

# Global Focus on Knowledge: Humans Considered From the Point of View of Beings Who Must Die (2)

## PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND DEATH ——Its Diversity and Correlative Perception ——

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# I . A Reminder of Death (Memento Mori)

## To the World View Based on This World

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- ▪ Change in value hierarchy from the world beyond to this world (from the soul to the flesh)
- “Whether you live a mundane life or for transcendence of this world, in the end the one great matter is death alone. Just resolve, ‘When the time comes, so be it,’ and every pressing concern will vanish. It is from cherishing your existence and clinging to life that all obstacles arise. If you simply come to realize that death by some mishap is actually a cause for joy, you will be able to face all difficulties with tranquility. Thus, if you sincerely aspire for the world beyond, by all means firmly establish the truth for yourself and do not capitulate to the heart; do not give your mind to things of this samsaric world.”

*Ichigon Hodan* (1291- circa 1350)

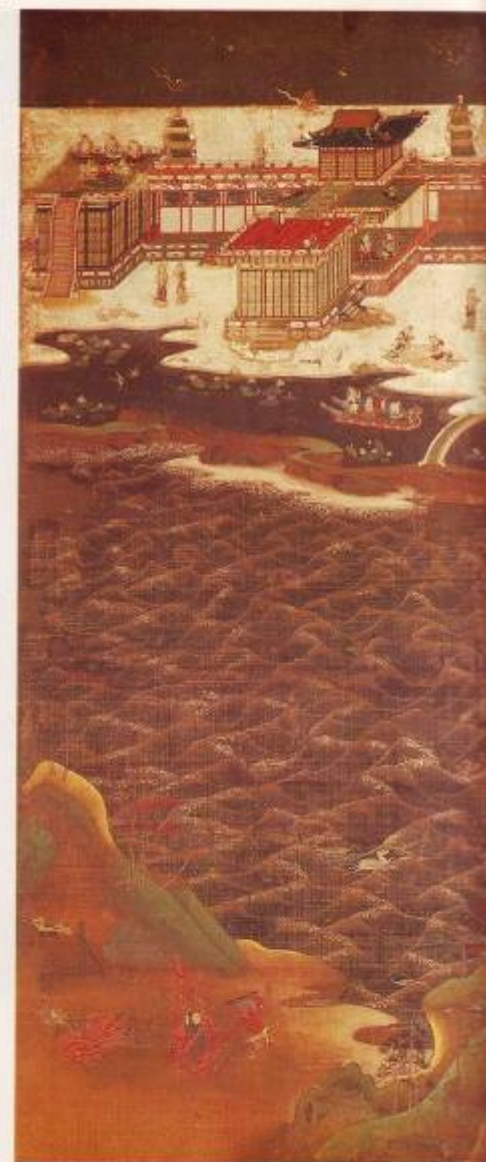
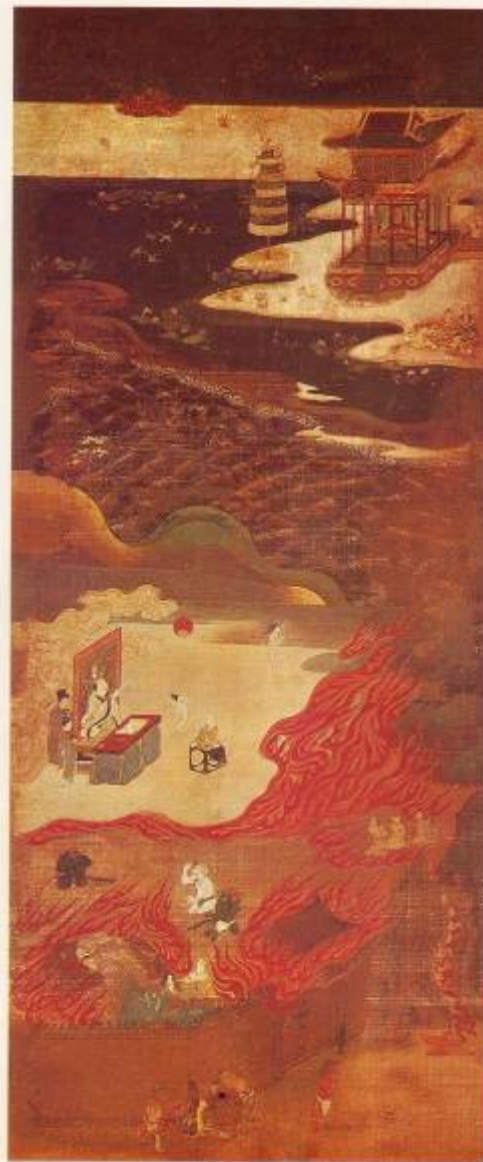
(English version: *Plain Word on the Pure Land Way*,

translated by Dennis Hirota,

Ryukoku University, Kyoto, 1989)



[Yatai, Guardian Deity of Children  
Scroll, ] 14<sup>th</sup> Century



■ [Hell and Paradise] Kinkai-Komyoji 14<sup>th</sup>  
Century





Cathedral of Saint Cecile , Albi France, "The Last Judgment" mural Late  
15<sup>th</sup> Century





# The Way of Peaceful Death

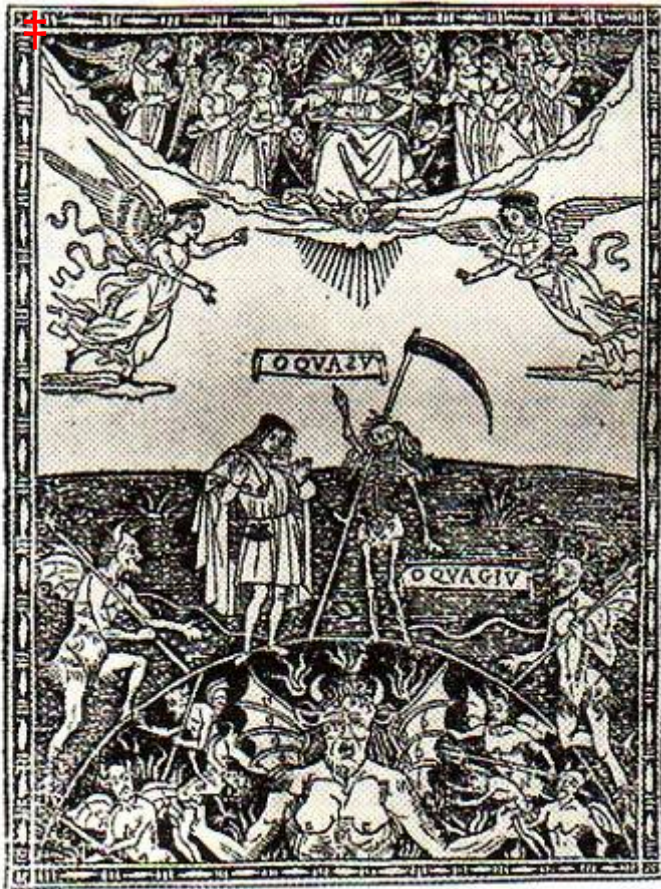
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The dying person tormented by the five temptations and the way to resist them.

1. Lack of Faith
2. Despair
3. Anger
4. Vanity
5. Greed

E.S., 1450, "The Way of Peaceful Death",  
The Ashmolean Museum

Koike, Hisako [ A Stroll Through the Macabre ]  
( Seikyusha 1995)



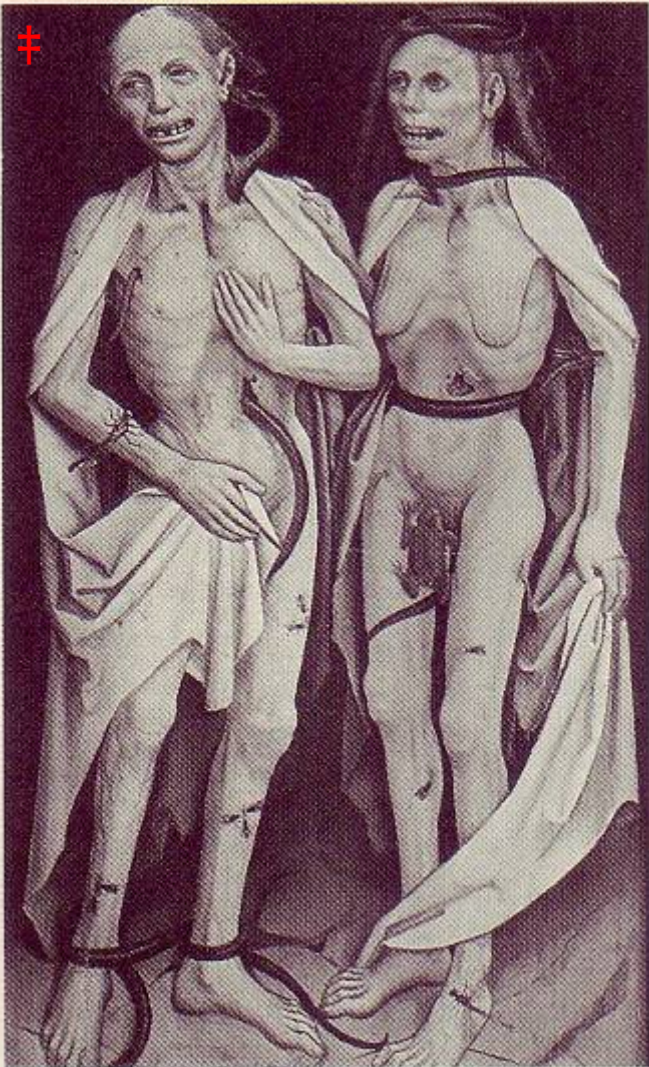
## Girolamo Savonarola ( 1452-98)

[ The Faithful must always wear the spectacles of death, and must prepare for it as if it will happen soon (Omitted)

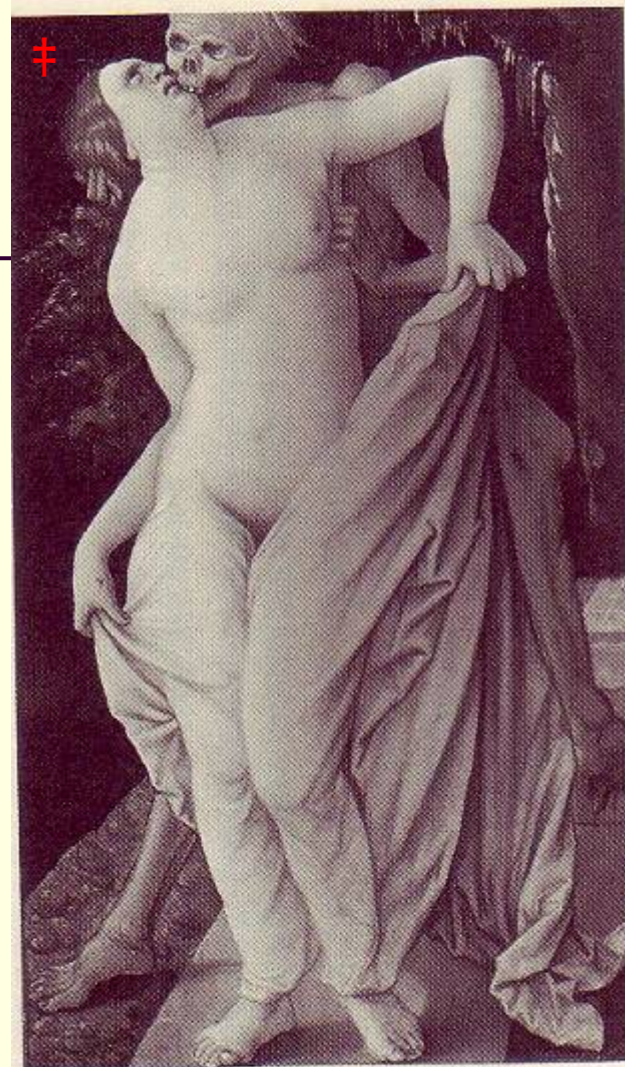
To be intimately confronted by death is a good experience. If one is not strong, then one must die in their own home. Hold a small skeleton in your hand and gaze at it for a while. Likewise, without any tools regard your own flesh. Your hand, your body, before long will become dust and soon a stench will arise.]

Koike, Hisako [ A Stroll Through the Macabre]  
( Seikyusha 1995)





Rot figure of man and woman, 1460-70,  
Strasbourg Museum



a virgin and death, 1518-20, Basel  
Museum

Koike, Hisako [ A Stroll Through the Macabre] ( Seikyusha 1995)

## II . Transience and the Floating World

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### Japanese Buddhism and the Concept of the Transience

“Ceaselessly the river flows, and yet the water is never the same, while in the still pools the shifting foam gathers and is gone, never staying for a moment. Even so is man and his habitation. (an omission) ... Dead in the morning and born at night, so man goes on for ever, unending as the foam on the water.

And this man that is born and dies, who knows whence he came and whither he goes? And who knows also why with so much labor he builds his house, or how such things can give him pleasure? Like the dew on the morning glory are man and his house, who knows which will survive the other? ”

***Hojoki***, 1212, by Kamo-no-Chomei;  
(English version: *The Ten Foot Square Hut*,  
translated by A. L. Sadler,  
Charles E. Tuttle Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing, 1975



◇ *Concept of the Floating World*, Mineo Hashimoto, Kodansha Gendai Shinsho (Kodansha Contemporary Books), 1975

◎ *The Floating World* implies a reflective consciousness of the way one is living deep in this world, while keeping some distance from this world.

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☆ [The Tales of Ise] (Middle Heian period)

“Could my heart stay peaceful in spring,  
if no cherry blossoms ever exist in this world?”

Arihara-no-Narihira

“Cherry blossoms are all the more lovable because they  
fall. Is there any thing in this world that is  
unchanging?”

Matahito

☆ *Kokin Wakashu* (905)

“Does the little cuckoo keep crying in sorrow among the  
Deutzia crenata blossoms, just as I feel in this  
floating world?”

Oshikochi-no-Mitsune

The picture to be  
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☆Saigyō (1118-90)

“The mundaneness keeps casting a cloud over my mind seriously. May the autumn moon clear it to calm me down.”

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“To be a hermit, I should have an air of pessimism. Since my admiring the autumn moon is unbecoming, it clouds the moon for me.”

“I wish I could die in spring under the cherry blossoms, and under the full moon of the second month of the lunar calendar, when grasses and trees begin to sprout.”

“Who imagined I could go over Mt. Saya-no-Nakayama again at my age? I only appreciate still being alive.”

“Although I know this world is transient like a dream, I’m not awakened yet and my mind hasn’t achieved enlightenment.”

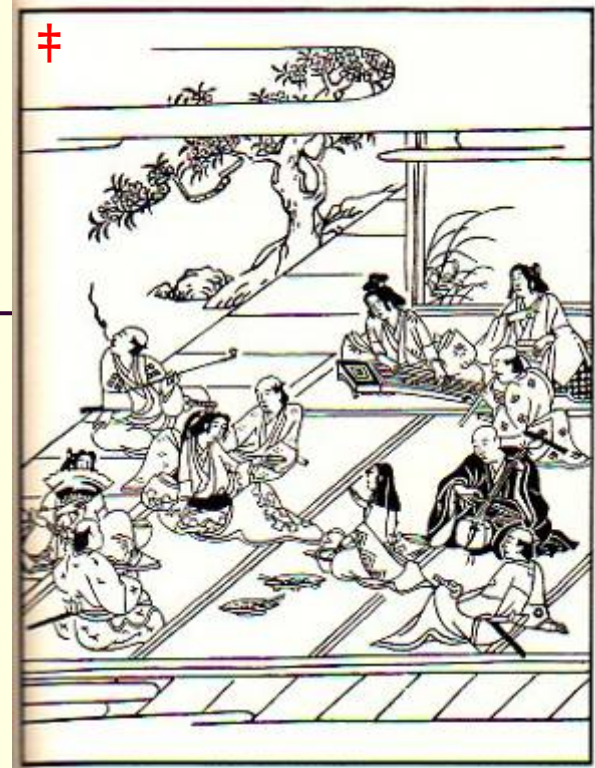




☆ *Ukiyo Monogatari (Tale of the Floating World)* , 1665,  
by Ryoi Asai (1612-91)

“Living in this world, you will see and hear both good and evil, all of which are interesting, but one inch ahead it is pitch dark. It’s useless like the gourd peel to worry about future and not good for your health. Be impromptu. Look, instead, to the moon, snow, flowers, autumn leaves. Sing and drink so that you’ll get merry and comfortable, and being penniless won’t bother you any more. You will feel yourself as a gourd floating on the water. Hence comes the term ‘floating world’.”

Quoted from p.88, vol. 64, *Shinpen Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshu* (Collected works of Japanese Classic Literature new edition), annotated by Masachika Taniwaki, Masahiko Oka & Kazuto Inoue, published by Shogakukan, 1999.



‡:People enjoy “singing and drinking” to forget the gloom of this world. A man sitting on the porch, smoking with a long pipe, a fashion of those days. A woman sticking out a wineglass toward a girl in juvenile hair style, urging her to serve ‘sake’ (rice wine) in front of a man of dissolute attitude. The sounds of koto, hitoyogiri (bamboo flute) and Chinese fiddle echo.

- *Ukiyo-buro (The Edo Public Bathhouse Stories)*, by Sanba Shikitei (1766-1822)

Ukiyo-buro Taii (Summary of *Ukiyo-buro*, the first part of the above book)

“Maybe nothing is quicker and better shortcut to learn the world than a public bathhouse. The reason is that no wonder everyone, the wise or the fool, the right or the wrong, the rich or the poor, the noble or the mean, gets naked when taking a bath, and everyone, Buddha or Confucius, housemaid or houseboy, has selfless appearance, as naked as nature intended, getting rid of any regret or wish, just as the Sea of the West washes away everything.”





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- “Bathe in the clean water and wash away grime of greed and earthly desire, and a master and a servant look so much alike in naked body that you can’t tell one from the other. The same is true from the newborn baby’s first bath to the last bathing ritual at one’s death. A red face drunkard in the evening gets sober by taking a morning bath. There is only a fine line between life and death and nothing ever goes the way one wants it to.”

# III. Thoughts of Life and Death---Japan and the West

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## ◇Dualism/ Monism

◎Soul/ Body (the flesh, the physical)

◎The Transcendent God/ Creation;

The world beyond/ This world

## ◇Confucian Monism

“Ji Lu asked how to serve the soul of the dead. Confucius replied. ‘Since I have not been able to serve men satisfactorily yet, why can I serve the soul well.’ Then Ji Lu dared to ask about death. Confucius replied. ‘Since I have not understood life yet, why can I understand death?’” *Analects of Confucius*, Senshin No. 11

## ◇Based on the individual/ Based on relations



# ◇Origin of the term ‘Thanatopsis’

- *Shisei-kan (Thanatopsis)*, Setsudo Kato (1870-1949), published by Seiretsudo, 1904.

Chapter 1. Transition of Thanatopsis

Chapter 2. Bushido (Japanese chivalry) and Thanatopsis

Chapter 3. Thanatopsis of Ancient Saints

Chapter 4. Modern Thanatopsis

Chapter 5. Solution of Life-and-Death Problems

*Dai Shisei Kan (The Great Thanatopsis)*,  
Sekibunsha, Yanagihara Shoten, 1908



# ◇Kato's favorite thanatopsis

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- “In order to realize the whole world, you should look to your mind. The same is true with the twelve fates. Life and death are all arising from your mind, so if you extinguish your mind, both life and death will vanish.’ (*Avatamsaka Sutra*)’
- As is mentioned above, reality of the universe can be divided into two parts: universal truth vs. life and death. The former represents the immortal principal and what makes turbulent waves of life and death on the principal represents the phenomena in the universe. Just as there is no water without waves and no waves without water, so life and death may be said the waves on the sea of the principal. Thus, we now enter phenomenon-integrated realism, which may well be said the glory of modern philosophy. (p.91)”



## *Seishikan Shitai (Four Types of Thanatopsis),* 1948, Hideo Kishimoto (1903-64)

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- Four types of ‘how to identify endless life or immortal life’:
  1. Desire for continued existence of physical life;
  2. Belief in eternity of life after death;
  3. Commending one’s own life to any substitutable eternal life;
  4. Perception of eternal life in actual life

*Shi-wo-mitsumeru-kokoro---Gan-to-tatakatta- junenkan (The Mind to Face Death---Ten Years Fight against Cancer),* Hideo Kishimoto, Kodansha, 1964 (Pocketbook, 1973)

# National Hero and Martyrdom

卍

祭神  
乃木希典命



卍

配祀  
乃木静子命



Quoted from *History of Nogi Shrine*



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Quoted from *History of Nogi Shrine*



# Love of Death and Solitude

- *Vagabond*, Takehiko Inoue, 29 vols. already issued, 50 million copies in total, adapted from *Miyamoto Musashi*, Eiji Yoshikawa (completed in 1939).



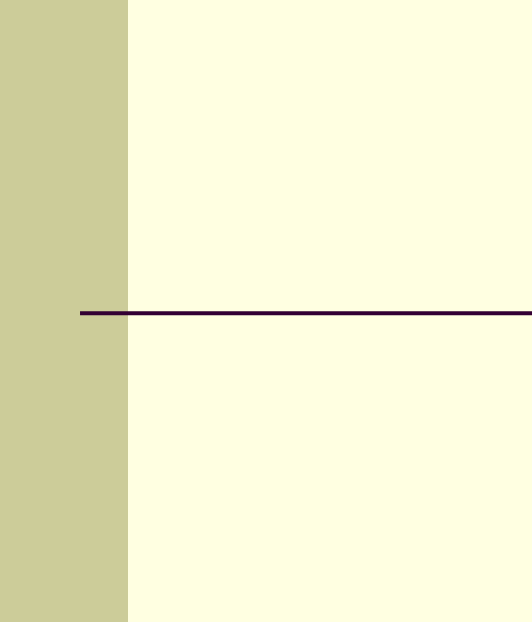




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