

Exclusive interview with Yasuhiko Genku Kimura by Marisa Torres

1) Tell us about yourself and your work?

I am an ordained Buddhist priest and scholar and a professional philosopher originally from Japan and residing for the past 20 plus years in the United States. I teach spiritual transformation courses to individuals and strategic, organizational, and cultural transformation courses to corporations.

The main focus of my work is to awaken and develop people's ability to think and create from the deepest level of their being and consciousness. That deepest level is what is called the spiritual level. As a result of working with me, people, individually and in an organization, not only develop their ability to think and create but also come to realize their deep and abiding individual passion, vision, and destiny.

2) Is talking about spirituality talking about choices?

Choices people make do not come from the same place or level in their consciousness. When you come in touch with your spirituality and start to come from your spiritual dimension of your consciousness or the deepest level of your heartmind, your choice will become authentic and truly yours. Otherwise, you do not really choose but your past reactively makes choices for you. Instead of you making life happen, life happens to you. Spiritual development makes it possible for you to make your life authentically your choice.

3) Are the lectures you are giving in São Paulo based on passion? In what way could this influence the current leadership model?

The lectures and seminars I am giving in São Paulo are on passion and vision, and on authentic thinking and alignment beyond agreement. Leaders are leaders because of their creative ability to envision and inspire a new future into which other people can live. My lectures and seminars will further enable leaders in their ability to creatively think, to inspire others, and to create a higher order of alignment in their organizations.

Also, leaders will further develop their ability to evoke passions and to discern visions of other people. As a result, leaders will gain the ability to invent their own leadership models in accordance with their individuality and vision, instead of following existing leadership models. Their organizational culture will reflect their own development as authentic visionary leaders and will increasingly evolve in the direction of creativity, responsibility, and integrity.

4) The passion could help leaders of HR, for instance, to retain the real talents?

When you come in touch with and start to live from your authentic passion, your passion becomes your mission and you become able to sustain your commitment virtually forever. Further, to the degree to which you are in touch with you passion,

you become able to identify and understand the passions of others. As a result, if HR is your passion, you will become much more able to recognize and retain real talents.

- 5) **In the beginning of the 21st century, depression not only embodies the passion of being and acting for oneself and how hard it is to do so, but also the demand for initiative and the difficulty of taking it. So we're talking of passion, in this case, in terms of quality of life or cure?**

When you see little or no hope of expressing your passion or manifesting your vision, you tend to experience depression. Depression is often a symptom of feeling hopeless or helpless and therefore feeling unexpressed anger and frustration. It is not enough to know your passion or vision; you must also know how to express or manifest it. For this reason, in my Passion and Vision Workshops, I teach how to express your passion and how to manifest your vision inside the particular circumstance in which you live.

- 6) **The world's professional relationships are organized in a hierarchy, so, how not to follow an external authority?**

To be authentic means to be the original author of your own life and to be the internal authority for your own self. Therefore, the authentic individual does not need and does not follow any external authority in the matter of knowing, thinking, and acting in his or her life. When the authentic individual enters an organization and work with others within a hierarchical structure, he or she does not follow any external authority but only follows the functionally hierarchical accountability structure and fulfills his or her responsibility to himself or herself and accountability for the organization.

Hierarchical structures exist in Nature and in the Universe as the natural structure of evolutionary process. Human organizations require hierarchical structures because organizations are networks of diverse accountabilities and the functional unification of accountabilities requires a hierarchical structure in order for them to work effectively. The same applies to projects. And following the logic of hierarchy is not the same as following external authority. Authentic individuals are responsible and therefore they will fulfill their accountabilities within a hierarchical structure more effectively than inauthentic individuals.

- 7) **What have you learnt from your father?**

From my father I learned the importance of honesty, the power of love, and the beauty of true inner strength.

- 8) **Are the economic and politic challenges, like the super-capitalism, consequences of a series of choices and decisions that defined a way of spirituality, as a set of references and habits?**

Thoughts and ideas are the primary substance and the prime mover of life and of the world. The ideas in the form of basic assumptions determine the course of individual and collective history. The basic assumptions set the stage and determine the nature

and parameter of the play. A question you ask contains a set of assumptions, which determines the direction in which you seek and obtain an answer. The choices and decisions you make are defined by the assumptions you hold.

Yet, people are usually almost completely blind to the assumptions they hold. One of the primary tasks of a philosopher is to help people examine their hidden assumptions that dictate their lives. Plato has Socrates say in his *Apology*, "An unexamined life is not worth living." Just like Socrates or Plato, my most important task as a philosopher is to make people's lives really worth living by assisting them to learn to examine their lives through examining their hidden assumptions.

When you become aware of and free from your assumptions, you gain the power and freedom to consciously make new assumptions or assume new stands. This is the most powerful and sure way of resolving problems hitherto irresolvable.

9) Is humanity moving towards a return to unity? If so, how?

In the last three hundred years humanity through the modern and postmodern age has completed the evolutionary process of individuation in terms of ego development. So now, the evolutionary trend of humanity is in the direction of achieving a higher unity. This is not a return to the unity of the pre-modern and pre-individualization age but an evolutionary renewal of a higher and greater human unity. This new human unity is accomplished not by diminishing individuality but by elevating individuality to a higher kind of individuality, which I call cosmic individuality.

10) Is there a relationship between the growth of individual responsibility (of being who one is) and an increasing depression?

On the contrary, both economic and personal or psychological depressions are signs of irresponsibility. Responsibility means the ability to respond and to respond means to promise (*spond*) anew (*re-*). To promise means to bring forth a future as a commitment. Therefore, responsibility means the ability to bring forth a new future.

Responsibility implies self-generativity, and the freedom to choose and the power to realize what you choose. A responsible individual is in charge of the destiny of his or her life and feels happiness and joy within.

Psychological depression stems from the sense of powerlessness with respect to one's future. It is the opposite of responsibility and therefore it is irresponsibility. It is the sense of helplessness typical of those who suffer from victim consciousness.

The economic meltdown that we are now experiencing, which can lead to depression, is the result of a series of irresponsible actions and behaviors on the part of those who have been given the responsibility to maintain economic well being.

11) What are the social consequences of a kind of "spirituality" that is based mostly on individualism, utilitarianism, and self-interest?

To be spiritual means to be in touch with the deepest part of your consciousness where you are connected and at-one with the whole of humanity. Therefore, a spirituality based on egoic individuality, utilitarianism, or self-interest is an oxymoron. It does not exist.

People try to use “spirituality” based on their egoic individuality, utilitarianism, or self-interest to gain some competitive advantage in this competitive society, but such spirituality is a pseudo spirituality, which is called “spiritual materialism” (an oxymoron) and is very rampant in the United States.

Authentic spirituality concerns self-discovery and self-development, and as a result makes you much more creative as well as joyful and fulfilled in life.

12) A society of generalized competition encourages selfishness and rivalry in individuals. It also dissociates us one from another and destroys the feeling of belonging to the society. Everyone must behave like warriors, like winners, in order to avoid being excluded and branded as losers. Do you see a way out of this?

Competition is a game which most people play in life in which winning is considered good and losing is considered bad. Society tends to evaluate your value as a human being based on competitive comparison. The higher is your grade in school, the better is the university from which you graduate, the more academic degrees you have, or the more money you make, the greater is your perceived value in society.

The question is: Which standard of priority do you value more, society’s standard or your own standard? Which is more important to you, to fully realize your potential or to win competitions imposed on you by the society?

If you choose to live your life based on your own standard and if the purpose of your life is to fully realize your potential, you will use the game and the field of competition for your own self-realization, spiritual and professional, but will not be used by it.

13) The “dissociety” is a society that represses or mutilates the willingness of “being-with”, imposing the domination of “being-oneself”. What is the role of the individual on this?

Being oneself and being with others are not mutually exclusive at all. The healthy human being wants and needs to be oneself and to be with others. The true meaning of individuality is the indivisible wholeness of being. With this indivisible wholeness of being you hold the rest of humanity. You are yourself and you are with others.

This strange notion of “dissociety” can arise only from a profound misunderstanding of what it means to be an individual, what it means to be oneself, and what it means to be with others. The English word “alone” comes from “all one” and if you understand the significance of this, there will be no “dissociety.” You are connected to others only

to the degree to which you are connected to yourself. Therefore, “dissociety” indicates not only the dissociation from others but also the dissociation from oneself and thus the inability to be oneself.

14) If solidarity is better than competition in our intimate relationships, why should the extension of competition constitutes the central part of our society?

The purpose of human life is self-realization. When people are unaware of the true purpose of their life, they substitute self-realization with winning in competitions. Passion is evolutionary and if you know and follow your passion, you will be able to realize your own self and potential. That “the extension of competition constitutes the central part of our society” means that the great majority of people are ignorant of the central purpose of life.

15) Is it possible to look at spirituality as a non-functional, essential dimension of the human experience?

Yes. The purpose of human life is self-realization and spirituality is another name for the evolutionary process of self-realization. That is, spirituality is a purpose unto itself. It has no function other than its own evolutionary unfolding.

The deeper you delve into the spiritual dimension of your being, the more love, truth, meaning, and beauty you will experience. The higher you evolve within the spiritual dimension of your consciousness, the more creativity and clarity of knowledge you will have. Therefore, yes, spirituality is an essential dimension of human experience.

16) Isn't it dangerous to follow a methodology for the expansion of consciousness? Shouldn't this expansion be the result of constant natural thinking?

There is a danger in following a methodology on your own precisely because most people do not know what this constant natural thinking is. There are methods for the expansion of consciousness designed according to the very nature of consciousness and natural thinking, but it is important that you have a teacher who can guide you in following a particular method. Once you know what this natural thinking is, then you can continue to expand your consciousness on your own as the result of your constant natural thinking.

17) You do not consider yourself a guru, right? Would you say that gurus are getting old fashioned?

No, I do not consider myself a guru. Etymologically the word *guru* is both an adjective and a noun. As an adjective, it has the following meanings:

1) heavy, weighty (also figuratively), 2) great, large, long, extended, 3) important, momentous, great, 4) arduous, difficult (to bear), 5) excessive, violent, intense, 6) venerable, respectable, 7) heavy, hard (of digestion), 8) best, excellent, 9) dear, beloved, 10) haughty, proud (as a speech), 11) (in prosody) long as a syllable, either

in itself (*a*), or being short, followed by a conjunct consonant (*a-ksara*), 12) valuable, highly prized, 13) grievous.

As a noun it means:

1) a father, 2) forefather, ancestor, 3) any venerable or respectable person; an elderly person or relative, 4) a teacher, preceptor, 5) a lord, superintendent, ruler, 6) The Supreme Spirit.

The term “guru” used in today’s Western spiritual context carries with it a connotation and implication of “external authority.” I say that I am not a guru because my work is dedicated to humanity transcending the mentality and psychology associated with external authority and therefore guruship is the very antithesis of the principle for which I stand.

Guruship in the sense of external authority is a vestige of the premodern hierarchical psychical and psychological structure in which people would externally project authority onto some “God” or human authority figures. But we now live in the 21st century and in the dawn of the Aquarian Age. Through my work I intend to serve human progress toward the development of the independent awakened mind, not human regress toward the atavism of the dependent premodern mind.

However, I do not deny that being a spiritual teacher is one of my functions in life. In the Mahayana Buddhist literature, the final future Buddha to come is named *Maitreya*, which etymologically means “friend.” There is a profound wisdom contained in this designation. The future Buddha is to be your friend. Moreover, there should not be only one but many *Maitreyas* because spiritual enlightenment is everyone’s birthright, albeit very few seem to claim it.

This is also what is meant by the Second Coming of the Christ in the West. The Second Coming will take place in every human being who awakens to Christ Consciousness or (in the Buddhist lexicon) *Mahaparinirovanic* Awareness. Therefore, do not wait for another Christ figure to come back to the Earth so that you can worship him or crucify him again. For, it is your sole responsibility to attain Christhood or Buddhahood for yourself.

Therefore, I am one of many *Maitreyas*, friends-*qua*-teachers, of humanity in whom the Second Coming has taken place and who know the ways to spiritual enlightenment, transformation, and evolution. I speak, write, and teach from my own internal authority but categorically refuse to be anyone’s external authority. The gurus who serve as external authorities, who let others externally project authority onto them, impede the very evolution of human consciousness they profess to espouse. They are yesterday’s problem, not tomorrow’s solution.

18) Are the values of eastern thinkers going to be in greater evidence, due to the rising of the Asian economy?

Not necessarily. The Eastern Thoughts was introduced to the West centuries ago, but the rate of introduction dramatically increased in the late 20th century. Now with the advent of the Internet, we have access to any kind of thought or philosophy, Eastern and Western. The primary motive has always been intellectual curiosity and desire for learning and communication. As China and India become more prominent, following Japan, the general public will become more familiar with the Eastern Thoughts.

19) Do the current times allow a new esthetics for the levels of consciousness?

The more you open your vision for beauty the more beauty you can behold and create. Therefore, as we evolve in our consciousness, we will allow new aesthetics to emerge and flourish.

20) In an internet search, Google came up with 142 thousand results for "espiritualidade nas empresas" (spirituality in companies). At yahoo we found 111 thousand pages for the same search. That's a considerable number. Do you believe that companies will also take care of the development of people's consciousness, like they already take part in the development of their professional skills?

When I started consulting companies in the 1980s, I could not openly use the term "spirituality" in the business environment. So I used "creativity" or "thinking" to evoke and develop spirituality in people. This gradually changed in the 1990s and in the 2000s the term became accepted.

Regardless of terminology, however, this is not an entirely new phenomenon. Mr. Konoske Matsushita (1894 – 1989), the founder of Matsushita Electronics (Panasonic) stated decades ago that his company's main business was the development of people's (employees') moral character and that for the secondary purpose they built electronic products.

The concept of a learning organization can develop into that of a character-building organization or a consciousness-developing organization. A company needs to create a conscious evolutionary culture in which each employee or associate can responsibly participate.

21) Are you writing a new book? If yes, which will be the main message that book will bring?

Several books: (1) *Alignment Beyond Agreement*, the book on the principle and practice of Alignment beyond Agreement; (2) *Authentic Thinking for Creative Evolution*, the book based on the same title expounding upon authentic thinking, creative evolution, and their relationship; (3) *The Omnicentric Universe*, the book on a new cosmology based on the primacy of consciousness; (4) *The Omnicentric World*, the book on the next stage of human evolution and the emerging new social architecture of the future; and (5) *Five Longings of the Soul*, the book on the evolution of the human soul