

*Kire* is a fundamental Japanese religio-aesthetic term referring to a Buddhist “cutting off” of everyday life in the sense of “renunciation” or the oppression of the superfluous and is linked to Rinzai School of Zen Buddhism. The aesthetic “cut” called *kire* creates a new stylistic space in art or in life. *Kire* is very important in classical Japanese art forms such as *ikebana*, *Noh* theater, garden-art (especially the “dry garden,” *karesansui*) and *haiku* poetry. *Noh*-art, for example, makes extensive use of *kire* as its stylized way of walking is supposed to “cut off” the natural way of walking. “Elegance is born when the ordinary is abbreviated, concentrated and reduced to essentials” (Komparu 1983: 71). When the superfluous or the natural is “cut,” the entity created does not come close to the modern Western idea of “purity” or “simplicity.” What is in question in Japanese aesthetics is “more” than Mies van der Rohe’s “less is more.” Mies’ “less” is meant to be a *substance* in the same way in which asceticism represents a way of gaining substantial quality in life. *Kire* does not produce mere asceticism but cuts off something *from* nature in order to create the spiritual quantity that does not appear as a new reality “as real as nature” but, on the contrary, as a non-reality.

*Kire-tsuzuki* literally means “cut and continue,” which makes the philosophical aspect of *kire* more explicit. When something is “aesthetically cut” in the sense of *kire*, the element that has been cut off continues to exist “negatively” as a kind of “non-being.” The aesthetic cut reveals the true essence of the aesthetic object. (TBB)

**Literature:** Ohashi, Ryosuke. 1998, “Kire and Iki,” in Michael Kelly, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (New York: Oxford University Press) Vol. 2: 553–55. Nishitani, Keiji, 1995, “The Japanese Art of Arranged Flowers,” in Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins, eds, *World Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, New York: McGraw Hill. Komparu, Kunio. 1983. *The Noh-Theater. Principles and Perspectives*. Weatherhill, Tokyo and Kyoto: Tankoshe.