

Kida Gen, *The History of Anti-philosophy*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2000. 272 pp. ISBN: 978-4061594241. (Japanese)

The author of this book, Kida Gen, who passed away in 2014, was a leading philosopher in Japan. He was well versed in phenomenology and published numerous translations and books on Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In this book, Kida attempts to relativize the history of Western philosophy, relying on an anti-philosophical view developed by leading authorities on phenomenology such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, who took over the philosophical work of Friedrich Schelling, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

In the first chapter, the derivation of the word “philosophy” is summarized. The word *philosophia* in ancient Greek originally was used as an adjective derived from *philosophos* (having a strong intellectual curiosity), and then as a verb of *philosophhein* (“to love knowledge”). Socrates defined *philosophia* as “being aware of self-ignorance and love and seeking for knowledge” and established a method called irony to uncover the ignorance of the Sophists. Kida also discusses the introduction of “philosophy” to Japan. It was first translated as “希賢学（希=seek for, 賢=knowledge, 学=study）” by 西周（NISHI Amane）. However, NIHSI later changed “賢” to “哲”, which represents the same meaning as “賢”, and “希” was omitted. Thus, “philosophy” was translated by the Japanese word “哲学” as it is used today, but Kida points out that “哲学” sounds more like the Sophists use of the word, which creates a very strange situation.

In the second chapter, the structure of irony is discussed. Kida says that to Socrates, irony is not only “a style of expression,” but “a fundamental way of living,” or “a unique style of existence” such as “infinite negativity” which does not allow people to stop even for a moment and forces people into an unstable life style without being mindful of peace. Kida finds an example of such a way of life in Osamu Dazai, who was one of the best Ironists in Japanese literature, and who eventually committed suicide.

The third chapter describes in detail the process by which Socrates was tried and sentenced to death, referring to the Peloponnesian War, the War of the Thirty Tyrants, and the disciples of Socrates who were involved in the two wars: Alcibiades, Kritias and Charmides. Kida shows how Socrates himself presented “infinite negativity” as a way of life. In the famous trials, Socrates tried to deny

both the oligarchy system and the democratic system which were a fundamental cause of the two wars. Kida argues that Socrates' way of thinking was an attempt to eliminate the world view of the Athenian people at the time and was a trigger for the birth of Plato's new philosophy.

In Chapter 4, Kida returns to the view of nature of the pre-Socratic philosophers (Vorsokratiker) in order to more concretely show the role of Socrates in clearing away the old world view and setting the stage for the appearance of Plato. According to Kida, the pre-Socratic philosophers shared a certain view of physis (nature), which is very different from that of thinkers and philosophers after Socrates. *Physis* is a Greek word, from which the English word *nature* and the Latin word *natura* are derived and was originally used in the meaning of "states which things should be." The Sophists contemporary with Socrates partly maintained such a view of nature, isolating "nomos" such as ceremonies, customs, institutions, and laws from the domain of physis, and then gave up on pursuing physis (states which things should be) of things around them. From the viewpoint of orthodox Western philosophical history, the natural view of the pre-Socratic philosophers seems to be heterogeneous, but it can be seen universally, Kida says, as in the thought of Lao Zi (老子), Kūkai (空海), Shinran (親鸞), the Cheng-Zhu school (朱子学), and Japan's oldest literary work *Kojiki* (『古事記』).

In Chapter 5, Plato's life and the outline of his theory of ideas are discussed. While the pre-Socratic philosophers believe the existential structure of things can be described by the verb "grow" as in Chinese and Japanese thought, Plato sees the existential structure of things from the viewpoint of "making". Kida, relying on Heidegger, argues that philosophy started when Plato's theory of ideas was established and the way to understand existence was separated into two: "*essentia* (it is ...)" and "*existentia* (there is...)", and that "essential" had been regarded as superior to "*existentia*" since the birth of philosophy.

In Chapter 6, Kida focuses on how Aristotle, while replacing Plato's concept of "Eidos" or "Hyle" with the notion of "potentiality" and "actuality," criticized Plato's theory of ideas and tried to return to the traditional theory of physis. However, Aristotle wrote about the "Unmoved Mover", which is incompatible with the view of nature of the pre-Socratic philosophers, and he failed to completely escape from Plato's thought. The supernatural principles such as Plato's "Idea" and Aristotle's "Unmoved Mover" were to be handed down in the form of "reason" or "spirit" as a metaphysical mode of thinking in the traditional

Western culture. However, Kida concludes that such a mode of thinking is distinctly unnatural, referring to criticism of traditional Western philosophy by Nietzsche and Marx.

In the seventh chapter, Kida leaps from Aristotle to Descartes, following the keywords of the Roman Catholic church, Holy Roman Empire, scholastic philosophy, the Renaissance, and mechanistic naturalism. Kida presents as an ingenious story the trajectory Descartes took through his attempt to establish universal mathematics, the conversion from an interest in mathematics to metaphysics, method skepticism, and then the proof of the existence of God, while he is describing how human rationality replaced Plato's "Idea", Aristotle's "Pure form", and the personality of God in Christian theology and became a metaphysical principle in the Western world. The emergence of Descartes had a great impact on the history of Western philosophy, for his rationalism made "existentia (there is...)" subjected to "essentia (it is ...)", which means that the view of nature of the pre-Socratic philosophers was buried deeper than ever.

Compared to other chapters, chapters 8 and 9 do not seem well to succeed in relativizing the history of philosophy. In these two chapters, Kida discusses two philosophers, Kant and Hegel, who represent German idealism, though his commentary on them can be said to be textbook-like. Kida describes how Kant overcame dogmatic rationalistic metaphysics and British empiricism, and how Hegel arrived at the concept of "absolute spirit" based on Kant's study of reason and completed a metaphysical mode of thinking which Heidegger thought would have a great influence on the modern world as a kind of technology.

In chapter 10, Kida explains that "positive philosophy" presented by Friedrich Schelling, "consistent naturalism" presented by Karl Marx, and "the will to power" and "eternal return" presented by Friedrich Nietzsche can be regarded as variations on an attempt to restore the view of nature shared by the pre-Socratic philosophers. It was Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, whose names are almost synonymous with phenomenology, who rediscovered and reevaluated the three philosophers (Schelling, Marx, and Nietzsche) who had convincingly criticized the metaphysical thinking style originating from Plato, and took from them the anti-philosophical attitude.

In the final chapter, the nineteenth century views related to the philosophical problems this book has treated, such as the social influence of the industrial revolution, the development of natural science, the establishment of humanities, and criticism of positivism in the philosophical world, are discussed.

In this book Kida has made a magnificent attempt to relativize traditional Western philosophy from an anti-philosophical perspective. Kida's argument that the thoughts of the protagonists in general philosophy textbooks: Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, are "unnatural" is clear and impressive, and, by introducing the concept of "essentia (it is ...)" and "existentia (there is...)" throughout the book, he succeeds in making his point consistent and persuasive. Moreover, his ability to tie a wide range of knowledge into a convincing story is brilliant. However, if Kida had more daringly relativized traditional metaphysics introducing oriental thought not only in chapter 4 and 5 but throughout the book, this book would be more interesting to those who engage in East-West studies. In fact, Kida confesses in the introduction that he "felt uncomfortable with studying philosophy in Japan that has contributed to Western culture". Considering this confession, he may well have had a strong interest in understanding the history of the relationship between Western philosophy and Oriental thought. However, given the purpose of this book is to give an overview of the history of philosophy from the anti-philosophical point of view which was born in the West, readers should probably be satisfied with Kida's approach.

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