Sensei and Gift-giving in Soseki's *Kokoro*: Towards an Alternative Economy of Teaching

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In this paper, I shall reconsider the idea of 'teacher' in contemporary education through an analysis of the idea of 'sensei' ('teacher' in English) as it is presented in Soseki's novel, Kokoro (1914). Paul Standish, in "Sounding the echoes", Chapter 1 of Education and the Kyoto School of Philosophy, *takes issue with an interpretation of "Sensei" in "Kokoro" as a provider of Western culture and instead pays attention to Soseki's reticence about "Sensei's" expertise or his field of study. In Chapter 16, Satoji Yano discusses the relationship between 'sensei' and 'gift giving' in terms of 'pure gift giving', and he presents another model of teacher which is exemplified by "Sensei". Through their respective interpretations of 'Sensei' in Kokoro, Standish and Yano both try to point to another kind of economy of teaching, one that exceeds the economy (or principles) of exchange. However, they seem different in their position about what it is to be exceeded or transcended. I shall illustrate the difference through the interpretation of Kokoro, reconsidering Yano's theory of gift giving and teaching and his interpretation of Kokoro. Through this reading, I shall show that there is a hint in Kokoro of an alternative economy of teaching precisely as Standish shows in Chapter 2 of the book.*

INTRODUCTION

In 'Sounding the echoes', Paul Standish discusses Sensei in Soseki's novel, *Kokoro* (1914), as a means of an introduction to his Chapter, and the book *Education and the Kyoto School of Philosophy*. Standish makes remarks about the curious characteristics of Sensei ('teacher' in English), and detects the possibilities for another aspect of teaching or education, which are parallel to the idea of 'transcendence down' he locates in the thought of Kitaro Nishida, Stanly Cavell, and Jacques Derrida. In 'Pure Experience and Transcendence Down', Chapter 2 of the book, Standish criticises the economy of 'pure experience' in philosophy of education derived from the Kyoto School as remaining a direction upward or a kind of belief in the idea of progress, and shows alternative economy of experience that is also seen in our daily lives. In this paper I aim to show such economy by connecting it to teaching.

However, in this paper, I do not discuss the theme directly. Rather, I want to show the alternative economy of teaching through an interpretation of *Kokoro*. By taking this approach, I believe we can be in a position to address the discussion in *Education and the Kyoto School of Philosophy*.

For that reason, I shall first present the common interpretation of the concept 'sensei' ('teacher' or 'mentor' in English) and hopefully show that Sensei in *Kokoro* illustrates characteristics that go beyond this common interpretation (section 2). Then, I shall move to present the theory of gift giving and teaching presented by Satoji Yano in Chapter 16 of the

book (section 3) in order to give a new account of Sensei. There, two models of teacher are shown by Yano, based on his distinction of gift giving. But his model is still problematic concerning the interpretation of pure gift giving, or the gift of death. Therefore, I shall critically reconsider the figure of the teacher as a pure gift giver presented by Yano, focusing on the meaning of the gift of death and the transcendence that accompanies it. Finally, as a way to illustrate an alternative economy of teaching, I shall reconsider the idea of the gift of death in the context of *Kokoro*, also referring to the works of Derrida and Agamben about death. And then, to respond to the questioning Standish poses in Chapter 2 of the book. I focus on more daily scene in *Kokoro* (section 4).

THE STRANGE CHARACTER OF SENSEI IN SOSEKI'S KOKORO

Kokoro has two main characters, the older man called 'Sensei (先生)' and the younger man, the narrator of the story written as 'watashi (私)'or 'I'. As I said above, the word 'sensei' means 'teacher' in English, but the resonance of the term 'sensei' is broader, incorporating the associations of mentor, guide, older friend and so on. According to Standish, 'in Japanese context, this will carry connotations of respect for learning and authority, and for superior age, with a sense of indebtedness for the gift that the teacher bestows' (Standish, 2012, p. 1). This is evident if we see the characters of the term '先生(sensei)'. The first character '先' means 'before' (adverb: 先に) or 'lead' (verb: 先んじる), and the second '生' means 'life', so '先生(sensei)' means those who lead others in their life, in other words, those who have more and richer experiences. Therefore, the term 'sensei' does not merely refer to those who pass on information or knowledge but rather to those who teach others how to live through their own daily practices of living.

When we compare the term 'sensei' to its English counterpart 'teacher', we realise that the emphasis in Japanese is on 'practice' or 'way of living'. For example, Kyoko Inagaki, a sociologist and professor at Kyoto University, points out that Sensei in *Kokoro* is an archetype of the mentor in life who has an informal and private educational relationship to his student (Inagaki, 2010). The same assumption inheres in Lynda Stone's interpretation of Sensei in *Kokoro*. In Chapter 14 of 'Education and Kyoto School of Philosophy', she mentions that the central theme of *Kokoro* is 'personal loneliness and the consequences of "going through life as one desires"' while struggling with modern circumstances. In her view, the younger man 'attempts to be "his own person" and with difficulty'. Sensei is 'a life-and-professional-failure of sorts but, of course, lessons are learned in' his story (Stone, 2010, p. 189). In her interpretation, Sensei is depicted as one who tells stories of his life, that is, a life abundant with failure and gives useful lessons for living in the world rather than knowledge or information. This characteristic of a 'sensei' allows us to see alternative aspects of teaching or education. In other words, we are encouraged to move away from education's formal and idealistic framework and focus on its informal and practical aspects.

However, Sensei as described in *Kokoro* makes us think about 'sensei', and in fact, beyond such dichotomizations as between giving (abstract) knowledge and giving (practical) lessons for life. The life of Sensei is too hollow to be a model for the younger man, at least so described in the story. If the younger man were to tell the story in order to give the lessons of Sensei, he would have to depict Sensei's way of living more substantially. But, in this story, there is no

substantial description about what Sensei teaches the younger man and what the younger man learns from Sensei. In fact, there is no explicit account of the influence, if any, that Sensei's company exerts on the young man.

Standish points out that Sensei's reclusive life of learning is not given any substance in the story. Sensei, whose early educational ambitions have been blighted through certain events in his youth, lives away from society and develops his thought in isolation. But his expertise or his field of study is uncertain[1], and it is not apparent whether he has moved in order to concentrate on his studies or if his ways of life is a kind of retreat from the world. There is no account of his ways of thinking and how his thought is connected to his way of living. Without this, Sensei cannot be a mentor in life. In fact, in the novel, there are passages that illustrate my doubts about this. In the climax of the Part 1 of the novel, 'Sensei and I', the younger man ('I') complains about Sensei being rather inconclusive in their conversation and asks him to talk in a clearer way. The dialogue continues as follows:

> (Sensei:) It would appear that you are unable to distinguish between my ideas at present and the events of my past. I am not much of a thinker, but the few ideas that I do have, I have no wish to hide from others. I have no reason to. But if you are suggesting that I should tell you all about my past-well, that's another matter entirely.
> ('I':) I do not agree with you. I value your opinions because they are the results of your experience. Your opinions would be worthless otherwise. They would be like soulless dolls.
>
> (The narration contiunes:) Sensei stared at me in astonishment. I saw that his hand, which held a cigarette, was shaking a little. (Natsume, 1957/1914, p. 67)

In the quotation, the gap between Sensei and the younger man stands out and makes evident a certain understanding of the figure of 'sensei'. The younger man thinks of Sensei's thought as inseparable from his experiences. For the younger man, Sensei's thoughts are precious, but without his experience they 'would be like soulless dolls'. Therefore, the figure of 'sensei' the younger man seeks seems similar to what I depicted earlier with my reference to Lynda Stone. On the one hand, the younger man tries to learn lessons of life from Sensei's ways of living his life, in which he thinks Sensei's thought and experience are integrated. On the other hand, it seems that Sensei tries to separate his thought from his experience. For Sensei, the task of 'sensei' is limited to the teaching of his thought. However, what is more important is that both figures of Sensei are illusory, and this becomes apparent through Sensei's testimony. In *Kokoro*, how the younger man matures or even whether he does at all is not described. This fact means that what Sensei teaches is not so important. Therefore, Sensei seems to lack credentials as 'sensei'[2]. When the illusory figure of Sensei is disclosed by his testimony, can Sensei remain a 'sensei'?

However, it is necessary to pay more attention to this question about 'credentials'. Usually, we give credence to a 'sensei' in the light of what a 'sensei' must be. In other words, whether someone is a 'sensei' or not is measured by an ideal of 'development' or linear progress. A 'sensei' defined in this way would be merely institutional and would lacks the variety and richness of the phenomena of teaching. We need an alternative figure of the 'sensei' or teacher. For this purpose, Sensei in *Kokoro* gives us a great insight to the extent that he is free from the prejudice of the

conventional figure of the teacher. My discussion will reveal what we call 'teacher' or 'teaching' and how it takes place.

As a way to consider an alternative figure of the teacher or an alternative economy of teaching, I shall refer, in the next section, to an exploration of education and gift-giving by Satoji Yano, a Professor of Clinical-Philosophical Pedagogy at Kyoto University.

EDUCATION AND PURE GIFT GIVING

In this section, I will discuss Yano's inquiry about education and gift-giving. In Chapter 16 of *Education and the Kyoto School of Philosophy* (hereafter cited as 'Chapter 16'), he tries to 'elucidate how the driving force of teaching originates... from the standpoint of the theory of gift giving'. As long as this is an inquiry as to what brings about education, it gives me a cue to think about how Sensei can be a 'sensei' and about an alternative figure of the teacher. In section 3.1, I shall outline his thought about education, showing his two models of education, and then discuss this in terms of the nature of gift giving. In section 3.2, I shall present some problems concerning the alternative figure of the teacher he presents and a new vision of an alternative economy.

Yano's theory of gift giving: education as development and education as formation

Before proceeding to the main issue, I want to outline the argument of a paper that constitutes a background to his inquiry in Chapter 16: 'Notes on the origin of education' (hereafter cited 'Notes') (Yano, 1998). In 'Notes', he proposes that conventional pedagogy tends to locate the origin of education in the community. In other words, it understands education as a kind of socialisation or initiation into the community. On this view, education is understood as cultivating people's abilities to live in community. Within this perspective, people are measured by the standard of development and categorized as belonging to a certain stage of development. Such a way of thinking presupposes from the beginning a symmetrical relationship between members of the community, and it loses sight of an asymmetrical relationship between those who do not share the same language game, even though education depends upon this kind of relationship. Yano criticises this model, calling it 'education as development', and against this he proposes an alternative one: 'education as formation'. This model identifies the origin of education as outside of the community. He explains this as follows: education originates from the taking place of 'the (asymmetrical) teach-and-learn relationship' by individuals who transcend (the economy of) the community, return to the community, and encounter its members (ibid, p. 54). However, this transcendence should not be understood in terms of the principle of the community because transcending the economy of the community literally means entering into an excessive economy that is beyond the understanding of the principle of usefulness within the community. Therefore, such experience of transcendence is an 'experience of non-intelligence'[3], which violates the code of the community based upon utility and disturbs the order of the community (Yano, 2012, p. 229). To sum up, education in the second model is thought of as originating from the disturbance occasioned by outsiders who transcend the community.

As Yano himself mentions, Chapter 16 can be understood as a reconstruction of 'Notes' in terms of the theory of gift giving. To emphasize the relevance of the second model of education,

Yano explains that the origin of a community, where the principle of exchange dominates, is in the initial stroke of gift giving, not in the principle of exchange. As Derrida points out, the gift ceases to be a gift when it is recognised as such (Derrida, 1995). For a gift to be a gift, gift giving must be done in secret. Recognition of gift giving arouses the receiver's feeling of indebtedness, on the one hand, and the giver's feeling of satisfaction, on the other hand, which makes the nature of gift giving changes into exchange[4]. However, the very ground of exchange is formed by an initial gift giving. 'For a community to exist as community, the initial stroke of gift giving is indispensable', and this is at the origins of community (Yano, 2008b, p. 260). Therefore, as Yano insists, the origin of education should be explained not in terms of the principle of exchange within the community but in terms of aprocess of gift giving by an outsider. In addition, he pays attention to the incommensurability of the outsider for the members of the community. Therefore, it can be said that the origin of education is not singular, which is equally recognised by the commensurable code of the community (or the principle of exchange). Rather, it is the origin as the repeated beginning, originated from pure gift giving[5]. To reconsider education from the newly presented origin, he compares two types of gift giving and through this he presents an alternative figure of the teacher to the conventional one.

According to Yano, there are two ways of gift giving: gift giving that anticipates return and pure gift giving that does not anticipate return. The first can be distinguished into the following two versions: the stroke of the initial gift giving and gift giving as return. The code of a community begins by the stroke, but the stroke anticipates a return by imposing unrepayable indebtedness. Since the ancestor of the community has already died (literally or symbolically), we cannot return the gift directly, so we can try returning it by transferring the code given to us by the ancestors to other members of the community. Yano explains this by referring to a theory of exchange articulated by Claude Lévi-Strauss, which is known as 'generalised exchange'. In this case, the gift giving as return takes place as an inheritance of the community's code. This is what Yano calls '(national) education derived from the sense of indebtedness to the sacrificed'. Such gift giving creates a commensurable horizon that allows for exchange and enables 'education as development': the pre-modern community as well as the modern nation.

The second model of gift giving reveals itself as an excessive stroke of inquiry, which 'arises from outside of the meaningful world of community, as in the case of Socrates' inquiry' (Yano, 2012, p. 229): 'This threatens the human being who has comfortably lived the life of exchange within the community, by depriving him of the ground of his life. Simultaneously it opens his life towards outside the community and exposes him to the experience of vital life' (ibid.). This is pure gift giving in that it appears to its receiver as deprivation rather than gift giving, which relieves him from indebtedness. Then, Yano calls the giver in this model the 'original' teacher. The 'original' teacher is born into the experience of death, which is the experience of non-intelligence, and turns such an experience into gift giving to his disciples. He embodies the type of individual who dares to dive into the innermost of his own being and by giving such experience creates his disciples similarly into individuals (ibid.). He drives 'education as formation'. In this way, Yano present an alternative figure of the teacher to the conventional one.

Through this discussion, we can identify a cue to answer the question at the end of the second section: 'when the illusory figure of Sensei is disclosed by his testimony, can Sensei

remain a 'sensei'?' Sensei may be seen as a concrete figure of the 'original' teacher, who is clearly distinguished from 'sensei' in the common sense. When we look back to the relationship between Sensei and the younger man, Sensei seems to give him nothing substantial: what he gives cannot be explained in terms of the principle of usefulness or stages of development; he can only to leave a mystery about his death. Such characteristics of Sensei allow us to see Sensei as a model of the 'original' teacher[6]. From Yano's viewpoint, Sensei embodies an individual who dives into the innermost aspects of his own experience. Sensei gives to the younger man his own death, the experience of non-intelligence, as a lifelong question, putting him the position of having this experience of non-intelligence, to dive into the innermost aspects of his own being.[7]

Problems about the 'original' teacher

Yano's discussion about an alternative figure of the teacher is convincing enough. However, some questions arise in my view. What first gives 'the original teacher' the chance to delve into the innermost aspects of his own experience? Where is his experience of non-intelligence? How can such experience be 'given' to his disciples? In this subsection I advance the discussion in the light of these questions.

To make the points clear, I would like to locate these questions in Yano's explanation of the gift of death of the 'original' teacher. The experience of death leaves his disciples a lifelong question about the meaning of the uncanny death of the 'original' teacher. The death of the 'original' teacher is a mystery because he is the individual who is outside the community, an individual-out-of-the-world[8]. As long as the individual-out-of-the-world does not belong to any community, the experience of non-intelligence (death) is supposed to take place outside the community[9]. But, what puts him outside the community and what is meant by the experience of death? More important than this, where on earth is this 'outside the community'? This is a variation of the first two questions.

According to Yano, the answers to both questions would be 'nature'. He pays attention to the fact that Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* opens with the appreciation for the gift from the sun by Zarathustra, a model of the 'original' teacher. This 'suggests that the giver is born through the event of gift giving' where this is something like the gift from the sun (Yano, 2008, p. 277)[10], and therefore 'we can say that the nature is the most primordial giver, which opens us the possibility of a human being to be a giver even though by the medium of the initiator[11]' (pp. 275-276). Therefore, it could be said that nature gives the 'original' teacher the experience of death, and it takes place in nature—strictly speaking, on the limit of the community where human beings have continuity with animals and nature.

However, his conception of 'nature' still leaves some questions. Outside the community, or in nature, the 'original' teacher has the experience of death. Yano seems to think that the death belongs to nature. Nevertheless, for all his attempts to relieve the concept of 'death' from the community, his conception of the death is nothing more than a biological end of his life, understood in terms of the code of the community. This is evident in his explanation of the gift of death. Please look back to the beginning of this subsection. What is actually given to his disciples is only a 'lifelong question', or the reason of the death, not the death itself[12]. The reduction of death to the end of life or a kind of question, in turn, changes the nature of the gift giving. The pure gift giving is changed into a kind of exchange, in spite of Yano's criticism against it. Furthermore, such deterioration of the gift annuls the two models of education

presented by him in the preceding subsection—education as development and education as formation. In fact, they seem to be distinguished just in terms of how the gift *appears* to the receivers[13], converting the gift into the commerce understood commensurably within the community.

Then, I would like to ask, using the extraordinary, excessive question that Yano presents: *what is* the gift of death *in the true sense*? According to Yano, this kind of question 'doesn't require any definition of the content, and the answer, if given, would be nothing more than tentative. To this extent, it is a question as an excessive gift without any destination and which incessantly disturbs and destroys the existing framework of understanding as opposed to the question "what is it?", which defines the object which is questioned' (Yano, 2008b, p. 281). But the question of mine is more radical than Yano to the extent that it 'disturbs' even the idea of 'question' or 'gift'. The question 'what is it in the true sense?' is conducted right in the disturbance—the very impossibility of the gift or question makes such event possible. In *Kokoro*, the same structure can be seen: Sensei offers the gift of death by destroying the idea of the gift. Therefore, the new alternative figure of the teacher can be described in this way: teacher can be a teacher *in the true sense* by the obliteration of any trace of teaching, by being deprived of their 'credentials' as a teacher. Sensei, ironically, becomes all the more 'sensei' when his illusory figure is disclosed.

TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE ECONOMY OF TEACHING: THROUGH RECONSIDERING SENSEI'S GIFT

Through the discussion in the third section, it has been revealed that Yano's description of an alternative figure of the teacher as the giver of his death seems to fail in questioning the very idea of 'the gift of death'. In the last section, I want to illustrate what it is to offer the gift of death by reinterpreting Sensei's gift of death in *Kokoro*, revealing an alternative economy of teaching in a different way from Yano. Therefore, first, I focus on the words 'shadow' or 'darkness', which appear many times in this novel, by linking these with the concept 'death' or the 'past'. And then, I see how Sensei has the experience of death and how the gift of death is presented in more everyday settings.

To begin with, I would like to quote some passages from the opening of Sensei's testimony in the third chapter of *Kokoro*:

> You see, apart from any sense of obligation, there is the simple reason that I want to write about my past. Since my past was experienced only by me, *I might be excused if I regarded it as my property, and mine alone.* Some think that it is regrettable to die before giving it to someone. I also feel so somewhat. On the other hand, I would rather see it destroyed, with my life, than offer it to someone who is not receptive enough to get it[14]... To you alone, then, among the millions of Japanese, I wish to tell my past. For you are *sincere*; and because once you said in all sincerity that you wish to learn from life itself.
>
> Without hesitation, *I am about to force you into the shadows of this dark world of ours.* But you must not fear. *Gaze steadily into the shadows and take whatever will be of use to you in your own life.* When I speak of darkness, I mean *moral darkness*... But they

> are at least *my own*. I did not borrow them for the sake of convenience as a man might a dress suit. It is for this reason that I think you, who wish to grow, may learn something from my experience (Natsume, 1957/1914, p. 128, underlining and italics added)

In the second paragraph, Sensei explains the intention of his testimony as follows: through telling of his past, he projects the dark shadow of human life[15] onto the younger man, and requires him to take something from them. To understand this mysterious declaration, careful attention is needed towards the metaphor of 'shadow' or 'darkness'. Seemingly, they are equivalent to his 'past', and this is right in a sense. But the 'past' referred to here does not mean simply the chain of previous events; it is more like a ghost that haunts with him. It is his own because it is experienced only by him, even when he spent the same time together with the younger man or his wife[16]. This is why *his* past is a shadow that cannot be seen by the eyes of others.

The expression 'moral darkness' appropriately describes the strangeness of his experience of the shadow. The 'darkness' is equivocal. On the one hand, his past, characterised by his betrayal of K, is dark (evil) according to his ethics: it is dark (evil) because he does not take clear and ethical account of it. To be ethical a more clear account is needed. On the other, *his* past is dark (invisible) in the light of ethics: it is dark (invisible) because it is experienced by him as a negation of any ethics. For others, and even for him, this experience of negativity, of a shadow, becomes more and more difficult to see, the more brightly the ethics casts its light on it, as is the 'impotentiality' of which Agamben speaks[17]. The bright light of ethics, which attempts to see everything in universality, conceals, or eradicates, the darkness. The darkness should be seen in the dark or in secret.

How, then, is the darkness experienced by Sensei? Through the experience of his betrayal of K and K's death, he encountered 'the dark shadow of human life' intensely. His faith in the world was shattered by the betrayal of his uncle, and he decided to live autonomously, as K did, trusting himself. But K's death deprived Sensei even of his faith in himself, his ethics.

> I thought that, in the midst of a corrupt world, I had managed to remain virtuous. Because of K, however, my self-confidence was shattered. With a shock, I realized that I was no better than my uncle. *I became as disgusted with myself as I had been with the rest of the world.* Action of any kind became impossible for me (p. 238, italic Asai).

He was deprived of any foundation. He realized that nothing provides or supports the decision within himself. There is no universal ethics that justifies his action, including whether to live or to kill himself. It was as if he stood over the abyss. He seemed to be in the midst of 'moral darkness'. However, in the following quotation, Sensei is described rather as clinging to ethics of a kind, seeking for ethical good, although there is no ethical foundation that gives an answer[18].

> You see, when your letter came, I was trying desperately to decide what I should do with myself. I was thinking, "Should I go on living as I do now, like a mummy left in the midst of living beings, or should I...?" In those days, I thought of the letter alternative, I was seized with a terrible fear. I was like a man who *runs to the edge of a cliff, and looking down, sees that the abyss is bottomless.* I was a *coward.* And like most

> cowards I suffered because I could not decide. Unfortunately, it would not be an exaggeration to say that at the time I was hardly aware of your existence. To go further, such a matter as your future livelihood was too me almost totally without significance (p. 125, italic Asai).

Sensei is not in the abyss. He is 'on the edge of the cliff' of the continent of ethics, and looks down into the abyss. Then, what does the abyss stand for? The answer is, so to say, death. Or, of course, 'moral darkness'. Remember the double meaning of 'moral darkness'. Similarly, the experience of death seems unclear and immoral from the edge at which he stands, requiring endless questions about what it is like in the light of ethics; on the other hand, the experience of the darkness of death is the experience of negativity or the experience of his experiencing nothing, in which he is able to make no gain on the ground of ethics. This is a kind of paradox. As long as he tries to see the abyss, getting his bearings from the light of ethics, the darkness of the abyss will be infinitely far away or unapproachable for him. On the contrary, moving himself into the darkness of the abyss would create a closeness or intimacy. Therefore, in order to address the question of death, he has to stop questioning and project himself into the abyss. However, he is a 'coward'. He cannot decide what he should do with himself clinging to the edge, and only looks down into the abyss, questioning what it is like. He goes on 'living like a mummy[19]'.

However, when he writes his testimony, he finally projects himself into the darkness of the abyss though without knowing where he will fall to[20]. When he writes about his past, he experiences *his* past in the darkness, not observing it from the ground of universal ethics. Professing his death, *his* past, he experiences a kind of death where nothing supports *his* decision. When he falls to the ground, he is reborn as a new life and sees the world in a completely different way.

I believe that the long discussion about Sensei's past and death can show us the existence of the two contradictory economies. One is universal in nature and the other is singular, and the latter has much to do with the experience of death. It is time to turn to the matter of the gift of death.

According to the first quotation in this section, the opening part of Sensei's testimony, he professes to project his past, the dark shadow of human life, onto the younger man. It seems a kind of gift giving, but if we pay attention to the economy of singularity, it stops being gift giving. For all his coherent explanation about his love affair, he finally annuls it as 'too simple' (p. 240). He 'finally became aware of the possibility that K had experienced loneliness as terrible as' Sensei's—loneliness which comes from the impossibility of being understood—'and wishing to escape quickly from it, had killed himself'. This is an antinomy. He gives his past, but the fact he dies because of his loneliness from the impossibility of being understood implies the impossibility of the gift. Therefore, what leaves after the gift is a sense of negativity, the experience of the impossibility of the gift. Here, ironically, the gift is achieved. *His* past, which incessantly haunts him as a shadow, is projected onto the younger man, puts the younger man into the experience of death, and drives him into a new life.

I can say the gift described here is nothing more than pure gift giving and, what is more, an alternative economy of teaching. It cannot be exchange, not because the gift giving anticipates any return, as Yano argues, but because nothing is given at all to begin with. The revelation of

such an economy of the gift, or of teaching, will allow us to see education in completely different ways. Before ending this paper, however, I would like to show how such an economy operates in more daily circumstances[21].

In the second section, I quoted a conversation between Sensei and the younger man. In this conversation the younger man asked Sensei to tell him his past, his previous experience, while Sensei refused it, saying that his thought is one thing, and his experience is a different matter. On the other hand, the younger man insisted that Sensei's thought is worthless, like a soulless doll, without the connection to his experience.

The younger man's expression 'soulless doll without the connection with his experience' is important. The 'soul' undoubtedly stands for his experience, but each of them takes the word differently. The younger man has no doubt about the possibility of speaking about the past. He can say he wants Sensei to be a 'sensei', who gives him a meaningful lesson about his life, and not as a 'teacher' who only transfer an abstract knowledge (see the second section). But he is deceived in that he thinks of what he says as commensurable. He says he is 'sincere' (Majime: 真面目 in Japanese, meaning also 'earnest') and trustworthy enough for Sensei to tell of his past (p. 68). On the other hand, Sensei knows it is incommensurable since he has surely experienced it but even he does not know exactly what it is. His past is singular and only his own. Thus, he knows the younger man cannot understand it. Nevertheless, the younger man requests, or commands—because he does not have any words that would give him a rational reason for his refusal; in this sense, it is nothing other than an absolute command—him to tell his past, without knowing he is commanding. Here, the younger man appears to Sensei as the Other who commands him, and even if Sensei wants to reply to him, his words never reach him. Then, he asks the younger man to be sincere, to be 'receptive enough to get it' (see the first quotation in this section), saying 'I should like to have one that I can truly trust'.

The promise from the younger man is, of course, unreliable because the words he speaks are completely other to Sensei. Whether he understands it or not is inaccessible and unforeseeable for Sensei[22]. However, Sensei promises to tell it in the future, making up his mind to project himself into the abyss. Here, we find that Sensei has already had experience of death before he writes his testimony. The experience of death takes place in such an everyday scene too. We can see signals of such experience in everyday life. For example, the moment Sensei makes up his mind, he is 'shaking' (see the quotation in the second section), or trembles, as Abraham trembles before God when he 'has taken his knife to slit his son's throat' at God's request[23] (Derrida, 1995, p. 72). Concerning the trembling, Derrida says:

> We tremble in the strange repetition that ties an irrefutable past (a shock has been felt, some trauma has already affected us) to a future that cannot be anticipated; anticipated but unpredictable; *apprehended*, yet, and this is why there is a future, apprehended precisely *as* unforeseeable, unpredictable; approached as unapproachable (ibid., p. 55).

In the tremble, we experience the way that the dark shadow of the haunting past has a continuity to the unforeseeable future, and there we are suspended over the abyss, in the darkness. Here, we have the experience of death, or the experience of impotentiality in Agamben's word. Here, in Sensei's case, he is capable of doing something and at the same time

he is capable of not doing something, but in this suspension he succeeds in responding to the Other, the younger man who commands him to tell of his past. In other words, he responds to the younger man in silence, projecting a 'dark shadow' onto him. Whether the younger man is receptive and responsible enough to hear and respond to the silence, or to get something from it, is uncertain. But if the younger man does, 'a new life lodges itself in [his] breast' (Natsume, 1957/ 1914, p. 129), and Sensei will be a 'sensei' in the true sense. In the moment of decision, Sensei teaches not by his ethical obligation as a teacher in relation to the younger man but by an absolute obligation to him as the Other.

Such a reading allows us to anticipate an alternative economy of teaching, which makes teaching possible and at the same time impossible to the extent that we cannot defend the concept of teaching. But is it, then, our daily life? We have much to learn from the mysterious way of teaching of Sensei in *Kokoro*.

NOTES

1. We can guess he studies philosophy (probably Western philosophy) from some passages in this story, but, even if it is relevant, we cannot get even any hint about what kind of thought he has.
2. He lacks credential both as a mentor in life as well as a teacher on his scholarship. Concerning Sensei's experiences, he doesn't tell in his lifetime, and his testimony does only destruct the younger man's illusory image of respectful Sensei. Moreover, it is sure that the younger man respect for Sensei's scholarship, but there is no substantial description about it in both novel and film. When we pay attention to the fact that the narrator of the story is the younger man, his reticence about Sensei's expertise means that the contents of the knowledge he learn from Sensei is not so significant, at least as far as he tells about Sensei. It goes without saying but when we remember that Sensei does not take the guidance of his graduate thesis although the theme of their study is quietly similar, Sensei doesn't have credential even as a formal teacher on his scholarship.
3. Yano uses the term 'experience of non-intelligence' barrowing the term of Georges Bataille. (Yano, 1998)
4. This may be understood in the following way. Gift is usually understood in the formula of A giving X to B, and at the same time B should not return anything for the gift to be the gift. But once gift is recognized in this formula, the gift 'X' is identified as commensurable and then come to be understood by the same measure applicable both for A and B. (In Yano's terminology, the measure is 'the code' of community and the common ground of exchange to A and B is community.) Even if B doesn't return to A, B is still anticipated to return the gift equivalent to X. Therefore, this may be described in the formula 'A gives X to B, and B returns nothing equivalent to X'. This is the form of exchange. In this formula, the word 'nothing' functions as a sign which can be measured by the code of community, and it may correspond to what Yano calls 'indebtedness'.
5. Concerning the origin, Yano explain in following way. 'I want to try a thought experiment, about the origin of education as the repeated beginning, which can be found only through logic and abstraction, not the absolute origin from which education begins nor the origin as the anthropological or historical fact' (Yano, 2008b, p. 31). In addition, he put a note on this sentence. This is a part of it: 'this origin of education is far from the original. It merely appears as the original through repetition and is nothing but a model' (ibid., p. 297).
6. In fact, Yano sees Sensei as a modern model of the 'original' teacher as well as Christ and Socrates (see Yano, 2003).
7. In Yano's paper in 2008, he mentions Sensei's death. '"I [the younger man]" achieve transformation through Sensei's gift of his death, but his death leaves the younger man a mystery (because the younger man cannot have any rational account that is equivalent to his gift of death), making it function as a lifelong question of the younger man' (translation Asai) (Yano, 2008b, p. 95).

8. Individual-out-of-world is the term of Louis Dumont. Yano distinguishes this individual from 'the relative other', who belongs to another community. 'The individual-out-of-the-world is the absolute other for socialised people inside the community in that he doesn't belong to any community, or in that he is beyond the very framework of community' (translation Asai) (Yano, 2008a, p. 39).
9. Yano regards the experience of non-intelligence as experience beyond description or textualisation, ex-sistent or ecstatic experience (Yano, 2008b, p. 103). Furthermore, the figure of the 'original' teacher Yano describes is modeled after Zarathustra given by Nietzsche (ibid. p. 94). Zarathustra returns from the mountain to the city with an intention to give. He is described as an individual who has had the experience of non-intelligence in the mountain and who is trying to return to the community. But the metaphor of 'return' gives an impression that such experience happens independently of the experience of community.
10. He added to this as following. 'If I put these in another way in terms of history of nature based of Bataille, the excessiveness of the energy of the nature (the sun) produces, foster, and evolve life, and then produces 'death'. The advent of death of individuals in the history of nature express the excessiveness of the nature, and it is a form of expenditure. The death=expenditure derived from the excessiveness of the nature, in turn, the excessive event of education' (Yano, 2008, p. 277). Yano regards the nature as the excessive giver, and through deep interaction with the nature, human beings restore the continuity to animals or the nature (see ibid., p. 275).
11. Please pay attention to the terminology 'initiator' here. Usually, as Yano mention repeatedly in his writings, the initiator is thought to be the teacher of the community who is familiar with the codes of community and give them to new comers.
12. Of course, the question is endless in kind, and it is formulated as 'what is X in true sense?'— a kind of question that generates further and further excessiveness. But the problem here is that there seems to be a kind of Archimedean point which supports the question itself and it may be the nature or the death. Through the emphasis on it, the importance of the first understanding of X, supported by the language in the community.
13. Yano pays attention to the difference of the ways of receiving the gift of death. In fact, Yano exemplify this distinction through analysing how each of the death of Sensei and K is received (see, Yano, 2008b, Chapter 2). When K (Sensei's friend) committed suicide, his death was given to Sensei with great indebtedness. K didn't mention anything about the betrayal of Sensei in his testimony although the cause seemed obviously this betrayal. This saved Sensei from criticism by other people, but left his sense of sin unaccountable. This fact gave Sensei tremendous indebtedness to K because he had a rational account on the death of K but could no longer return the debt. The younger man (the narrator of the story) doesn't have any rational account enough to explain the cause of Sensei's death, which makes the younger man inquire his death as a lifelong question rather than feel indebted of his death. In both cases, Yano explains how one's death is received, but he doesn't explain how the death itself is given or, how it can be given at all.
14. In English translation by McClellan, the underline is translated as 'someone who does not want it', but to be precise to the original words ukeireru-koto-no-dekinai (受け入れる事のできない), the word 'receptive' is better.
15. This is translated as 'the shadows of this dark world of ours'. In original text, it is written as kurai-Jinsei-no-Kage (暗い人生の影), and the latter is more precise to the words.
16. This is evident in the following passage: 'Once she cried and said: "You have changed."' The words that followed hurt much more: "You would not have changed so, had K-san been alive." "Perhaps you are right," I answered. Secretly, I grieved for my wife, who took my answer differently from what I meant' (ibid., p. 239, underline modified by Asai).
17. In 'On Potentiality', Giorgio Agamben refers to the concept of 'shadow' as 'impotentiality [adynamia]', and I got an inspiration of this interpretation of the concept 'shadow' in Kokoro' from the idea. '[I]f, potentiality were, for example, only the potentiality for vision and if existed only as such in the activity of light, we could never experience darkness [...]. But human beings can, instead, see shadows (to stotos), they can experience darkness,; they have the potential not to see, the possibility of privation' (Agamben, 1999, p. 181). According to Agamben, '[i]n Homer, stotos is the darkness that overcomes human beings at the moment of their death. Human beings are capable of experiencing this stotos' (ibid.).

18. The figure of Sensei described here is perhaps similar to such disciples who are given death by the 'original' teacher and inquire a lifelong question as Yano describes. They deny 'the code of community' and ask an excessive question that disturbs the border of the community, but their question itself is based on the way of thinking in the community.
19. He decided to go on living as if he were dead because he 'felt strongly the sinfulness of man' (Natsume, 1957/1914, p. 243). It is a kind of punishment, and this is based on misconception in that the judgment is given in the terms of ethics. His betrayal against K deserves the death sentence but he has to live to save her wife, so he chooses to live as the dead. This is the product of calculation, so his traumatic past that haunts as the incalculable 'moral darkness' suffers him for all his clearance of his past.
20. This does not necessarily mean that he goes outside the community. The abyss is not on the border of the community but within the community. In the community the abyss is only the shadow, so it is invisible for someone who sees the world clearly shedding the bright light around.
21. To think about the excessive economy in daily life may respond to Standish's questioning in the last section of the Chapter 2 of Education and the Kyoto School Philosophy: 'Should we transcend the messiness of human life?' (Standish, 2012, p. 26).
22. This is why Sensei are not aware of the younger man's existence and only wondering what he should do with himself until he decides to die with the testimony. After all, the decision may be not about what he should do with others but about whether he gives himself as a vulnerable to the Other, who gives him the absolute command. The last judgment of his decision is entrusted to, or fulfilled by, the Other. To understand the matter of decision, Agamben's argument of the two messianism may be helpful (Agamben, 1999, p. 174).
23. In 'Gift of death', Jacques Derrida refer to the Binding of Issac by Abraham in the Old Testament. One day, God commanded Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, whom he loved most, to the land of Moriah and to offer him there for a burnt offering. Abraham was thrown into a dilemma by two contradicting orders: ethical duty or human law bans killing human beings, and at the same time the absolute responsibility to God commands him to be a murderer. When Abraham is ready to slit his son's throat, he trembles. He trembles because he is still afraid of what already makes him afraid and which he can neither see nor foresee (Derrida, 1995, p. 55, p. 72).

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