

The Closing Chapter / The world of "connectedness"

1. Philosopher in the digital era

What is the work of a philosopher, or, from a practical point of view, an ethicist? What are they usually thinking about? It's hard to imagine for non-specialists. In this closing chapter, I would like to introduce the ideal work of a philosopher living in the digital era of the 21st century.

Philosopher's mission

Now, looking at the work of philosophers, we find that they tend to be polarized in two directions.

On the one hand, the interpretation of classics in the history of philosophy is enthusiastically performed. The interpretation of classics is, of course, historical research, which requires a deep philosophical background and historical perspective. However, the more submerged in the interpretation of the classics, the farther away it is to go out of the world of thought constrained by a particular era and culture and to specifically wrestle with the era of the 21st century.

On the other hand, there is an increasing number of practical studies on particular themes such as caring, technology, war or discrimination. For that purpose, it is necessary to dive into the field and thoroughly understand the specific context before conducting a thorough analysis. However, the closer we are to the particular sites, the more the unified perspective that covers the era of the 21st century becomes hazy.

Philosophy should be wisdom that fundamentally responds to the challenges

of the times. The significance and mission of philosophers living in the 21st century are also there. However, at present, classical and practical studies of philosophy are not connected, and as a result, it is not possible to respond concretely and comprehensively to the challenges of the times. In order to meet the challenges of the times, we must first clearly understand what the 21st century is and what the challenges are.

Challenges of the times

Let's go back to the 19th century. In the 19th century, when the functional differentiation of society progressed, the issue of the times was the mediation of science and religion. It was Kant's dualistic philosophy that systematically provided this mediation model, and the basis for it was "object recognition." On this basis, the ethical context focuses on individual conscious behavior.

In the 20th century, when the traditional hierarchical society was reorganized by functional differentiation, the foundation of philosophy shifts from "object recognition" to "behavior in the environment." The problems that emerged here are the unconsciousness outside of consciousness, life, emotions, language, communication, relationships and systems. Ethics shifts the focus from individuals to relationships and organizations.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the environment, animals, AI, etc. outside humans will appear as problems in the further development of technology. And today in the 21st century, the foundation of philosophy shifts to communication, including digital information. "Digitalization" has pushed this forward.

2. Issues in the digital society

The above overview has already been pointed out in the opening chapter. In

order to take a step further and grasp the issues of the 21st century, we must reconstruct the digital society by the way of thinking of <four-dimensional correlation>.

Macroscopic trends

Macroscopic trends have occurred from the latter half of the 20th century to the 21st century. In the economic region, <informatization> has progressed to <digitalization>. As this digitalization permeates, <single-person> will be added to <declining birthrate and aging> in the common region. In the public region, <globalization> overlaps with <division>. In the cultural region, the <end of the ideology (big story)> deepens into the <meaninglessness> of all values. The above can be summarized as follows.

I Economic region … Informatization … Digitization

II Communal region

… Declining birthrate and aging population … Single person

III Public region … Globalization … Division

IV Cultural region … The end of ideology… The meaninglessness of value

Let's think of the digital society as a "problem" and arrange the issues under the 16 fields of the social system region. By tracing this in chronological order, it is possible to analytically show the impact of <digitization> on each field of the social system and its flow. In addition, let's attach a four-dimensional correlation diagram that gives a panoramic view of the overall spatial arrangement (**Fig.41, 42, 43, 44**).

I Economic region

i External dimension

Digitization brings out the value of efficiency and convenience. In this situation, the working environment will change drastically, and an automated "optimal environment" will emerge for all aspects of livelihood.

ii Internal dimension

In the optimal environment, people aim for comfort and pursue safety and security endlessly, but since there is no limit to security, anxiety arises in return, and anxiety seeks further security.

iii Others-oriented dimensions

Increasing reliance on technology creates anxiety about vulnerabilities and creates a "risk paradox" in which new measures create new risks again.

iv Self-oriented dimension

When the movements of ii ii iii merge, the level of satisfaction of desires continues to rise, as is typically seen in the endlessness of health desires, creating a "desire paradox" in which desires arouse new desires.

Fig. 41 Economic region

II Communal region

i external dimension

Digitization promotes individualization, but on the other hand, privacy is lost, and skillful skills and autonomous judgment are not required, so in reality, uniformization progresses. This is the "individual paradox" in which the progress of individualization returns and denies individualization.

ii Internal dimension

Digitization promotes independence, but the reverse side of independence is loneliness and isolation, and as a result, mutual assistance is weakened.

iii Others-oriented dimension

Mutual distrust due to isolation requires external surveillance and increases reliance on government and academic institutions. As a result of this inclusion in a particular specialty, the alienation of those excluded from it spreads.

iv Self-oriented dimension

The weakening of mutual aid and the spread of alienation have led to sympathy for anti-technology discourse and humanist claims, and a growing thirst for the

community.

Fig. 42 Communal region

III Public region

i External dimension

As the paradox of desires prevails, dissatisfied and anxious people become overly demanding of politics.

ii Internal dimension

Faced with the trilemma of meeting the demands of the people, curbing excessive demands, and bailing out those who have been eliminated, the measures available to the government are limited. As a result, people are longing for stronger politics.

iii Others-oriented dimension

As digital processing technology blurs the line between truth and fake, people accept only information that is convenient for them, and the division of the group progresses.

iv Self-oriented dimension

The communication gap between groups widens and the conflict over justice intensifies.

Fig. 43 Public region

IV Cultural region

i External dimension

Since digitization erases the dimension of depth of things and situations, digital thinking that lacks a sense of complexity is widespread.

ii Internal dimension

Due to the opposition to digital thinking, nature, body, climate and community are reviewed, and traditional ideas are revived.

iii Others-oriented dimension

Contrary to the revival of traditional ideas, the demand for equality of minorities continues forever, and differentiation and flattening are thoroughly carried out beyond humans to animals and robots.

iv Self-oriented dimension

As digitalization causes a transformation of reality, people with a sense of loss of reliance and a sense of spiritual emptiness seek absolute and ultimate meaning.

Fig. 44 Cultural region

Basic challenges

The above is an overview of what kind of fluctuations will occur inside the social system domain under the influence of digitalization. When they are put together, the basic issues of the digital society emerge. That is the next four-dimensional task.

I Economic region ... Optimal digital environment ... Self-control of endless desires

II Communal region ... Singleness ... Reconstruction of weakened mutual help

III Public region ... Division... Coordination of conflict over justice

IV Cultural region ... Value meaningless ... Comprehensive view of reality

3. Ethics of digital society

In order to comprehensively tackle the four-dimensional issues of the digital society, the method of systems ethics is necessary and effective, as is the case with the medical ethics problems that have been discussed so far. According to this method, it is to first set a practical goal, second orient each dimension from the viewpoint of the set practical goal, then reconsider the

issues from the ground up, and finally formulate and implement concrete countermeasures.

So, what are the "practical goal" for restructuring the ethics of the digital society? The practical goal must be inherent in the problem itself, not the ultimate goal. In my opinion, that is the conclusion of the previous chapter, "competitive coexistence among different systems." This practical goal is embedded in the universe of communication networks behind the digital society itself.

From the perspective of competitive coexistence among different systems, the following paths emerge. First, in the region of culture IV, a comprehensive framework of reality will be established based on the theory of communication systems. Next, in III public region, we apply a two-sided parallel model and a four-dimensional correlation approach to shift the conflict of justice. Furthermore, in the II communal region, a multi-generational mutual help community will be formed and weakened mutual help relationships will be reconstructed. Through the above efforts, I will review the way of living and working in the economic region and self-control endless desires. The above can be summarized as follows.

Self-control of endless desires...General review of living and working styles

Reconstruction of weakened mutual help

...Formation of multi-generational mutual help community

Coordinating conflicts over justice

...the practical application of system ethical methods

Comprehensive view of reality...Communication system theory

4. Philosophy of "connectedness"

The basis of systems ethics is a way of thinking that captures problems and events in a four-dimensional correlation. As pointed out in the opening chapter, the dominant way of thinking in traditional ethics was to focus on one dimension only. This is especially true for modern Japanese philosophers.

Nishida Philosophy

Many modern Japanese philosophers have viewed "ethics" in the one-dimensional direction of "community," or "indiscriminate identity," on the basis of 19th and 20th century philosophies. Kitaro Nishida, who represents Japanese philosophy, is one of them *.

* Nishida's philosophy is the logic of historical reality, and its basis is the idea of "place". This is the logic of the cycle in which innumerable individuals are born from the environment, and the individuals born in this way work together to create the environment. The key to the logic of this cycle is the interaction between individuals that connect them to the environment as a whole. In the case of Nishida, this interaction of individuals is not seen in the direction of the individual things that work with each other, but in the overall direction that includes the individuals. "Place" is located at the limit of the whole.

From the perspective of structuring the communication system, "place", which is the fundamental idea of Nishida's philosophy, is not indiscriminate as a whole, but is reconsidered as a communication network that creates various systems. Systems ethics, which develops the perspective of structuring the communication system, breaks through the limits of Nishida's philosophy, which is biased toward inclusiveness, by enabling inclusiveness and distinction at the same time. In that sense, it is a new Japanese philosophy of the 21st century.

* For the sake of fairness, let's touch on trends in Japanese philosophy that are different from Nishida's philosophy. Gen'yoku Kuwaki (1870-1956) of the University of Tokyo was a philosopher of the same era as Nishida of the Kyoto School. Kuwaki

developed his own "philosophy of culture" under the influence of the late Neo-Kantian Windelband. The fundamental point of view of his philosophy is the freedom of the personality responsible for "fundamental value creation." From that point of view, he tried to grasp "Japanese culture" in a direction that was open to the world.

In contrast to Nishida, his "philosophy of culture" is not in the direction of the whole that includes individuals, but in the direction of the individuals that work with each other. However, from the perspective of systems ethics, "fundamental value creation" overlaps with the creation of communication systems, but created values are still limited to "cultural value", so it can be said that one-dimensional thinking remain in his philosophy.

Application of method

So far, this book has explained the theoretical framework of the method of systems ethics. This framework is rooted in the ontological structure of human being. Therefore, it should apply to any conflict situation involving humans.

Of course, in order to actually shift the conflict situation, the problem itself must be analyzed in detail based on the concrete context. Work in this direction has already begun in the study of QOL scales, but the application of the method is not limited to the study of QOL scales. Let's touch on ethnic conflict as another application.

The relationship between the Islamic world and the Western world is historically complex. There is now a major issue between the two, how to treat the large numbers of refugees from the Islamic world. Britain's withdrawal from the EU, Germany's expansion of expulsion of foreigners, and France's anti-terrorism all originated there (here, the issue of foreigners from Eastern European countries is set aside).

On the surface of society, there are many troubles related to immigration control, terrorism, place of residence, employment, etc., but the essence of

the problem is not there. As symbolized by the "Burqini Controversy", the essence is the conflict between civilizations centered on the idea of law and religion. On the one hand, there is the principle of separation of church and state, and on the other hand, there is a system that does not separate law, religion, morality, and customs. This is a fundamental conflict.

Certainly, the clash of civilizations is not only between Islam and the West, but also between China and the West, and between Jewish culture and the West. Not unrelated to ourselves, Japanese.

Systems ethics also applies clear methods to ethnic conflicts (the underlying religious conflicts) and sets a common foundation for moving conflicts. There are many people involved, so things will be much more complicated and difficult than in medical or elderly care settings. However, systems ethics still tries to challenge without giving up hope because it knows the following example.

In Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, various religions such as Hindu denominations, Sikhism, Jainism, Tibetan Buddhism, Christian denominations, and Islam have coexisted for many years. From generation to generation, parents tell their children to get along with believers of different religions among the people who live there. In other words, at the root of the culture that respects the differences in religious doctrine and customs, there is a method of coexistence, which is deeply rooted in the soul (NHK BS Premium "Somewhere Street Kathmandu" broadcast on January 13, 2015).

Systems ethics stops focusing on only one dimension (one aspect) of an event, and takes the idea that the four dimensions correlate. From this perspective, the parties themselves are encouraged to relativize their own viewpoint and interpretation (self-transformation), and through this, the goal is to fluidize the confrontational situation between specific positions.

The perspective of four-dimensional correlation is, to put it plainly, to put and see yourself in a connectedness. This is exactly the symbiotic manner that the Kathmandu people have inherited from generation to generation. Philosophically rephrasing this manner of coexistence, it becomes a way of life with four-dimensional correlation.

Philosophy of "connectedness"

The perspective of connectedness enables insight into the critical conditions for applying the methods of systems ethics, the "practical goals".

In the case of public prevention (cervical cancer vaccination), the perspective of connectedness did not pay attention to the viewpoint of collective defense alone, but also the viewpoints of the respect of the individual, scientific rationality and people's patience to side effects.

Similarly, in the case of infertility treatment, the perspective of connectedness introduced the "connectedness between parents and children in a broad sense" as a practical goal. Or, in the case of euthanasia problems, it found "connectedness between way of life and death, between the way of life of the caregiver and the way of life of the caretaker and between the dead and the living" as practical goals. Regarding relationships with animals and robots, that perspective led to set "competitive coexistence among different systems" as a practical goal.

As explained in the opening chapter, "connection" is philosophically paraphrased as "communication". And "connectedness" is a communication network, therefore a communication system. The perspective of connectedness is the fundamental perspective of systems ethics, that is, the perspective of (structuring) the communication system. At the heart of systems ethics is the philosophy of "connectedness."

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This concludes this book for the time being. "For the time being" is because the application of the method of systems ethics will be waited in the future, and this book will have to be transformed through the result of the application. From the standpoint of this book, the transformation is highly welcomed. In order to promote this, we are looking forward to the emergence of young people who resonate with the four-dimensional correlation thinking method of systems ethics and carry applied research together.