



History and Contingency



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— History is formed by contingent encounter —

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History is a living system that produces new things out of interactions of countless encounters. Therefore, history is non-conclusive and unpredictable, formed by contingent encounters of happenings. At each moment of history, influenced by contingency, the decisions we make determine the course of the future. History is a life. The following is a philosophical thought about the new perspective on “a living history”.

1 Contingency is to encounter

From contingency to chaos

Yoshimasa Ashikaga, the 8th shogun of the Muromachi government, married Tomiko Hino when he was 20. Since she hadn't shown any sign to give birth an heir for him, Yoshimasa appointed his younger brother, Yoshimi, his successor. However, the next year, Tomiko became pregnant and produced a boy. It was 10 years after their marriage. Tomiko, in the hope of making her own son the next shogun, approached Mochitoyo Yamana, an influential warlord of the government, and asked for help, while Yoshimi worked closely with Katsumoto Hosokawa. Thus the political tension between two powerful warlords was raised, and involving other families across the region who supported either of them, it ended up over 250 thousand soldiers gathering in Kyoto. Yamana's Western army and Hosokawa's Eastern army finally crushed in 1467 to start the war that continued on for 11 years, destroying most of the city to a total waste. The battle, known as

Onin War, partly thanks to Yoshimasa's uselessness, spread outside Kyoto and developed unprecedented scale of warfare in Japan's history. The air of inverting social order prevailed, and Japan entered the era so called the Sengoku era or the State of War period.

The cause of this great war could be explained by small accidents and misunderstandings. If Tomiko had not given a birth to a boy 10 years after their marriage, or Yoshimasa had not appointed his brother as his successor, the conflict between Yamana and Hosokawa wouldn't have gone serious, and the war might not have happened at all.

Needless to mention "Cleopatra's nose", there are plenty of examples in history that only if something had taken a little different shape, the result would have greatly differed. Just as Kiyomori Taira's decision of sparing the life of young Yoritomo and Yoshitsune, after taking Tokiwa's petition for their life, drew the fall of Heike family, all serious incidents always have a small cause, and even a smallest cause can lead a serious incident. In life, often we find a simple mistake or coincidence of the past determined the later development. Just as a small rock sliding down causes a great earthquake, even a small accident that happened only by chance could have an effect to change history from its very foundation.

The First World War, too, that shook the whole Europe wasting more than 10 million lives, started with a small contingency in Sarajevo. It is impossible to remove all the contingent aspects from history. In a way, history is a sequence of contingent events which occur randomly. Contingency produces results that nobody can predict. So, only to pick up visible reasons is not enough to fully explain and understand a historical event. It is true that finding a decisive reason helps understand the process and result of the event logically. But given the fact that a great reformation of history could be triggered by a smallest happening, history seems not working as logical as we see it.

Instable aspects are often observed also in the nature, where a minor difference in the beginning of the process has a serious

effect to the outcome. Even a little irregularity made by contingency could expand exponentially and produce a surprising result. Seeing a trifle cause makes a big change, we think it is coincident. Jules-Henri Poincaré says in his work *Science et méthode*,

“When a cause that is too small to see for us leads the result that is too big to ignore, we regard it was a production of coincidence.” History, too, is a chaos where great results are produced by a small cause.

Unpredictable history

It is true that when an observer in the position to know the result can't identify the cause that produces the result, he calls it contingency. Also for a person who actually had a serious accident, when it was caused by an unpredictable reason, it seems to have happened by contingency. The former is contingency lead by the result, and the latter by the cause.

For instance, for Yoshimasa, it was completely out of his expectation that his wife didn't bear his heir for a long time and she did after ten years of their marriage. And even an unprecedented war occurred because all of this.

When something unexpected happens we call it contingency. To expect means to wait for something to happen, when, under specific conditions, it is certain to do or can be predicted with high possibility. However, in our life and history, it is always a case for us to have something we never anticipate. We live a life, exposed to the possibility to be put in accidental situations that we never foresee. And, these unpredictable events change the process and lead unexpected results.

Also unexpected things happen in our own actions. Humans don't necessarily take an action with a good reason, rather it is often taken just by feeling or it simply happens. Even an action taken after very careful consideration could have been inspired in the first place by a small event that happened by chance. Contingency can be a great force to make decision.

Generally speaking, in our history, no matter how much we speculate initial conditions, still we will never be certain about when, in what form and how an event is happening. As long as contingent element is contained in it, it is impossible to make prediction. History is based on numerous individual events, so it can be said that history is formed by unpredictable contingency. Contingency works to develop an event into another direction.

It is possible to describe history as a chain of contingency. This is how one of the great historians in the 20th century, Friedrich Meinecke, concluded the 40 years of tragedy in Germany after the World War 2. Unfortunate of Germany during the period of two World Wars, Meinecke sees, was caused by succession of contingencies: vainglorious Kaisers, the election of incompetent Hindenburg as the president of Weimar Republic, monomaniac Hitler having come to the center of politics and so forth. Meinecke's commentary reflects his depressing feelings after the Wars, facing his mother country being in such miserable state, but it also clearly reveals the truth of history.

Even in the natural world, it is contingency that determines the result especially in a complicated system. For example, in environmental changes that occur randomly, what life plants and animals choose, or what course of adjustment they take, are never predictable. In most cases, it is determined by contingency.

Coincidence outside of causality and purpose

Certainly, there is always a necessary reason for something to happen. Everything has its cause. An event occurs in the junction where numerous causes encounter. However, since there are uncountable numbers of lines of causes crossing to form a junction and there are great many such junctions too, it is almost impossible to make the contacts made by causes clear. Also how an event gets connected to the other event that was formed at the different junction is unpredictable.

We call such encounter contingency that more than two things meet without any necessary reason of causality. Although one

event has always a line of cause, one line is not necessarily connected to other lines by causality. The meeting point of more than two lines cannot be deduced from either line. Contingency occurs when these lines come across, and in many cases a historical event is produced by this accidental encounter of lines of causes. But, what kind of new thing happens from this encounter is always unknown.

Nobunaga Oda's monumental victory at Okehazama valley was also a production of contingency. When Yoshimoto Imagawa was resting at the low-land of Okehazama only with 300 cavalry with him, heavy rain began to fall. Taking advantage of this, Nobunaga ambushed Yoshimoto's army and successfully killed him. There was good reason for Yoshimoto, being off guard, to be stopping there with small number of soldiers. Also, about why rain began at the timing, to make an aerographical explanation is possible. Nobunaga, too, had a good reason to decide to make surprise attack with a few soldiers. Each element has a necessary line of cause, but there was no reason for the encounter of these three lines happened then and there. As a result of this contingency Nobunaga scored the great winning to make his first step to reunification of Japan, which made way for other warlords mainly from Owari and Mikawa region, such as Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, to continue the enterprise of unifying and developing the new order of modern Japan. This big historic movement was caused merely by contingency and there was not at all necessity to be so.

Since history develops only with interactions among events, the possibility of formation is entirely contingent. A contingent event causes distortion in the direction of moving things. This small distortion affects the way things meet each other and makes a great difference in the result. Epicurus known for Atomic philosophy insisted that things are formed by the collision caused by clinamen, a behavior of atom that going slightly off the orbit in its movement. History, too, is lead by Epicurus' clinamen into unexpected direction. In other words, contingency is a force to produce whatever result, draws the creativity of history. What direction history goes to is almost entirely determined by

contingency. We should not underestimate the role of contingency in our life.

From historical events which are full of contingent aspects, historians correct seemingly significant facts, put them together and, with logical explanation, make up a possible story. Assuming causality is a very common method in this process. This is particularly true for historians who obtain causes from the result and sort out the facts with causality. This process makes history look logical and understandable. But this type of historical descriptions are in many cases mere "hindsight" reasonably made up by someone, and they don't count contingency which actually moves history. Causality is something abstract and cannot be applied to analyze reality. There are events in history that accidentally occur with no relation to its original purpose and change the whole thing into an unpredictable direction. Therefore, to describe history, it is a wrong attitude to choose only certain aspects that fit in causality, while ignoring contingent aspects. Contingency cuts the logical flow that historians need. As long as there is contingency, it is impossible to explain all with causality.

Also, when taking action, we usually count cause and effect, calculate the possible result and take measures to reach the goal. Even in this process, although taking steps precisely on the measure, we often see things going unexpected way by coincidental happenings.

For example, Sannai-Maruyama site in Aomori was discovered when workers were clearing the land of the construction site for a prefecture owned baseball stadium. They happened to find ancient ruins underground and, after excavation, it was proved to be that of a huge village of the Jomon period. This discovery was a contingency out of the original purpose of building a baseball stadium. Because of it, the construction work stopped, and the project was altered to excavation of the site to conserve the ruin, and through the research on the ruin, the understanding of the Jomon period greatly improved. Each of them has different cause, the 1,500 years of life of Jomon people and the construction work for a baseball stadium by modern Japanese. When two causes

make contact with no reason, we call it contingent discovery. There is neither a purpose nor a plan in this encounter. The course of our life and history is affected and changed by contingency that occurs completely unexpectedly.

Coincidence as emergence

In history, new things are emerged from encounter of many different things. Many mutual interactions of causes produce unexpected results. Even if we list up all the causes of the past and the present, still it is impossible to know what would emerge from their interactions. What emerges depends on the encounter, and there is contingency working here. This type of contingency could be called as “emergent contingency”, and it proves both contingency out of causality and purpose, are reduced to this.

History is made by this kind of emergent contingency. For example, human history is often greatly changed by people with exceptional leadership and ability, coming out of nowhere, such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Muhammad and Genghis Khan. This is also an evident proof of history based on emergent contingency. There would be many explanations about the reason of appearances of these historical heroes, but still, it is just hindsight by historians. No matter how many reasons one comes up, no one can foresee what kind of hero would emerge from the interaction among them. From the view point of someone who is making history, the appearance of capable figures is totally an emergent contingency. But it is by these figures that our history gets moved.

Also it is an example of emergent contingency that an invention or a discovery that never attracted people’s attention triggers a huge social reformation, totally changing the world. The discovery of domesticated plant and iron refining technology was made in such circumstance. But if it had not happened, the revolution in agriculture wouldn’t have realised and ancient nations wouldn’t have been formed. Christopher Columbus discovered American continent merely out of luck, but because of this, the New World

was connected to Europe and became a part of the modern history. These accidental inventions and discoveries were, in many cases, made by encounter of things out of causality and purpose. The new part of history is produced by such contingency occurring out with no reason or purpose.

Contingent discoveries and inventions are made also in scientific study. Serendipity is an idea that refers to utilization of contingency for the development of science technology. It values inspirations and ideas coming from unconventional paradigm, freeing from common sense and rigid thinking as much as possible, for its principle that contingency enables new things to appear.

It is also possible that a contingency never occurs. Its very existence is not stable enough. On the contrary, a certainty guarantees something to happen, and there is no possibility for it not to happen. So it has enough reason to exist. Historical events, regardless its scale, occur from mutual works among many things of the past, so those events have enough reason to exist. But the encounter between the event and the other event cannot be induced from the reason it contains inside. The encounter itself is contingency. Contingency is the opposite of certainty, and vice versa. When something with opposite quality encounter, a historic emergence occurs.

Probability theory is a thought to see contingency as more certain phenomena in the situation where contingency and certainty coexist, by studying and understanding the nature of contingency. However, in probability theory the contingent encounter can't be properly perceived. True, in natural science, particularly in the field of thermal mechanics is used probability theory to grab the contingency of the movement of molecules to get an ordered image of chaos. But it doesn't catch contingent encounter of each molecule and particle. When a dice with numbers from 1 to 6 is thrown, each number has a sixth of odds to show. Probability theory won't tell us what number we get when we throw the dice. But what number to show matters a lot in defining the future.

In history, about whether a thing goes right or left, even if the odd is 50 percent in probability theory, its significance for the future is not small. In a way, like our life, history is a gamble. After all, probability theory suggests only a broad view of contingent phenomena, but not each contingency at each moment. Also in chaotic system in science technology, contingency makes difference and change plays an important role in defining result. So does it in history. Probability theory doesn't show us these differences and changes.

Also contingency cannot be defined as a lack of information or awareness. Of course, we often think that everything is ruled by causality deterministically, and since human ability is limited we can't know all the causes, so it is merely contingent. But this thought either is not based on enough consideration, because contingent encounter contains an aspect of free choice. Because what choice a person makes is always a mystery, it is something we never perceive.

Coincidence as encounter

As the First World War started from an "encounter" of a car carrying the royal couple of Austria and a nationalistic Serbian student, after all, contingency is an unexpected encounter of causality and causality. Here, there is no relation of reason and result, cause and sequence or purpose and means. Therefore here is no way to expect or plan it from any line of events.

When more than two causalities meet, they make a junction. Contingency is born in this junction. All events emerge from this encounter. History is based on events and events affect all the events that happen later. An event that emerges from a contingent encounter is the source of production. The moment more than two chains of causality meet by chance, a new form of a thing is conceived. It is a very improvisational process. It can be said that life and history are all improvised drama. A life is often described as a piece of drama, because it contains a lot of encounters and contingencies. History does, too. Therefore history is not determined by causality theory. Historical contingency is

powerful enough to cut the chain of cause and result that historians and scientists make up to determine it.

Things are driven forward by self and others making a “curious encounter”. It is a fortune, a term come from a Roman goddess of happiness, Fortuna. If it is a good encounter, it is fortunate, but if it is not, it is unfortunate. So contingency in encounter is something mutual and it depends on to whom you encounter. A relational contingency like this cannot be perceived by mechanical perspective. As mechanism sees everything as certainty, it cannot see contingent encounter which doesn't follow causality, not to mention the contingent emergence occurs as a result of this encounter. Historical phenomena contain contingent aspects, and these contingencies produce the character of each historic event. This historical character cannot be analyzed with causality theory.

The space where the encounter happens could be called the space of “Engi (a Buddhist term to refer to something occurring in connection with others). Whether it is a birth of a heroic figure or a ground-breaking invention, its occurrence always contains some contingent elements, and also for the hero or the invention need a place or a condition to work. And if they are appropriately placed in a certain condition and a place is also defined by contingency. Like this, a new production is made by bi-directional contingency of inward and outward. As we have phrases as “lucky shot” or “fortunate error”, we have experiences, in life and in history, of having a good result unexpectedly. This, too, is caused by contingent encounter of the condition and the place. They say that for something to be fulfilled it needs opportunities given by heaven, advantages given by the earth and the accord of men. This saying also refers to the encounter of a condition and a place.

Environmental changes including biological evolution and social changes, too, contain unexpected contingency. Also how the subject adjusts itself to the changing environment is, since they have often many means for it, affected by contingency. Here again, we see bi-directional contingency of subject and environment. History, too, finds new direction to move in the same way. History

produces various things and keeps making the world different at every moment. Its process is not one planned in advance but contingent one that could lead a thing to another direction. A historical process goes almost on random. As “curious encounter” suggests that life and history are made by En or connection and emerge from encounter. This concept is never gotten by simple cause and reason theory.

On the other hand, an encounter of two things is made simultaneously, and contingency is produced by this simultaneity. Contingency is simultaneous encounter at the present, in other word, a chance. Numerous causes are making contact simultaneously in this moment and work each other to produce a new form. What form will be produced depends on the encounter made at each time. So it could be anything, and it has no plan. From a contingent encounter a new production comes. As “inspiration” for an artist, a new form emerges in the moment. Life and history, too, produce new form from contingent encounter being made in every moment. This is because our life is affected by a small thing. The time of “succession” where many events occur successively to change the situation, is also a production of this contacts made at each moment in the present.

Shuzo Kuki, a Japanese writer, says in his book *The Problem of Contingency*, contingency is a contact happening in this place, in this moment, of two independent things, being located unsteadily on top of fluidity. The time and space produced by contingency are those of “now and here”.

Good luck and bad luck

The role of contingency in history is not small. Even if we could replay history like a video tape, with a tiny difference in the course, it would show us completely different ending. By the condition of the moment which comes up randomly, history can lead any result. In this regard, it can be said that history is formed by good luck and bad luck. We are helped and suffered by contingency. If we get a positive result it is a good luck, if not a

bad luck.

In Japan's Sengoku period, there was, of course, no plan for the three Daimyos, Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, to assume successively the position of unifier. It was made almost by chance, in many situations things having gone in favor for them. There were plenty of unfortunate losers behind it. It is not that these losers such as Shingen Takeda, Kenshin Uesugi, were inferior in ability as warlord, considering the fact of them having died from disease, they were just out of luck. The bad luck of theirs worked opposite on Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu. Someone's good luck is other's bad luck. Opportunities given by heaven, advantages given by the earth and the accord of men, the principle of historical success seems to contain a lot of contingent aspect.

Evolution of natural life is mostly the production of contingency. Actually, according to Stephen Jay Gould who suggested a new perspective to the theory of evolution, multicellular life explosively flourished in the Cambrian period, but many species born in the period had mass extinction at one point, while survived ones, branching into many lines, formed the organization of natural life of today. Most of new creatures born in the Cambrian explosion died out while only a few survived and flourished. The reason for this is only if they happened to be in a good position or a bad position. Therefore it is not necessarily true that those survived were superior in adaptation, and those extinct made mistake in designing for survival. The losers were merely unlucky. The drama of whimsical evolution in the Cambria with a great number of tragic extinction and a few lucky survivors is a good example of relationship between evolution of life and contingency. How life develops is not fixed in the first place but defined by luck.

Gould's suggestion implies that human's appearance on earth was utterly a contingency in evolution. Because, during the mass extinction, Pikaia, a creature looking like cephalochordata, ancestor of vertebrate animal, fortunately survived to become the ancestor of vertebrate creature among which eventually human

appeared. In other word, before we human appearing on earth, there were millions times of chances when everything could disappear or the course of evolution would turn to different direction. While mass extinction, if the selection of surviving species had been only slightly different, a totally different creature could have existed today.

Both evolution history and human history are filled with unfairness and inequality. The possibility of contingency to occurrence tends to concentrate in one point just like lottery which no fairness or equality. Since a great scientific discovery is, too, often made with a contingent event that plays a big role in the process, the chance is not given equally to all the scientists. The prize for the discovery is given only to the scientist who happened to meet the contingent or didn't miss it. Both history and life are also based on the fortunate encounter and unfortunate encounter.

For example, in Japan's history, it was a total luck that the nation got away of Genko, Mongolian invasions, twice having storms in both times. Although samurais in Kyushu under instruction from the Kamakura government did everything against invading Mongolians, there was no causal relationship between it and the storm, neither in the Bunei invasion nor the Koan invasion. It was totally a contingency as fortunate as winning a lottery twice. But because of these good lucks, Japan didn't suffer from so called Tataro-Mongol Yoke, as they did in Korea, Russia and China. If the wind hadn't blown twice, our history would have had Mongolian rule and had a non-ignorable scar.

In many cases, to have enemies unexpectedly coming from outside is, for those invaded part, a misfortune. For example, civilizations in America continent both in the north and the south never expected the invasion and subjection by the Europeans, and it was an unfortunate contingency. The Aztec in Mesoamerica and the Inca in the Andes formed empires and both were steadily growing, until in the early 16th century, Spanish came abruptly. Neither the Aztec nor the Inca had iron weapons and firearms,

and they were not immune to such germs as smallpox and tetanus. The population of these empires sharply declined and eventually disappeared from earth. Two civilizations were destroyed by this unexpected contingency. For the Aztec and the Inca, in the first place, the “encounter” with the Europeans was very unfortunate.

Unfortunate accidents like a collision of trains or ships are caused by more than two unpredictable processes having encounter in an unexpected way to produce a surprising result. It happens always random and illogically, often making us feel impossible to understand the reason, because it doesn't no necessary cause and result at all. To get caught in the net is an unexpected misfortune for fish and birds, but they would never be able to foresee when it drops on them. There are plenty of similar events in human life and history. We cannot bare mentally such misfortune, therefore we try to reason this with the theory of paradox.

We sometimes observe that two seemingly unrelated objects show incredible correspondence, which is totally a coincident and an accidental meeting of different causal lines. When the meeting leads a positive result, it is a good fortune, and when it to negative, it is called a bad fortune. History continues to extend with fortune and misfortune.

2 Non-determinacy and irreversibility

Junction in history

There are many junctions in history, and it has not been planned of which way out is going to be chosen at each junction. There are infinite possibilities at the junction, and the choice has a huge significance in making the direction of the future history. The choice is once only, but at each point we have broad selection of possibilities.

In the last days of Tokugawa shogunate, if Satsuma and Choshu, two powerful domains in the Western part of Japan and regional rivals, had not agreed to form an alliance, they would

never have worked together against the shogunate, then there wouldn't have been the battle of Toba Fushimi, so, possibly, the state reformation might have been lead with the principle of Kobugattai, an idea of uniting the court and the shogunate, as Matsumae domain insisted. Actually, the alliance was very vulnerable one, and if the bad weather in Shimonoseki had lasted longer and the arrival of Ryoma Sakamoto's ship to Osaka and Kyoto delayed, the secret agreement between Kogoro Katsura and Takamori Saigo wouldn't have been made. The consequence might have been that Katsura went back to Choshu with empty hand, and Shinsaku Takasugi's battle against the shogunate at the second Choshu conquest, could have ended in defeat without new rifles that were expected to be supplied by Satsuma,.

History is a sequence of junctions. At each such point, among many possibilities, only one is chosen, and the chosen one makes the following history. Of course, contingency works here. Only with a contingent occurrence of a tiny gap at the point, which gradually expands, the historical outcome can be something completely different. With only a small change given in the early stage, historical vector forms a totally different current.

It is said that in history we shouldn't think "if". It means that we should accept the events that actually happened solemnly, or it is a necessary cause with no choice to have been otherwise. But this is actually a commentary from the hindsight. When we see the history from the viewpoint of those who involved in the event, or even from their consciousness, we will find that history was getting unfolded right in front of them with almost "zero eyesight". Including activities in mind, with one different move, history could have gone a different way.

For example, if the third shogun Iemitsu hadn't issued the seclusion policy, trading with the Europeans and exporting from Japan would have maintained and the greater degree of the modern Western culture must have been adopted much earlier, and even under the governance of Tokugawa, the status of Japan in the late pre-modern period would have been very different and the transition to a modern society could have come about 50 years

earlier. Furthermore, Japan would have advanced to South East Asia, Indian Ocean area and the Pacific Ocean much earlier, therefore, as a result of it, the conflict with the West would have come much earlier, making a big impact in the world history.

Also in life, it happens to everybody that to regret a decision we made in the past. Our own history is after all the sequence of such regrets.

During the World War 2, even in the situation where Japan was already surrounded by the Western super powers who wanted to remove Japan's influence from the continent, if Japan had sought for different way for survival, we might have gotten out of it without going through such big tragedies. It is often said that the handing over of the Hal note to Japan was the last turning point when things got literally pushed into the closed corner. But if Japan, not receiving it as an ultimatum, had decided to leave from French Indonesia and China, or occupied part of Sumatra island which is rich with oil, instead of attacking Perl Harbor, there would not have been the war with the United States and millions of life could have been saved. Even when it looks there is no way out, still a way for survival could be found.

When there are some possibilities at a junction of history, which one is to be chosen is greatly depends on contingency, since it is often working in the selection process at a junction. A contingency at a junction has a force to bring history into the different direction. Something that could have been otherwise is called a contingency.

At the battle of Sekigahara, at first, the Western Army lead by Mitsunari Ishida was unexpectedly winning, because of this, a battalion commander on the Western side, Kobayakawa, hesitated to make move and was seeing the development, despite the promise to betray Mitsunari and fight for Tokugawa. Being surrounded by the Western solders, with his own formation not appropriate for the situation, Ieyasu was in real jeopardy. In this circumstance, Ieyasu had his gunners to shoot Kobayakawa from behind. It was a revival measure by Ieyasu to have Kobayakawa to make decision. Kobayakawa could attack Tokugawa's Eastern

Army, then the Western Army would have had the landslide winning while the other disappearing from history. But, getting shot from behind, Kobayakawa came to mind and, keeping his promise, forwarded toward the West, which was a decisive move for the winning of Tokugawa. This battle was an important junction for Tokugawa to unify the country and develop his own government system, and there were many contingents working. If it didn't work for Tokugawa's favor, not only people had a different leader but also the government was not placed in Edo, regional warlords were treated differently and the proportion of the reward was also different. Using contingency as a spring board, history makes leap.

Since there are many junctions in the developing process of our history, sometimes we wonder which way we should go. At a junction, by making choice, the direction of the history is determined. By an act of making choice between the two, history is defined and begins to move. To act is to make a choice and to break the symmetry of the junction. A pencil placed vertically on the table with the sharpened side downward of course falls. The breaking of symmetry plays a decisive role in creating new structures and forms. By breaking symmetry a self-organizing process of history gets significant effect, which brings history to the irreversible point.

A contingency is found where symmetry breaks. Our history is driven to a certain direction by such contingent incidents as bumping into someone by chance or to get some information accidentally. Information is important to make a choice particularly at junctions. Information work to reduce the number of possibilities, so with or without information makes a big difference in decision making. Only with a small knowledge happened to be brought in, the selection of the possible actions is totally changed, and the following decision making differs as such. Also whether the subject gets information or not, in many cases, depends on luck.

For example, if the Sorge incident which was disclosed in 1941 had been more comprehensively dealt there might not been the

Pacific War. But what actually done was only a resignation of the cabinet lead by Prime minister Fumimaro Konoe, and the arrest and execution of Hotsumi Ozaki, one of the political advisers of Konoe, who corporated with Sorge. The investigation was quickly wrapped up and the responsibility of Konoe himself was never questioned, and even none was charged of other agents who worked with other ministries and were possibly spies of USSR. If the investigation was thoroughly done and the information obtained from it was shared with the U.S. and other countries, it would have been known that not only in Japan and the U.S., also in many European countries information was manipulated by USSR spies, and the U.S. and England might not have allied with Stalin. It is also said that the arrest of Sorge himself was a plot conducted by Stalin and the information about him might have been purposely leaked so that suspicions on other agents who were working in the central part in Japan's politics would be reduced. If all of this was ever known back then, the development of the World War 2 must have been very different.

The choice made at the junction of whether to release a certain information or not, to have the information or not and to take it seriously or not, cause a significant effect on the choice of action, and plays a decisive role breaking the symmetry at the historical junction. The choice of "to let out information or not" and "to have it or not", including how it is taken, is a matter with an opponent, so it is more dependent on contingency. History is depended on contingency.

History has not been planed

If contingency plays an important role at any point of history, it means history is developing indecisively. As we see, even whether getting information or not changes the consequence of history. We must say that history is very indecisive. Since history is formed by interactions among many events, what shape it is going to take depends on the encounter happening at each time. Contingency works at the encounter between events.

In history, every event decides its direction of development only in the relationship with all the other events. Therefore its future is indecisive and what structure it is going to form is unknown either. History is a spontaneous process of producing something new from this mutual interaction among many events. Since determinism does not capture this spontaneity, it can't predict what comes up in the next stage in history. There is a leap in History, which determinism cannot grasp.

It is true that in the 17th and 18th century, the world view suggested by the classical dynamics was very much that of determinism, where it insisted that everything in the present and the future were already determined when the whole universe was first made. But such deterministic explanation cannot be applied to history not to mention to the nature.

Also in the 19th century, historical philosophy was still under strong influence of this classical dynamics, and our history was seen to be following the deterministic law. Actually, such philosophers as Hegel and Marx, tried to describe history by necessity, based on their deterministic historical philosophy, coming up with phrases such as "development of freedom" and "growth of productivity" as drives for consistent movement of history, as if history follows a physical law like gravity.

But the real history is not as simple or logical as determinism advocates insist. Even if they try to catch history that has complicated and illogical nature with the net of determinism, most of it will drop through the net. History can be neither simplified nor rationalized. As our life, history doesn't move along a certain law or a plan that was made in advance. This is why, needless to say the future, the present and the past are indecisive.

There is no law that runs through history. To describe history with only one law could take a risk of being dogmatic. History doesn't develop following the process of helotism, feudal system, capitalism and communism as suggested by Marx, nor running through the stages of generation, growth, collapse, deformation and death by Toynbee. Rather, history goes along something unpredictable such as natural disasters, invasions by enemy, the

desire for power, ambition of rulers or passion of people. There is illogical complexity that cannot be reduced to a law. We shouldn't simplify and generalize those complicated historical events. If we carelessly extract a simple law from complicated phenomenon which is infinitely varied, we would miss the complexity of history. We should take the complex and varied historic events as they are.

For sure, the most important character of science is its nomothetic nature, and ultimately everything is considered to be defined by its default setting. But, today, it is known that in fields in which things are interacting infinitely, including natural science, it is not necessarily possible to establish a single law. Formulas made by scientists are mere assumptions, and in the different spectrum of consideration, or with the perspective onto the subject, they need to be adjusted to the new environment. History must be treated in the same way.

Deterministic formulas give us a decisive view about the future. But it is impossible to predict precisely about the future. In future could always happen events that are never expected. In our history, sometimes a small event becomes a trigger for a far bigger event. We humans, both as part of a group and also as an individual, develop ourselves through experiences, and what we will be like in future cannot be predicted by determinism.

History is often described as a drama, but it is more than that. A drama has an author, but history doesn't. A drama has a scenario, but history doesn't. History is not like a drama where the author controls the story toward the end that he already knows. In the real history, even the actors who live in it don't know what future is waiting for them.

If the future is predictable by determinism, the future needs to be contained in the condition from the beginning like the Newtonian dynamics. But in the nature, something determinable of its hourly changes from its first condition is found only in the area that doesn't have any complex element, and even so, it is only an approximate prediction. Most part of the nature is unpredictable, not to say our highly complicated history. Thus we

must admit that it is not the original mission of science to predict the future by establishing deterministic laws.

Historical law can be obtained by finding a generally reproducible rule among the connections of events and analyzing it in the causal relationship. Nothing happens without a reason, so, in a historical event there must be an effect from all the events that happened before. Even so it is impossible to reduce the effect to a simple law. To produce a result, there needs a numerous reasons, and the sequence of the causality literally expands temporally and spatially. Plus, to produce a historical event requires many conditions that affect the result. And even with the same set of conditions working together, still the result could differ because the combination of the reasons and causes is infinite. Therefore we can't associate a reason with a condition automatically. History has not been made in "one reason one result system" but on the countless number of them. That is why sometimes we see a specific reason leads different results, or different reasons produce the same result. Being under harsh government, people don't necessarily always start a protest, and no matter what policy the government takes a protest could happen. We can't explain history with only one reason.

The forth to drive history is not only one, either. It is driven by politics, religion, culture, economy, environmental issue and so on. And we can't pick up a couple of reasons, economy and environment, for instance, to make a framework in explaining about history. This is a disrespectful simplification of history and, in a way, a selfish attitude. Establishing a simple law to see history is surely a useful way to catch people's attention but it is mere an advertisement. As Marc Bloch puts it, "one reason theory" is nothing but a obstacle in explaining history. Since a historical event can be defined only in relation with all the other events, history can't be reduced to a simple cause.

In history, every event has relationship with all the other events, so the relation between reason and result, too, can't be defined in a simple way. From the relationships among numerous events comes up something uncontrollable with a simple causality.

In a simple causality theory, the past rules the present and the present rules the future, but it doesn't seem to capture the real dynamics of history which keeps producing new future over the experiences of the past and the present.

Freedom exists in contingency

In determinism, everything is considered to have a reason, and as long as it was caused by the same reason, always the same thing happens. It makes a previously happened event a reason for another event which happened afterward. Causality law thinks things happen in sequence by necessity. Here, there is no space for contingency, and everything is seen happening only by necessity. In short, determinism explains history with logic of necessity, dropping all the contingent aspects.

But there are many coincidences in history, which occurs out of reason, and contingency that can't be defined by causality. There are times when we think if we didn't have the accident, whether it is individual or national matter, things would have gone to very different direction. The course of History changes its direction with a bit of contingency. History is always affected by its instability. History is consisted of numerous actions made by countless number of people and their mutual interactions, and there always some contingent aspects in it to make history indecisive. With the law of reason and result, this accidental nature can't be captured.

Also, determinism suggests predestination about the future, where history is treated as a progression process on the already decided route. But given the fact that history often proceeds to unexpected direction driven by contingency without purpose, this is impossible to be taken as a process moving toward a certain place. Since an action is thrown into a place where interactions are happening among numerous events, it is inevitable some coincidental elements slip in, making it impossible to define the direction along which history moves. History is a drama without scenario, and it stands on contingency which destructs the

scenario set by predestination theory.

Hegel thought that the contingent aspect of an event caused by heroes or citizens, regardless of their original purpose, makes contributions to drive the plan of history forward, and called this phenomenon “trick of reason”. But contingency is a forth to drive history to different direction and break historical lows. Because of this, it is obvious that an idea of including contingency into this kind of teleological determinism doesn't work. There is no end for history.

In our history, we see changes in our living environment affected by reformations of international power balance or getting pressure from foreign nations, and the way to deal with these changes is not only one but many. We have freedom in choosing the means. We always have a “freedom of choice” when we have some options and possibilities. And, which one we are going to take has not been decided. Freedom is guaranteed in the respect that the choice has not yet been made. The freedom exists in making a choice from all the possibilities. Therefore, when we see the history not from outside but as a stakeholder, we have a freedom about the future. The direction of history can be changed by an action we throw in among the interactions. An action has freedom to break both necessity and determinacy.

We are exposed to unexpected contingency. But our “freedom of choice” exists in making a choice of life against the unpredictable contingency. We live in contingency, that is why we are free. There is no freedom in life which is bound in necessity. Freedom enables us to take leap and to produce. It is in creation and spontaneity where freedom from causal determinism and teleological determinism is found.

History is irreversible

The current of history never goes back. Just like our life, it can't be reversed, repeated, replayed or taken back. “History repeats itself” is a common phrase. There also is a phrase saying “there is nothing new under the sun. Things of the past still exist today,

and things that exist today will be found in the future.” For sure, human repeatedly did wrong things over the history. But looking at it closely, we never see the same view. Like swirls in the river, only similar patterns appear. We merely call it, “History repeats itself”.

Because history is self-productive, a historical event is only one time phenomenon which will never be repeated. History never repeats the same thing for it produces unexpected result from infinite reasons and conditions. We can neither reverse replay history just as we do with a video tape. History is not a video, so even if we go back to the past and set up the same conditions, things cannot be expected to run on the same course. Even the smallest move of a thing is not the replay of what had happened. It is something completely different.

Repeatability is one of the principles of Natural science emphasizes, that under the same condition they can obtain the same result. But it doesn't apply to history. Actually not to the nature either. Such things as evolution of the space or the lives are the processes that will never be repeated. It is true that physics and chemistry look dealing with repeatable nature, but actually they deal with the parts that look so. When even natural science can't get the sense of repeatability, it is not to say in history. Now that the historical side of nature is beginning to be acknowledged, it is rather necessary to apply to natural science the method used in historical study which values the sense of one-time and irreversibility.

Just as all matches of sports are played differently, history never repeats. So, experiment of history is impossible. Even if tried, because the action itself of making an experiment stairs the current of history, there is no way to reproduce the same result. This is irreversibility of history. It is observed that in natural science they have been focusing on the reversible aspect of the nature and proving it by experiment. But in the field of geology, paleontology, cosmology and evolutionism, researchers study subjects that they can neither experiment nor reproduce. In the study of history which involves even higher complication, an

experiment for reproduction or establishing determinism oriented laws, is out of question. Irreversible quality of history, too, like indecisiveness, denies reductionism, an idea to reduce history to a simple theory.

History is irreversible and it is impossible to reproduce it. Even if we go back to the Sengoku period by the time machine to observe the history of the past, because of the fact that by going back to the time we already adds irregular element in forming history of the time, history must take a different course. Suppose we witness the Honnouchi incident and manage to inform Nobunaga about the presence of a traitor, he would take a measure to flee from Mitsuhide's attack, and the Honnouchi incident would never happen, then the political map of the era would be greatly different. Things have lead the way as they actually did, and it was an irreversible historical process that has only one go.

In history of the nature and the life there is a phenomenon that a choice made in the past defines the course of the present and the future. History has its record. The record forms customs or rules in the society, and, while repeated over years, becomes a tradition. Therefore, to understand a society, we must know the historical record. In our life, the past is written as a record.

We form a historical record with the layer of experiences we have been having since the long past, to pass it to a new experience we will have in the future. The process of development by layering experiences is irreversible and it keeps producing new things. The layer of the past history is necessary to produce new things for the future. From the past to the present, and to the future, history runs irreversibly.

In chaos also found a recording phenomenon so called course dependency. Chaos, too, has its history. Chaos is a space where things has possibility to lead to any direction in the early stage of its development, but once the direction is decided, the possibility shrinks and eventually the course is fixed, and the record is formed at the same time. Chaos is strongly dependent on the initial condition, and a small choice in the first place makes a big difference to the result. When this whole process is traced back

from the result, its dependency to the course it took is inevitable, and that makes chaos's historical record.

For example, as Brian Arthur says, to find the origin of today's automobile society we have to go back to its early period in the late 19th century when internal-combustion engine and steam engine coexisted. Then there were two options in making a car; internal combustion or steam. But at the racing competition of horse and car, the gas vehicle happened to win, and with the situation of the time that water shortage is a social issue, gas engine became prominent rather than steam engine which requires a lot of water. After getting further improvements, internal-combustion engine eventually pushed steam engine completely out of the market and thus dominated the 20th century. It is well understood that it was one of the biggest step in modern history. If it had not been for this whole thing, neither of those two world wars would have occurred in that fashion. Around the time of the wars all of the world super powers were in competition in seeking for oil, and ended up having a serious crush. The history in the 20th century was deeply affected by the fact that gas engine was chosen, and it was the first condition on which the course of the history formed. Once a decision was made, it is impossible to erase the record, and it is irreversible.

A decision made in the beginning forms an irreversible course toward the long distant result. And, if in the process of decision making contingency is working, it must be pointed out that contingency and irreversibility are closely related. Because it is certainly possible for one to assume that a different choice could avoid a tragedy, therefore making a choice, even contingently, is a serious action because it starts history that can never be taken back. History is a sequence of choices and layers of contingencies. The contingency leaves inerasable deep mark on history. It is contingency that produce irreversibility and the sense of "only once". Historical facts are results of complicated interactions and competitions among numerous events of the past, and it can neither go back nor reversed.

We live in the historical time where the past, the present and

the future come in sequence. Only switching the order of events to happen makes completely different things. Contingency works to produce irregularity in this order. We accumulate experiences of life in this sequence of time. We can't reverse the direction of historical time, and can't swap the order of the past, the present and the future. The arrow of time goes only to one direction. A broken jar never brings back. We can't go back to our childhood. Containing the past in the present, anticipating the future at the same time, irreversible history keeps developing toward one direction. The world itself is a drama played in irreversible time.

History based on contingency

History is stirred by unreasonable coincidental events that are taken as an accidental occurrence, a coincidental interaction of things from different lines of events or contingency in making choice. But these are the very drive to produce organic formation of history and creative evolution. Contingency is the heart of history. History is innovated by contingency. Ultimately, "existence" is a contingency. An event having come up and ending up in the state of the present is a contingency. Such contingency is running through the history.

It gives a sensational, rather astonishing feeling to us. And when we realise that we have been thrown into such history, we take this harsh contingency as a "fate". We take sufferings totally unexpected or a misfortune we drew by our own choice as a fate. We should. Things of unpredictable, undeterminable or irreversible are all harsh contingency. We are anxious because they are harsh. The god of history is like a playing child. We are loaded with our own fate, being influenced by it. For history, contingency is more fundamental than necessity, and a fate is similar to contingency. But, because of the burden we carry, we have a freedom of making a new production.

After all, it was contingent that in the very beginning this universe tilted to positive, not negative. Since there is no reason for this, it is no surprise that it never happened at all.

Contingency doesn't allow us to ask why. Our world began with this contingency. It runs through our history. Not only in the beginning, but at each moment of history there is contingency. Sense of contingency running through history is the answer for why history is indecisive, why unpredictable, why irreversible and why we have only one chance. Contingency drives history and the world. Contingency is the very thing that produces infinite development of life. If contingency is what working at the point where positive turns negative, and negative turns positive, it calls for creation. The world itself is historic.

Source: Michinori KOBAYASHI *Philosophy of Life*, Collection 3 (2016) included in *Invitation to Historical Philosophy*, chapter 2, published by Minerva Shobo)