

the **Order** of the **Universe**

George Ohsawa

English Version, Introduction, and Notes by Jim Poggi

and

“The Spiralic Concept of Man”

by Herman Aihara

George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation
Chico, California

Other books by George Ohsawa in English include: *The Art of Peace*; *Cancer and the Philosophy of the Far East*, *Essential Ohsawa*; *Gandhi, the Eternal Youth*; *Jack and Mitie*; *Macrobiotic Guidebook for Living*; *Macrobiotics: An Invitation to Health and Happiness*; *Philosophy of Oriental Medicine*; *The Unique Principle*; *You Are All Sanpaku*; and *Zen Macrobiotics*. Contact the publisher at the address below for a complete list of available titles.

Front cover Photograph: “Miniature Sunflower with Honey Bee”
By Maryanne Caruthers-Akin

Back cover: Calligraphy by Korean Zen Master Man’Gong Sunim (1871–1946). Used with permission of the Zen Lotus Society, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Silkscreen prints (11” x 32”) available from the Society, 1214 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104.

Cover design by Carl Campbell
Text layout and design by Carl Ferré
Keyboarding by Alice Salinero
Map designs by Sue Reid
Illustrations and calligraphy by Sheri Peterson

Originally published in Japanese	1940
First English Edition	1986
Current Edition: edited and reformatted	2011 Jun 10

© Copyright 1986 by the
George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation
PO Box 3998, Chico, California 95927-3998
530-566-9765; fax 530-566-9768
www.ohsawamacrobiotics.com; gomf@ohsawamacrobiotics.com

Published with the help of East West Center for Macrobiotics
www.eastwestmacrobiotics.com

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 78-159569
ISBN 0-918860-35-8

Preface

To my knowledge, this is the first complete version in English of George Ohsawa's *The Order of the Universe*. I prefer to call it a version rather than a translation. This for two reasons: First, because of its multi-lingual origin. Because I do not read Japanese or French, but know Spanish quite well, I worked from Mauricio Waroquiers' Uruguayan version. I presume that this, in turn, was taken from some French translation or other, which, in its turn, derived from the original Japanese. I am indebted to Herman Aihara for comparing my effort with the Japanese and for making some additions and a number of suggestions both as to content and accuracy of expression. The second reason for calling this a version is that I took certain liberties in expressing what I felt to be the sense of Ohsawa's thought, as opposed to a mere literal rendition. This decision was made in favor of greater clarity and readability.

I am also indebted to Herman Aihara for his support in bringing this version to light, as well as for his willingness to field a number of my questions presented to him along the way. Thanks to fellow staff members Carl Ferre, Sylvia Zuck, and Stan Hodson for suggestions, criticisms, and drudgery gracefully endured. And, finally, I am grateful to my wife, Pat, for her patience and tolerance of my rather long love affair with this book.

Jim Poggi
August, 1986

“A mind which is deep and boundless has neither doubts nor thoughts...To see that the mind is the Tao is to follow the stream and reach the source...When the meaning has been revealed and the source realized, words and contemplation do not necessarily remain.”

Ch'an Master Yung-Chia (665–713 A.D.)

Contents

Preface	3
Introduction	7
Journey Up the River of Life	18
The Eternal World	25
Maps Used by the Team of Life Explorers	34
The Order of the Universe	42
A Further Look at the Unique Principle	49
Conclusion	65
Notes	74
The Spiralic Concept of Man	97
About the Author: George Ohsawa	112
About the Author: Herman Aihara	113

Journey Up the River of Life

The River of Life — what we call “our world” or “our life” — is not just any river one might find in a geography book. This river is so big we have trouble making out its banks. The rocks we see protruding from its surface like tiny islands are called people’s “lives.” In this river, one finds all conceivable kinds of living things. So huge is it that viewed from one of these tiny rock-islands it seems hardly to be moving at all, while in fact it is surging along at a tremendous speed. Everything in this river is moving along night and day. Almost no one has ever attempted to pit himself against this mighty current and move up the River of Life. All scientists have done is to study some insignificant details about some rock or plant found on one of its islands. It seems to me that it is too difficult an undertaking for them to study the river itself.

I invite you to join me in traveling up this River of Life and with me to reach its source.

As our point of departure we need to ask: Where does our physical life come from? We know, of course, that it is passed on to us by our parents and forebears. But, what is the origin of our parents’ lives and how have those lives been maintained? The answer is not so difficult because we know there are many factors involved. But the most important of these is food. Food is the very basis of our lives. It is thanks to food that we are alive at all. Without food we wouldn’t be able to live, think, or propagate. The only way to discover the profound meaning of food in our lives and its great and mysterious power is to fast. I recommend fasting to those who haven’t yet undertaken it as an experiment.

Over the course of thousands of years, it is thanks to food that man has been born, has produced offspring, has lived, been active, thought, created, mastered ideas, and known God. Thinking about it this way we can understand how food is the origin of life. Our bodies are a transformation of the food we eat. There is vegetal and animal food, water too, and the nourishment provided by the air and the sun's light.

Of these sources of food, vegetal foods are the main ones because all animals, including man, live by eating grains and vegetables either directly or indirectly. Grains and vegetables have no capacity to move themselves, but they give rise to those creatures, namely man and animals, who do enjoy this ability of self-locomotion. So what moves comes from that which does not move. It could be that Newton got this far up the River of Life, when he demonstrated that all bodies impelled by an initial force will move infinitely in the direction of that force provided that no contrary motion or obstacle intervenes.¹ In my opinion, that initial force (as well as the obstacle) is the source of the River of Life. In short, the origin of animal life is the vegetal world, our first support base.

What, then, is the origin of the vegetal world? It is the Earth, our second support base. The Earth is made up of soil and water. And the soil contains all the various minerals. The Earth spins incessantly, not stopping even for a second. What does not move (the vegetal world) arises from what does move (the Earth). Still, the mere existence of the vegetal world and of soil and water is not enough to account for the existence of animal life; similarly, the vegetal world does not exist by the Earth alone.

The Earth, too, cannot exist of and by itself. Necessary to its existence as well as to that of the vegetal and animal worlds is the Sky,² whose covering of air enshrouds the Earth like a mantel. The Sky does not move. A moving Earth is born of an immovable Sky. And so the Sky becomes our third support base.

Still, man and animals cannot live only by the supports we have so far mentioned. We need something more: the Light of the sun, which is heat, the source of fire. Without Light neither the Sky, nor

the Earth, nor the vegetal or animal and human worlds would be capable of existence.

Truly, from this Light is born the Sky, a light that moves at a tremendous velocity. The Sky, which does not move, is born of that which moves, the Sun, our fourth support base. So far we have discovered four elements that support the animal and vegetal worlds, namely, Earth, Water, Wind (Sky), and Fire.³ These four elements the great Greek and Indian philosophers already knew.

Have we now arrived at the wellspring of life? No, something is still missing. Even supposing our bodies could live by these four elements, still, lacking Spirit, they would be nothing but living corpses. But what is the origin of Spirit? By what is it nourished and how does it develop? A body in which the Spirit does not dwell cannot be a living body. A body has length (centimeters), weight (grams), and duration (seconds). It is visible, maintains a certain temperature, and moves. But Spirit doesn't manifest any of these particular qualities. Could Spirit, then, be the origin of the four elements? This is the question we shall be exploring. In any case, we know Spirit doesn't have length, weight, or time.

Scientists don't consider it worth their while taking a look at anything they can't perceive with their senses. And so it's a waste of time to question them as to the nature of Spirit. Even were we to consult those teachers — ministers, priests, and preachers — whose business it is to study matters of the Spirit, we still could not depend on their reply, given over as most of them are to the overwhelming influence of the materialistic thinking of people and scientists only interested in length, weight, and time. With even greater reason we could say that the answer is not to be found among politicians and educators.

Let us clarify the meaning of Spirit. We cannot know Spirit by way of the five senses. Whereas the body weakens with age, the Spirit never grows old. One has the impression that, even in advancing years, it has the naiveness or innocence of a child. What increases or decreases in relation to the body is of the physical order and does not touch the Spirit. Because it lacks form, the Spirit does not age;