

IN MEMORIAM YUASA YASUO (1925–2005)

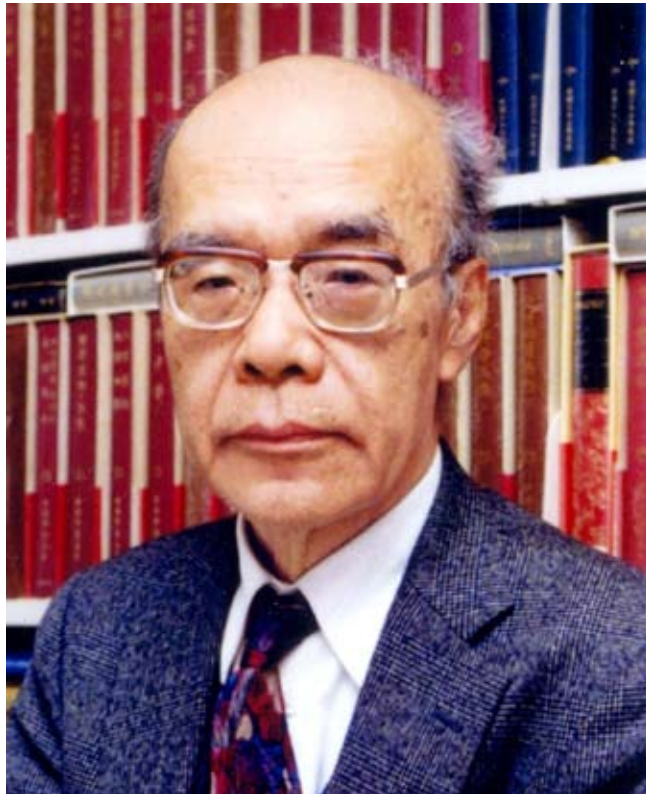
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PROFESSOR YUASA YASUO passed away on 7 November 2005 at the ripe old age of 80. Professor Yuasa was my advisor for more than twenty years. He was very humble and kind to the people around him, even though he was very shy and reserved to those he did not know well. He liked to talk with his students and friends about what he was writing, in order to see their first reaction.

Many visitors from various countries were welcomed into his home. They included the late Joseph M. Kitagawa, Shigenori Nagatomo, Thomas Kasulis, William LaFleur, Graham Parkes, and so on. When I was young I used be his driver and took many of these visitors to Mt. Tsukuba and other places for sight-seeing or a study tour.

Since my high school days I have been interested in the comparison between the Western and Eastern traditions because I felt a strong cultural difference between the local Japanese environment and the Jesuit education I received from Jesuits from various countries like England, Scotland, the USA, Spain, and Germany. During high school I began reading Nishida Kitarō's *A Study of Good* and practicing yoga by myself. Then I found C. G. Jung's works illuminating, and I began reading them, at first in an uncritical fashion. It was this situation that led me to find Professor Yuasa's works fascinating. He wrote books on *Jung and Christianity* and *The Body*, which deal with self-cultivation in the Eastern tradition. While an undergraduate at Sophia University, I tried to meet him, and Professor Anselmo Mataix, who happened to be an old friend of his, provided an introduction. That occurred in 1978 at the annual meeting of the Japan Society



for Ethics, when I was a senior at Sophia University in Tokyo, and when Yuasa was professor at Osaka University.

It was a meaningful coincidence that Profs. Nagatomo and Kasulis, who were at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, visited Professor Yuasa earlier in the same year. Professor Nagatomo wrote about his first meeting with him as follows:

In June, 1978, T. P. Kasulis and I went to see Professor Yuasa at his home in Hirakata city, Osaka, Japan. At that time, I was familiar only with one of Professor Yuasa's works, *The Body: Towards An Eastern Mind-Body Theory*. Since both T. P. Kasulis and I were impressed with the unique and profound insights contained in this work, we decided to fly over to the western rim of the Pacific Ocean to see Professor Yuasa in person and to learn more about his book and his intellectual background. My first impression of Professor Yuasa was that he was a deep thinker, somewhat reminiscent of one of the ideological leaders of the Taisho Democratic Movement, Nakae Chōmin. This was perhaps because Professor Yuasa, attired in a traditional Japanese kimono in subdued color, was patiently awaiting our arrival in deep meditation; I caught

only a side glance of his face before T. P. Kasulis formerly introduced me to him. His face concealed a depth which I could vaguely sense as if I were looking through a small opening into a distant forest formed by the trees of knowledge and life.*

On the other hand, I must confess that my first meeting with Professor Yuasa was among my worst experiences ever. He was gloomy and hard to talk to, and I felt I was rejected when I tried to pour sake into his cup. My mind is a blank when it comes to remembering how I spent the rest of the time with him at the same table at the party for the Japan Society for Ethics. In fact I was too young to be a member at the academic meeting, and probably I was the only undergraduate at the conference. I was just a senior at that time and I needed more academic training and self-cultivation before I was to be regarded as Yuasa's student.

Later I had many chances to see him before I finally I became one of his students. However, it took me 5 more years to become his student at the University of Tsukuba after completing the undergraduate and graduate program at Sophia University. That occurred in 1983 when I enrolled in the third year of the doctoral program, doing comparative research on C. G. Jung's psychology and the Buddhist mind-only theory in the Yogacāra tradition. However, the final result was a doctoral dissertation that focused solely on Jung's psychology.

In 1989 I completed my doctoral dissertation and submitted it to the University of Tsukuba under Professor Yuasa's instruction. Its theme was the psyche and the world as experienced in C. G. Jung's analytical psychology from the hermeneutical point of view. In the same year, I became a permanent research fellow at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, where ever since I have carried out research on Japanese religions. Over these many years, I closely collaborated with Professor Yuasa on a number of projects, such as organizing international conferences, and together we wrote and translated several books. I was also asked to be one of the editors for his complete works, which have been published by Hakua Shobō in Tokyo since 1999 and which have not yet been completed.

From these many experiences, I would like to share some of my personal memories about Professor Yuasa and some observations about his work. Let me begin with some of the more private aspects of Yuasa's life.

It was Professor Yuasa's custom to invite his students to his house and treat them with delicious food, good drinks, and stimulating conversation. I remem-

* Nagatomo Shigenori, "Prelude: Introducing Yuasa Yasuo," David Edward Shaner, Shigenori Nagatomo, Yuasa Yasuo, *Science and Comparative Philosophy: introducing Yuasa Yasuo* (Leiden/New York: E.J. Brill, 1989), xxvii.. Nakae (1847–1901) was a democratic leader during the Meiji era who introduced Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideas into Japan. Professor Nagatomo saw Professor Yuasa as a deep thinker.

ber he held a welcome party for me after I came back from Chicago in 1986. Even though I had been away at the Nanzan Institute and at the University of Chicago for a long time, he welcomed his prodigal student with open arms and instructed me patiently. Last year on June 4 we celebrated his 80th birthday party. He was surrounded by his friends and former students. It is worth mentioning that he was highly regarded by the medical doctors who had experience both in Western and Eastern medicine. He looked calm, fine, and satisfied at that time. Last September I participated together with Professor and Mrs. Yuasa in an international conference on science and religion in the age of crisis held on Awaji Island for several days. And I participated in a meeting in Tokyo of the same group with him just a week before his death. It was really impossible for me to believe that he passed away so suddenly.

Just after his death I had a rare chance to review his life and work for a recommendation via the University of Tsukuba for Professor Yuasa to receive a decoration from the Japanese government. The whole document had to be finished within a week, and I had to leave Japan for the AAR on the day after his funeral. I received assistance from his friends and students to review his life and work.

Professor Yuasa Yasuo was born in Fukuoka Prefecture on 5 June 1925. He moved to Osaka and then to Tokyo. His education was interdisciplinary at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In 1945 he entered the University of Tokyo and majored in Japanese history, ethics, and economics. He received both a BA and MA in ethics and economics.

Yuasa was deeply influenced by his advisor, Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960), who developed the ethics of human relationships. Watsuji stressed that human relations determine the way people behave. In a sense this is the influence of the Confucian ideas, but it is also an appropriation of Confucianism in a Japanese way. His ethics is called the “ethics of the community,” because he stressed the ethics of human beings in the context of various levels of society. He was the founder and the first president of the Japan Society for Ethics. In responding to Martin Heidegger’s idea of *In-der-Welt-sein*, that is, “being-in-the-world,” Watsuji wrote the book *The Climate*, which explains the ethnicity of various peoples based on the difference of the climate in which they live. He wrote extensively on Western philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, Japanese intellectual history, and ethics. His essay, *The Pilgrimage to the Old Temples in Kyoto* has been read by many generations. Watsuji was another giant in contemporary Japanese intellectual history, and Yuasa was the only disciple of Watsuji that can be compared to his master.

In 1956 Yuasa became an assistant to the Ethics Department at the University of Tokyo. He deepened his interest in religion and psychology and practiced yoga

under the instruction of Dr. Motoyama Hiroshi of the International Association for the Religion and Parapsychology.

Professor Yuasa taught at Yamanashi University, Osaka University, the University of Tsukuba, and Ōbirin University for 32 years in total. He was also a visiting professor at Indonesia National University in 1980 and at Beijing Foreign Studies University in 1987. He was also very active in the academic world. He prepared an international conference with French scholars at the University of Tsukuba on science and spirituality in 1984, and a Chinese-Japanese conference on *ch'i* or *ki* and human science in 1988. He was a founding member of the Society of Mind-Body Science in 1990 and its president from 1994 to 1998. Professor Yuasa was also a member of the committee for the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and the committee of the Tetsurō Watsuji Cultural Prize of the City of Himeji.

Throughout his career, Yuasa did research into the interdisciplinary fields of Japanese intellectual history, philosophy, depth psychology, and mind-body theory. He published more than 50 books and 300 articles, which are being collected by Hakua Shobō in his complete works, the publication of which began in 1999. Even the start of the publication of his complete works did not prevent him from publishing more books, and he published several more books before he passed away. He also translated English and German books into Japanese including *Parapsychology* (1957) by J. B. Rhine and J. G. Pratt, Richard Wilhelm and C. G. Jung's *The Secret of the Golden Flower (Das Geheimnis der goldenen Blute)* (1929), C. G. Jung's "Essays on Eastern Religions," and so forth.

First, Yuasa left many achievements in the field of Japanese intellectual history and Eastern intellectual history. Not only did he study the ethical thought of the ancient Japanese state and theoretical study of Japanese myths, he also studied Japanese religious consciousness through history from the ancient period to the middle ages and modern times. Furthermore, he studied modern Japanese philosophy and existential thought in detail, and he received the Doctor of Literature from the University of Tokyo. As the last disciple of Watsuji Tetsurō, he had a deep understanding of Watsuji's unique ethics, and Yuasa's study of Watsuji is highly regarded. Yuasa augmented Watsuji's Japanese ethical history, which emphasized rational order, and developed a new understanding of the Japanese history of religions that emphasizes irrational elements such as emotions, body, and the unconscious. Thus he shed light on the transformation process of the dominant images in the religious experiences of common people. From the new point of view of self-cultivation, it became obvious that there is a clear difference between Eastern and Western views of the body and the relationship between religion and self-cultivation, as well as between the basic paradigms of the Western and Eastern philosophical traditions.

A new contribution in the field of Japanese intellectual history was Yuasa's work on Kūkai's teachings and Shingon Esoteric Buddhism from the philosophical point of view. He pointed out that Kūkai was the first to argue for the significance of the body in Japanese intellectual history.

Yuasa also established a point of view for understanding modern Japanese philosophy and existential thought. In that process he clarified the contributions of thinkers like Uchimura Kanzō, Hatano Seiichi, Miki Kiyoshi, and Natsume Sōseki, each of whom wrestled with modernity.

Second, Yuasa devoted himself to critically examining C. G. Jung's analytical psychology, and he not only studied Jung's thought in the area of depth psychology, but he also pursued the point of contact between Western intellectual history and the Eastern philosophy of religion. Therefore, he is also well-known as a scholar of Jungian psychology, even though he was not a Jungian in the strict sense. He painstakingly examined Jung's works and shed light on Christianity, European intellectual history, and Eastern thought. Then he tried to find the point of contact between religion and science. He expended a great deal of effort on the elucidation of synchronicity, that is, the principle of acausal connection. He was able to delineate the Eastern worldview that would lead to Daoist thought.

Much of Yuasa's work was based on Jung's psychology of religion, and he compared Eastern and Western religions at the level of depth psychology. He claimed that the esoteric traditions that form the undercurrent of Western culture are close to Eastern religious thought. Professor Yuasa also asserted that the significance of mysticism can be clarified by depth psychology. In particular, he dealt with meditation as self-cultivation, and he shed light on common themes in the Eastern and Western esoteric traditions.

Third, Yuasa pursued the issue of the human body. He established the Society for the Mind-Body Science in order to study the human body from the interdisciplinary standpoints of the life sciences like medicine and physiology, information science, and human science. He became a pioneer of this area of study. His books on the body are translated into English, and he is known as a scholar of mind-body theory in the West. He regarded self-cultivation (*shugyō*) not only as ritual, but also as the physical technique to bring about altered states of consciousness. This work is closely related with his study of Japanese intellectual history, but he grasped self-cultivation and the body not only within the framework of history, but also as a matter closely related to modern man. He did the groundwork for the interdisciplinary study of the mind-body relationship from the standpoint of such life sciences as medicine and physiology. Yuasa dealt with the key concept "ki" 氣 in Japanese (or "ch'i" 氣 in Chinese) on the basis of Eastern self-cultivation, and he clarified the fact that "ki" is not only the principle of matter in Daoist cosmology, but also a kind of energy prevalent

in self-cultivation. Thus, he presented “ki” as the topos for the interdisciplinary study of the body.

In this way, Professor Yuasa left behind for us tremendous work in the areas of research and education. He was productive until the end of his life, even publishing a large monograph in 2004. His contributions to the study of Japanese intellectual history, depth psychology, and mind-body theory stand out as lasting achievements.