

# IMPERMANENCE AND UNCERTAINTY: *Tsurezuregusa* of Yoshida Kenkō and *Essays* of Montaigne

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## Preface

My recent article in English entitled “Early Buddhism and Pyrrhonism as Human Wisdom”<sup>1)</sup> began quoting the view of “Mujō” (無常 impermanence) at the beginning of *The Tale of Heike*, one of the most famous Japanese classical literature. The passage is as follows:

The sound of the Gion Shōja bells echoes the impermanence of all things; the color of the sala flowers reveals the truth that the prosperous must decline. The proud do not endure, they are like a dream on a spring night; the mighty fall at last, they are as dust before the wind.<sup>2)</sup>

This view of Mujō shows the impertinence of all things as truth (“Kotowari” in Japanese) accompanied by the feelings of sorrow and resignation. This view seems to have influenced not only Japanese literary world, but also Japanese mentality in general until today. In my above-mentioned article, I have shown what Gion Shōja was and what occurred there. I have indicated about the scepticism of early Buddhism, which elucidated the meaning of “Shogyō Mujō” (諸行無常 impermanence of all things). I have also indicated there the relationship between the scepticism of ancient India and Pyrrhonism founded by a Greek sceptical thinker Pyrrho, who joined the expedition of Alexander the Great to the East up to India. At about 2 B.C., Sextus Empiricus succeeded the Pyrrhonism and wrote some books. One of these books is *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*.

About 1400 years later, Michel de Montaigne, one of the top-runners of modern thought, read this monumental work. My issue in this article is to ask whether we can recognize something like “impermanence” in Montaigne’s *Essays*, and, if we can, I would like to ask whether Montaigne’s view of impermanence has any difference from Japanese view, and

further I would like to ask whether there exists a link between this view of Montaigne and the starting point of his thinking.

So far as this article is concerned, I will revisit in the first chapter the works of Japanese literature which contain a view of “Mujō (impermanence)” and which are well known to us Japanese, namely those of Saigyō, Chōmei, Kenkō, and Bashō. After that, I will try to find Montaigne’s view of impermanence.

In the Japanese literature, I take up most of all Priest Kenkō (兼好法師) (1283–1350), often called Yoshida Kenkō (吉田兼好), because both Montaigne’s *Essays* and Kenkō’s *Tsurezuregusa* (徒然草 *Essays in Idleness* according to Professor Donald Keene’s translation) have the similar style of writing, namely the style of essay. The contents of two essays are also to some extent similar so far as the impermanence is dealt with. As for Kenkō, the following passage seems to be illuminating:

The author’s real name was Yoshida-no Kaneyoshi, Kenkō being his name in religion. He was born a Shinto priestly family in the hereditary service of the Yoshida shrine in Kyoto, and as a youthful samurai he entered the service of Imperial court. There he enjoyed the special favour of the Emperor Go-Uda, and became highly respected as a poet. On the death of the Emperor, he was overwhelmed with sorrow at life’s uncertainty, and so secluded himself from the world to lead the life of a Buddhist recluse.

Later, when Kyoto had become the scene of civil strife, he travelled as a solitary among distant mountains to escape the turmoil. After a while he came back to Kyoto and built himself a hermitage at Narabigaoka, where, it is said, while leading a leisurely life in the enjoyment of nature, he composed his great work *Tsurezuregusa*.

Born a Shintoist, becoming well versed in poetry and in close touch with Confucianism and Taoism, and later entering the religious life as a devout believer in Buddhism, Kenkō Hōshi was fortunate in being blessed with wide culture and with scholarship and talent as well as a profound knowledge of Japanese literature. The result was, as this work clearly shows, to produce in Kenkō a philosopher in whose mind such contrasts as pessimism and optimism, feeling and reason, fantasy and realism, could find a harmonious meeting place.<sup>3)</sup>

## Chapter 1. “*Essays in Idleness*” The *Turezuregusa* of Kenkō

### 1. The Great Step

The 59<sup>th</sup> fragment (hereafter simply 59) of Kenkō’s *Essays* is as follows:

A man who has determined to take a Great Step should leave unresolved all plans for disposing of urgent or worrisome business.

Some men think, “I’ll wait a bit longer, until I take care of this matter,” or “I might as well dispose of that business first,” or “People will surely laugh at me if I leave such and such as it stands. I’ll arrange things now so that there won’t be any future criticism,” or “I’ve managed to survive all these years. I’ll wait that this matter is cleared up. It won’t take long. I mustn’t be hasty.” But if you think in such terms the day for taking the Great Step will never come, for you will keep discovering more and more unavoidable problems, and there will never be a time when you run out of unfinished business.

My observation of people leads me to conclude, generally speaking, that even people with some degree of intelligence are likely to go through like supposing they have ample time before them. But would a man fleeing because a fire has broken out in his neighborhood say to the fire, “Wait a moment, please”? To save his life, a man will run away, indifferent to shame, abandoning his possessions. Is a man’s life any more likely to wait for him? Death attacks faster than fire or water, and is harder to escape. When its hour comes, can you refuse to give up your aged parents, your little children, your duty to your master, your affections for others, because they are hard to abandon?<sup>1)</sup>

The words “The Great Step” are for “Dai-ji 大事” in the Japanese original sentence. In the ordinary meaning “Dai-ji” is “the important (valuable) thing”, or, “serious happening (affairs).” In 188 we can find another similar expression “Ichi-dai-ji 一大事” side by side with “Dai-ji.” 188 goes as follows:

A certain man, deciding to make his son a priest, said, “You will study and learn the principle of Cause and Effect, and you will then preach sermons to earn a livelihood.” The son, doing as instructed, learned to ride a horse as the first step towards becoming a preacher. He thought that when people wanted him to conduct a service they would probably send a horse for him, since he owned neither a palanquin nor a carriage, and it

would be embarrassing if, because of his awkwardness in the saddle, he fell from the horse. Next, thinking that if, after the service, he were offered some sake and had no special graces to display, the donor would be disappointed, he learned to sing popular songs. When he was at last able to pass muster in these two arts, he felt anxious to attain real proficiency. He devoted himself so diligently that he had no time to learn preaching, and in the meantime he had grown old.

This priest was not the only one; the story is typical of people in general. When they are young they are concerned about the projects they foresee lying ahead of them in the distant future—establishing themselves in different professions and carrying out some great undertaking, mastering an art, acquiring learning—but they think of their lives as stretching out indefinitely, and idly allow themselves to be constantly distracted by things before their eyes. They pass months and days in this manner, succeeding in none of their plans, and so they grow old. In the end, they neither become proficient in their profession, nor do they gain the eminence they anticipated. However they regret it, they cannot roll back the years, but decline more and more rapidly, like a wheel rolling downhill.

In view of the above, we must carefully compare in our minds all the different things in life we might hope to make our principal work, and decide which is of the greatest value; this decided, we should renounce our other interests and devote ourselves to that one thing only. Many projects present themselves in the course of a day or even an hour; we must perform those that offer even slightly greater advantages, renouncing the others and giving ourselves entirely to whatever is most important. If we remain attached to them all, and are reluctant to give up any, we will not accomplish a single thing.

It is like a *go* player who, not wasting a move, gets the jump on his opponent by sacrificing a small advantage to achieve a great one. It is easy, of course, to sacrifice three stones to gain ten. The hard thing is to sacrifice ten stones in order to gain eleven. A man should be ready to choose the course which is superior even by a stone, but when it comes to sacrificing ten, he feels reluctant, and it is hard to make an exchange which will not yield many additional stones. If we hesitate to give up what we have, and at the same time are eager to grab what the other man holds, we shall certainly fail to get his pieces and lose our own.

A man living in the capital has urgent business in the Eastern Hills, and has already reached the house of his destination when it occurs to him that if he goes to the

Western Hills, he may reap greater advantage; in that case, he should turn back at the gate and proceed to the Western Hills. If, however, he thinks, "I've come all this way. I might as well take care of my business here first. There was no special day set for my business in the Western Hills. I'll go there some other time, after I have returned," the sloth of a moment will turn in this manner into the sloth of an entire lifetime. This is to be dreaded.

If you are determined to carry out one particular thing, you must not be upset that other things fall through. Nor should you be embarrassed by other people's laughter. A great enterprise is likely to be achieved except at the sacrifice of everything else.

Once, at a large gathering, a certain man said, "Some people say *masuho no susuki*, others say *masoho no susuki*. ① The holy man of Watanabe knows the secret tradition of this pronunciation." The priest Tōren, ② who was present at the gathering and heard this remark, said (it being raining at the time), "Has anyone a raincoat and umbrella he can lend me? I intend to call on this holy man of Watanabe and find out about the *susuki*." People said, "You shouldn't get so excited. Wait till the rain stops." The priest replied, "What a foolish thing to say! Do you suppose that a man's life will wait for the rain to clear? If I should die or the priest passes away in the meantime, could I inquire about it then?" So saying, he hurried to study the tradition. This struck me as a most unusual and valid story.

It is written in the *Analects* ③ that "in speed there is success." Just as Tōren was impatient to learn about the *susuki*, we should be impatient to discover the sources of enlightenment.

① *Susuki* is a variety of pampas grass. *Masuho no susuki* has been identified as *susuki* with a plume about a foot long; *masoho no susuki* as *susuki* with tangled plumes; and *masuu no susuki* as *susuki* of russet tinge. The ability to make such distinctions was accounted a mastery of the secrets of the art of poetry; hence Tōren's alacrity.

② A poet of some distinction, but no biographical data is known.

③ *Analects* XVII, 6: "He who is diligent in all he undertakes" (Waley). Here again, Kenkō's interpretation of the Chinese text is at variance with the present one.<sup>2)</sup>

The translator of Kenkō's *Essays*, Prof. Donald Keene, translates these words "Dai-ji" (大事) and "Ichi-dai-ji" (一大事) case by case as "our principal work," "whatever is the most important," "one particular thing" and "a great enterprise." Furthermore, "the sources of

enlightenment” of the end of the fragment 188 corresponds to the Japanese original “Ichi-daiji Innen (一大事因縁).” “Innen” in Japanese means “Cause and Effect.” We find the expression “Cause and Effect” in the first sentence of this fragment. But it is the translation of the Japanese word “In-ga (因果).” Prof. Keene translates “Ichi-daiji Innen” as “the sources of enlightenment.” To these words, I would like to add “the principle of Cause and Effect.” So it goes in my opinion as follows: “the principle of Cause and Effect as the sources of enlightenment.” “Enlightenment” in this context means “spiritual awakening,” in Japanese “satori (悟り).”

For Kenkō, Buddhist priest, “Ichi-daiji,” the most important (valuable, precious) thing is to enlighten the people on the principle of Cause and Effect (“Innen”). To realize “Mujō,” “impermanence” in English, seems to be the first step to enlightenment, namely spiritual awakening. In the fragment 59, Prof. Keene translates “Dai-ji” as “The Great Step.” Is Dai-ji not the final end, but still the step to anything?

## 2. The final end, the next world?

It was in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD that Buddhism reached Japan by way of the land Kudara of the Korean Peninsula. Since then, Buddhism was differentiated in Japan into various teachings and sects throughout the whole Japanese history. In the period in which Kenkō (1283-1350) lived, Jōdo-kyō (浄土教 Jōdo sect) had the influence on many people. It was originated in China in the later years of the Tang Dynasty. Hōnen (1133-1212), who was often called Hōnen Shōnin (法然上人), the High Priest Hōnen, was the founder of the Jōdo sect in Japan. This sect believes that because Amida Buddha (Amitabha) who reached after his death the Pure Land (Jōdo, Sukhavati in Sanscrit) intends to save people on earth, salvation is to be obtained by calling the name of Amida (念仏 Nembutsu, i.e. repetition of the sacred name of Amitabha). 39 and 98 are fragments dealing with Hōnen and the Jōdo sect.

The first half of 39 and 98 are as follows:

39: A certain man once asked the High Priest Hōnen, “Sometimes as I am saying the nembutsu I am seized by drowsiness and I neglect my devotions. How can I overcome this bstacle?” Hōnen replied, “Say the nembutsu as long as you are awake.” This was a most inspiring answer.<sup>1)</sup>

98: These are the things I found most to my taste when I read the book called

Ichigon Hōdan, ① which records the sayings of the great priests:

1. when in doubt whether or not to do something, generally it is best not to do it.
2. A man concerned about the future life should not own even a miso ① pot. Owning valuables, even if they happen to be personal copies of sutras or images of guardian Buddha, is harmful to salvation.
3. The hermit's way of life is best; he feels no want even if he has nothing.
4. It is good for the man of high rank to act like a humble person, for a scholar to act like a pauper, and for the talented man to act awkwardly.
5. There is only one way to seek Buddhist enlightenment (:"butsudō o negau" 仏道を願う) : you must lead a quiet life and pay no heed to worldly matters. This is the essential.

There were other things, but I don't remember them.

① A collection of Buddhist sayings relating to the Jōdo sect. The compiler and date are unknown.

② Miso is a paste made of beans, commonly used in Japanese cuisine.<sup>2)</sup>

By the way, ① to set the mind on enlightenment, ② to get happiness in the future life, ③ to escape from the cycle of birth and death, how did Kenkō relate these three items each other? Talking of enlightenment, is "the principle of Cause and Effect" the sources of enlightenment? Are they the same things for Kenkō? In any way, we can not expect him to give us any systematic explanations in his essays.

For the time being, the second half of 39 is not yet shown. But, as we will see, it should not be overlooked.

### 3. Doubts

The rest of 39 is as follows:

Again, he said, "If you are certain you will go to heaven, you certainly will; if you are uncertain, it is uncertain." This too was a sage remark. Again, he said, "Even if you have doubts, you will go to heaven provided you say the nembutsu." This too was a holy utterance.<sup>1)</sup>

Prof. Keene's translation shown above: "If you are certain," or, "If you are uncertain," may possibly be changed as follows: "If you think it certain that you will go to heaven," or, "If

you think it uncertain whether you will go to heaven or not,” because in Kenkō’s original text, he says in Japanese: “omoeba (思へば) (if you think)”. In fact, thinking is one thing, and believing is another. Thinking is always accompanied by doubting. According to Kenkō’s quotation of 39, Hōnen seems to teach that we should do nothing but saying “nembutsu” and believing in being able to go to heaven.

Be that as it may, doubting is also for Gotama Buddha the starting point of his teaching. As I have already shown in my English article “Early Buddhism and Pyrrhonism as Human Wisdom,” in ancient India, Sañjaya Belatthiputta, sceptic thinker, answered the following four questions using the formula of quadrilemma, typical Indian mode of argument at that time. The four questions are: the following four things are or are not: ① a next world, ② beings who survive (death), ③ a result and consequence of good and evil actions ④ the Perfect One (One who gets enlightenment) exists after death or not.

To each question Sañjaya suspended his judgment using the formula of quadrilemma. G. Buddha had always been forced to answer the so-called four metaphysical questions: ① the world is eternal (in time), ② the world is an ending thing (in space), ③ the life-principle and body are the same, ④ Perfect One is (exists) after dying.

G. Buddha, too, suspended his judgment (epochē in Greek) using the formula of quadrilemma for fear of falling into dogma.

G. Buddha had also been obsessed by another question: the existence of the ātman. “The ātman was inherent in all things, controlling them from within; it possessed eternal nature and its substance was the same as that of the absolute Brahman.”<sup>2)</sup> The anātman is the negative form of the ātman. The question is whether the five aggregates (shapes, sense impressions, concepts, will, consciousness) are the self (ātman) or not. The Buddha shows the answer as follows: none of these five are the self and the self is finally nothing but the temporary (impermanent) combinations of the five, and does not exist in reality. Preaching thus on five aggregates, Buddha shows also “impermanence” and “anātman.” These two are usually put side by side, and are the fundamental points of the first one of “the Eightfold Noble Pass,” which are as follows: the practice of correct understanding, view or faith, correct thinking, correct speech, correct action or conduct, correct livelihood, correct effort or endeavor, correct attentiveness or momery and correct concentration.<sup>3)</sup>

The Buddha’s enlightenment is dependent co-origination (the principle of Cause and Effect). He explains that the reality beginning with birth and ending in death is more fundamental to the Brahma-faring than those metaphysical views, showing his basic standpoint “pratitya-samutpāda (dependent co-origination)” and so-called “catur-arya-



satya (the Four Noble Truths),” that is to say: 1) “existence entails suffering,” a clear recognition of the nature of human life; 2) “the cause of suffering is craving,” 3) “craving can be destroyed”; and 4) “the practice of the Eightfold Noble Paths is the means for destroying this cause.”<sup>4)</sup>

#### 4. Impermanence in literature

We have just learned the impermanence in G. Buddha. Fragments 49 and 74 of Kenkō's Essays show us his concept of the “Impermanence.” These fragments are as follows:

49: You must not wait until you are old before you begin practicing the Way. Most of the gravestones from the past belong to men who died young.

A man sometimes learns for the first time how mistaken his way of life has been only when he unexpectedly falls ill and is about to depart this world. His mistake lay in doing slowly what should have been done quickly, and in hastening to do what might best have been delayed. ① He regrets these actions committed in the past, but what good can it do, even if he feels regret, at that stage?

A man should bear firmly in mind that death is always threatening, and never for an instant forget it. If he does this, why should the impurities bred in him by this world not grow lighter, and his heart not develop an earnest resolve to cultivate the Way of the Buddha?

The story is told in Zenrin's Ten Courses of Salvation ② of a holy man of long ago who, when someone came to discuss important business concerning them both, answered, “An extremely urgent matter has come up, and it must be settled by morning, if not tonight.” So saying, he covered his ears, recited the nembutsu, and presently achieved Buddhahood.

A holy man named Shinkai ③ was so aware of the impermanence of the world that he never even sat down and relaxed, but always remained crouching.

① This means he was slow to perform Buddhist duties but quick to indulge in worldly activities.

② Zenrin is short for Zenrinji, a Jōdo temple in Kyoto north of Nanzenji. It refers here to a monk of that temple named Yōgan (1032–1111), known familiarly as Zenrin Yōgan. His work Ōjō Jūnin, mentioned here, was widely read.

③ An adopted son of Taira no Munemori who, after the defeat of his clan, took refuge on Mount Kōya, the center of Shingon Buddhism.<sup>1)</sup>

74: They flock together like ants, hurry east and west, run north and south. Some are mighty, some humble. Some are aged, some young. They have places to go, houses to return to. At night they sleep, in the morning get up. But what does all this activity mean? There is no ending to their greed for long life, their grasping for profit. What expectations have they that they take such good care of themselves? All that awaits them in the end is old age and death, whose coming is swift and does not falter for one instant. What joy can there be while waiting for this end? The man who is deluded by fame and profit does not fear the approach of old age and death because he is so intoxicated by worldly cravings that he never stops to consider how near he is to his destination. The foolish man, for his part, grieves because he desires everlasting life and is ignorant of the law of universal change.<sup>2)</sup>

The final end of Mujō (impermanence) is nothing but death. We are always being threatened by death. We should never forget it, and we desire to the contrary the everlasting life. We can now recognize that Kenkō opposed the everlasting life to death and that he tried to let us notice our being mortal.

*The Tale of Heike* showed the impermanence of all things as truth (Kotowari in Japanese). This view of Mujō seems to have influenced not only literary world, but also Japanese view of life until today. Kenkō accepted this “truth” and lived like a hermit not in a far away mountain, but in Kyōto, which was in the midst of the great turmoil of the changing period.

Talking of the “truth,” G. Buddha showed the “truth” (to say more precisely the Four Truths) on the standpoint of the so-called Cause and Effect principle as was mentioned above. In classical Japanese literature, as for a view of Mujō, the beginning part of the *Hōjōki* (方丈記), *The Ten Square Hut of Kamo-no-Chōmei* (鴨長明 1153-1216) seems to be better-known than Kenkō's *Essays*. *Hōjōki* begins as follows:

Ceaselessly the river flows, and yet the water is never the same, while in the still pools the shifting foam gathers and is gone, never staying for a moment. Even so is man and his habitation.<sup>3)</sup>

Kamo-no-Chōmei seems to find the truth in the very fact that the river flows, and the water is never the same. A Greek Philosopher who has the similar view is Heraclitus

(540?—470? B.C.). He says that one can not enter the same river twice, as Aristotle's *Metaphysics* shows us. Furthermore, another source tells us Heraclitus' opinion that the river itself is the same. Aristotle says in *Metaphysics*:

.....For it was from this supposition that there blossomed forth the most extreme view of those which we have mentioned, that of the professed followers of Heraclitus, and such as Cratylus held, who ended by thinking that one need not say anything, and only moved his finger; and who criticized Heraclitus for saying that one cannot enter the same river twice, for he himself held that it cannot be done even once.<sup>4)</sup>

Aristotle also says in *Metaphysics*:

In his youth Plato first became acquainted with Cratylus and the Heraclitean doctrines—that the whole sensible world is always in a state of flux, and that there is no scientific knowledge of it—and in after years he still held these opinions. And when Socrates, disregarding the physical universe and confining his study to moral questions, sought in this sphere for the universal and was the first to concentrate upon definition, Plato followed him and assumed that the problem of definition is concerned not with any sensible thing but with entities of another kind; for the reason that there can be no general definition of sensible things which are always changing. These entities he called "Ideas," and held that all sensible things are named after them and in virtue of their relation to them; for the plurality of things which bear the same name as Forms exist by participation in them.<sup>5)</sup>

Heraclitus says that no man can ever step twice into the same river, but the river itself is the same, or, according to Diels-Kranz, the river is the same, but for those who enter into it different waters flow one after another.<sup>6)</sup> According to W. K. C. Guthrie, Seneca comments: "As Heraclitus says, into the same river we step and do not step twice; for the name of the river remains the same, but the water has flowed past."<sup>7)</sup>

Again, Kamo-no-Chōmei finds the truth in the very fact that the river flows. Heraclitus, on the contrary, says that it is difficult to find the universal and general scientific knowledge in changing things. Considering this suggestion of Heraclitus, Plato produced his "idea"-theory. We may assume that Heraclitus contributed to Plato's philosophy of idea indirectly.

Matsuo Bashō (松尾芭蕉 1644-1694) found “Mujō” in his traveling, he himself admiring and learning from Saigyō (西行 1118-1190), traveling poet. Bashō’s *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (奥の細道) begins as follows:

Days and months are travellers of eternity. So are the years that pass by. Those who steer a boat across the sea, or drive a horse over the earth till they succumb to the weight of years, spend every minute of their lives travelling. There are a great number of ancients, too, who died on the road. I myself have been tempted for a long time by the cloud-moving wind – filled with a strong desire to wander.<sup>8)</sup>

Bashō traveled creating Haiku, Haikai Poetry, with 17 Japanese letters, while Saigyō traveled creating versed Waka Poetry with 31 Japanese letters.

As is well-known, the first passage of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* is derived in part from Li Po (李白 701?-762), Chinese poet in the period of Tang Dynasty. One of Li Po’s verse is entitled: “Preface to a banquet at the peach and damson garden in a spring night”. It goes in my English translation as follows:

“Heaven and Earth are like hotels which accept and send off all the things. Days, months, and time are eternal travelers who visit and leave these hotels. Life is like a dream. Why not enjoy this spring night?”

Li Po, enjoying his life in drinking, created a great number of poetry. In this verse above we can also recognize his optimistic character. Using the similar phrases, two poets, Bashō and Li Po, show quite different two views of the world. In the first paragraph quoted above, Bashō alludes to his death on the road. The end of traveling is death. His last Haiku is, though it is not included in *Narrow Road...*, as follows: Stricken by sickness on the way of journey, my dreams run wandering round the withered fields.

In Li Pao’s verse quoted above, Bashō recognized the impermanence of traveling. About after 250 years, Yukawa Hideki (湯川秀樹 1907-1981), Japanese physicist, got the idea of meson theory by which he won the Nobel Prize later in 1949, from the same passage of Li Po’s verse from which Bashō was suggested on impermanence. Later we will have the opportunity to discuss the relationship between this passage of Li Po and Yukawa’s meson theory.

In connection with the concept of impermanence (“Mujō”), we find another fragment 7 in Kenkō’s Essays. It is as follows:

If man were never to fade away like the dews of Adashino ①, never to vanish like the smoke over Toribeyama ②, but lingered on forever in the world, how things would lose their power to move us! ③. The most precious thing in life is its uncertainty. Considering living creatures—none lives so long as man. The May fly waits not for the evening, the summer cicada knows neither spring nor autumn. What a wonderfully unhurried feeling it is to live even a single year in perfect serenity. If that is not enough for you, you might live a thousand years and still feel it was like a single night's dream. We cannot live forever in this world; why should we wait for ugliness to overtake us? The longer man lives, the more shame he endures. To die, at the latest, before one reaches forty, is the least unattractive. Once a man passes that age, he desires (with no sense of shame over his appearance) to mingle in the company of others. In his sunset years he dotes for his grandchildren, and prays for long life so that he may see them prosper. His preoccupation with worldly desires grows ever deeper, and gradually he loses all sensitivity to the beauty of things, a lamentable state of affairs.

① Adashino was the name of a graveyard, apparently northwest of Kyoto. The word *adashi* (impermanent), contained in the place name, accounted for the frequent use of Adashino in poetry as a symbol of impermanence. The dew is also often used with that meaning.

② Toribeyama is still the chief graveyard of Kyoto. Mention of smoke suggests that bodies were cremated there.

③ The well-known expression *mono no aware* is here translated as “the power of things to move us.” It has also been translated as “the pity of things,” a more literal meaning.<sup>9)</sup>

“Uncertainty” of the first passage is for “*Sadame naki* (定めなき)” in the original text. Considering the context of fragment 7, “*Sadame naki*” obviously means “*Mujō*”, that is to say, impermanence. Certainty (“*ichijō*” 一定) or uncertainty (“*fujō*” 不定) is often used, as we saw it in the second half of 39, in relation to faith or knowledge. And so here in this passage, “uncertainty” can be changed into “impermanence.” Certainty or uncertainty will play an important role in my next chapter.

## Chapter 2. Montaigne's Essays

### 1. Pyrrho and a Pig

Montaigne (1533–1592) inquired the problem “death” throughout his life. Did Montaigne refer to the problem “Impermanence” in connection with death as well? Within his enormously voluminous Essays, we can find an important turning point. His way of thinking changed completely after this turning point. Without taking into consideration this change of his, it would be difficult to understand him sufficiently. This is also true about the question above. I will pick up two different comments on the same episode. The episode stems from the chapter of “Pyrrho” of *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* written by Diogenes Laertius. The episode goes as follows:

Posidonius, too, relates of him (Pyrrho) a story of this sort. When his fellow-passengers on board a ship were all unnerved by a storm, he kept calm and confident, pointing to a little pig in the ship that went on eating, and telling them that such was the unperturbed state in which the wise man should keep himself.<sup>1)</sup>

At first, in Volume I, Chapter 14 (hereafter I-14) of Montaigne's *Essays*, Montaigne said approximately as follows:

Dare we say about that this advantage of reason, owing to which we are masters and emperors of the rest of creatures, is given to us only for suffering? If the knowledge of things interrupts our rest and tranquility, and we are in a condition inferior to the pig of Pyrrho, for what is our knowledge?

In the years 1572–1573 Montaigne began writing his essays as a Stoic philosopher. In his early time, he had been influenced by Stoics, especially by Etienne de la Boétie, who was a famous Stoic and who died of an infectious disease in 1563, which had deprived many people of their lives. In addition to the disease there had been in France the civil war between the Protestants (Huguenots) and Catholics. It is well-known that the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Night happened in 1572. And Montaigne lost 5 of his 6 children. He had been surrounded by many kinds of death.

In his early time, as a Stoic, he had tried to overcome the fear of death relying on reason. In I-20 he narrates his philosophy of death. He tried to be accustomed to dying and tried to approach death. As he narrates in II-6, he happened to experience death by falling down

from the horseback. He wandered for a few hours in a dark consciousness, and was revived from the depth of consciousness, discovering his self again. When he recovered his self, he seemed to put off the Stoic coat.

Montaigne was always being harassed by renal stone. He seemed to find it difficult for him to endure the pain, let alone to overcome the pain relying on reason. Thus he seemed to realize the weakness of reason.

In II-12, about the episode of Pyrrho and pig he said approximately as follows:

Ignorance perceives feeling of death, pain, grief and other inconveniences far less than learning and knowledge. We think that we are superior to animals. We must tread down this foolish vanity under foot.

In this way, Montaigne changed his attitude towards Pyrrho's pig and he praised the tranquil minded pig in II-12. He emphasized in II-12 the powerlessness of human beings and criticized the false conception and self-conceit that human beings were superior to the rest of creature.

According to II-12, the fear of death also derives from that kind of human self-conceit. Generation and extinction happen everywhere. There is no special death.

Where does the difference between these two comments, in I-14 and II-12, come from? The latter of these two he seemed to write in about 1578. What happened to him between 1572~73 and 1578?

## 2. Epechō Medal

In 1576, Montaigne had a medal struck. In an introduction to the translation into English of Montaigne's *Essays*, L. C. Harmer explains it as follows:

Just as Montaigne's methods of composition changed, so also did his attitude towards life. When he began to write he appears to have been, probably because of his fondness for Seneca, an enthusiastic admirer of the Stoics. Later, however, having acquainted himself with all the systems of philosophy that existed among the ancients, he decided that the Pyrrhonians, who professed the doctrine that certainty of knowledge is unattainable, were 'the wisest party of Philosophers' ('That our Desires are increased by Difficulty'). He took as a motto the words 'Que sçais-je?' and had a medal struck, with, on one side, his armorial bearings and, on the other, a pair of scales in perfect balance, having underneath them the Greek word ε π é χ ω, 'I abstain', and the figures '42-1576', the latter indicating that, at the time, Montaigne's age was forty-

two and, therefore, that the medal was struck between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> February in the year 1576.

It seems highly probable that it was about this time that he wrote a considerable part of Book II, chapter 12, 'An Apology of Raymond Sebond', which is the longest essay of the entire work and one that both Pascal and the French freethinkers of the first half of the seventeenth century regarded as being a compendium of his philosophic and religious thought.<sup>1)</sup>

In about 1575, Montaigne seemed to meet with the book *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* of Sextus Empiricus, which was translated from Greek into Latin and published by Henri Etienne, and Montaigne had a medal struck. The medal symbolized nothing but his determination to live as a Pyrrhonian, no more as a Stoic.

In II-12 of his essays, the longest chapter of the book, Montaigne tried to interpret, paraphrase and comment on *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. At the end of II-12, he referred to "impermanence" in his own way. We can see that the passage referring to "impermanence" is written as the conclusion of II-12. And *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* contains the thought of Pyrrho's disciples. In recent English article published in 2003, I tried to demonstrate how Sañjaya, ancient Indian sceptic and teacher of G. Buddha's two important disciples, G. Buddha himself and Pyrrho argued using the formula of quadrilemma, which was Indian way of argument at that time. Pyrrho seemed to have joined Alexander's expedition to the East including India and to have kept company with some Indian philosophers. The most prominent of these Indian philosophers was Calanus, who was in all likelihood a Jain teacher.<sup>2)</sup>

### **3. Sextus Empiricus and Montaigne**

About 500 years after Pyrrho, Sextus Empiricus, who conveyed Pyrrho's idea to the intellectual world of Hellenism, was confronted with the dogmatists. At the top of these dogmatist was situated Aristotle. Sextus Empiricus seemed to have lived in Alexandria at the mouth of Nile.

Now let me quote from my own article mentioned above the following passages:

Alexandria built by Alexander the Great at the mouth of Nile had kept its hegemony by the Greeks for about 1000 years until it was put under the Arabic. In its peak age it had one million population, and it was an international city in the true sense of words,



very exceptional in antiquity.....<sup>1)</sup>

In the second century B.C. Alexandria experienced the second golden age, in which Galen as well as Aristotle had been authority in the world of learning for over 2000 years. Ptolemy was well-known as the author of "Almagest" under the geocentric system, which has been tumbled by Copernicus. In that period the author of "Outlines of Pyrrhonism", Sextus Empiricus, was alive. He was the contemporary of Galen and Ptolemy. Sextus seemed to be a medical doctor, whose medicine was introduced by Galen in his book.<sup>2)</sup> At that time Sextus was not so well-known as Galen or Ptolemy. Sextus wrote some books, but these books as well as "Outlines of Pyrrhonism" seemed to have been as it were "the Sleeping Beauty" in the Arabic woods or somewhere in Europe for over 1400 years until Henri Etienne, a French publisher, found the Greek text in Italy and published it, translating into Latin in 1562,

One of the persons who could understand the significance of "Outlines of Pyrrhonism" translated into Latin was Montaigne. He digested the important points of the book well and transmitted them to the modern world. It is not too much to say that without Sextus's this book, the modern world would be another one.....

Aristotle wrote his books, and built the metaphysics of theological world view, carrying out manifold experiments and observing phenomena carefully. Indeed, Aristotle had a high regard for empiricism, but not leaving the phenomena unexplained, he tried to explain them definitively, and often fell into dogmatism. Aristotle's range of learning was so wide that there seemed to be no objects that he did not treat, as is often said. He built such a magnificent palace of learning that anyone before him had never did. The first man to notice the problem that this palace had may well be Sextus Empiricus.....

In this way, Sextus opposes "essence (logos)" to "appearance (phainomenon)." He says we can explain the appearance given to our senses, but we can not say anything about its essence itself. We can nothing but suspend the judgment (epochē). Because someone says something about the appearance, and other says the other thing about the same appearance. Someone says A about appearance X. The other says Non-A (or B) about the same appearance. These A and Non-A (or B) have "equipollence" or "equality" (isostheneia). And so, what is fundamental for Sextus is as follows: 1) the opposition of essence and appearance, 2) suspension of judgment to essence, 3) the affirmative judgment and the negative judgment (or another) are equal and compatible, 4) to attain to a state of quietude (ataraxia) .....

Now, Sextus argues the reason why one judgment and another one are equal, and we must suspend the judgment.....

In the first mode of argument he shows how there are different kinds of animal (including human being), and how the perceptive impressions are different one another owing to the difference in animals. For Sextus, each perception of different kinds of animal has equal qualification; that is to say, for him the difference of animals does not mean any rank. He simply puts these dissimilar and variant modes of birth (born as eggs like birds; as lumps of flesh like bears and alive like human beings) side by side, and he never makes hierarchy as Aristotle. Sextus does not think which perception is superior to which. Of course for him human beings are not specially qualified living things. They are only one of living things. What he wanted to say in the first argument seems to me that we are unable, either with or without proof, to prefer our own impressions to those of the “irrational” animals. Sextus demonstrates how it is not proper that “the irrational animals” such as dogs are inferior to “rational” human beings.<sup>3)</sup>

Sextus puts Aristotle at the top of dogmatists. Aristotle built the theological world view constituting a hierarchy from imperfecter ones to perfecter ones, and he put men at the top. Women are imperfecter than men.<sup>4)</sup>

Besides, at the beginning of his “Metaphysics” Aristotle says the sense of seeing is the most important. But for Sextus five senses are equally qualified. He does not treat the sense of seeing as the most important one.

What Sextus says in the first mode of argument is also applied to the second mode. He argues here the difference in body and soul (most of all, the way of philosophical thinking) among human beings. He does not give any ranks to human beings, but he only puts the differences side by side. As a whole, in the other eight modes (tropes) Sextus emphasized “relation (pros ti)” as well as variety, and criticized one-sided dogmatic thinking. We can take the Pyrrhonism by Sextus Empiricus for the caution to manifold dogmatism (scientific, political, religious etc.) into which we are always apt to fall. The Pyrrhonism recognizes no difference between the superior and the inferior, but qualifies them equal. Furthermore, Pyrrhonism tries to attain to “ataraxia”, which is to enable to be liberal in soul. And so Pyrrhonism has both liberty and equality in itself.

In the sixteenth century “Outlines of Pyrrhonism” was awakened from the long sleep. Montaigne interpreted this book in his “Essais” (Volume II, Chapter 12).<sup>5) 6)</sup>

II-12 occupies one sixth of the whole *Essays*. Almost a quarter of the whole II-12 is spared for a number of episodes of animals. The episode of “Pyrrho and a pig” is one of them. Sextus puts different kinds of animal including human beings side by side and qualifies them equal. With different examples of animals Montaigne tries to know how “irrational animals” are “rational,” and rather superior to us human beings. He blames and criticizes the conceit of human beings. He recognizes uncertainty of senses, the powerlessness of reason, and power of ignorance, saying *Que sais-je?* (What do I know? I know nothing.)

#### 4. “Impermanence” in Montaigne’s Essays

The following passages of II-12 seem to clarify Montaigne’s concept of “impermanence.”

.....there is no constant existences, neither of our being, nor of the objects. And we, and our judgment, and all mortal things else do uncessantly role, turn, and pass away. Thus can nothing be certainly established, nor of the one, nor of the other; both the judging and the judged being in continual alteration and motion. We have no communication with the being; for every human nature is ever in the middle between being born and dying; giving nothing of itself but an obscure appearance and shadow, and an uncertain and weak opinion. And if perhaps you fix your thought to take its being; it would be even, as if one should go about to grasp the water: for how much the more he shall close and press that, which by its own nature is ever gliding, so much the more he shall loose what he would hold and fasten. Thus, seeing all things are subject to pass from one change to another; reason, which therein seeks a real substance, finds her self deceived as unable to apprehend any thing subsistent and permanent: forsomuch as each thing either comes to a being, and is not yet altogether; or begins to die before it is born.....Heraclitus avers that no man ever entered twice one same river  
.....

.....not only (as Heraclitus said) the death of fire is a generation of air; and the death of air, a generation of Water: But also we may most evidently see it in our selves. The flower of age dies, fades and flees, when age comes upon us, and youth ends in the flower of a full grown man’s age: Childhood in youth, and the age, dies in infancy: and yesterday ends in this day, and to-day shall die in tomorrow. And nothing remains or ever continues in one state.<sup>1)</sup>

.....he cannot see but with his own eyes, nor take hold but with his own arms. He shall raise himself up, if it pleases God extraordinarily to lend him his helping hand. He may elevate himself by forsaking and renouncing his own means, and suffering and suffering himself to be elevated and raised by mere heavenly means. It is for our Christian faith, not for his Stoic virtue to pretend or aspire to this divine Metamorphosis, or miraculous transmutation.<sup>2)</sup>

“There is no constant existence.” Here we can find Montaigne’s “Impermanence.” “Existence” is taken into consideration by him from two sides. ① As the judging subject. ② As the judged object by the judging subject. Montaigne says that both sides are not in a constant condition, in other words both sides are in impermanent condition. Or they are in uncertainty.

The subject of judgment exists as the “self.” Montaigne seems to have met with or discovered his self a short while before his accepting Pyrrhonism. He seems to have discovered his self when he experienced his near-death by falling down from the horseback.

We can find in II-6, which seems to have been written before 1575, the following passage:

.....For truly, for a man to acquaint himself with death, I find no better way than to approach it.....This is not my doctrine, it is but my study; And not another man’s lesson, but mine own. Yet ought no man to blame me if I impart the same. What serves my turn, may haply serve another man’s; otherwise I mar nothing; what I make use of, is mine own.....Many years are past since I have no other aim, whereto my thoughts bend, but my self, and I control and study nothing but my self. And if I study any thing else, it is immediately to place it upon, or to say better, in my self. And I think I err not, as commonly men do in other sciences, without all comparison less profitable. I impart what I have learnt by this, although I greatly content not my self with the progress I have made therein. There is no description so hard, nor so profitable, as is the description of a man’s own life.....<sup>3)</sup>

To this passage of II-6’s, the following two passages of II-17 and III-2 seem to correspond:

II-17: .....I turn my sight inward, there I fix it, there I amuse it. Every man looks

before himself, I look within my self: I have no business but my self. I uncessantly consider, control and taste my self: other men go ever elsewhere, if they think well on it: they go ever forward,

--nemo in sese tentat descendere.--Pers. Sat. iv. 23.

No man attempts this Essay,  
Into himself to find the way.

as for me I role me into my self. This capacity of sifting out the truth, what, and howsoever it be in me, and this free humour I have, not very easily subject my belief, I owe especially unto my self, for the most constant, and general imaginations I have are those, which (as one would say) were born with me: They are natural unto me, and wholly mine. I produced them raw and simple, of a hardy and strong production, but somewhat troubled and imperfect: which I have since established and fortified by the authority of others, and by the sound examples of ancients, with whom I have found my self conformable in judgment.....<sup>4)</sup>

III-2: .....Constantly itself is nothing but a languishing and wavering dance. I cannot settle my object; it goes so inquietly and staggering, with a natural drunkenness. I take it in this plight, as if at the instant I amuse my self about it. I describe not the essence, but the passage; not a passage from age to age, or as the people reckon, from seven years to seven years, but from day to day, from minute to minute.....<sup>5)</sup>

As mentioned above, Heraclitus says that no man can ever step twice into the same river, but the river itself is the same. Just like this, Montaigne says that there is no constant existence, but he discovered the constant and general in his self. And on the other hand, he had been trying to establish his own originality through learning the Greek and Latin classics and philosophies (I-25). He met with his self inside himself, and with Pyrrhonism through learning in his library.

Montaigne established his "Self" belonging to the modern age through his encounter with Pyrrhonism. We can find the relationship between his self and his version of Pyrrhonism in III-4, III-8, and III-10. The first step of Pyrrhonism consists in opposing A and Non-A (=B), suspending judgment, and inquiring both A and Non-A. What he did as a Pyrrhonian was at first to divide his self into two sides: inside his self and outside his self.

His library was only for his inside self. There in his library, he talked only with himself. No one was allowed to enter his room. But outside his own room, life dealing with many kinds of people was awaiting him.

Montaigne had to live as a lord, as a courtier, and as a politician. In his library he read and described what was taking place in his self, falling down inside and observing it precisely. He always tried to balance these two sides of his life. The balance is the symbolic mark of Pyrrhonism. He was appointed to the chamberlain for two French kings, the mayor of Bordeaux, and he was asked to mediate between the Protestants (Huguenots) and Catholics. He was always occupied with public affairs. He tried, however, not to sacrifice his private life for his public one as possible as he could, though he was ready to do things in case they were necessary.

In public life, too, he behaved as a Pyrrhonian. Needless to say, in mediating the two sects he played a great role in a Pyrronian way. In II-12 he said that Pyrrhonism was the most truthful and useful teaching. He went everywhere keeping thoroughly and positively a balance in his mind, not sparing, if necessary, any blood and pain.

Most important of all the things, however, was the fact that on the two plates of his balance he himself and others weighed equally. He always thought that everyone had his human condition and generality in him, and what occurred to him happened equally to others. He maintained his confidence, listening at the same time to others. Appointed to a mayor, he did not change his mind. At that time, 14 % of the population of Bordeaux were said to be Protestants (Huguenots). His standpoint was Catholic rather than Huguenot. He seemed to be in a difficult position. In Pyrrhonism there exists no hierarchy among human beings. They have freedom and equality to one another.

## Conclusion

I would like to suggest to compare the lifetime of the following two groups.

① Kenkō (1283-1350)

Bashō (1644-1694)

② Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Montaigne (1533-1592)

Kenkō and Thomas Aquinas share the 13th Century, and Montaigne was born 100 years earlier than Bashō. Montaigne belonged to the 16th Century, while Bashō was alive in the

17th Century. The difference of the birth age of each group is almost the same, namely about 300 years. Concerning the view of Mujō of the first group, we can find little difference. But as for the second group, each occupies quite a different position in the European history of thought. The former united two authorities of Europe: Aristotle's metaphysics and Christianity. The latter, on the contrary, insisted not to accept any authorized view without suspicion.

Montaigne wrote in his *Essays*: "There is no constant existence." Men have long asked the question whether there is any constant existence or not. Some say yes, others say no, or suspend their judgment. G. Buddha just suspended the judgment on ātman, namely individualized Brahman. Brahman was thought to be constant existence in India at that time. And Buddha rather maintained anātman, "Muga 無我" in Japanese. On the contrary, Dr. Kanakura, former professor of Indian philosophy at Tōhoku University in Sendai, Japan, says as follows:

The ātman was inherent in all things, controlling them from within, it possessed eternal nature and its substance was the same as that of the absolute Brahman. To put it bluntly, Buddha emerged to deny the fundamental principle which the Upanishadic sages had racked their brains to discover, and which they had succeeded in grasping.<sup>1)</sup>

To quote my English article again:

And so anātman is the negative form of ātman. It is against the Upanishadic thinking. It represents the revolutionary meaning of early Buddhism. Anātman has nothing to do with losing or rejecting the self. According to "the Dhammapada 160," "Oneself indeed is patron of oneself. Who else indeed could be one's patron? With oneself well restrained, one gets a patron hard to get."<sup>2)</sup>

Buddha says he is obliged to suspend the judgment to permanence and absoluteness, because we can not experience them, but we can at least experience birth, becoming sick, old and death, and so he rather says we are in impermanence and anātman.<sup>3)</sup>

In early Buddhism one was expected to have oneself firmly and freely enough to control. "Jō 常", first half of "Mujō," means constant existence. And so, Mujō is nothing but no constant existence or permanence. That is to say, it is impermanent. At the same time, all the things are built up by a fugitive net-work of the self. It seems to me, however, that those

Japanese literary works on Mujō understand Mujō only as something moving or changing. The Japanese writers described and versed in Waka or Haiku, feeling Mujō in their ordinary lives and in Nature surrounding them. Moreover, they seem to think it good to wrap all things, even their selves, if any, into Nature, and think that all the things happen within Nature. All the things including religion (Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism) and many kinds of knowledge and so on. In any way, they left us Nikki (Diaries), Essays, Waka (Tanka) and Haiku. Until today, people are fond of versing many kinds of short poetry in Japan.

Montaigne says in I-25 as follows:

We can talk and prate, Cicero says thus, These are Plato's customs, These are the very words of Aristotle; but what say we our selves? What do we? A Peroquet would say as much. This fashion puts me in mind that rich Roman, who to his exceeding great charge had been very industrious to find out the most sufficient men in all sciences, which he continually kept about him, that if at any time occasion should be moved amongst his friends to speak of any matter pertaining to Scholarship, they might supply his place, and be ready to assist him: some with discourse, some with a verse of Homer, otherwise with a sentence, each one according to his skill or profession; who persuaded himself that all such learning was his own, because it was contained in his servants minds. As they do whose sufficiency is placed in their sumptuous libraries. I know some, whom if I ask what he knows, he will require a book to demonstrate the same, and durst not dare to tell me that his posteriors are scabies, except he turn over his Lexicon to see what posteriors and scabies is, we take the opinions and knowledge of others into our protection, and that is all: I tell you they must be enfeoffed in us, and made our own. We may very well be compared unto him, who having need of fire, should go fetch some at his neighbour's chimney, where finding a good fire, should there stay to warm himself, forgetting to carry some home, what avails it us to have our bellies full of meat, if it be not digested? If it be not transchanged in us? except it nourish, augment, and strengthen us? May we imagine that Lucullus, whom learning made and framed so great a Captain without experience, would have taken it after our manner? We rely so much upon other men's arms, that we disannul our own strength. Will I arm my self against the fear of death? it is at Senecaes cost: will I draw comfort either for my self, or any other? I borrow the same of Cicero. I would have taken it in my self, had I been exercised unto it: I love not this relative and begged-for sufficiency.



Suppose we may be learned by other men's learning. Sure I am, we can never be wise, but by our own wisdom.<sup>4)</sup>

For Montaigne, only Myself is certain, because I have Myself. God may be certain, but I am not God himself, and I do not have God in Myself, he thinks. Myself consists of uncertain and impermanent reason and senses in recognizing things. Nevertheless, Myself is obliged to support itself. He tries (essayer) to describe such impermanence and uncertainty as they are, observing in his deep inside self, and notices that many kinds of custom (habit) and experience are accumulated in his self, knowing that his self is nothing but a mass of custom (habit). In this view of self we may find the so-called birth of Modern Self (近代的自我).

Putting Kenkō living in the 13<sup>th</sup> century aside, it was late in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that Bashō died. About 200 years later, the way of European thinking was imported to Japan. Was “Modern Self” included in the imported way of thinking? I have no idea whether the following episode gives the answer for this question or not, but it has something to be taken into consideration. Dr. Yukawa of meson theory used to put a book on one side of his desk, a book whose author was a “disciple” of Montaigne. Who the author was and which book Yukawa liked to read will be treated in another opportunity.

## NOTES:

### Preface

- 1) Nakako Miyake, “Early Buddhism and Pyrrhonism as Human Wisdom,” in: *The Annual Collection of Essays and Studies*, Faculty of Letters, Gakushuin University, Tokyo, Vol. 50, 2003.
- 2) *The Tale of Heike*, Translated with an Introduction, by Helen Craig McCullough (Stanford: California University Press, 1988), p. 1.
- 3) *Introduction to Classic Japanese Literature*, Edited by the Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai (The Society for International Cultural Relations), (Tokyo: Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, 1948), pp. 202–203.

## Chapter 1. “Essays in Idleness” The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō

### 1. The Great Step

- 1) *Essays in Idleness: The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō*, Translated by Donald Keene (New York: Columbia University Press, Second Paperback Edition, 1998, first publication 1967), pp. 53–54., pp. 159–162.
- 2) *Ibid.*, pp. 159–162.

## 2. The final end, the next world?

- 1) Ibid., p. 36.
- 2) Ibid., pp. 81–82.

## 3. Doubts

- 1) Ibid., p. 36.
- 2) Yensho Kanakura, *Hindu-Buddhist Thought in India*. Translated by Shotaro Iida and Neal Donner. Edited by Takao Maruyama and Thomas Quinn (Yokohama: Hokke Journal, Inc., 1980), p. 39.
- 3) Kanakura, *ibid.*, pp. 44–45.
- 4) Kanakura, *ibid.*, p. 44.

## 4. Impermanence in literature

- 1) *Essays in Idleness*, pp. 42–43.
- 2) Ibid., p. 66.
- 3) *The Ten Foot Square Hut and Tales of the Heike*: Being two thirteenth-century Japanese classics, the “Hōjōki” and selections from the “Heike Monogatari”, Translated by A. L. Sadler (Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1972), p. 1.
- 4) Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Books I–IX, With an English Translation by Hugh Tredennick, The Loeb Classical Library 271 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933), Book IV.v., p. 189.
- 5) Ibid., Book I.v., p. 43.
- 6) *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, griechisch und deutsch, von Hermann Diels, 7. Aufl., herausgegeben von Walther Kranz (Berlin: Weidemann, 1968), 22 B 12.
- 7) W. K. B. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Volume 1., *The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 490.
- 8) Bashō, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*, Translated from the Japanese with an Introduction by Nobuaki Yuasa, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1966), p. 97.
- 9) *Essays in Idleness*, pp. 7–8.

## Chapter 2. Montaigne's Essays

### 1. Pyrrho and a Pig

- 1) Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, With an English Translation by R. D. Hicks (London: William Heinemann Ltd, first print 1925, revised and reprinted 1931), Volume 2, p. 481.

### 2. Epechō Medal

- 1) Montaigne, *Essays* in three volumes, Volume One, Translated by John Florio, Introduction by L. C. Harmer, Everyman's Library (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1965), Introduction, xvi.
- 2) Nakako Miyake, “Early Buddhism and Pyrrhonism as Human Wisdom,” pp. 63ff.

### 3. Sextus Empiricus and Montaigne

- 1) Mustafa El-Abbadi, *Life and Fate of the Ancient Library of Alexandria* (UNESCO, 1990).

- 2) V. Brochard, *Les sceptiques Grecs*, nouvelle édition conforme à la deuxième (Paris: Librairie philosophique, J. Vrin, 1969), pp. 364–367. Craig B. Brush, *Montaigne and Bayle, Variation on the Theme of Scepticism*, International Archives of the History of Ideas 14 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p. 9.
- 3) Sextus Empiricus, With an English translation by R. G. Bury, 1. *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Loeb Classical Library No. 273 (London: William Heinemann, 1933), pp. 27–39.
- 4) Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, With an English translation by A. L. Peck, Loeb Classical Library No. 366 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 170–178: 737a20. 737b25.
- 5) Montaigne, op. cit., p. 487, pp. 569–570. Cf. Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes, *The Modes of Scepticism: Ancient Texts and Modern Interpretations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). This book and another book: *Sextus Empiricus: Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Translated by Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) are very instructive for me. Also instructive for me is: Jonathan Barnes, *The Tails of Scepticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- 6) Nakako Miyake, “Early Buddhism and Pyrrhonism as Human Wisdom,” pp. 79–85.

#### 4. “Impermanence” in Montaigne’s Essays

- 1) Montaigne, *Essays* in three volumes. Volume Two, translated by John Florio, Everyman’s Library, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1965), pp. 323–324. In quoting from this English translation from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, I have amended old-fashioned expressions into the expression of today, for example “goeth” to “goes”, “himself” to “himself” etc. I amended in the same way the quotation from the English translation of Montaigne’s sentences in the introduction by L. C. Harmer in: Chapter 2. Montaigne’s Essays, 2. Epecho Medal, footnote (1).
- 2) Ibid., p. 326.
- 3) Ibid., pp. 58–59.
- 4) Ibid., p. 385.
- 5) Montaigne, *Essays* in three volumes. Volume Three, translated by John Florio, Everyman’s Library, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1965), p. 23.

#### Conclusion

- 1) Kanakura, op. cit., p. 39.
- 2) *The Dhammapada*, Translated by Ross Carter and Mahinda Palihanawadana (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 226: Section 160.
- 3) Nakako Miyake, op. cit., pp. 62–63.
- 4) Montaigne, *Essays* in three volumes. Volume One, translated by John Florio, Everyman’s Library, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1965), pp. 139–140..

## 無常と不確実性：吉田兼好とモンテーニュ

三宅中子

当論文は、学習院大学文学部研究年報第50輯所収の三宅中子の「人間の知恵としての初期仏教とピュロニズム」の内容を前提としている。同論文では、日本人が持っている、例えば平家物語の初めにあるような無常観は仏教の創始者ゴータマ・ブッダの説いた無常観に基づいているのかを問うた。平家物語では「無常」は「ことわり（真理）」とされ、全篇滅びと死に終始している。

先ず初期仏教と古代ギリシャのピュロニズム（懐疑論）との関係を明らかにし、ブッダの「諸行無常」は「諸法無我」とセットであり、「無我」は「我（恒常性のある真理）」の否定形で、八正道の初めにくる「正見」であること、ブッダの悟りの基本は四諦と縁起、八正道はその実践であることを考えて平家物語の無常との違いを明らかにした。初期仏教はピュロニズムと共に極端にはしることを戒めた人間の知恵として東方よりむしろ西方に伝わったと思われ、その受け手の一人が紀元二世紀のアレクサンドリアのセクストゥス・エンピリクスで、その後1400年の空白のあと、十六世紀のフランスのモンテーニュが大きな役割を果たして近現代の主要な動きに影響を与えたことを論じた。

当論文はそのようなモンテーニュの考え方の中に無常観といえるものが認められるかどうか、認められるとすれば、近世のトップランナーの一人としてのモンテーニュの考え方とどんな関係があるかを問う。そこで改めて無常観を漂わせているといわれる日本の文学作品を取り上げることにした。それら文人達は人を含めた自然を流れとして受けとめ、それを短歌や俳句に詠み、随筆や紀行文にした。

モンテーニュはピュロニアンとして古代ギリシャ以来の伝統的な存在を認識主体とその対象となる客体の両面として考え、その両面とも人間の認識能力の不確実性により不確実な無常な状態にあると考える。又、近世の人間として自立を願望する彼はそうした我の中に「変らぬ我」を発見する。「我」はいつでも「我」である。このことは我にとって「唯一の確実なこと」である。どんなに不確実な状態にあっても。モンテーニュの無常は恒常性のない不確実性として考えられ、かえって「変らぬ確実な」我を引き出した。この我をよりどころにして公私の生活を全うし、「私」の記述ものこした。

明治時代欧米流の考え方が輸入された折、この「近代的自我」も入ってきたのであろうか。日本の伝統的な無常観の根強さを思うとき、疑問とせざるを得ない。

**キーワード**【無常 死 不確実性 ピュロニズム 近代的自我】

**IMPERMANENCE AND UNCERTAINTY:**  
*Tsurezuregusa* of Yoshida Kenkō and *Essays* of Montaigne

Nakako MIYAKE

This article is premised on my recent English publication “Early Buddhism and Pyrrhonism as Human Wisdom,” in: *The Annual Collection of Essays and Studies*, Faculty of Letters, Gakushuin University, Tokyo, Vol. 50, 2003. I asked there whether the view of “Mujō” (impermanence), which, like that of the beginning of *The Tale of Heike*, derives

from early Buddhism or not. *The Tale of Heike* shows “Mujō” as “truth.” I clarified the relationship between early Buddhism and Pyrrhonism, and assumed that the latter was transmitted rather to the West than to the East. One of the successors of Pyrrhonism was Sextus Empiricus (2. century A.D.), and the other was Montaigne.

In this article, I would like to ask whether or not we can find “Mujō” in Montaigne as well, and if we can, whether or not we can find the relationship between “Mujō” and his way of thinking as one of the toprunners in the modern world. I ask these questions comparing Montaigne with Japanese writers, most of all with Yoshida Kenkō, concerning their views on “Mujō.”

Montaigne, as a Pyrrhonian, suspending his judgment to the traditional “constant existence,” divided it into two sides: the judging subject and the object judged by the subject, both thought by him as being in uncertain and imperfect condition. Then Montaigne discovered there “constant I”: “I” am always “I”. This is “the only certainty” for me, even if “I” myself am in uncertain conditions. He interpreted impermanence as unconstant uncertainty and gave birth to “Modern Self.” He tried to live both his private and public life earnestly, leaving *Essays*. When the European way of thinking was imported to Japan, was the “Modern Self” introduced as well? I am rather sceptical about it, because the traditional view of “Mujō” seems to be deep-rooted not only in Japanese literature, but also in the Japanese way of thinking in general.

*Key words:* Impermanence, Death, Uncertainty, Pyrrhonism, Modern Self