have disappeared long ago.

Imagine there is this president agonizing over whether to go to war or not. If he (or she) carried out his (or her) decision making in clear view of all, using the QAS process, the resulting conclusion would not engender conflicts with world opinion or the harsh judgment of history.

According to modern philosophy, there is no such thing as "objective judgment." But, if there were a judgment in which 6 billion of 6 billion members concurred, that would be an objective judgment and, at that time, would be absolutely correct.

Sensei, do you think it is impossible to get 6 billion people to agree?

Well I think it *is* possible.

If the QAS rules, or rather way of thinking, were to be universally accepted as a common-sense premise, a given, the way the heliocentrism and evolution have been,

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and 6 billion people could climb into the ring, a unified understanding of any problem could be achieved; and, if it can be done at the nursing home, I bet it can work for the whole world! After all, the questions of what should be done to rid the nursing home of chaos and stress and how to do so for the world are analogous and this is no ivory tower theory dreamed up by a theorist sitting at his desk, either.

Of course, before this QAS can expand to incorporate the entire world, it will be necessary to go back to the origin of language and return all concepts, including all religions to zero.

I think all conflicts that have been born of human linguistic activity are solvable – the concrete, or physical ones by QAS, and the ideal, or metaphysical ones by PSM (Problem Solver for Metaphysica – I’ll explain it later!). But, we are talking about the framework and principle here and that is hardly enough to make any headway in the real world.

As Chomsky liked to say, you can’t take something like particle theory and build a bridge with it. You need to remake your physics into the applied science of engineering and, further, break that down into civil engineering and architectural engineering and, then, gather these together if you are going to build something on the order of a bridge. In the same sense, it would be wonderful if this QAS and PSM were to be made into sophisticated problem-solving software programs with different LAN (Local Area Network) versions suitable for companies or for the entire world. In principle, all problems (conflicts) can be solved (resolved) by the QAS-PSM system, provided only that the data base is rich enough. I’d bet on it working. If I were a computer wizard, I’d make it right now! We’d be rich!

5

Whew! I seem to have gotten a bit overheated. Maybe I had better excuse myself for a smoke.

I was a good kid, you know. Didn’t start smoking until I was a grownup. India is where I picked it up. Wow, Sensei, India’s something else again! There are corpses floating in the river. There are kids all around who had an arm or leg cut off to beg more money for their parents. Old ladies are crawling around in garbage piles mixed right in with dogs and pigs. You feel like you have gotten a close look at the rawest part of human society. As you walk in the street, they incessantly come up and ask things like “Won’t you buy a woman?” “Will you change this bill?” “Won’t you buy some hash?” So long as I’ve come all the way to India, I thought, I might as well try some hash for 500 yen (\$5) in Calcutta. Sensei, have you ever smoked hash? This hash was dark (something like deer shit) and soft. You unwrap a cigarette, add the hash and rewrap it, but for some reason – probably because it was such cheap stuff – it didn’t work on me, but the tobacco smoke made me somewhat giddy. My body felt strangely numb, I had trouble standing and ever since, I’ve been hooked on tobacco. I’m pretty certain you smoked Lark, right? I first smoked Lark, too, but a girlfriend convinced me to smoke Marumen* and I’m still smoking it. She was always bumming cigarettes off me and gave me grief every time I offered her a Lark, so I switched. My usual is 2 packs a day, but when I am writing, it can go as high as 6 packs a day! Don’t know why, but I smoke more when I write. I do like writing, sensei, I really do. There may be some of the pain that comes with giving birth, but when I start writing I just go on and on, forgetting to eat

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or go to the toilet for 10 hours at a stretch and, afterward, I feel like I just went the full 15 rounds to beat Mike Tyson.

**Marumen* Marlboro Menthol. The Japanese abbreviate the names for many products, perhaps because they like such colloquialisms or perhaps because of an unconscious need to compensate for the tendency of the language to excessive length. Starbucks is *Sutaba* and MacDonalds *Makku*.

You know, my first time was in an Indian whorehouse. A little before I went to India, I read a book by Zhuge Liang. Before he became a mighty regent, he was accosted by a leprous woman on the street who called out to him “Won’t you buy me?” He hesitated for a while, then thought, “If it’s my fate to sleep with this woman, catch leprosy and die of it, then it’s my fate,” and slept with her. At the time I went to India, the AIDS boom was at its peak, and perhaps because I was influenced by this story, I decided to test my fate. The first woman to come along was an old lady well on the far side of 60. She cost 50 yen (50cents). It was one hell of an experience!

Ok, it’s time to get back to what I was writing about. I’m not done yet. There are more questions needing an answer: “What is a human?” “What is mind?” “What is time?” “What is the universe?” When you think about it, once people who fret over *What is this?* and *What is that?* disappear, the demolition of the system of thinking we call philosophy will finally be complete, won’t it!

By the way, Sensei, one thing I wanted to tell you is that I can finally answer your homework problem by saying that it is the type of question that requires QAS to decide/judge it. But first, I had to change it from “Why shouldn’t we kill people?” to “Is it right or wrong to kill people?” and then to “Is killing people correct or incorrect?” just like I changed M’s smoking question/problem from “Is it alright for M to smoke, or not?” to “Is it correct to guarantee M’s freedom to smoke, or not?” at the nursing home.

Now, pardon me if this seems a bit presumptuous on my part, but since I know you didn’t do any formal study of philosophy, I’m going to give you a short history of human thought before trying to answer those questions.

On the history of thought

1

Sensei, modern philosophy did not find itself stuck up a one-way street as everyone thinks. After a long time of wandering inside the maze called language, it has finally made it back to the entrance. That’s all. You can get lost in that maze, but by calmly walking on, keeping a hand continually touching the wall, you always make it to the exit.

But, let’s keep it simple, sensei. I’m going to give you the shortest route from the entrance to the exit gate. Of course, a boss-character-like guard awaits you there. *

**Boss Character* A game term. They are usually found at the end of an electronic game play section and must be overcome before continuing on to the next level of the game. Most young Japanese are apparently familiar with the vernacular *bosukyara*.

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“Why am I alive?” That question is the entrance for all philosophy. All philosophers, however erudite, begin this way; and any ignoramus who thinks about this subject is, at least while they are thinking of it, a philosopher. But people who are burning up with love or deeply caught up in this or that don’t think this sort of thing. People who are really starving or freezing or so deeply in debt they are afraid to look right or left for fear of their creditors don’t think of it either.

People who may start to think about it and say, “Naw, forget it!” are drawing monthly salaries; those who keep trying to think about it, but have no idea how to proceed are the job-hopping part-timers. The people who live for what they like are the artists and scholars and politicians. Those who live for what they believe in are the people of faith, the ideologues and the terrorists.

Well, those who start by wondering “what is human life?” and, even though their studies may get confusingly complex, never lose sight of this question, they are your ordinary philosophers. Among these, the ones who insist on leading terribly individualistic lives and deaths are your existentialists and those who change the question to “Does human life have meaning and a purpose?” and end up with one foot in the coffin called “What am I?” and another in the coffin called “What is objective?” are the philosophical elite, the metaphysicists.

To start from the answer, as far as the meaning of human existence goes, there isn’t any to speak of. Would you ask about the meaning of canine existence? Or, rodent existence? Well, it’s the same type of question. I know the standard reply: “But people are different! Dogs and rats don’t think about the meaning or purpose of their lives.” Well, of course they can’t think about their lives, they can’t *think*, period. Why can’t they think? Because they lack language. (If you think that is a lie, try to think about “life” without using the word “life!”) In a word, it is language that makes people special.

If it is just communication you are talking about, everything from bugs to apes has some sort of language. But only humans can write and read letters. The thing about letters is that they can be seen and they can be preserved.

Letters are a sort of sign. A sign is like the “+” in 1+1 that is “plus,” or the red of a traffic signal that is “stop.” So a sign is a mark with meaning, a type of convention. “A” and “i” and “ai” are examples. “I think I could die for her!” “In that case, it must be *ai* (love), not *koi* (romance).” Both letters and the words they make are mere combinations of signs arbitrarily settled upon. If I may sum it all up again, symbols are “signs gathered together for the purpose of creating meaning by demarcation from, or contrast with, other things.”

The relationship between spoken language and written signs is (more or less) that of a melody and scale. Only the number of notes comprising the scale are relatively few in number, so it is about the same for all nations, while the number of words used in speech and writing is huge, so each locality must have its conventions. Changing the rules of one locality to those of another is the work called translating.

For example, Japanese think of the rainbow as being seven-colored, whereas Americans think of it as six-colored. This is because there is no color similar to the Japanese *ai* in America.* By the same measure, the rainbow has only two colors in a Liberian language. Do the people in other countries have faulty eyes? No. Linguistic differences cause differences in the way they see things because people only perceive, i.e., recognize, the things their five senses sense through language. This language-utilizing

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perception that people perform unconsciously all the time is the mental operation called *conceptualization*.

**Ai* This color can be translated as “indigo,” but dare a translator translate a word the protagonist says does not exist? Unlike Japanese, many if not most of whom know their rainbow has seven colors, for there is even a song saying so, most Americans never even think to count the colors, but six colors were the conventional number for the rainbow in England before dark-blue gained the word “indigo” from fabric imported from the Indies (which is to say, the East).

Looking at the same snow, Japanese and Eskimos see something different and watching the same news program, you, Sensei, and I will take it differently. This is not because of differences in our brains, that is, hardware, but because of a difference in our language, our software. (Of course, you could say it’s a matter of different linkages between the neurons, but that is still a hardware approach, not mine). The things our bodies and brains, both of which are hardware, sense are recognized, which is to say *known*, by language, our software. So you could say that Japanese and Eskimos use different software to convert grains of ice falling from the sky into the data base of experience and memory.

There is nothing particularly difficult in the way our perception may differ. What to us ignoramuses may only be “loose socks” – for us, loose socks are just loose socks – will be immediately recognized by any high school girl as either “loose socks” or “super loose socks.” * A biker will instantly register the difference between a Harley Fat Boy and a Yamaha Drag Star where other people will only see a motorcycle.

**Loose Socks* The practice of wearing loose socks began when school girls increased the size of the plain white socks that was part of their uniform – in Japan, most students wear uniforms – so much that they began to accordion down around the ankles in loose rolls. The fad which began as a small cry for freedom received so much attention by the media that it turned into a fashion that has held up for over a decade! The translator is not sure what degree of gross looseness justifies the “super” prefix.

Differences in the way we perceive things are not limited to the visual. To one man, Chateau d’Yquem and Romanee Conti have distinct bouquets but all *shochu** tastes alike, where another man might say the opposite. And the same man might be enraged to hear someone confuse the music of Bach and Mozart yet, himself, confuse Green Day with Bad Religion.

So whether it is about what people see or what they hear or what they taste or what they touch, feelings will be at complete odds depending upon whether we know the names or the words defining the names of these things.

Sensei, if your worldview and mine are different, that difference is nothing but a difference in the words in our two heads. Put another way, a kid who doesn’t know the word “Pikachu” doesn’t want to have a Pikachu* and the same thing can be said for cars and houses and drinks and cigarettes and money and power and marriage and happiness – our desire comes after our knowing the concept.

* *Shochu* Japanese hard liquor made from sugarcane, potato, wheat or barley. It has something of the rustic quality of bourbon whiskey and the pure power of vodka.

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* *Pikachu* A Pokemon character. Over 400,000 hits on Google suggest that many readers will not need an introduction to Pikachu!

Though this would be a good place to stop, the philosopher can't help but push on and drive deeper.

Seeing "super loose socks" as simply "loose socks" because of not knowing about "super loose socks" is the same as an old man seeing loose socks as simply sagging socks because he didn't know of "loose socks" is the same as some native people seeing socks as a cloth wrapped around the foot because they didn't know of "socks" is the same as a stone-age primitive seeing cloth as a strange foot for not knowing "cloth"

You keep going this way and you see that when there is no word for "tree" a tree is no longer a tree, when there is no word for "human," humans are not human, when there is no word for your "self," your self is not your self, no "world" and there is no world, etc.. You end up with everything being nothing. So, in primeval times before there was language, I think the world did not exist for the proto-people. Sure, they hunted in their world and pooped in it. But this world they lived in was nothing more than that of the animals you can still see today.

Now, is when I really don't know what I'm talking about, but that's what cutting-edge philosophy is – tinkering on when there isn't really anything left to say!

As I wrote a while ago, uniquely human language comprises "signs gathered together for the purpose of creating meaning by demarcation from other things." If you have a word like "white," you can make "black," by parting them, and parting both, you can make "grey." And, so, by making finer and finer demarcations, you end up with a variety of things – color gradations, such as blue,* navy-blue, blue-serge, indigo, azure, etc., or people, such as male, female, *gal*, *ko-gal*, *mago-gal*, *okama*, *onabe** or your self, other, stranger and so forth.

**Colors* The "blue" in Japanese is *ao*, a color including most blues and light green, meaning pale and/or fresh! Unlike the English translation, the colors in the original are all single words.

**People Types* Most fine people categories translate even worse than color for there is more cultural input. *Gal* is a fashion-conscious, rather flashy, young (twenties or younger) girl. *Ko-gal* is younger version of "gal", literally kid-gal, usually indicating a high school girl. And *Mago-gal* is much younger version, literally grandkid-gal, usually a junior high girl. *Okama* is an openly effeminate homosexual, who usually cross-dresses (in Japan, this is the stereotypical homosexual) and is usually found working in a bar which, unlike the gay-bar in the West, is a novelty item catering more to heterosexuals. *Onabe* is a masculine woman who may pass for a man.

What I mean is that all you need is one word and it starts multiplying by itself like that. One is all it takes. The problem is how that very first word ever came to be.

So, how did it come about?

2

Sensei, if you recall, Darwin once hypothesized that all varieties, all forms of life from monads (unicellular plants and animals) to man share a phylogenetic tree that grows

Do you know why 1+1=2?

out of a single ancestor. In the same way, isn't it possible that the 5,000 or so still-evolving variations of language in the world all began with a single tongue, no, a single *word*?

Reductionism – that is intellectual exploration of the cause of the cause of the cause – is found in all academic disciplines, bar none. In physics, reductionism pushes as far as the quark in the micro direction or the Big Bang in the macro direction. But, you know, whether you are talking about the quark or the Big Bang, they in turn have to have an anterior cause.

Nowadays, most of the brilliant physicists are monkeying around with one or the other of these extremes using the tenuous tools – imaginary 10-dimensional wriggling loops of something unknown that remind me *Mobile Suit Gundam's** Minovsky particle* – of their Super-String Theory trying to come up with the answer.

**Mobile Suit Gundam* The English title of the giant robot manga *Kido-senshi Gundam* (mechanical warrior Gundam). This popular TV and movie animation series went beyond the old formula of encouraging good and punishing evil and, by introducing mass-produced robots, colossal robots and new types of humans, brought about a revolution in both manga characters and the world of toys. Its treatment of dictatorships, SF wars, growing up, forbidden love between siblings, etc. have kept it popular with all ages for over twenty years.

**The Minovsky Particle* An important part of *Mobile Suit Gundam* science. This imaginary particle born from Dr Minovsky's successful development of fusion energy prevents detection by radar. This makes bases otherwise vulnerable to long-range attack viable and favors combat at close quarters.

Theoretically speaking, they might just succeed in doing it. But even if this were to happen, you'd still have to ask how those Super-Strings happened to be. What was *before* them? In the end, you must wonder if supposition (what is not) can create reality (what is). Can a layman be blamed for doubting the scientists here?

Today, the borderlines between all the disciplines of philosophy, science, religion and so forth are vanishing before our eyes. All of them are ending up at the same place, facing a purely metaphysical question "What is the beginning?" So what comes next is up to philosophy. It is time for philosophers to roll up their sleeves, for the real work starts now.

Nietzsche cried "God is dead!" Wittgenstein cried "We must remain silent about what can not be said."

But no one yet has properly answered questions like "What is the beginning?" "What is the Universe?" and "What is man?" Philosophy is not dead! As long as someone somewhere is wondering "Why are we here?" who can say philosophy is over?

Philosophy keeps trying to commit suicide, but people can't help continuing to wonder about what it is to live. And, they will keep right on wondering so long as the gap between the subjective and the objective remains. And, the thing that gorged out that gap is none other than language, and it happened when ape became man.

The ultimate aim of philosophy was to gain hold of the Truth (what is universally correct). So long as it cannot open the doors to this Truth, philosophy can make up and destroy one truth after another but it will never, can never, end its history. Politics,

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philosophy, science – they are all full of this same unproductive repetition! The same goes for the world of social services, for nursing home care . . .

3

Of course, it would not be fair to say that all of the old philosophers spent their time playing in the maze. Those who deserve to be called true intellectual explorers never stopped searching for the way out. Some even reached it. But when they got there the guardian of the gate, the Devil was waiting. This Devil called Language was born tens of thousands of years ago and boasts thousands of years of victories in battles with men and not a single defeat. He is behind all the chaos that is leading the world into disorder. The brave intellectuals have continued to do battle with their swords forged from the sweat and blood of reason, but none have managed to give the Devil so much as a scratch. The maze turns out to have been a labyrinth. Time and time again, we find dramatic fights to open that gate to the Truth, but all that remains is a mounting pile of bodies.

About six hundred years after the first weak frays against the Gate Guardian began, a baby was born within the labyrinth. That's right. A cursed half-blood baby "god" born of the Devil and a human mother. Born in mid-battle near the exit gate of the labyrinth, the baby began to crawl back to the entrance where it rapidly grew up and remained to face each and every young intellectual explorer who entered.

This God, who came to guard the entrance for his Devil father guarding the exit, sucked the blood and brains of all who came to do battle and came to surpass his parents in strength. When he came to be about a thousand years old, he left his post at the entrance and made his way out into the world of man. Sometimes, he cajoled and sometimes he pillaged and butchered until he ended up in total control of human society. The intellectuals became the tools of this God, the blood of intellectual exploration dried up and the very existence of the Labyrinth was eventually forgotten.

After ages passed and the fighting was completely forgotten, humans took the God's rule for granted and assumed it would continue forever and ever. Then, a miracle happened. A warrior was born on one island in West Europe. His name? Charles Darwin. Within fifty years of the publishing of his *Origin of the Species*, this sharp and mighty sword of a book triumphed and the God, the Entrance Guard was banished from the world of man in the twinkling of an eye.

The God had no choice but to retreat back into the Labyrinth to eke out a living, but he was no longer the dreadful God of old. People once again came to search for the Truth Gate and were not afraid to beat back the God.

Right at the time God was suffering an ignoble defeat at the hands of Darwin, a youth was shakily making his way into the maze through the din of the pitched battle. His name? Ferdinand de Saussure. Without intent or effort, as if he were drawn along, De Saussure came to approach the exit and as he did so quietly started looking for the chinks in the armor of the Exit Guard who was the true master of the Labyrinth.

De Saussure, still not aware that he was a warrior, breathed his last at the feet of the Exit Guard. But knowledge of the chinks he found in the armor and various swords he developed were assembled into a formidable weapon by those who followed: *A General Course in Linguistics*. This was further upgraded by others and perfected. The

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result was the ultimate strategic weapon, Semiotics. Once the Devil's weak-spots began to become clear, people in every country jumped onto the bandwagon and further developed their versions of the ultimate weapon. In the end, mankind had three invincible weapons in its collective hand: Semiotics, of course, the Uncertainty Principle and the Theory of Relativity. These three are the core of what is in essence a single theory based on a single principle. The heads of this triple-headed missile were aimed respectively at the Devil's head, hands and feet. And, in the end, mankind pushed the button.

About 3000 years after men with bamboo spears first came to fight for the truth, the Devil who guarded the Gate was finally blown to smithereens.

Or, so it seemed.

The weapon De Saussure left worked well enough, but it was not intended as a device for liberating all humanity from the Labyrinth forever. Moreover, the pieces of the seemingly vanquished Devil gathered themselves together into an amorphous amoeba-like shape and completely filled in the Exit Gate.

Spirited heroes continued bravely wandering about the Labyrinth searching for the Exit. Many perished, falling into the pitfalls dug into the floor by their predecessors, while others, their spirits tired or failing, kept wandering until they managed to return to the Entrance and crawl back out.

The Winter of the Intellect had come.

The Labyrinth itself became the Devil and continued to eat the bodies of the courageous and, as you might expect, the God who was supposed to have been killed a hundred years ago, is gradually gaining back his strength. But, now, no one even remembers how to do battle with him.

Meanwhile, man's torturer of old, the Gate Devil has been busy fragmenting himself until his body has come to cover and create a maze far more fiendish than ever before. How it terrifies those who still enter it! The complexity balloons as you walk and the paths keep splitting faster and faster . . .

Will mankind ever succeed in throttling the Devil and opening the Gate to the Truth? And if the Gate should be opened what world would we see on the other side?

We, who have been left to fend for ourselves by the great defeated intellects, have but one weapon left. Like the box-cutter, it is so common everywhere that we tend to overlook it – I am talking about

the mind of a child, cruel in its naiveté.

On Creating Artificial Intelligence

1

As it has been said from ancient times, the closest thing to God is a child. Why, then, *is* the child close to God (the Truth)? That is because the child has only just begun to taste the fruit of knowledge and his brain is not yet contaminated by language.

Do you know why 1+1=2?

Granted, the child becomes quite a know-it-all when he grows up, but do adults really “know it” at all?

There was a brave man called Alan Turing who worked out the theoretical foundation for digital computers modeled on human thought, thus creating the concept that was to become known as artificial intelligence. But, when he published an article proposing that science should consider the question of whether machines can think or not, many people, fearing the consequences of people being equated with machines, protested vehemently, turning out countless “but machines can’t do this!” “but machines can’t do that!” types of arguments. In order to halt this unproductive exchange, Turing came up with a thought experiment we now call “The Turing Test,” where a machine could be proven to think if an interviewer could not discern it from a human control while engaging both in conversation through a monitor.

But years later, many counter-tests were made – one being John Searle’s “Chinese Room,” a test based on the assumption that a calculator was only superficially capable of synthetic thought, and could not have a conscious mind because consciousness was the natural result of biological causes, i.e., “mind can only come from brain” – and the scientists are still arguing.

Meanwhile, it so happens that computers are clearing the Turing Test, especially in specialized areas such as psychotherapy. Most of the patients who received such counseling from Expert Systems via monitors refused to believe it. Yet, for all the progress, even those working in AI still debate whether this really is intelligence or is not intelligence.

So, let us take a look at what exactly “intelligence” is.

I think you could say that “intelligence” has become little more than a catch-all phrase for the patent way a human’s (adult’s) head works. There is a joke definition of intelligence that is known by everyone in the artificial intelligence community: “Intelligence – What humans can do and machines cannot.” The irony is not far from the truth. Every time machines progress with what they can do, someone protests “That’s not real intelligence,” and after you have enough of these denials, we get to where we are now, with nobody knowing where the true nature of intelligence lies.

So, as soon as you try to think about *what intelligence is* you find yourself lost inside of that labyrinth. Yet if you restrict yourself to humans, intelligence would seem to be simple to describe. It means that you have a good head on your shoulders. So, then, what type of *homo sapiens* is it that is said to have a “good head?”

Usually when someone is said to be intelligent it means that they know a lot (an ample data base) or they are really on the ball (high-speed processing). But, when it comes to these types of intelligence, humans don’t stand a chance of competing with machines. In other words, the intelligence of the know-it-all and quick-thinker are not particularly human. The most straight-forward proof of this is the fact that a machine called Deep Blue beat the human chess champion.

In the 1940’s, Claude Shannon of Bell Laboratories calculated the aggregate number of possible moves that can be made in chess as 10^{20} , a figure larger than the number of micro-seconds (a unit of time one millionth of a second in length) that have passed since the Big Bang and larger than the total number of observable elementary particles in the Universe. The researchers at that time thought that a computer capable of checking all possible chess moves was an impossibility. Of course, Deep Blue knew

Do you know why $1+1=2$?

enough strategy to reduce this number considerably but, at any rate, its triumph proved man's intelligence could be surpassed in both the volume and speed.

People have this image of computers blindly following rules without any flexibility, but modern computers are able to learn on their own and make judgments. Machines, such as such as Sejnowski's Nettek, modeled on the brain's neural network, starting from zero, have learned to pronounce English sentences. And there are mathematical machines that can find patterns in a multitude of phenomena and discover therein theorems and axioms. For example, the SciSys' Chess Champion Mark V proved there were three solutions for the famous Zagoruiko Problem, which humans had assumed to have only one.

Summing up,

Intelligence = A: perception, B: learning, C: thinking, D: judgment

And, of these, machines can serve as our proxy for types B, C and D. A, *perception*, alone remains the bottleneck for Artificial Intelligence research.

To put this another way, let us look at the three types of judgment (or, assessment) that humans perform:

- 1) Metaphysical judgment that can be put in the form of the question "What is _____?"
- 2) Individual judgment based on comparative examination of the evidence, merits/demerits and suitability of alternatives for achieving particular goals.
- 3) Societal judgment of *correct* or *incorrect* based on given rules

Of these, 2) and 3) may be done by machines. 1) is a problem. Not only artificial intelligence, but mathematics, science and philosophy are all in the same boat. Their intellectual inquiries are ultimately thwarted by the fact that they have not yet learned how to design intelligence capable of 1) metaphysical judgment that can be put in the form of the question "What is _____?" Frankly speaking, I myself didn't know why we know a cup is a cup.

2

Sensei, do you know why you perceive a cup as a cup? I'll bet you don't. Indeed, if I were to claim that what you call a "cup" is a "flower-vase," there is nothing anywhere to guarantee the correctness of your, rather than my perception. It is no easy question to answer. The largest passage in the labyrinth called metaphysics was made by men trying to provide just such a confirmation of the correctness (basis) for the perception we take for granted.

The word "metaphysics" goes back to the first century BC. When Aristotle's writing was sorted out, his logic, ethics and nature-study (*physika*) were each compiled into their respective books under their respective names, but when it came to the part of his writing that dealt with ideas of deity and other things beyond the visible forms of nature, they couldn't come up with a proper title, so they wrote: *ta meta ta physika*, the (works) after the physics, i.e., "after nature-study," and called it that.

Do you know why 1+1=2?

Be that as it may, AI cannot be perfected/completed and philosophers continue their endless squabbling because the true nature of this human behavior of *knowing*, which is to say perception (the cognitive system) has not been figured out.

For example, the logician Wittgenstein would not go along with his mentor Bertrand Russell when the philosopher stated “I know there is no rhinoceros in my room.” Logically speaking, it is *possible* a rhinoceros is in your room, he responded. Russell, who held that people get their knowledge through experience, looked behind his chair and under his desk and asked, “where, then, could a rhinoceros fit in this room!” But, Wittgenstein did not budge. He would not agree that Russell could know *for certain* that a rhinoceros was not in his room.

Now, this story about the kooky mind-life of philosophers may seem far from everyday life, but think again.

Imagine, for example, that you respond to a “why/what/how” question put by your little girl with a thoughtless: “Why? Because that’s how it is! It’s just one of those things grownups know.” Well, she could ask “How do you know papa?” And this might lead to how you know you know and the whole meta-rule, meta-meta-rule, meta-meta-meta-rule progression until you end up having to appeal to absolute existence.

So, when a parent, whose adult mind has been polluted by symbolic language faces a child’s relentless *Why this?* and *How that?* attack, he ends up having to reply, “Hmm, Papa doesn’t know, either” or, “I don’t know. No one knows. That’s just the way it is.” Did you ever have that experience, Sensei?

Well, you might try a humbler approach, replying to your daughter with “Because that’s what we happened to decide.”

“Hey, papa, why is this a *cup*?”

“Because your papa has decided it’s a cup, just for you!”

“Hmm. OK, thank you papa!”

That takes care of it. It is important not to be trapped into saying “That’s just how it is,” for that only leads you into the metaphysical morass. No, Sensei, you must be clear. The one who decided it was a cup was none other than you, yourself.

And when you are giving your teenager a lecture because she played hooky, and she suddenly turns on you with “So what’s the right way to live, anyway!” the only thing you can reply that works on any child is “It is what your papa has decided it is.”

In the same way, if we start thinking about how to reply to “What’s *life*?” we risk wandering into the Labyrinth. It’s simpler just to say “It is whatever we decide *life* is.” If there are people who think a cat is alive, there are others who think a colony of cells on a computer monitor is, too. There are even people who say the Earth is a living being. Others say, no. But it is all purely arbitrary. We *decide* it.

So, humans (grown-ups) do not *know* things, they only *decide* them. That’s *round*, that’s a *cup*, it’s *wrong* to kill people – these things are not passively *known* but actively yet unconsciously *decided*. So there is no need to presuppose a god, an idea or a *ding an sich* (thing-in-itself).

“perception=deciding”

Do you know why 1+1=2?

That's it. Had Russell only built his argument on this premise, he would not have replied "I *know* there is no rhinoceros in my room" but "I have *decided* that there is no rhinoceros in my room" and he would not have had to quarrel with and separate from his dearest disciple. Even contentious Wittgenstein would probably have said "Ah, is that so?" and not taken issue with it. But in the exceedingly unlikely event that he did, and their argument degenerated into an unproductive quarrel, with Russell continuing to hold that "It just isn't!" and Wittgenstein continuing to contest "but, it might be!" then it would be enough to use my QAS to determine, i.e. *decide* upon a unified understanding and any disagreement that continued after that would be argument for argument's sake.

Considered from this perspective, all conflict of opinion in philosophy vanishes. It won't do to explain it all here, but if Einstein and Bohr had only done this they would not have gotten into a quarrel over the Copenhagen Interpretation (If we carry it to an extreme, extrapolating the happenings of the micro-cosmos to the macro-cosmos, the sun and the moon would only exist when we observe and perceive them.).

Talking about this from an everyday level, it would cause quite a commotion if a philosopher were to think about the question "Is it alright for Mr. M to be free to smoke or not?" and, coming to seek a basis for a correct answer, started questioning and trying to deconstruct Descartes' *cogito*, the Categorical Imperative and the Absolute Mind. But it would accomplish little. That is only natural, for *knowing* is not our *forte*. Human intelligence functions for the sake of *deciding*. A problem like this can only be *decided* by a human agency (such as my QAS). The moment I realized this, I just sort of slipped to another place, and I knew (was able to decide) what happened at the moment an ape became a man.

3

This is a bit of a side-track, but please bear with me.

To me, this was an earth-shaking discovery, but I didn't feel so much excited as relieved, full of the contentment that comes with understanding. I had thought the wondrous world would remain an unexplainable mystery. I assumed I would keep wandering in the Labyrinth called philosophy while the puzzle remained unsolved. And here it was solved, just like that! What happened is this. The gap between my self as the perceiving subject and the object of my perception, i.e., the outer world, closed for the first time as I comprehended the process by which language originated. And, knowing this, I knew how the whole world worked. But it's not easy to put *that* into words . . .

Sensei, have you ever thought about things like "What is God?" "What is Space?" or "What is Time?" Ok, how about "What is *Shonen Janpu**?" These questions, as I'm sure you can tell, are all of the same type.

**Shonen Janpu* The name of Japan's top-selling comic book. For the last quarter of the twentieth century it sold tens of millions of copies per week. The title translates as "Youth Jump," but it is not at all clear if the latter word is meant to be a noun or verb.

Do you know why $1+1=2$?

I can remember asking my father “Why is there a “*Janpu*” in *Shonnen Janpu*? Why? Why is it?” on the way back from kindergarten and how he lost his patience and shouted

“‘*Janpu*’ is just ‘*Janpu*’ and that’s how it is. You got that? No meaning!”

At the time, my feelings were hurt, but now I think he did me a favor. My father, at that time broke the hinges off the Truth Gate. For, when you think about it, there *is* no meaning in names like *Janpu*, nor, for that matter, *God*, *Space* or *Time*.

Forgetting where the concept of “nothing” came from, people even start wondering “What is “nothing”?” about this “nothing”! But words are just a tool for thinking with, not the objects or goals for thought. Unless you want to get into a Zen dialog,* if you are thinking seriously about what something is, you would do better to pursue its *history* than its *meaning*. It may be fun to bother your head with about an elegant questions like “What is “philosophy” (or “love”)?” but, as you know, “philosophy” and “love”** and their ilk (and, consequently, questions asking what they are) did not exist in pre-Meiji* Japan, so it makes sense to look at the Greek etymology. In Greek, a *philosophos* meant someone who loved wisdom, who wanted to know things, that’s all. Similarly, no one asked “What is The Universe”, before the word “universe” existed.

Seek not meaning but history. This is another trick you must know if you would hope to pry open the Truth Gate.

**Zen dialog* The *Zen mondo* is quite unlike its Socratic counterpart for it is marked by the quality of *not* making sense (at least not by normal logic) and total disassociation. It is used as a synonym for an exchange full of *non sequiturs*.

** *Love in Japanese* While the Japanese have plentiful vocabulary to express varieties of affection, there was no equivalent for the Occidental concept of “love.” Although it was adopted over a hundred years ago, “love” still has a foreign air and is found in greatest abundance in translated literature and movies with their declarations of love (“I love you” “Honey, do you love me?” etc) which feel alien to the Japanese.

*** *Pre-Meiji* Japanese history is a succession of eras, rather than centuries as in the case with the West. The Meiji Era (1868-1912) is when Japan was forced open by the West and began to modernize rapidly to join in the global fray. This required many new words to be coined, including “philosophy” (*tetsugaku*), which does not incorporate the “love-knowing” etymology of the original.

4

So what is doing all that thinking about the answer for questions like “What is the Universe?” My mind. Sensei, have you ever thought about how strange it is that something like a *mind* is within our material bodies? Long ago, Descartes tried to find an answer for this by pinning the soul to the pineal gland. More recently, Penrose has proposed that the key to the development of consciousness is found in the micro-tubules of the neurons. But a thing is a thing. No matter how deep down the *thing* found, it is in itself no explanation for how matter gives birth to mind.

Do you know why 1+1=2?

This “Mind-Body problem” (now, sometimes called the “Brain-Mind” problem) has stirred up heated debate East and West from ancient times to the present, where it remains a highly contested subject in cognitive science, but, if you ask me, it is not much of a problem at all, if only it is properly approached.

First, let’s consider the question “What is mind?”

Hearing the word “mind/heart”* the first natural associations we make are visual memories, images of love and gentleness, and emotions such as joy, anger, sadness and happiness. But if we take these separately and ask “What are memories?” “What is love?” “What is emotion?” and so forth, this pursuit will lead nowhere. The original question of “What is mind?” will remain unanswered. Indeed, the separate questions only take us back to the first question, because “Mind” is the answer for all of them!

* *Mind/heart in Japanese* In Japanese, one word, *kokoro* means “mind” and “heart.” In most cases, the translator can choose one or the other according to context. In this book, it is clear that “mind” is what is generally intended, but the associations sometimes indicate that the heart-like connotations are still present, so this difference in language ought to be kept in mind when reading this book (or any book translated from Japanese!).

When we think about the question of “What is _____?” the more we fragment the object of the question, the more we are in a “losing the forest for the trees” type of situation. We just get further and further from the essence of what’s what. So, what we need to do, if we want to get somewhere with this question, is to stop chasing after the meaning of the word “mind” and, instead, think about its origin, that is, to ask things like “What type of things was the designation “mind” applied to?” and “How is the mind formed?”

Generally, the mind and intellect are used to mean different things, with intellect typically defined as what people have and machines do not, and mind defined as what people have and animals lack. That is not good enough. Without a clear definition of mind, what good is it to wrinkle up our brows and ask things like “Do bugs have souls?” or “Are animals conscious of death?” Words like “spirit,” “consciousness” and “soul” are, after all, simply sentimental variations of one word, “mind.” The essential picture is this:

“mind=spirit=consciousness=soul=intellect”

Or, more precisely, “intellect = A) perception, B) learning, C) thinking, D) judging” and, as I said before, B), C) and D) can be handled by machines in our place, so if mind is what we alone have, what distinguishes humans from other types of existence, then we are speaking of

“(the essence of) mind = perception”

Of course, perception is not all there is to mind, but your mind is something that doesn’t exist until it is aware that you and the world exist. So, what is this “perception”? It is the cognitive function that verbalizes (signifies) the sense-objects to construct a network of meanings (difference/contrast). And, the name for the totality of conceptualized things, including self-consciousness, is what we call “mind.”

Do you know why 1+1=2?

That is to say, clarifying the mechanism by which sense-data (including one's self) is converted to symbols is tantamount to solving the Mind-Body problem.

Or, putting it differently, if you cool down and think only of what is essential, the question of "How can grey stuff like a brain bear a mind?" can be seen to as equivalent to asking "How does a baby become a human being?"* and this means tracing the essence of what it is to be a human being back from intellect→perception→symbolic language, which is like asking "How do children learn language? = How did my parents raise me?" If only you could remember that, the puzzle would be solved! And, since the essence of symbolic language is difference, the key to the matter comes down to one point: "How does the brain create difference in sense-objects.

**Baby Becoming Human* Most readers in Japan would not take issue with this, but in the West, the expression may upset many to whom "human" is a religious absolute rather than a type of animal which has symbolic language capacity (or whatever attributes one might decide upon). The author offered to change "human" to "adult" but that would weaken the parallel of ape →human and baby →human and the translator feels it is unnecessary.

From the perspective of making artificial intelligence, we might ponder the way a human child comes to naturally say things like "Hmm, mama's face is round, but papa's face is square!" while a computer must be painstakingly taught what is round and what is square. And if this is done by a top-down method, by first inputting instructions to the effect that "O" is the correct answer for the idea of roundness, then teaching it to judge shapes with specs *approaching* roundness to be round, you push the computer into a metaphysical maze where it faces problems like "Should a 500,000 angle rectangle be perceived as a "O" or not?" and it ends up buried in the Cave Plato dug for his ideas. (If you look closely at a circle on a computer screen, you see it has jagged edges. Likewise, there is no perfect circle in the real world. To solve the question of why people can know the concept of roundness without ever seeing something perfectly circular/round, Plato made up his Idea World.)

If you take humans (grown-ups) who already have developed perceptive, i.e., cognitive, powers as your model and try to reproduce it by using rules and calculations and procedures, the way ahead will end up blocked by countless intrinsic philosophical difficulties that go by specialized terms such as "the framing problem" "the "symbolic grounding problem" and so forth. So, if we want to create machines with intellects and minds like ours, they cannot be programmed with it, but must learn it by themselves from the bottom up, tracing the path taken by a baby becoming human.

So, how in the world does a baby, born with neither intellect nor mind gain both?

5

A chaotic jumble of light is the only thing to meet the eyes of a new-born baby. It is neither the world nor an image of any type. The baby as a material object senses what is out there, but there is no perception. The baby sucks the breast, but doesn't know it is a breast. As this thing that is nothing but a little ball of flesh acquires symbolic language, a spirit, or mind, is born within the physical brain and the world begins to form there, little by little, until eventually it grows into something capable of understanding books full of arcane philosophy. (There is a research report by Wynn that claims infants of five

Do you know why 1+1=2?

months age can understand the concepts of $1+1=2$ and $2-1=1$ based on experiments with a number of dolls shown and hidden to the subject, but I think these experiments have little significance. This is a complicated matter, so I will not go into the question of *a priori* cognitive powers in this letter.)

True, not everyone reads books of philosophy. Some people can't even read the newspaper. But if a person has all of his or her faculties, though they can't read, they can always converse. As we might expect (or, as we can decide) spoken language has a higher priority than visual language and it is through their ears that babies become human. That is, language forms when originally unrelated visual data couples with that input aurally on a basis of equality. In a word,

“the formation of the mind = language acquisition = the genesis of difference/contrast through the union of hearing and sight”

Explaining in steps, the process may be delineated like this:

- (1) The brain is born (material) = *tabula rasa* (blank slate condition)
- (2) The flat visual information sensed by the brain is demarcated by the input of auditory information.
- (3) Difference/contrast arises between sense objects, and 1 is born from 0 (something from nothing).
- (4) As the demarcation repeats, the sense object (=1) fractionalizes.
- (5) These subdivisions categorize into patterns (papa/mama=person).
- (6) The number of symbols in the brain increase and the outside world is lingualized.
- (7) Inside the brain, a meaningful world (=mind) is erected.

As this symbol-making ability called perception forms sequentially, hearing → sight, the result is, conversely, the image-favoring visually biased human sensory system.

Even when someone is born with their visual and auditory senses disabled, as was the case with Helen Keller, if they can only acquire and connect two different but equal tactile senses (the fluid and hot/cold feeling of water vs the serial protrusions of Braille), signs (difference, i.e., meaning) develop, just as they develop for those of us who depend upon hearing and sight, and the cognition of a conceptual world becomes possible.

So, if you would want to have artificial intelligence comprehend the concept of O, it would be a mistake to start by inputting a O. Rather, a machine could learn the idea of roundness (the answer to “What is round?”) by generalizing each object in the same way that we do when we learn to feel that a portion of randomly input images are “round,” as melons and tires and mother’s faces are, one after another, demarcated by auditory input to the effect that “This is round, this, too is round” and, thereby verbalized.

Naturally, if the machine only had the relevant senses, it could come to understand concepts such as *itchiness* or *pain* by the same method. And, once the machine knew *roundness*, *itchiness* and *pain*, it would not be long in acquiring concepts such as *gentle* and *dear*. If such a sensitive machine were left to hang out in the university cafeteria or a church, it might even start troubling itself with questions like “What am I?” and “What is God?” In a word, if we can clear the level of “(1) metaphysical judgment that can ask the question “What is _____?” (I mentioned it earlier,

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remember?) through following this type of process, a QAS (Q&A System) could be feedback and rewritten and the machine's cognitive system could self-organize as ours does. Then, AI could finally come to serve as a true proxy (not in a fuzzy but a logical and pragmatic way) for the "perceiving-thinking-assessing-deciding" capability we call human intelligence.

6

Sensei, I can well imagine your response when I start talking this way: "Can a machine *really* get an ego and self-consciousness that easily?" Of course, it is not that easy. But when you think about it, the ego and self-consciousness are, after all, functions of the mind. Forgive me for repeating but, when you consider the way things work –

“the essence of mind → perception → symbolic language → difference →
the union of sound and sight”

– I think you can see there is nothing mystical about the way the human mind is made. I didn't mean to make any statement to the effect that the soul and spirit reside in material. The only reason I brought up ego and self-consciousness was because they formed through basically the same process I described with respect to "roundness," that is, when our parents give us our individual names, thus symbolizing this being called "I/me" and separating it from the rest of the material world. To wit:

“oneself = the aggregate of concepts demarcated by your names”

Because of this both the development of multiple personalities with multiple names and the failure to develop a personality through the lack of a name – a good example is the wolf-boy – is possible.

So this "self," like "god" and "love," is an abstract *idea*, constructed solely by social consensus, which is to say, human fiat. Since this "self" is the only abstract idea that can be seen and felt, people overlook it and unconsciously assume it is something material. So we end up asking things like "What am I?"

Put the other way around, so long as the being called "self" is not conceptualized, there is no boundary between the "self" and the "world." I repeat: but for the "barrier" called language, self and world would be continuous. So dualism, the philosophical practice of separating mind and body, or perceiving-subject and perceived-object is clearly mistaken.

7

What we really must get right is this: there is no physical and objective line to separate animals, humans and machines from each other. The symbol called "human," for example, is only our categorization of all sense objects perceived as resemblances of "I/me," "papa" and "mama," and so forth.

If I were to dare to formally answer the question "What is a human?" it is this:

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“human = the general term for individuals with perceptive/cognitive (not sensory) capability”

Take Robocop. He gets confused about whether he is a human or a robot and suffers from it. But if you go with my definition, he and the Replicants in *Bladerunner* would be human, without question. To borrow the words of the inventor of Artificial Life, Christopher Langton, “the leap you have to make is to think about machineness as being the logic of organization. . . There’s nothing implicit about the material of anything – if you can capture its logical organization in some other medium you can have the same ‘machine’ because it’s the organization that constitutes the machine, not the stuff it’s made of.”*(in Steven Levy: ARTIFICIAL LIFE p117) Robocop is programmed with various restrictions on his patterns of thought, but we, too, are given restrictions such as “It is forbidden to kill a human.”

In the same way, computer programs have their check point such as “If . . . then” and “GO TO,” humans are programmed by a complex intermingling of cultural pressure (early developmental socialization, education, experience) and hereditary predisposition, with which we make up their minds in daily life through the unconscious use of QAS.

Sensei, if this makes you feel like knowing (i.e. deciding) the answer to the old question “Do humans have a free will or not?” try using QAS. If you would then ask “What *is* free will? then please investigate the roots of the words “free” and “will.”

The point I wanted to make here was that the question of whether a machine can acquire intelligence is analogous to asking whether a baby can acquire intelligence.

Ah, one thing I forgot to say. It is the type of thing only an SF fan might notice but Sensei, did you know that detective Deckard (the protagonist played by Harrison Ford) in *Bladerunner* wasn’t a human but a Replicant?

On the Beginning of the World

1

Next, it might be nice to think about the question of how the world began and how it will end. To do so, first I’ll shrink the scale down to “Where did humans come from and where are they going?” then I’ll shrink that once more to the former part of the question and start there.

Though the question “Where does man come from?” has a fine ring to it is still too vague, so I will rephrase the question once more in a less grandiose form: “What was the route by which some apes evolved into men?”

In order to proceed, we must first make clear just where apes and men differ.

Once, the demarcation was described by the question of tool use, *yes* or *no*. But wild apes were observed using twigs to fish for ants and stones to crack nuts. Then the identity of man as chief primate came to rely upon one trait, the use of language. When I say this, I can imagine you, Sensei, asking “Well, then, isn’t the chirping of courting

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birds language?” So I think I had better start by explaining how the languages used by humans and animals differ.

2

In a word, the language of animals is *communicative*, of humans, *symbolic*.

The process involved (*input* → *data processing* → *output*) is the same for animals and humans, but with animals (such as the chirping voice of courting birds) the input from the body's organs is parallel processed in one fell swoop, where in man's case, it is much messier, for sensory information is converted into symbol, through the process of perception described a way back, before it is processed and, then, these symbols are used for communication.

Take the cat. When a purring mother cat licks a kitten, the kitten directly feels “Ah, I am in a safe and comfortable situation!” On the other hand, when a human parent says “Now, now” and strokes a child's head, the child feels “Ah, now, I am in a situation to be happy about!” only after the “Now, now = positive words” and “head stroking = positive behavior” have united in a two-step process of cognition. Here, what bears noting is the fact that in some language-cultures, head-stroking angers people.

For sure, there are wild primates that can discriminate between dozens of calls depending upon the type of danger. But no matter how various these calls might become – though there were a million different calls – they would still be nothing but auditory signals serving to differentiate one situation from another. The calls have no meaning as words. Meaning requires that the sense object has a name (= symbol = difference).

The words spoken by humans both signal and mean something. They have sound and significance, where the vocalizations of animals function only in the former capacity.

Whether we speak of the dance of the bee, the marking of a dog, the high frequency utterances of dolphin or the sign language of a chimpanzee, the languages possessed by non-human animals comprise “signals which evoke particular responses” where ours comprise “signals that evoke particular images.” When we hear the sentence “a car's come!” we do not react to the mere sound of the words but to the visual image of a car the words evoke. However, the process of symbolic conversion is unconscious and happens instantly, so that people mistakenly think they communicate vocally, by sound, itself.

The symbolic language people use is not an extrapolation from the communicative language of animals. A merely communicative language is a communicative language and will never be anything else. It is vital that we clearly distinguish the two.

3

A good example of this confusion comes from a book by linguist Maruyama Keizaburô called *What Is Language? (kotoba to wa nani ka)*. “Hypothesizing there was a time in prehistory when language was established,” he writes, “how was the caucus to establish language organized? How was the time and place announced, and how was the matter argued?” How, indeed! Now this sort of speculation is fun, but it is based upon the supposition that the communicative language used by apes gradually evolved until we

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got the symbolic language we now have. For my part, I do not think our language is an extrapolation of animal language. There had to be a moment when symbolic language was born, i.e., a moment when ape became man.

If I had to put my concept of the birth of symbolic language into a story, it would go like this:

Long ago on a sunny afternoon, a Cro-Magnon couple were walking in a meadow. The air felt so fresh, so good, that our hirsute Adam suddenly threw back his head and exclaimed “*Aaoh!*” Eve, by his side, bent her head down as she grimaced at the sudden meaningless noise and, as luck had it, noticed a pothole at her feet, just in time to avoid falling in and losing her life. At that instance, the image of the pothole firmly fixed itself within Eve’s brain. When Eve reached out to touch the edge of the pothole before her, she could feel the earth against her fingertips. But she couldn’t touch the image that remained in her head. No matter how many times she reached out her hand to touch it, there was nothing there. Yet every time she heard that exclamation “*Aaoh!*” the pothole popped up in her mind. This happened when she was in her cave and in her dreams when she slept. She hadn’t had that happen before. And, the next day, when she awoke she had a feeling she had just seen the pothole. Then, she remembered it. She was the first living being to have what we call a *memory* and a *past*. After this, whenever her companions exclaimed “*Aaoh!*” she unconsciously looked at the ground and, finally, whenever she spotted a pothole, she herself came to shout “*Aaoh!*” The other Cro-Magnons around her came to imitate this, so that in a while a “rule” was established: “*aaoh*” meant “pothole.”

“*Aaoh* = pothole”

In this way, language was born. The number of words increased quickly, the Cro-Magnon tongue came into being, and this spread to Peking Man. At first “pothole” was “*aaoh*” there, too; but they had a different living environment and the pits used for catching Naumann elephant came to be called “*ohaoha*.” In this way, the Cro-Magnon tongue and the Peking Man tongue came to slightly differ. But the fundamental “rule,” the link between thing and sound remained. A thousand years pass, two thousand . . . and this “*aaoh*” became more and more complex – and confusing – Shakespeare staged his plays and Einstein scribbled physics upon blackboards. Wow, little pothole, you *have* come a long way!

This is my “hypothesis of the origin of language.” Do you think it is ridiculous? I think it is ridiculous. But, I also think it is probably right.

4

With the discovery of the similarity between Sanskrit and ancient European tongues at the end of the eighteenth century, there was a period of intense interest in the history and origin of language. The results of the philologists’ research and conjecture, however, were very paltry and, in 1866, the Linguistic Society of Paris incorporated a ban on the subject into its founding statutes. This was not because the question was considered insignificant, but because it was something too enormous, too important a

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matter to be addressed before the real nature of language could be figured out. In other words, they recognized that there was a methodological bottleneck. After this, no one gave the question any serious thought. But if you cool it, and think objectively, the question “How did apes acquire language and evolve into humans?” is analogous to the question “How does a baby acquire language and become human?” The only significant difference between the two questions is the presence or absence of an outside educator.

As I wrote before, a baby constructs a “world of meaning” through a process of symbolizing the outside world by uniting auditory signs and visual data. In the case with the natural world, where there is no outside educator, we can assume that something occurred to allow Eve’s hitherto separately functioning auditory and visual senses to synchronize, with the result that symbolic language spontaneously came into being. For example, imagine that the instant Eve’s hearing senses the meaningless vocalization XX (sense data A), she happens to be facing a serpent (sense data B) and the visual and auditory senses connect. At that instant, the name (i.e., symbol, i.e., difference) we might express as “XX=serpent” ($a \neq b$) comes into being. Then, as this single word went on dividing over and over, it, or rather, they were transmitted to other individuals and this common possession resulted in the birth of consciousness and ideas. Human culture. In a word, apes evolved into humans as the result of the random union of sound and sight.

“*Ukeeh!*” (voice) = “It’s a saber-tooth! Flee!”

That was the old style, ape language. But because of a chance occurrence, we ended up with this.

“*Aaoo!*” (voice) → “pothole”(image) = “You better watch-out!”

Even if it is but a millisecond, there is a time-lag in that “→.” You might even say the origin of language lies within this time-lag. Yes, you hear “Aaoo!” and turn about and there is a saber-tooth, so you scramble up a tree and save your life (auditory data input → visual data input = output). Here, it doesn’t matter if “*aaoo* = saber-tooth.” But “*ukeeh* = saber-tooth” will not work. It might get you up a tree, but it will not get you language. That is because, to that group of apes, the sound “*ukeeh*” and the image of a saber-tooth are already codified as a single output. Even the right time lag would bear no result. The birth of symbolic language requires inputs that separately produce different outputs to unite and evoke a singular output.

5

All I wanted to point out here is that the questions of how apes evolved into humans and how babies become humans are analogous.

So, what brought me to “discover” my Pot-hole Hypothesis for the origin of language? It was my desire to prove that it was OK for Mr. M to smoke all the cigarettes he wanted to. That’s right, since people way back in the beginning did not *know* that “*aaoo* = *pot-hole*,” but only happened to *decide* it that way, the nature of language would seem to dictate that human intelligence functions only for the sake of *decision* and,

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therefore, there is nothing that cannot be decided by human fiat according to the consensus arrived at by QAS.

6

Sorry to be getting off on a side-track again, it does have something to do with apes, and I thought you might be interested in it. And I would like to know what you think about it.

There is this sweet-natured chimpanzee in the Kyoto Center of Primatology called Ai. She has a real good head on her shoulders. She can count and make comparisons of more and less, saves up money to buy apples and stuff from a vending machine and can represent things she has seen with tokens of various shapes. For example, when she is shown five green pencils, she can turn to her keyboard and select the tokens for “green,” and “pencil,” and the key for “5,” and display this on the monitor. Is this no more than an extreme extrapolation of Pavlov’s stimulus-response experiment? Or, does it prove that she is acquiring a symbolic language? I think and think about this, but just can’t decide, myself. This is my biggest problem right now – it’s driving me crazy! – so I sure could use any help you can give me!

By the way, Ai’s keeper-researcher, Professor Matsuzawa Tetsuro is a wonderful man. I saw him on TV once, and when he was asked why he was trying to teach language to a chimpanzee, he replied “Because I want the chimpanzee to teach me about her world.” In this age, where researchers get off on dressing up their talk with big words, it was so refreshing to hear a researcher talking like this about how he felt. It really encouraged me to know that there are researchers like him.

On Insanity

1

To get back to the subject. Sensei, I suspect that after reading the last part, you might say “Well, that may have been the origin of language, but it is hardly the origin of the world, is it?” The only thing is this, Sensei, to me, the beginning of language *is* the beginning of the world. For, you see, both the “beginning” and the “world” are words. You might put it like this: *language does not belong to the world; the world belongs to language*. There wasn’t a “world” from which language was then born. The world came into being after language was born.

This point is extremely difficult, but once you understand it there is nothing about this world that doesn’t make sense. Like learning to ride a bicycle, it takes you a while to get the knack of it, but once you do, you never forget. Just try it. Your way of seeing things, your thoughts change 180 degrees. But at the same time, it must be said that someone who has never seriously wondered about *what things are* might only respond to all of this with “So what!” or “Who cares!”

I am not saying that words existed before there was a physical world. I am only saying that before words, the world had no “beginning” or “end” and both “something” and “nothing” did not exist. Until hearing and sight connected inside of Eve’s brain and gave birth to difference, there were no conceptual divisions or any other boundaries.

In order that you can grasp this as rapidly as possible, I have devised a thought experiment just for you, Sensei.

Sensei, have you ever thought about whether life evolved by accident or because it had to be?

The scenario for the origin of life held by most scientists today goes something like this. A thick soup of organic molecules covered the primordial earth. Within this churning soup, the amino acids united to form proteins that began to self-replicate. Critics of this hypothesis often say that the probability of such a sequence’s success is about the same as a monkey typing out one of Shakespeare’s sonnets, perfectly. (But if that type of argument is allowed, what in the world would be the probability of you, Sensei, born way up north in Hokkaido and your wife from Brazil meeting in a minor suburb of Tokyo?)

When thinking about this “chance versus design” question, most people are misled by the ambiguous meaning of the words – we are brainwashed by the very words we use to color our world – and jump to conclusions, such as “that type of thing is naturally impossible” → “so it must be predetermined” → “so there must be a supernatural power involved” → “god exists” when, if they would slow down and think objectively, they would notice that it is necessary to ask “what is chance (or, accident)” and “what is design (or, inevitability)?” before proceeding any further.

Here is a thought-experiment for you.

Sensei, suppose you are in a room and you are holding a ping-pong ball (molecule). You throw this ping-pong ball (molecule) at the wall. When the ping-pong ball (molecule) bounces back off the wall, you catch it. That is to say you were able to predict where it would hit (reach your hand). It was not chance that you caught it. You were *bound* to catch it (in a rough way, to say we are “bound to” do something is to say it is more or less inevitable). Now, increase the number of balls (molecules) to two and throw them against the wall. Were you able to catch both? Perhaps you caught one and dropped the other, but you probably were able to roughly estimate where they would hit. If you can catch two, then try increasing the number to three, four, five, fifty, five hundred, five billion Up to how many trajectories could you predict? From what number of balls would you say that success was not inevitable, that you were not *bound* to succeed?

Looked at in this way, we can see that “chance” and “inevitability” are concepts conveniently but arbitrarily dividing a single continuous phenomenon and not intrinsically different. That is to say that there are no *a priori* “chance phenomena” and “inevitable phenomena.” A single continuum of phenomena has been divided into the antithetical categories “chance/determined” by human fiat. So, asking which category the birth of life falls under is – like asking how many ping-pong balls it takes for catching them to become a matter of chance – utterly meaningless!

Do you know why $1+1=2$?

Put the other way around, if we are going to insist upon solving the question about whether life originated by accident or was inevitable, it will be necessary to ourselves set (decide upon) the rules (definitions of vocabulary) determining what percentage of probability constitutes the dividing line between “chance” and “inevitability.” It is only by following such a rule, that we can obtain an answer for the question “Was the birth of life by chance or design?”

When I was a child, I used to ponder the paradoxical statement: “It is absolutely correct that nothing is absolutely correct.” I troubled my brain with this many times to no avail but now, of course, I know that a solution is impossible without first asking what the word “absolute” means and deciding upon a definition of it. For example, we could define it as applying to “whatever items ‘QAS’ decides are “‘absolutely’ correct.””

Further discussion along these lines will get too complex – I’ll skip the math – but if you think about the perennial puzzle of the mathematicians, the Continuum Problem from this perspective, the problem itself evaporates and Gödel’s Incompleteness (not in the sense that proof is impossible but that rules are needed) Theorem – a mathematical expression of the paradoxical sentence “This sentence is false” – is inevitably arrived at.

3

Since I became aware of this stuff, I wanted to spread the truth, namely, that “it’s fine for Mr. M to smoke freely,” and started shooting off my mouth at work, not necessarily saying so directly, but indirectly by saying things like “if a bug is a living thing, a rock is a living thing” and the result was people started giving me the crazy treatment. I started to think seriously about the meaning of normal and abnormal. I mean, Sensei, the only boundary between bugs and rocks is an artificial one of our making. Ordinarily, life is defined as “something that grows, reproduces, adapts and evolves,” but what can you say, then, about artificial life you can watch do all of those things on the computer monitor? Isn’t it alive? Everyone says bugs and rocks are different classes of things, but what, then would be “the same?” What, precisely, does “different” mean?

In everyday life, we can tell living things from minerals by seeing whether they move or not and by other visible qualities. This is a judgment call based upon sight-dependent human perception. But what if humans were to mutate and evolve into a sightless form of life? Imagine a highly sophisticated civilization that developed entirely from the acoustic sense. How would our daily lives differ from what we know now? And would we “see” cultural phenomena like ghosts, UFO, gods, nature and the world? In such a world without sight, can we be sure that bugs and rocks would be separate concepts?

What I mean to say is that “life” is no more an objective phenomenon than are “chance” and “inevitability.” The conceptual division “life/non-life” is not a given, but something we have established.

Take, for example, the categorical pattern that might be called the greatest common divisor of all: “food = OO-ish XX-like stuff” and “excretion = YY-ish ZZ-like stuff.” If things in either side change category in the case of an adult human, that person will probably be labeled mentally deranged or senile. But, there is no absolute division between what is food-stuff and excretory material. The difference is only based upon a rough consensual judgment to the effect that “it just is such-and-such a thing.” If you

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think about it, a foreigner who sees the rainbow as two-colored is, to us, pretty abnormal. So, if I were to formally define normality in human affairs, it would be:

“normal = pattern-perception/thoughts formed by established consensus”

Or, to turn it around, *genius* – whether in scholarship, visual arts or music – is called “genius” precisely because it can make consensus crumble. Genius = abnormality.

4

What I am trying to say here all comes down to one thing, “the world is one.” This may sound a bit like a religious cult’s blathering about how “all men are brothers” or sloppy pantheism, but it is not. I mean that all this divided, multi-variegated world only exists because people with their symbolic languages perceive it and that if these conceptual divisions and boundaries did not exist, the world of old and of today would be one continuous entity.

Thinking that *matter* was “something with spatial extension that can be divided” and that *mind* was something without extension that was indivisible, Descartes sallied forth into the Labyrinth where he wandered around and around, but the short of it is that he had it backwards. It is matter (the object) that is one (analogue) and mind (the subject) that is many (digital). People took an originally ruler-like, continuous analogical world and, with their symbolic language, turned it into a segmented, abacus-like* digital world which they mutually perceive.

**Abacus* Japanese adopted the traditional Chinese digital calculus device which they call *soroban*. The number of users is diminishing rapidly, but the *soroban* receives occasional attention for the speed of its calculation, which can exceed an electric calculator (because the result is tabulated as soon as the last sum is input by minute fingertip manipulation of beads).

This idea that “all things are fundamentally one” is, in a sense, akin to the state of enlightenment; but the *satori* experience of zen is a private one that cannot be imparted to others, whereas I came to my conclusion by logical suasion, by proceeding a step at a time, like descending a flight of stairs, so there is no reason others – eventually, everybody – cannot come to the same realization. But, Sensei, thinking about these eventualities is not enough for me right now. I so want you to *quickly* understand this stuff, because if you don’t, it may not be long before they label me “insane.”

Sensei, who do you think “normal,” I mean *sane*, me, or the people at work?

On the End of the World

1

Do you know why 1+1=2?

Going along this line of thought, takes us to something else, Sensei. When we recognize that humans have come to perceive/think digitally through symbolic language, we inevitably come to know the answer to questions like “Where is humanity headed?” = “How will the world end?” Or at least, I did. Does that, too, make me crazy?

Well, to tell the truth, I am not alone in this. There is a book that depicts the end of the world just as I imagine it. It is not the Bible. It is found in Suzuki Koji’s novel *Loop* (this book is a sequel to his horrific thriller *The Ring* that, as you may know, was turned into a Hollywood movie). Give it a read if you can find the time.

“I don’t want you to get the wrong idea, here. I didn’t actually see them. I am only telling you what I heard the older guys discuss.

But, I still felt strangely excited about it. Artificial life that evolved within a computer having sex. How could that *not* be interesting! (. . . .)

They were clearly intelligent and conscious of having selves. This was perceived by the manner in which they exchanged signals.

The amount of data that life could use clearly increased by the exchange of signals that were digital, 0 and 1. As a result, the survival rate of those who did so likewise increased. So, we could not but acknowledge that these artificial beings had language.

As a result of analyzing many of their 0 and 1 exchanges, it became possible to translate them into words. The life within the Loop, for its part, had no idea that they were communicating with binary notation. Like us, they must have just assumed they were using a complex language. (. . . .)

Artificial life began to make its own history. Similar beings gathered and made groups, countries fought and there was political give-and-take. Civilizations were created and artificial life, looking every bit the creator itself, began shaping its own world. So much was familiar, men felt they were observing the history of mankind. (. . . .)

The staff of the Research Center could perceive this virtual world of Loop, but the intelligent life of Loop could not even begin to perceive its creator, us. I guess this shows we really were their gods. So long as they were within the Loop, they could not even tell the basic underpinning of their world. The only way for that to be possible would have been to get outside of it. No, there is no other way.”

At this point, Amano paused and raised the coffee cup to his lips. He knew the cup was empty, but couldn’t help going through the mannerism. Had he been a smoker, he would have lit a cigarette.

“What do you mean by *cancerization*?”

Amano shrugged and his hands opened wide as if to emphasize the helplessness of the situation.

“The Loop World lost its diversity and came to be occupied by a single gene. It headed straight down the path toward obliteration.

Kaoru looked up at the ceiling as was his habit. He was trying to digest what Amano had just told him.

A virtual three-dimensional space had been constructed within a super-high-speed super-computer and it had been named “Loop World.” From the point of view of the life within the Loop, the space was infinite, for it was their universe.

(. . . .) The research purpose of this “Loop World” was to trace the actual process of evolution. If it turned out that “Loop” followed the same evolutionary path as that of the real world, then the results of the experiment would serve to predict the future.

At that moment, a chill went down Kaoru spine. Yes, it was true. What happened in Loop was a forecast of what was going to happen to life on Earth and the finding was that all life turns into a single cancer.

. . . . Damn it all! Isn't that exactly where we seem to be heading now?

Amano, who was still sitting before him, did not seem to have made the scientific connection implied by the similarity of reality and the Loop. That was not surprising. It wouldn't be easy to find people who would believe something so ridiculous.

Doing his best to conceal his shock, Kaoru calmly asked. (. . . .)

“So, just one virus was able to affect all the patterns in Loop World?”
(Suzuki Koji: LOOP)

2

“THE ANSWER” is equivalent to the virus mentioned in that last line.

If my thinking is correct, all clash of opinions and “what is this or that?” questions will vanish from the world some day. But, when that happens, diversity will vanish from society and the entire human species will cancerize.

In the end, this thing we call human history is just the course between the birth of symbolic language and its obliteration. The human individual and the species are analogous systems, both aggregative accumulations of language. So even if humanity as a whole manages to avoid a fatal accident (all-out nuclear war) and sickness (the greenhouse effect), it will eventually become senile and return to its apehood. Senile dementia is, after all, basically the disappearance of conceptual boundaries.

If we agree that symbolic language is what makes humans human, it comes down to this:

“The extinction of man = the end of language”

Sensei, are you familiar with the second Law of Thermodynamics. To put it simply, the “Law of Entropy,” as it is also called, says that “Everything moves irreversibly from a state of order toward one of chaos.” I connect this with the irreversible increase in the quantity of data resulting from the infinite discrimination, which is to say, fragmentation of symbolic language. And it is only because of this Law, that time flows from past to future. But if, at some point in time, the discriminating process of symbolic language were to stop, time's vector would reverse, “order→chaos” to “chaos→order,” and time would begin to flow back to the past.

Q=“Where has man come from and where does he go?”

A= “Man comes from and goes to the very same place.”

The terrible strength of the spirit of language is nothing to laugh at!

Do you know why $1+1=2$?

All conventional thinking, or so-called “common sense,” is formed by a small number of people, before the vast majority has even an inkling of its existence. At some time, it spreads through the population before it shows any obvious symptoms. Then, after most people have already caught it, the dormant virus begins to awake and, before those who have it notice anything, begins to chew up their brains, bit by bit, but inexorably

But even if that really will happen, it probably won't be for another 500 years or so. And who cares, anyway? Who cares!

On Theoretical Physics

1

I know. This is getting too depressing. Let me tell you a happy story. So, Sensei, perk up those ears and keep reading!

Remember Einstein's unfinished business? His desire to find an Unified Field Theory, a system to unite space and time? Well, I have made just such a system! It is so sophisticated it can unite not only *space* and *time*, but *men* and *women*, and *Christianity* and *Islam*. It can unite all concepts that humans with their words can think of.

Doing this hasn't brought me any praise. None. It would feel so good to have you at least, Sensei, tell me, “Well done, son. Well done!”

I can imagine you might be thinking that the unification of space and time is the work for physics not philosophy. But, if you recall, Einstein himself, once said “Eventually, science and religion will become one.” So, who is to be the bridge between physics and religion? Philosophy, of course!

OK. Dragging on with this sort of talk won't take us anywhere. Take a look at my PSM and see how it grabs you:

PSM = Problem-Solver for Metaphysica

(Method of Use: Substitute two concepts for the proposition $a=b$)

Proposition: time (a) = space (b).

Premise: perception = judgment

Proof: 1 / time (a) and space (b) premise change

2 / change premises difference

3 / difference premises symbols

4 / perception premises symbols

1~4 demand the following groups:

A: Physical existence that does not premise symbols

B: Objective existence premises symbols

Ergo, in the case of A, the time(a)/ space(b) distinction does not exist

What does this mean? It means that there is no “world”. There are *two* worlds. There is the world of physical reality in which symbolic language does not exist (Type A),

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and there is the world of objective reality in which symbolic language exists (Type B); or to state it in a more everyday manner, the analog world, with neither beginning nor end, where all things were one, was divided and diversified by the birth of words with the result being the birth of the digital virtual world we now perceive and share through our language.

It is only because these two Worlds, Type A and Type B, are hopelessly jumbled together, that we get things like Zeno's (so-called) paradox, the Law of Causality of quantum mechanics and the fierce debate between the materialists and the spiritualists.

The following words come from a letter Einstein wrote to the bereaved family of his lifelong friend Michele Besso.

“He has left this strange world a little ahead of me. It doesn't make much difference either way. To those of us who believe in physics, the distinction between present, past and future, however intractable it may seem, is only an illusion.”

And the Einstein of the mathematical world, Gödel wrote this:

"It seems that one obtains an unequivocal proof for the view of those philosophers who, like Parmenides and Kant, and the modern idealists, deny the objectivity of change and consider change as an illusion or an appearance due to our special mode of perception."

To sum up, without the object-cognition created by the filter (or tinted glasses) of language by humans living in a Type B World, we would have but one world, Type A, with no change and no flow of time. Without symbolic language, there is no difference, without difference there is no change, and without change the arrow (past→future) of time just does not fly. Sorry if I'm starting to repeat myself, but in the Type A World neither the past (the beginning of the universe) nor the future (the end of the universe) exist. I would bet that within a hundred years this will even be understood by everyone at work. But for now, Sensei, I would be happy just to convince you (in order to keep myself sane) and would be grateful if you could try yet another simple thought-experiment.

Imagine that in the near future, a special bomb devised by a nameless nation explodes over the earth and on that day the five senses of every man on earth are paralyzed – or, frozen, if you prefer – and we all lose our consciousness. Then, with no one around to perceive the outer world, ten years pass – or, do they? Sensei, do you think that, given the circumstances, we can say time still flowed?

What I am trying to do here is to push Einstein's concept of the relativity of time further, by unifying it with space at Point Zero.

Sensei, I'd guess you probably still feel that the outside world would change whether people were there or not. That is the normal response, what common sense says.

But I am not denying that the outer world exists by itself regardless of human witness. I am only saying that without object-perception by language, that world doesn't change. How could it, when it is a completely connected, one continuous whole?

“Change” presumes the existence of the concept of “same/different” ($a \neq b$).

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Because this “same/different” and “time/space” not to mention “accident / design,” “life / not-life” and “god / man” (if you use PSM to think with) – are all nothing more than conceptual categories, or ideas, created *ipso facto*, or rather *ipso lingo* by us, there is no way we will ever arrive at an answer to the question “What is time?” by breaking it down into “past / present / future” and so forth. If you would know the answer, you need to look in the opposite direction. To wit,

“Time = The change process of perception-objects based upon symbolic language.”

No matter how hard I try to get this across, it doesn't really matter to you or to the people at work – my workplace, at least – does it? But, you know, there are people out there who are tearing out their hair over this. Some may even be frustrated enough to commit suicide. I wish I could let these people know that, before they use difficult equations to try to solve the problem of the space-time unification with vague ideas of what they are, they should go back to the origin of these concepts and think deeply about just *what* “space” and “time” are.

2

In ancient Greece, there were two conflicting world-views. The school of philosophy represented by Parmenides and Zeno held that the world did not change or move (all things = one), while the school represented by Thales and Democritus that held the world was made by fundamental elements that could be divided no further (all things = many). All scientific theory and Western thought is constructed upon the latter world-view and couldn't have been realized without ignoring the countless paradoxes that accompanied the course of its history. And now, on the front edge of science, we have superstring theory.

The “superstring” is an infinitesimally small string-like material existing in X dimensions, that stretches out and bundles up into balls and vibrates as it forms the entire existence of the universe. Superstring theory resembles the stuff of fantasy.

It brings to mind the Minovsky particle, a realistic fictional substance that supports the Mobile Suit Gundam World. The last time I checked there were over 20 varieties of Gundam robot, all of which branched off from the first-generation RX-78 type, generally called First Gundam. I, who was so avid a fan of First Gundam have not managed to keep up with the times and can no longer even guess the size and the weight of the Death Scythe H Custom, not to mention the characteristics of all of its new weapons. Meanwhile, the “First Superstring,” the E8 X E8 Heterotype, now has split into five major varieties that are still evolving, and the vanguard of superstring science is something called M Theory.

If we who were once self-professed Gundam scholars find it hard to keep up with our Gundam world, it is even harder to find a professor, any professor, who can completely understand this M Theory. The formulas that fortify the theoretical foundations of the SO(32) Heterotype Superstring have come to exceed the scope of understanding of the E8 X E8 Heterotype Superstring specialists. And if that is not enough, there is now an Ultimate M which combines the five main varieties and people

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are saying things like “actually, it turns out the strings are not strings but membranes” and about all even scientists can say is, “Far out!” or “Awesome!”

The thing that is unique about superstrings is that they do not originate as yet another particle but were born from mathematical theory describing Veneziano amplitude and dual resonance. In other words, superstrings are not a theory to explain matter, but matter for explaining theory! This superstring world began with 26 dimensions, was forced down to 9 dimensions, then further compacted to 3 dimensions and, then, rebounded to the 10 + 1 dimension world favored today. When you observe how the number of superstring dimensions constantly rises and falls, it is clear that no one really can say how many dimensions of superstrings exist. After all, even the brains who study elemental particle physics are human and how many humans can really grasp the image of an 11 dimensional universe?

If we cool down and think calmly, anyone can see that the argument about whether the objective, real world has 2 dimensions or 20 is not much different from that by medieval theologians about how many angels could stand on the head of a pin or by sci-fi science enthusiasts over who is stronger, First Eva or First Gundam.

* *First Eva and First Gundam* First Eva, like Gundam, a Japanese animation featuring giant robots, is short for the First Evangelion. Studio Gainax’s Neon Genesis Evangelion was probably the most popular television anime in the 1990’s and regarded by many Japanese as the greatest ever. It was turned into movies. Two DVD’s of the apocalyptic (in the Greek sense of revelatory) anime are available with English dubbing (the dubbing that preserves the original sound-score is recommended). First-Eva is a multi-hundred million dollar industry. Like Gundam, it has given birth to countless dolls and Hollywood reflects its influence. The most endearing character is an autistic youth, an unlikely hero who faces each challenge repeating to himself “I mustn’t flee! I mustn’t flee!” (*nigecha dame! nigecha dame!*).

Sensei, I’d bet my pension that in a hundred years, this Superstring Theory and the Big Bang Theory will be viewed as we view those angels on the pin head today. Don’t you think so?

Of course, I am completely self-taught in the hard sciences and when it comes to difficult equations, can’t tell what is going on. I don’t hide it. But, I still think that it is about time for a bold child to stick out his arm and point out the naked emperor.

Superstring theory and the Big Bang are logical attempts to explain the process of how *something* was born of *nothing*, but from the child’s cruelly direct point of view, it looks like this: since there is neither *something* nor *nothing* in the Type A World, no matter how much the people thinking with language in their Type B World strive to explain the Type A World they only come up with so much sophisticated nonsense.

3

The teachings that were handed down from Zeno to Aristotle and eventually to us point out the inherent limits of the symbolic system that is at the root of theory. So I am astonished by the rash attempts to solve Zeno’s Paradox using the time-space coordinates of quantum physics that have been cropping up recently. This is an extreme example of that idiom “preaching religion to Sakyamuni.” No, more precisely, it is like theologians

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trying to teach the Buddha about Enlightenment. No matter how complex the specialized language used, scientific theory is still a technique for representing reality with symbols. This being the case, could we say it was inevitable that modern physics, which neglected the riddles of ancient Greece while it was constructed on the basis of its knowledge, has come full term and would end up where it began?

Thinking about that race between Achilles and the tortoise, we end up at the problem of the infinitesimal point. The X point of the speed of falling bodies calculated by infinitesimal calculus, the singular point of the black hole, and the starting point for the universe postulated by Big Bang theory are all infinitesimals. Indeed, the ultimate substance sought by elemental particle physics is none other than this same infinitesimal point. Those who would attempt to explain the world by numbers always run into this troublesome concept. So what exactly is this infinitesimal point?

On Mathematics

1

It doesn't seem to bother scientists at all to speak of their "infinitesimal," but, Sensei, think about it, this infinitely small point might be well be described as "something that is though it is not!"

Newton escaped from pinning it down by calling it "evanescent quantities." Leibniz fudged it over with his "relative zeros," and the philosopher George Berkeley quipped "He who can digest [infinitesimals]....need not, methinks, be squeamish about any point in Divinity."

The following words found in a Kabbalah text give us something to go on:

"With the appearance of light, the universe expanded. With its concealment, all individual existence came into being. This is the mystery of the act of creation. One who understands, understands."

In the beginning, there is matter and it is one. Next words were born and the world became many. If you can grasp this one important distinction, you are free to go where angels fear to tread.

Physics is a method of explaining nature by fitting numbers to it. But numbers and nature are not directly connected; words are what tie them together. Humans, first, build a commonly understandable model of physical reality with their words, and then made a secondary model, the system of mathematics to explain it. Mathematics and machine language are digital systems, so they match perception/thought based on language, but the world-as-is is analog and ultimately refuses difference. So long as men think with language, this gap can not be closed. Think about it. Mathematics is but one form of culture. Yet, this single religion of mathematics has managed to become catholic to the world. The reason is that it embodies the very process by which apes became men, which is to say the way language was born, i.e. the digitalization (division) of analog (continuous) Nature.

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The reason $1+1=2$ is only because Nature, originally an undivided one, was split by the birth of symbolic language. (If the world were not divided into discrete units, i.e. *many*, numbers would have no ground to exist. So there is no “0,” no “1,” and no “2” in a world without words. Thus, “ $1+1=2$ ” is not a universal truth, but only a cultural truth valid for our shared perception of this virtual world we humans have made with our symbolic language.) As the distinction 0/1 (nothing/something) does not exist for perception-objects themselves, a paradox is born on the boundaries of thought. Call it “the infinitesimal.” Call it “something that is though it is not.” Call it “a truth that is a lie.” Call it “ $0 = 1$.”

2

For example, consider this, Sensei. If one of your children were to ask “Which is more, 30 apples or a 30 centimeter ruler?” how would you answer?

Apples are “many” where rulers are “long.” The former concerns number, that is, it is digital, where the latter concerns ratio, so it is analogical. The paradox of Achilles and the tortoise was born of comparing the size of apples and rulers. Or, to put it another way, a line is not a collection of points, it is only a long point.

Though it may require points to become lines and particles to become strings, what elementary particle physics really wants is to get to the real identity of the infinitesimal point (or line, or plane). But all we can actually get is 1, the smallest divisible number and the largest.

To put it another way, because no discrete unit is more or less than 1, no matter how you would divide the physical world, you only get 1. Archimedes worked out the value for the transcendental value Π by finding the ratio of a circle of radius 1 and its circumference, obtained analogically by approximating the larger and smaller perimeters of regular polygons inscribed within or circumscribed around the circle. And a point, so to speak, is only the idea of a O (circle) with a radius of zero, a circumference of one and no area. In other words, the real identity of the infinitesimal point filling in the gap between the analog ($1=\text{continuum}$) Type A World and the digital ($\text{many}=\text{discrete}$) Type B World is “ $2\Pi r = 1$.”

Π dominates mathematics from a place entirely unrelated to the numerical ratio of the circumference of a circle and its radius with which it is identified. This stems from the fact that the paradoxical equation $2\Pi r = 1$ is embedded in the very heart of the system called mathematics. There is no longer any need to cop out and call on God to explain the perennial puzzle.

on religion

1

Humans wear many colors of glasses in their lifetimes. As they grow up and as times change, they keep adding lenses – information filters – one upon another, so instead of two eyes or becoming four, they came to have eight or even eighty, and the world

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ended up chopped so finely that people could only speak to people who wore the same tint of glasses as their own. For a long, long time, philosophy has made futile efforts to coordinate the colors. Unfortunately, the more words are spun out, the more the world fragments, and those colors just keep getting more and more out of whack. The way things are now, there is no way the theories and thought that have specialized to the utmost as a result of this approach can reach any consensus. So let's think about the opposite possibility. If you are serious about truth and universality and objectivity, and seek a final theory, you should not be seeking an ultimate lens, a perfect pair of eyeglasses. You should remove them. *Take all the lenses off.* It is the only way. You will see the world as it is for the first time and objectivity will be born from a single colorless transparent point. So I have no intention of pushing some new pair of tinted glasses on you, Sensei. I'm just saying that if the tinted glasses that say "all things are many" are not removed, the wishes of helpless old men will continue to be ignored, science will go on wandering in the infinite void, and war in the name of God and justice will never cease.

2

I know this is a bit off the wall but, Sensei, have you seen the movie called Star Wars? I'm sure you have.

This paradigm-shift-bringing movie's chief protagonist is neither Luke Skywalker, nor Darth Vader. The presence that continued through the entire mythical tale of three eras is a concept called *The Force*. This "force" was translated as *riryoku* ("force of *ri*"), a neologism. *Ri* can mean either "logic" or "truth," but here it is clear that it means the latter. "

You'll see why I mention this in a moment. Anyway, close your eyes and imagine you are viewing that magical final scene.

An X-wing shooting through the metal canyon on the side of the death-star. R2D2 shrieks while white smoke pours from its wounds. Luke, who failed with his bomb attack, hears the voice of his mentor, Obiwan Kenobi: "Use the force!" Luke hesitates after his mentor tells him something else: "Don't look." But there is no time to vacillate. The distance approaches zero. The target comes into sight. Luke gulps. A fierce attack from behind by three Tie fighters. His wing-mates are all shot down and Luke's X Wing is left all alone. But right then his spirits are lifted by the arrival of an ally. Covered by Han Solo, Luke relaxes his guard and pulls off his helmet. Luke, remembering his mentor's words, stands still with his eyes closed. Then, having achieved *mu* (nothing), the real force finally became his.

There is a reason that Martial art and Zen Masters usually make the closure of the eyes an important part of their methodology for achieving salvation (*vimukti*) through *satori**. It is because all cultures made by the primate calling himself Homo Sapiens are visually oriented, so this is the best strategy to overcome the common sense of such a culture and negate the secular way of the world, which is synonymous with the eyeball-based sense-object-perception.

When you close your eyes, you can no longer see the changing, moving world through them, but the images still remain in your mind. Those images are what keep physicists who seek the Unified Field Theory from gaining release.

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* *Satori and Vimukti* – The Japanese word for spiritual awakening (or resignation to one’s lot), *satori*, is beginning to be used in English. To have used the closest English equivalent, “enlightenment,” might have been misleading, for its visual=light orientation. *Satori* is typically but not always instantaneous. *Vimukti* is one of the English translations given for the Japanese *gedatsu*, usually translated as “salvation” or “deliverance,” but literally meaning to be “cut loose” or gain “release” from the ties of the world.

The Universe the physicists “see” is not the absolute and universal form of the universe, but one dependent on sight-perception. It is a local universe particular to Earthling culture. So, if there were some extraterrestrials with an intellect (language) that depended upon hearing rather than sight to perceive the world, the form of their universe would no doubt be entirely different. I cannot imagine exactly what this might be (Some hints might be obtained by speaking with people visually impaired from birth, but because most of their conceptual distinctions would have come from visually unimpaired sources, even Helen Keller probably could not have understood such extraterrestrial perspectives.). At any rate, the answer to the question “What is the Universe?” is this:

“The Universe = The aggregate image formed by symbolic language.”

That humans can not only look but *see* is not because we have eyes but because we have language. Even if our eyes were to be put out, we would eventually come to see what’s what. But, when we lose all the words in our head, we cannot see a thing. The final place that the Pro Emancipator Buddha came to was this: If the symbolic distinctions, i.e., difference, within the ego flattened out (with no words, there would be no concepts and no thought), mental activity itself would lose all meaning, or, in other words, become *mu*, nothing. To wit:

“Nothing = a world in which meaning (difference) does not exist.”

Not that the Buddha came to his understanding of nothingness through the persuasion of logical argument . . .

3

I suppose it’s something that can’t be helped, but just like modern physicists can’t understand the feelings of Einstein when he cried to hear Bohr’s reasons for separating from him, modern Buddhists have completely misunderstood Buddha’s intent by turning him into an object of worship.

Buddha the Problem Solver – who, it should be recalled sought *satori* as a solution for real social problems – did not teach men to have faith or seek transcendence. He taught reality itself. So it makes sense that he did not try to make a system of his thought, forbade his followers to make his image and wanted people to seek emancipation by individual effort. Buddhism is not a religion. It is simply the teachings of Buddha and these are not meant for belief. They are, rather, a methodology, such as that of philosophy or physics, for seeking the truth. When Buddha found *satori*, he knew

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that “This cannot be taught to others.” He knew this because he did not find it by studying in the manner of the scholar but by seeking the truth by himself

Sensei, remember what Buddha said? “What do you think you’re doing worshipping me!” Yes, he was angry, and he had every right to be so. The teachings which the Buddha passed on to man only because the Hindi gods begged him to do so, were meant to be a technical guide to emancipation. If you don’t yourself struggle with existence, what good is there in worshipping Buddha?

Our term for chanting has the Buddha’s name built right into it but, Sensei, the belief that chanting prayers can save you (that faith is all that matters) is ultimately Christian. The Bible would have us pray because it works to slow down our analogization. What Buddha was trying to say was just the opposite. “Humans, if you do not depend on gods but make strong efforts for yourself, you can make it to the Type A World!”

4

Buddha and Jesus are often discussed in similar context, but I think that it makes more sense to compare Buddha with the author/s of the Old Testament rather than with Jesus.

This is only my personal opinion, but my guess is that Jesus was probably an exceptionally enthusiastic teacher who, like Homerom B’s Kinpachi, belonged to a particular time and locality, and was almost certainly little more than a reformer of Judaism. Granted, he had a superb character. He really knew human limits and foibles and saw the unavoidable contradictions and dangers (secularization and fundamentalism) inherent in the teachings (commandments) prohibiting them. But the deified Jesus Christ the Savior, the second tier God Jesus Christ of the Holy Trinity is a product of later generations. Later generations always legendize those who are markedly different than others. Take Newton and the way people soon came to believe that he made the discovery of the millennium when an apple fell on his head. What’s so wondrous about Jesus getting born from a virgin and rising from the dead?

Whether we are talking about Buddhism, Christianity or Islam, the story is always the same. You have a charismatic leader of pure motivation, who pure-hearted but not too bright followers posthumously turn into a legend, that is later spread by politicians knowledgeable in the ways of the world for their own ends.

It is not my intention to put down religion. Indeed, I sometimes feel people who have a faith are more fortunate than me. I just want to tell those people who believe in a religion not to swallow whatever the great have said (or are said to have said), but to use their own heads to think about the original intent of the “teachings” and how they were passed down to them. The same thing can be said for people studying philosophy, people studying science and people studying long-term care insurance systems, for that matter. Whether we speak of religion, philosophy, science or insurance systems, there are always founders with their particular motivation. It is important that we remember that original motivation because people have a bad habit of putting the cart before the horse when it comes to the ways and means of the systems men make. Before you know it, terrorism to promote an ideology turns into an ideology to promote terrorism. The examples are countless. To mention but a few: Nazism (a party for politics → politics for the party), care insurance (a system for welfare → welfare for the system), Superstring

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theory (a mathematics for physics → a physics for mathematics) are classic examples of this. We should never forget that there was an era when Hitler was equated with “good” on the part of the masses.

Because of this tendency for things to come out bassackwards, I cannot deny that the final theory I am offering involves serious risk. That is one reason why I don’t want my system to just drop ideas plop down upon people’s heads in a top-down manner, but dream of a bottom-up system with self-regulating (i.e., self-cleansing) feedback loops.

I apologize for veering so far off the subject, once again. My main point was supposed to be that the ones who really understood the truth (the real form of the world) were not Einstein or Jesus, but Buddha and the author/s of the Old Testament.

5

Buddha vanished the difference between castes, vanished the difference between men and beasts and vanished the difference between god and the cosmos. This is unification, a religion of *the one*. The authors of the Bible, on the other hand, starting with “In the beginning was the Word (Logos) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” immediately set about separating light from dark, heaven from earth, nature from man, and men from women. This is a teaching of division, of *the many*. Religion East and West explain opposite processes but, I think the men who were the source of these Oriental and Occidental religions probably saw the same thing.

Ancient people who spoke languages that had yet to ramify to excess were in a far better position than we moderns to become aware of – experience the epiphany of knowing – symbolic language as a meaning/image (semiotic) producing system. The wise men of the East struggled to understand the world by giving up language, where the wise men of the West did so by facing up to words. This different stance gave rise to the different systems of truth, summed up as “theory” and “satori.”

Because the men who wrote the Bible and created the concept of God were deeply cognizant of the internal workings of the common illusion formed by symbols called the world, of course, they also foresaw that because of the reciprocal relationship of language and society, the latter would fractalize and its ever finer distinctions result in increasing fragmentation that would eventually bring about the breakdown of the system. And they also knew that it would occur prematurely if men were to be unbrainwashed of their belief in the manifold nature of the world.

That’s why Moses, speaking for God, was adamant about the need for social rules. Blind obedience for regulations, constitutions, laws and bureaucratic regulations is best for a peaceful society. We can’t have people wondering “Why shouldn’t we kill people?” or “Why can’t people smoke all they want in a nursing home?” We cannot question “What *is* a point?” and “What *is* a line?” It was to stop man from ever answering such questions that God split up the language of man into tiny fragments as soon as humanity began to build Babel.

6

When the modern mind, mired in secularization, encounters religion and prophecy, they seem like tall tales and superstition, but in the dawn of the modern age, the

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Renaissance, all parts of the intellectual system enjoyed a symbiosis as they were treated equally without prejudice.

Now, the name Nostradamus carries a somewhat unpleasant cult-like aura, but for the sixteenth century French, he was a doctor, mathematician, astronomer, poet, writer, philanthropist, wealthy man who was a one-man cultural force of the likes not to be found among modern intellectuals. In the England of Newton, astrophysics and astrology equally pursued the predictive possibilities of complex systems. That is to say, both pursued truth and prediction, and it was only differences in the manner of specialization and systematization of their techniques that gave birth to the separation of science and religion.

Newton, too, is seen as an exceptionally multi-talented man, but that is from the perspective of moderns, whose intellectual system is far more specialized than in his day. Newton was a philosopher in search of the truth. For him, calculus and physics, like theology, the research of prophecy, (Biblical) chronology and alchemy, were simply means to this end. Newton believed his own so-called discoveries were only the rediscovery of ancient knowledge. For example, he claims the Inverse Square Rule was discovered by Pythagoras with his experimentation on the vibration of strings and that the relationship of the sun and the planets had already been expanded upon by the Ancients, but was so abstrusely expressed that later generations misunderstood, then forgot it. So, he called himself, “only a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary.” And died regretting that while he played “the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

7

Here, there is one thing we must not forget. The unpredictability of quantum mechanics and the unpredictability of complex systems are not the same thing. In the latter case, the unpredictability is only due to the factors and processes being overly complicated. In the objective reality (Type B World) of complex systems, Einstein’s beloved Law of Causality itself exists, so, *in principle*, the future *can* be predicted.

There is, for example, no fundamental difference between predicting what I will do ten seconds from now or ten years from now. And if you think of the way people such as fisherman and mountaineers notice weather ordinary people cannot even perceive and predict changes in the same, there is nothing particularly strange about people who manage to notice certain phenomenological indicators combining them to at least partially foretell the future. The difference between amateur forecasters such as fishermen and mountaineers on the one hand and your prophets or seers on the other, is whether or not one can comprehend the process involved. But, if you look back, instead of forward, this difference doesn’t matter. So, if we only follow the long chain of cause-and-effect in this world of human perception all the way back, theoretically speaking, we *can* find the answer to the most fundamental of all questions, “What is the very beginning?” And, what I am saying is that I *did* it! I went all the way back and I found the answer preceding the question was neither a Zen conundrum nor the Big Bang. It was *the origin of language*.

Final Summation

Do you know why 1+1=2?

Thank you for reading all the way to the end. It got to be longer than I intended. I guess all I really want to say can be summed up in a paragraph.

When conflicts arise between people, so long as we confine ourselves to thinking “Which is right, which is wrong?” or “Which is good, which is bad?” men will continue wandering aimlessly in the Labyrinth and history will continue to repeat itself. Now that we have clarified the origin of language and come to understand that, properly understood, all conflicting ideas ultimately trace back to a single word, it is up to us to *decide* for ourselves what is the truth, i.e. *absolutely correct*, without depending upon religion, ideology or leadership. I know all this responsibility may sound pretty heavy, but think about what it means: *there is nothing, nothing that cannot be settled!* As I have said too many times already, this is possible because the world is, in the last account, *one*.

Please excuse me for writing many things that must seem horribly grandiose if not egoistic, but it was you, Sensei, who told me to think things through with my own head, and that is exactly what I have done.

Sensei, you know the way that hit-songs climb up the chart, then fall and disappear. We see all sorts of events, problems of the day, doing the same thing. Even philosophy, science and religion go through repeated paradigm shifts. “Yeah, that’s life” as some might put it. I, too, had thought that philosophy was simply a grand sort of play. But following the smoking incident in the nursing home, for me, philosophy changed from being something to contemplate to something I felt I had to solve. I was no longer content with metaphysics or with relativism. What I wanted now was some universal logic, that could provide a *guarantee* for “eternally correctness.”

Sensei, in any age, bald-faced logic, or reasoning, is unpopular and feelings or heart-felt expression is admired, but reason is too good a thing to give up on like that. After all, emotional argument leads nowhere, for you will never find 100% of a hundred people who can really share *feelings*, but reasoning that stands up to logic is something that can be shared by *everyone*. Even if you can’t know the real feelings behind her getting upset and crying, if she makes an effort to communicate them to you, you can come to understand the reason for the tears. Man may be a solitary animal, but thanks to words we are not isolated. Sensei, now, I can with confidence tell Mr M: “Cigarettes? Sure. Smoke all you want! Don’t let it bother you. Hold your head high. Whatever anyone says, it is right, it is *absolutely correct*.”

My fifteen year-long fight against my illness (that *Why? Why?* compulsive disorder I mentioned earlier) was a long up and down struggle, but it is finally cured. So, now, I am happy to say that I finally feel my homework is ready to turn in.

It’s hard to believe you’ve been dead for seven years. In that time, Sawada graduated from the University of Tokyo where he majored in law,* passed his bar exam on the first try and is now in a law firm making 1,500,000 yen (\$15,000) per month. In the boxing world, Onizuka has quit, Kaneyama died and Takehara finally got the title for Japan. As I was a middleweight, too, I really root for Takehara. And, Sensei, if you meet Kaneyama up there please tell him that the match was magnificent!

Sensei, my current dreams are to make a punk band to surpass the Sex Pistols, compete in the championship in the Budokan* and write a best seller that gains a bigger

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readership than the Bible. I can remember what you used to tell us “*there is nothing too big for a dream.*” Please look down on my endeavors from the sky and help me to achieve at least one of them. Sooner or later I’ll be joining you up there. Then you can give me your impression of this composition.

I’ll write again before too long.

Your student, forever . . .

* Note *Law Major at the University of Tokyo* In Japan, unlike the U.S., law is one of the most common majors in a four-year university. Passing the Bar Exam, on the other hand, is far rarer. Indeed, it is more difficult by one or two orders of magnitude than in the USA, for Japan has far fewer lawyers. Japanese think of the University in question as Japan’s Harvard, but they are wrong for it is also the MIT and Cal Tech, for Japanese higher learning is more concentrated than in the USA.

*Note *Budokan* The Budokan is the top location for Japanese martial art competition. It is the equivalent of the Madison Square Garden in the USA for boxing matches, but is also the top venue for pop-concerts!

ACT IV The Motherland

I burnt the letter to my mentor and watched it waft its way to heaven! Over the previous two or three years, I had sent a total of ten phone-book's worth of manuscripts to the appropriate department at every university and every publisher I could think of. I wore my feet down to the bone, sometimes even taking time off from work, to call on academic institutions throughout Japan . . . all those physicists, sociologists, information engineers, theologians and especially philosophers. But the gates of the Ivory Tower did not budge. As a mere staffer at a nursing home, I couldn't even gain entrance into the citadel, and none of the professors I nevertheless managed to catch gave me any serious criticism. They never gave me a chance. As I sat there clammed up, politely listening as they expounded upon their own nit-picking research, over and over I caught myself about to say aloud, "Oh man, have I just been wasting my time?" And, then, as we parted, they would say,

"You know, you have a way with words, why not turn your experience at the nursing home into a novel?"

I guess that couldn't be helped.

"I found the answer, the solution for all problems!"

Truth, absolute objectivity, final theory, the end of the world -- who is going to believe that kind of talk? Or am I crazy for believing it? Unfortunately, I had no way to make a reality check.

Do you know why 1+1=2?

I began to have trouble determining if I were sane or not. As the boundary between the two states grew increasingly vague and disappeared, the enormous mountain born of my continuous rewriting boiled down to one ten-line proof and, then, reduced to a five-character equation.

“I hope to see the day when all of physics may be summed up in a simple and elegant formula that easily fits on a T-shirt.”

Those are the words of a Nobel prize physicist.

But my acquaintances, who couldn't know about such dreams, thought me very odd indeed when I printed T-shirts with my equation on them.

My ideas were just too far-out for the people at work. They came to consider me a space case, and no one paid any heed to whatever I said. As a coworker who started work the same year I did put it,

“You know, it doesn't do any good to try to do anything; nothing ever changes.”

There I had finally found the “*answer*” but had no way to get it across to others. My mental pain was excruciating. It was like being forced to watch your parents getting slowly murdered while your hands are tied.

Finally, I just gave it all up and left Japan. I no longer wanted to talk about anything to anyone. I decided to head for a place I had longed to visit for years, the cradle of complex systems, The Santa Fe Institute. I was determined to put an end to my obsession.

I was walking in halting steps – like a heifer being loaded for market – up the slope, a piece of desert covered with asphalt, under the hot New Mexican sun and didn't notice the Landrover until it stopped by my side. It was Professor Hardy, artificial intelligence researcher from MIT.

“Where are you heading?” he asked me.

“The Santa Fe Institute,” I said without raising my eyes.

“Summer vacation starts today. You just caught me on my way home. But, what brought you here?”

This, I felt, was fate. I must make an effort to tell my story to another person one more time. Just once more. I raised my head.

I talked and talked, desperately, like a person who is possessed. The problems at work, social problems, philosophy, physics, math, the fact that all of them reduce to a single point, the origin of language; and that if we don't rethink things from the foundation, all problem solving will continue to be like cutting off the heads of the hydra.

Professor Hardy listened with remarkable patience to the flood of halting English coming from someone he just met..

“Hmm, I see. Very interesting.” He removed his sunglasses as he talked.

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Systems analysis, a way of thinking that does not take science and philosophy as separate disciplines but as analogous systems, is beginning to become popular in America. From that point of view, your conception is not at all odd. Moreover, the idea of the bottom-up self-organization of society is exactly what complex systems is all about. It sounds to me like you discovered what might be called the atom of thought. Could you elaborate on your thoughts about the origin of language for me?

For a moment, I thought he must be egging me on. But his eyes had that glint peculiar to people who are intellectually excited.

I wasn't mistaken. I really wasn't mistaken!

My sudden relief swelled up to my chest, my eyes moistened and all the strength left my body.

I looked up into the clear blue sky and rubbing my clouded eyes, said

“Thank you. Thank you very much. You cannot know how happy it makes me just to hear you say that! But all I want to do now is just forget everything. I want to go back to zero and start over.”

As I had already logically persuaded myself to erase all thought from my mind, leaving myself with a clean slate, or *tabula rasa*, at that time, I was occasionally overtaken by feelings of terror, terror of being unable to perceive the meaning of words, spoken or written. I was experiencing what might be called logical, or should I say, logically induced, dementia. My condition of feeling like I was going crazy but not quite going over the edge was a living death. My ego was ready to fall apart and was held together tenuously by what I still do not know.

He introduced me to his friend Gary.

Gary made his living teaching tourists how to hunt and meditate in the woods. Professor Hardy said he had studied meditation from him.

He brought me to the bus depot and saw me off. As we parted he told me to send him an English copy of my paper and tried to give me a memo with his address. I (stupidly) did not accept it.

“It doesn't matter now. I just want to get over it. If I took your address, I'd feel like going on.”

“That's a shame. A real shame,” he said, shaking his head as he shrugged., “But getting well is your first priority. I'm sure Gary will be of help and we'll meet again some day.

The hand I shook goodbye was like the desert of Santa Fe, hot and dry.

I didn't see anything of the scenery. My eyes remained closed all the way north, as I struggled with my wildly boiling brain and my teeth chattered in the bus's excessively cold air-conditioning. Hold on, I told myself. You'll be in Canada soon and all will end.

But, in retrospect, all that the five-day fast in the woods of Canada brought me was a strong suicidal impulse.

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If you are in a suicidal mood, there are things you can do to fight it. Like moving your body. But no matter how I tried to exercise and talk myself out of killing myself, I couldn't get the warm smiling knife blade out of the back of my brain. At that time, I would see victims of accidents or terrorism on the televisions in the shops and think how lucky they were.

When I flew home, there was no one waiting for me at Narita.

My beloved motorbike had been stolen, the cat I asked others to take care of was dead and my old acquaintances, observing my unsettled eyes, looked on me with pity but took care not to get involved with me. I could think of only one place where I could count on getting help.

Late on a sunny afternoon in early Autumn, I visited a woman in the counseling room at my old university.

After knocking on the door, I recognized the voice I had not heard for five years.

"Please, come in!"

The moment I started to walk in, she noticed –

"What happened? Are you alright?"

". Couldn't be worse. I never imagined, I'd be in this bad off when we met again."

"You're sick, right?"

"Probably. That's why I came. I just can't tell what I should do."

"Can I ask you something? Just one thing?"

"Uh-huh."

"Like always, you're just thinking about yourself, right?"

"Can't you be easy on me, just for today!"

"All right. Have a seat. Talk about whatever you want to. I'll hear you through."

For a moment I almost lost it. I was hit with a tsunami of inexplicable homicidal impulses toward this woman in front of me. All sorts of strong feelings coalesced into a lump of hatred that swirled into what seemed to me an audible eddy of loathing. The color left my vision. My hands trembled as they searched for something to stab with. My back began to twitch, and before I knew it a howl left my mouth

“ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo”

When I got my self back, she was still there as if nothing happened. She had not even changed her posture.

I could hear the laughing voices of students outside the open window. She looked up and seemed to peek into my eyes. And the dam broke. My words began gushing out.

That continued for an hour or two, then the torrent slowly petered down to gentle stream and I found myself silent.

After the peaceful silence had filled the room, she spoke,

“Is there anything you need to talk more about?”

I closed my no longer overheated eyes and after a moment’s hesitation, said:

“What I have to say is not the type of thing an educated person likes to admit”

She laughed.

“Really, I just thought about it. I really am proud to be Japanese. Sure, Japanese politics are disgusting, the level of social awareness is low. But I have wandered about much of America and couldn’t find any culture to speak of or true depth anywhere in their daily lives. I guess you could say it was a culture with nothing but actors and spectators. No producers, no scripts, no props or lighting. I felt like I was watching a huge variety show only of interest to the participants themselves. In Japan, we are at least half-aware of the inanity of our own culture, but Americans – most of them, anyway --- are just so full of themselves! I had given up on Japan entirely, but now I’m thinking, it would be nice if I could get someone from this country, rather than just Professor Hardy, to understand what I discovered.

You know, philosophy is important. Japanese need an intellectual ground to stand on and some sort of guiding principle. If they have that, then Japanese will once again have pride in being Japanese. Don’t you think so? . . . I know this must sound strange coming from me . . .”

No, not, strange, but not pc either, she said, laughing.

“So, you could quit philosophy and become a right-winger, huh?”

“No way! I’m a philosopher until I die.”

She seemed to think for a moment, then looking completely serious said:

“Come to think about it, philosophy does resemble hand-to-hand fighting, more specifically it’s like ultimate fighting.

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“Yes, you could say so. A no-holds-barred intellectual battle. You sure got it pegged. Don’t tell me you are still a martial arts addict?”

“Anything wrong with that?”

“No, no, it’s great. It’s hard to find a girl to go with me to the Korakuen Hall* every weekend to watch fights. I was grateful for that. Still am.”

* *Korakuen Hall* This small hall with only 3,000 seats is the mecca for modern martial arts in Japan. It has everything from boxing, kick-boxing to pro-wrestling debut matches to national title matches. (The Budokan (see pg __) is used for world title matches.)

She was particularly fond of watching the matches of young inexperienced fighters. No theory, no technique, simply spilling blood head to head. Thanks to this, the tickets were cheap, too.

“Thanks. But, speaking of fights, it looks like you’ve just had one heck of a fight outside of the ring. And something gives me the feeling that you won, too.”

“It’s not like I need a title or anything, just . . .”

As I said this, chills ran down my spine and I got goose bumps. My shoulders slumped forward a bit.

“Pull yourself together, man!” she piped out in a half-joking tone of voice. You never cared much for rules, anyway, right?”

She gave my fists a playful smack. The cigarette burns still showed on the back of my hands.

“No, seriously, you know the old saying, “only a sheet of paper between a genius and a fool.” Well, we can’t really draw a line between a researcher who is completely absorbed in his work and someone who is mentally ill. We might even say the real genius scholar comes in two types, the schizophrenics and the manic depressives. The schizo type tends to come up with wild ideas, jumps of logic that lead to new theories. Newton is a good example. Darwin is a good example of the depressed type. They just keep piling up painstaking down-to-earth research until they get whatever they get. I can’t tell for sure whether you are a genius or not, or which type sums you up the best, but I can say this, the most dangerous time for a creator is that which comes right after you unload your masterpiece, so to speak. It’s a type of depression called *entlastung*. I know that mental illness is usually thought of as something related to how you control or don’t control your feelings, but really it comes from a shortage of some substances in your brain. So you need to use drugs to augment them. If I take care of the introductions, will you check in to a hospital and get yourself cured? How about it?”

In the hospital ward, there were patients of every type, depressed, autistic, alcoholic, and so forth, but strangely enough, not one was what you might call “strange in

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the head.” In other words, I, who behaved in a perfectly normal way, become one of the crowd of similar mental patients. Becoming conscious of this, I experienced a feeling of relief and came to become more relaxed.

While I was in the hospital, I did 8 kilos of roadwork, jumped rope and shadow boxed three 3-minute rounds every day and spent most of the remainder of my time chatting with the other residents.

Eventually, some of the other patients expressed an interest in learning to box and within a half year I had a boxing circle of five students, three male and two female. I learned a lot teaching others.

With medicine, a well regulated life and weekly counseling, I was able to put some distance between myself and *the answer*. At the same time, I came to realize I couldn't completely escape from it, for it stuck to me almost as if it were a curse. If I hadn't met Hardy, I'm sure I would have thought I was crazy, plain and simple. The Doctor in charge showed absolutely no interest in my philosophy.

“Doctor, I no longer crave recognition. I just want to do something about the work place and society. I want to reform them. I mean, I know the solution, I know *the answer*.”

“So you need to try to forget about others and help yourself first. You sought an answer and you got it. Isn't that good enough in itself?”

We repeated these same conversations many times.

In a word, I had to learn where to draw the line. The only problem was that all those incidents that come and go on the television or newspaper, that is to say, almost all information pulled me back to *the answer*.

“You ought not fight against yourself. If you fight, someday you're bound to lose. If you don't fight, you can't lose.”

I recalled what Gary said when we parted in the Canadian forest.

Gary, I am not fighting against myself. My opponent is the world, all the people in the world. This is a fight of 1 vs 6 billion . . .

A year passed since I left the world outside. Strangely enough, I didn't really miss it.

A month before I was due to leave, the doctor in charge suggested that I should change my environment and use my body more.

“If you return to your workplace and start using your head, you are going to end up in the same place again. It is too early for you to do that. You need to spend some time in rehabilitation before rejoining society. Have you ever been to Canada?”

“Yes, I have”, I replied. “I have gone there”.

“I have an old acquaintance who emigrated to Canada. Tanigawa is his name. He is a professor at a university over there and he has friends who run a farm. I hear they are always looking for people to help out. Well, are you interested?”

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I who had always insisted on doing everything my way, had learned, after a year in the hospital, the importance of listening to what others had to say and of going with the natural flow. “I’ll go.” I said.

The day before I left for Canada, I once again visited the counseling room at my old university. I encountered a man I had never seen before. I asked where she was and was told she had quit in order to get married.

As I dreamily watched the clouds outside the plane window changing shape and flowing by, I thought. What in the world do I want to do with my life? Even “QAS” and “PSM” had given me no answer for that. Eventually, complete peace can be brought to the world. But if that doesn’t also bring about the happiness of all, what good is it? Maybe my whole idea of helping the world solve its problems was a grand illusion born of my mania.

The Tanigawas were waiting for me at Vancouver Airport. A short youth with bleached hair* was with them.

* *Bleached Hair* The original said “blond,” but the actual color of the hair would be brown with a reddish tinge. In Japan, with its almost uniformly raven-haired population, young people of both sexes often bleach their hair to show their independence, or just to look cool. The fact that many in the “water-trades” (bars, restaurants, music and entertainment) also do so may have something to do with it, as well.

“This is Kenji. He dropped out of high-school and is staying with us. He spent years with a rough crowd, so he’s got a rude side, but I’m sure you’ll get along OK,” said Mrs Tanigawa. Without raising his eyes to meet mine, Kenji muttered a greeting as he stepped on the cigarette stub he had just tossed down.

Manners aside, he seemed like a nice enough boy.

Professor Tanigawa also had a child with Downe’s Syndrome, from an earlier marriage. Recently, he learned to speak his first words said the Professor with a smile I saw in the rear-view mirror.

“It is completely thanks to my wife.”

“No, dear, meeting you saved me.”

“Being with you, I never have a dull minute.”

“And I never have to worry about money.”

Hearing this type of lovy-dovey exchange from the lips of this old couple in the front seat, my hitherto tense mind began to relax.

“You, too, are about the right age to start looking for the right person.”

Mrs. Tanigawa turned about in the seat ahead, craning her neck to look me full in the face as she said this.

“I don’t know about that. I plan to remain single forever.”

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I grinned as I said these words I had often said. There is no way I could keep loving one person for decades. Why is the institution of marriage needed, anyway? If you want to stay with some one, why not just stay? How could I even consider doing something so utterly lacking rational foundation? After I said this, Mrs. Tanigawa cackled with laughter.

“I had heard you were a hyper-logical type. Now, I can see you really are! But, really! You get married because you feel like it. That’s all there is to it.”

I replied in a slightly fed-up tone of voice:

“To tell you the truth, I don’t have the time or energy to think about women, any way.”

“That might be so. But with life you never know what is going to happen.”

She wasn’t kidding. Who could have dreamed that within a month and a half I would meet Sayo, the woman who would become my perfect soul-mate and my wife?

Explanation*

**Explanation.* In Japan, most books with any pretense to being serious have an explanation, an afterword, generally written by someone who is well known, well qualified to discuss the subject, or both.

Hatamaru Akiko (Lector in Social Studies, Bourbaki University)

I first met him, G.P.S., about three years ago.

At that time, I taught two courses and my mentor, a professor at my alma mater, kindly enabled me to attend his lectures for free and gave me good advice whenever I needed it. My circumstances were very good for a young woman just out of graduate school. My husband did not seem to mind my comfortable life – dissolution, compared to his long work hours – and I was thankful for his moral and financial support.

One day, just after the professor's lecture ended, he asked me to accompany him to his office. I sat down and he handed me a thick folder.

"Yesterday, a strange young man dropped in and left this," he said. "He begged me to read it and tell him what I thought about it. He said he was a graduate of the university, so I couldn't just turn him down, but I am very busy preparing for our annual meeting. I'm sorry to trouble you, but could you read this in my place?"

If the professor was busy, he could have just excused himself, but then he wouldn't have been the professor. I clutched the folder. The cover bore the words "The Origin of Intelligence."

"The Origin of Intelligence" was a long dissertation that became the basis for Act III of this book: "Letter to My Mentor." I recall that it was as voluminous as all of "THE ANSWER."

I took it home and started reading it, but quickly became bogged down. This was primarily because I was a major in education sociology, with almost no background in religion and philosophy, much less physics, and most of the names and terminology was

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unfamiliar to me. I might as well have been reading a volume of law reports. There was too much knowledge I had to comprehend if I were to make sense of it.

Nevertheless, the fact is I could not stop turning the pages. I found myself stopping time after time at encountering unfamiliar words, then, looking back at previous passages trying to grasp meanings, and though I never could really comprehend it, I experienced an eerie excitement, the feeling that what I was reading was something of momentous importance and that I was in direct contact with it.

A week later. He came to the university's faculty lounge and I invited him to join me in the cafeteria. He looked disappointed not to see the professor (not to mention my being young and a woman), but accompanied me without protest. Judging from the curriculum vitae appended to the dissertation, we belonged to the same class at the university. It was the first time we met, but that is not unusual for people in different schools.

He was tall, with clean-cut features. If it had been my university days, I might have fallen for him. As we walked across campus I had such idle thoughts.

As soon as we sat down across a table with our paper cups of coffee and lemon tea, I confessed that I had read "The Origin of Intelligence" but was able to comprehend very little of it and, accordingly, did not care to argue about it or be questioned about the content.

He nodded.

"It's enough for me if you have just read it through to the end. Very few people have."

"I guess that would be the case."

This seemed to offend him, if ever so slightly, but I went on.

"The scope of applications for "The Origin of Intelligence" is just too wide. That can't be helped because it *is* "the answer to solve all problems." Anyway, in Japan with its specialist-idiot* professors, you probably won't find anyone who can completely comprehend it."

* *Specialist-idiot* Or, 'specialist-fool.' A common expression in Japanese for someone who knows a lot about his own specialty but little about anything else (*senmon-baka*).

His face showed some apprehension. Perhaps he had not expected someone from the Ivory Tower, albeit a first floor level, to speak that way.

"I do not think this *work* (I can remember specially using that word) will find a good reception in Japan."

"So what should I do? None of the scholars will even look at what I wrote. The philosophers won't, the theologians won't, the physicists won't and, of course, the sociologists won't. It looks like all I can do is bury it and move on."

"But, you must have had a target in mind when you wrote this, didn't you?"

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Hearing this, he looked very surprised.

Reading “The Origin of Intelligence,” I had come to know what his target was. “The Origin of Intelligence” was not supposed to be read with the intellect, but with feeling, no, to be more precise, with *sensitivity* rather than knowledge. Adults do not read that way. Such being the case, who exactly *was* he writing this huge dissertation for?

Les enfants terribles.

I gave him some constructive advice (If I may overstate my role a little). How about reducing the number of specialized terms and making it easier to understand? How about rewriting it under the supposition that it is for a general education lecture series that could be understood by university freshmen, just out of high-school with no specialized knowledge? “Then, after you’ve done that,” I continued,

“You might submit it to a publisher that has a prize contest for new essays. That would at least give it a chance of seeing the light of day. If your attitude is to say you’re happy if it is read by a handful of people who can appreciate it, that is fine, but you should realize that is just a form of arrogance. Regardless, the first people who will evaluate it will be adults, so you need to try to appeal more to them, too.”

Of course, if my advice were followed too closely, there would be some risk of the work’s losing some of its original power . . . He nodded. “Also, there is another possibility,” I added.

“You could translate “The Origin of Intelligence” into English and try the same thing in America, right? The scholars over there tend to have more flexible minds than their Japanese counterparts. At any rate, I think your writing would have a higher rate of acceptance than it will get in this country.”

He replied that he didn’t have any confidence in his English ability, but that the situation might change if a good translator could be found. At any rate, he said he’d keep it in mind as one alternative.

As we were about to part, I told him,

“Having become this involved with your work, I must admit to being curious about where you go with it. If, sometime in the future, it should be published, would you let me know about it?”

And, so saying, I wrote my home address and phone number on a small memo and gave it to him.

Three years passed – I had my first child, Sakura, who was now a 1 ½ year-old girl – without hearing from him. You might say I had pretty much forgotten he even existed. Until, that day, when I received a parcel in the post.

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The content was a manuscript as fat as that of three years earlier. On the cover, were the words “THE ANSWER” and next to it, in large felt-tip pen handwriting, “final draft.”

The enclosed letter explained that he had finally managed to find a publisher and was mailing me the manuscript in its final form, as I had wished, and he was eager for me to read it. That was all. Considering we had no contact for three years, luck was with us. What if I had moved? But, then, I thought, that is like him.

Reading “THE ANSWER” I was surprised, pleasantly. The newly added “Love Letter” and “In Hazelwood” provided a fine introduction for the “Letter to My Mentor.” The parts where he wrote what he most wanted to write were as uncompromising as ever, yet he found a methodology that could pull readers into the book.

And, more than anything else, the impressive final chapter: “Motherland.” I doubt if anyone who buys this book will start with this “Explanation,” but just in case you are doing just that, let me say that you will regret it if you don’t read the book to the end!

But, the world has more contrary people than we might imagine, so I dare not give away much information about the content of the book here because I want you to read the main text first. “THE ANSWER” is full of traps and gimmicks. The reader should be free to enjoy stumbling into these without having the experience blunted by prior knowledge.

Also, this is a bit embarrassing to admit but even now, three years after my first reading, I cannot completely grasp the content of the “Letter to My Mentor” – the part that was “The Origin of Intelligence.” Without the child’s ability to sense-read it, I must read it with my intellect, but I don’t have the knowledge to do that either. You can see where that leaves me. The “Letter to My Mentor” are the book’s main dish. A person that cannot properly appreciate the main dish is hardly qualified to talk about the course.

Some days later, he phoned me.

“Have you read it?”

Maybe I was just imagining it, but his voice seemed to exude confidence.

“I read it. I think you have turned it into something very interesting. The only thing is, I couldn’t really understand “Letters to My Mentor” this time, either.”

“Thank you. Thank you very much.”

It sounded formal. I could almost see his head bow as he said it. I felt he was a well-mannered man. Then he said something else.

“As it seems you like it, I have a request I wish you’ll consider.”

“And what might that be?”

“Could you, by any chance, write the Explanation for “THE ANSWER?”

I hadn’t expected that. Of course, I declined, but he didn’t give up.

Do you know why 1+1=2?

“If you hadn’t given me your advice that time, I probably could not have completed “THE ANSWER.” Many other things have happened in the meantime, but still, you were the only person in Japan who gave me any real help back then. So, at least, as far as the Japanese version of “THE ANSWER” goes, you are the only one qualified to write it.”

Oh come on! I thought. My contribution is not even mentioned in the book. Well, I guess there really is no good place to squeeze it in, so I really shouldn’t complain.

I gave in. I’ll try, I promised, but I want to be careful not to do anything to injure the atmosphere of the main text. I’ll send you what I write, and if you *really* like it, you may use it, if not, please feel free not to use it. And, so saying, I hung up.

I am honored if these words of mine are being used as the Explanation and are right here printed in their proper place at the end of the book. I write this because I feel there is a good chance that this book, if it survives its first decade may well prove to be a major phenomenon, a monster as we call prodigies these days. It gives me pleasure to look forward to that eventuality. Doesn’t it give you the goose-bumps when a book written by an unknown young author smashes hard-headed authorities and their meaningless knowledge into smithereens?

Author notes:

- 1 This work is fiction. Jack, Swallow House and other characters and organizations have no relation with real characters or organizations that may happen to exist.
 - 2 It would be appropriate to list all sources cited in a biography, but the earlier drafts no longer exist and with all the rewrites I must confess to losing track of what is original and what is cited and all I can do is apologize to anyone I should have mentioned but did not.
 - 3 I eagerly await your response. My e-mail address is gosuke@gps1999.com Unless beset by pressing business, I will promptly respond.
 - 4 My famous Final Theory T-shirts (out of production at the present), mentioned in the book, are available in three colors (white, blue and black), while they last. Please e-mail me to request your free T-shirt!
 - 5 I thank the small number of people who have supported this work, including my wife, friends and Takeda Seiji, whose books taught me what little I know of philosophy.
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[back jacket, inside]

Author Affiliation

GOSUKE SUZUKI (G.P.S. is a nom de plume of the amateur times)

* Won Fourteenth Mainichi 21st. Century (Essay) Award

Born 1969 in Tokyo, Japan. Graduated from Sophia University department of literature philosophy dept.

Worked for an advertising agency, fish market and a nursing home. Suffered from a mental disease and hospitalized. After leaving the hospital, stayed in Canada for rehabilitation and worked as a volunteer for half a year at a horseback riding club. After return home, published "THE ANSWER" at own expense. Kadokawa Publishing Co., Ltd printed a new edition of "THE ANSWER" in 2004 and it has reprinted immediately. Became a full-time writer after then.

Other works

"A suicide allied force" (Kadokawa Publishing Co., Ltd. /2005)A filmization plan is in progress.

"The story of the man who has become a fatty" (Kyuryudo /2006) has made into a cartoon.

"Reunion" (Yamaha pod casting drama /2006)

"Can you answer the question "Why do humans live?" (Kawade Shobo Shinsha, Publishers /2007)

"Listen to the song of the daddy" (planned in 2008)

2002 September 15

Mainichi Shinbun (one of Japan's top four newspapers)

Reviewed by Ôoka Akira*

“THE ANSWER”

by G.P.S. (Shinpûsha --- 1400 yen)

What in the world is *absolute truth*? How about *nothingness* and *being*? What is beyond the edge of the known Universe? What *is* the Universe? What is *consciousness*? *Life*? Why is *homicide* taboo?

Probably, all of us have thought about philosophical problems such as these at some time in our lives. Granted, some young punk will disagree with me: "I'm no brain, but I can tell you I've never wasted a minute on that kind of crap!"

He is full of it. Of *course* he has. He just didn't use the same words to think with, but fit the questions to his own vocabulary and conceptual world. For better or worse, humans hanker to explain the world as soon as they get a kindergarten-level command of language. We can't help ourselves.

Do you know why 1+1=2?

“THE ANSWER,” according to the author, G.P.S., is “a story about the love, tears and laughter of a man who (thinks he) has really solved all such problems.”

“G.P.S.?” Is that the name of a human being? I had better answer that before proceeding further. It is, he says, an acronym for *General Problem Solver*. The protagonist calls himself that because he claims to have worked back to the spring from which all the contradictions and trouble that plague humanity originate and solved them.

At this point, I think the ordinary --- this is itself a vague word --- person may hesitate. This “story,” as the author calls his book, is fiction, but it differs ever so slightly from what is generally thought to be a novel, by being a book of ideas, or rather thinking focused on philosophy as process.

The protagonist is a young man with a real bad case of the *why's* --- *Why this? Why that?* attacks as persistent as hiccups. He wants to know *why* so badly that it is literally killing him. So he seeks for an equation by which he can solve problems from those in the nursing home, where he worked, to international conflict, from the beginning of the world to the end. And, as he copes with the lack of understanding of those around him and the temptation of death=nothingness, he discovers the structure of human society.

His philosophical construction --- “hyper-logical bullshit to last a million years,” as he puts it in a modest moment --- is built around theories about how mankind came to acquire language. Since the book jacket copy claims it is “like reading a first-class mystery novel,” I dare not give away too much lest I be scolded, but let me summarize the book in my own words.

Animals have communicative language. The moment man leaped from that to a symbolic language, where there is no direct relation between the signifier (in this book the spoken word) and the signified (what is referred to), this “world” of ours was born, and with it, time, mind and the endlessly repeated study of the Truth. The Incompleteness Theorem-like futility of the latter endeavor comes from the fact that so long as thought is based on language, we can only *decide* things and even philosophy and science cannot help us to *know*, much less *understand*, anything.

I can go along with the conclusions that G.P.S. draws from Saussurean linguistics readily enough, but if I continue this dry outline, the reader will not imagine the fun chop logic that pervades the book.

In many ways, the substance of the argument approaches the cosmology arrived at by the Buddha, yet the book is in many ways a polemic with some points that may be controversial. As intellectual entertainment, the book sometimes falters, but the author’s skill at weaving it into a moving narrative makes this a good book, a challenge for the logic-loving people of the world.

*Ôoka Akira is an award-winning (Akutagawa prize, Mishima Yukio prize) novelist.

[excerpt from web page]

A Word from the Author

Hello! I am G.P.S. (General Problem Solver).

Thank you for visiting my home page.

What type of book is “THE ANSWER?” To borrow the words of ex Bad Trip guitarist Watanabe Kazurô, my work is “an incomplete philosophical version of ‘Beautiful Mind’.”

Like John Nash, the protagonist of “Beautiful Mind,” I go to a mental hospital once per week. According to my diagnosis, I have a tendency toward depression, schizophrenia and paranoia. This may or may not have something to do with my strong conviction that “THE ANSWER” is the most awesome book ever written. In the whole world, there are three of us, myself included, who believe this may actually be the case. What is so exciting is that we really have no idea if this book will end up being bought by only ten people or whether it will end up a world-wide best-seller surpassing even “Harry Potter.” This is fun to speculate about, isn’t it? But, tell me, doesn’t reading the paper and watching television depress you, too? Incidents one after another coming up, then quickly forgotten. Smug-looking big-shot scholars and politicians providing specious explanations that follow after this endless parade of woes that vanish only to keep multiplying and coming back like the heads of a hydra! None of these problems are *really* solved. Meanwhile our world overflows with chaos and stress.

Why is this?

One reason, of course, is that most scholars and politicians are myopic fools. But, if we think more deeply about it, it is because there is still no OS (operating system) for the thinking of human beings. No matter how many theories and thoughts and systems are developed and sold, so long as there is no OS that can comprehend these and process them, the solutions for all these problems are but drops of water on a hot griddle; and, so long as people use language to think, decide and do things, it is the duty of philosophy to develop that OS.

I do not care whether or not this book is read by mighty scholars.

Of course, I think it would be nice if this book sells and I have some desire to gain a degree of social recognition. But to be honest about my main intention, it is to have young readers with their flexible minds and courage read it and be inspired to start a movement to change this chaotic, stressful world into something better.

OK, that may be nothing but a pipe dream. At the very least, I hope to get a “Hmmp!” out of some adults who wear imperious faces as they throw about difficult words. (If they condescend to read this, that is.) I can’t stand those people. On the other hand, I really think that teachers and parents who are not sure how to properly respond when a little child asks them “Why is it wrong to kill people?” will find it worthwhile to read my work.

Do you know why 1+1=2?

What more can I say? If you read the book and happen to like it, I would be grateful if you could do something for me. Because the publisher is a tiny one, with no funds for publicity, please let people know about it by word of mouth or e-mail! If you include a link to this home-page, it should work very well. And let me add that I am always delighted to receive your opinion and feelings about my work.

Here's to a dream, a day when adults kneel down before the innocently cruel children of the world!

Synopsis of “THE ANSWER” by G.P.S.

ACT I – *Love Letter from Canada.* GPS (general problem solver) explains to his fiancé that he is mentally unbalanced, while depicting some of their life in Canada and announcing his intention to write a book about his discovery of *the answer* for the world's problems and return to Japan to check in to a mental hospital.

ACT II – *In Hazelwood.* GPS discusses his philosophical quest with a skeptical Canadian Indian guide, fasts to forget everything and start over in the forests of Canada

ACT III – *A Letter to My Mentor.* GPS paints the history of philosophy as he sees it – in strong mythological colors – and recalls his own momentous philosophical discovery of the key to answering all problems in the origin of language to the Sensei who was his junior high school teacher and inspired his search for understanding by asking students to think about basic but usually ignored questions such as “Why is it wrong to kill people?”

ACT IV – *The Motherland.* Dropping everything he is doing in Japan, GPS heads for the Santa Fe Institute, the mecca of Complex Systems. As his mental stability starts to slip, he follows the advice of Professor Hardy of MIT and heads to the wilds of Canada to do a fast. Suffering from strong suicidal compulsions as a result, he returns to Japan and commits himself to a mental hospital. Then, he returns to Canada for rehabilitation, where he meets someone who will change his destiny.

EXPLANATION – *Postscript by Hatamaru Akiko, lecturer in social studies Bourbaki University.* The woman who read the first draft of what became ACT III of “THE ANSWER” gives readers an insight into the history of the book and character of the author.