

Hiroike and Western Traditions¹⁾

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Upon inviting me to Reitaku University after the UNESCO-sponsored Kyoto-Tokyo international symposium on “New Stakes for Cultural Diversity,” Professor Nobumichi Iwasa, Director of the Institute of Moralogy, informed me that the members of the Research Center for Moral Science would be interested in hearing my reactions *as a westerner* to Chikuro Hiroike’s ideas in *Towards Supreme Morality*.²⁾ Professor Iwasa pointed me in particular to Chapter 14 of that *magnum opus*, and I dutifully read that chapter, as well as other items by and about Hiroike, before landing in Japan on November 3, 2007. (I have been reading Hiroike intermittently but not intensively since my first visits to Reitaku University in the early 1990s.) Since Professor Iwasa told me that my remarks were to be considered “informal,” I refrained from writing an essay or doing more than taking a few notes. That turned out to be a prudent way of proceeding, since on my arrival at Reitaku University I was asked for my reactions not to Hiroike’s *Towards Supreme Morality* directly but to three lectures to be delivered on November 14th by Professors Norio Tachiki (who lectured on “Biographical Study of

Chikuro Hiroike: Hiroike's Moral Conversion through his Serious Illness of 1912",³⁾ Minoru Kakehata (who spoke on "View of Nature: Background of Moralogy"),⁴⁾ and Haruo Kitagawa (who lectured on "Human Society and the Ortholinon Principle").⁵⁾ I met the three professors the day before the scheduled lectures and was informed in general terms what the lectures were to be about. After listening to all three lectures on November 14th, I formulated my remarks as follows.

First, I should perhaps acknowledge the professional and autobiographical sources of these comments. For many years, in my graduate seminars and in directing students' dissertations in the field of Comparative Literature, I have tried to teach what I call "comparative cultural axiology." Axiology⁶⁾ is the study of values; cultural axiology is the study of the values of a culture; comparative cultural axiology is the comparative study of the values of different cultures. To me, this is one of the most fruitful approaches to comparative literature and comparative history. In pursuing this approach, I remain mindful of the philosophical underpinnings of whatever values I am attempting to interpret. In addition to this pedagogical and research commitment to a certain approach in literary and historical study, I have had a more private interest for an equal number of years. That is, I have been fascinated by the practice and history of spirituality across various eras and cultures, from the axial age to the 20th century, from the birth of Judaism to responses to the Holocaust, from medieval Catholicism and the history of monasticism to Hinduism, Buddhism and Zen culture.

Professors Tachiki, Kakehata, and Kitagawa delivered lectures which emphasized different aspects of Moralogy and of Hiroike's life, but the lectures share certain themes. For

instance, all three lectures included observations on ethics and the ethical life, as well as on the place of man in his environment (whether natural or social). Because of these and other shared themes, I shall address issues that should be of general interest to students of Hiroike and therefore also to students of East-West comparative cultural analysis. For even though Hiroike left Japan only once in his lifetime (to travel to China), he was an energetic mental traveler. His mental journeys are reflected in his thought and in the astonishing range of citations in his works. He was curious about many different corners of the world and able to utilize diverse thinkers to illuminate and exemplify his own theories. As remarkable and charismatic as he was personally, he was not, in my view, as unique a thinker as I believe that many at Reitaku University consider him to be.

I have learned much from all three presentations, and I still have much to learn concerning Hiroike. My main task here, therefore, is not so much to find fault with each presenter as it is to complement their observations with observations of my own based on more than forty years of experience in studying the philosophical, historical, and literary traditions of the West.

Individualism and Atomism

I begin with an observation that departs from the third presentation, that by Professor Kitagawa, who draws a clear distinction between Western and Eastern cultures, to the effect that while Western cultures are said to be “individualistic” and “atomistic,” Eastern cultures are considered to be those of interrelatedness and interdependency. I consider these differences to be generally valid if both Western and Eastern cultures were to be placed on a continuum and if the

differences between them are seen as tendencies rather than as absolute distinctions. However, to imply that these distinctions are absolute is to misread western history or rather the histories of western traditions, for there is neither a single history nor a single tradition.

All three traditions at the root of the three major Western traditions—the Judaeo-Christian, the Greek, and the Roman—strongly emphasize the rights and responsibilities of man as a social being living in a community. The five books of Moses in the Old Testament (*Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*), which are the foundational books of the Jewish tradition, are profoundly concerned with the behavior of the individual in relation to his family, to his society, and to his God. Half of *Exodus* (Chapters 20-40) and most of *Leviticus*, *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy* regulate human behavior and establish procedures to deal with lapses or transgressions.⁷⁾ Beyond that, both the Palestinian and the Babylonian Talmuds—central texts in the Jewish tradition—interpret “the law” and create a hermeneutical tradition of dialogue concerning right and wrong. Along with the Old Testament per se, they thus regulate Jewish life and conduct.

Moreover, at the center of Judaism is the notion of the covenant between God and man, with corresponding covenants between the individual and the society around him. Covenants regulated both present and future behavior. In the most famous of the early covenants, God, after the flood, promises not to destroy the world by flood again and sets the rainbow in the sky as the sign of his covenant (*Genesis* 9: verses 8-17). The establishment of a covenantal society is at the heart of the Moses narrative. In effect, reciprocal promises are made: God promises to protect the Jews and the Jews promise devotion and obedience to God and God’s law as well as justice and compassion toward other members of society.⁸⁾

Greek culture is, likewise, neither individualistic nor atomistic. One of the central questions for Plato, for instance, concerns what it means to live in a society. The result of his question is one of western philosophy's most important texts in epistemology, ethics, and social thought, *The Republic*. This work begins with Socrates asking the question, "What is justice"? In answering it, over ten "books" of dialogue, Plato, through Socrates, arrives at a theory not only of justice per se, of the nature of the good, and of how we know what we know, but also of man as a social being. Underlying Plato's view of the state and of specific forms of government, especially as he becomes increasingly idealistic in the later books, is the notion that people who live in society are governed by agreements (that is, covenants) which regulate their actions. Societies cannot function properly if people live without regard for others or without respect for the law. In fact, one of the arguments advanced by Socrates in the dialogue entitled "Crito" just before he dies is that in refusing to escape his prison he is assenting to the laws of the State, despite its unjust verdict in his own case. What would happen to the State, Socrates asks Crito, if its citizens could freely disobey any law they disliked?⁹⁾ In many ways, then, Plato is as much a moral and social philosopher as he is a metaphysician or epistemologist, and he argues always in favor of one's larger responsibilities to society over one's own personal preferences.

Aristotle is also a moral and social philosopher. His *Politics* more or less departs from the observation that man is a political animal, a *zoon politikon* (1253a2-3). That is, man lives with other human beings in a city, "polis" and state. The state itself, as it is described in the first paragraph of the entire work, is a political community which is organized with a view to the "the good" (1252a1-5). Put another way,

civilized human beings do not live isolated in caves, as Homer would have the monstrous Cyclops Polyphemus live, but collectively in communities and cities. To be a good “citizen” is to be mindful of one’s neighbors, to be aware of one’s civic responsibilities, and to obey the law. In defining human beings in this manner and in ascribing to them the desire and the ability to live collectively and responsibly with other human beings, Aristotle—like Homer, Aeschylus and Sophocles before him—is distinguishing between city dwellers and those who lived before the existence of cities and states, before, therefore, “civilization.” These people live in nature in its rawest form, respecting only the most primitive sense of tradition, custom, and law.¹⁰⁾

Civilized society, then, develops systems of obligations and responsibilities. It has always been thus. I do not have the space to go into the universally acknowledged Roman contributions to the idea of society as a network of interrelated obligations and laws that preserve the social fabric. It is well known, for instance, that Roman law is the basis of civil law in many parts of the world today. And after the fall of the Roman Empire, the so-called “Dark Ages” in western history evolved into feudalism, which may be defined as a system of social order based on reciprocal rights and responsibilities between the rulers and their subjects. The crowning document of the feudal system, the “Magna Carta” (or “Great Charter”), drafted by English barons and agreed to by King John in 1215, limited the power of this and future kings of England, prevented arbitrary rule (at least in theory), and defined the rights and responsibilities between the ruler and his subjects.¹¹⁾

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the notion of society as involving interrelated rights, obligations and responsibilities became known as “Social Contract Theory.” Its major theo-

rists were Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Social contract theory was inspired by covenantal thought, especially as articulated in the Bible, and its central tenet was that society was founded on a “contract” between the rulers and the ruled. In return for peace and security (Hobbes), or the right to certain freedoms of thought and speech (Locke), the people agree to be ruled by someone and by some institution above them. They agree, as Rousseau put it, to be governed by the “General Will.” In this scheme of things, the individual accommodates his particular will to the interests of the larger social will.

Social contract theory influenced the American and French revolutions and, therefore, the constitutional system of the United States. One of the more common and clichéd views of the United States is that it is a society of individual freedoms. There is truth in this view, but that truth is not absolute. It is equally true that the United States is a society of laws. And there are consequences to breaking the law. Therefore, to define western culture as individualistic and atomistic is an oversimplification.

It must be acknowledged that the view of western society as a network of obligations and responsibilities resembles much that is being advocated by Hiroike in *Towards Supreme Morality* and elsewhere. Hiroike uses somewhat different terminology. He speaks of the importance of benevolent compassion toward others and also of not acting purely out of self interest. He speaks as well of the sense of responsibility and respect that a son feels towards the parent (and, through him, the ancestors), a citizen feels towards the country, and that the Japanese feel towards the emperor. (I will take up some of Hiroike’s observations from a slightly different perspective when I comment on the ortholonin principle later on in these remarks.)

Nature, Law, and Morality

Let me turn now to Professor Kakehata's presentation on "nature" in which, following the work of August Berque, he described the Japanese relationship to nature as one of "physicophilia" (or love of nature) and the western view as one of "physicophobia" (or fear of nature). For the Japanese, Professor Kakehata states, nature is the sacred reflection of the mind of God, whereas for westerners nature is seen as something evil and to be feared. This contrast is a misrepresentation of western thought, for there are several views of nature in the West, and *physicophobia* is not one of the main ones. Several traditions must be kept in mind.

The first of these traditions is the Judeo-Christian one, in which nature is perceived in three fundamental ways: as a paradise of innocence, as something to be dominated, and as a reflection of the mind of God. There are two versions of creation in the Bible. The more ancient of these (called the "J" account, for Jehovah) is actually narrated second. In the "J" account, God created Adam and then planted a garden for him, "eastward in Eden" (*Genesis* 2: 8) in which the trees are pleasant to the sight and good for food. After Adam partners with God in naming the beasts of the field and birds of the air (*Genesis* 2: 19), God puts Adam to sleep and creates Eve out of his rib, the two of them to be in effect happy and innocent gardeners. Of course, the story of "The Fall" follows and Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden, never to return. As a place or *topos*, the Garden of Eden resonates in western history; it becomes a longed-for golden age in which human beings lived in harmony with nature, knowing neither sin nor death.¹²⁾ This *topos* has much in common with "the once upon a time" of fairy tales and with an ancient view of the history of mankind which was

first described by Hesiod (in *Works and Days*), then adapted to Roman circumstances by Virgil (in the Fourth Eclogue and elsewhere), and given a more influential definitive form by Ovid (in *The Metamorphosis*). This theory has the world begin with a “golden” age of harmony and peace, which is succeeded by ages of silver, bronze, and iron (and, in the Book of *Daniel* in the Old Testament,¹³) by the age of clay).

The second Judaeo-Christian view of nature—that of dominion over it—also comes from *Genesis*, but from the “P” or Priestly account. The “P” version of the creation of human beings reads as follows: “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth’” (*Genesis*, 1: 26). After God created human beings (in this version both man and woman were created at the same time), God commanded them to “have dominion” over the earth and everything on it (*Genesis* 1: 28-30). Until recently, this biblical injunction to control nature was sometimes used as justification for exploiting the resources of the earth, an exploitation which has accelerated exponentially since the Industrial Revolution. In a very real sense, globalization has seen the exportation of the Judaeo-Christian advocacy of the domination of nature be extended to every corner of the globe. No culture, even one as close to nature as Japan, is immune from this influence.

Neither the notion of primeval nature as “golden” nor that of nature itself as something to be dominated suggests that the western attitude toward nature is one of “fear”.

In addition, nature has been worshipped, admired and longed-for in several literary and intellectual traditions of the West, though not consistently and continually so. For

instance, the pastoral tradition, which began with the Greek poet Theocritus and was “codified” for literature by Virgil, was one of literature’s major modes at least through the Renaissance and the 17th century (Edmund Spenser, Miguel de Cervantes, and John Milton). As a genre, pastoral juxtaposes the corrosive corruption of city or court life to the more innocent simplicity of rural life, exemplified through the actions (and songs) of shepherds and shepherdesses.¹⁴⁾

One of the commonplaces of western literary history is that “mountains” were not part of the poetic imagination until the 18th century, or until Romanticism and writers like Rousseau and Wordsworth wrote lyrically and worshipfully about nature. This commonplace is generally true. Earlier, mountains were sometimes seen as impediments which were real (Hannibal saw the Alps as both an obstacle to his invasion of Italy and an opportunity to surprise Italy by invading it from the most unexpected direction) or symbolic (Dante’s way up the mountain is blocked at the beginning of *The Divine Comedy* and so he must get to salvation by going down into hell first). Sometimes mountains were considered to be symbolic paths toward salvation or some kind of enlightenment experience. This latter view is behind the portrayal of the Mount of Purgatory in *The Divine Comedy* and of the “windy mountain” in Petrarch’s famous essay entitled “The Ascent of Mount Ventoux”.

Deserts also have these ambivalent symbolic attributes. For someone like Herodotus, deserts were the wild and empty spaces or *aporias* which separated communities from each other and were sources of danger. For early Christians, however, deserts were places of spiritual combat and solace. Jesus spent time in the desert before taking up his ministry. And the Christian hermits (also known as “eremites,” the word being Greek for “desert”) of the 3rd and 4th centuries

sought out the desert as a place of solitude which nurtured contemplation and devotion to God. This eremitical practice was transformed into western monasticism.

The West, therefore, cannot simply be placed into the *physicophobic* camp and the East into the *physicophilic* one.

There is also another and deeper sense in which the western view of nature cannot be characterized as *physicophobic*, a sense that brings the West closer to Hiroike's conception of nature, and that is the notion that nature is a reflection of the mind of God (however one defines God or the Divine Principle). In this view, nature is ordered, just as the cosmos is ordered. As is the case with the cosmos, nature has laws that are immutable and "true". Nature, or the abstract idea of nature, becomes the source of "natural law," which is one of the major traditions of law in the West. It is possible—and even would be advisable in a longer essay—to enumerate the varieties of natural law in western traditions, for they would include, say, Aristotelian, Thomistic, and Protestant conceptions. To do so would extend these remarks beyond reasonable limits, however. What all these conceptions of natural law have in common is a view of the rational, immutable, and transcendental foundation of law itself. In a Greek drama like Sophocles' *Antigone*, for example, the higher law of the gods, of the *logos*, is appealed to by Antigone herself as the justification for her disobeying the lower law of men, which is law based on custom or tradition. Natural law and the higher law are reflections of each other. Since both are immutable and deeply "rational," the concept of "justice" refers to a morality that transcends the individual particularities of actions based on custom or individual preferences. Yet when justice is applied, as it is for instance in a court of law, it represents the application of natural law to conventional practice. In these cases, a distinction must be made

between what is “just” and what is “legal.” Antigone herself made this distinction and decided to act on the basis of justice rather than of legality.

For Aristotle and for the Greeks generally, nature can be considered the source of justice. To live a just life, then, is to live in accord with nature, to live virtuously. If one can live a life of virtue, then one will be happy. That is, happiness is not the result of the acquisition of material objects, of the exercise of power, or of sexual satisfaction but, in Aristotle’s view, of one’s virtuous “character.”¹⁵⁾ And one’s character is acquired by the way that one lives.

The distinction drawn here between natural law and conventional law, between justice and legality, sounds to me very much like the distinction that Hiroike draws between supreme morality and conventional morality. Over and over in his work, Hiroike defines supreme morality as transcendental, universal, and permanent. Over and over he states that even though this morality may be embodied in a few great spiritual heroes like the Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, Jesus Christ, and Amaterasu-Oomikami, it transcends their individual lives to become universally applicable to all mankind. Supreme morality should be the goal of one’s life, to be attained for its own sake and not for any selfish reasons. In attaining it, or rather in the process of attaining it, one builds one’s character. As one builds one’s character, one becomes happier, more virtuous, and more beneficent or compassionate. The notion of “character” is as central to Hiroike as it was to the Greeks and others in the West, and for many of the same reasons.

Hiroike has little regard for conventional morality, which he sees as differing in degree and not in kind from immorality: he considers each to be essentially egocentric.¹⁶⁾ Conventional morality, based on custom and tradition, has “devel-

oped gradually from man's instinct of self preservation and is therefore egoistic in nature."¹⁷ Though conventional morality exists in all cultures, Hiroike applies the concept in particular to the history of moral thought and practice in the West. In Hiroike's view, the true meaning of the teachings of Socrates and Jesus Christ was reinterpreted in order to make those teachings appealing to the selfish emotions of the common people.¹⁸ Even the notion of salvation in Christianity is seen to be an essentially selfish notion. These observations on the place of self interest, custom, convention, and tradition in the history of moral thought in the West strike me as largely correct.

Since supreme morality is transcendental and reflects the order of the universe, it reflects "nature" and what Hiroike calls alternatively "the mind of God" or "reality." For instance, in the fourth chapter of *The Characteristics of Moralogy and Supreme Morality*, Hiroike writes that "pure orthodox learning" (which is one of the ways that he describes Moralogy) has nothing to do with conventional morality or "selfish human instincts" but is rather morality that is "in complete accord with the divine law of the universe."¹⁹ Aristotle might well have made such an observation, or even Christian thinkers like St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas. In sum, Hiroike's thought has more in common with western thought than has hitherto been acknowledged. Some of the differences that are said to exist between the West and the East may be, in fact, the result of too partial a knowledge of western intellectual traditions. But to say so is not to ignore the substantial differences that do exist between the West and the East. One of those differences is Hiroike's concept of the "ortholion."

The Ortholinon

Whereas Hiroike is critical of the role of tradition in the preservation of morality when he speaks of western culture, he has a different attitude toward tradition when he applies it to the East and to Japan. In my view, he recasts “tradition” as a component of the ortholinon principle. Hiroike defines “ortholinon,” a word of his own creation, in the following ways. It is, he says, that part of “the succession of pure orthodoxy,” which comes “in a direct line from God (or ‘reality’) and the sages” and which “creates or develops the physical and spiritual life of mankind.” The respect for an ortholinon is an intrinsic part of the practice of supreme morality. Hiroike gives the etymology of the word “ortholinon” as coming from the Greek “orthos” (which he defines as “straight”) and from the Latin “linon” (which he defines as “thread” or “line”). The ortholinon, then, is a straight line of succession. In Japan he identifies a national ortholinon, a family or bodily ortholinon, and a spiritual ortholinon.²⁰⁾

If we are to understand Moralogy properly we must also understand the ortholinon principle. Hiroike himself drew particular attention to the close relationship between the ortholinon principle and Moralogy when he included the following statement in his will, drafted on May 14, 1938, about a month before he died. The statement reads:

The principle of ortholinon that comprises the substance of Moralogy is reflected in the following three things. The first is the very actions of myself, the founder of Moralogy, over the years. The second is the original books of Moralogy that describe my practice. The third is the lessons, directions, notices and educational instructions I have revealed to help all mankind practice the teachings of Moralogy correctly.

Anyone who wants to practice the teachings of Moralogy must use these as the standards of his life.²¹⁾

I will come back later on to the message implicit in these remarks. For now, let us note how essential the “ortholinon” is to Moralogy itself.

The ortholinon principle demands a kind of loyalty that is itself unusual. Hiroike is critical of the fact that the practice of filial piety or respect for authority, for instance, has sometimes been cast to one side when personal interests interfere. Yet supreme moralogy demands “the virtue of absolute obedience and self examination in the service of our rulers and parents under all circumstances.”²²⁾

I was told before November 14th by Professors Iwasa and Kitagawa that I would have difficulties with the ortholinon principle. They were right, though I am not sure if my difficulties stem from disagreement or from an insufficient understanding. I agree that one’s elders and rulers should be respected, but I question the wisdom of requiring “absolute obedience.” Certainly the practice of “absolute obedience” to the state—or the emperor—can have negative and destructive consequences. As I understand it, one of the main differences between Chinese and Japanese cultures is how the notion of loyalty toward authority is viewed. In China, loyalty is owed to the principle of heaven, and if the emperor acts in a way that is perceived to be against the dictates of heaven, then the principle of loyalty to heaven can be used to overthrow the emperor. In Japan, loyalty is owed to the person of the emperor, who is descended from the goddess Amaterasu-Oomikami. There is no question that Japan’s 2,000 years of continual imperial rule owe much to this ortholinic principle of loyalty and its corollary, obedience. On the one hand, such a tradition of loyalty and obedience facilitated the Japanese militarism of the 1930s and the conduct of World War II. On

the other, loyalty and obedience to the emperor also facilitated the postwar peace. For once Emperor Hirohito had spoken to the Japanese people on August 15, 1947, informing them that “we” had “accepted the provisions of the Powers of the joint declaration,” the way was smoothed toward a peaceful occupation and post-war recuperation.²³⁾

A principal reason that westerners may have difficulty with the ortholinic principle is that at its foundation lies the figure of Amaterasu-Oomikami. She is central both to Japanese culture and to Hiroike’s thought. The goddess from whom the Japanese imperial family descends, she is worshipped at the Great Shrine of Ise, Shintoism’s holiest place. Hiroike devotes a good many pages to Amaterasu-Oomikami. In fact all of chapter 13 of volume two (pp. 423–516) is devoted to her. Japan is praised as unique in world history for its 2,000 years of uninterrupted imperial rule. Hiroike attributes “the first cause” of this accomplishment to Amaterasu-Oomikami’s “sacred virtue,” and he attributes the “second cause” to the “sacred virtue of successive emperors,” all of whom have been called *akitsumikami* or “god incarnate” (vol. 2, p. 423).

European history has had its own great cultural heroes and traditions, sacred or secular, but they differ from those of Japan. For instance, Aeneas, the hero of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, is said to be descended from the gods and to be as well the founder of the Roman Empire, but that is a literary invention by a poet eager to mythologize the current emperor of Rome under whose protection Virgil wrote, Augustus. Japan is the only major contemporary culture I know of which is said to be ruled (or to have been ruled) by a living god whose line of divine descent goes all the way back to a single progenitor.²⁴⁾ Like Pallas Athena being born from the head of Zeus, Amaterasu-Oomikami is born—through parthenogenesis—without a

mother and from the left eye of her father, Izanagi no Mikoto.²⁵⁾ Hiroike says that the supremacy of her virtue is due to the “supreme morality practiced by her father or by her parents” (vol. 2, p. 424). The respect and devotion that one owes to one’s parents are owed as well to one’s ancestors, to one’s emperor (and through him to the State), and to Japan’s ancestral founding god. Through the practice of that respect and devotion, one learns to practice supreme morality.

As central as Amaterasu-Oomikami is to the history and religious traditions of Japan, as important as she is to the unbroken continuity of its imperial rule, as essential as she is to Hiroike’s own conception of Moralogy and the ortholion principle, Professor Kitagawa did not mention her (or the emperor) either in his lecture or in his published essay on the ortholion principle. Perhaps the acknowledgement of the centrality of Amaterasu-Oomikami and emperor-worship to the theory of Moralogy might be considered problematic and thus an impediment to the acceptance of Hiroike’s thought in today’s Japan or its relevance elsewhere. After all, both Japan and the world have changed a great deal in the 70 years since Hiroike’s death. In order to make him more clearly relevant to the contemporary world, it has been necessary to “modernize” him. That process of modernization requires an accompanying strategy of secularization. From what I have seen during this third visit to Reitaku University, I believe that faculty and administrators at Reitaku University are committed to modernization and are aware of the accompanying risks and rewards of secularization.²⁶⁾

However, the decision to secularize Hiroike’s thought does not eliminate the tension evident in his work between the traditional and the modern, the religious and the secular. That tension remains. For instance, Hiroike’s own etymology for his neologism “ortholion” is secular, yet it ignores

the more common connotation of “orthos,” given in any good etymological dictionary as “right, true, proper, or correct.” These are essentially religious connotations, as one can see in the word “orthodoxy.” “Doxy” (from the Greek “doxa”) refers to doctrine or opinion. Orthodoxy thus means “the true or correct doctrine,” the implication being that the false doctrine is “heretical” because it is incorrect and untrue.²⁷⁾ Hiroike’s term “ortholinon” therefore implies not only a “straight” line but one that is “right, true, proper or correct.”

Another way of approaching this problem of the tension in Hiroike between the sacred and the secular is to note that the same tension exists between what he deems “religious” and what he deems “scientific.” Repeatedly he says that Moralogy is a science. Yet consider the various ways in which he begins his magnum opus. The preface to the first edition of *A Treatise on Moral Science* (the earlier title of the work that in translation became *Towards Supreme Morality*) begins thus: “All the true doctrines of the sages of the world are in agreement with the principles of the natural sciences of today.” The first introduction to the *Treatise* begins: “This *Treatise on Moral Science* which I am here introducing is the very first book on Moralogy, which is a new science.” Chapter One of Book One begins: “What I am now presenting to the world is a new science which is chiefly devoted to a comparative study of conventional morality and supreme morality with respect to their principles, substance and content, but which at the same time aims at a scientific demonstration of the effects of their respective practices.” Each of these beginnings (from 1928) emphasizes “the scientific.” The preface to the second edition of the *Treatise*, however, written in 1933–34, begins with a very different tone: “When heaven and earth parted, presenting a universe where all kinds of existence came to constitute the world of phenomena,

none of those processes were the result of accident.” This is religious language.

What is the meaning of this change from a scientific discourse to a religious one? I believe that as Hiroike matured and became more influential culturally and pedagogically in Japan, he became increasingly convinced of the spiritual truth of Moralogy itself. That conviction led Hiroike to a view of himself as a sage of Moralogy, as its patriarch or father. The key moment in this transformation lies in an experience 20 years before the preface to the second edition was written: it occurred during his serious illness of 1912, which is the focus of Professor Tachiki’s presentation. I turn toward that in the final section of my comments on “Hiroike and Western Traditions.”

Illness and the Conversion Experience

Professor Tachiki, taking his cue from Hiroike himself, sees the serious illness of 1912 as more than just physical; it was spiritual as well. Keeping Professor Tachiki’s presentation (as summarized in note 3) in mind, I would like to discuss how the pattern of Hiroike’s illness, spiritual torment, and conversion resembles the most common conversion paradigm in the West.

In the West, conversion narratives have been most closely associated with Christianity, with, for example, the conversion of St. Paul on the road to Damascus,²⁸⁾ of St. Augustine, of Martin Luther, of John Henry Newman, and of Thomas Merton. Of these figures, let me focus on St. Augustine, for he clearly embodies the paradigm described by the scholar A. D. Nock in his groundbreaking study of conversion. For Nock, the conversion experience in general involves “a reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning

from indifference or from an earlier form of piety, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right.”²⁹⁾ Further, the conversion experience may be best understood through the application of two concepts, both of them Greek: *psychomachia* and *enantiodromia*. “Psychomachia” refers, as the etymology suggests, to a “battle within the soul”; in colloquial English we might call this an “inner conflict.” “Enantiodromia” refers etymologically to a turning or running in the opposite direction; colloquially, this reversal would normally be referred to as “turning point.”

Perhaps more clearly than any other writer I know of, St. Augustine embodies and illustrates the concepts of *psychomachia* and *enantiodromia* in his exemplary conversion narrative, *The Confessions*. In it, St. Augustine describes his early life, in particular his excessive love of learning (he has great pride in his intellectual abilities), his immersion in carnal pleasures (he fathers an illegitimate son, later identified with the name “Adeodatus”), and his other youthful indiscretions. At some point, a gifted teacher, Bishop Ambrose, begins to turn him toward Christianity and to set his feet on the path toward conversion. The turning away from sin and toward faith and good deeds is the *enantiodromia* mentioned above. There are more “turning points” in the story. Most significantly, just as Hiroike did in the 1912 illness, Augustine experiences spiritual darkness and deep despair. For Augustine, that despair is the result of a “soul sickness”; for Hiroike, it was physical illness that brought about despair. “Oh God,” writes Augustine, “where were you all this time?... I was walking on a treacherous path, in darkness. I was looking for you outside myself and did not find the God of my own heart. I had reached the depths of the ocean. I had lost all faith and was in despair of finding the truth” (Book 6, section

1).³⁰ Augustine repeatedly describes his despair in terms of *psychomachia* later in the narrative. For instance, he writes: “So these two wills within me, one old, one new, one the servant of the flesh, the other of the spirit, were in conflict and between them they tore my soul apart” (Book 8, section 5). Later he writes: “My inner self was a house divided against itself” (Book 8, section 8). In this state of utter despair, which he calls a “sickness” and “soul sickness” (Book 8, section 11), he goes to sit in his garden, where he hears the voice of a young child which commands him to take up the Bible and read. He does so, opening the book to the letters of St. Paul (*Romans* 13: 13-14). The text opens his eyes, “the light of confidence flooded [his] heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled” (Book 8, section 12).

As was the case with St. Paul, the movement in Augustine’s narrative is from despair to joy, from darkness to light, from a spiritual blindness to a spiritual sight, from damnation to salvation, from self-absorption to a dedication to God and to mankind. The conversion experience of both of them leads each man to a life of service, of benevolence, of good deeds. The progression of Chikuro Hiroike follows pretty much the same pattern: from an excessive self-confidence (“I could accomplish anything with my abilities”) to the depths of illness and despair, to the awareness that he had reached a “turning point in the journey toward spiritual peace and enlightenment,” to a promise to God to dedicate himself the “salvation... security and happiness of all human kind.”³¹ In the same manner, metaphors of darkness turn into those of light, spiritual blindness turns into spiritual sight or enlightenment. The result of Hiroike’s conversion experience is Moralogy.

To interpret the origin of Moralogy in this way is to make it less of a science, despite Hiroike’s claims that it *is* a science.

The pattern of Hiroike's life and thought is religious, and so is the language he uses to describe his great transformations and insights. In fact, I view him less as a scientist than as a sage of Moralogy, a system of moral thought and practice designed to bring "salvation" to mankind.

Let us adduce the following two bits of evidence. On April 16th, 1938, Hiroike wrote his "death poem," which reads as follows:

My soul remains here, immutable and undying,
And for those who cherish the teachings,
I hereby pray that they may be born anew.³²⁾

Many have viewed this poem as composed just for this occasion, spontaneously arising out of a profound awareness of approaching death. Yet it is virtually identical to a poem composed seven years earlier, during a serious illness. This is that poem, written in 1931:

Forever will my soul stay here
Praying the rebirth of people who follow
And practice supreme morality.³³⁾

I do not have the Japanese originals at hand and so cannot compare them, but I would guess that the differences are slight. The most interesting difference between the 1931 death poem and the 1938 one is that Hiroike signed the 1938 poem as "The Father of Moralogy." This is not scientific language. Nor should the paragraphs of his last will and testament on the significance of the ortholinon principle and Moralogy, cited earlier in this essay, be considered the writings of a scientist. Rather, the rhetoric in these paragraphs belongs to a religious leader who exhorts his disciples to follow his personal example: the "actions of myself," "my practice," and "the lessons, directions, notices and educational instructions I have *revealed* to help all mankind."

In conclusion, Chikuro Hiroike's life and thought are less

original, less unique, than is generally understood to be the case. This is not a criticism of him but rather an acknowledgement of the intercultural resonance of his ideas. He did not write in a vacuum but connected his ideas to those of other traditions. He put forward theories that—with some exceptions—are not unique to Japan. Because he read so widely and cited from so many different sources, he can be considered a universal man of letters whose aim was to bring salvation—through Moralogy—to the people of both his country and the world.

Endnotes

- 1) Revised and expanded version of comments delivered on November 14, 2007, in the small auditorium of the Institute of Moralogy, 2-1-1 Higarigao-ka, Kashiwa-shi, Chiba-ken, Japan, at a research meeting on “Moralogy and Chikuro Hiroike.”
- 2) Chikuro Hiroike, *Towards Supreme Morality: An Attempt to Establish the New Science of Moralogy*. 3 vols. (Kashiwa-shi: The Institute of Moralogy, 2002).
- 3) Professor Tachiki’s lecture was based on a more general essay entitled “Chikuro Hiroike’s Moral Experiences: How did he realize the spirit of ‘Benevolence, Tolerance, and Self-Examination?’”, in *Searching for a Common Morality in the Global Age: The Proceedings of The International Conference on Moral Science in 2002*. Edited and Translated by Haruo Kitagawa, Shujiro Mizuno, and Peter Luff (Kashiwa-shi: The Institute of Moralogy and Lancer’s Books, 2004): 95-106. In examining Hiroike’s “serious illness of 1912,” Professor Tachiki focused on three time periods and the mental states associated with them: Hiroike’s mental condition prior to his illness of 1912; the illness itself and Hiroike’s reflections during that time; his recovery and the decisions he took then. In essence, before the onset of his illness, Hiroike found himself to be at an impasse, with no way out, eaten up by pride and depressed by his limitations. During the more severe stages of his illness, which is described in almost clinical detail, Hiroike “awaited only death” (*Chikuro Hiroike*, 310-311), concluded that he had violated “the laws of nature from too much perseverance and egoism” (*Towards Supreme Morality*, III, 523), felt buffeted this way and that by this “warning from God” (*Towards Supreme Morality*, III, 300), and he resolved, as he recovered,

to dedicate himself to God and to “the enlightenment and salvation of all mankind” (*Towards Supreme Morality*, III, 300-301). Hiroike’s illness is thus seen both by Hiroike and by Professor Tachiki as much a spiritual illness as a physical one, a view that I shall comment on later on, comparing his spiritual trajectory with an example of the analogous process of spiritual conversion in the West.

- 4) Professor Kakehata focused on the Japanese festival of the rice harvest held on the 23rd of November called the “Ninamesai.” This is a yearly festival which is especially important to celebrate when a new emperor ascends the throne, for although his rule may be already established politically, it is not established spiritually until he can be consecrated through the Ninamesai. This festival, according to Professor Kakehata, is evidence of the Japanese relationship to nature. That relationship is one of “physicophilia” (or the love of nature), which Professor Kakehata, relying on the work of Augustin Berque, contrasted to the western attitude toward nature, characterized as “physicophobia” (or the fear of nature). Moralogy is based on “physicophilia,” for in Moralogy nature is treated with reverence and respect. Indeed the campus of Reitaku University was founded around a single tree deemed by Hiroike to be blessed. In Hiroike’s view, nature is sacred, the laws of God being those of nature, and nature is the realm of beauty and goodness. This physicophilic view, said Professor Kakehata, is unlike the Christian and western view of nature which sees it as evil and as something to be feared rather than loved.
- 5) Professor Kitagawa’s remarks were based on his essay of the same title published in *Searching for a Common Morality in the Global Age: The Proceedings of The International Conference on Moral Science in 2002*. Edited and Translated by Haruo Kitagawa, Shujiro Mizuno, and Peter Luff (Kashiwa-shi: The Institute of Moralogy and Lancer’s Books, 2004): 170-183. His thesis was that western society is atomistic and individualistic (p. 175). Eastern society, by contrast, emphasizes the “unbroken succession of life” (p. 175), the interrelationship of all human beings, and the importance of social duties over individual rights. Eastern society (Japan) is thus the natural home of the “ortholion principle” which Kitagawa, following Hiroike, defines as the line of succession, derived “from God (or ‘reality’) and the sages” (*Towards Supreme Morality*, III, 111), which links together family, nation, and spirit. The ortholion is that “succession of pure orthodoxy that creates or develops the physical and spiritual life of mankind” (*Towards Supreme Morality*, III, 111). The ortholion principle, Professor Kitagawa said, may be one of Moralogy’s major contributions to western thought. It is the ortholion principle, for instance, that informs the Japanese reverence for family and ancestors and may be considered the basis for a common

morality that reflects “the mind of God which is the foundation of the universe” (Kitagawa, p. 180). This supreme or common morality is quite different from conventional morality, which is based on transient customs and self interest.

- 6) In using the term “axiology” I am not attempting to add a chapter to the philosophical theory of value, which is generally considered to be the study of “goodness” (however that is defined) and the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic value. My interest is in whatever values are central to a particular culture’s identity. For me, therefore, such values are always historically contingent and culture-specific.
- 7) The Ten Commandments are set down in *Exodus* (20: 2-17) and are repeated in *Deuteronomy* (5: 6-21).
- 8) The emphasis on one’s obligations is paramount in Judaism. Early in the Jewish *Siddur* or book of prayer, which is to be used every day by the observant Jew, the practitioner recites the precepts which guide his life and behavior: “the honor due to father and mother, acts of kindness, early attendance at the house of study morning and evening, hospitality to guests, visiting the sick, providing for a bride, escorting the dead, absorption in prayer, bringing peace between man and his fellow—and the study of Torah is equivalent to them all” (*The Complete Artscroll Siddur*. Translated, with commentary, by Rabbi Nosson Scherman. New York: Mesorah Publications, 1984 ; 1996, p. 17).
- 9) Hiroike quotes the dialogue “Crito” at length in volume two of *Towards Supreme Morality*, pp. 161-164. Hiroike comments at the end as follows: “Socrates’s daring acceptance of the death penalty in defense of the national law was his most important lesson to mankind, showing his respect for the national ortholonin for the protection of human welfare” (p. 164).
- 10) One must be careful not to blindly identify the term “nature” with “lawlessness” in the case of pre-civilized life, for there is another tradition which looks to nature as the foundation of the state itself, and even of law. Abstractly considered, the “nature” of something for Aristotle is that toward which it tends when it is fully developed. I shall rely on this notion of “nature” a bit later on in these remarks.
- 11) The Magna Carta did not magically ensure civil and political liberties for all people in England, nor did it resolve issues of governance definitively, for civil war broke out immediately after the death of King John in 1216 and the document had to be amended repeatedly. Nevertheless, despite its checkered history as a legal document that limited royal authority effectively, it is often considered to be the foundation of the English constitutional system and, from it, American democracy. See William Sharp McKechnie, *Magna Carta: A Commentary on the Great Charter of King John* (Glasgow 1914;

- revised edition New York: B. Franklin, 1960).
- 12) The history of “the golden age” has been chronicled by the literary comparatist Harry Levin in *The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).
 - 13) Daniel describes a dream vision of a huge, brilliant, extraordinary and frightening statue (those adjectives are in the Bible): “The head of that statue was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay” (*Daniel*: 2: 32-33). This dream vision is then interpreted (verses 36-45) as a theory of historical change and decline.
 - 14) An analogous juxtaposition in Japanese literature, with somewhat different resonance, might be the juxtaposition of the courtly intricacies found in *The Tale of Genji* to Basho’s loving attention to nature and simplicity found in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*.
 - 15) If happiness is the result of one’s virtuous character, then unhappiness and tragedy, by contrast, are the result of flaws in one’s character. This, the so-called “tragic flaw,” is one of the central tenets of Aristotle’s theory of tragedy in his *Poetics*.
 - 16) This is how Hiroike begins a book, written in 1930, that summarizes and condenses his three-volume major work. The 1930 book is entitled *The Characteristics of Moralogy and Supreme Morality*. Translated from the Japanese. (1942; rev. ed. Kashiwa-shi: The Institute of Moralogy, 1966, 1976), pp. 1-2.
 - 17) *The Characteristics of Moralogy and Supreme Morality*, p. 2.
 - 18) *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
 - 19) *Ibid.*, p. 27.
 - 20) This characterization of “ortholinon” is derived directly from *Towards Supreme Morality: An Attempt to Establish the New Science of Moralogy* (Kashiwa-shi: The Institute of Moralogy, 2002), vol. 3, pp. 111-112.
 - 21) Cited in *Chikuro Hiroike, Father of Moralogy*. Collective biography by members of the Institute of Moralogy (Kashiwa-shi: The Institute of Moralogy, 2004), p. 581.
 - 22) Hiroike, *Characteristics*, p. 68. Hiroike implies in *Towards Supreme Morality* and elsewhere that filial piety, loyalty and the respect for tradition and one’s ancestors are characteristic of the East but not of the West. Yet consider Virgil’s epic poem, the *Aeneid*. Aeneas, the eponymous hero of the epic and the mythological founder of the city that would become Rome and then the Roman Empire, was a leader among the Trojans who were defeated by the Greeks in the battle of Troy. The “Greek” side is told by Homer in the *Iliad*. Virgil narrates the story of the defeated Trojans. As Aeneas leaves his destroyed and burning city, he lifts his father to his shoulders to

carry him, asking him to hold the household gods (penatis) and takes his own small son Iulius by the hand. His wife Creusa follows behind him. (See *Aeneid*, Book II, lines 705-729). This tableau, often the subject of paintings, is iconic in western civilization for its exaltation of filial piety and the strong bonds that unite families and link generations. From Roman times through the Renaissance, Virgil was the most widely read poet in Europe, and the *Aeneid* the most widely read and admired literary work.

- 23) I leave to one side the question of interpreting Hirohito's radio address and the extent to which he bore the personal responsibility for Japan's policies and actions in China, Southeast Asia, as well as later against the allies, between the years 1931 and 1945. This question has been thoroughly explored by Herbert P. Bix in his book, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000) and by Robert Harvey in his book, *American Shogun: MacArthur, Hirohito and the American Duel with Japan* (London: John Murray Publishers, 2006).
- 24) One of the principal strategies of MacArthur and the American forces after August 1945 to change Japan was to attempt to diminish or eliminate Emperor Hirohito's divine status, and indeed in 1946 Hirohito was obliged to repudiate his divinity. Yet he did so in a way that permitted different interpretations as to what he had actually repudiated. Herbert P. Bix devotes a number of pages to this issue and its consequences.
- 25) There are two accounts of her birth. The account of her birth from her father alone is in the *Kojiki*, Book 1, The Age of the Gods. The account of her birth from both father and mother is in the *Nihonshoki*, Book 1, The Age of the Gods. Hiroike calls the first account "sacred," the second that of "an ordinary affair of human society" (*Towards Supreme Morality*, II, 442).
- 26) An example of modernization which is also secularization is a fairly recent publication from the Institute of Moralogy: *Toward Moral Regeneration and a Century of Mutual Respect* (2001; English translation Kashiwashii: The Institute of Moralogy, 2004). As are a number of publications issued by The Institute of Moralogy, this book is collectively authored. Its primary approach to Moralogy is psychological or "mental" rather than "spiritual." The following sentence is typical: "As the essential importance of supreme morality resides in the mental activity and attitudes of those who practice it, anyone can practice it at any time and in any place. The starting point is to change our own way of thinking in our daily life" (p. 87). I saw no references in this book either to Amaterasu-Oomikami or to the emperor of Japan, current or past.
- 27) Consider the word "orthodox" in "Orthodox Christianity" (later the "Russian Orthodox Church"). Eastern Christianity or the Orthodox Church separated itself from Western Roman Christianity (Catholicism) definitively

in 1054 A.D. by refusing to recognize the authority of the Pope. The term “orthodox” is also relevant to the history of Judaism, “Orthodox Judaism” being the one closest to the most ancient practices, the “reform” and “conservative” movements being more modern transformations of Judaism. “Orthodox,” therefore, has profoundly religious connotations. Because of the contexts in which Hiroike uses the word and idea of “ortholinion,” the religious connotations of “the ortholionic principle” are inescapable, and I believe that Hiroike deliberately exploits them.

- 28) For instance, Saul, originally an enemy of the disciples of Jesus Christ, was struck down, flattened to the ground, and blinded by a flash of light while traveling to Damascus. Though not physically ill before that moment, his blindness makes him helpless and, instructed by the voice of Jesus Christ, he is led by the hand to Damascus where a disciple of the new Christianity named Ananias lays his hand on Saul’s forehead and restores his sight to him. The movement in the narrative, thus, is from darkness to light, from blindness to sight, from a lack of faith to faith. Saul’s conversion is accompanied by a change of name, from Saul to Paul, implying a transformation in his identity. “Paul” immediately begins his “ministry.” This story is narrated three times in *Acts* (Books, 9, 22, and 26) in the New Testament.
- 29) Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 7.
- 30) I follow the common practice of citing St. Augustine’s *Confessions* by book number and section number. The translation of the edition I used is by R. S. Pine-Coffin. Cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (1961; rpt. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1976).
- 31) See *Chikuro Hiroike: Father of Moralogy*, pp. 307–310.
- 32) *Chikuro Hiroike: Father of Moralogy*, p. 579.
- 33) *Searching for a Common Morality in the Global Age*, p. 91. Quoted by Professor Yukimasa Nagayasu in his essay entitled “Hiroike’s Experiences and Supreme Morality” in that volume (pp. 89–94).