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A Study of Zen in American Poets

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## Introduction

The origin of the encounter with Zen Buddhism in American poetry goes back to the literati of New England, who into the middle of the nineteenth century were deeply rooted in the Puritan tradition. Their interests, which had heretofore been completely dedicated to Europe, turned for the first time towards Oriental thought. It was the transcendentalists in Concord who advocated natural philosophy through which human beings could reach the holiness in God through Nature. A philosopher and poet, Henry David Thoreau, who put Ralph Waldo Emerson's ideas on transcendentalism into practice as an essayist and poet, played a central role in this turning-point.

The philosophy of Emerson, who at that time was called 'the Sage of Concord' has been discussed considerably, and a viewpoint evaluating him as a poet is indispensable for investigating the influence of Zen Buddhism on the history of American poetry. It would, however, be more precise to base this influence on the oldest Oriental sacred book, the *Veda*, in India, rather than on Zen Buddhism. Emerson's Oriental-tinged, metaphysical poetry, to say the least, is a starting point for a historical synopsis of the stream of American poetry, from the World's Parliament of Religion held in Chicago in 1893, to approximately fifty years later, in the Zen 'boom' of the 1950s. Thoreau, who took Emerson's principles on transcendentalism and thoroughly practiced them in the woods of *Walden* in the suburbs of Concord, was not only a non-conformist but also the pathfinder for present-day ecologists. The most important work of

Thoreau, *Walden, or, Life in the Woods* (1854) was the record of a self-sufficient life, living by himself in a cabin by the lake, *Walden*, on the outskirts of Concord for more than two years. Thoreau's essays and poems give one an impression that his speculations are like a romantic yearning for the thought of the *Veda* and Hinduism. In this paper, I chose the poems of Emerson and Thoreau is in order to indicate a reassessment of the predecessors who accepted Oriental thought such as in the *Veda* and Hinduism. Thus Emerson's spirit of poetry, which is indeed metaphysical in spirit is unexpectedly close to how Lindley Williams Hubbell's aesthetics indicate how to grasp the phenomenal world in modern painting of the twentieth century. On the other hand, the poetic sensations of Thoreau's mix of reality and fancy come to life by moving their stage from the lake, *Walden*, near Concord, to the wilderness at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in California where Gary Snyder now lives as a Zen Buddhist poet.

L. W. Hubbell came to Japan for his first time in 1953 mainly in order to teach Shakespeare, English poetry and Greek drama in Doshisha University. He was, however, not only a professor of English literature but also a distinguished and intellectual poet who had started to write poems as a young man in his twenties and continued to do so all his life. I intend to state about the dramatic episode of Hubbell's first meeting with Gertrude Stein and his accurate understanding of her literary work, "Melanctha," the second novella in *Three Lives* (1909) especially in her first period in chapter II. I will also take up some poems of Hubbell before and after his arrival of Japan in chapter III. The

purpose of it is so as to elucidate how Hubbell cultivated a great knowledge of modern art over a period of twenty one years, working for the New York City Library, before he came to Kyoto, which helped him perceive the beauty of Japan and at the same time reflected it in his poems. Hubbell wrote poems in *Travel Diary 1953-1954* (2002) about his impressions of the places of scenic beauty and historic interest in Kyoto and *Seventy Poems* (1965), which is exceedingly typical of his aesthetics. I will, furthermore, investigate how Hubbell's aesthetic sensations reacts to the spirit of Zen when he encountered the traditional Japanese performing art, Noh (Ezra Pound, a modern American poet, transcribed it as *Noh*, not *Nō* in 1917), and from the Zen spirits in the rock gardens, especially in the Rinzai Zen temples of Kyoto. This study leads to the first valuation of Hubbell's poetry.

In chapter IV, I will analyze the poetry of Gary Snyder who came to Kyoto in 1956 and led an ascetic life as a trainee monk mainly at Daitoku-ji temple. Snyder was generally identified as one of the Beat poets of the 1950s-60s' counterculture in the history of the American poetry. He was also a Zen Buddhist poet who practiced Buddhism for about ten years in Zen monasteries in Kyoto. When I read the essay, *The practice of the Wild* (1990), I clearly recognized the great influence of the essay, *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* (『正法眼蔵』), the life work essay of the Sōtō school (曹洞宗) of Zen, Eihei Dōgen. Snyder tackled an essay, "Mountains and Waters Sutra" (「山水経」) squarely in *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* and followed the very essence of Buddhist religion of Zen master Dōgen which germinated in his early poem, *Riprap and*

*Cold Mountain Poems* (1959). Thus I will demonstrate that Snyder had already had the sensibility to appreciate Zen master Dōgen's thoughts in his "Mountains and Waters Sutra."

Buddhism, which originated in India, acquired the elements of Zen in China (primarily, *Ch'an* in Chinese and *Dhyana* in Sanskrit). In the Kamakura period, Eisai Zen master (1141-1215) who descended from Mt. Hiei, on a second journey to Sung China in 1187, sought to spread Rinzai Zen in northern Kyushu and Kyoto. Dōgen, after Eisai's death, studied Zen Buddhism from Myōzen, his disciple. Dōgen also took passage to China in 1223 and visited various temples. Finally he came to Mt. T'ien-t'ung (Tendousan 天童山) where he met the excellent Ch'an priest Juching (Nyōjō 如淨禪師) and had the experience of spiritual awakening. In 1227, Dōgen returned home and founded a Zen monastery for training, Daibutsuji temple, which was later renamed Eihei-ji temple in 1244. The preceding history of Buddhism came to occupy a resolute position of Zen in Japan.

In the course of time, the long history of Zen Buddhism was to encounter the tradition of American poetry in the twentieth century. Hubbell and Snyder became a bridge between American poets and Zen in the present day. This is the significance of this paper on Zen in American poetry. Another purpose of this thesis, finally, is to take the first step toward understanding the ending of Hubbell's life as a Japanese citizen on the 2nd of October, 1994 on the soil of Kyoto.

## I . An Encounter with Oriental Thought

### (1) The Case of Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was born the son of a clergyman of the Unitarian Church. He also grew up to be a minister. After a journey to Europe, his friendship with transcendentalists engrossed his thoughts. He started out on a profession of letters by giving a lecture on his own natural philosophy in the Concord Lyceum. Emerson in this time of the 1840s encountered Oriental thought, the fountainhead of Zen Buddhism, as a New England Transcendentalist in the history of American literature. Emerson's thoughts were a kind of romanticism which perceives the wonder of nature through contemplation. He may have been affected by metaphysical ideas of Oriental thought which possibly stuck cultured persons as separate from the secular world.

In Emerson's ideas on transcendentalism, especially his poems, which contain the thoughts of the *Veda*, a sacred book from the *Bhagavad-Gīta*, a religious epic poem of Hinduism in ancient India, afforded clearly an ample understanding of Zen Buddhism. A short poem, *Brahma*, for example echoes the *Bhagavad-Gīta*. The first example is from Emerson's *Brahma*.

If the red slayer think he slays,

Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;  
Shadow and sunlight are the same;  
The vanished gods to me appear;  
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me cut;  
When me they fly, I am the wings;  
I am the doubter and the doubt,  
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,  
And pine in vain the sacred Seven,  
But thou, meek lover of the good!

Find me, and turn thy back on heaven. (Atkinson 1940 : 809)

The first person “I” in this poem, entitled *Brahma*, indicates the Brahma as the highest principle of the world. The Brahma is also the incarnation of one of the Trimurti. It consists of the three principal gods: Brahma, the Creator of the universe, Vishnu, the god of maintaining and Shiva, the god of destroyer.



If we human beings strive to see the phenomenal world without dividing you and I, or “the red slayer” and “the slain,” we should accomplish “the subtle way” which means an encounter with Brahma. Humans must renounce a strong attachment for the world of secular affairs. Brahma is like a sacred spirit which dwells beyond time and space. That is the reason why Brahma can say “shadow and sunlight are the same” and “one to me [Brahma] are shame and fame.” Where does Brahma appear from or to ? Emerson propounds that Brahma would show up everywhere if man became conscious of it. The unsubstantial and invisible Brahma has two aspects in the *Veda* and Hinduism. One is the highest principle of the world, which is essentially connected with the Buddha-nature in Buddhism. The last line, “Find me [Brahma], and turn thy back on heaven” an imperative sentence, is to emphasize an encounter with Brahma. The other is the divine incarnation of the Creator of the Universe. In “The Yoga of Renunciation” of the *Bhagavad-Gita* there is a scene in which Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, addresses Arjuna, who is the third prince of courage in the lineage of Pandavas as God (Brahma) himself. Here I will cite part of verses.

Seeing all things equal,

The enlightened may look

On the Brahmin, learned and gentle,

On the cow, on the elephant,

On the dog, on the eater of dogs.

Absorbed in Brahman  
He overcomes the world  
Even here, alive in the world.  
Brahman is one,  
Changeless, untouched by evil:  
What home have we but Him ?

The enlightened, the Brahman-abiding,  
Calm-hearted, unbewildered,  
Is neither elated by the pleasant  
Nor saddened by the unpleasant.

...

Only that yogi  
Whose joy is inward,  
Inward his peace, subject  
And his vision inward  
Shall come to Brahman  
And know Nirvana. (Prabhavananda 1975 : 74-5)

It is not until yogi, like a trainee monk, achieved unity with Brahma that he realizes the state of union with Brahma, Nirvana. Man, who lives in the world of secular affairs, usually divides the subject and the object with the logo-centric rationalism of Western thought. There is a monism which transcends the subject

and the object, beyond rationalism, in Emerson's poem, *Brahma* as well as in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. This also leads to Gary Snyder's poetry and Hubbell's aesthetics.

## (2) The Case of Henry David Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was a practical thinker in Concord who graduated from Harvard University in 1837. Thoreau entered the teaching profession, but soon resigned. Thoreau, following an impulse from Emerson, started to take interest in the Transcendental Club and became a member of it. He contributed both prose and verse to the Transcendental periodical, *The Dial*. Thoreau was also enthusiastic about Oriental things (Crawford 1934: xxiv). He read books in his search for light on Oriental thought. This showed his growing interest in the East.

Thoreau also began nature observation and to put his belief, the profoundest passion for nature or the woods as places of anyone living, into practice. He was deeply interested in wild nature before he entered the woods, *Walden*. He had a sharp observant eye for the natural phenomena of mountains, rivers, grasses, and trees. His short poem, "The Thaw," from the journal in January 1839 has such lines as:

I saw the civil sun drying earth's tears —

Her tears of joy that only faster flowed,

Fain would I stretch me by the highway side,  
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow,  
That mingled soul and body with the tide,  
I too may through the pores of nature flow.

But I alas nor tinkle can nor fume,  
One jot to forward the great work of Time  
'Tis mine to hearken while these ply the loom,  
So shall I my silence with their music chime. (Crawford 1934 : 521)

The thaw comes with warmth in the gentle spring sunlight. To Earth's tears of joy is juxtaposed the flow of waters. Thoreau hopes that his body is unified with the melting snow to thaw and trickle and his soul and body to flow with the tide. He, however, cannot identify himself with the natural things which he can only harmonize, listening to the sound of nature.

Thoreau, moreover, goes into the woods at the lakeside of Walden and starts to live alone, cooking his own food there. The resulting book, *Walden*, the best known of Thoreau's works, is a record of his residence at Walden Pond. He was someone unique and eccentric, a distinguished nature observer with a poet's heart. Thoreau expressed the union with the clouds in the sky and "incense" going upward from a hearth in "Smoke" April in 1843, which he wrote in *Walden* as follows:

Light-winged smoke, Icarian bird,  
Melting thy pinions in the upward flight,  
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,  
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;  
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form  
Of midnight vision, gathering up the skirts;  
By night star-veiling, and by day  
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;  
Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,  
And ask the Gods to pardon this clear flame. (Howarth 1981: 593)

Thoreau hoped and prayed for harmony between nature and the incense which he made with his own cooking. He made a small wood fire by asking “the Gods” to “pardon this clear flame” which he set at his cabin. “The Gods” is of course not in New England Puritanism, but in his own pantheistic ideas which identify gods with all sentient beings in nature. Thoreau grasped the earth as both living things and poems.

. . . The earth is not a mere fragment of dead history, stratum upon stratum like the leaves of a book, to be studied by geologists and antiquaries chiefly, but living poetry like the leaves of a tree, which precede flowers and fruit, — not a fossil earth, but a living earth. . . .

(Howarth *ibid*: 275)

One realizes again that Thoreau's basic idea, that human beings are equivalent to all of the animals and plants, leads to the environmental problems of ecology. This concept of ecology, in other words, is greatly connected with the Buddha-nature, which dwells in all of mountains, rivers, grasses and trees. The sense of the Buddha-nature indicates respect for the existence of all sentient beings including human beings, which moreover equally have the potentiality of realizing Buddha-hood. Thus Thoreau's transcendentalism is not based on the Western rationalism which distinguishes between a self and others, but on a yearningly pantheistic spirituality which realizes the reverence of life of all living things through a sharp, observant eye. In this manner Thoreau was a predecessor of Buddhist-tinted poetic ecologists like Gary Snyder who, as a Buddhist poet, involves himself in the present-day environmental issues of the globe. Thoreau's short poem without a title, for example, has only two lines:

My life has been the poem I would have writ,

But I could not both live and utter it. (Witherell 2001: 552)

Thoreau's lifetime was a oneness of theory and practice. His life itself was a piece of poem, which at the same time showed a token of his being a real poet.

## II. Gertrude Stein and Lindley Williams Hubbell

Lindley Williams Hubbell (1901-1994) first met with Gertrude Stein in New York when he worked in the New York Public Library in 1934. About two years before, Hubbell actually had corresponded with Stein about his impressions of her essay, *How to Write* (1931). At that time Hubbell was deeply impressed at meeting with Stein. Hubbell recollected his meeting with Stein in an interview as follows:

That was a year before I went to live in New York. I had begun writing poetry and reading poetry. I discovered her in the autumn or spring 1922 issue of *The Little Review* was the avant-garde magazine at that time, and I read something by Gertrude Stein and I was overwhelmed. I went to bookstores and there was nothing. I went to the New York Public Library and two books were there, *Three Lives* and *Tender Buttons*.

First I read *Three Lives* and then I read *Tender Buttons*, and that really overwhelmed me. . . And at that time all the writing about her was ridicule. She was [seen as] just a joke, and I grew more and more angry, so finally I wrote an article about her. I had difficulty in publishing it, but finally it was published. I didn't send it to her, of course. I was too shy for that, but somebody showed it to her and she wrote to me, thanking me. See, all those years she was so little appreciated. So of course I wrote her

answering that and from then on we corresponded. . . .

So after that, in 1934, [Stein] came to America. One day when I [Hubbell] was sitting at my desk in the New York public Library the telephone rang. I took up the receiver and said, "Map Division," and a voice said, "May I speak to Lindley Hubbell?" so I said, "This is he," and the voice said, "Hello, Lindley, this is Gertrude Stein." I was never so astounded in my life! She said, "I'm in the Algonquin." That's a hotel two block from my library. She said, "I'm in the Algonquin. Come up for dinner tonight." So I went out and had dinner with her. She stayed in that hotel about a year while she was on her lecturing tours. So I saw her many times.

Alice Toklas was always with her, except on one funny occasion. Gertrude was giving lectures all around in New York, and one day she called me up at the library and she said, "I have to give a lecture tonight in Brooklyn." And she said, "Alice can't come. She has a cold. So will you go with me?" I said, "Yes, of course." So we went there in a taxi and the head of the Brooklyn Museum welcomed us and she shook hands with him and introduced me, "This is Alice Toklas." And he looked at me and said, "How do you do, Miss Toklas." (Gallup 1979 : 691-2)

This is uniquely Gertrude Stein's sense of humor which, years later, is potentially inherited in Hubbell's aesthetics of subtlety and understatement of his poetry. I, in this chapter, intend to describe how Hubbell appreciates Stein's



main literary works including novels and prose poems in the early period. First I will shortly introduce Gertrude Stein herself. Next it is very helpful to analyze especially the unique technique in style of her “Melanctha,” the second novella in *Three Lives* (1909) when we clearly grasp Hubbell’s aesthetics of poetry which is based on subtlety and understatement in chapter III.

Gertrude Stein was born in Pennsylvania in 1874. She graduated from Radcliffe College, where she was taught by a psychologist William James (1842-1910) and after that went to Johns Hopkins University to study the anatomy of the brain. Tiring of the work, she left Baltimore in 1903 to live with her brother Leo in Paris where she lived till her death in 1946 with her lifelong friend and a secretary, Alice B. Toklas (1877-1967). After Leo left for Italy around 1908, Gertrude Stein’s *salon* in Paris attracted many prominent artists including Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris whose works were collected. She also had a close friendship with writers, such as Guillaume Apollinaire, Sherwood Anderson, and Ernest Hemingway and so on. Stein’s creative works—novels, prose poems, the series of short works called ‘portraits,’ and operas — were, as a result, products that mainly came from an aesthetic desire of abstraction in style. She was much influenced by modern painters, Cézanne and Picasso. I have a mind to regard Stein as an American poet who wrote prose poems rather than a prose writer in this paper.

Now Hubbell states in his essay that Stein’s early novel, *Q.E.D.* deals with an emotional triangle between three women in prose of a neutral style, the sort of thing that Willa Cather does better than anyone else (尾崎 2002 : 632).

He also describes “Melanctha” as Stein’s masterpiece in which her unique voice is first heard (尾崎 *ibid* : 636). *Tender Buttons* which was published in 1914 is completely hermetic. The opening poem, “A Carafe, That Is A Blind Glass,” for example, which was the cool elegance of a Cubistic painting by Juan Gris.(尾崎 2002 : 645) Hubbell described that her early literary works of *The Making of Americans* (1903-1911: 1925) and *A Long Gay Book* (unpublished until 1933 in *Matisse Picasso and Gertrude Stein*) in her regular gerundive style were equivalent to a Russian painter, Kasimir Malevich’s *Black Square* (1915) and *White on White* (1917). Hubbell explained Malevich’s aim of his paintings by quoting Alfred H. Barr’s “to free art from the ballast of the objective.” (尾崎 *ibid* : 641) In other words, that is what Gertrude Stein, a few years earlier, had done for literature in *The Making of Americans* and *A Long Gay Book*: “She [Stein] had freed literature from the ballast of the objective.” (尾崎 *ibid* : 641-2) In this way Hubbell grasped the trend of Modernism movement which brought painting and literature into a closer relationship in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Here I will analyze closely the stylistic characteristics of “Melanctha” in *Three Lives* (1909) because Hubbell’ sense of beauty was much influenced by Stein’s literary works in the early period. This novella, “Melanctha” is mainly based on the colloquial style in America, using limited punctuation marks and the repetitious expressions of simple sentences. In a way it shows a new tendency toward abstraction in style. The other distinctiveness of Stein’s writings was her creation of a new idea of time at the beginning of the twentieth

century. Her experimental endeavors not only refused the linear progression of the conventional concept of the time—past, present and future—but also rearranged our daily life consciousness by condensing the present into a continuously definite dimension of time. This new time theory of an original term, “continuous present,” was indirectly inspired by the post-Euclidian geometry and the post-Newtonian physics of Albert Einstein and by the refusal of function of logos descended from the ancient Greece which was based on a rational and coherent succession of thoughts. Stein was very sensitive to these concepts of time which progressively appeared. It was with just her keen temperament that she could recognize the new time sense in the twentieth century. Stein gave importance to both the past and the future as much as the present. She integrated them into the present itself. Her ways of writing and its device were closely associated with her unique time sense. In “Melanctha” she evolved the flow of the intricate awareness of the central figures. On the first reading we can find the uniqueness of her eccentric style. Hubbell, as a critic, set a high literary valuation on Stein’s works as he also indicated her new time concept in his essay.

At the opening sentence of “Melanctha,” for instance, Stein begins to depict the characterization of two young women. The heroine, Melanctha Herbert immediately puts in her appearance, and following several sentences further, a narrator impressionistically begins to express the two characters, using the repetitious expressions of simple sentences with only the slightest variation.

Melanctha Herbert who was Rose Johnson's friend, did everything that any woman could. She tended Rose, and she was patient, submissive, soothing, and untiring, while the sullen, childish, cowardly, black Rosie grumbled and fussed and howled and made herself to be an abomination and like a simple beast. . . .

Rose Johnson and Melanctha Herbert had been friends now for some years. Rose had lately married Sam Johnson a decent honest kindly fellow, a deck hand on a coasting steamer.

Melanctha Herbert had not yet been really married.

Rose Johnson was a real black, tall, well built, sullen, stupid, childlike, good looking negress. She laughed when she was happy and grumbled and was sullen with everything that troubled.

Rose Johnson was a real black negress but she had been brought up quite like their own child by white folks.

Rose laughed when she was happy but she had not the wide, abandoned laughter that makes the warm broad glow of negro sunshine. Rose was never joyous with the earth-born, boundless joy of negroes. Hers was just ordinary, any sort of woman laughter. (Stein 1909 : 85-6)

The fragmentary episodes in this story are a description not of the actions but of the gradations of human mind. I will quote some paragraphs in order to explain the subtle variation which is in the inner consciousness of Stein's characters by

making it concerned with the simplicity in style. This is from the scene which the closest relationship between Rose and Melanctha starts to get worse.

Rose did not have Melanctha to live with her, now Rose was married. Melanctha was with Rose almost as much as ever but it was a little different now their being together.

Rose Johnson never asked Melanctha to live with her in the house, now Rose was married. Rose liked to have Melanctha come all the time to help her, Rose liked Melanctha to be almost always with her but Rose was shrewd in her simple selfish nature, she did not ever think to ask Melanctha to live with her.

Rose was hard headed, she was decent, and she always knew what it was she needed. Rose needed Melanctha to be with her, she liked to have her help her, the quick, good Melanctha to do for the slow, lazy, selfish, black girl, but Rose could have Melanctha to do for her and she did not need her to live with her. (Stein *ibid*: 214)

The three paragraphs consist of a few sentences and only have the almost tedious contents in the circuitous statements. In this fragmentary narration, by the simplified patterns of verbal combinations, Stein places emphasis upon the subtle variation of Rose's feelings for Melanctha.

In commenting upon Stein's uniqueness of the stylistic device, there is a noteworthy fact, a simplification of verbal expression. The simplification of

words contains a very important element in case of demonstrating the iteration of trite languages later. Thus it is necessary to ponder over Stein's connection with Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) so as to find a clue to solve the problems with a new tendency to simplification in style and execution. Because Cézanne's painting was one of her brother, Leo's enthusiasms, it was in the winter of 1904 that she had a fatal encounter with his paintings. The stimulating episode is described in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933):

Before the winter was over, having done so far Gertrude Stein and her brother [Leo] decided to go further, they decided to buy a big Cézanne and then they would stop. After that they would be reasonable. They convinced their elder brother that this last outlay was necessary, and it was necessary as will soon be evident. They told Vollard [an art dealer of France] that they wanted to buy a Cézanne portrait. In those days, practically no big Cézanne portraits had been sold. Vollard owned almost all of them. . . and there they spent days deciding which portrait they would have. There were about eight to choose from and the decision was difficult. . . Finally they narrowed the choice down to two, a portrait of a man and a portrait a woman, but this time they could not afford to buy twos and finally they chose the portrait of the woman. (Stein 1961 : 30-1)

And Stein gives her impression of the portrait of the woman: "It was an important purchase, because in looking and looking at this picture Gertrude

Stein wrote *Three Lives*.” (Stein *ibid*: 31)

What does this passage, “in looking and looking at this picture Gertrude Stein wrote *Three Lives*” mean ? It was possible for Stein to write a literary work in terms of Cézanne’s method of expression even if the device of an author essentially differs from that of a painter. It is certain that she will acquire a kind of “inspiration” from the art of Cézanne. His painting heightens our awareness of pictorial form and structure when he tried to communicate nature differently. Cézanne evolved a new syntax for painting. In fact he destroyed the three-dimensional stability of clairvoyance perspective present since the Renaissance. The objects of visual reality were dissolved fragmentarily with some flat planes which were composed of a lump of colors. His predominant artistic distinctiveness was indeed originated as geometrical simplification by a startling new idea of his own. This simplification brings with it the proportion of the fragmental planes of colors to paragraphs which consist of simple sentences in this story. From the point of the art of Cézanne, an Art critic, Clive Bell (1881-1964), a member of the Bloomsbury group, described this simplification in *Art* (1914).

I have said that in their choice of forms and colours most vital contemporary artists are, more or less, influenced by Cézanne, and that Cézanne has inspired them with the resolution to free their art from literary and scientific irrelevancies. Most people, asked to mention a third, would promptly answer I suspect — Simplification. To instance

simplification as a peculiarity of the art of any particular age seems queer, since simplification is essential to all art. Without it art cannot exist; for art is the creation of significant form, and simplification is the liberating of what is significant form what is not. (Bell 1914 : 220)

Cézanne regarded nature as something to reshape, distort or otherwise arrange according to the dictation of geometrical shapes, for example, a cone and a cylinder. He took an object apart and then reassembled the parts by means of the possible combinations between lines and colors. He recognized a fragmentarily physical object into “significant form” through simplification. This new belief leads to desires to move towards abstraction in modern art. Stein, by a similar process, also attempted to exemplify the progressively changing flow of self-consciousness in terms of the relative combinations between sentences and paragraphs.

Next, I analyze that the fragmental patterns of each paragraph in narrative structure are subservient to depict the subtle change of the close relationship between Rose Johnson and Melanctha Herbert. The form of expression consists of the units of paragraph with almost trite childlike words. The recurring pattern of each sentence which only expresses the almost similar contents shows us the changing flux of Rose and Melanctha’s consciousness in a roundabout way rather than in a laconic speech, although we, as Edmund Wilson indicated, have felt it “some ruminative self-hypnosis” (Wilson 1979 : 191). Stein represented the personality types of characters from different angles by



using a reiteration of each sentence. Her simplified combinations of diction are based on the device of “repetition” in style in this descriptive narrative. The following long dialog between Melanctha and her boyfriend, Jeff Campbell which is composed of their conversation ranges over three pages is a good case in point. This long paragraph is closely related to a flow of consciousness in the two central figures. Jeff and Melanctha try to enter into the inner reality of their own feelings by justifying or condemning each other thoughts. Especially, Melanctha’s original idea of “remembering right” tells us how she perceives the things around her. This phrase is a clue to solve her underlying system of self-consciousness. This scene begins with Jeff’s advice to Melanctha. He said that she has no ability to remember accurately past experiences.

“. . . You certainly Melanctha, you ain’t got down deep loyal feeling, true inside you, and when you ain’t just that moment quick feeling, then you certainly ain’t ever got anything more there to keep you. You see melanctha, it certainly is this way with you. You see Melanctha, it certainly is this way with you, it is, that you ain’t ever got any way to remember right what you been doing, or anything else that has been feeling with you. You certainly Melanctha, never can remember right, when it comes what you have done and what you think happens to you.”

(Stein 1909 : 180-1)

And in response to Jeff’s opinions, Melanctha says thus:

“ . . . It certainly is all easy for Jeff Campbell to be talking. You remember right, because you don’t remember nothing till you get home with your thinking everything all over, but I certainly don’t think much ever of that kind of way of remembering right, Jeff Campbell. I certainly do call it remembering right Jeff Campbell, to remember right Jeff Campbell, to remember right just when it happens to you, so you have a right kind of feeling not to act the way you always been doing to me, and then you go home Jeff Campbell, . . . I never could feel so like a man was low and to be scorning of him, like that day in the summer, when you threw me off just because you got one of those fits of your remembering. No, Jeff Campbell, it’s real feeling every moment when it’s needed, that certainly does seem to me like real remembering. . . .” (Stein *ibid*: 181)

A major matter chiefly raised by the dispute between Jeff and Melanctha is how she sensitively grasped the progressively changing process of self-consciousness and equally all kinds of things around her in an immediate moment. Her radical function of self-consciousness modifies or transforms some memories of the past in terms of the state of mind she has felt just now. This function of the inner awareness for the moment breaks down a consistency of remembrance in the past. Richard Bridgman has referred to “remembering right” with its relation to memory in the following passage: “her life lacks the continuity that a systematic and accurate memory can provide.” (Stein *ibid*: 55) Since she regards

self-consciousness of the past as that of the present, Melanctha can live only in the present. Whatever she may recall, her life depends upon how she recognizes the objects around her in the “continuous present.”

Stein’s concept of time sense in this way is connected with Hubbell’s thoughts of modern literature. Hubbell stated in “Studies in English Literature” as follows:

Modern literature is based on a new concept of time, derived from the post-Euclidian geometry and the post-Newtonian physics of Einstein and his contemporaries. In the epics of Proust, Joyce, and Stein; in the poetry of Pound and Eliot; in the novels of Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf, in short poems like Wallace Stevens’ Peter Quince at the Clavier, in all of them you will find this new concept of time, for today time is no longer held to be an absolute, but a dimension of matter. (尾崎 2002 : 637-8)

The new concept of time, “continuous present” is actually indicated, for example, by repeating “now” and “always.” Stein uses the words any number of times within one paragraph. This device has an effect which makes us hold our attention most forcefully as we read. She has developed to the utmost the idea of the “continuous present,” in depicting the change of passion between Jeff and Melanctha in a slow tempo. In the following paragraphs, the first is Melanctha Herbert:

Melanctha acted now the way she had said it always had been with them. Now it was always Jeff who had to do the asking. Now it was always Jeff who had to ask when would be the next time he should come to see her. Now always she was good and patient to him, and now always she was kind and loving with him, and always Jeff it was, that she was good to give him anything he ever asked or wanted, but never now any more for her own sake to make her happy in him. Now she did these things, as if it was just to please her Jeff Campbell who needed she should now have kindness for him. Always now he was the beggar, with them. Always now Melanctha gave it, not of her need, but from her bounty to him. Always now Jeff found it getting harder for him. (Stein 1909 : 174-5)

And the second is from Jeff Campbell:

Slowly Jeff felt it a comfort in him to have it hurt so, and to be good to Melanctha always. Now there was no way Melanctha ever had had to bear things from him, worse than he now had it in him. Now Jeff was strong inside him. Now he knew he was understanding, now he knew he had a hot love in him, and he was good always to Melanctha Herbert who was the one had made him have it. . . Now Jeff Campbell had real wisdom in him, for Jeff knew now all through him that he was really strong to bear it. (Stein *ibid*: 204-5)

Stein incorporated the leading characters' memories of past experiences into the inner workings of awareness of the present in the light of "continuous present." This simultaneity of time is nothing less than "nowness" of self-consciousness. It was, therefore, more interesting for Stein to show several moments simultaneously than to represent the events and thoughts of the past as a reminiscence. Her endeavors in this story were to express immediately an ambiguity of consciousness before their feelings are clearly said by the words, love or hate.

The aim of Stein's characteristic expression of words is to represent immediately human intuitive recognition and at the same time to show several moments simultaneously in order to emphasize upon "nowness" of self-consciousness. For, at the early stage of her writing career, her major concept, "continuous present," was pivotal between the composition in writing and the progressively changing processes of awareness. In brief the human mind existed in an immediate moment of the present, not in the linear progression of time which distinguished between the memories in the past and the expectations in the future. Stein verbalized fragmentarily the state of mind and wrote it down in her writings. Although she ignored the context of story and some of syntactical and grammatical rules in writing, Stein created the eccentric techniques which were composed of the simplification of diction and the "repetition" of a few emblematic words and phrases which are equivalent to "significant form" in art. Stein stated that "sentence is not emotional but

paragraph is.” (Stein 1985 : 93)

Stein, at the beginning of the twentieth century, and afterwards, was fully aware that the words must be recreated in a new dimension by experimental endeavors. She began to express this feeling of linguistic liberation in “Melanctha” which was one of her masterpieces in the early period. In this respect, she said in *How Writing is Written* thus:

The only way the Americans could change their language was by choosing words which they liked better than other words, by putting words next to each other in a different way than the English way, by shoving the language around until at last now the job is done, we use the same words as the English do but the words say an entirely different thing. (Stein 1974 : 171)

Stein’s intention was to turn the conventional use of the words into a new diction. The same could be said by Cézanne’s notion which tried to communicate nature differently. She strove for the simplicity in composition and eccentricity in style by ignoring the conventional rules of the story and plot. Stein herself stated the literary value of “Melanctha” which took a new direction in linguistic art as follows:

Gertrude Stein had written the story of Melanctha the negress, the second story of *Three Lives* which was the first definite step away from

the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century in literature.

(Stein 1961 : 50)

In this statement, we can understand Stein's principal intention which was made in this story. "Melanctha" is her full experiment in the use of "continuous present" and is like a memorial tower in the city of words in Sherwood Anderson's phrase. The common distinction of the twentieth century artists was to ignore the conventional narrative of events and express the immediate, sensuous perception of human mind. This led modern writers to a new direction in linguistic art. In this context, Gertrude Stein could acutely recognize a new time sense. Her eccentric style became one of the established classics of American literature. Stein's eccentricity in style was equivalent to that of the modernist poets and authors such as Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and Woolf. Stein was also unique in her pursuing new possibilities of incantations which are similar to mantra in Buddhism. In *The Making of Americans* (1925), the repetitious expressions of simple sentences are typical of incantations. It is no exaggeration to say that I call Stein a "shamanic" prose poet who manipulates the repetitious incantations of simple sentences in the literary world of the twentieth century.

Gertrude Stein, as for Hubbell, was an outstanding predecessor who became conscious of a close relationship between painting and literature. Hubbell, anyway, penetrated that Cézanne and Picasso had the greatest influence on most of her writings. Her simplified word-form which led to abstraction in *Tender Buttons* is equivalent to a sort of *collage* in Picasso's

Cubistic paintings. Finally, Hubbell pointed out that the period when Stein published *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* was “the mountain top, the heroic age” to her. (尾崎 2002 : 652) Thus Hubbell’s sense of beauty can be unexpectedly influenced by Stein’s aesthetics of simplification in style as a modern poet as well as a critic in literary criticism.



### III. Lindley Williams Hubbell's Poetry

—An Aesthetic Eye of Subtlety and understatement—

#### (1) From America to Japan

An American poet, Lindley Williams Hubbell, 1901 – 1994, was “a witness of the twentieth century.” Hubbell’s lifetime of ninety three years is broadly divided into the two periods. The first half of his life was spent in America. Hubbell came to Japan in 1953. As he was originally born and raised in Hartford, Connecticut where an old traditional background strongly persisted, he acknowledged himself to be a New England Puritan.

When he was eight years old, Hubbell started to read the Shakespearean works including the Sonnets. He, however, left high school in his second year and did not go on to a college. Hubbell in childhood called his neighbor Laura Charlotte Williams his “aunt” and liked her so much that he made his middle name “Williams” after her name. He learned French, German, Italian, and other foreign languages from her and a tutor (尾崎 2002 : 686). Then he acquired religion, philosophy, literature, music, and fine arts on his own. He worked at the New York Public Library for more than twenty years beginning in 1925. In 1946, once he returned to Harford, he taught the history of drama; Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Greek drama in the newly-established Randall School of Art. Hubbell as a poet won the Yale Younger Poets prize by his collected poems, *Dark Pavilion*

in 1927. He continued to write over ten poetry collections, poetical dramas, and essays. This period made up the first half of his life.

The later half of his life began on the 6<sup>th</sup> October in 1953, when Hubbell came to Japan for the first time, at which time he lectured on English poetry and Shakespeare's literary works mainly in Doshisha University. He was legally naturalized as a Japanese citizen with the name of Hayashi Shyuseki in 1960. After he retired in 1985, Hubbell stayed in Kyoto for some time and lived near Kobe for the rest of his life. He never went home to the United States.

I intend to focus on Hubbell as a modern poet and search for the reason why he left America and chose to go to Japan as his final home. Finally I will analyze Hubbell's poetic world on the stage of Japan as he saw it through his aesthetic eyes. When Hubbell left his hometown, Hartford, for Japan, he expressed his parting words in "Leaving Hartford" in *Travel Diary* as follows:

I shake the dust of this city  
From my shoes.  
I pronounce Anathema  
On the people of this city  
Because, being insensitive  
And without imagination,  
They expected me to explain to them  
The art of poetry. (尾崎 2004 : 3)

Hubbell put a great emphasis on his irritation against the people in Hartford who couldn't appreciate "the art of poetry" with the word "Anathema" in capital letters. This means that Hubbell himself pronounce excommunication on his puritan tradition. His disillusionment with the people in Hartford, who were "insensitive and without imagination," was condensed in the expression "Anathema." His irritation against the people of his native country, who are indifferent to art, is equally true of Ezra Pound (1885-1972), who also expressed his own resentments by calling America "a half savage country" (Eliot 1918 :187) in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920).

Hubbell had made Japan his final home after he arrived in 1953. We need to understand his impression of Japan as reflected through his aesthetic sense. In this paper, I'd like to bring it to light by analyzing some short poems in *Seventy Poems* (1965), which express the artistic space of Japan. It is very interesting for me that he had a keen appreciation of Noh, the classical stage art of Japan. That is why the distinguished scholars in Japan as well as in the U.S. have scarcely made a literary criticism on Hubbell's poetry. In the past, the late professor Hisao Kanaseki in Komazawa University, however, called that he was "the last Modernist Poet" (金関 1995:25). Professor Kanaseki owing to Hubbell's close friend stated that he died away at ninety-three years old and at the same time published an article in a literary magazine which pays a tribute to the memory of Hubbell as a modernist. It is very significant for our scholars to recognize the existing of a description like this. I, from here, must objectively take a new step forward to Hubbell's world of poetry.

## (2) An Encounter with Noh

After Hubbell's arrival in Japan, only twelve days went by before he attended Noh plays on the 21<sup>st</sup> October. The program was *Fujidaiko*. That is one of the four categories of plays, which are also known as Miscellaneous (雑能) Noh, in which, as the name indicates, a variety of characters appear. I cannot make clear to what degree he could appreciate the classical art of Noh at that time. But he wrote an interesting essay in Japanese in the booklet *Kongō* (金剛流) in 1957. It is not too much to say that in it he certainly penetrated the abstract style of the Noh. Hubbell understood the essence of the Noh plays in comparison to Greek dramas as follows:

The dramas of Greece are greatly different from those of Noh on two points. The first point is that the heroic stories have powerful tones and varieties in a broad and clear style, like the shrine architecture of Greece. The second point is that the Noh plays are an art of subtlety and understatement which tries to reveal truth in a flash. This is the difference between the Parthenon and Katsura Imperial Villa. (尾崎 2002 ハベル「碧眼に映じた能」[Hubbell, "The Noh reflected in Blue Eyes" ]5-6)

The characteristics of Noh are very simple plots, without ornament on the stage, and without orientation in time and space. There are stage props and small

personal props. The former are set on the stage to manipulate the space while the latter are held or worn by the actor (the Shite). The materials of the stage ornaments are mainly made of bamboo, branches, cloth, papers, and very simply constructed. Hubbell, especially, by stage space and the use of actor's personal props, precisely grasped that the gesture of the main character in a series of posturing brings about abstraction, not representation. In fact there is, as Hubbell pointed out, a crucial moment at which the main character makes the abstract gesture in the program *Fujidaiko* (『富士太鼓』) of the *Kongō* school. It is the scene when a main actor consciously lets the rush hat he kept with him fall.

I will, first, survey the scene which leads to the first half climax, “the very moment” of dropping the rush hat. The program, *Fujidaiko*, belongs to the category of the Noh play which expresses a wife's (the Shite) frantic sensation, lamenting the death of her husband. In this story an accomplished drum player by the name of Fuji (no family name) who belonged to the Grand Shrine of Sumiyoshi in the district of Settsu province (now located in the district of Osaka and Hyogo) was killed by Asama, a rival drummer. At the time, Fuji, the drum player went by himself to Miyako, the capital (Kyoto) to join an orchestral music festival and competed with others by imperial order from Tennouji (now located in the district of Osaka). But, out of envy, his rival Asama killed him. Before long, the scene is set, in which Fuji's wife, who at home had seen her husband off, had a sinister dream of her husband's death. Fuji's wife accompanied by her child starts to follow her husband, and on the way to the Grand Shrine, they

come across a servant of the shrine, and are much grieved at the bad news that her husband was killed by Asama. But at that moment, the Shite, Fuji's wife, keeps standing on the center of the stage and only drops without a word the rush hat out of her hands.

This simple gesture is one of the classic actions on Noh and greatly impresses the spectators by its abstract style of action, letting only the rush hat fall rather than realistically breaking into tears. In other words, this tendency toward abstraction of a series of actions is intended to lay great emphasis on the sadness of the widow. It is a simple and abstract gesture in a tense atmosphere on the stage that produces a deep impression. The simplified action of dropping the rush hat leads to an aesthetic subtlety in Noh plays. This is a component of the Noh style of the *Kongō* school which associates, as Hubbell puts it, an aesthetics of "subtlety and understatement." Thus he epitomizes the ideal of stylistic beauty in Noh.

The emotional sensation, the sadness of Fuji's wife who realized her husband's death is reduced to "the fall of the rush hat," to the abstract image of a line. The Shite's acting in abstraction certainly has something in common with the poetic structure of expression not only in Noh drama but in modern American poetry. It might be true to say that the Shite's abstract forms, as T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) put it, are suitable as "objective correlative" in his poetic principles. Regardless of a series of actions or events, they produce emotion in the spectators. In *Fujidaiko*, the audience has a feeling which involves a visual impact lingering on in one's mind after the main character's performance, such

as Eliot's poetic technique suggests. This amplifies the effect of suggestion avoiding the ambiguity, sentimentality, grandiosity of romantic drama as much as possible by substituting realistic with abstract acting. This pattern of posturing is not a hint for the sake of a hint, but expresses a deep grief humans can't possibly assuage.

Hubbell had already had an insight into the beauty of the Noh drama when he has appreciated *Fujidaiko* in 1953. He discovered the simple and abstract style of expression, excluding emotionalism, in Noh. He was sensitive to the times on the basis of aesthetic principles underlying literary modernism, which brought literature and fine art into a closer relationship at the beginning of the twentieth century.

### (3) A Taste for Painterly Abstraction

Where on earth was Hubbell's aesthetic taste for finding out something modern in traditional Japanese performing arts, Noh plays derived from? I might as well direct my attention toward his interests in the fine arts. As he stated in his autobiography, he had only to appreciate especially four artists in modern art — Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), Kasimir Malevich (1878-1935), and Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) — when he lived in New York between 1925 and 1946. What these four artists' works of art have in common is that they tend to an abstraction which conveys the

impression of so-called “conceptual art.” Before he came to Japan, Hubbell grasped presence of mind by the word “tranquility,” in Brancusi’s sculptures, Mondrian’s paintings, and Debussy’s music in *Long Island Triptych* (1941).

The tranquility of Brancusi’s bird,  
Of Mondrian’s great black and white diamond,  
Of Debussy’s clouds,

This is my home, this is where I live,  
I have stayed away too long,  
I must try to go back. (尾崎 2002 : 203)

Before he arrived in Japan, Hubbell’s spiritual home for healing had been only in the works of these artists. But this is true not only of Hubbell’s sensibility, but of the general public. It is not very difficult to imagine that the desire for abstraction, satisfied by a combination of lines and colors makes spectators feel “tranquility” in a Brancusi and a Mondrian. Brancusi, for instance, consciously strove to reduce and idealize organic objects of the physical world to the essence of things by eliminating the personal factor. He conceptualized the image of birds actually flying in the air to a leap in scale, resulting in a form of stream-lined ovals and tubes in marble and brass like a bird spreading its wings. This is the so-called *the Bird in Space* series.

Both Brancusi and Mondrian are utterly different in their methodology of



art, but the two artists are similar in their desire for abstraction by chipping the representational form of objects from the phenomenal world. They don't directly represent emotional sensations or ideas but imply, centripetally, the core of the essentials. One of the "Composition" series, Mondrian's characteristic style is one of pure abstraction by eliminating vestiges of organic objects. This kind of art work, a simplification by a combination of forms and colors, gives spectators a feeling of "tranquility" when they appreciate them. As a matter of fact, in the pages between the poems, "Malevich" and "Mondrian" in *Seventy Poems* are set *Suprematist Composition: White on White* (1917) and *Composition in White, Black, and Red* (1936). The distinctive element, especially of Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism is the desire for pure objectivity in the absence of individualistic tendency. He rejected an element of sensibility which would seem too sentimental on canvas. He emphasizes anti-expressionism. As much as mathematics, the Mondrian plastic structure of art counts on representation of the fundamental characteristics in the physical world.

Is there an aesthetic criterion to grasp what brings about the "tranquility" we spectators feel at the combination of simple forms and primary colors? Here I will suggest an aesthetic criterion in modern art at the beginning of the twentieth century.

An art critic, Clive Bell was much influenced by a new wave of abstract painting, from which originated a new sense of beauty with an impulse for abstraction. He coined so rightly an original term, "Significant Form" in his main work, *Art* (1914).

The lines and colors combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combinations of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving forms, I call “significant Form” ; And “Significant Form” is the only quality common to all works of visual art. (Bell 1914 : 8)

I, to put it more plainly, might as well visualize the surface of the sea shimmering from the setting sun as a metaphor. The spectacular views of the silver waves shining brightly from the sun light give the spectators the experience of visual beauty of the rippling waves. Even the bright surface of the sea, from a viewpoint of “Significant Form,” unexpectedly created by nature, can make an aesthetic space. An art historian, Wilhelm Worringer (1881-1965) who belonged to the Vienna School stated that “Tormented by the entangled interrelationship and flux of the phenomena of the outer world, such peoples were dominated by an immense need for tranquillity” (Worringer 1980 : 16). The emotional impulse of a spiritual stability against the chaotic world of reality urged to moderns to abstraction. The tendency to formalism in style is not necessarily true of all visual arts. It, however, can be at least a standard of beauty for Mondrian’s pure abstract paintings and Brancusi’s sculptures. The idea, “Significant Form,” of suggesting aesthetic emotions and conveying ideas, is suitable not only for plastic art but for the pattern, “the Fall of the rush hat” in the Noh, the *Fujidaiko* as it was called in the classic performing arts.

When he lived in New York, Hubbell had cultivated a sense of beauty connected with the abstract arts at the turning point of the twentieth century. He perceived the stylistic beauty in the unique pattern of the Noh in Japan through an aestheticism of subtlety and understatement.

#### (4) Abstraction and Aesthetic Space of Japan

It is quite possible that Hubbell applied his aesthetic eye of subtlety and understatement with a great knowledge of visual arts in the collected poetry, *Seventy Poems* after his arrival in Japan, including the poems which he had written in America. He expressed his sense of beauty, subtlety and understatement, by naming the title of poem “The Rock Garden at Ryoanji.” This short poem has such lines as:

This is the ultimate subtlety of art

The marrow in the bones:

A rectangle of raked gravel

And a few stones. (尾崎 2002 : 45)

This poem reminds me of the main principles of Imagism which Pound set forth in 1912. The first two lines suggestively understate the subtlety (or something spiritual) in a sort of cosmos. We, as Pound, who was influenced by *Haiku*,

indicated, should grasp this poem, directly with reference to two of the three elements of style in poetry:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

(Eliot 1918 : 3)

It is very important for Imagist poets to represent things directly in anti-individualistic style of writing. In other words, as Pound asserted as one of his principles "the direct treatment of the thing," Hubbell also detested stylistically the ambiguity, sentimentality, exaggeration, and gentility of romantic poetry. The significant combinations of images and objects are to evoke in the reader's mind certain emotions.

In the actual rock garden at Ryōanji, surrounded by an earthen wall with plaster that bears the dim atmosphere of many ages, fifteen large and small natural rocks, precisely arranged in five groups on a stylistically expanse of white gravel, are harmonize in size, shape, and balance without any large mounds or trees. In spite of an irregular arrangement of rocks, the spectator who calmly stands in the foreground of the dry landscape garden experiences the emotional impact of "tranquility." It seems to be similar to subtlety or elegant mystery (*yūgen*) which are indispensable to Noh performances. The spectator in the garden feels the mysterious essentials, which cannot be grasped, to slip through one's reason and intelligence. Hubbell expressed the spiritual

space “the ultimate subtlety of art” in this poem. The aesthetics of austerity is not only in the world of poetry, but also in painting, drama, and even in landscape gardening. The aesthetics of subtlety undoubtedly induces a state of deep concentration, so-called “nirvana,” where subject and object are one in Buddhist doctrine. It has often been said that an aesthetic cosmos of rock and dry landscape garden symbolized human mentality as a metaphor, but depended upon a delicate arrangement of stones in a dimension of intuition. I suppose that it is not necessary to search for a rational demonstration in so far as one looks with an aesthetic eye.

What makes us feel “tranquility” from a small spiritual universe by uniquely asymmetric arrangement of rocks in the dry landscape garden at Ryoanji temple ? It is impossible to attest the intentions of garden’s builders at Ryoanji, who have not yet been identified, but who initially arrange the opening of this garden around five hundred years ago. It is “Significant Form” that originated from the simple composition of natural rocks which placed on the expanse of the patterns raked in the sand of dry landscape garden generally makes the spectator “tranquility” in spirituality like nothingness in Zen. We the audience feel the subtlety through Hubbell’s aesthetic eye, not a scientific one.

The sense of beauty did not have originality in Hubbell’s artistic temperament though he watched visually the essentials of classic art of Japan in Ryoanji’s rock garden. I feel that the modern American poet, Hubbell’s eye gazing at Mondrian’s pure abstract paintings, is now in and now out of sight. The short poem, “Katusra Imperial Villa” plainly expresses the difference of

aesthetic senses between Japan and America.

Americans can see a Mondrian

But Japanese can live in one.

That is why they do not care at all

To put one on the wall. (尾崎 2002 : 339)

About *Katsura Imperial Villa*, there is no realistic expression only with the title of the poem. The first two lines are actually juxtaposed. I wonder if they are really in conflict with, or whether they are suggesting something intuitive or aesthetic. I think that Hubbell intends to understate the landscape of Katsura Imperial Villa on the assumption that we spectators already knew its image. Hubbell vaguely compared Katsura Imperial Villa with Mondrian's pure abstract paintings, indicating the difference of aesthetic sense of the two people.

To take Mondrian's *Composition in White, Black and Red* as an instance, Americans, in general, can recognize the value of his art as consisting in the possibly peculiar combinations of lines and colors. But it is impossible to attempt further interpretation beyond that. On the other hand, Hubbell suggestively points out that the Japanese can live in Mondrian's world of art. The second line that "Japanese can live in a Mondrian" is a sort of metaphor that we cannot literally interpret. Americans hang Mondrian's pictures on the wall and enjoy them, but that is all. The third and last lines are to express that Japanese have a congenial sense of beauty to the extent of appreciating

Mondrian's paintings. Hubbell recognizes the aesthetic difference between the American and the Japanese.

Hubbell, however, discovers a point of contact between the aesthetic characteristics of a Japanese landscape garden in Katsura Imperial villa and those of Mondrian's pure abstract art. I intend to analyze what it is, taking into account the Japanese aesthetic context in connection with the rock garden at Ryoanji.

The early period of Katsura Imperial villa started with its construction by the first Toshihito prince of Hachijo (1579-1629) in the intention of keeping it in better repair. This is a villa where the prince Toshihito diverted himself or took a rest (森 1972 : 72). He sometimes invited guests of honor and used to compose *Tanka*, a poetic form of thirty one syllables, in this villa and to give elegant banquets.

Looking down upon the Imperial villa site from the sky, there are several buildings around a study room, *Shoin*, in the center, which had first been employed in Zen temples, used sometimes for receiving guests, the parts of which formed a harmonious whole of trees and ponds. Visitors walk on a path named Miyuki-dori in front, which was paved with pebbles and asymmetrically planted with shrubbery on both sides. One passed through a middle gate with a thatched roof, Tobi-ishi, or over stepping stones which set at one's feet lead to a front garden. The disposition of the processed flagstones, geometrically composed of triangles, squares, trapezoids, and pentagons in the small garden, are suggestive of Mondrian's paintings as a masterpiece of the plastic arts. This

natural landscape garden is called “borrowed scenery,” which has distant views that most likely include forests, ponds, and rivers made of white gravel. A Japanese traditional microcosm of ideas is incorporated in the design of the garden. The aesthetic beauty, delicately arranged by natural materials — soils, waters, sands, and trees, — resides in the surrounding of a garden. The symmetrical design of stepping stones is like Mondrian’s painting set in a frame for an art museum but at the same time, indeed, visitors not only take a long appreciative look at the stepping stones but also walk on the pavement of flagstones which leads to a study room. Mondrian’s paintings aim to be appreciated as an art work, while the uneven stepping stones at Katsura Imperial villa are not only an object of appreciation arranged by the Japanese sense of beauty but also the practically stepping stones themselves to walk on. Hubbell’s aesthetic eye of subtlety and understatement is just an abstract viewpoint connecting the stepping stones of Katsura Imperial villa and Mondrian’s pure abstract works of art, related to Hubbell’s aesthetics of a sort of anti-sentimentality. He evokes tranquility in the image of a sophisticated landscape garden at Nanzenji as well as Ryoanji. His relaxation suggests the paintings of Edward Hopper’s (1882-1967) anti-sentimentality. Hubbell’s “Rock Garden by Kobori Enshu, Nanzenji,” for instance, has such lines as:

All other gardens, except

Incomparable Ryoanji,



make me a little nervous.

Here I am relaxed.

When I told my friends

(in America)

That I loved Edward Hopper

They were always surprised

because I am supposed to be

“modern”

but I told them:

Edward Hopper

gives me the same pleasure

that Mondrian does. (尾崎 2002 : 24)

This is a perfect example of Hubbell’s aesthetics of forms by simplification. He evokes “tranquility” in the rock garden at Nanzenji in contrast with Hopper’s paintings, which suggest the solitude or alienation of city dwellers in modern American society. Hopper does not make a simple sketch of the urban city or the landscape of nature but depicts unique scenes to project his state of mind,

especially estrangement, solitude, and tranquility through the painterly filter or angle peculiar to him. A former art critic of the New York Times, Brian O'Doherty put it as follows:

Hopper's attitude toward his subject matter, antiromantic and asentimental, was unmatched in twentieth-century American Art until Pop art inserted its ironies between the artist and banal. (O'Doherty 1988 : 20)

Hopper seizes the scenes at a point of view which spectators unintentionally happened to see such as looking in others' rooms, looking over the glass at a bar in the middle of the night or gazing at a woman looking down, who alone stands leaning the wall at an aisle in a theater. His composition on canvas consciously makes viewers able to interpret his work in several ways. Hubbell's interests in Hopper's paintings make sense only in respect of a terse technique of style. Thus although the rock garden in Zen temples and Mondrian's paintings are utterly different from a methodology for grasping centripetally or centrifugally the essentials of things, in a simplified space which has an effect of "subtlety and understatement" there is Hubbell's aesthetics evoking the emotion "tranquility" which is unboundedly akin to *nirvana* in Buddhism.

(5) A Guiding Principle of Paucity and its Significance of Style

It is said that Hubbell's intention, not to figuratively represent the landscape of Katsura Imperial villa in his poem, leads to a prosody of *Haiku* which expresses what is observed and felt in nature in the present time. His poetic technique resembles Pound's imagistic style which juxtaposes, as opposed to explaining, the two images in an unexpected way. This is to renounce the objective depiction of the phenomenal world from a point of view of modern Occidental rationalism. What artists centripetally express in the aesthetic of paucity, as Hubbell cited Kasimir Malevich's phrase "to free art from the ballast of the objective world" (尾崎 2002 : 611) in his essay, was to make readers feel emotional sensations or ideas. Gertrude Stein's advice on style, "Remarks are not literature" (Stein 1961 : 77) to young Ernest Hemingway is also true of Hubbell himself.

Hubbell, in his essay, "English Poetry in the Twentieth Century," stated the difference between Occidental and Oriental culture. The former is based on intellect, which results in logo-centrism originating from Greek thought and consistency in the rational succession of thought. On the other hand, Hubbell pointed out that the Oriental thoughts are beyond the limits of the inferential thinking faculty and directly appeal to poetic imagination. If the aesthetics of paucity, according to Hubbell, is applied to the field of prosody, English poetry until the nineteenth century is chiefly the poetry of explanation. He shortened, for example, Robert Frost's original poems in "Dust of Snow" by understatement. The first is cited from original poetry.

The way a crow  
Shook down on me  
The dust of snow  
From a hemlock tree  
Has given my heart  
A change of mood  
And save some part  
Of a day I had rued. (尾崎 2002 : 610)

Hubbell shortened these eight lines to half of them thus:

A crow  
Shook down on me  
The dust of snow  
From a hemlock tree. (尾崎 *ibid* : 610)

The four-line verse is more sophisticated, is close to *Haiku* and more opposed to explaining, than the original. Most of the short poems are written through this prosody of understatement. This is well supported by the poems of the rock garden at Ryoanji and Katsura Imperial villa.

This suggestive prosody of understatement can be traced back to Shakespeare's lines in the dramas and the Sonnets. Hubbell explained

dramatic impact by a combination of the word's meaning and its rhythm in his lecture "Shakespeare and Technique," as he was a specialist of Shakespeare. He quoted a poetic line which Macbeth just spoke of Duncan's life in retrospect.

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well. (Brook 1990 : 6)

According to Hubbell's commentary on this line, in each of the four short words of the subordinate clause, the letter " f " is used five times, succeeding the plosive " f " which includes the alliteration, while the sentence of the main clause arranges the sharp " I " and " e," alternating with the softer vowels, and the prolonged " eh " at the close. The rhythm of sound in the two parts of the sentence changes to the caesura at the end of the sequence of " f " and " v. " The association from the sound of the plosive " f " shows Duncan's furious life. The gentle, prolonged sound, "He sleeps well," indicates a peace of mind which means Duncan's tragic without a descriptive explanation. Hubbell stated:

Here we are dealing with the work of a miraculous technician. But no technique can explain what that line means to us. Another arrangement of words, such as "After the fever of life he is sleeping well," may convey some comfort to us, like the words of a well-meaning friend, but when we hear the august music of Shakespeare's line we are carried beyond the facts, and death becomes beautiful. (尾崎 *ibid*: 7)

I think that Shakespeare's poetic combination of words or phrases with its anti-sentimental tendency has something aesthetic in common with the pattern, "the fall of the rush hat," in *Fujidaiko* of Noh. This means Shakespeare's "arrangement of words" and their musical rhythm sublimate the emotion of sorrow a deep beauty in a moment. The pattern in the combination of words in English poetry, the series of postures in Noh, and the rock garden in Zen temples, as Clive Bell indicated, is synonymous with "Significant Form" which evokes aesthetic emotions. This is just what great beauty of style is.

Hubbell, in his letters to Danno Yoko, who was one of his disciples and a poet, in 1969 narrated that he was on the side of Apollo that was "the god of light, reason, form, clarity," not of "Dionysus of intuition, inspiration. . ." (尾崎 2002 別冊 : 4) using for the two aspects of Occidental culture Apollonian and Dionysian in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. Lindley Williams Hubbell was a modernist poet, maintaining abstract tendency in style without falling into sentimentalism, pursuing all his life pure aesthetics of "subtlety and understatement" which ultimately comes to the attainment of Buddha-hood of Zen Buddhism.

#### IV. Gary Snyder's Wild Eyes and Dōgen's Zen

##### (1) A Way to the Wild

Gary Snyder's (1930- ) *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (1965) is a combination of his first collected poems, *Riprap* (1959) and twenty four poems which he translated from three hundred original poems by the Chinese poet, Han-Shan, in the Tang dynasty, into English. These collected poems include quite a few poems by which Snyder decided his basic position as a Zen Buddhist and ecologist. Snyder had gone through the forest ranger's works at the Cascade Range in California, made woodland paths in Yosemite National Park and took jobs as a wiper in the engine room of an oil tanker, *Sappa Creek* before he earnestly started to practice Zen Buddhist training under Zen master, Miura Ishu, at Shokokuji and so forth in Kyoto, Japan. Regarding his academic background, he was a student of Reed College in Portland in the State of Oregon in 1947, where he has studied the ethnology of Native Americans and then pursued Oriental studies in the University of California at Berkeley between 1953 and 1956. He was greatly influenced by Hinduism, the esoteric Buddhism of the *Shingon* School and Zen Buddhism.

I will try, in this paper, to find the significance of the "Wild" which shows up in the wilderness of the background of the Northwest of the United States of America as the image by his early poem, *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems*. It is

very important to grasp how Snyder expressed the wild, for example, in “Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout,” “Water,” and “Piute Creek” which were written in 1956. First, in his diary, “Lookout’s Journal” which Snyder wrote with poetic images that appear in the opening poem of *Earth House Hold* (1969), I will explain how Snyder grasped the landscape of the mountains at that time. This journal is what he wrote about his experience as a forest ranger in Crater Mountain of the Cascade Range, the North of Washington, in the summer of 1952.

6 August

Clouds above and bellow, but I can see Kulshan, Mt.Terror,  
Shuksan; they blow over the ridge between here and  
Three-fingered Jack, fill up the valleys. The Buckner Boston  
Peak ridge is clear.

What happens all winter; the wind driving snow; clouds —  
Wind, and mountains — repeating

this is what always happens here,

and the photograph of a young female torso hung in the lookout  
window, in the foreground. Natural against natural, beauty.



two butterflies  
a chilly clump of mountain  
flowers.

*Zazen* non-life. An art: mountain-watching.

leaning in the doorway whistling  
a chipmunk popped out  
listening (Snyder 1957 : 7)

Snyder is taking a view of several mountains from a height above cloud level, according to a journal dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of August. He, sitting in meditation (坐禪) expresses as usual a magnificent spectacle of the mountains in summer like a snap shot. A chipmunk popped out on the ground and listened to Snyder's whistling. The scene makes one feel the whistling poet's sense of unity with the chipmunk listening to him. The juxtaposition of these two simple images provokes an imagist poetry approaches the form of *Haiku*. The relationship between the poet and nature is equal and integrated, never opposing to each other.

Snyder spoke his mind in *Zen Notes* (1955) of The First Zen Institute of America in New York as follows:

I can recommend a lookout as an excellent place for anybody with

yamabushi tendencies and some physical and mental toughness. There are lakes, meadows, flowers, cliffs, glaciers, many bear and deer, and clouds both below and above you. I found an excellent period for zazen between sunrise, 4:30 A.M. and the radio check in at 8:00 A.M. (Fields 1986 : 213)

Snyder's sensibility is suggestive of the poetic world of "Cold Mountain Poems." Here is a cold mountain poem which Snyder translated from the original into English.

奧 自 居 寒 山  
會 經 幾 萬 載  
任 運 遯 林 泉  
棲 遲 觀 自 在  
巖 中 人 不 到  
白 雲 常 變 變  
細 草 作 臥 褥  
青 天 爲 被 蓋  
快 活 枕 石 頭  
天 地 任 變 改 (入矢 1997 : 56)

Snyder translated the original poem into English as follows:

I settled at Cold Mountain long ago,  
Already it seems like years and years.  
Freely drifting, I prowl the woods and streams  
And linger watching things themselves.  
Men don't get this far into the mountains,  
White clouds gather and billow.  
Thin grass does for a mattress,  
The blue sky makes a good quilt.  
Happy with a stone underhead  
Let heaven and earth go about their changes. (Snyder 1996 : 45)

Snyder expresses in this poem a state of mind of the Cold Mountain poet, Han-Shan, when looking around the cold mountain. Many years have passed by since the Chinese poet Han-Shan lived in retirement and was alone in the depths of the cold mountain without the paths where anybody could step in. Grasses, besides, are a mattress in bed, while the blue sky is like a quilt. He peacefully lies down on the stones as pillow and leaves nature as it is. Han-Shan kept away from a village society, and finds a peace of mind and a feeling of freedom by his sense of identification with nature. Han-Shan's attitude towards the mountain expresses Snyder's philosophy of nature in "Lookout's Journal." A yearning for nature which remains wild, not artificial is the starting point, when Gary Snyder goes into the wilderness and identifies himself with Han-Shan, the Cold Mountain poet, as expressed by Snyder's depiction of

Han-Shan's sensation in "Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout" which describes Sourdough Mountain at Mount Rainier National Park in Washington State.

Down valley a smoke haze  
Three days heat, after five days rain  
Pitch glows on the fir-cones  
Across rocks and meadows  
Swarms of new flies.

I cannot remember things I once read  
A few friends, but they are in cities.  
Drinking cold snow-water from a tin cup  
Looking down for miles  
Through high still air. (Snyder 1996 : 3)

Just as Han-Shan broke off the bustle of the earth and renounced the world in the wilderness, Snyder went up the lookout in Sourdough Mountain and forgot the significance of the books which are by-products of human intellects. Snyder stays away from big cities to realize self-oblivion. Here in the wilderness the real experience of Snyder's self squarely takes a stand against magnificent nature. The basis by which he realizes the grandeur of nature is clearly through his experience as a forest ranger in Crater Mountain, in the Cascade Range in

the summer of 1952, and in his employment of paving paths with ripraps in Yosemite National Park in 1955.

The relation of Snyder's inner consciousness with wild nature, revolves around his identification with the wild and the discipline on Zen Buddhism. One cannot help but to consider the influence of Zen from an early stage in his poetry. The publication of *The Practice of the Wild* (1990) greatly clarifies Snyder's interest in Zen Buddhism and in the founder of the Soto School, Eihei Dōgen. Snyder centripetally searches for the essence of the wild, basically by contrast with essays from Dōgen's lifework, *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eyes* (*Shōbōgenzō*).

## (2) The meaning of the Wild and "Mountain and Waters Sutra"

I should clarify Snyder's interpretation of nature, before he came to Japan in 1953, from his viewpoint on Zen Buddhism. First, a Beat poet and novelist, Jack Kerouac (1922-1969) wrote an autobiographical novel, *The Dharma Bums* (1958). The main character, "Japhy Ryder" in this novel is the very model of young Gary Snyder in the days of 1956. The plot strikingly highlights a conversation on the way to Matterhorn, accompanied by Raymond Smith, Kerouac's alter ego. It is the scene in which Japhy talks about the essence of the mountain from a Zen Buddhist monk's viewpoint to Raymond who is frightened of the wild rock mountain. What Japhy says to Raymond, in the

dialog of this scene, ingeniously reflects the spirit of Zen.

“Yeah man, you know to me a mountain is a Buddha. Think of the patience of thousands of years just sittin there bein perfectly silent and like praying for all living creatures in that silence and just walkin for us to stop all our frettin and foolin.” (Kerouac 1958 : 67)

Discovering Buddha-nature (仏性) in the mountain which otherwise exists merely for people seeking after worldly pleasures in daily life, is to discover the religious role of Bodhisattva in Buddhism. The meaning of Bodhisattva conveys a trainee-monk of Mahayana, the Great Vehicle, looking for enlightenment (大悟) in which one is to search for the way to enlightenment by oneself and to help others find salvation. Thus what Japhy says means that the significance of the mountain's existence is to try to save all living creature. The reason why, however, Japhy projects the Buddha-nature onto the Matterhorn is that he obtains the unique Zen sensibility of the unification of the subject and object by refraining to distinguish between physical things like mountains, rivers, trees, etc and his or her self from a rational point of view. Dōgen described Buddha-nature in the same light as a natural thing such as mountains in “Mountains and Waters Sutra” as follows:

Mountains and waters right now are the actualization of the ancient buddha way. Each, abiding in its phenomenal expression, realizes

completeness. Because mountains and waters have been active since before the Empty Eon, they are alive at this moment. Because they have been the self since before form arose they are emancipation-realization. (Tanahashi 1985 : 97)

The mountains and waters, here and now, are not natural things as the objective physical world but are embodied phenomena which open out before one's eyes as a real form of Buddha-nature. In prehistoric times before human beings recognized the idea of "time," in the physical world the mountains and waters exists as themselves.

According to Buddhism, reality is defined as having one's eyes opened to the law of Buddha (仏法) in actualities of life, being conscious of one's experience of the wisdom of the truth. Dōgen does not interpret the mountains and waters as one of visual phenomena in the physical world but as the attainment of enlightenment, in other words, the Buddha or the subject searching for self becoming apparent(発菩提心). Buddhism conveys an idea of innate relationship between human beings and all living things including mountains, rivers, rocks, blades of grass and trees. The mountains and waters in the phenomenal world are only interpretation from human viewpoints. Thus nature and humans equally exist as one thing. On the basis of their interpretation viewing the mountains and waters in prehistoric times before a factitious interpretation was imposed on them is just an outlook on the world in Buddhism. Snyder stated that "a text, system of symbols, a referential world of mirrors, but that this

world in its actual existence is a complete presentation, an enactment — and that it stands for nothing” (Snyder 1990 : 113) in *The Practice of the Wild*. Snyder renounced the factitious way of thinking of contemporary Western rationalism.

It is essential to understand how Snyder experienced the wilderness. Here are the two poems, “Water” and “Piute Creek” by which Snyder demonstrated on the basis of his own experiences, how he experienced the “wild” of the mountains and waters. First, “Water” has such lines as:

Pressure of sun on the rockslide  
Whirled me in a dizzy hop-and-step descent,  
Pool of pebbles buzzed in a Juniper shadow,  
Tiny tongue of a this-year rattlesnake flicked,  
I leaped, laughing for little boulder-color coil —  
Pounded by heat raced down the slabs to the creek  
Deep tumbling under arching walls and stuck  
Whole head and shoulders in the water:  
Stretched full on the cobble — ears roaring  
Eyes open aching from the cold and faced a trout. (Snyder 1996 : 12)

Snyder expresses three scenes in a row: First, his rhythmical steps running down a slope of rugged craggy mountain. Secondly, the scene, in which he was suddenly surprised at running across a rattlesnake. Thirdly, sudden encounter



with a trout as soon as he stepped down and breathed a sigh of relief. The series of scenes speedily progress and stop at full stretch. This is a dynamic mountain-walking poem. It is natural that Snyder not only came across a rattlesnake and a trout but also that anyone who climbs mountains would go through a sudden scare from the wild life. The wilder living things such as animals and vegetation are, the more human beings feel estranged from the wildness. The people who are used to living in civilization will inevitably experience a fearful tension when he or she meets with the wild life in the natural environment. This is because humans and the wildlife live in utterly different worlds. Both of them have felt anxiety about each other. Anybody who lives in civilized society should go through the same thing as Snyder as long as one is conscious of the wild.

The poet's surprise at the encounter with a trout can be interpreted as a metaphor of a Buddhist term, which means "four views on water" (一水四見) in Dōgen's "Mountains and Waters Sutra." This term means that human beings perceive so-called water which forms seas, lakes, rivers, and so forth, but if the perceivers were beings other than humans, water might not be just water. Dōgen expressed the metaphor like this:

All beings do not see mountains and waters in the same way. Some beings see water as a jeweled ornament, but they do not regard jeweled ornaments as water. What in the human realm corresponds to their water? We only see their jeweled ornaments as water.

Some beings see water as wondrous blossoms, but they do not use blossoms as water. Hungry ghosts see water as raging fire or pus and blood.

Dragons see water as a palace or a pavilion. Some beings see water as the seven treasures or a wish-granting jewel. Some beings see water as a forest or a wall. Some see it as the dharma nature of pure liberation, the true human body, or as water as water. Water is seen as dead or alive depending on causes and conditions. (Tanahashi 1985 : 101-2)

Human beings, for instance, recognize water as water for drinking or washing, but heavenly beings see it as ponds decorated with jewelries, hungry ghosts as pus and blood, fishes as nests in waters. It is just that there are as many opinions as there are people. As long as we are limited to human one-sided viewpoints, we cannot realize the four ways of seeing. In Buddhism this is called attachment (執着), which leads to desire for worldly things. It is crucial to be sufficiently mindful of the points of view of “four views on water” beyond the secularly narrow-minded standard to genuinely realize the wild. If, as Snyder indicated, one recovered the spirituality of the wild which was naturally innate in oneself, one should remain quite unruffled without feeling uneasy in the face of a wonder of nature. Humans could sensitively grasp a magic attraction of the wild.

One granite ridge

A tree, would be enough  
Or even a rock, a small creek,  
A bark shred in a pool.  
Hill beyond hill, folded and twisted  
Tough trees crammed  
A huge moon on it all, is too much.  
The mind wanders. A million  
Summers, night air still and the rocks  
Warm. Sky over endless mountains,  
All the junk that goes with being human  
Drops away, hard rock wavers  
Even the heavy present seems to fail  
This bubble of a heart.  
Words and books.  
Like a small creek off a high ledge  
Gone in the dry air.

A clear, attentive mind  
Has no meaning but that  
Which sees is truly seen.  
No one loves rock, yet we are here.  
Night chills. A flick  
In the moonlight

Slips into Juniper shadow:

Back there unseen

Cold proud eyes

Of Cougar or Coyote

Watch me rise and go. (Snyder 1996 : 8)

The landscape of wilderness which Snyder expresses is not a vague image of nature. It is not as a part of physical environment but the equivalent of the Chinese view of nature, meaning the processes in the world which are neither caused nor controlled by human beings. In other words, the term, “nature,” comes from Latin, *natura*, which has its origin from a Greek term for ‘birth,’ to mean an uncivilized, uncultivated, or contrived state. The Chinese in ancient times recognized in nature the state of birth as it is. We realize that the natural environment that wild life inhabits in “Piute Creek” has regenerative powers. It portrays an ethical standard in which human beings can live together symbiotically with the wild forest, the nature is synonymous for wilderness, not an unsustainable waste land.

In the lines “One granite ridge / A tree, would be enough” or “A huge moon on it all, is too much,” Snyder intends not to request anything excessively by restraining figurative expressions. The line, “All the junk that goes with being human / Drops away, hard rock wavers” leaves no human beings’ artificial traces in the wilderness where the wild appears and all of “words and books” that the people in a civilization produced are meaningless. They result in

being refused here. Human reasons and logo-centric thoughts are of no use in the wilderness where there remains only “A clear, attentive mind / which sees is truly seen.” There is no thing in the wilderness except for anything which intrinsically exists. What anything means is “cold proud eyes of Cougar or Coyote” in which the wild exists. Snyder himself acquires “a clear, attentive mind,” a sensibility which is enough to perceive the wild. This is the wisdom of the wild and is the equivalent to that of enlightenment in Zen Buddhism. According to Dōgen’s “Mountains and Waters Sutra,” in the mountains and waters of the physical world is embodied a Buddha-nature. The pure spirituality which seizes wildness can with intuition discover the wild eyes of cougar or coyote beyond the time and space.

The phrase, “The eyes of Cougar or Coyote” was prompted by a phrase of one of the Chinese Zen master, Kyōgen-ji-shūto’s “Dragon’s howl behind an old tree / An eye-beam behind a skull” (「枯木裏龍吟」。「髑髏裏眼睛」。入矢 1992 : 65) in *the Hekiganroku*, symbolized the transcendence of time and space in Zen.

“An old tree” literally means being in death or being rid of all desires. “Dragon’s howl” implies gaining a real life, a real state of enlightenment embodied before one’s eyes in Zen Buddhism. “An eye-beam behind a skull” symbolizes a supernatural energy of spirit which transcends death. Besides, we cannot, needless to say, literally interpret that a dragon is actually “howling” behind an old tree or that a skull’s eyes are “shining” inside. An impact, however, by the combination of the images of “a dragon’s howl behind an old tree” and “An eye-beam behind a skull” as a metaphor in Zen equivalent to the powers of “cold

proud eyes of Cougar or Coyote.”

### (3) The Wisdom of the Wild in Zen

The essence of writing poetry, as for Snyder, is originally based on his idea that “it is delicate, unpredictable and requires a continual openness to inner surprises and a willingness to pay attention to very subtle signs” (Snyder 1980 : 91). The keen senses of the wild, “a clever, attentive mind” are the essence of poetic sensibility which leads to the composition of poetry, by which one can grasp the wisdom of the wild. From here the true poetry comes. Snyder stated in an interview that “the true poem is walking that edge between what can be said and that which cannot be said. That’s the real razor’s edge.” (Snyder *ibid* : 21) In other words, it was important for the poet to express the eyes of the wild, by which is symbolized the image that transcends a rationalism, as an imagery of universal truth, the dharma(仏法) in Buddhism.

The poems which are brought out by keeping the poet’s mind open tend to reflect Zen spirits. The relationship between the wisdom of the wild and the spirit of Zen comes from Snyder’s student days in Reed College in 1947 when he was influenced by anthropology and Mahayana Buddhism in the complete works of D. T. Suzuki. The topics of the college students in America at that time were critical of capitalism and at the same time committed to Marxism. Snyder, in the current of the times, became aware of the other fields through Native American studies in his major, anthropology, and through acquaintance with Native American leaders in college.

I thought it was only capitalism that went wrong. Then I got into American Indian studies and at school majored predominantly in anthropology and got close to some American Indian elders. I began to perceive that maybe it was all of Western culture that was off the track and not just capitalism — that there were certain self-destructive tendencies in our cultural tradition. (Snyder 1980 : 94)

Snyder clearly abandoned Western culture and became aware of different cultures as typified by Native American culture. To practice the way of thinking, Snyder realized that “you must be a Hopi to follow the Hopi way” (Snyder *ibid* : 94). It was in Zen Buddhism that Snyder discovered a methodology to find his way out of the exclusiveness of Native American culture which, deeply rooted in land, was not generally cosmopolitan. Snyder, in the interview, discovered that “Buddhism presents itself as cosmopolitan and open to everyone, at least if male. I knew that Zen monasteries in Japan would be more open to me than the old Piute or Shoshone Indians in eastern Oregon, because they *have to* be open — that’s what Mahayana Buddhism is all about.” (Snyder *ibid* : 95) The basic spirit of Mahayana Buddhism, to keep one’s mind open to all, is confirmed by the practice of Zen in Japan. Actually Snyder discovered spiritual free openness to all by sitting meditation in the Zen monasteries of Kyoto.

My own personal discovery in the Zen monastery in Kyoto was that even

with the extraordinary uniformity of behavior, practice, dress, gesture, every movement from dawn till dark, in a Zen monastery everybody was really quite different. In America everybody dresses and looks as though they are all different, but maybe inside they're all really the same. In the Far East, everybody dresses and looks the same, but I suspect inside they're all different. The dialectic of Rinzai Zen practice is that you live a totally ruled life, but when you go into the sanzen room, you have absolute freedom. (Snyder 1980 : 99)

Here I would like to compare the significance of sitting meditation with Dōgen's: We appreciate that Snyder thoroughly realized Dōgen's essence of Zen. He recognized Zen as the most important life style.

I stay with Zen, because sitting, doing zazen, is a primary factor. Sitting is the act of looking-in. Meditation is fundamental, you can't subtract anything from that. It's so fundamental that it's been with us for forty or fifty thousand years in one form or another. It's not even something that is specifically Buddhist. It's as fundamental a human activity as taking naps is to wolves, or soaring in circles is to hawks and eagles. It's how you contact the basics and the base of yourself. And Zen has cut away a lot of frills, to keep that foremost. (Snyder 1980 : 83)

Zen, as Snyder indicates, is a form of meditation and like human breath, the



fundamental action when searching for the self. He spoke of three mysteries (三業) : body, speech, and mind(身口意). “The three practices are, then sitting meditation, for exploring the mind; singing or chanting, or poetry or mantras, for exploring speech and voice; and yoga, or dance, or hoeing the garden and gathering firewood, for the exploration of the body” (Snyder 1980 : 84). In other words, “body” means the practices of daily physical labor such as keeping a lookout forest and paving ripraps. “Speech” is “singing or chanting, and poetry or mantras” as sounded words by writing or reading poetry. Finally, “mind” signifies the practice of sitting meditation. The practice of the three mysteries in Zen is deeply connected with Snyder’s daily life in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. At the same time he practices the definition of enlightenment in Dōgen’s essay, “On the Endeavor of the Way” (『弁道話』), which preached the true way to *nirvana*, a non-dualistic state that is beyond life and death.

All buddha tathagatas, who directly transmit inconceivable dharma and actualize supreme, perfect enlightenment, have a wondrous way, unsurpassed and unconditioned. Only buddha transmit it to buddha without veering off; self-fulfilling samadhi is its standard. Sitting upright, practicing Zen, is the authentic gate to the unconfined realm of the samadhi. (Tanahashi 1985 : 143)

Even Dōgen explored the great way to *nirvana* through sitting meditation by practicing *Samadhi* (concentration). This is true of Snyder’s three mysteries,

which also mean meditation. In an interview, when the interviewer asked Snyder about “the erasure of the self,” he described it in comparison with “the creative process for all kinds of people, and all kinds of arts.” (Snyder 1980 : 34) He stated that “human can raise the self not necessarily by formal practice of meditation, but by practice of an intuitive capacity to open the mind and to not cling to too rigid a sense of the conscious self ” (Snyder *ibid* : 34) is to get rid of selfishness, not the self itself. The renunciation of egoism related to the desires of human beings, and giving full play to the intuition of the wild leads to the attainment of *nirvana*, the release of the self which is rather close to selflessness. This is common to the Buddhist training for transcending the self and others in Dōgen’s essay, “Actualizing the Fundamental Point.” ( 「現成公案」 )

To study the buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things. When actualized by myriad things, your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. . . . (Tanahashi 1985 : 70)

This is a basic principle of Buddhist practices. Searching for the Truth of life beyond (forgotten) the self and others is equal to “studying the buddha way” and gaining an enlightened state of *nirvana*. Snyder described, in his ideal of a poet, “a great poet does not, express his or her self, he expresses *all* of our selves. And to express *all* of ourselves you have to go beyond your own self.” (Snyder 1980 : 65) The meaning of “Go beyond your own self” is to gain “a clear,

attentive mind” by renouncing egoism depending upon factitious values. Finally going deep into the wilderness in Northwest of America, Snyder, with “cold proud eyes Cougar or Coyote,” perceived the wisdom of the wild which inherent in themselves in pursuit of “a clever, attentive mind,” or *nirvana* in Zen Buddhism.

## Conclusion

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Emerson and Thoreau as the literati of transcendentalism and as American poets in Concord, were the first to encounter and be influenced by Oriental thought through the sacred book of *Veda*, the long epic poem of *Bhagavad-Gita*, and Hinduism. Emerson wrote many poems as well as essays on transcendentalism. He was especially affected by the poem about the highest principle of the universe of Brahma which was subsequently connected with Buddha-nature in Buddhism.

On the other hand, in *Walden* Thoreau spoke of Oriental thought as follows:

I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad-Geeta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo ! there I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water jug. . . The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. (Crawford 1934 : 266)

Thoreau as well as Emerson took great interest in the mysteries of the East. But the impact of Eastern thought on American poets, since then, did not continue nor take root for a long time in the history of American literature.

It has been one hundred years since Japanese Zen Buddhism indeed landed again in the North America continent. An epoch-making event was the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1883. This convention was a very important historic occurrence in various fields of arts as well as religion. Of the main members of Buddhism who joined the Parliament of Religions were Swami Vivekananda who was the university-educated disciple of the illiterate Bengali mystic, Sri Ramakrishna, Anagila Dharmapala (1864-1933) of Theravada Buddhism (literally means 'the way of the elders' is one among a number of early schools of Buddhism) from Ceylon (the present-day Sri Lanka) and the Rinza Zen master, Soyen Shaku from Engakuji in Kamakura, Japan. (Fields 1986 :121) Dharmapala among them attracted considerable attention by speaking English very well, with "an accent that to American ears sounded as musical as an Irish brogue." (Fields *ibid*: 121) He had personal magnetism and the ladies especially were taken him. On the other hand, Soyen Shaku had little charisma. Because Soyen could hardly speak English, Dr. John Henry Barrows, liberal Protestant minister and chairperson of the Parliament read an English translation prepared in Japan by D. T. Suzuki (1870-1966) on behalf of the Zen master. Soyen's subject was "The Law of Cause and Effect, as taught by Buddha" (Fields *ibid* :126) which considered "the universe as having no

beginning and no end.” (Fields *ibid* :126) As a result, of all the Eastern Buddhists present Dharmapala drew the most attention. Soyen Shaku unfortunately did not get into the news in the Parliament mainly because he had little personal attractiveness and also never spoke English throughout the convention. They said that, because of this, the Theravada Buddhism of Dharmapala rather than Mahayana’s, had a great influence over the religious world of the United States for a period of time.

The new stream of Buddhism, however, began to grow in New York in the beginning of the twentieth century. The disciple of Soyen Shaku, Sokatsu Shaku visited San Francisco accompanied by a young sculptor of Buddhist statues, Shigetsu Sasaki who was later called Sokei-an in 1906 (Fields 1986:174-5). Sokei-an started to live at a small temple in an apartment house in New York. He played an important role which would aptly lead to a connection with the two American poets, Lindley Williams Hubbell and Gary Snyder.

Allan Watts, the author of *The Way of Zen* (1957), who was born in England, came to the United States with his wife and started a newly-married life in Sokei-an’s neighborhood, New York. His wife was a vivacious young woman of the name of Eleanor Everett, whose mother was Ruth Fuller Everett. It was Ruth Fuller Everett who later became Sokei-an’s wife and disciple in 1944.

Ruth Everett also lived close to Sokei-an’s small apartment-style temple on West Seventy-fourth. She was first married to the prominent Chicago attorney, Charles Everett and spent some time at the Nyack, New York ashram.

She first had heard talk about Zen at the ashram and she visited Japan with her husband in 1930. Two years later she returned to Japan by herself, and at that time D. T. Suzuki introduced her to a Rinzai Zen master of Nanzenji in Kyoto. She stayed there for three and a half months there and experienced joining the monks for their morning sittings (zazen). When she settled in New York again in 1938, Ruth Everett became one of the principal supporters of Sokei-an's group, the Buddhist Society of America where the two began to spend a great deal of time together (Fields 1986:190). After her husband, Charles Everett died in 1940, Ruth Fuller and Sokei-an got married in 1944 (Fields *ibid* : 192). Those days, Ruth's main task remaining was to complete her husband's unfinished work. It was to translate the *Rinzairoku* (『臨濟録』) and other Zen texts. After that, she came to fulfill her duty in the First Zen Institute of America which Sokei-an founded. The First Zen Institute moved into new quarters, provided by Ruth Fuller Sasaki, on East Sixty-fifth in New York. After Sokei-an died on May 17, 1945, Ruth Sasaki took over the First Zen Institute of America (Fields *ibid* : 191-2).

Around 1953, Ruth Fuller Sasaki herself in The First Zen Institute played a new important role which became a point of contact of two young American poets. One was Lindley Williams Hubbell, and the other was Gary Snyder.

First let me start with the encounter of Ruth Sasaki and Hubbell. It was during twenty-one years that Hubbell had been working in the New York Public Library. At the time she introduced him to the president of Doshisha University through Hisao Kanaseki (later on he became professor of English literature at

Komazawa University) in the English department on October 9, 1953. Ruth had known Hisao Kanaseki who had aided in the translation of the *Rinzairoku* and other key Zen texts in a branch of The First Zen Institute of America, the site of Daitokuji in Kyoto. Hubbell stated that he decided to come to Doshisha University to give a lecture on Shakespeare on November, 1953 and, moreover, after the lecture, he was offered a professorship from the university authorities, as revealed in an interview in his last year, January 31, 1994. (尾崎 2002: 690)

Next, I will take up D. T. Suzuki's lectures on Zen Buddhism at universities here. D. T. Suzuki, who was trained as a Buddhist disciple of Rinzai Zen master Soyen Shaku in Engakuji in Kamakura, worked as a translator into English of Zen Buddhist texts. From 1897 to 1908 he worked as an editor in the Open Court Publishing Company in LaSalle (Fields 1986:138). But later he lectured on Zen and Japanese culture at the Claremont Graduate School in Pasadena in 1950, he continued to give lectures on the subject of Zen Buddhism at universities of the request of the Rockefeller Foundation and, in 1952, at a series of seminars at Columbia as a visiting professor. At this time his lectures on Zen Buddhism were one of the most important achievements, because various literati including, for example, a psychoanalyst and therapist, Erich Fromm as well as a composer and writer, John Cage then thirty-eight, attended his seminars. Suzuki's lectures at Columbia sowed the seeds of the so-called Zen "boom" of the late fifties in the United States. (Fields *ibid*: 195-6) Since the World's Parliament of Religions was held in 1893, more than fifty years earlier, at last Mahayana Buddhism (literally means the 'Great Vehicle,' and is so called



because it regards itself as the universal way to salvation), especially Japanese Zen Buddhism widely spread in America.

It is important to grasp the spiritual climate of America in the late 1950's as a factor. The Zen boom was started ironically during the Second World War. America of the Western liberal camp took a stand against the Soviet Union as a Superpower in the Cold War and did not show any interest in Eastern countries. Several years passed by after the Second World War. World affairs were greatly changed. The Japanese economy under American occupation, for example, was gradually changing for the better. The Communist Party in China started to raise its head and in other Southeast Asian countries, in particular India, independent movements took place. The world situation was thrown into an uproar over the Asian countries. America as a Superpower often strove to watch the changes in the world drifts. There was a rapidly changing social situation even within domestic affairs, for example, in the Civil-Rights Movement and the counterculture of the 1960s. The cultural backgrounds started to change and as a result young American poets — Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Gary Snyder and so on — called the Beat poets, turned their interest to Oriental thought exemplified Hinduism and Japanese Zen Buddhism. Especially it was very important for Gary Snyder to experience practical Zen training like a Japanese monk in Kyoto. At this time Allan Watt introduced Snyder to Ruth Sasaki, with the result that she arranged a scholarship-grant for him to study Rinzai Zen in Japan and work as a secretary with the translation team at the First Zen Institute of America in Japan. (Fields 1986:215)

On account of the close friendship with Ruth Sasaki, Lindley Williams Hubbell left Harford for Kyoto in 1953. He continued to write his poetry, giving lectures on Shakespeare, English poetry, and Greek drama in the universities. He grasped not only the classic but also the modern Japanese sense of beauty throughout his own aesthetics of subtlety and understatement. Hubbell as a poet led an uncompromising life to his dying day of December 2, 1994.

Both Lindley Williams Hubbell and Gary Snyder were sufficiently receptive to Zen Buddhism in Japan in their own way. In the Soto Zen school there is a traditional motto that Zen practice is the equivalent to learning. It is possible for Zen Buddhists who practice the ascetic life of Zen training in Eiheiiji in Echizen (now located in the district of Fukui) to study the new spirit of Zen once again from American Zen, which began to take root in the 1950s. The twenty first century's vision of Zen is in Hubbell's aesthetics shows an urge to abstraction, whereas Snyder's "wild" eye in the wilderness focuses on the ecosystem in globalization in the near future. A noteworthy point is that the people who are, to no small extent, engaged in Zen Buddhism must not forget Allen Ginsberg's two-line epigraph to Gary Snyder in a poem.

The red tin begging cup you gave me

I lost it but its contents are undisturbed. (Ginsberg 1987 : 189)

The Japanese Zen Buddhism must not absolutely part with the lacquered black begging cups. If the spread of Zen Buddhism to other cultures and

literature including America continues more and more, and if Zen absorbs the new wisdom of American poets, a genuinely new energetic form of Zen will be born from this encounter.

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