

Toronto, July 26, 2023

I write this text in recollection of Uno Group meetings with Professor Sekine, almost all of which were held on a monthly basis at the living room of Professor Albritton's home in Toronto, as Professor Sekine's home was outside of Toronto (Oakville) and would have made it less easy for group participants to get there. What comes first to mind about these meetings is not any details I may still remember, but the attendance of the person whose work had inspired these meetings, Professor Thomas (Tomohiko) T. Sekine. For me, the most prominent and significant aspect of these meetings was that they were held in the presence of Professor Sekine, because of who he was (including who he was for me) and what he had achieved.

Professor Sekine was one of my two dearest and most highly esteemed mentors during my York University years and beyond.

During the 1980s, he and Professor Albritton formed a dedicated monthly reading group with interested students to study Uno theory and explore its potential relationships with other theories and ways of thought. I was invited to join the group in the fall of 1990 and attended almost all of its meetings until 2007 when the group stopped meeting. Professor Sekine returned to Japan sometime in the 1990s, but he had occasion to attend a few more meetings afterwards during his visits to Toronto.

He taught me formally, when I took a 4th year half-year directed reading course in economics with him and when I audited his full year Dialectic of Capital course, and he also taught me informally, outside the university, in Uno Group meetings, various academic conferences in Toronto and New York City, and a trip to Greece we took together with Mrs. Sekine and Professor Albritton's family in 2003.

His teaching, formal and informal, was carried out by a combination of unusually clear, coherent, and precise speech, a meaningful low-key silence as distinct from his immense capacity for attentive listening, a demeanour of almost ascetic physical near-stillness and self-sufficiency, and a natural, broad, warm-hearted smile in his face.

He taught me the pure theory of capitalism which he had mastered and crafted and he taught me much more than that. With quiet deeds, never direct words, he taught what it means to be a good and humble human being in academia, a generally toxic environment ruled by self-serving mediocrities, exceptions notwithstanding.

In everything he was saying and doing, he was exuding simplicity, gentleness, kindness, and a genuinely deep moderation of character - to the point of self-effacement. And moderation, for ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, is the most exemplary virtue of character and it is on the basis of the structure of moderation that Aristotle understood all other virtues of character, including bravery (as distinct from recklessness), magnanimity, truthfulness, and justice. Moderation, for Aristotle, is also the hallmark of the most important intellectual virtue, wisdom.

Professor Sekine, who was a giant intellectual thinker and had done absolutely monumental and path-breaking work to develop and extend Kozo Uno's difficult contributions to Marxian political economy, and also reconstruct the 3 volumes of Karl Marx's *Capital* as a rigorous dialectical logic, was the one and only person I have met in life who exemplified the virtue of moderation to the greatest extent, a virtue that, personally, I am still struggling to learn and adopt.

That's exactly how he was in the Uno group meetings too. His conduct in these meetings was, for me, astounding. I don't remember him even once criticizing any other thinker, including those who understood capitalism and the workings of capital differently or less well than he did. He would only point out and clarify how capital worked. And if we happened to discuss works other than economic theory, he would listen attentively, ask questions, and disarmingly profess his lack of knowledge in other fields of knowledge.

In these meetings he would always sit in a lean and elegant armchair next to Professor Albritton's fireplace, as this was, fittingly, the most "distinguished" seat in the living room. Professor Albritton would serve one or two kinds of herbal tea and Professor Sekine would enjoy having it, as the rest of us did too.

I distinctly recall a recollection of Professor Sekine himself, as he reiterated it happily to us from time to time. It always made him laugh softly as he was relating it to us and it seemed to me that it gave him a certain small and sweet satisfaction. He compared how the secretaries in the Department of Economics at York University would respond to requests to make photocopies for faculty, which was part of their duties. If one of his close long-time colleagues and subsequently co-author in the Department of Economics made the request, they would find all sort of excuses to delay. If Professor Sekine asked, they would do it right away. Ha, ha! I still laugh myself remembering it. Not because I think it was funny (it was not meant to be), but because I remember Professor Sekine always laughing about it.

Professor Sekine was not our peer. His *Dialectic of Capital* is to the theory of capitalism what Yasujiro Ozu's *Tokyo Monogatari* ('Tokyo Story') is to the history of the cinema. An absolute and unsurpassed masterpiece, a work of the highest beauty in its kind, "*a possession of all time*" (as the ancient Greek historian, Thucydides, would put it). He was a truly "*spoudaios*" man in Aristotle's sense of the term, a person of the highest human excellence who knows which things are worth taking seriously and which aren't.

I am certain that Aristotle would have wanted to know him.

Stefanos Kourkoulakos, Professor Sekine's pupil