



The Gap of *Wen* and the Edge of Chaos: From the Conundrum of *Kyōsei* to the “Cosmic Hope”

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THE IDEAL AND REALITY OF *KYŌSEI*: THE CONCEPT OF *KYŌSEI* IN JAPAN

The word “*kyōsei*” (共生) is very commonly used in Japan. The renowned architect Kishō Kurokawa (1934–2007) claimed to have pioneered the term’s use in Japan. According to Kurokawa, this word in Japan has two sources of origination. One is the term “symbiosis” from biology, which in Japanese is written as 共栖 (both 共生 and 共栖 can be pronounced as *kyōsei*). The other originates from Buddhism, namely the “*Tomoiki* Buddhist Association” (共生佛教会) movement promoted by Shiio Benkyō 椎尾弁匡 (1876–1971), a Pure Land Buddhist priest.¹ The Pure Land Buddhist sect in Japan was greatly influenced by the words of Shandao 善导 (613–681), the founder of Pure Land Buddhism in

¹ Kurokawa, *Shin Kyōsei no Sison* 新共生の思想 (*Philosophy of Symbiosis*), 24.

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China—“May all living creatures be reborn in the Land of Pure Bliss”—and developed its own unique idea of *kyōsei*. Thus, the concept of *kyōsei* in Japan has its roots in the religious worldview of Buddhism, which made it a long-standing part of Japan’s cultural history. The kanji 共生 has had broader and more historical implications than its Western counterpart of “symbiosis.” Therefore, in discussing this term, it would serve us well to position it in a wider intellectual, cultural, and historical context.

We seem to be able to conclude that the term *kyōsei* became a common part of modern Japanese vernacular after the 1980s.² This was a period when Japan had completed a period of high economic growth, had experienced a severe environmental crisis brought on by industrialization, and when the country’s economic bubble formed and post-modern thought became popular. As the world’s then second-largest economy, Japan’s interactions with the international community were increasing by the day. As a result of friction from cultural differences, there was a natural increase in various types of conflict both inside and outside the country. It is not difficult to imagine that at a time like this, the use of the *kyōsei* concept proliferated as a response to the challenges posed by these new social conditions. In other words, *kyōsei*’s use in Japanese society emphasized the post-modern conditions facing humanity. Regardless of the differences that existed between oneself and others (differences of gender, body, nationality, culture, language, ethnicity, religion, political views, economic status, and so on), one still had to co-exist and grow with others. This necessity became a common ethical goal in Japan at that time. Additionally, faced with the constant escalation of global environmental crises, the idea of “living in harmony with nature” and the idea of viewing the natural world as “the other” in relation to humanity at large were also receiving widespread societal recognition.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF *KYŌSEI* IN PRACTICE

Faced with these conditions at the turn of the century, the University of Tokyo established the Center for Philosophy (UTCP), an international research institute with the goal of promoting “co-existence” (共生) in 2002. The UTCP defined humanity of the twenty-first century as the subject of *kyōsei* and claimed that it would strive to internationalize the

² Kurokawa, 700–710.

research of philosophy with *kyōsei* as a core concept. The UTCP was especially concerned with the methods of human survival under current circumstances. As an ethics, *kyōsei* should be a goal that we all strive for, but judging from the view of the entire global system, *kyōsei* is also the foundation that all life forms rely on for survival. In this sense, *kyōsei* is a plain fact that should be discussed pragmatically without the need to indulge in complex theorizing. But does that leave any room for philosophical reflection on *kyōsei*? Yasuo Kobayashi, the director of the UTCP, expressed his concern that philosophical discourse was powerless to contribute anything to the reality of the global climate crisis or the technology being developed to solve it:

On the material level of carbon dioxide, we are already *kyōsei*. We co-exist as ‘humankind,’ and as ‘humankind’ we also co-exist with other species. Not only that, but we also co-exist with the entirety of ‘humankind’ and other species that have not yet arrived. Rather than calling this a mysterious, metaphysical ‘truth,’ it would be better to call this a mundane, prosaic ‘fact.’³

Kobayashi’s intentional use of the term “humankind” stems from his idea that “human” and “humankind” are not equivalent ideas. His concept of humankind comes from the way he sees reality: humans are just one species among many within the natural world, and philosophy has yet to inquire into the significance of being human from this species perspective. The emission of CO₂ is a necessary precondition for all animals—including humans—to survive. Humankind has not yet found an ethical norm that balances the problem of carbon emission with our continued survival. Thus, according to Kobayashi, past humans have not developed into “humankind.” Kobayashi also points out that what we need is not just ethical reflection but to construct human subjectivity. Creating a new form of politics with this subject as its foundation is a much more pressing practical issue. The theme of *kyōsei* demands that we change the way we think about life and survival. It poses a significant challenge to the individual perspective of life, that is to say, the philosophical method that starts from “Dasein” (existence). In this context, the reason behind UTCP’s choice of translating *kyōsei* 共生 as “co-existence”

³ Kobayashi, “Atarashii Hito ni Mukatte 「新しい人」に向かって (Toward a “New Humanity”),” 20–21.

in their publications is quite clear. It signals that our singular existence is no longer predicated on the survival of the individual. Instead, we ought to define ourselves as a co-existential subject, along with others.

In 2019, the East Asian Academy for New Liberal Arts (EAA), an institute that grew out of the UTCP, proposed a new approach titled the “World Human Studies.” In December of that year, EEA held a conference for the “Declaration of World Human Studies,” where it was suggested that the concept of “human being” should be transformed into “human co-becoming.”⁴ The significance of the latter term is that it imagines humans as dynamic, communal existents that strive for betterment with their fellows. The Declaration of World Human Studies can be seen as a transitional breakthrough. This paper, in fact, is a product of my continued reflections and research after presenting my report at the conference for the Declaration. Proceeding from this foundation, I will avail of the discourse of traditional Chinese philosophy to explore the preferred direction for a new philosophy based on *kyōsei*.

THE TENSION BETWEEN SYMBIOSIS IN NATURE AND *KYŌSEI* IN HUMANITY

There are at least two levels of difficulty facing *kyōsei* among humans. (1) The human approach to ensuring the survival of its own species is at odds with the balanced symbiosis found in the natural world. (2) Conflict within human society is difficult to eliminate. Symbiosis is a type of relationship that all species in nature rely on. This balance, however, requires the sacrifice of individual lives at times. Not just the individual, but the extirpation of entire species, drastic changes in climate, and even planetary explosions—these are all phenomena that occur naturally. All species and individuals in nature face this reality with equanimity and let things take their course. All, that is, besides humans. Humans have an instinctual aversion to harm and seek to extend their lives by modifying and

⁴ See *Sekai Ningengaku Sengen* 世界人間学宣言 (Declaration of World Human Studies), 38. The one who suggested this concept at the conference was the cultural anthropologist and Indian studies expert Tanabe Akio. The first one to ever suggest this conceptual shift, however, was likely Nakajima Takahiro, an expert in Chinese philosophy who led UTCP with Yasuo Kobayashi. Nakajima is also the current director of EEA. For Nakajima’s paper, please see *Human Co-becoming: Redefining the Concept of Humanity for a Super-smart Society*: <https://www.hitachihyoron.com/jp/column/ei/vol07/index.html>.

exploiting the natural world. Symbiosis, then, is an essential barrier to the human desire for limitless growth and prosperity. Are we humans willing to sacrifice our interests for the benefit of symbiosis? In what sense, and to what extent, do we actually pursue symbiosis? Is there any way to resolve the conflict between the natural fact of symbiosis and the human desire (some would say the ethical imperative) to survive? If there is, how should we approach this resolution?

Aside from global ecological and climate disasters, humanity must also deal with the convoluted conflicts and contentions between the eight billion people that make up our society, as well as issues like injustice, unfairness, and inequality. Given these circumstances, the *kyōsei* symbiotic goal that humanity must strive to realize means finding a way to live harmoniously with the “other.” Communities must depend on the existence of the “other” for their own establishment. No human community has been able to avoid using the “other” to maintain its own internal cohesion. Human communities have had to create the role of an ostracized other—Homo Sacer, the “accursed man”—for the sake of ensuring the survival of its own members. Thus, no matter how appealing the ethical call to live harmoniously with other sounds, we may unwittingly create an “other” that is to be sacrificed for us, that is to be discarded and suppressed. Thus, from the point of view of human communities, symbiosis is also an established fact—but the “other” in relation to human symbiosis is an unwelcome, forsaken sacrifice.

Symbiosis as a “fact” deviates humanity’s universal ethical norm. Thus, we are forced to admit: there are serious contradictions between the reality of living in symbiosis with others and the humanistic ideal of societal improvement. Confucian morality demands that we practice *ren* 仁 (benevolence or humaneness). If there is one sentence that can best encapsulate this imperative, it is no doubt the prescription to “love one’s fellow man” (found in chapter 12 of *The Analects*). This should be the common moral standard for all humanity, our shared vision of kindness. And yet to actually work toward this goal is no simple task!

THE GAP OF WEN: FROM TAN SITONG BACK TO XUNZI

These are the considerable problems we are confronted with when we consider the topic of *kyōsei*. However, it seems like there is only one viable path forward: to re-align ourselves from the height of *ren*, to pursue not just “love for one’s fellow man” but “love for all things”

in order to adapt to the ethical requirements of the Anthropocene. To this end, we must change the way we understand the world, restore the possibility of shaping the world anew. Fortunately for us, there is a historical model available for reference in this regard. The late-Qing thinker Tan Sitong (1865–1898), in his book *Theory of Ren*, stated that “interconnectedness is the most righteous form of *ren*.”⁵ Tan advocated for the rejection of the confining Confucian ethical codes, the abolishment of traditional hierarchal relations (between the sovereign and his ministers, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother, etc.) so as to achieve a harmonious state of interconnectedness among all things. This radical idea, though seemingly replete with Utopian sentiment, conceals an important insight into the way humans interact with the world. In Tan’s view, the foundation of the feudal hierarchal system (then prevalent in the Qing dynasty and throughout China’s history) was an ossified name-actuality relationship (*mingshi guanxi* 名实关系). His admonition to “throw off the trammels” (*chongjue wangluo* 冲决网罗) meant renouncing the name-actuality relationships of linguistic symbology and creating and reorganizing new relationships, thereby changing the structure of how humans understood the world. This idea echoes Xunzi’s concept of *li* 理 (order):

Tian and earth give birth to the noblemen (*junzi* 君子) and the *junzi* brings order (*li* 理) to *tian* and earth. The *junzi* form a triadic partnership with *tian* and earth, a supervisor for the myriad things, and are mothers and fathers to the people. If there were no *junzi*, then *tian* and earth would not be properly ordered.⁶

In Yang Liang’s commentary to *Xunzi*, he notes that, “propriety (*li* 禮) and righteousness (*yi* 義) begin with the *junzi* 君子; *junzi* regard practice and learning as their foundation.”⁷ Thus, a *junzi* is an ideal person of learning who possesses both wisdom and morality. As humans, becoming *junzi* should be our goal. In this sense, *junzi* is an ordinary

⁵ Tan Sitong, *Renxue [Theory of Ren]* 仁学 (Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing Company, 1998).

⁶ Xunzi, “The Rule of a True King,” in *Xunzi: The Complete Text*, trans. Eric L. Hutton (Princeton University Press, 2014), 68–82.

⁷ Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi Jishi [Collected Explanations of the Xunzi]* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1988), 193.

person, as everyone has the potential to become a *junzi*. According to Xunzi, *junzi* is a product of *tian* and earth, but *tian* and earth are “ordered” by the *junzi*. The Qing-era philosopher Dai Zhen (1724–1777), in the opening of his work *Evidential Commentary on the Meaning of the Words of Mencius*, said: “*li* (order) is the minute differences we observe and name. Thus, it is called *fen li* 分理 (differentiated order).”⁸ In other words, the *li* that Xunzi speaks of is the methodical order inherent in nature, that requires human intelligence to observe and distinguish to become clear. This is the mechanism by which the order of things is made manifest.

“If there were no *junzi*, then *tian* and earth would not be properly ordered.” In other words, human wisdom is needed to shape our understanding of the natural world. Our human understanding and grasp of the natural world have shifted as paradigms have changed. Each major scientific discovery drastically alters our knowledge of the world. The world always remains the same, but once our knowledge of it changes, so too does our relationship with the world, as does the appearance of the world as well. Modern biological discoveries concerning bacteria, for example, have utterly changed the way we prevent and treat diseases. This is the “ordering of the world by *junzi*”; a shift caused by our ability to “observe and distinguish minute differences in things.” The concept of *li*, then, represents the system of denotive symbols that humans rely on to understand the world. This is what Tan Sitong was expressing with his radical exhortation to “throw off the trammels.”

THE GAP OF WEN

Li is the effect of our subjective knowledge and the objective order that it distinguishes. Our language itself is a construct of *li*. We use language to describe the world. As languages differ, so too does the world these languages describe. Conversely, if we succeed in changing our language, the world that unfolds before our eyes will be different from before. This process is what has fueled the development of human history until today.

⁸ See Ewell, John. *Reinventing the Way: Dai Zhen’s Evidential Commentary on the Meanings of Terms in Mencius (1777)*. Dissertation, University of California Berkeley, 1990.

On the level of language, the structure of *li* 理 (order) is called *wen* 文. According to Xu Shen's explanation in the Chinese etymological dictionary *Shuowen Jiezi*, Fuxi 庖犧, a Chinese mythological hero, created the *bagua* 八卦 (eight divinatory trigrams) by observing the *wen* (here meaning distinctive tracks) of different creatures; and Cangjie 仓颉, a legendary scribe of the Yellow Emperor, created *wen* (here referring to Chinese characters), also by observing the distinctive tracks created by various animals. From this origin, *wen* later came to mean "writing" (*wen zhang* 文章) and "culture" (*wen hua* 文化). Thus, *wen* represents humans' unique ability to describe the natural world. Language is the most important manifestation of *wen*. And as Xunzi and other Chinese philosophers have pointed out, there will always be a disparity between *wen* and nature (reality). *Wen*, after all, is only a reflection of subjective human understanding, and in this way, it can never be equivalent to nature as such. But it is this that allows us to constantly modify language and thereby reshape the world, create civilizations, and develop culture. *Wen* is an unceasing movement; so long as there are humans, *wen* will be constantly changing. And the reason for this is none other than the "gap" that exists between *wen* and nature.

THE DEATH OF "CHAOS" (*HUNDUN* 浑沌)

The gap of *wen* is what allows us as humans to constantly change ourselves. It is the source of the indispensable vitality that fuels our efforts to become better. But the gap of *wen* is also a source of discomfort; it is always indelibly there, and yet we cannot access it. It strikes us as an ineffable abyss. The gap of *wen* is the world of chaos waiting to be differentiated.

Mentioning chaos, some might think of the story of Hundun found in the "Sovereign Responses for Ruling Powers" chapter of *Zhuangzi*:

The emperor of the southern sea was called Swoosh (*shu* 倏). The emperor of the northern sea was called Oblivion (*hu* 忽). The emperor of the middle was called Chaotic Blob (*hundun* 浑沌). Swoosh and Oblivion would sometimes meet in the territory of Chaotic Blob, who always waited on them quite well. They decided to repay Chaotic Blob for such bounteous virtue. 'All men have seven holes in them, by means of which they see, hear, eat, and breathe,' they said. 'But this one alone has none. Let's

drill him some.’ So, every day they drilled another hole. Seven days later, Chaotic Blob was dead.⁹

In this story, Shu and Hu are much like kindhearted humanity. It is natural for humans to want to repay kindness with a gift, and we all wish to lead stable, orderly lives. Hu and Shu represent this type of human nature. Hundun, the “Ruler of the Center,” whose pronunciation is identical to a noun meaning chaos, however, is different. He is a benefactor. It is because Shu and Hu were both recipients of Hundun’s benefaction that they were able to meet, get to know one another, and enjoy each other’s company. This relationship between the two parties reminds us of Xunzi’s relationship between nature and humans, that “*tian* and earth give birth to *junzi*.” Hundun is like *tian* and earth, and thanks to his benefaction, Shu and Hu get to enjoy their friendship. Shu and Hu thus see no reason not to “order *tian* and earth”—that is, repay Hundun’s kindness. To this end, they set about modifying Hundun’s appearance so as to give him differentiating features. Every day they chisel an orifice in him, eyes, ears, mouth, and nostrils, until on the seventh day Hundun dies. “*Junzi* bring order to *tian* and earth.” This is how the story of Hundun ends in destruction, or how the chaos dies.

This is a story about the limits of human intelligence. Intelligence, when employed to the fullest extent, will destroy the reciprocal relationship of benefaction and gratitude that exists between humans and nature. Humans attempt to differentiate objects and give them names, but this only rigidifies the name-actuality relationship. This rigidification is what Tan Sitong urged us to reject by “throwing off the trammels.” In other words, chaos is a necessary condition for human development, in much the same way that the gap of *wen* is needed for us to be able to change existing systems of linguistic symbols, see the world anew, and explain and shape the world.

CHAOS AND THE TRIPOLAR STRUCTURE: THE ALLURE OF CONTRASTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The renowned Japanese historian of science Keiji Yamada once described the relationship between Shu, Hu, and Hundun as a tripolar structure:

⁹ Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings*, 72.

In the beginning, the world was a single space ruled by Hundun, what we would call a unipolar structure, signified by a circle. Next, the space of the world was sliced into three parts, in which Hundun ruled the center and the south and north were ruled by Shu (also known as Yuhao 禺号) and Hu (also known as Yuqiang 禺强) respectively. This is called a tripolar structure... Once the tripolar structure is established, conflict arises between the rulers and they start to struggle with each other. According to Zhuangzi, the primary conflict is between Hundun on one side and Shu and Hu on the other. In other words, a conflict between internal and external space. This struggle ends with the disappearance of internal space. With Hundun dead, the world is split in two, ruled by Shu (Yuhao) and Hu (Yuqiang) respectively.”¹⁰

In Fig. 7.1, circles a, b, and c represent unipolar, tripolar, and bipolar structures.¹¹ The appearance of Shu and Hu divides the original unipolar structure into internal and external space. The internal space is still ruled by Hundun, while each half of the external space is ruled by Shu and Hu, thus creating a tripolar structure. As we have already noted, Shu and Hu conduct themselves as humans. They were born into an undivided world with Hundun (chaos) as its unopposed ruler. The human nature of Shu and Hu inevitably creates conflict. Yamada views the gratitude of Shu and Hu as classical behavior informed by the lure of power and benefits, the inevitable consequence of which is the eruption of conflict. The death of Hundun creates a bipolar world. With *yin* and *yang* settled, the world becomes stable. Stability and order are maintained through a balance of the two poles' power.

In the Eastern tradition, the structure of the natural world is described using the two vital forces of *yin* and *yang*. This type of contrastive relationship is also manifested in traditional Confucian relations, such as those between the ruler and his ministers, or a father and his son. In this way, the binary structure of the natural world is transposed onto the social world of human relations. However, the binary structure does not allow for human subjectivity. If humans long for subjectivity and freedom, they must create a tripolar structure within the bipolar structure.

¹⁰ Keiji, *Konton no umi e chugoku teki shiko no kozo* 混沌の海へ中国的思考の構造 (*Toward the Sea of Chaos: The Structure of Chinese Thought*), 296.

¹¹ Keiji, 296.

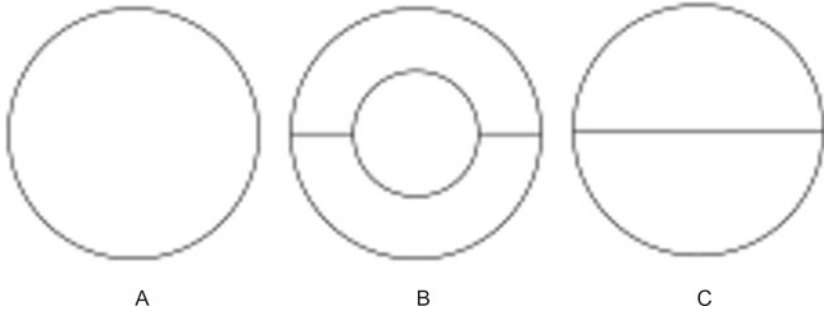


Fig. 7.1 The creation of a tripolar structure

THE EDGE OF CHAOS

Tan Sitong's Utopian vision wherein we "throw off our trammels" was actually mobilized by such subjectivity and freedom. After Tan Sitong, dismantling contrastive relations became a common theme of late-Qing critical philosophy. The project of this critical philosophy coincided with modern physics after the twentieth century and with the contemporary worldview provided more recently by the study of complex systems.

Stuart Kauffman, who established the theory of complex systems, said:

I suspect that the fate of all complex adapting systems in the biosphere—from single cells to economies—is to evolve to a natural state between order and chaos, a grand compromise between structure and surprise... We will find a place in the sun, poised on the edge of chaos, sustained for a time in that sun's radiance, but only for a moment before we slip from sight. Untold many actors come and go, each, as a fine playwright once said, strutting and fretting its hour upon the stage. A smiling irony is our fate.¹²

The "edge of chaos" is an indispensable evolutionary power source in the world of complex systems. It is not the rational order imagined by the modern Enlightenment, nor is it the primordial unipolar world of undifferentiated chaos. It is a certain "natural state between order and chaos," a state within which we may linger "but only for a moment." This frail,

¹² Kauffman, *At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity*, 10.

nebulous state is nevertheless an inexhaustible source of vitality for evolution in the natural world. This description evocatively echoes Yamada's theory of the tripolar structure between Shu, Hu, and Hundun. Yamada believes that the tripolar structure contradicts the natural disposition of the world. In this sense, his theory does not seem to conform with the worldview expressed by complexity studies. But the statement that the establishment of a tripolar structure depends on humans' "free decisions and behavioral choices" should provide us with some insight. The "edge of chaos" rejects permanence, but it plays a decisive role in the operation of the natural world. Conversely, humans, in order to constantly change their understanding of the world and thereby change and reshape it, must also preserve space for the existence of this type of "edge of chaos." It is here that the irrefutable existence of the gap of *wen* becomes so crucial.

BETWEEN ORDER AND DISORDER: CO-EXISTING WITH THE "OTHER"

Perhaps the chaos that lies wedged between the gap of *wen* is our true "other." The "other" exists on the opposite side of understanding, delineating the scope of our own knowledge. The "other's" existence is disquieting, not just because we exclude the "other" as "Homo Sacer" but because the "other's" existence provides us with our foundation for being existent in this world. So, we should look at the problem using an inverted form of Agamben's theory of the "other."

That is to say, it is not that we establish a community that excludes the "other," but rather that the "other's" existence is what gives us, within a limited purview, the appearance of a stable, ordered world. The "other's" existence precedes our own. When a community appears internally stable and orderly, the "other" seems like a latent external disruptor, which the community aims its power at. But when the community loses stability, so too does the boundary between the self and the "other"; the two start to permeate one another, disturbing the pre-existing order and causing chaos to appear. The "other" is a source of vitality for reshaping the world and the fountainhead for constructing the world. The "other" compels change in the order of the world, and this transformative effect is actually another gift that the "other" gives us. Thus, as our world experiences renewal and change, the self-other relationship changes along with it.

We thought we were the subjects, but in this dynamic process we are in fact objects whose fates are steered by the "other."

THE DYNAMIC STRUCTURE OF PATTERNS ALL UNDER *TIAN*

Keiji Yamada's "pole structure theory," the core of which is the tripolar structure, actually arose out of the need for a set of interpretive theories for explaining the revolution and establishment of Chinese socialism. Beginning from the practical significance of the establishment of Chinese socialism, Yamada sought a structural mechanism that would make "value conversion" possible. According to him, the tripolar structure acts as a mechanism fueling social revolution, and when society becomes mature enough, it naturally converges into a bipolar structure. Society is only able to grow through this alternation of tripolar and bipolar structures. Yamada's creative theory demonstrates the structural character of the dynamic development of Chinese society, noting especially the theoretical value of the revolutionary base area strategy.

I further argue that the structural mechanisms that make the value conversion possible did not begin with the modern Chinese revolution. In actuality, the image of the cosmos as found in the traditional Chinese conception of *tianxia* 天下 (all under *tian*), such as it is described in the "Celestial Patterns" chapter of the *Huainanzi*—"The Way [*Dao*] of heaven [*tian*] is called the Round; the [*Dao*] of earth is called the Square"¹³—already contains a similar dynamic mechanism. This expression, of heaven, or *tian* being "round" and earth, or *di*, being "square," is how ancient Chinese people imagined the structure of the world. Interestingly, the formal differences between *tian* and earth in this view mean that there will always be a gap between them. Referring to Fig. 7.2, regardless of whether we imagine a circular heaven encompassing the entire earth (as on the left) or a square earth carving out space around a yurt-shaped *tian* (the right image), there will always be a portion left over that cannot be accommodated by either *tian* or earth.¹⁴ In his work on the *Tianxia* system, Zhao Tingyang has often stressed that there is "nothing outside *tianxia*." But if this is the case, should we then consider this surplus portion—the remainder left over from *tian* and earth—internal or external to *tianxia*? The horizon structure on the surface of the earth that radiates from the inside to the outside represents order among the

¹³ Liu and Major, *The Huainanzi*, 115.

¹⁴ Tsuyoshi, *Chugoku to Sekai* 中国と世界 (China and The World), 281.

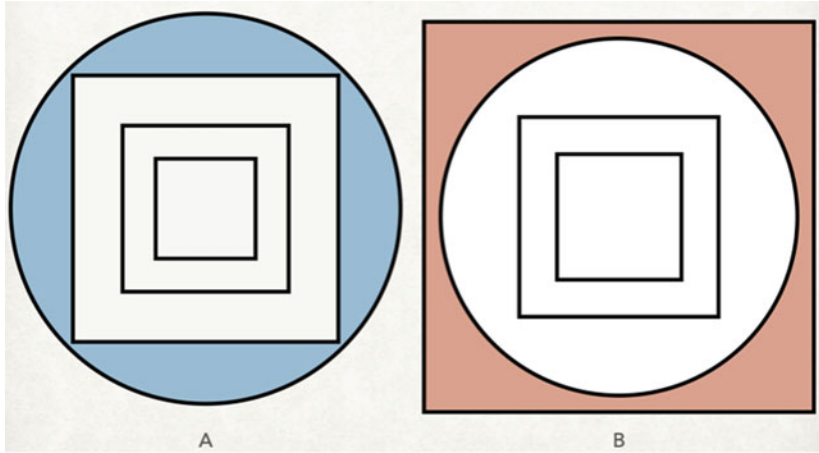


Fig. 7.2 The imagined structure of the world consisting of *Tian* and earth

internal and the external, among the Chinese and “barbarians” (*huayi* 华夷). It is equivalent to the bipolar structure composed of the Chinese on the one end and barbarians (cultural outsiders) on the “other.” We may then view this unaccommodated portion between *tian* and earth as a third pole, thus forming a tripolar structure “under *tian*.”

SUMMARY: THE IDEAL OF *KYŌSEI* AND “COSMIC HOPE”

This tripolar structure “under *tian*” and its underlying dynamics are an extremely thought-provoking worldview, and an intellectual resource that we can consult when discussing the topic of *kyōsei*. We live in this world, and this world is surrounded on all sides by chaos, that is the boundless the “other.” In the context of the universe at large, the world in which we exist can be compared to this type of the world of the “other”; it is negligibly small. In thinking about *kyōsei*, we must use our understanding of this smallness as a starting point. The ineffable “other” moves us to know the world, to describe and shape it, and to be “*ren* persons that love others” (*renzhe airen* 仁者爱人) and “*ren* persons that love all things” (*renzhe aiwu* 仁者爱物) as our lodestars, we are constantly modifying the way we view the world and life. To this end, we have to create a territory where these abovementioned efforts become possible

and design a system of arrangements that conforms to this requirement. This system should be based on the tripolar structure, since the tripolar structure contains a mechanism for constant self-transformation. Realizing it requires profound human wisdom, sustained effort, and a lofty awareness of the concepts of *ren* and righteousness. This should be the high ground that humankind, the subject of *kyōsei* in the twenty-first century, strives to attain.

What is profound about the *tianxia* worldview is that within it there exists an unresolvable domain of chaos—“the gap of *wen*,” or “the edge of chaos.” The goal of this paper has been to examine the characteristics described by this type of world structure to help us reshape our understanding of the following two points. (1) The world is not a fixed, quiet static existence. It is molded by human subjective understanding, and, as such, it can also be changed according to subjective judgment. (2) At the same time, our existence is controlled by the chaotic “other” (混沌的他者) in the gap of *wen*. Our subjectivity is just a response evoked by stimulus from the “other.” Thus, people, or humans, are simply not their own masters.

The “other” is an ineffable abyss, but it is only because of the “other” that we can enjoy life in a limited world. The “other,” then, is none other than our hope. Having come this far, if humanity wants to elevate itself to the subject of *kyōsei* in the twenty-first century—and to truly deserve this status—it must establish a worldview in which hope is placed in the “other.” And perhaps this worldview will not be confined to our terrestrial purview alone. That is why I call this hope a “cosmic hope.” This should be our goal for *kyōsei*.

This article is translated by Thomas Garbarini and Jin Young Lim.

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