YUASA Yasuo’s Theory of the Body

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Shigenori Nagatomo
Dept. of Religion
Temple University
U.S.A.

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I. Introduction
Among the voluminous writings of YUASA Yasuo (1925-2005), we find essays thematizing the body gathered mainly in Volume Fourteen of Yuasa Yasuo’s Complete Works, wherein two major works addressing this topic are contained along with eighteen other essays that supplement them. They are Shintai: Tōyōteki shinshinron no kokoromi [The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory (SUNY, 1987)] and Shintai, Ki, Shugyō [The Body, Self-Cultivation and Ki-Energy (SUNY, 1992)]. How did Yuasa, I wonder, assess the worth of his theory of the body? When Yuasa Yasuo’s Complete Works was first beginning to be published in 1999, the first volume to appear in print was Volume Fourteen, wherein we can have a glimpse into his feelings he had toward his own theory. It seems that his theory of the body occupied a central, and hence important, place in his scholarship.

1 YUASA Yasuo, YUASA Yasuo Zenshū (Tokyo: Hakua shobō, 1999).
Why then does Yuasa develop a theory of the body as one of the most important themes of inquiry in his scholarship? We can probably adduce many reasons for this, including psychological, cultural-geographical, and historical reasons, but a short answer, which I think captures his real intent, would be probably for the purpose of proposing an Asian, particularly an East-Asian, view of the body in the context of global philosophy. Or alternatively, Yuasa presents a theory of the body as an attempt to overcome the modern Western paradigm of thinking and offers it as a stepping stone to propose East-Asian views of the human being and nature. He believes that his theory of the body can open up a new perspective on these views, with the hope that it becomes an impetus to change the direction of the contemporary global situation in a way conducive for fostering an holistic lifestyle.

When we attempt to articulate his theory of the body however, we immediately encounter a difficulty of capturing its whole accurately, for it incorporates diverse fields of academic discipline, such as Eastern and Western philosophy, depth-psychology, neurophysiology, modern Western medicine, conditioned reflex, psychosomatic medicine, Eastern medicine, and parapsychology. It also covers theories of sports and artistry. Upon glancing at the scope of his inquiry, one cannot but be amazed by its breadth, as it goes far beyond the capacity of one single individual scholar. Only an intellectual giant, like Yuasa Yasuo, can digest these diverse fields of discipline, and sublimate them into a unified theory, while maintaining a thematic consistency and coherence. Yuasa’s theory is as comprehensive as it is interdisciplinary.

It is therefore insurmountable for me to cover within a limited space all of the multifarious dimensions of Yuasa’s theory of the body. All I can do is to sketch an outline of his theory and then only its bare bones. Accordingly, I would like to briefly touch salient thematic features I discern in his theory: I will deal

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2 A direct motive for him to launch an investigation into this topic is found in the Postscript he wrote to Kindai nihon no tetsugaku to jitsuzonshisō [Modern Japanese Philosophy and Existential Thought], in which we find him saying that “Through the research material for this book, I have come to notice that a unique view of the body exists among the Japanese philosophers.” Yuasa Yasuo, Yuasa Yasuo Zenshū [The Complete Works of Yuasa Yasuo] (Tokyo: Hakubutsukan, 1999), vol. 10, p. 393.
with four such features by discussing 1) the predicament of human beings—particularly its epistemological meaning, while living in the midst of the daily environment, which he calls everyday “commonsensical” dualism; 2) a methodological stance for overcoming this dualism; 3) the philosophy of self-cultivation he accordingly incorporates in his theory; and 4) the body-scheme he designs to capture the process involved in self-cultivation. To conclude this short essay, I will draw a few implications from his theory of the body.

II. Commonsensical Dualism

Historically, in the tradition of Western philosophy, a concern for how to understand the body surfaced explicitly in the 17th century when Descartes (1596-1650) declared “cogito ergo sum” as the principle of philosophical investigation—i.e. a claim of the apodictic certainty of cogito—although the germination of this mode of thinking can be traced as far back as the distinction made in Greek philosophy between form (eidos) and matter (hylē). Descartes defines the body as that which is extended, a matter existing in space that is ontologically distinct from cogito, while he defines cogito as that which thinks, a disembodied mind (or soul) which stands, as it were, outside of space. This is the well-known Cartesian dualism.3 Yuasa questions, however, if in Cartesian dualism, the body so understood is not the body belonging to an “I.”4 This is, Yuasa reasons, because one’s own body as a whole resists a total objectification, insofar as one relies on external sensory perception for observation, unlike an other’s body, which “I” can objectify in toto.5 Let us examine it a little more closely, following Yuasa’s reasoning.

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3 As is often observed, at the background of this dualism is an inheritance of the Christian flesh-spirit dualism in a secularized form, along with the faith in the immortality of the soul.


5 One may argue that since the meaning of the body is that which is thought by cogito, it is correct to understand it as the idea of the body, i.e., bodyness. Because of this reason, it cannot be understood as that which is perceived by external perception. As the argument below suggests, it is unquestionable however that the body thus understood also contains a problem.
In Descartes’ mind-body dualism, the concept of the mind-in-general arises by generalizing the *cogito* of an “I” that is anonymized. What should be noted here is the fact that in this generalization the others’ minds are totally excluded. This is because the concept of the generalized mind is obtained by expanding the scope and content of *cogito* that belongs to an “I.” On the other hand, the concept of the body-in-general is obtained by generalizing the others’ bodies, while also rendering them anonymous. Consequently, “my” own body similarly disappears in this generalization, because the generalized concept of the body is valid only for others’ bodies as seen from the perspective of an “I.” In short, Yuasa’s point is that these generalizations ignore a difference in the mode of cognition. To be specific, they ignore the difference between an “I” knowing one’s body and others’ body, and between an “I” knowing one’s mind and others’ mind. For example, when “I” attempt to know an other’s mind, “I” rely on his/her bodily and/or linguistic expression, but unlike knowing one’s own mind, an other’s mind cannot be known directly here and now.

However, when we judge the above points in light of the experiential fact that as long as a human being is alive, he/she is an integrated whole of the mind and the body, i.e. in light of “I” knowing one’s own body vis-à-vis the state of one’s mind, it is obvious that Descartes’ dualism is disjunctive, wherein is intrinsically embedded contradiction, inconsistency and incoherence. Notwithstanding this however, the generalized concept of the body, for example, is assumed in the practice of medical science, which is organized by following the Cartesian method of thinking, while the generalized concept of the mind is seen in the philosophy of idealism, which regards the transcendental subjectivity as an *a priori* condition for cognition. (For example, the philosophies of Kant and Husserl.)

Why then does Descartes’ dualism surface in this way? Yuasa states the following. In the field of everyday experience, there exists a pre-reflective, practical understanding of communal nature as a condition *prior to* a theoretical

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investigation concerning the mind-body relationship, and this antecedent condition imposes a structure on how the everyday understanding must occur. In other words, on the strength that we are all humans, there exists a pre-reflective understanding that presupposes an interchangeability between “my” mind and an other’s mind, and between “my” body and an other’s body, and accepting it as “a matter of fact,” we carry out our daily activity. If a person were to deny this interchangeability, such a person would fall into solipsism. However, the truth which a solipsist holds disappears with his/her death. In spite of this pre-reflective, practical, communal understanding as an antecedent condition however, a “way” to directly apprehend the other’s mind is closed in the field of everyday experience when relying on “my” sensory perception and “my” discursive mode of reasoning—that is, as long as we rely on the everyday method of cognition. This epistemological closure is a predicament for the human being placed in the field of everyday experience. Yuasa calls the standpoint which places the human being in such a predicament “commonsensical dualism.”

Here we can discern a reason why Yuasa turns to the philosophy of self-cultivation. We must acknowledge provisionally that the epistemological predicament is intrinsic to the everyday standpoint, in which is embedded the aforementioned contradiction, incoherence and inconsistency. However, the predicament invites us to think that it must be overcome existentially, ethically and epistemologically. How can we then overcome it? It must be overcome, Yuasa maintains, not through pure reason or a discursive mode of theoretical reasoning, but through the practice of self-cultivation. Since this stance forms an integral part of Yuasa’s theory of the body, we need to keep it in mind.

Before we move into Yuasa’s philosophy of self-cultivation, we must pause here to reflect on the difference in the methodological stance presupposed between Cartesian disjunctive dualism and the philosophy of self-cultivation. In so doing, we will be able to put the characteristics of Yuasa’s theory of the body in clear relief, while showing how Yuasa attempts to overcome methodologically

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the commonsensical dualism, including Cartesian disjunctive dualism, by way of the philosophy of self-cultivation.

III. Reflection on Methodological Stance

We can find the following characteristics in Yuasa’s methodological reflection.¹⁰

When philosophers attempt to question the mind-body relationship, they take a theoretical stance while being anchored in the standpoint of the commonsensical dualism, and they often formulate their question as: “What is the relationship between the mind and the body?” In this methodological stance is presupposed—as is seen in the genealogy of idealism in Western philosophy—a prioritization of theory (theōria) over practice (prāxis). Consequently, this kind of questioning leads them to an essentialistic or substantialistic ontology, as they are duped by the subject-predicate linguistic structure.¹¹ On the other hand, when philosophers in the tradition of self-cultivation raise a question about this relationship, they ask, “What do a mind and a body become through the practice of self-cultivation?” This is because they are interested in practical, lived experience. In this methodological stance an emphasis is placed on practice, and


¹¹ A well-formed sentence in Indo-European languages consists of the subject-predicate structure. In the structure of these languages the predicate functions to qualify and/or limit the subject. This means that a thing or a thing-event is conceived primarily in terms of the subject. We might say that all is gathered into the subject. For example, Aristotle, in defining substance, thought that it is the subject which cannot become a predicate. If the subject is transcendentized, it becomes a transcendental subject, in virtue of which the transcendental subjectivity emerges in the field of philosophy, and the transcendent God as a concept also emerges in the field of religion, of which the philosophy of the Church fathers spoke in terms, for example, of creatio ex nihilo. Consequently, a substantialistic or essentialistic ontology has come to be advocated through this kind of operation, when it is coupled with a deep rooted longing for things to exist forever. Individualism can be conceived of along this line of thinking. Nishida Kitarō, who questioned this mode of thinking, proposed an idea of “transcendental predicate” [chōetsuteki jutsugo] by which he understood that in cognizing a thing or a thing-event one must grasp it in term of its activity. To put it simply, it is not that an essence is what makes a thing the thing that it is, but rather its activity makes a thing what it is. Nishida understood the “transcendental predicate” to issue from “the place of absolutely nothing [zettai mu no basho].” He uses the term “absolutely nothing” to mean that which is not defined or determined by anything and “place” to mean “wherein” things are placed and act. Accordingly, Nishida’s “place of absolutely nothing” designates a primordial source of activity as well as the ground of being.
a theoretical concern for the mind-body relationship is, to use a terminology of phenomenology, practically “bracketed.” Therefore, they do not accept the essentialistic or substantialistic ontology. To put it differently, practice precedes theory in the methodological stance of this philosophy. Herein is clearly indicated Yuasa’s methodological stance of the philosophy of self-cultivation, in which, as we can discern, the practical philosophy is advocated. Practical philosophy of self-cultivation accepts the reversal of theory over practice by acknowledging the contradiction intrinsically embedded in the everyday standpoint. This does not mean however that it is not interested in theoretical questions. Instead, it understands that a proper perspective on formulating a theoretical question cannot be forthcoming as long as one is anchored in the standpoint of the commonsensical dualism, because human beings are in actuality incapable of overcoming the predicament of the everyday standpoint. (For Yuasa this predicament, as mentioned above, is epistemological as it is existential and ethical.) Accordingly, we must find a “way” that overcomes the everyday standpoint. Yuasa seeks it in the practical philosophy of self-cultivation as is found in the Eastern tradition of self-cultivation, particularly the practice of meditation.

IV. Philosophy of Self-Cultivation
As is seen above, Yuasa incorporates the tradition of self-cultivation as an integral element in his theory of the body, and what he has primarily in mind are various meditation methods that have been practiced in traditions such as (Kuṇḍalini) Yoga, Daoism and (Esoteric, Zen, and Pure Land) Buddhism. He captures a principle common to all of these meditation methods as follows: one corrects the modality of one’s mind by correcting the modality of one’s body.12 This principle is based on the practical knowledge that a capacity of the mind can be

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transformed just as a bodily capacity can be enhanced through training. In this sense, if we are to use the terminology of Existentialism, self-cultivation is an “existential project” through which, Yuasa thinks, one can overcome the commonsensical standpoint. This is a cardinal point in Yuasa’s philosophy of self-cultivation.

How then can it be overcome? Since Daoist categories are easy to understand—because they capture a complex process schematically—I will briefly explicate a process of overcoming by using them, while keeping in mind Yuasa’s explanation. According to Daoist philosophy, meditation transforms sexual energy (sei) into energy of psycho-physiological nature (i.e. ki-energy), which is then transformed into a spiritually subtle divine energy (shin). In Daoism, the spiritually subtle divine energy is said to be further transformed into the void (kyo), which is a primal font of creative energy and a home of authentic self. These three transformative processes describe how a Daoist meditator moves to transformed states of consciousness, but when they are interpreted epistemologically, they describe how the dualistic perspective of the everyday standpoint is transformed into an holistic perspective and how thing-events come to be seen from that perspective. For example, the Secret of the Golden Flower, a well-known Daoist meditation text, describes an experience of reaching an apex of meditative self-cultivation to the effect that “[I] try to find [my] body, but cannot find it.” As this example shows, the holistic standpoint is a perspective that opens up only when practically transcending the commonsensical standpoint in which the mind and the body are dualistically opposed. Herein we can clearly

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13 We need to be clear about the fact that it differs from the position advanced, for example, by Aristotle. Even though Aristotle assumed an empirical stance, he insisted in his Metaphysics that a true, authentic knowledge is a theoretical knowledge of a universal that is obtained through an intellectual generalization.


15 Dōgen, who is often heralded as one of the most philosophical Zen masters, expressed a similar meditation experience as “casting off the body and the mind” [shinjin datsuraku], wherein the distinction between the mind and the body disappears. Myōe, in the tradition of Kegon Buddhism, who is known to have observed precepts throughout his life, reflectively captured his meditation experience as “mind-body crystallization” [shinjin gyōnen]. This phrase describes a clear, transparent state of the mind that obtains in meditation. Buddhism maintains that the being of the clear transparent mind is at the same time the being of the world, wherein a transparent light is said to be dazzlingly shining.
discern the afore-mentioned principle of Yuasa’s self-cultivation philosophy. The philosophy of self-cultivation teaches that since the transformation of the mind is correlated with the transformation of the body, the practice of self-cultivation \textit{practically} transforms the commonsensical dualism, including the Cartesian disjunctive dualism into the correlative mind-body dualism, and through the process of this transformation, the meditator reaches an holistic perspective.

More specifically, essential to this transformative process, as exemplified above in the Daoist scheme, is a transformation of \textit{ego-centric} complexes in one’s personality—which is formed by emotions, desires and instincts—into higher spiritual energy. Since these affective modalities are of the body, meditation enables a meditator to become consciously aware of complexes and to learn to dissolve them by discharging them in the form of wandering thoughts and images: meditation has a function of \textit{purifying} the source out of which these affective modalities surface. Because the source that gives rise to emotions, desires, and instincts is buried deep in the unconscious, we can alternatively state that the principle of meditation training has a meaning of purifying, to use Jung’s (1596-1650) terminology, the unconscious (both personal and collective). This purification in turn has an effect on personality formation, because the personality is in part formed by various complexes that are unconsciously defined by one’s likes and dislikes. In the tradition of self-cultivation, it is experientially known that such a purification has a positive effect on personality formation. As personality is a habituated pattern of emotional responses, it therefore leads Yuasa to conclude that self-cultivation carries an ethical sense of perfecting a personality.

Because the process of purifying the unconscious accompanies various image-experiences arising out of the unconscious, Yuasa devotes considerable space to examine the texts of Yoga, Daoism and (Esoteric and Pure Land) Buddhism in order to elucidate their depth-psychological meaning, by utilizing in-depth knowledge he acquired through his study of Jung’s depth-psychology.\footnote{See for example four volumes Yuasa wrote on Jung’s psychology; \textit{Jung and Christianity}, \textit{Jung and European Spirituality}, and two volumes of \textit{Jung and the East}.} The unconscious, according to Jung, is a reservoir of images with varying
magnitudes and significance. Yuasa interprets it to form a stratified, hierarchical constellation, based on his knowledge of image-experiences that occur in the course of self-cultivation practice, and these constellated layers of images form “one world.” “One world” means that just as we share one common physical space, we share “one spiritual world” in the dimension of the unconscious or the soul. This “one world,” like Zhaungzi’s “chaos,” is a world in which time and space are indeterminate and hence rendered zero.

How does one then approach such a world? The hierarchy of images consists of base and frightening images at its shallow layers, and with a deepening of meditation practice, the meditator experiences being embraced by the divine, the sacred, and even by transparent illuminations. (The Daoist example mentioned above, i.e. “[I] try to find [my] body but cannot find it,” is an instance of this kind of experience.) With a deepening of experience in the course of meditative practice, Yuasa points out that what Jung called “archetypal situations” or what may also be called parapsychological phenomena start surfacing following “the principle of synchronicity.” In the context of the philosophy of self-cultivation, the principle of synchronicity means that the body and the mind become one, wherein a thing-event in the psychological space and a thing-event in the physical space become coincided in meaning. To generalize it, we may say that it is a state in which a physical space and a psychological space become overlapped. This observation shows Yuasa’s incorporation of what is known to occur as a by-product of meditation practice in the traditions of Yoga, Buddhism and Daoism. He interprets that at the apex of such image-experiences is found an authentic self, which is identified, for example, as enlightenment (satori) in Zen and Dao in Daoism.

Next, I would like to discuss how Yuasa schematizes the everyday, commonsensical dualism and the transformative process of self-cultivation that goes beyond it, and this topic takes us to an inquiry of Yuasa’s body-scheme.

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17 Here we can sense Yuasa’s development of the concept of “one world” (unus mundus), whose idea can be traced back to Plato, and which Jung incorporated in his psychology.
V. Yuasa’s Body-Scheme

Yuasa’s body-scheme as a whole is more comprehensive than, and is superior to, those which have thus far been proposed (e.g. by Henry Head, Henry Bergson, Merleau-Ponty, and Ichikawa Hiroshi) and consists of four information circuits, which are: 1) the sensory-motor circuit, 2) the circuit of coenesthesis, 3) the emotion-instinct circuit and 4) the circuit of unconscious quasi-body. One of the characteristics of Yuasa’s body-scheme is that in the standpoint of everyday experience, one’s awareness gradually disappears as one moves from the first circuit to the fourth circuit, but with a deepening of self-cultivation one’s awareness in turn becomes opened up.

The first circuit captures how a sense datum is (centripetally) received through a sense organ (i.e. sensory perception) and how an action is executed (centrifugally) based on it. It depicts perception and action as they relate to the field of everyday experience. The second circuit, “the circuit of coenesthesis,” is concerned with a self-apprehension or a feeling one has of one’s own body, such as a kinetic sensation (i.e. “the circuit of kinesthesis”) and a sensation about a visceral organ (i.e. “the circuit of somesthesis”). Unlike the first circuit, a clear awareness of this circuit cannot be obtained in a healthy state, because this circuit is experientially located at the periphery of the first circuit. For example, Husserl was aware of the importance of kinesthesia existing at the periphery of sensory awareness, but he never fully incorporated it in his phenomenology. Moreover, in Merleau-Ponty’s body-scheme, the first circuit and kinesthesia are extensively investigated in connection with his concept of “habit-body,” but Yuasa notes that he makes no reference to somesthesia. In this connection, it is worthwhile to note Yuasa’s observation that both the circuits of kinesthesia and somesthesia are closely connected with the sensory-motor circuit in executing actions in athletics or performing arts. He elucidates how the difference in motor capacity arises between a novice and a master of sports and performing arts. Both “the sensory-


motor circuit” and “the circuit of coenesthesia” belong to what Yuasa calls “the conscious-cortex order”—“conscious” because the information received and the execution of an action based on this information can be processed consciously and “cortex” because the activity of sensing and executing an action can be mapped neurophysiologically on the neoencephalon. The preceding two circuits are a schematization that is obtained through an analysis of the everyday, commonsensical standpoint.

The last two circuits are “the emotion-instinct circuit” and “the circuit of unconscious quasi-body.” That Yuasa brings out these two circuits is one of his greatest contributions to the theory of the body. Without his knowledge of the practice of self-cultivation and depth-psychology they would have never been discussed in the field of philosophy. The former circuit is psychologically related to the activity of the unconscious and neurophysiologically the activity of the autonomic nervous system. For example, when we experience an emotion or instinct, it affects our whole body, including the field of our consciousness, that is, holistically, because it thrusts upward, as it were, from the depths of our consciousness, disregarding the movement of consciousness. Moreover, if and when any one of the visceral organs that is controlled by the autonomic nerves fails to function, it drives a human being to death. In this sense, this circuit is an important circuit. Neurophysiologically, the regions which generate and express emotions and instincts are located in the mid-brain, and psychologically they issue from the unconscious. Noting these facts Yuasa says that “the emotion-

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20 I would like to bring to the reader’s attention the fact that breathing exercises, an important exercise in meditative self-cultivation, utilize this neurophysiological fact by taking advantage of it. Breathing is ordinarily performed unconsciously or autonomously, but since the voluntary muscles are attached to the respiratory organs we can also perform breathing consciously. Taking note of this fact, meditative self-cultivation recommends the practitioner to perform conscious breathing. It brings unconscious or autonomous breathing to conscious breathing, by conditioning the breathing that is governed by the autonomic nerves. What is surprising is that the physiological center for the activity of breathing and the psychological center that controls the activity of emotions are housed in the same area of the brain, i.e. the midbrain. This suggests that the breathing exercises performed in meditation have a function of correcting a distortion of emotions. Emotion and the pattern and rhythm of breathing are correlated with each other as we know experientially for example, by comparing a peaceful state and an angry state. Therefore, the breathing exercises in meditation, taking advantage of this correlative relationship, carry an ethical meaning of perfecting personality.
instinct circuit” belongs to “the unconscious-autonomic order”—“unconscious” because its activity, psychologically speaking, cannot ordinarily be brought to conscious awareness by exercising the will of ego-consciousness and “autonomic” because its activity is controlled by the autonomic nervous system that also works independently of the will of ego-consciousness. For this reason, it remains “invisible” to the everyday consciousness.

By contrast, “the circuit of unconscious quasi-body” is a philosophical recapitulation of the meridians of acupuncture medicine, and it incorporates an energy activity of psycho-physiological nature in a living body (i.e. ki-energy). As may be surmised from the fact that this circuit exists beneath the third circuit, it cannot be brought to awareness under normal circumstances. Only through the practice of self-cultivation via meditation can these two preceding circuits be brought to clear awareness. Yuasa schematizes this circuit in consideration of the fact that a seasoned meditator and a master martial artist are known to apprehend “the flow of ki-energy” in one’s own body as well as in others.

What is noteworthy here is that the philosophy of self-cultivation regards living nature as filled with this energy, where it exists abundantly and pervasively. Unlike the idea of absolute space which Newton held, this philosophy considers space to be a field of energy. Accordingly, it carries an environmental message that living nature must be kept in a pristine condition for humans to survive. Yuasa’s philosophy emphasizes that in order to apprehend the flow of ki or divine subtle-energy, a human being qua microcosm must inter-resonate with the activity of nature qua macrocosm. What views of the human being and nature then emerge from his philosophy of self-cultivation?

VI. Implications of Yuasa’s Theory

Yuasa maintains that human beings are fundamentally a “passive being,” delimited

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21 Newton for example proposed the idea of absolute space. This space contains no content and is regarded as homogenous. That there is no content in space means that it is something that is thought. To express it philosophically, it means that it is formally abstracted. However, this idea of space carries no meaning experientially for a living human being, because a lived spaced is filled with things and because it is not homogenous. Moreover, there are places in the lived space where one feels good or bad.
by their own body. Yuasa’s idea also seems to be influenced in part by his teacher, WATSUJI Tetsurō (1889-1969), who erected an East-Asian ethical system based on the examination of the network of “betweenness” that governs interpersonal relationships in the field of everyday experience—a network that exists prior to one’s birth. As this network exists prior to an individual’s birth, an individual is passively “thrown” into the network. This recognition of the fundamental passivity of human beings led Yuasa to take a practical rather than a theoretical approach (for example, in understanding an authentic self), as is seen in his philosophy of self-cultivation.

In order to reflect this utterly contingent aspect of human existence, he defines the human being as a “being-in-nature.” By this phrase, he intends to convey an image of a human being living in harmony with the invigorating activity of nature, while at the same time receiving its energy. Here nature is grasped as a “living” nature. To contrast this image, Yuasa also defines the human being as a “being-outside-of-nature.” It depicts an image of the human being who assumes a theoretical standpoint, like Descartes’ cogito, in order to control nature, which is taken to be a collection of physical matter. Nature thus grasped is a “dead” nature that is anthropomorphically understood, wherein there is no inter-resonance among living beings. Needless to say, Yuasa acknowledges that the human being in the field of everyday experience can be characterized as having this dual nature, and using NISHIDA Kitarō’s (1870-1945) well-known phrase, he refers to the human being as a “self-identity of contradiction.” However, he emphasizes “being-in-nature” more than “being-outside-of-nature,” because he fears that if one emphasizes the latter in disassociation with the former, humanity will undergo a dangerous process of deracination. (For example, a destruction of nature and a manipulation of DNA) For Yuasa, the human being is that being who is rooted in the great Nature.

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Yuasa’s goal in his investigation of the body is to capture the human being as a phenomenon which is intimately connected with a great, creative, living nature. To reflect this image, he proposes an idea that an incarnate human being is a microcosm that resonates with the activity of living nature qua macrocosm, i.e. the micro-macrocosmic correlative. He advances this idea because he thinks that the human being is born from nature and returns there. This view that connects the human being to the living nature states that if one comes to thoroughly know the activity of the microcosm that is one’s own body through the process of self-cultivation, he/she also comes to know the activity of the macrocosm. There is no “I” in this apprehension. His theory of the body in the final analysis suggests a lifestyle in which an “I” is not posited as a parameter to understand everything, including one’s self, his/her interpersonal relationships and the natural environment.

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23 YUASA Yasuo, ibid., p.183.
24 Historically speaking, this idea is a recapitulation of the idea of “Heaven-Human Correlativity” which Tochujo proposed during the early Han dynasty in the second century. See Yuasa Yasuo, Tetsugaku no tannjō: danseisei to jyoseisei no shinri [The Birth of Philosophy: Psychology of Masculinity and Femininity] (Kyoto: Jinbun shoin, 2004), p. 183.
25 Although it must be investigated in a separate paper, I wonder if this perspective is somewhat similar to how Aristotle’s “active reason” (nous pòetikos) was interpreted by the medieval philosophers as only possible for God and angels.