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Neglected Themes and Hidden Variations

EDITED BY

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NANZAN

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Introduction

This book was born at a conference entitled "The Kyoto School: Neglected Themes and Hidden Variations," held at McGill University on March 9–10, 2007. The conference theme, "Neglected Themes and Hidden Variations," was meant to focus attention on the more marginal figures and less studied lines of thought in the Kyoto School. In the West, most of the scholarship on the Kyoto School has focused on the three main figures: Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962) and Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990), the scholars who held the chair in either History of Philosophy or Religion at Kyoto University during the first half of the twentieth century. Western scholarship has also focused on a familiar list of topics: the philosophy of nothingness, Mahāyāna Buddhist thought, nationalism, et cetera. This tidy focus has obscured the fact that the Kyoto School has never been sharply defined, either in terms of its membership, or in terms of the philosophical issues particular to it. The conference succeeded in its aim. In an unusually collegial and fruitful exchange, the participants threw the spotlight on scholars outside the inner circle and on issues outside the usual agenda.

Kuki Shūzō is the central focus of attention of three of our authors. If illness had not cut short his life, the quality of his published works strongly suggest that he would have become as well-known as the mainstream Kyoto School authors but would have developed a line of thought without obvious debt to either Zen or Pure Land Buddhism. Kuki spent eight years in Europe, studying at Heidelberg in 1921 with Heinrich Rickert and at Marburg from 1927 to 1928 with Heidegger and Karl Löwith. He also spent several years in Paris where he studied French philosophy and composed four collections of poems. He

was probably the person who introduced the young Jean-Paul Sartre to Heidegger's existentialism. After returning from Europe, Kuki was appointed a lecturer in philosophy at Kyoto Imperial University in 1929 on the recommendation of Nishida. He received his doctorate in 1932 with his dissertation on contingency. In the following year, he was appointed assistant professor and in 1934, professor. He remained there until his unexpected death in 1941, at age fifty-three. Nishida wrote the epitaph carved on Kuki's grave. Kuki published several works on quite diverse topics. In Western scholarship to date, he is best known for *Iki no Kōzō* 「イキ」の構造 [The Structure of *Iki*, 1930], a work on Japanese aesthetics. But in Japan, he is also well-known for producing one of the first works on Heidegger, *Haidegā no tetsugaku* ハイデガーの哲学 [The Philosophy of Heidegger, 1933], and for *Gūzensei no mondai* 偶然性の問題 [The Problem of Contingency, 1935]. Graham Mayeda, in his paper "Is There a Method to Chance? Contrasting Kuki Shūzō's Phenomenological Methodology in *The Problem of Contingency* with that of His Contemporaries Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert," first explains Kuki's methodology in the study of contingency; Kuki's approach was phenomenological as opposed to the scientific or rationalist approaches of Windelband and Rickert, contemporaries who also investigated contigency. Kuki's phenomenological approach allows him to talk of an ethics for taking responsibility for chance encounters. John Maraldo, in the conference keynote address "The Contingencies of Kuki Shūzō," takes elements of Kuki's theory of contingency and first shows how contingency is presupposed in a contemporary issue, the debate between evolution and intelligent design. He then shows how Kuki opposed an ethics modeled on science and universal laws of nature and instead advanced an ethics of taking responsibility for the contingent, for the possibility of not being. Michael Marra, in "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer: Kuki Shūzō's Version," first begins with Heidegger's "Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," a work which criticizes Kuki's aesthetics as misguided since aesthetics grows out of European thinking; Marra uses the poetry that Kuki composed in France to construct a possible answer that Kuki might have made to Heidegger.

An unstudied aspect of the Kyoto School is its relationship to Marxist

thought. Nishida had several students who were strongly influenced by Marxism. One of them, the young Tosaka Jun, in fact went so far as to criticize Nishida charging that his was basically a bourgeois philosophy. Nishida kept up a conversation with his Marxist students and took these criticisms seriously; his writings in the last decade of his life reflect some of those conversations. Among those students was Miki Kiyoshi, whose Marxist-influenced writings may have caused him to lose his teaching post in 1930. Miki died in prison in 1945, leaving behind an unfinished essay on Shinran. In her paper, "The Subject of History in Miki Kiyoshi's 'Shinran'," Melissa Anne-Marie Curley argues that Miki understood Shinran as taking the three historical stages of true dharma, counterfeit dharma and final dharma not as successive stages in the degeneration of the dharma but as a dialectical process, in which the age of the final dharma "sublates" the two previous ages. This gives a new meaning to Shinran's realization of himself as a *bonbu* 凡夫, an abjectly ordinary person, for he realizes himself as a historically given subject at the center of history.

Watsuji Tetsurō is the main subject of three papers in this volume and is discussed in several others. Watsuji has not usually been treated as if he were a full member of the Kyoto School. It is true that he spent the latter half of his career at Tokyo University, but he started off in Kyoto under the wing of Nishida. At the invitation of Nishida and Hatano Seiichi, Watsuji was appointed lecturer in ethics at Kyoto Imperial University in 1925. He then left for study in Europe on a three-year scholarship, but returned early because of the death of his father. He resumed teaching at Kyoto Imperial University and in 1931, was appointed professor. In 1934, however, he departed for Tokyo Imperial University to assume a chair in the Faculty of Literature and there he remained until 1949. Watsuji was a prolific writer with a very broad range of interests. His many books run the spectrum from literature (he had a deep interest in Natsume Sōseki and a side interest in the Romantic poets), traditional Japanese culture, Western philosophy (he produced studies of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard), Zen Buddhism (he is credited with reviving modern scholarly interest in Dōgen) and existentialism (his *Fūdo* 風土 [Climate, 1935] was written as a response to Heidegger's *Being and Time*). His intellectual interests clearly overlapped those of the Kyoto School

authors and just as clearly exceeded them as well. In "Transcendence of the State in Watsuji Tetsurō's Ethics," Bernard Bernier argues that although Watsuji explained that the Japanese imperial state was transcendent, the Japanese example was for him a particular instance of a more general claim that the state in general had a sacred and absolute character. David Dilworth, in "Guiding Principles of Interpretation in Watsuji Tetsurō's *History of Japanese Ethical Thought*," argues that Watsuji's ethical system appropriated Western philosophy and transformed it into a "particularistic multiculturalism." Ironically, for Dilworth, Watsuji's premodern version of cultural hermeneutics presaged the postmodern version that we see around us today. Erin McCarthy's paper, "Towards a Transnational Ethics of Care," addresses a fundamental problem within feminist scholarship, particularly in the ethics of care: the very concept of care seems to be inconsistent with the widely accepted Western liberal notion of the self as individual and self-sufficient. Thus she finds in Watsuji's concepts of *ningen* 人間 and *aidagara* 間柄—the human being and betweenness—as both individual and relational, a concept of self that supports the relational orientation essential for an ethics of care.

The Kyoto School has often been described as offering a bridge to the West. Its scholars are steeped in Asian thought and culture, especially in Mahāyāna Buddhism, yet they have also studied with Western philosophers and express themselves in the concepts and theories of Western philosophy. But the Kyoto School is a bridge to Asia as well. The essays by Lam Wing Keung and Xiaofei Tu show that the Chinese philosopher Mou Zongsan (1905–1990), like the Kyoto School philosophers, had seriously studied Western philosophy and had incorporated Western elements into his own philosophical writings. Mou Zongsan is considered a leader in the New Confucian movement that arose after the May 4th Movement of 1919 in China. The movement was influenced by a variety of foreign forces—European philosophy, American liberalism and Marxism among others—but its central mission was to recast and revive the values of Confucianism in the modern century. The New Confucian movement was in some ways historically reacting to the same intellectual forces as the Kyoto School, although China at the time was very different from Japan. The two movements are both engaged in an endeavor that might be called comparative philosophy. In his paper, "Subjectivity,

Rinrigaku and Moral Metaphysics: Watsuji Tetsurō and Mou Zongsan," Lam Wing Keung points out that where many of the Kyoto School philosophers had studied Heidegger and strove to recast a Mahāyāna Buddhist outlook, Mou Zongsan had studied Kant and strove to recast a Confucian outlook. He compares Mou Zongsan with Watsuji Tetsurō and compares their conceptions of subjectivity as applied to their ethical positions. Xiaofei Tu, in "The Comparative Philosophies of Mou Zongsan and Nishitani Keiji," compares Mou Zongsan with Nishitani Keiji and responds to contemporary critiques of the comparative approach, arguing for an understanding of twentieth-century Asian philosophies as necessarily "philosophies of contact."

Studies on the Kyoto School's philosophy of nothingness usually focus on ontological issues and the nature of existence. In her essay, "Hidden Aspects of Temporality: From Nishida to Watsuji," Jacynthe Tremblay focuses on a less researched theme: time. She shows that all the main Kyoto School thinkers—Nishida, Tanabe, and Nishitani, as well as Watsuji and Kuki—grappled with the nature of rectilinear time, the status of the past and the future, and the nature of the "eternal now," the "other" of time. In the end, with the exception of Kuki, they resolve their issues with past, present and future by locating them in the *basho* of the present, ultimately in the eternal now. The very notion of *basho* 場所, or "place," has a spatial connotation which until now has partly obscured its temporal dimension.

We are also pleased to publish two papers from Japanese scholars which we received after the McGill conference; both have been skillfully translated by Robert F. Rhodes. These essays deal with Nishitani's theory of the imagination, a part of Nishitani's philosophy which has not to date been discussed in Western-language scholarship. In "Sensation and Image in Nishitani's Philosophy," Hosoya Masashi explicates Nishitani's theory of sensation as set forth in one of his last essays *Kū to soku* 空と即 [Emptiness and Immediacy, 1982], showing its links with Kant and Hegel on one side and illustrating it with reference to Bashō and Dōgen on the other side. Ono Makoto, in "Nishitani Keiji's Theory of the Imagination," traces it back to Aristotle's notion of *sensus communis*, the fundamental unitary power of mind to sense one single thing despite the fact that each of the senses individually contributes sight alone, sound alone, touch alone, taste alone, odor alone.

For the last several decades of his life, Nishitani Keiji was considered the dean of the Kyoto School philosophers. But when he died in 1990, the mantle passed to Ueda Shizuteru. Little of Ueda's work has been translated into Western languages so he remains a figure largely unknown to Western scholarship. In this volume, Bret Davis, in "Letting Go of God for the Sake of Nothing: Ueda Shizuteru's Non-Mysticism and the Question of Ethics in Zen Buddhism," sets out Ueda's interpretation of Eckhart. In a pattern familiar to readers of Nishitani, this interpretation emphasizes a double negation—a first negation that turns us to an experience of absolute nothingness and a second negation that returns us to direct engagement in the here and now of daily activity.

We would like to acknowledge the support of all the people who made both the conference and the present volume possible. First of all, we very much appreciate the participation of all the presenters who made the conference an unusually friendly and enjoyable meeting of minds and persons. Katherine Narraway led a wonderful team of organizers, including Cindy Bentley, Alnis Dickson and Julian Menezes. In Kyoto, Mizuno Ayumi, a graduate of the philosophy department at Kyoto University, and Mizuno Tomoharu, a doctoral student at Kyoto University working with Professor Fujita Masakatsu, provided many kinds of invaluable assistance. We thank Mr. Brian Nagata and Mr. Yasuo Honjo of the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism) for their continuing support of this and other projects. Several of the papers submitted for this volume were first reviewed by anonymous readers, and we owe a great debt of gratitude to these readers. Inevitably in a volume like this, which works in several languages and rests on so much previous scholarship, there is much detail that needs to be checked and verified. For any mistakes or omissions, the editors take full responsibility.

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Is There a Method to Chance?

Contrasting Kuki Shūzō's Phenomenological Methodology in *The Problem of Contingency* with that of his Contemporaries Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert

Graham Mayeda

Had Kuki Shūzō's (1888–1941) European colleagues and teachers been aware of his book on contingency, they might well have considered it an anachronism. His contemporaries such as Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915) and Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936) sought to place the study of contingency on a firm footing by developing a scientific understanding of the phenomenon. However, in *Gūzensei no mondai* 偶然性の問題 [The Problem of Contingency, 1935],[1] Kuki gives primary place to the metaphysical concepts of necessity and contingency, which had historically been used to prove the existence of God, a metaphysical question that had fallen out of favor with twentieth-century philosophers. Abstruse debates about the contingency of human existence and

1. First printed in Tokyo by Iwanami Shoten; reprinted in *Kuki Shūzō zenshū* 九鬼周造全集 [The Complete Works of Kuki Shūzō], vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981). Translated by Omodaka Hisayuki as *Le problème de la contingence* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1966). Further references will be to the French translation.

its relation to the necessary existence of God had been dismissed since Immanuel Kant as questions of faith about which reason tells us nothing. And yet they return to occupy a primary place in Kuki's text. The purpose of this paper is to explore why Kuki treats contingency as he does, and to explain how this treatment is not an anachronism, but rather an innovation—the result of the application of a new phenomenological methodology to an ancient question.

There are a number of unique aspects to Kuki's study of contingency. The first is the primary place that Kuki gives to contingency in his study. Unlike most of his European contemporaries, he does not seek to derive a concept of contingency from necessity. Instead, after a brief discussion of the relationship between necessity and contingency, he launches directly into a detailed investigation of contingency. The second unique feature of Kuki's study is his application of this study of contingency to ethics.[2] This differs from previous applications, which were primarily epistemological (Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Rickert) or metaphysical (Aquinas, Spinoza, Leibniz). In contrast, Kuki emphasizes the ethical significance of contingency for the responsibility that arises from the chance meeting with another. The third unique feature of Kuki's approach is in the aspect of contingency that he finds most interesting. Of the three types of contingency that he identifies, *viz.* categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive, the most important to him is disjunctive contingency, because it deals with the metaphysical relationship between the phenomenal world in which we live and the absolute. However, as we will see, for Kuki, unlike his contemporaries, all three types of contingency are involved in determining the meaning of ethics. The fourth unique aspect of Kuki's study arises from the distinction between his ethics and those of his Japanese contemporaries. Omodaka Hisayuki identifies Kuki with the philosophy of *bushidō* 武士道, the "way of the warrior," and Friedrich Nietzsche (Kuki 1966, viii–ix). This is in contrast to the identification of Nishida Kitarō with an intellectualist ethics, and the identification of Tanabe Hajime with a voluntarist ethics (Kuki 1966, viii). I will argue that this identification of Kuki's ethics with that of *bushidō* is not correct.

2. On the relationship between ethics and contingency in Kuki's philosophy, see Marra 2004, 14.

Kuki's ethics is not Nietzschean. It does not take Sisyphus as its paragon. Rather, Kuki's ethics is based not on the solitary affirmation of the individual's fate in the face of the impossibility of its realization but on the recognition of the responsibility that the ultimate emptiness of human striving requires us to take for the contingent encounters we have with others.

In order to make clear some of the original features of Kuki's study of contingency, I will develop Kuki's unique concept of ethics. I will do so by comparing and contrasting Kuki's phenomenological methodology with the methodologies of his contemporaries, Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert. Both have written important works on the nature of contingency—works with which Kuki was familiar, and on which he relied in writing *The Problem of Contingency*. A full appreciation of the novelty of Kuki's phenomenological methodology will only be possible when it is contrasted with the scientific and rationalist approach of his Neo-Kantian contemporaries. Undertaking this comparison will help to illustrate how Kuki's phenomenological ethics is most consistent with an ethics of responsibility that is loosely based on Buddhist ideals.[3] However, before launching into the comparative section, let me begin with a brief introduction to Kuki's theory of contingency.

An introduction to kuki's theory of contingency

The goal of Kuki's study of contingency is "to shed light as far as it is possible on the ontological structure of contingency and its metaphysical sense" (Kuki 1966, 5). For Kuki, the question of contingency is primarily a metaphysical question, and it is only an epistemological ques-

3. There are also interesting parallels between Kuki's ethics of responsibility and the phenomenological ethics of Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas calls ethics the "calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other" (Levinas 1961, 43). According to this ethics, when faced with the other in a chance encounter, I am forced to take responsibility for my subjectivity in the face of the strangeness and difference of the other (Levinas 1961, 43; Critchley 1992, 5 and 19).

tion, or more specifically, a question for scientific investigation, to the degree that epistemological questions lead back to metaphysics (Kuki 1966, 5). By describing the problem of contingency as "metaphysical," Kuki means that it deals with the question of nothingness (Kuki 1966, 5–6). In characterizing the problem of contingency as metaphysical, he is referring to metaphysics as Martin Heidegger might have used the term, had the latter not been so intent on characterizing his project as an overturning of traditional metaphysics. In other words, for Kuki, the problem of contingency is a fundamental problem of the nature of human existence.[4] What sets Kuki's study of contingency apart is its refusal to discuss contingency purely in relation to necessity. According to Kuki, while necessity is the domain of identity—A is A (Kuki 1966, 5–6)—contingency is the domain of difference and the encounter between two different people or things—A and B (Kuki 1966, 192). The encounter of A and B, and hence the experience of the difference between them, is possible because of nothingness—i.e., the affirmation of B relies on the possibility of not affirming A (Kuki 1966,192). Our experience of the contingent encounter of something other than me, and the surprise that accompanies this experience, is a fundamental human experience, because it makes us aware of the possibility of nothingness—the possibility of non-being that underlies being. Contingency is not simply to be understood in contrast to necessity, as many of Kuki's contemporaries believed; rather, our experience of contingency is fundamental to human existence, because it leads us to uncover something essential about this existence and how we should lead our lives.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, although it is not obvious at the outset, by the end of *The Problem of Contingency*, Kuki is interested in exposing the ethical meaning of contingency. In the section on disjunctive contingency, Kuki writes at length about the relationship between contingency and destiny, and he gives this discussion ethical significance. Contingency, when it manifests itself as blind destiny, by which I imagine Kuki is referring to a surprising and unforeseen event that in fact manifests one's hitherto unknown destiny, is closely related to neces-

4. Marra also makes the link between Kuki and Heidegger (Marra 2004, 18).

sity (KUKI 1966, 168–9). One thinks that one has possibilities in front of one—that one has free will—and yet one finds oneself, as Schelling points out, not in the midst of possibilities, but confronted with the real (KUKI 1966, 171). On this understanding, the contingent has ethical meaning, because it brings home to us the apparent inevitability of our fate, and brings into question how we should live when faced with this fate. Contingency, to the degree that it manifests our fate, leads to an existentialist ethics that questions how we should live our lives given the certainty of death.

However, existentialist ethics, which exhorts us to live with the consciousness of our finitude and the creative power of human projection, is not the end of Kuki's ethical thought. Kuki also discusses ethics at the very end of *The Problem of Contingency* where he refers to the doctrine of the Pure Land: "If we are able to discover the desire and the possibility of salvation of the Buddha, then nothing happens in vain" (KUKI 1966, 259). He explains this passage by saying that the "infinitesimal possibility that approaches the impossible becomes reality in contingency, and this contingency again produces a new contingency, which develops to the point of necessity: and this is the salvation of man through his desire for the salvation of Buddha as destiny" (KUKI 1966, 195–6). What Kuki appears to mean is that it is the slim possibility of the impossible—our salvation through the Buddha—that is the source of redemption for humans. Each contingent moment which contains within it the sudden possibility of nothingness—our death—is also a moment in which we can be redeemed as the Buddha was and escape this contingent existence. Unlike the existentialist ethic, which requires us to encounter our own finitude alone, the possibility of Buddhist redemption arises in the encounter between oneself and another. While the existentialist ethic considers the contingent event as giving rise to our awareness of the unavoidability of death and annihilation,[5] in Kuki's ethics, the contingent encounter with another opens up the contingent possibility of salvation. To use the language of Kuki, through the surprise encounter

5. See Heidegger's discussion of *das Unheimliche* (HEIDEGGER 1996, 188–90).

with another, we "interiorize" the possibility of redemption, which can become our destiny (Kuki 1966, 195).

Having briefly discussed the outlines of Kuki's theory of contingency, I turn now to a more detailed discussion of his phenomenological methodology and the comparison of this methodology with that of contemporary studies of contingency.

The relationship of kuki's concept of contingency to those of his contemporaries

To understand the novelty and innovation that characterizes Kuki's study of contingency, one must first set it in the context of contemporary treatments of the issue. I have chosen to contrast Kuki's views with those of two neo-Kantians of the Baden School—Wilhelm Windelband and his student, Heinrich Rickert. There are two reasons for picking these two contemporaries. First, they are mentioned in *The Problem of Contingency* and Kuki divides contingency into roughly the same categories as they do. Second, both Windelband and Rickert employ a scientific methodology in their study of contingency that Kuki rejects and criticizes. Thus the contrast between the approaches of Windelband, Rickert and Kuki will make clear the unique aspects of Kuki's theory.

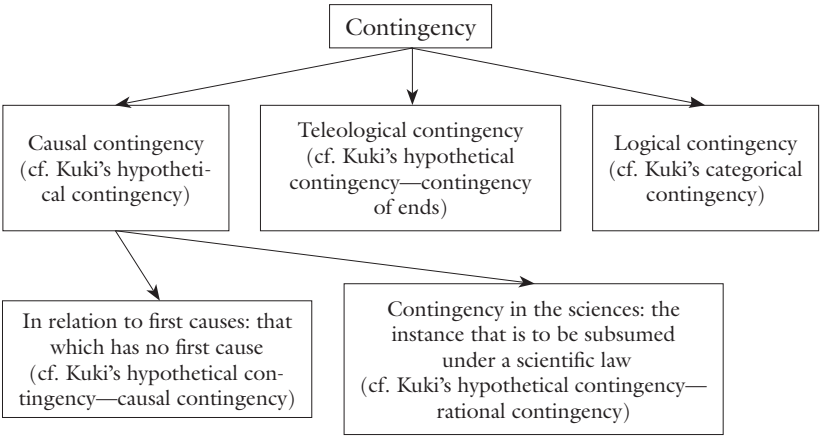
Wilhelm Windelband

The goal of Wilhelm Windelband's theory of contingency is to isolate a scientific concept of contingency, which he identifies as the relationship between a general concept and its specific instance. All other forms of contingency, Windelband argues, are unscientific, because they are constructed on the basis of a false analogy with logical contingency (categorical contingency, in Kuki's scheme, which is the type of contingency that deals with the non-essential or accidental characteristics of a thing; Mayeda 2006, 182). Philosophers who are guilty of such a false analogy mistakenly modeled the relationship between God and humans on the relationship between concept and specific instance of that concept. They thought that God, like a concept, was characterized by all neces-

sary characteristics, while human existence, like an instance of a concept, is replete with inessential, accidental characteristics. These philosophers analogized between logical contingency and the human-divine relationship in order to extend human knowledge to the realm of God, and to understand human values in relation to God's ends. According to Windelband, this is not the correct way to understand contingency. The world is a world of purely contingent events. These events can only be understood in a general way through scientific concepts. But these concepts necessarily abstract from everyday life, and so cannot capture the essence of human existence. Another method is thus necessary to capture the essence of everyday contingent events.

In *Die Lehren vom Zufall* [Theories of Contingency, 1870], Windelband considers three types of contingency: causal contingency (*das causal Zufällige*), purposive contingency (*das teleologisch Zuffällige*), and logical contingency (*das logisch Zufällige*) (WINDELBAND 1870, 70). As we will see, causal contingency is further divided into two types: first, there is contingency as it relates to first causes (*Ursachen*), and second, contingency as it relates to scientific laws (*Gesetze*) (WINDELBAND 1870, 5–26, 26–52).

Windelband begins his investigation of these various types of contingency by exploring the widely-held view that contingency is the nega-



tion of necessity, an approach which, in contrast to that of Kuki, derives the meaning of contingency from that of necessity (Windelband 1870, 5). Accordingly, Windelband relates each of the different types of contingency to a particular type of necessity. However, as we will see, for Windelband the world is simply a world of pure contingency (Windelband 1870, 78). The necessity with which this contingency is contrasted does not truly exist in the causal or teleological senses. It only exists in the logical sense, and all metaphysical attempts to contrast contingency with necessity are false applications of the logical relation between the general concept and the individual instance to causal and teleological concepts.

By examining various concepts of contingency and their relationship to necessity, Windelband comes to the conclusion that contingency is not truly a causal term (Windelband 1870, 69). He examines two possible causal conceptions of contingency and rejects both. First, Windelband rejects the view that the contingent is that which has no cause (*der Ursachslose*) (Windelband 1870, 26). He rejects this first on the ground that it seems contradictory. If something came about by chance in the sense that it is not the result of any physical cause, then it appears that it has a cause, *viz.* chance (Windelband 1870, 6). Second, he rejects the premodern identification of that which is without cause with the first mover—God. The identification of contingency with pure being—that which is not itself determined by anything and which does not work by means of the principles of physical causality—places the contingent outside of the realm of human knowledge, which, as Kant demonstrated, is dependent on the phenomenal world in which causes act. The purely contingent as the fullness of being without cause cannot be known, and so cannot be the basis for objective knowledge of contingency (Windelband 1870, 19).

Windelband also rejects a second approach to understanding contingency as a causal concept, *viz.* the scientific approach. Science views the relationship between the contingent and the necessary as the relation between the instance and the necessary law. It seeks to explain particular instances in terms of these laws. He gives two examples of this sort of contingency. The first is the coincidence of two events that are not causally connected, and whose coincidence is thus "contingent" (Win-

DELBAND 1870, 52). The second is the actual coincidence as a single contingent event (WINDELBAND 1870, 52). Science attempts to find a single causal law that would explain how what appears to be contingent is in fact the necessary consequence of a scientific law (WINDELBAND 1870, 53). However, science fails in this regard: it is unable to account for a particular contingent event. At best, scientific explanations can use statistics to explain the likelihood of such an event, but statistics cannot describe any causal relationship (WINDELBAND 1870, 49). And even if science can reflect on the laws of nature that must have been in play to bring about a particular event, science is in no way able to know all of the complex conditions that led by means of these rules to the emergence of a particular event (WINDELBAND 1870, 52).[6] From a scientific viewpoint then, a contingent event is just an event that we have insufficient knowledge to explain (WINDELBAND 1870, 68).

Having rejected definitions of contingency that relate to causal necessity in which cause is understood as first cause (*Ursache*) or scientific law (*Gesetz*), Windelband next turns to teleological conceptions of contingency that contrast the contingent with necessary goals (*Zweck*) (WINDELBAND 1870, 54). This means defining contingency as the opposite of a necessary goal. This can be understood in two ways. The contingent can either be that which is without goal or purpose within human activity, or it can be that which interrupts human goals or purposes (WINDELBAND 1870, 56). In the former sense, contingency is that which inserts itself into human action without any intention on the part of humans, thereby interrupting the fulfillment of human intention (WINDELBAND 1870, 57). Examples of this are well known in theatre, where the intentions of one character result in a fully unintentional consequence as a result of the character's actions being interrupted by unexpected and unintentional events (WINDELBAND 1870, 57). Sophocles' *Oedipus* is a

6. Guy Oakes characterizes Windelband's conclusion on the scientific attempt to understand particular events as follows: "The occurrence of individual events cannot be explained by general laws. Put another way, there is no set of nomological statements, regardless of how exhaustive and precise, from which any description of an individual event can be deduced. This is why our theoretical interest in individual phenomena cannot be satisfied by natural science" (OAKES 1986, XIII).

good example of this.[7] In the latter sense of an interruption of a human goal or purpose, contingency is that which appears as the unintended consequence of intentional human action. For instance, an alchemist intends to discover primary substance, but succeeds in creating gunpowder (Windelband 1870, 58). Here again, contingency is conceived as that which interrupts the realm of human purpose. It is the interference of the natural world, which does not heel to human purpose, in the domain of human means and ends (Windelband 1870, 66–7).

According to Windelband, all metaphysical attempts to understand contingency—and in "metaphysical" he includes the scientific concept of the scientific law, the premodern concept of first cause, and the goal-oriented final cause—have failed to characterize contingency as anything other than a lack of knowledge (Windelband 1870, 58). The premodern concept of contingency as the uncaused cannot be scientific, because the uncaused is beyond the ken of humans, who are limited to perceptions of the phenomenal world. The scientific concept of contingency sees contingency as the result of an inability to fully explain an individual event by means of scientific laws because of insufficient knowledge about all the causal factors involved. Finally, contingency in goal-oriented human action is the intervention of other human action or the natural world in ways that unexpectedly interrupt the achievement of a human goal. In all cases, contingency from a metaphysical point of view is simply the inability to explain a particular occurrence because of a lack of sufficient knowledge about the totality of circumstances that determine it (Windelband 1870, 68).

Having rejected these metaphysical concepts of contingency, Windelband concludes that contingency only makes sense within the realm of logic. The relationship between contingency and necessity is only possible as the relationship between a specific instance and a general concept (Windelband 1870, 69). If a concept requires that a thing falling under that concept have a certain quality, then that quality is necessary. All other qualities are contingent or, to use scholastic terminology, accidents. In the world of cause and effect, if the concept of one state of

7. Oedipus kills his wife's brother, Creon, only to discover that Creon is his brother, and Creon's wife, Jocasta, his mother.

affairs does not necessitate the arising of another, then the relationship of the second state of affairs to the concept of the first state of affairs is contingent (WINDELBAND 1870, 71–2). For instance, a particular event such as a stone falling on the head of a man can only be considered contingent in relation to the general concept of a stone falling. There is nothing in the concept of a stone falling that necessitates it hitting a man (WINDELBAND 1870, 72). The stone hitting a man is a purely contingent event from the point of view of the general concept, although from a causal point of view, the fact that the falling stone hit the man was the necessary causal consequence of a whole host of prior events, which include the stone coming loose from a mountain at a certain time in a certain place when a man was walking by at a certain time and in a certain place, and so on.

In Windelband's view, previous attempts to understand the nature of contingency and its relation to necessity have failed because they confuse logical contingency with other forms of contingency. One such confusion arises when we ascribe causal significance to the general concept, thereby confusing logical and causal contingency. For instance, many philosophers considered the general concept to be absolutely valid independent of any particular conditions. Consequently, they reasoned that the existence of the general concept must be absolutely necessary, not contingent on particular prior conditions. But this was a mistake, according to Windelband. The existence of the general concept is not absolutely necessary. To think it is confuses logical with causal necessity by imagining that what is logically necessary is also causally necessary. The correct view, as was later pointed out, is that the existence of the general concept is not causally necessary, but contingent—its existence depends on the existence of its particular instances. For example, there is no concept of a chair independent of particular chairs. However, a failure to grasp the relationship between a concept and its instances resulted in the confusion of logical with causal necessity, and in turn those who succumbed to this confusion falsely understood the contingent in relation to causal necessity, rather than in relation to logical necessity (WINDELBAND 1870, 73).

In a similar fashion, logical contingency became confused with teleological contingency. Philosophers incorrectly surmised that the relation-

ship between God's purpose and human purposes was analogous to the relationship between a general concept and its instances. The concept defines the necessary qualities of a thing, while the instance has many accidental qualities. By analogy, they reasoned, God's purposes, because they are necessary, must be inevitable—they are fated to come about. However, human goals, like specific instances, lack this quality of necessity. They are not assured of being realized, unlike God's plans (Windelband 1870, 75). However, this understanding of the relationship between divine and human purpose unjustifiably imposes the relation between concept and instance on the relation between the divine and the mundane.

Applied to ethics, this confusion led to the view that only God has true worth, since individual action is never entirely free of the contingent worldly circumstances in which humans act. But this too is a carryover of the relationship between the general concept and the individual instance. Rather than recognizing that a general concept is merely an abstraction from the existence of particular exemplars, those who committed this error imagined that the general concept exists as God, who alone understands the absolute goal of all existence. Those who mistook logical for teleological contingency thus considered that the lack of identity between God and His creation irredeemably contaminated the goal-oriented ethical behavior of this creation. They longed to fulfill God's purpose, rather than realizing human purposes. They wished to lead divine rather than ethical human lives. In Windelband's words, they thus longed for fruit while picking cherries (Windelband 1870, 77).

In conclusion, for Windelband, the history of human philosophy is an attempt to battle against the contingency that we encounter in the world. Science, religion, ethics and art attempt to understand the complexity of the human world and its many contingent events by constructing an ideal world that functions in accordance with necessary rules, and which can therefore be understood. However, all previous attempts to contrast the contingency of everyday life with the necessity of this ideal world are frustrated. Contingency only exists in relation to necessity in a logical sense, and all other attempts to define it in relation to necessity are wrongheaded, since they seek to carry over logical contingency to other domains.

What does Kuki adopt from Windelband? Primarily, he adopts the idea that the truly contingent is the isolated event—the particular state of affairs. For Windelband, the only thing that is truly contingent is an actual act or state of affairs. And what is contingent about this act or state of affairs is that it is not contained within the concept of that act or state, but rather occurs in circumstances that are entirely accidental from the logical point of view. Kuki takes this as his starting point. For him, the true significance of contingency arises from the contingent meeting between two people. As he points out, "the radical meaning of contingency is, in principle, the possibility of another, rather than the same, which is the perspective of necessity" (KUKI 1966, 192).

However, Kuki cannot wholly adopt Windelband's approach. While Windelband might be right that we cannot understand the world from God's perspective, this does not leave only a scientific approach as the alternative. Thus for Kuki, the phenomenon of contingency cannot be reduced to logical contingency. The contingent is manifest in our life as more than simple logical contingency. Where has Windelband gone wrong, according to Kuki? He has overlooked the fact that contingency is not just a scientific phenomenon—it is also an experiential one. The contingent is not simply the limit of human knowledge. We can know things about this limit because we experience it every day—when, for instance, we are surprised by a chance event or encounter. Windelband has overlooked the ecstatic dimensions to human experience that give us glimpses of the limits of human knowledge. Moreover, this experience of the limits of conceptual knowledge can tell us something about the nature of human experience itself. Thus a further contribution of Windelband's approach to Kuki's theory of contingency is that it demonstrates the failure of a scientific approach, and underlines the importance of employing a phenomenological methodology to understand the role of contingency in our experience.

It is because of his adoption of a phenomenological approach that Kuki seems to proceed in the opposite direction from Windelband. Windelband begins with metaphysical concepts and demonstrates that these reduce to a false application of a logical concept to metaphysics. In contrast, Kuki begins with logical and epistemological concepts and ends

up explaining their metaphysical significance. We see here the profound difference in the application of Kuki and Windelband's methodologies.

Heinrich Rickert

Heinrich Rickert developed the ideas of his teacher, Windelband, with the goal of grounding history as a science. He extends Windelband's work in a direction that brings him closer to Kuki's purpose and method of studying contingency, and yet still differs from Kuki due to his rationalist approach. Rickert chooses an object of study that is much closer to that chosen by Kuki. Kuki is interested in concrete encounters between individuals; history, Rickert's object of study, is precisely the study of particular historical events and encounters. As well, Kuki sees the encounter as having ethical significance. Similarly, Rickert sees history as the study of values. Natural scientific study requires the removal of all values from the object of study. However, history is precisely about the selection of historically significant events and individuals. It is thus a value-laden form of investigation. However, Rickert and Kuki part company when it comes to method of inquiry. While Rickert seeks to understand the relationship between a particular historical event and cultural values from a scientific point of view—i.e., from a purely conceptual point of view in which concepts are applied to individual instances—Kuki proceeds phenomenologically by beginning from the actual concrete encounter itself.

In *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung* [The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science, 1921], Rickert studies the limits of natural scientific methodology and explains why it is unsuitable for application to the study of history. The method of the natural sciences involves developing concepts by abstracting from particular events. However, history is the study of particular, concrete events. Thus if history aspires to be a science, it cannot use the same method of abstraction, since this would divorce it from its object of study. In order to develop such a scientific historical methodology, Rickert articulates a theory of historical concept-formation that takes as its starting point the object of historical study, *viz.* particular historically significant individuals, or particular historically significant events. Rickert develops this

methodology by demonstrating the limits of natural scientific inquiry: "we undertake an investigation of the *limits of natural science* in order to achieve clarity concerning the nature and the philosophical significance of the historical sciences" (RICKERT 1986, 17). The purpose of Rickert's inquiry is not to undermine the scientific way of viewing the world, but rather to question whether it can be used as a model for scientific inquiry in all areas of study (RICKERT 1986, 17–18).

According to Rickert, science takes nature as its object of study, while history makes culture its object (RICKERT 1986, 36). In creating its concepts, science distances itself from specific natural phenomena. According to Rickert, the purpose of natural science is "to establish an opposition between the content of *concepts* and the *reality* of sense perception that is as rigorous as possible" (RICKERT 1986, 37). This is because the more general natural scientific concepts become, the less of the individual phenomenon they contain. The result of this is that although nature is science's object of study, it never grasps the concrete reality of everyday life.[8] Rickert thus concludes that what limits the process of concept formation in the natural sciences are the actual, concrete experiences of life:

> *What fixes the limits of natural scientific concept formation, and which the natural sciences can never surmount, is nothing but unique empirical reality itself,* just as we directly experience it in sense perception, in its *concrete actuality* and *individuality*. (RICKERT 1986, 40, emphasis in original)

Of course, this seems paradoxical, because it appears as if science is never able to describe its object (RICKERT 1986, 40). However, Rickert explains that the fault is not with the sciences, but with the correspondence theory of truth. We may think that scientific concepts are determined to be true to the degree that they correspond to actual, observed phenomena, but in fact, the purpose of scientific concept formation is to "transform" the content of reality in a "generally valid fashion and

8. "The more completely we develop our natural scientific theories and representations, the further we depart from reality as unique, perceptual, and individual—in other words, from the real as such" (RICKERT 1986, 39).

on the basis of specific perspectives" (Rickert 1986, 46). "Nature," the object of science, is not concrete reality, but rather reality depicted with reference to the general (Rickert 1986, 54). Science is thus one-sided, because it deals with the formation of concepts that are universal and essential, and which do not make reference to a specific space and time.[9] Rickert explains that if we are interested in reality at a specific point in time, as is the case with history, natural scientific concepts will not help us:

> This does not mean that a representation of unique and distinctive objects by means of natural science is impossible, nor does it diminish the significance of representation in natural science. On the contrary, it only clarifies its definitive character and, of course, its one-sidedness as well. This point should make the following explicit: Regardless of its significance for knowledge of nature, a science concerned with whatever has no spatiotemporal reference but is generally—and therefore universally and invariably—valid can have nothing to say about what exists at a specific point in space and time, and what really and uniquely holds true here or there, now or then. (Rickert 1986, 46–7)

To fully understand spatial and temporal reality, one must look to history. The methodology of history cannot be the same as that of science if it wishes to access concrete phenomena. But the challenge is that if history has a rational method, it may fail to capture the irrationality of reality (Rickert 1986, 53). Rickert goes on to contrast history with science in the following way:

> When reality is to be comprehended in its individuality and distinctiveness, the intention of bringing it under general concepts or establishing laws of the historical—laws that, as we know, are necessarily general concepts—is simply a *logical absurdity*. Like all the concepts of natural science, nomological concepts of this sort would only result in what is no longer unique and individual. Thus the historical sciences would fail to realize their purpose—knowledge of reality in its individuality—all the more certainly the more successful they became

9. For Kuki's discussion of the difference between science and history, see Kuki 1966, 103–5.

> in discovering the laws of the real material whose "history" we want to know. (RICKERT 1986, 56)

What is the historical equivalent of the process of scientific concept formation? Historical inquiry, Rickert says, is about the relationship of values to objects. However, it is not the study of particular value judgments (RICKERT 1986, 88). Rather, it deals with values that are valid for everyone (RICKERT 1986, 89). For instance, Goethe's status as an individual is valued by everyone, but this is not the case for historically insignificant figures (RICKERT 1986, 89). The general value is not, however, general in the sense of a concept, which is an abstraction of the essence from a series of particulars. Historical investigation does not aim at creating generalized values. Rather, history as a scientific inquiry must explain the process of assigning value to a particular event or person. But what does it mean to relate a value to a thing theoretically, as opposed to studying specific valuations? A specific valuation involves a specific judgment about whether a historical event or person was good or bad. At this level, historians could never agree. But a theoretical valuation recognizes that, whether historians consider him good or bad, a particular person is of historical significance. In Rickert's words:

> …positive or negative valuation is in principle different from the theoretical relation of objects to values. Valuation is always positive or negative, and the value judgment declares that its object is either good or bad. The purely theoretical relation to values, on the other hand, stands aloof from such an alternative. If an object is essential to this relation, that does not mean we have to consider the character of the object good or bad. (RICKERT 1986, 93)

This does not mean that theoretical value is the actual agreement of all individuals as to the significance of a specific person. Rather, as I mentioned, theoretical value is abstracted from any concrete valuations.

As we have discovered, history according to Rickert is the study of particular events or particular individuals. It differs from science, which abstracts from these particulars (RICKERT 1986, 111). These particulars need not be individual people or points in time. Every individual historical figure is part of a historical nexus—for instance, the Renaissance or the Baroque. The relationship between the individual and this nexus

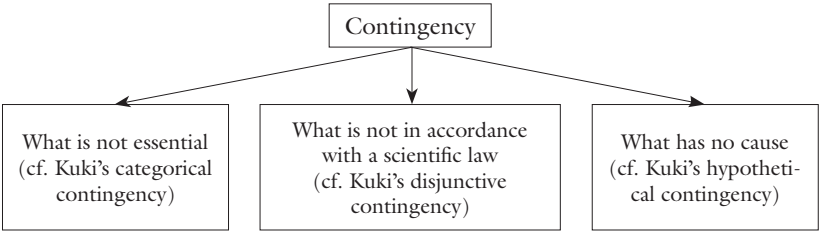
is not that of instance to concept, but rather of individual to a group (Rickert 1986, 107–11). And the group of which the individual is the part—the Renaissance—is itself an individual, since it is part of a culture, which is itself part of human history as a whole. Thus even if it studies a historical period, history as science is about individuals, not instances of abstract concepts (Rickert 1986, 107–11). As Rickert states, "historical science, even when it links its objects to the 'most general'—that is, most comprehensive—cosmic nexuses, still does not cease to be a science of the individual, the unique, and the specific" (Rickert 1986, 111). This contrasts with the sciences, for which the nexus is not a group, but a system of general concepts (Rickert 1921, 278).[10] And whereas a scientific nexus becomes more "empty" the more general it becomes, since concepts are devoid of inessential characteristics of the instances they describe, in contrast a historical nexus becomes more "full" in the sense of "richer in content," since it encompasses, at its most general, the whole of human history (Rickert 1921, 281).

Because history deals with particular events, its concept of "causation" is different from that used in the sciences (Rickert 1921, 284–5). History deals with individual material causal chains—e.g., the circumstances that lead to Wilhelm IV giving up the throne (Rickert 1921, 285). Scientific causation, by contrast, deals with conceptual causation, because it explains why a particular effect is the necessary result of a causal law, which is purely conceptual. To put this differently, science deals with causally determined events, while history deals with the actions of free individuals (Rickert 1921, 286). But the different conceptions of causation used in the natural and historical sciences have led some to say that if science deals with free individuals rather than causal laws, it must be a science of contingency, which is impossible (Rickert 1921, 286).

In order to demonstrate that this is not an objection to the possibility of historical science, Rickert identifies the various categories of contingency and necessity. Contingency can have three meanings: first, something can be contingent if it does not act in accordance with a necessary

10. Oakes does not translate all of Rickert's text. References to the 1921 text are thus references to portions not translated by Oakes. Where translations are provided, they are my own.

law. Second, the contingent can be that which has no cause. Finally, something is contingent if it is not part of the essence of a thing (RICKERT 1921, 286). Again, as we have seen with Windelband, contingency is defined in relation to necessity, rather than being investigated as a phenomenon in itself.



Rickert points out that if history deals with contingency in any of these senses, there is nothing that prevents it from being a scientific study. If contingency is understood as that which does not fall within a causal law, then everything that occurs in the real world is purely contingent. For example, it is pure chance that it is Saturn and not the Earth that has rings (RICKERT 1921, 286). There is no scientific law that determined this. Thus the natural sciences and the historical sciences are on the same footing—both study a purely contingent world. If contingency is understood as that which has no cause, then again, nothing in the world is contingent, because every state of affairs is caused by a previous one (RICKERT 1921, 286), and neither the natural sciences nor the historical sciences is at an advantage. Finally, if necessity is that which is essential and contingency the inessential, then history is once again just as scientific as the natural sciences. There is a historical principle by means of which we determine what is essential for a historical inquiry, just as there is a scientific principle by means of which the essential is abstracted from particular instances (RICKERT 1921, 287).

Rickert thus demonstrates that the view that history deals with contingency rather than necessity is simply due to false usage of the word "cause." Proponents of this view argue that scientific laws such as the law of gravity are the "cause" of an object falling in a purely conceptual sense (RICKERT 1921, 290). They go on to say that there are no general histor-

ical laws by means of which we can explain why some contingent events take place rather than others. Thus history cannot be a science in the same sense as the natural sciences. However, according to Rickert, this is a misuse of the term "cause." Something can be the necessary result of a causal law from a conceptual point of view. But in the real world, scientific concepts have no causal efficacy. Thus to say that science deals with necessary events, while history deals with contingent events, is a terminological mistake. Science deals with events that are *conceptually* necessary, but it does not deal with events that are *materially* necessary. In contrast, history deals with what is *materially* necessary—it tries to explain why a particular series of events came about and why they have historical significance (Rickert 1921, 290).

Having examined the way in which Rickert contrasts the scientific with the historical, we learn that history, insofar as it is the study of events that occur at a particular time and place, is in fact the study of contingency. It is the study of the concrete world, the unfolding of which can be explained as necessary by means of natural scientific rules, and historically, as the necessary result of concrete antecedent causes, which, however, are not conceptually necessary in the scientific sense.

Furthermore, Rickert has explained that this study of contingency is a study of values. It thus has a necessarily ethical character, and this links Rickert's study quite closely to Kuki's project of articulating the ethical significance of contingency. However, as we will see, where Rickert and Kuki differ fundamentally is in the methodology they adopt. For Kuki, Rickert's attempt to make a science of the study of the contingent by establishing a logical and formal concept of history fails to capture the meaning of contingency in our lives—i.e., it does not explain how it is that we actually experience contingency. Instead, Rickert has reduced contingency to a scientific category—that which occurs at a specific place and time.

Kuki's theory of contingency

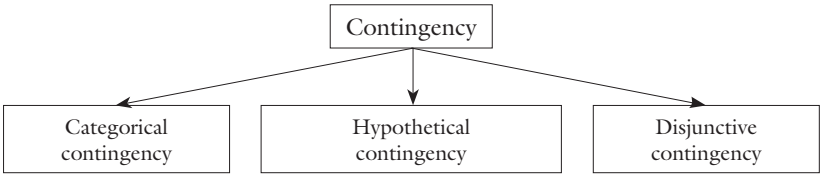
Kuki's study of contingency both takes its cue from the studies of his contemporaries and differs in surprising and fascinating ways.

Kuki considers a particular event—the crossing of two causal paths or the meeting of two individuals—as the true locus of contingency. This is similar to the view of Windelband. Recall that for him, the concrete world is a world of purely contingent events that lie outside of the realm of a scientific concept of contingency. However, because he is seeking a scientific concept of contingency, rather than investigating the truly contingent, Windelband is forced to investigate the contingency of a particular event in relation to its general concept, since only this relation is capable of being studied rationally—i.e., scientifically.

For Rickert too, history deals with contingency, because it deals not with concepts but with particular events that are ascribed historical importance. Where Kuki differs from his contemporaries is in his goal and his methodology. Unlike Windelband and Rickert, Kuki is not interested in achieving a scientific understanding of contingency. Windelband sought a concept of contingency that was open to rational explanation. Metaphysical concepts of contingency led back to an unknowable God. Science was unable to completely explain the contingent event because it is impossible to know all of the circumstances in which a particular event transpires, and which thus act on it in order to bring it about. Rickert set out to examine the limits of scientific knowledge. He found that the natural sciences were, for the reasons given by Windelband, unable to be a science of the actual nature of our experience. Only history could be such a science, and it was his goal to develop a concept of history as the science of the particular, and to see it as the theoretical study of the relationship of objects to values (Rickert 1986, 92).

In contrast, Kuki's goal is not to set out a science of contingency or establish a concept of contingency amenable to scientific understanding. As such, his methodology is not scientific in the neo-Kantian sense, but rather phenomenological, and his goal is not to understand contingency conceptually, but rather phenomenologically as the condition for the possibility of ethical obligation.

In *The Problem of Contingency*, Kuki begins his study with categorical contingency (the relationship between a concept and an exemplar). He then progresses to hypothetical contingency (the relationship between experience and reason), and ends with disjunctive contingency (the relationship between being and non-being).



Kuki characterizes the various stages of this progression as follows:

> In sum, the fundamental meaning of categorical contingency is individuality and individual phenomenality; the fundamental meaning of hypothetical contingency is as the encounter of one series and another; the fundamental meaning of disjunctive contingency is to be a possible nothingness. (Kuki 1966, 191)

The progression begins with epistemological conceptions, then moves on to existential conceptions, and ends finally with a metaphysical conception of contingency. Interestingly, it is the reverse of the progression that Windelband uses. This is likely due to the scientific methodology that Windelband employs. In his search for a scientific concept of contingency, Windelband begins with metaphysical conceptions of contingency, which he rejects in an effort to articulate a purely logical and hence scientific conception. In contrast, Kuki's phenomenological methodology leads us to uncover the conditions for the possibility of our experience by examining the existential structures of this experience. Kuki thus progresses from the fact of individuality pointed to by categorical experience to the impossibility of using reason to understand the individual, finally ending in the metaphysical structures of this understanding, which reveal the nothingness that is the possibility of the individual's existence. This interpretation is justified by the gloss that Kuki gives on his characterization of the progression of his study:

> The contingent, because it is individual and an individual phenomenon, possesses contingent characteristics in relation to the general concept; because it is the encounter of an independent series, it finds itself outside of the necessary relation of the conclusion to reason; and because it is a possible nothingness, it is a setting-aside of the necessity represented by the totality of all possibilities. (Kuki 1966, 191–2)

What is interesting about Kuki's theory of contingency is that, while he uses categories substantially similar to those of the neo-Kantians, unlike in both Windelband and Rickert's typologies, Kuki's three types of contingency are not completely separate. Rather, they are all moments of our experience—conditions for the possibility of the phenomenon of contingency:

> These three meanings are absolutely inseparable, and they harmonize in a single whole. The fundamental meaning of *individuality and individual phenomenality* is the fact of the *encounter of one series with another*, and the possibility of there being no encounter which accompanies the profound meaning of the encounter and is contained in it is *possible nothingness*. (KUKI 1966, 192, emphasis in original)

Each of the three types of contingency is a progressive unfolding of the meaning of the phenomenon of contingency. Interestingly, unlike either Rickert or Windelband, Kuki does not simply focus on chance events, but on the crossing of two causal series, or more concretely, the meeting of two people. And the phenomenological meaning of this encounter is derived from disjunctive contingency—the possibility that the encounter could have not occurred. As Kuki explains:

> The origin of individuality leads back to the dualist position of the other face-to-face with the same. The encounter is nothing other than the encounter of two independent principles. The possibility of nothingness, as if founded on the choice of one or the other, is the condition for the possibility of this duality. (KUKI 1966, 192)

Kuki's study of contingency leads him to unfold the meaning of the contingent face-to-face meeting with another. It is for this reason that contingency has a profoundly ethical significance for Kuki.[11]

In terms of methodology, Kuki speaks little in *The Problem of Contingency* about the phenomenological methodology that he employs. In the introduction to the text, Kuki contrasts a natural scientific investigation with a metaphysical investigation. The former, he says, investigates particular regions of being, or in Kuki's words, "fragments of being," since

11. On the importance of the face-to-face for ethics, see LEVINAS 1961, 50–1.

it does not take into account the relationship between being and non-being (Kuki 1966, 3). According to Kuki, a study of contingency cannot proceed unless we investigate it in terms of its relationship to non-being. This somewhat obscure comment can, I think, be best understood if we read it in light of a passage from Lev Shestov quoted by Kuki. The passage is used to admonish us to be the kind of people "who do not want to give up the hope of discovering in the world something other than statistics and necessity" (Shestov 1926, xv; quoted in Kuki 1966, 5). This passage seems to indicate that in order to understand contingency, we must investigate it from the point of view of the conditions for the possibility of this understanding, and this means investigating it from the point of view of the hopes and expectations that animate human existence. It is for this reason that Kuki advocates uncovering the ontological structures of contingency (Kuki 1966, 5).

In order to discover what the process of uncovering the ontological structures of contingency involves, one can look to the similarities between Kuki's text on contingency and his most famous work, *Iki no kōzō*「いき」の構造 [The Structure of *Iki*, 1981]. Both the latter work and *The Problem of Contingency* share the fact that they take a concept—in the first case, the aesthetic term *iki*, and in the second case, contingency—and create a complicated system of classification for both. In the case of *iki*, Kuki elucidates the intensional structures of *iki* (its structures as a phenomenon of consciousness) in order to develop its meaning as a system of Japanese taste (Mayeda 2006, 140). In the case of contingency, he again uses this technique, exposing the structures of contingency as a phenomenon of consciousness, and then using these to point to the meaning of contingency as an ethical experience.

Kuki begins with concrete experiences, providing examples of contingency as it occurs in our daily life. It is for this reason that he discusses concrete phenomena such as the rarity of the four-leaf clover, the tile that fortuitously falls from a roof, and the contingent relationship between two people's names due to their being written with the same number of brush strokes. The technique is similar to that used in *The Structure of Iki*, in which Kuki lists endless concrete expressions of *iki*. He then turns to the intensional structures of these everyday phenomena. These are the manifestations of contingency as "phenomena of consciousness." He

brackets the everyday assumptions associated with these experiences—that is, he performs a sort of epoché (MAYEDA 2006, 141–2)—which allows him to expose the conditions for the possibility of these experiences of contingency, namely: individuality, the encounter of one series with another, and the possibility of nothingness. Finally, he turns to the "extensional" structures of contingency by giving contingency as a *system* its metaphysical meaning. The last step involves demonstrating the unity of the three main types of contingency—categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive—and explaining how, by means of its intensional structures, the everyday experience of contingency points outside of the individual's everyday existence to the metaphysical, ecstatic dimensions of this existence, which have ethical significance, and call us to take responsibility for our encounters with others.

We thus see that Kuki's methodology is equally as rigorous as the scientific methodologies employed by his contemporaries Windelband and Rickert. And yet its goal of uncovering the meaning of contingency in our lives is fundamentally different from the goal of achieving a rational understanding of contingency as a science. Having discussed the nature of Kuki's methodology, I turn in the last section to a short overview of the ethical consequences of Kuki's study of contingency.

KUKI'S ETHICS

Although a full investigation of the nature of Kuki's ethical thought is not possible in this essay, a few brief words about the results of Kuki's application of his phenomenological methodology are appropriate. There are two possible interpretations of the ethics that Kuki sets out in *The Problem of Contingency*. Omodaka Hisayuki identifies Kuki's ethics with that of *bushidō*, which he likens to the Nietzschean *amor fati*. Nitobe Inazō describes the ethics of *bushidō* as providing "a sense of calm trust in Fate, a quiet submission to the inevitable, that stoic composure in sight of danger or calamity, that disdain of life and friendliness with death" (NITOBE 2005, 8). If we accept Omodaka's characterization of Kuki's ethics, then the role of the contingent encounter is to

initiate and reaffirm the fulfillment of the individual's fate—i.e., to set into motion once more the fruitless wheel of human existence.

I do not think that this description of the ethics of *bushidō* corresponds with Kuki's understanding of ethics and its relationship to contingency. Admittedly, both *bushidō* and Kuki's ethics appear to share one feature—acceptance of one's destiny is the opportunity for original contingency, which Kuki also identifies with absolute nothingness, to manifest itself. The manifestation of destiny is the acceptance of the ultimate nothingness of human existence and the vanity of human plans and goals that end in the realization of this nothingness in death.[12] And yet, while *bushidō* sees redemption as individual—it can be obtained through the fulfillment of Heaven's will (Nitobe 2000, 94)—for Kuki, redemption is possible through the relationship between oneself and another. Relationality, as I have already explained, thus has a principal role in Kuki's ethics.[13] Ethical behavior does not just involve embracing of the individual's fate. Rather, the ethical moment occurs through the contingent encounter with another. Ethics is thus not individual, but relational.

Furthermore, for Kuki, ethics cannot be scientific. A scientific ethics would attempt to make moral laws similar to natural laws, just as Rickert attempts to make the science of experience—history—the science of the theoretical relation of value to objects. According to Kuki, a scientific concept of ethics "ends in a 'will that no longer wills anything'" (Kuki 1966, 194). Instead, Kuki advocates that ethics take as its starting point an understanding of the relationship of the contingent event to "the whole," i.e., the fact that each contingent encounter bears within it the surpassing of the limit of such an encounter:

> The interiorization of contingency at the level of practice is nothing other than the consciousness of the correlations between the innumerable parts that form the concrete totality. It must be that which

12. "Contingency as not conceptualized, it is without correlations, without rules, arrangements, interests or preoccupations. Contingency has no goal. It has no intentions. It has no affinities. It rests on nothing. It is blind and has no eyes" (Kuki 1966, 197).

13. Contingency, Kuki reminds us, "exists primarily where there is a duality of the same and the other" (Kuki 1966, 192).

> joins the joys and sorrows of all of existence in the profound interiorization of the *you* external to the *I* in every isolated instant in which the same and the other meet by chance. (KUKI 1966, 194)

The only way to do this is to see the contingent event—the meeting which seemed unlikely or even impossible—as opening up future possibilities.[14] However, these possibilities are not just the possibilities of the individual, as is the case in the philosophy of Heidegger.[15] Rather, the possibilities are responsibilities, whereby one has a responsibility to ensure that contingent encounters are "not in vain" (KUKI 1966, 196). Responsibility involves ensuring that chance encounters affect the way one conducts oneself in the future.

CONCLUSION

In developing the ethical implications of Kuki's theory of contingency, it is instructive to compare Kuki's theory with that of his European contemporaries, Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert, because Kuki develops his ethics in dialogue with them. He adopts their categories, but rejects their methodologies in favor of a phenomenological methodology. It is because of this methodology that Kuki is able to develop contingency as an ethical concept.

Kuki accepts Windelband's view that all human activity is contingent—it cannot be understood as the consequence of particular laws (causal contingency) or of particular goals (purposive contingency). He also accepts two of Rickert's insights. First, he accepts that a scientific method of inquiry never reaches the phenomena themselves. This is implicit in Rickert's view that the process of concept formation in the natural sciences is unable to capture what is essential in historical inquiry. However, Kuki rejects Rickert's alternative scientific approach, which seeks to identify the type of concept formation at work in his-

14. Kuki reminds us that contingency is the "tendency of the possible toward the possible" (KUKI 1966, 195).

15. For a full discussion of Heidegger's philosophy in this regard, see MAYEDA 2006.

torical inquiry, and to demonstrate its scientific qualities. Instead, Kuki begins not with the process of concept formation but with the encounter with phenomena themselves—the actual face-to-face meeting of one person and another. The second insight that Kuki adopts from Rickert is that investigating human relations involves contextual factors such as culture and the ascription of values to concrete phenomena. Kuki's acceptance of this approach is most evident in works such as *The Structure of Iki*. However, unlike Rickert, he does not want to create a science of the context. Rather, he investigates how this context gives meaning to the concrete and contingent encounter itself. In the end, the meaning of these encounters is ethical. Ethics is about the individual's unique responsibility, arising from crossing paths with another, that limits his possibilities.

Kuki's understanding of ethics is not modeled on the ethics of *bushidō*. The ethical imperative does not demand stoic acceptance of the fate that draws inexorably closer as concrete encounters engender human emotional responses. Rather, the meeting with another is the opportunity to take responsibility for the one we meet and any failures to live up to this responsibility.

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The Contingencies of Kuki Shūzō

John C. Maraldo

Contingency is my topic, both the philosophical issue and its intersection with actual life. Now I would like to think that it is more than mere chance that got me invited to this occasion, yet, reading Kuki, I've been compelled to reflect on all the chance encounters that have defined my life and brought me to this moment. I wonder where I would have been without these coincidences and chances not of my own making; I wonder whether I would or could be myself without them, and what contributions are possibly due to me. It is customary in polite academic culture to recognize others for whatever positive things we imagine we have achieved, and to pretend self-responsibility for our shortcomings. But if chance occurrences so define our lives why not just reverse the customary conceit, blame circumstances for our shortcomings and give ourselves credit for what we and others like about ourselves? Why take responsibility at all if contingencies define our lives? This question, an ethical one, will reappear in a different form at the end of my talk today. For now I will begin by trying to recall some of the chance encounters that bring me to talk about Kuki Shūzō (1888–1941).

* This essay retains the informal lecture style of the keynote address delivered at the conference on which this book is based.

I suppose it was when I was a graduate student in Munich in the late 1960s that I read Heidegger's "Conversation on Language with a Japanese"[1] and first came across the name Kuki, in the midst of a series of mysterious pronouncements about something called *iki*, something that seems to have sent Heidegger into the thralls of rhapsodizing about the essence of East Asian art. That may also have been the first time I heard of Nishida, mentioned as Kuki's teacher who wrote the epitaph carved on his gravestone. I remember searching for that gravestone about ten years later, finding it after an hour's search in the damp, mossy cemetery beside Hōnen-in in Kyoto, looking again several years later and not finding it, and finding it again in 1998, this time with the help of a map the temple gave to visitors. It was probably not Heidegger's musings that sparked my interest in Japan, however, but my encounter in Munich with some American junior-year-abroad students who happened to meet me and tell me about the wonderful poetry of Bashō and D.T. Suzuki's Zen. So I became enthralled with Zen and haiku and things Japanese and—by many fortuitous circumstances and the possibilities afforded me—ended up in Tokyo in the early 1970s.

Kuki had gone from Tokyo to Germany fifty years earlier, in 1921, after studying with Raphael von Koeber at Tokyo Imperial University and learning of the philosophical rage in Germany at the time, Neo-Kantianism. After two years studying with Heinrich Rickert in the rather staid environment of Heidelberg, he found the allure of Paris too powerful to pass up and spent a year and a half there, and after another year or so in Freiburg with Husserl and in Marburg with Heidegger, he returned to Paris. The story of how Kuki happened to hire a 23 year-old student by

1. "Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache, zwischen einem Japaner und einem Fragenden" (1953–1954), in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Gesamtausgabe I, vol.12), ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann 1985); translated by Peter D. Hertz as "A Dialogue on Language" (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). The comments of the "Japanese" in Heidegger's text were embellished from what Tezuka Tomio told Heidegger in an actual conversation in March 1954. For a critical discussion of the exchange, see Reinhard May's *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East-Asian Influences on His Work*, translated with a complementary essay by Graham Parkes (New York: Routledge, 1996), 11–20; Tezuka's version is translated therein as "An Hour with Heidegger," 59–64.

the name of Jean-Paul Sartre to tutor him about philosophical currents in France is well known, thanks to Stephen Light and Satō Akio. It is possible the young Sartre learned more of consequence from Kuki than the other way 'round.

It is not entirely clear to me how Kuki came to be so intrigued with the problem of contingency. Was it his encounter with Heidegger's themes of facticity and thrownness (that it seems he also introduced to Sartre)?[2] Did Sartre happen to know of Émile Boutroux's 1895 work on the contingency of natural laws[3] or Émile Borel's *Le Hasard* of 1913? Or more likely, was it Sartre's discussions with Kuki about freedom, time and contingency in Bergson? Or had Kuki already come across the Neo-Kantian Wilhelm Windelband's *Die Lehren von Zufall* (1870) or Rickert's distinctions between essential, causal, and rule-oriented contingency? Perhaps it was not so much the books Kuki was reading as the circumstances of his life that turned his attention to contingency. His daily encounters must have imbued him with a strong sense of contrasts between European, "Western" civilization and Japanese, "Oriental" culture, between the artificial European split of body from spirit[4] and the Japanese sensibility known as *iki*, between women and men as defined by two cultures, and—seemingly so obvious to nearly everyone he met—between the "white" and the "yellow" race. Perhaps Kuki began to live in a space of contrast as an aristocratic, wealthy, tall and slender man of forty impeccably dressed in the best-tailored three-piece suits who was still somehow unmistakenly oriental to jaundiced European eyes. Michael Marra notes that when Kuki asked, "Why was I born Japanese," his answer was "Because of the rolling of the dice" (Marra 2004, 15). In a poem from his time in Paris he contrasts the necessary world of geometry with the lived world of chance encounters, and so anticipates his effort to resolve

2. As Stephen Light points out, Sartre titled a draft of his 1938 novel *La Nausée*, "Factum sur la contingence" (Light 1987, 20).

3. *De la contingence des lois de la nature*, first published as a doctoral dissertation in 1874 (Boutroux 1895).

4. Kuki himself lamented the artificial split between body and spirit he found so prevalent in the European world, and sought to recapture their unity in his poems, his poetics, and many of his philosophical essays. See Tanaka 2001, 320.

the problem of contingency. As wonderfully translated by Marra, Kuki writes,

> You and I, I and you,
> the secret of a chance encounter I saw,
> of love the anti-law.
> This is the geometry of life's retribution,
> won't you bring it for me to some solution? (MARRA 2004, 52)

It was in Paris in 1926 that his thoughts on *iki* germinated, and we can connect his later work on this untranslatable term to the problem of contingency by noticing several crisscrossing lines. In both *Iki no kōzō*「いき」の構造 [The Structure of Iki, 1930] and *Gūzensei no mondai* 偶然性の問題 [The Problem of Contingency, 1935] we find a logical, structural classification crossed with something that resists conceptualization and subsumption under general concepts—something betrayed by the concept of individuality—*iki* in the first work and contingency in the second.

We also see a hermeneutical analysis of conditions of concrete existence like temporality crossed with a palpable sense of the transience of life, one's infirm life here and now. We can also note the crisscrossing themes of duality and possibility. In *The Structure of Iki*, Kuki writes, "the main concern of allure [*bitai* 媚態, one of the principal factors of *iki*]… is maintaining a dualistic relationship, that is to say, preserving the possibility as a possibility."[5] In his treatise *Gūzensei* 偶然性 [Contingency, 1932], he writes, "The core meaning of contingency is the chance encounter of A and B…; it is the contact between two different things" which in the end of *The Problem of Contingency* becomes "the chance encounter between you and me" (KSZ 2: 302, 258).

Eventually emerging from his encounters in the sharply contrasting cities Edo and Paris, Kuki went to Kyoto in 1929. He secured a position at the university thanks to Professor Emeritus Nishida (SAKABE 2000:340), and as something of a black sheep among the faculty there

5. Cited in MARRA 2004, 7; translation adapted from Hiroshi Nara's in his book, *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shūzō, with a translation of Iki no kōzō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004). The original is in *Kuki Shūzō Zenshū* (hereafter KSZ), 1: 17.

he began to teach French philosophy. In 1932 he submitted the treatise titled simply *Contingency* as a doctoral dissertation, with Tanabe Hajime as a reader. Miyano Makiko has recently pointed out that Tanabe criticized Kuki's treatise for its insufficient account of teleology as a constitutive part of metaphysics, not merely a subjective regulative idea leaving too much up for grabs (Miyano 2006, 227–28). Kuki vastly expanded his analysis, slightly emended it in a way we shall see, and published *The Problem of Contingency*, a work five times as long, in 1935. But just as his struggles with this problem did not begin with an academic dissertation, they did not end with this book; contingency is a focus in numerous poems and essays, many translated by Marra, and it is the theme of several systematic treatises and lectures collected in Volume Two of the Complete Works, including a 20-page piece called "A Logic Informed by Contingencies" (偶然化の論理 *Gūzenka no ronri*).

To my mind there are four features of Kuki's academic work on contingency that distinguish it from other treatments and distinguish him from other Kyoto School philosophers. First, Kuki gives probably the most systematic treatment of contingency, as a concept and a problem, in the entire history of philosophy (though he limited his treatment mostly to Western philosophy); and his systematic style of analysis differs greatly from the more meandering kind of writing we find in Nishida, Tanabe, Nishitani and others. Second, his evaluation of contingency as a reality to be appreciated, not overcome, contrasts with its traditional devaluation relative to the search for necessity, laws, regularity, invariance, and predictability in nature and life. Kuki's evaluation also contrasts with the emphasis on transcendence in existentialist philosophy, and with Nishida's and Tanabe's self-determining absolute. Third, Kuki regards metaphysics as the only discipline that thematizes contingency as such, and he regards contingency as the primary problem of metaphysics, because it ultimately poses the problem of why being at all, why not rather nothing. Of course by posing this problem he echoes Heidegger, Leibniz and many others; and by making the connection to nothingness he fits loosely into the Kyoto School. But again he differs from the absolute nothingness of the School by insisting on the relativity of nothingness, a non-being as opposed to being. Contingency, Kuki writes, "arises when some existence is intrinsically and inextricably related to non-existence.

It names the condition wherein being has its roots in nothingness, the specter of nothingness transgressing being" (KSZ 2: 69). Finally, as we shall see, Kuki connects in a kind of triangulation the contingency of the absolute, the contingency of the natural world, and the contingency of individuals and their fortuitous encounters.

Two other features characterize Kuki's work on contingency. His dissertation and book both begin with a general, abstract and logical analysis but end with an appeal to a concrete, immediate and individualized imperative about the encounter of one and another, you and me. And Kuki is aware of the great irony in a general analysis and classification of contingency. A theory of contingency would be self-negating, in a sense: it would generalize the phenomenon and attempt to describe its nature or its general kinds, and would try to contain it under general rules or principles. The contingent features of contingency, as it were, would escape the theory. By its "nature" contingency refers to the factors that do not fall under the general plan or rule or law.[6] For Kuki, contingency tests the limits not only of knowledge but of our power to conceive (KSZ 2: 316).

I would now like to present some details of Kuki's theory by way of examples and issues different from the ones he chose. And I am aware of just how arbitrary the examples I've chosen are. Their general direction is to suggest how any appeal to a necessity generates a contingency. My intent is to have us discover on our own the pervasive reality of contingency that Kuki would have us see.

The place of empirical contingencies

Where those necessities and contingencies are causal in nature, Kuki calls them empirical (or hypothetical in the later book). Empirical contingency is a central issue in a form of intelligent design theory

6. Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, citing Pierre Aubenque on Aristotle, has also noticed this irony, and writes "any ontology of contingency must, strictly speaking, negate itself as ontology as soon as it accepts the contingent character of being" (Botz-Bornstein 1997, 493).

today.[7] In short, this is the theory that evolution leading to human beings like ourselves cannot be explained by Darwinian natural selection which leaves far too much to chance and accident, that is, to contingencies. To explain the evolution of living beings, we must have recourse to a force or being beyond the natural world which purposefully directed or designed its development. The interesting point is that debates about the contingency of evolutionary life add a third concept to the standard pair, necessity and contingency. The debates distinguish contingency not only from the necessity of natural laws but also from the purported design behind natural evolution. So the three assumed possibilities are chance, law, and design. Michael Ruse, a leading scholar of the debate, writes that "we distinguish design from something produced naturally by law or something we would put down to chance.... Design has to be something which is not contingent" (Ruse 2003). Of course, these are not mutually exclusive possibilities for life; all three or only two could be at work in evolution. (We might also note that linear time is assumed, versus the cyclical or circular time that Kuki finds characteristic of the Orient.[8]) Natural laws necessitate what will happen once certain initial conditions are given, but whether a certain set of conditions obtains or not is a matter of chance. Evolutionary theory proposes that life forms evolve by natural selection: those that by chance are better adapted to environmental conditions will survive and reproduce; others will die out. The general idea in intelligent design theory is that the life forms we know on earth are much too complex and specified to be the result of such chance occurrences.[9] I do not intend to evaluate the arguments here, only to indicate how both sides of this debate, and related debates as well, end up with contingencies—ultimately with primal contingency.

7. I discuss here the form that sees intelligent design as compatible with evolution, although the contrasting creationist form of intelligent design theory would likewise imply contingencies in its explanation of God's special creation of humans and other species.

8. In his lecture at Pontigny, France: "The Notion of Time and Repetition in Oriental Time," in Light 1987, 43–50.

9. Ruse examines the argument of William Demski, who tell us what specificity means here: "Events that are both highly complex and specified (that is, that match an independently given pattern) indicate design" (Ruse 2003).

Let us take a look at how this happens. Evolutionary theory says that life forms have evolved by chance alongside natural laws. The intelligent design side argues that evolution proceeds by divine design guiding natural laws, with chance occurrences accounting only for some aberrations. We can show how empirical contingency is a defining factor not only in cases that involve chance but also in cases that require the necessity of natural laws, especially those that have recourse to intelligent design. In the case where something occurs by chance, of course, contingency is by definition the defining factor. But even in the realm of natural laws contingency is at work, and in two ways. First, if something occurs as the necessary result of a sequence of events that act as causes, then this sequence can lead back to an original or primal contingency. For example, the evolution and dominance of mammals probably has a lot to do with the collision of the earth and an asteroid some 65 million years ago which extinguished the then-dominant dinosaurs and set earthly life forms on a different course. The asteroid and the earth were following orbits necessitated by the law of gravity, and evolution was following whatever conditions prevailed, however necessary. It was the fortuitous encounter of asteroid and earth that, even if not a matter of pure chance, opened up myriad new possibilities for life. That life forms had existed at all was due either to design and divine choice, or to myriad chance factors, or to natural laws that happen to be as they are. Any of these disjunct possibilities leads to prior contingency, even if the singular collision of earth and asteroid does not define ultimate, primal contingency.

The second way contingency is at work in natural laws is that contingent, unforeseeable factors can affect a causal sequence; such factors may be unpredictable in principle and not merely unforeseeable due to a lack of possible knowledge. An example (one that intelligent design theory would probably consider aberrant contingency) is a mutation in DNA caused by random radiation. Radiation in the environment can cause chemical alterations in DNA that in some unusual cases are not corrected but result in mutations and even disease. Once the radiation is emitted and has entered the cells, we could in principle predict the outcome if we knew of all the other contributing factors. That there might be a near infinity of such factors that happen to come together in

just the right moment would make it practically impossible to predict the result, but still not impossible in principle. What renders the result impossible to know in principle is the fact that the radiating particles are emitted at random, without determinate causes. The origin and thus the occurrence of the mutation are ultimately contingent. This is a kind of microcosmic version of primal, cosmic contingency: determinate causes eventually lead back to something that just happens to happen. In this case though we don't have to go back very far. Either on a cosmic or a microcosmic scale, contingency can and does play a significant role in naturalistic explanations of the world.

There are two other variations, which I mention in passing. Some physicists and philosophers regard natural laws as inductive generalizations with probable, not necessary outcomes. Contingency would play an even stronger role in that case. On the other hand, some physicists now question the reigning view that on a quantum level probability is all we have; they challenge the view that certain events occur randomly, without determinate causes. They suspect there are hidden variables that determine the course of any natural event (Smolin 2006, 316–26). Suppose that were true. Then the contingency would arise as the chance of happening to know all the relevant variables. And this case would define not only the contingency of our knowledge but also the contingency of nature: the more variables the more room for the contingency of any particular natural event or coincidence of events.

This discussion has devolved far from the debate about how nature works on the level of life. So let us return to that issue, and recall the argument of intelligent design theorists. The rather anthropomorphic notion of intelligent design implies an intention by a knowing, planning, perhaps scheming mind. The theory of course places the mind in question outside the natural universe so as to confine the universe to occurrences that necessarily follow the divine plan (except for things that happen as a result of free human choices). So, according to intelligent design theory, necessity reigns in the world of natural evolution (absent the aberrant contingencies that do not affect evolution on a large scale), and outside that world we have an intention, a plan of how life will evolve. Modeled after commonsense notions of human plans, the divine plan is thought to be the free intention of a divine power. But divine

design usually assumes divine freedom which entails choice and contingency. So contingency is merely deferred, set outside the natural world. After all, the divine designer could have created a different design, could have acted otherwise. In other words, the evolution of intelligent life may be designed rather than occurring by chance, but which design it follows is up to the intelligent designer who could have produced a very different plan. If God designs freely, then God's particular plan is contingent upon what God happens to choose. Further, if God creates freely, then it is God's choice whether to create any world at all; creation is entirely gratuitous, free, and contingent (a view that for some philosophers represents "the Christian distinction" from other views of creation (HART 2003). Precisely when one accepts the intelligent design hypothesis, one is compelled to embrace ultimate contingency.

Suppose we imagine a designer that had to create just as it in fact did. Suppose we imagine a necessitated design as Leibniz implied in arguing that God necessarily had to make this the best of all possible worlds. If Leibniz's God is to create a world at all, then God is constrained by his nature to make this world the best of all possible worlds. Not only is God's existence necessary, but also, Leibniz says, the kind of world God can create. (It is not entirely clear whether Leibniz thinks that God must create a world.) So far, then, in this view, there is no contingency in God's existence and no contingency in how the world happens to be. Is there room for contingency in God's nature? Given a certain nature by definition, God has to be. God's necessary existence is a feature of God's essence. How necessary is that essence? There are two questions here: First, if it is necessary that God be perfect, does it follow that it is necessary that God create a world? Does a necessarily existent and perfect being have to create a contingent being? (Of course, the terms necessary and contingent imply one another, but that is not to say God has to create.) If a perfect, necessary being does not have to create a world at all, then the fact of creation is contingent. Second, how necessary is this definition of God? The history of religions provides a great variety of definitions of divinity, and even the Christian history that Leibniz shares does not compel us to settle on his definition. But more to the point, is this definition necessary for intelligent design theory? Does an intelligent designer have to be a perfect, necessary being? As far as I know,

the arguments of intelligent design theorists do not employ this notion at all. Even the supposition of a necessary design leaves room for the ultimate contingency of the designer's choice and perhaps the designer's nature. (Leibniz may not be thinking in terms of "design." But does that matter?)

An interesting alternative to classical Western notions of God is Spinoza's view, which allows for no contingency in God or nature at all, including human beings.[10] Kuki notes that the kind of contingency recognized by Spinoza is a seeming contingency due to a lack in human knowledge (KSZ 2: 302). Humans may not perfectly know the causes of things, and so mistakenly think that some things and events are contingent. While Spinoza would argue that humans cannot have been otherwise than to have imperfect knowledge, Kuki might think this imperfection introduces a genuine contingency in two ways: first, given that imperfection might be a necessary feature of humans, the possibility of any human knowing more or less than s/he happens to know would introduce a contingency. Secondly, the very difference between the two modalities, God's perfect knowledge and human imperfect knowledge, implies the possibility of an other to each. (Spinoza explicitly equates possibility with contingency; he writes *vel contingens vel possibilis* (*Ethica* I, 33, Schol. 1, cited in KSZ 2: 307).) As we shall see, for Kuki it is a duality that generates contingency; in this case, the duality of infinite divine knowledge versus finite human knowledge, as opposed to the monism better reflected in Spinoza's formula, *Deus sive Natura*. Ironically, it is no accident that the idea of contingency or possibility plays a role in Spinoza's discussions.

Another interesting alternative is the notion of God and creation that we find in process theology. Charles Hartshorne for example argues that for a necessarily existing God to know a contingent world, God must have contingent aspects. God's actuality, the manner in which God

10. But Kuki also notes that Spinoza contrasts the notion of God as self-cause (*aseitas*) with the notion of individual things that are caused by something else (*abaleitas*), and writes, "to the extent that the existence of things is not found to be necessarily specified or necessarily excluded, I call such individual things contingent" (*Ethica* IV, def. 3).

exists, interacts with the contingencies of the world and thus is in process rather than necessarily fixed for all time or in eternity. The activity of God's creatures continually changes God's experience of them.

Here I will not go into the intricacies of process theology, or its connection to evolutionary theory. Nor do I wish to evaluate the arguments for and against intelligent design theory, or Leibniz's or Spinoza's views, or those of process theology. What I do wish to emphasize is the central role of contingency in all these proposals. They all would exemplify what Kuki took to be the inevitability of contingency in our world as well as the inextricable link between the two problems of contingency and necessity. Kuki tried to capture this link in a phrase he borrowed from Novalis: "primal contingency as absolute necessity" (KSZ 2: 304). Primal contingency (Kuki alludes to the *Urzufall* of Friedrich Schelling) refers to the metaphysical contingency that ultimately can trump any actualities that appear as necessary from a more restricted perspective, or that appear as necessities which happen to encounter one another. Let us return to our example of living beings to see how that works.

We began by speaking of the issue of empirical contingency in the debates over intelligent design. This kind of contingency is expressed in hypothetical judgments (Kuki uses Kant's classification) such as, "if *p* then *q*"; "if living beings evolved, then by design." The contingency comes in when the possibility is introduced that *p* may not entail *q*, evolution may not entail design. But the same initial situation can be expressed in logically simpler, categorical judgments, such as "living beings are designed beings." Logical or categorical contingency lies in the non-identity of *p* and *q*, living beings and designed beings, that is, in the possibility that being designed is not essential to being a living thing. Finally, we can regard a given categorical judgment or a given hypothetical judgment as just one distinctive case of a disjunctive judgment, such as, "either living beings are designed, or they are accidentally and naturally selected, or both in part." Here we reach the level of metaphysical contingency, the baseline possibility that things could be otherwise than they are and that any particular thing might not be at all.

In his doctoral dissertation Kuki proposes, then, that the same event or thing can be considered from the perspective of the three different kinds of judgment, categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive, yielding

the three types of contingency, logical, empirical and metaphysical. He suggests, moreover, that a seeming necessity might be a mere contingency from the metaphysical perspective. For example, the purported necessity that evolved living beings be purposely designed might be a mere contingency: they might have been created all at once, they might not have been created at all, they might not have been. Primal contingency names the possibility of this nothingness.

Kuki also stresses that the three types of contingency are interrelated in a specific and hierarchical way. Each not only has a core meaning, but those core meanings are rooted in one another. The core meaning of logical contingency lies in individuality, which is rooted in chance encounter, the core meaning of empirical contingency. Empirical contingency in turn is rooted in the possibility of not being, that is, in metaphysical contingency. Furthermore, all three types require plurality as opposed to monistic necessity. Let me expand on Kuki's sparse comments (KSZ 2: 315–16) to try to make sense of this order. Individual things are at the heart of the idea of logical or categorical contingency. When we make categorical judgments like "Ps are Qs" we obviously categorize individual things; we place them under general concepts. But the general concept does not make individual things identical to one another. To recall the case of evolutionary theory again, this living being is not that living being, whether or not they both count as beings that evolve according to designed laws of nature. They are defined by difference as much as commonality, and that means each is different from the other and each could be otherwise. Further, the evolution occurs, in Kuki's terms, through a series of events that encounters another series of events and so forth, in a pattern, designed or not, that is variable. The particular encounters or interactions that occur could be otherwise, and other individuals could arise and perish. Kuki implies that chance encounter is a principle of individuation. And since it is possible that particular chance encounters not take place, it is possible that something not be (and thus "deviates from the absolute necessity of the Absolute," Kuki writes).

Together the three types of contingency presuppose a plurality rather than a monism. To be precise, Kuki first writes of duality rather than plurality, but I think the meaning there is ambiguous. Let us first sup-

pose Kuki means simply more than one. "The possibility that something not be is fundamentally a rebellion against unity," he says (KSZ 2: 316). Kuki's avoidance of a term like non-duality may well be deliberate; Sakabe Megumi has suggested that his philosophy of contingency hints at a rebellion against the totalitarian or totalizing tendencies he found in Nishida's predicate logic at the time, as well as in Watsuji's notion of a greater whole that subsumes individual relations.[11] But how exactly do the three types of contingency presuppose plurality? Again we need to fill in Kuki's thesis here. On the logical or categorical level, a singular term or subject as it functions in judgments is necessarily self-identical and carries no possibility of being different. Possibility and differentiation arise when one term is opposed to another or predicated by different general concepts. Logical contingency requires the existence of more than one term. On the empirical level of hypothetical judgments, Kuki himself gives us an example: "In tracing the origin of individuals we posit a duality as opposed to a unity. A chance encounter requires two people or things" (KSZ 2: 316). On the metaphysical level, a strict (and probably inexpressible) monism requires necessity and excludes possibility; plurality on the other hand allows for the possibility of being otherwise that is expressed explicitly in disjunctive judgments. In sum, you have to have two (or more) to have contingency and, as Kuki will suggest, you have to have contingency to have two (or more).

Ethics and the place of contingent selves

In the end Kuki's book, *The Problem of Contingency*, clarifies the ambiguity about the meaning of duality. The book makes it clearer that the crux of contingency is the difference between self and other. This theme in turn introduces the connection between contingency and ethics, a theme barely broached by Kuki. Although this fragile connection is explicit only in the conclusions of the dissertation and the book—much more prominently in the book's conclusion—it is facilitated by a some-

11. In a discussion of his paper, "Kuki Shūzō on Contingency," read at a workshop on Japanese philosophy, Lake Forest College, Illinois, April 23, 1990.

what surprising conjunction between Kuki's analyses of contingency in the natural world and his examples from the human social world. I see this as a conjunction between a philosophy of nature and a philosophy of selfhood; and I use the word conjunction to suggest the contingent quality of the connections. Kuki's philosophy of nature is implicit in the rather abstract analysis of the three types of contingency modeled after Kant's three types of relations in judgments: categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive. Kuki's philosophy of selfhood is implicit in the kind of concrete examples he chooses which are often existentialist in tone. A four-leaf clover is one of Kuki's examples of contingency in the natural world, as are my examples from the intelligent design debate. A chance encounter of two people is an example of contingency in the social world. The existentialist examples take on a greater role as Kuki's work progresses, and we can see this both from their frequency and from a revealing shift in some of his terms. He shifts from the more generic term *kobutsu* 個物, individual things, to *kotai* 固体 in the sense of the individuality of persons (*kojin* 個人), and he begins to speak of "I and Thou," *ware* 我 and *nanji* 汝, and of self or the one (*issha* 一者) and the other (*tasha* 他者). He replaces the example of the chance encounter between two series of events, with that of the chance encounter between two people. Despite these shifts, however, Kuki retains his classification of the types of contingency throughout, another reason that I regard his analysis, in both the dissertation and the book, to conclude in a conjunction between two distinct philosophical approaches, philosophy of nature and existentialist philosophy of self, rather than a replacement of one by the other. Occasionally Kuki's examples fit into both approaches: that he happens to be of "the yellow race," as he writes, is both a natural contingency and a social, existentialist contingency that Kuki no doubt abruptly encountered in his sojourn in Europe.

Earlier I briefly mentioned Heidegger's and Sartre's treatment of contingency in terms of facticity, and I drew a contrast with Kuki who does not overcome contingency by transcendence but maintains its ultimacy. There seems here to be a conjunction with Richard Rorty's recent work on contingency and selfhood, and I would like to mention this as another indication of the abiding relevance of Kuki's work, unknown as it was to Rorty and still is to most other philosophers outside Japan.

Rorty opposed all attempts to discover or construe a universal human nature in the form of a rationality or moral conscience, an imperishable truth with which one could identify himself and perhaps overcome personal death and the fear of it. He argued for the recognition of the particular contingencies that "make each of us 'I' rather than a copy or replica of somebody else." Contingency allows self-creation, as opposed to self-knowledge, and is in tension with "the effort to achieve universality by the transcendence of contingency." Whereas traditional philosophy before Nietzsche downplayed particular contingencies as accidental appearances, Rorty says, Heidegger and Wittgenstein "write philosophy in order to exhibit the universality and necessity of the individual and contingent" (RORTY 1989, 25–26). This seems in line with Kuki's project, except that in comparison, I would say, Kuki asks in a way more radical than Heidegger and Wittgenstein, what if contingency is the universal condition of our lives?

Our lives as individuals resist comprehension as particular cases of a universal category like "human being." However we might categorize our individual lives, there is always something essential left over. As Nishida also says, an individual is not explained by attaching general attributes to a subject, no matter how many attributes we predicate of it. In a sense, individual selves cannot be "explained" at all if explanation requires categorization. For every categorical statement about me there is a contrary, and together they form a disjunctive contingency. Although individuals cannot be explained, however, we can situate them in an interplay between self and other, I and thou. I do not know whether Kuki chanced upon these terms in Nishida, who wrote his essay *Watashi to nanji* 私と汝 in 1932, the same year as Kuki's dissertation, or in Jacobi, the critic of Kant that Kuki cites. In any case, Kuki seems to bypass Nishida's and Jacobi's recourse to an absolute as a third: the absolute other in me (and me in the absolute other) that Nishida proposes, or the transcendent, personal God of Jacobi that allows the I and thou to recognize and respect one another. Instead, Kuki proposes that I "interiorize" the thou that conditions me and that we interiorize contingency. "The interiorization of contingency on the level of practice," Kuki writes, "must be what ties together the pains and joys of every existence, ties them together as the interiorization of the exterior thou

into the depths of the I, in the very moment of chance encounter with the other…" (KSZ 2: 258). If I understand Kuki right, this concrete interiorizing is not a case of making the other the same as self or of reducing them both to some abstract, universal sameness.

These remarks lead to the link with ethics. It is clear that Kuki opposes Kant's ethics, modeled as it is on natural science and the universal laws of nature. There is no place for contingency in such an ethics, Kuki says (KSZ 2: 317ff.); such an ethics will not be able to appreciate humans in their concrete existence. Now many philosophers, not only Kantians, would counter that the abstraction from contingencies is precisely the point of ethics. The point of ethics is not to make a special case of oneself, but to bind people under moral laws or imperatives that apply equally to all. What can an ethics based on contingency offer? I will not try to answer this question in any depth (I refer the reader to Graham Mayeda's essay in this volume), but I will try to draw together some finishing thoughts on Kuki's alternative. Most people would recognize two features of ethics in Kuki's proposal: first, ethics arises only when there is a plurality of us, many I's and thou's, you's and me's. Second, ethics arises from a recognition that things can be otherwise, that I can act differently or be different. Of course in ethics this possibility of being otherwise is not the contingency of pure chance or simple indeterminism. It is rather the freedom to be and to do otherwise, a form of self-determination. Rorty notes that many moderns see freedom as a recognition of contingency, but, we might add, not of just any chance contingency.

Kuki also seems to have a restricted kind of contingency in mind when he makes the connection to ethics. He writes (this is the conclusion to the doctoral dissertation copied in part in the later book):

> If morality is not an empty idea and if we are to actualize it and give it some force, then we must esteem contingency as our springboard. The wonder with respect to contingent things is not something we must base solely on the present. We can also base it, contrary to ordinary reasoning, on the future. In creating a purpose for the future we can elicit wonder in the moment of a chance encounter. It must become a task for us finite humans to reinforce the wonder of contingency by invoking the future, that is, to truly accept contingency itself. Vasubandhu's Treatise on the Pure Land Sūtra indicates as

> much when it says, "Once one has seen the vow and power of salvation of the Buddha, the encounter never occurs in vain [観佛本願力、遇無空過者]." (KSZ 2: 317; see also KSZ 2: 259 for the passage in *The Problem of Contingency*)

Kuki's ethical contingency is not that of happenstance, of how things happen to be or to have occurred. It is the contingency of a future we can value as giving life to the present moment of encounter. But where in Kuki's alternative is there room for the guidance that ethics can give us? Kuki invokes the guiding hand of ethics when he goes on to transform the conditional statement of the Pure Land Sūtra into an imperative:

> In order to give eternal meaning to the contingency that harbors nothingness and holds only the destiny of perishing, we must give life to the present moment by calling on the future. In the domain of theory, no one can give a perfectly adequate answer to Milinda's question, "why [is it that all men are not alike]?" But if we shift the problem to the realm of practice, then we can give ourselves the imperative, "Let not your encounters occur in vain [遇うて空しく過ぐる勿れ]." (KSZ 2: 317; see also KSZ 2: 260 for the passage in *The Problem of Contingency*)

Here Kuki transforms the Kantian categorical imperative into an imperative of a different nature. It is not the hypothetical imperative that Kant dismisses; Kuki's is not conditional and does not exactly involve willing an end: creating a purpose for the future is not necessarily willing a specific purpose. And unlike Kant's categorical imperative, Kuki's imperative is inclusive of contingencies. To adapt his own terms, it is a metaphysical imperative that, for Kuki, means an imperative to accept nothingness. Kuki defines metaphysical contingency as the possibility of not being, and so we might say that contingencies are the variable but inevitable places where nothingness is manifest in the world. If one nothing can differ from another, Kuki's nothingness as non-being differs from the absolute nothingness of Nishida and Tanabe, and places him at the fringe of their School. If we take their philosophies to define the center, or the two foci, of the Kyoto School, then figures like Kuki at

the outer bounds might better reveal some overlaps with philosophers foreign to the School.

I suspect that many problems lie concealed, or perhaps not so hidden, in my attempt to clarify Kuki, explain contingency, and connect it to ethics. I have at least the consolation that Kuki offers when he writes that, when we expose hidden problems and carry thought to the limits of conceptual knowledge, a wonder springs up that defines the freedom and prerogative of philosophy (paraphrased from KSZ 2: 316). Let our philosophical encounters at this wonderful gathering not be in vain.

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Abbreviation

KSZ *Kuki Shūzō zenshū* 九鬼周造全集 [The Complete Works of Kuki Shūzō]. Kuki Shūzō 九鬼周造. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980.

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A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer

Kuki Shūzō's Version

Michael F. Marra

The title of my essay obviously refers to the "Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer" which the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) wrote in 1959, and which appears in *On the Way to Language* (*Unterwegs zur Sprache*). The dialogue is a fictional reconstruction of an actual meeting that Heidegger had with Tezuka Tomio (1903–1983), a Japanese scholar of German literature who visited the philosopher in Freiburg at the end of March 1954. The dialogue begins with a reference to the Japanese philosopher Kuki Shūzō (1888–1941), who had met Heidegger in 1927 at the house of Heidegger's teacher, Edmund Husserl. In November 1927 Kuki attended Heidegger's lectures on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, as well as his seminar on Schelling's *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, at the University of Marburg. In the spring of 1928 Kuki audited Heidegger's lectures on Leibniz's *Logic* and his seminar on Aristotle's *Physics*. The Dialogue begins as follows:

> Japanese: You know Count Shuzo Kuki. He studied with you for a number of years.
>
> Inquirer: Count Kuki has a lasting place in my memory.

J: He died too early. His teacher Nishida wrote his epitaph—for over a year he worked on this supreme tribute to his pupil.

I: I am happy to have photographs of Kuki's grave and of the grove in which it lies.

J: Yes, I know the temple garden in Kyoto. Many of my friends often join me to visit the tomb there. The garden was established toward the end of the twelfth century by the priest Hōnen, on the eastern hill of what was then the Imperial city of Kyoto, as a place for reflection and deep meditation.

I: And so, that temple grove remains the fitting place for him who died early.

J: All his reflection was devoted to what the Japanese call *iki*. (HEIDEGGER 1971, 1)

The dialogue presents a critique of Kuki, which is actually Heidegger's critique of aesthetics. Heidegger's mistrust of aesthetics is well known: with Kant the work of art had become autonomous but, as a result, it had lost its cognitive power. No work of art could advance any claim to truth once aesthetic judgment had been separated from a critique of pure reason. Heidegger's search for the Being of a work of art was an attempt to give back to the work of art the truth of its existence, thus reshaping the role that art plays in the formation of human existence, or *Dasein*. According to Heidegger, with Kuki things got even more complicated: as a Japanese, Kuki adopted Western categories in order to talk about the Being (*Sein*) dwelling in a house of language which had nothing to do with Western houses. Heidegger questions the validity of Kuki's method in very clear terms, as one can see from the Dialogue:

J: Later, after his return from Europe, Count Kuki gave lectures in Kyoto on the aesthetics of Japanese art and poetry. These lectures have come out as a book. In the book, he attempts to consider the nature of Japanese art with the help of European aesthetics.

I: The name "aesthetics" and what it names grow out of European thinking, out of philosophy. Consequently, aesthetic consideration must ultimately remain alien to Eastasian thinking.

J: Aesthetics furnishes us with the concepts to grasp what is of concern to us as art and poetry.

I: Here you are touching on a controversial question which I often discussed with Count Kuki—the question whether it is necessary and rightful for Eastasians to chase after the European conceptual systems. (Heidegger 1971, 2–3)

Kuki never had a chance to respond to Heidegger's charge—he had died eighteen years before the publication of the Dialogue. However, I believe that it is possible to elicit Kuki's critique of Heidegger from Kuki's writings, although he was too polite to confront the venerable master in any direct way. In this paper I will try to elicit this critique using the poetry which Kuki wrote during his extensive stay in Europe from fall 1921 until December 1928. To begin with the conclusion I would argue that, had Kuki written a rebuttal to Heidegger's Dialogue, he would have probably stressed the fact that this is not a dialogue at all. It is a monologue in which, at the end, Heidegger only encounters himself and no one else, as we can see from Heidegger's use of Kuki's key aesthetic term, "*iki*," which Kuki had discussed in his 1930 best-seller *Iki no kōzō*「いき」の構造 [The Structure of Iki]. Kuki had defined *iki*—usually translated as "chic," or "refined"—as the Being of an ethnicity shaped by Shinto rules of "allure" (*bitai* 媚態), Buddhist rules of "renunciation" (*akirame* 諦め) and *bushidō* rules of "pride" (*ikiji* 意気地). The sum of the three qualities is the equivalent of *iki*. On the other hand, for Heidegger, *iki* is "the gracious, the breath of the stillness of luminous delight, the appropriating occurrence of the lightening message of grace, the coming of what has been, the emergence into openness in the sense of unconcealedness, the reality of presence in its essential origin" (Heidegger 1971, 44). In other words, *iki* is Heidegger's philosophical house.

Does an encounter with the Other take place in Heidegger, and is such an encounter possible? It seems to me that to these questions Kuki gives negative answers. I will try to prove it by comparing Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's poem "The Ister" to the poetry that Kuki wrote in Paris in 1925–1926—poems which I recently translated in English (Marra 2004). Heidegger dedicated the 1942 semester course to a reading of "The Ister," discussing the role that unhomeliness plays in the

formation of one's homeliness. By unhomeliness I mean the encounter with something that is outside oneself (and, therefore, extremely difficult to know), something other than oneself, foreign to oneself—in one word, the Other. Poetry is an eloquent example of what happens when a poet encounters the Other—an exteriority which poetry determines whether it can be known or not, whether it can be penetrated or not. Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's poem centered on the role that the Other plays in the construction of homeliness, our feeling at home in our natural surroundings. Basically, Heidegger posited the Ister (which is the Greek name of the Donau River) as an enigma which, once it is solved, discloses the truth that an encounter with the Other is possible. My reading of Kuki's poetry leads me to draw exactly the opposite conclusion—a meeting with the Other for Kuki was utterly impossible.[1] If Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's poetry and my reading of Kuki's poetry lead to the conclusion that their approach to the Other was diametrically opposed, this means that the two philosophers actually dealt with different kinds of Others. Let us begin by reading Hölderlin's hymn "The Ister."

> Now come, fire!
> We are impatient
> To look upon Day,
> And when the trial
> Has passed through the knees
> One may perceive the cries in the wood.
> But, as for us, we sing from the Indus,
> Arrived from afar, and
> From the Alpheus, long we
> Have sought what is fitting,
> Not without wings may one
> Reach out for that which is nearest

1. I reached this conclusion by looking at Kuki's poetry, which reflects Kuki's isolation in Paris—an isolation that led him to refine the issue in later works such as *Iki no kōzō* and *Gūzensei no mondai* 偶然性の問題 [The Problem of Contingency, 1935]. In these works, the meeting with the Other becomes the basic condition for the realization of a self which is free from the necessity of totality thanks to daily actualizations of chance meetings. See SAITŌ 2007, 1–3 and chapters five and six of MAYEDA 2006.

Directly
And get to the other side.
But here we wish to build.
For rivers make arable
The land. For when herbs are growing
And to the same in summer
The animals go to drink,
There too will human kind go.
This one, however, is called the Ister.
Beautifully he dwells. The pillars' foliage burns,
And stirs. Wildly they stand
Supporting one another; above,
A second measure, juts out
The roof of rocks. No wonder, therefore,
I say, this river
Invited Hercules,
Distantly gleaming, down by Olympus,
When he, to look for shadows,
Came up from the sultry isthmus,
For full of courage they were
In that place, but, because of the spirits,
There's need of coolness too. That is why that hero
Preferred to come here to the well-springs and yellow banks,
Highly fragrant on top, and black
With fir woods, in whose depths
A huntsman loves to amble
At noon, and growth is audible
In resinous trees of the Ister,
Yet almost this river seems
To travel backwards and
I think it must come from
The East.
Much could
Be said about this. And why does
It cling to the mountains, straight? The other,
The Rhine, has gone away
Sideways. Not for nothing rivers flow

Through dry land. But how? A sign is needed,
Nothing else, plain and honest, so that
Sun and moon it may bear in mind, inseparable,
And go away, day and night no less, and
The Heavenly feel warm one beside the other.…
(HÖLDERLIN 1998, 253–57)

In his discussion of this poem Heidegger sees in the flow of the Donau River an example of encounter with the foreign. Springing from the Swabian Alps the Donau has shaped the culture of the many countries it runs through before entering the Black Sea. In Greece it takes the name of Ister—the name that gives the title to Hölderlin's poem. Together with the Rhine, the Donau is a landmark of German culture, the provider of a sense of ease and homeliness to the German people. What does homeliness mean? It means that one has reached what is nearest to him. However, Heidegger reminds us that what is nearest to us is actually the most remote from us. One needs wings in order to reach it. In other words, our local prejudices hardly guarantee us a sense of homeliness unless they are confronted by what discloses them as mere prejudices. Men are thrown into a world, but this world is hardly homely unless it is confronted by what is foreign to it, what is unhomely. The foreign brings to the notion of homeliness what is absent from the place in which we have been thrown—an unhomeliness which is an original ingredient of homeliness, and which will eventually make one feel at home. The gods will finally live one beside the other in warmness. Stated differently, homeliness cannot exist aside from unhomeliness and the foreign.

The Ister is foreign to the Donau, although these two names refer to the same river. The Ister flows in the land of the Indus, of the Alpheus, and of Hercules who has been invited as guest to the coolness of the Alps. The poem begins with an invitation to the fire of the sultry isthmus to find its way to the cool land of the Donau. Hercules brings to Germany what Germany lacks: the fire of passion and inebriation, the Dionysian moment that the German land of Apollo—the land of cold rationality and planning—has forgotten. The Ister succeeds in bringing to Germany this forgotten dimension since the calm waters of the river look as if they travel backwards, back to their point of origin. The incor-

poration of fire into this cold rationality gives the German people an ultimate sense of homeliness—a sense that could only be achieved with an encounter with a foreign land. Homeliness is achieved only after passing through the unhomeliness of a foreign Other. Once true homeliness has been reclaimed, the Donau clings to the mountain, the regained origin, rather than going sideways like the Rhine.

For the time being I will leave aside the ominous tone of Heidegger's words which were pronounced one year before Germany would bring its call to to the battlefields of southern, Mediterranean Europe. The question that I want to raise in this essay is what happens when the foreign unhomeliness is utterly Other and the Other is not the source of one's homeliness. Then, the encounter with the Other must be much more dramatic than the one Heidegger described with the word *Stoss* (shock). I will turn to Kuki's poetic work—a work that clearly indicates that Heidegger's dialectics of "homeliness–unhomeliness" is based on a homogeneous type of otherness. If so, how can the unhomely be truly Other? As Kuki's critique points out, Heidegger's unhomeliness is not the result of an encounter with the utterly Other; it is simply an incorporation of the same into the concept of homeliness. Greece was much less foreign to Germany than Germany and France were foreign to Japan. As a matter of fact, Kuki spent nine years studying and writing in Germany and France. His encounter with the Other was truly unhomely. In other words, Kuki's unhomeliness was truly foreign. His level of discomfort in this encounter was much higher than Hercules's discomfort when he left the sultry isthmus for the well-springs and yellow banks of the land of fir woods.

Kuki's encounter with the other

How did Kuki experience his encounter with the Other? Kuki's encounter with Europe was quite brutal, although he did not suffer from extended periods of discrimination, due to his aristocratic status and great personal wealth. However, we can easily imagine the amount of tension that Europe was producing with regard to racial matters. The following is an account of Kuki's arrival in Heidelberg in 1921 by Her-

mann Glockner, a student of Heinrich Rickert who used to live in his teacher's house:

> One day Rickert surprised me with the news that he had just decided to give private lessons to a Japanese, a fabulously wealthy samurai who had asked him to read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* with him. This unusually distinguished gentleman looked totally different from the rest of his countrymen. He was tall and slender, with a relatively narrow face, a nose almost like that of Europeans, and unusually delicate hands. His name was Kuki, which meant something like "Nine Devils" (as he himself told us). (quoted in MARRA 2004, 15)

Kuki produced a critique of racism which is humorous and quite incisive in a poem titled "Yellow Face" (*Kiiroi kao*)—a dialogue between a European who presents a racist argument based on the notion of sickness, an Asian positivist thinker who introduces an argument based on the notion of cause and effect, an Asian metaphysician whose argument is based on the notion of God, and a European critical thinker whose argument is based on the notion of value. They all challenge each other in finding the best explanation for the existence of different skin pigmentation. The poem is included in a collection titled *Sleep Talking in Paris* (*Parī no negoto*), and was originally published in the journal *Myōjō* (Morning Star) in October 1926:

> *The European*:
> Your face is so yellow
> Inhabitants of the southern countries of Spain
> And Italy,
> Unable to stand strong sunlight,
> Have a brown face but
> Not yellow.
> It might be rude to say but
> The Chinese and the Japanese have contracted
> Something like a chronic jaundice….
> This is what we Europeans
> Actually think.
>
> *The Positivist*:
> This seems a little harsh.

The place where we find skin pigments and
The layer where the yellow color of jaundice
Is present are different.
It seems that our ancestors
Somehow overate
Pumpkins and tangerines.
Maybe they also drank too much
Of the Yellow River and Yellow Sea.

The Metaphysician:
The distinction between races is inborn.
In a former life we committed mischief,
The gods got terribly upset,
Then the demons came upon us,
Caught us while we were running away,
Forced on our heads the filth of urine and feces.
Our yellow face
Stands as eternal memorial
To the merciless curse
Of just gods.

The Kritik Philosopher:
I am not going to mimic the arguments
Of the birdcatcher in the Magic Flute, but
There are yellow persons
As there are yellow birds.
The issue of becoming is a different complexity,
Reality is given as reality.
In short, we should establish appropriate categories
For the concept of yellow race
And look at it from the standpoint of value.
Well, how can a yellow face become white?
Let's turn this problem from pure reason
To the realm of the practical. (Marra 2004, 55–57)

How did Kuki explain the issue of different skin pigmentation? He did it by developing a philosophy of contingency—the race is determined by the rolling of the dice, a purely contingent act which breaks the chain of necessity. There are three levels in Kuki's structure of contingency:

Categorical contingency (*teigenteki gūzensei* 定言的偶然性), which explains the individuality of race over the generality of being born as a human being rather than as an animal or a tree. However, this contingency is predicated on what Kuki calls "hypothetical necessity," which is the result of a cause and an effect. I was born Japanese because my parents were Japanese. And yet, this necessity is predicated on a second type of contingency:

Hypothetical contingency (*kasetsuteki gūzen* 仮説的偶然). The encounter (*sōgū* 遭遇) between the Japanese parents happened by chance; it was a chance encounter (*kaikō* 邂逅). Again, this is not a pure contingency, since it is based on what Kuki calls "disjunctive necessity." Although the Japanese parents met by chance, they worked in the same factory. This necessity is, once again, predicated on a third type of contingency:

Disjunctive contingency (*risetsuteki gūzen* 離接的偶然). Although the parents worked in the same factory, they happened to be alive, a fact which includes the possibility of the necessity of death and an opening to the ultimate reality of nothingness.

In other words, human existence is a reality created by a series of contingencies: an individual is characterized by its difference from another for no necessary reason (categorical contingency); it meets by chance with another for no necessary reason (hypothetical contingency); and it eventually fades into nothingness for no necessary reason (disjunctive contingency). Kuki discussed the issue of contingency in a poem titled "*Gūzensei*" (Contingency), which we find in the collection *Fragments from Paris (Hahen*, *Parī yori*, 1925).

Could you find a proof to the design
Of parallel straight lines?
That was your aim:
Did you withdraw your fundamental claim?
Did the central issue become
That to the angles of a triangle's sum
Two right angles are equal?
Or was it less than a 180–degree sequel?
In Alexandria the old book was found,

Principles of Geometry two thousand years ago bound,
No matter whether the worms ate it or not,
Euclid is a great man, never forgot,
Who with lines and points the shape of the universe drew!
You and I, I and you,
The secret of a chance encounter I saw,
Of love the anti-law.
This is the geometry of life's retribution,
Won't you bring it for me to some solution?
At the straight line of cause and effect A we look!
The straight line of cause and effect B we took!
The principle that two parallel lines do not intersect,
To the intersection of parallel lines don't you object?
With this, contingency is fulfilled,
With chaos Venus is filled,
Two people a string of pearls detect
Brought by the waves of cause and effect.

(Marra 2004, 51–52)

Kuki's critique of western philosophies of homogeneity

The challenge that Kuki's thought presented to the homogeneity of Western constructions of the Other was actually based on a series of deconstructions which were quite in tune with Heidegger's project of dismantling metaphysics. It is paradoxical to notice that, while Kuki was learning from Heidegger the need to deconstruct two thousand years of Western philosophy, he was actually pointing out the limitations of Heidegger's philosophy by critiquing the homogeneous nature of Heidegger's Other. Kuki challenged all the major ingredients of Western metaphysics—notions such as necessity, causality, the primacy of identity, sameness, completion, and the law of non-contradiction. We find in his poem "The Dialectical Method" (*Benshōronteki hōhō*) a sarcastic attack on the Hegelian dialectics of thesis, synthesis, and antithesis. (Kuki wrote two versions of this poem, the second of which was composed in rhyming verse.)

Spirit!
Hell, paradise
Sobbing out a counterpoint.
Glaring at each other are clouds of rain,
Not even a canon
is born!
Living in a field at dawn
Hornets and red starlilies
Entwine to make honey,
Who can explain this?
God and witch
Plight their promise and give birth to humanity.
These are the rules of life,
Thesis, antithesis, synthesis,
The tone of logos,
The singer a priest,
How good, a triple time
Dancing the waltz.

Hell, paradise—they disappoint,
Sobbing out a counterpoint,
A journey is a fellow traveler's grime,
Glaring at each other are clouds of rain,
Even a canon in vain
Misses the time.
Hornets and starlilies
Entwining to make honey with smiles,
Bless the fields in early summer wild,
Benevolent god and witch,
Embrace each other, become one twitch,
Give birth to a human child!
The tone of life,
Thesis, antithesis, synthesis' strife,
Well now, call the tune,
Blind priest,
How grand, a triple feast,
Dance the waltz soon! (MARRA 2004, 52–53 AND 118)

Basically, Kuki asked the question, how could the contingency of human life be reduced to a mathematical formula? How could the experience of existence be described by any model of pure rationality? The poem "The Geometry of Gray" (*Haiiro no kika*) is an eloquent witness to the futility of such attempts.

> A perfect circle wrapping a dream's tips,
> How many days going round and round,
> The orbit an ellipse,
> A fire burning in the focal point is found.
> Waking up a triangle,
> A theory born of the angle,
> The chart a rectangle,
> How many names for stars dangle?
> A round square
> = contradiction,
> The awakening of the soul's glare?
> ∞ opposition's fiction.
> The geometry of gray,
> Is that the spirit solving human play? (Marra 2006, 114)

Human life is much too complex to be reduced to a law, a method, whether Hegelian dialectics or Kantian categories. The following is a short poem (#128) from the collection *Sonnets from Paris* (*Parī shōkyoku*):

Hanchū ni	How many years have I spent
Toraegatakaru	Lamenting to myself
Onogami o	This body of mine—
Ware to nagekite	As difficult to grasp
Hetsuru ikutose	As a category?

(Marra 2006, 92)

Rationalism by itself does not explain human life, at least not the rationalism on which logic is based. The un-named, un-articulated, un-expressed are as powerful tools to make sense of life as any fully articulated techniques based on purely technical/technological terms. The negative is as powerful as the positive once it comes to trying to grasp the unnameable reality of existence. This is Kuki's message in the poem

"The Negative Dimension" (*Fugōryō*, the Japanese translation of Kant's "*negative Grösse*").

> In a shadow there is the blessing of a shadow,
> It is not just that the shadow is not exposed to sunlight.
> Ice has the taste of ice,
> It is not the same as cooled hot water.
> You can pull out your white hair,
> Black hair won't grow.
> A eunuch
> Cannot become a lady-in-waiting.
> Plus and minus—both extremes
> Are affirmations second to none.
> The law of contradiction regrettably
> Is an odd pair, a one-eyed man, a man with one arm.
> Glory to yin!
> Glory to yang!
> Good,
> Smell the fragrance!
> Evil,
> Let the flower bloom! (MARRA 2004, 51)

As several Western thinkers had already pointed out—the Frenchman Henri Bergson (1859–1941) first among all—the inability to fully articulate a philosophy of existence was due to the tendency of reducing it to quantitative time (*temps-quantité*), the measurable fixed time of the clock, rather than explaining it in terms of qualitative time (*temps-qualité*) of pure duration that no clock can catch. The latter is heterogeneous, dynamic, and creative. Only the time of pure duration can explain the heterogeneity of human life, catching what falls in the cracks of the time of the clock. Pure duration is the flowing of inner life that no formula can catch. As Kuki argues in the poem "Pure Duration" (*Junsui jizoku*, the Japanese translation of Bergson's "*dureé pure*"), quantitative time is nothing but the reduction of human life to the homogeneity of space.

> Falling in love with space
> Time, what a shabby illegitimate child!
> To give birth was a mistake in the first place,

To repent for it, a good-for-nothing goblin,
The cause of your worries night in and night out.
Hello tortoise, dear tortoise!
To lose to a rabbit in a race, isn't that a victory?
A gull floating on the water says,
I will not be outrun by a duck!
You are thirty-something,
Still studying 31–syllable poems?
You say it is a 5/7/5/7/7 syllable poem?
That two stanzas 17/14 is the norm?
That three stanzas 12/12/7 is the poem's original form?
Aren't you rewriting the poem since the caesura splitting
verses is bad?
Don't mistake "line" for "nine"!
A stanza is not made of numbers.
Since homogeneity is the foundation of compromise,
Respect the tune of pure heterogeneity!
Recollection of the past as well
Depends on time:
To curl your fingers around moldy possibilities
Is the habit of the loser.
Shout in your heart!
A meteor
A flash of lightning
A melody
A color. (Marra 2004, 53)

Kuki's other: the allure of the female

All the poems we have examined to this point are markers of Kuki's attacks on homogeneous time, homogeneous space, and the homogeneity of the dialectical method. Kuki clearly indicates that homogeneity is not the right path to follow when we want to talk about human life. Then, the big question remains, how do we talk about heterogeneity? Is there a way to deal with heterogeneity? Or is heterogeneity just too much to handle? The latter seems to be the conclusion

that one must reach looking at the unsuccessful attempts in Western philosophy to do so. Maybe there is no way to deal with the Other, for the simple reason that the Other is utterly foreign. Maybe the encounter with the Other is just too brutal for man to be able to survive it and talk about it. When one looks at Kuki's poetry, one notices the repeated use of two metaphors indicating the heterogeneity of the Other and, at the same time, the desire that this Other produces: women and food—actually, French women and French food. The topic is appetizing; the conclusion is not. Kuki's obsession for women includes dancers, high class entertainers, as well as very plain streetwalkers. Thanks to his poetry we know all the women's names. We find Yvonne, Denise, Rina, Marianne, Louise, Henriette, Jeannine, Renée, Yvette, and Suzanne.

Tomoshibi no The smiling profile
Moto ni Ivonnu ga Of Yvonne
Emu yokogao wa Under the light
Doga no e yori ya Seems to come out more starkly
Idete kiniken Than from a painting by Degas!
(MARRA 2004, 67)

Yamite yaya Having fallen ill
Hō no hosoriken Her cheeks will be slightly thinner—
Donīzu ga When Denise
Emeba koyoi wa Smiles, how charming
Namamekashikere This evening will be!
(MARRA 2004, 69)

Koyoi shi mo Saying,
Roshia no kouta Let's sing the little Russian song
Shiyo mōshite This evening,
Rina ga nuretaru If only Rina would live
Me ni zo ikimashi In the damp pupils of my eyes!
(MARRA 2004, 72)

Torikago ni A goldfish
Kingyo no oyogi Swims in the birdcage;
Minazoko ni A canary chirps
Kanaria no naku Underwater—
Mariannu ka na It must be Marianne!
(MARRA 2004, 73)

Ruīzu ga	Louise
Ware o mukaete	Welcomes me
Yorokobase	And makes me happy—
Nihon no nui no	She leaves wearing
Kinu tsukete izu	A garment of Japanese embroidery.
	(Marra 2004, 74)
Pansuchiu to	How hard to forget even
Anrietto ga	Henriette's
Namamekite	Charming
Iitsuru kuse mo	Habit of speaking
Wasuregatakari	When she says, "Penses-tu?"
	(Marra 2004, 74)
Janīnu ga	Faintly a light rain
Mune naru bara no	Fall dampening
Kurenai o	The crimson
Kosame honoka ni	Of the rose
Nurashitsutsu furu	On Jeannine's chest.
	(Marra 2004, 80)
Furusato no	My heart smells
"Iki" ni niru ka o	A fragrance similar to
Haru no yo no	The "stylishness" of my homeland
Rune ga sugata ni	In the figure of Renée
Kagu kokoro ka na	On a spring night.
	(Marra 2004, 83)
Ivetto ga	Feigning not to know,
Mi no uebanashi	I listen
Ōuso to	To Yvette
Shiredo soshiranu	Boasting about herself,
Kao o shite kiku	Though I know it's a big lie.
	(Marra 2004, 90)
Yakiguri ga	An evening
Parī no tsuji ni	When roasted chestnuts perfume
Kaoru yoi	The street corners of Paris—
Tachite kuri hamu	Yvonne, Suzanne
Ivonnu, Suzannu	Stand and eat chestnuts.
	(Marra 2004, 78)

(There is no doubt as to the profession of these women standing in a street corner of Paris, warming themselves up while waiting for customers).

These are all difficult encounters with the foreign Other—overreaching, impossible to grasp, superficial, unfulfilling encounters. This obsessive search for the alluring West results in painful disillusions—the realization that no encounter will ever take place with the Other. In other words, the encounter with the Other is utterly impossible. Any naïve attempts to believe otherwise would be like throwing pearls to pigs, as Kuki says quoting from the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces" (Matthew 7:6). The encounter with the Other could turn fatally smelly and unpleasant to witness, as we see in the poem "Pig" (*Buta*).

> I remember giving the pig the pearls
> Of the fruit of the pearl oyster shell.
> The pig swallows the pearls,
> Grumbling with her muffled
> Creak, squeak, creak,
> And trots along here and there
> In the mud.
> Look in the ordure she dropped!
> The pearl as well is the color of dirt.
> I remember giving the pig the pearls
> Of the fruit of the pearl oyster shell. (MARRA 2004, 60)

It goes without saying that a feminist reading of this poem would turn the tables on Kuki by positing the man as the squeaking pig.

KUKI'S OTHER: CRAVING FOR FOREIGN FOOD

Food is the other example in which the desire for the Other turns into gourmandism with unpleasant consequences. We find many poems on food in Kuki's collections, starting with the long poem "Seafood Restaurant" (*Sakana ryōriya*) from *Paris Mindscapes* (*Parī Shinkei*, 1925).

[Man]
Oh, the sea, the sea
Born in an island country in the Far East
I pine for the blue sea,
The shore scattered with seashells,
White sand bathing in the morning sun,
The smell of seaweed, the sound of waves,
I wonder, you who grew up in Paris,
Do you understand my feelings?
Tonight let us go to Prunier
On Victor Hugo Avenue.

Pillars designed with the pattern of scallops,
Lamps shaped as sea crabs,
Watery foam on the walls,
Fish on the counters,
The ceiling a light turquoise,
The rug the crimson color of seaweed,
A faint floating light,
A scent more fleeting than a dream,
Like breathing at the bottom of the sea,
My favorite seafood restaurant.

[Woman]
What was your favorite dish?
Salmon roe sandwich,
Sea urchin in its shell
Sprinkled with lemon juice,
The chowder bouillabaisse
A specialty from Marseilles,
Lobsters the thermidor style
Not the American style,
I too like
The steamed flatfish Paris style.

For a dress I will choose clothes of black silk.
Don't you like the way my figure looms over the silver wall,
One snowy white rose on my breast,
Pearls for necklace,

A platinum watch on my wrist,
A white diamond ring,
A hat the green color of laver
I will pull down over my eyes coquettishly?
Let me please make my lipstick heavy.
Do you still insist I am princess of the sea?
(MARRA 2004, 46–47)

Several *tanka* also deal with food:

Toki to shite Since, at times,
Koki irodori no I pine for
Itaria ga The intense colors
Koishiki yue ni Of Italy,
Ichijiku o hamu I end up eating a fig.
(MARRA 2004, 70)

Zensai no Vinegar dishes
Sunomono mo yoshi Are good appetizers, too,
Komayaka ni The finger's gesture
Fōku o toreru In taking the fork delicately
Yubitsuki mo yoshi Also is good.
(MARRA 2004, 74)

Maruseru to Won't I find consolation
Aniesu to kuu In the seafood
Puriunie no Of Prunier,
Sakana ryōri ni mo Where I eat
Nagusamanu ka na With Marcel and Agnès?
(MARRA 2004, 84)

Or, the first verse of the rhyming poem "Cointreau" (*Koantorō*):

To the streets of Paris I cling,
A restaurant late at night,
Small bottle of Cointreau, a bite,
The blessing of a fleeting spring. (MARRA 2004, 113)

The outcome of the consumption of so much foreign food is quite predictable—an indigestion of unhomeliness that makes the poet vomit,

as we see from Kuki's poem "Vomiting" (*Hedo*) from the collection *Windows of Paris* (*Parī no Mado*, 1925).

> At times I vomit.
> Working alone,
> Sitting in a chair in my study,
> Suddenly nausea comes.
>
> I bolt up without knowing what I am doing,
> Poke my head out the window onto the street,
> Ouch, ouch,
> Vomit driven by distress:
>
> Artichokes, asparagus,
> Snails, frogs,
> Entrails of crabs, jellyfish,
> Rabbit's testicles, pigeon's liver.
>
> Divine wrath of gourmandism!
> Proof of indigestion!
> Ouch, ouch,
> It also smells of wine.
>
> Formal wear, pleated skirt, don't get close,
> Surplice and priestly robe stay away,
> School cap don't come near,
> Women, children run!
>
> At times I vomit.
> Not a case of appendicitis!
> Not a pregnancy!
> I must be possessed by an annoying fox. (Marra 2004, 65)

Conclusion

This poem confirms once again that the encounter with the Other is nothing but a simple illusion, or better to say, a painful delusion. What conclusions can we draw from the reading of Kuki's poetry? Kuki points at three different solutions of the enigma of the Other:

the Hegelian approach, the Heideggerian approach, and Kuki's own approach. The annoying fox makes the Hegelian synthesis impossible. Hegel was able to digest the Other after mercilessly feeding on it in a process in which the Other was completely digested, obliterated, and expunged from the body. With Heidegger, the Other is recuperated (the Ister flows back into the Donau), but, as we saw from Kuki's critique, it turned out that Heidegger's Other was not totally other; it was simply the other side of sameness, Germany's local Orient—Greece. This Other turned out to be a homogeneous Other, against Heidegger's own intention to overturn metaphysics and the principle of self-sameness. What we learn from Kuki is that the true Other can only be vomited. It is a rich food, an appetizing food, a tempting food, but it is just too much food to handle. We are back to square one: how do we deal with the truly Other? How does the truly Other inform our feeling of homeliness? This certainly requires some further thought. For the time being, I hope the reader enjoyed at least the poetry.

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The Subject of History in Miki Kiyoshi's "Shinran"

Melissa Anne-Marie Curley

In 1932, the young Marxist thinker Tosaka Jun (1900–1945) pegged his equally young colleague Miki Kiyoshi (1897–1945) as "the brightest star on the horizon" of Nishida philosophy (Heisig 2001, 3). Tosaka died in prison on August 9, 1945, less than a week before Japan's surrender of the Pacific War. Miki died in prison on September 26, 1945, barely a week before the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers issued the directive to release all prisoners being held under the terms of the Peace Preservation Act (*Chian ijihō* 治安維持法). The timing and circumstances of Miki's death seem to lend it a particular kind of weight—novelist Toyoshima Yoshio writes that Miki died just as the age was on the verge of "a great revolutionary conversion [*tenkan* 転換]": times were ripe for change, Miki's thought ripe for use, and then, "all of a sudden, he is dead" (Toyoshima 1967).

An unfinished essay on the Jōdo Shinshū patriarch Shinran was found amongst Miki's belongings; it was assembled for publication in 1946,

* Many thanks are due to Victor Hori and Iwamoto Akemi for their assistance with the translation of the Shinran essay, and to Mark Blum for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

and received some public and critical attention in the postwar milieu, invested perhaps with surplus meaning as a posthumous work. Assessments of the place of the Shinran essay in Miki's larger body of work vary, in part simply because of the difficulty of dating the manuscript. Because it is the last text of Miki's to be published, it is tempting, of course, to read it also as Miki's last words, as though it was intended to be a summation of his thought. Shigenori Nagatomo seems to suggest that indeed we should read it this way, finding in what he calls "Miki's last, though unfinished, writing" the "culmination" of Miki's religious dimension, that element of his thought dealing with "the concept of the ego developing into religious awareness" (NAGATOMO 1995, 2 n.2). Harry Harootunian too calls the essay Miki's "last work"; suggesting that it was written in a state of exhaustion (HAROOTUNIAN 2000, 358), he characterizes it as a record of Miki's attempt "to return to the tradition of religious thinking and action of Shinran"—that is to return to some native home—though he "never quite got there" (HAROOTUNIAN 2000, 358). Karaki Junzō, on the other hand, doing a close examination of the manuscript, identifies the Shinran essay as belonging to an earlier period, possibly as early as the late 1930s, and in any case decidely not Miki's last work (KARAKI 2002, 80); on this view, the essay should be read as a record of Miki's earlier views, rather than an expression of his mature thought (see also Kunō Osamu's introduction to the Shinran essay in KUNŌ 1966).

Nagatomo and Karaki seem to agree, however, that the Shinran essay represents a turn away from Miki's usual Marxian interests. Miki's political philosophy, according to Nagatomo, is well served with a Marxist reading, but his religious dimension is something else—it "cannot be covered by this orientation" (NAGATOMO 1995, 2 n.2). Karaki suggests that we see in Miki's consideration of Shinran not so much the efflorescence of a religious dimension, but an expression of the religious, eternalist side of Miki stricken by fear of the consequences of the humanism to which Miki was rationally committed, a fear of the nothingness that must follow death (KARAKI 2002, 83–84). Both then would seem to me to share the understanding that the Shinran essay represents a turn away from Marx, and cannot be read through a Marxian lens, except perhaps negatively.

What strikes me about the Shinran essay though is that the line of thought most clearly developed in it is neither anthropological nor theological but historiographical, with page upon page devoted to rehearsing the details of *shōzōmatsu* 正像末 (the three ages of true, counterfeit, and final *dharma*), which, Miki says, consitutes the Buddhist view of history (Miki 1999, 173). The essay begins with the assertion that it is quite right to say that Shinran's thought is defined by its having "made something human of Buddhism" (Miki 1999, 156), but what Miki is working toward is the claim that this is only possible because Shinran grasped the Buddhist teachings in terms of his own historical situation in relation to *shōzōmatsu*—"human reality," writes Miki, "is essentially historical reality," and again, taking another stab at the same passage, "history is the human being's most profound reality" (Miki 1999, 196). I would assert that in taking up the question of the Buddhist view of history, Miki is in fact writing through and about Marx. The Shinran Miki is after in this essay is a Shinran whose historical consciousness was sufficiently raised. In this paper I want to situate Miki and his Shinran in the context of mid-twentieth-century Japanese thought, in order to suggest why there might be certain obstacles standing in the way of an assessment of Miki's Shinran as a Marxian Shinran, and then try to work out what it is in Miki's version of Buddhist history that I take to be Marxian. Finally by way of conclusion I want to briefly mention one implication of the Shinran essay which I think does indeed suggest a serious break with Marx.

Miki's marginality

Miki's position as a representative of Japanese Marxism is somewhat bedeviled. His relationship with the chief representatives of Marxism in Japan during his lifetime was an uneasy one—in 1930, the same year he was arrested and jailed for having violated the Peace Preservation Act by making a donation to the Japanese Communist Party, he was ousted from the Proletariat Science Research Institute (Puroretaria Kagaku Kenkyūjo プロレタリア科学研究所) after being denounced by Hattori Shisō (1901–1956) as "a bourgeois social democrat" (Doak 1998, 248). In 1938 he became a member of the imperial Shōwa Research Asso-

ciation (Shōwa Kenkyūkai 昭和研究会); following his death, despite the fact that there is little sign that Miki himself had lost interest in Marxism, this period of involvement with the state comes to be viewed as an apostasy, or *tenkō* 転向.[1] Further, like Tosaka, one of Miki's chief concerns was the question of subjectivism (*shutaisei* 主体性) (KOSCHMANN 1981, 615); in the post-war period, this came to be seen as an unorthodox area of interest, with the Japanese Communist Party officially denouncing subjectivism in 1948 and leading party intellectuals sharply critiquing efforts to read Marx through Nishida (KOSCHMANN 1981, 623). As the Kyoto School and Marxist camps become increasingly polarized following the end of the war then, Miki comes to occupy a doubly marginal position—if he was too interested in Marx to warrant posthumous inclusion in the Kyoto School proper, he was too involved with the Kyoto School to be readily embraced by post-war Marxists.

At the same time, Hattori was developing a doctrinaire interpretation of Shinran in his *Shinran nōto* 親鸞ノート [Notes on Shinran, 1948], in

1. It seems to me that the image of Miki as a *tenkōsha*, especially when combined with the counter-image of Miki as a political martyr, has so much power that it has taken on a life of its own. Andrew Barshay, for example, who positions Miki as the emblematic apostate turned martyr, writes that "In a sense Miki represents both prewar Marxism and prewar social science, *in extremis*" (BARSHAY 1992, 377). Christopher S. Goto-Jones seems to attribute Miki's *tenkō* to the weakness of *both* of his philosophical commitments: "He never fully embraced Marxism and his will was broken by government pressure. Unlike the other members of the Kyoto School, who generally demonstrate impressive continuity throughout their careers, Miki underwent an abrupt *tenkō* in the late 1930s" (GOTO-JONES 2005A, 105). In another work, however, Goto-Jones proposes a more sympathetic reading of Miki's intellectual career, suggesting that the involvement with the Shōwa Kenkyūkai was not mere submission but an attempt—even if a failed attempt—to engage state power, noting that Miki continued to "identify himself with the 'Left'" even after his "apparent *tenkō*" (GOTO-JONES 2005B, 5) and that in fact Miki never made "a significant intellectual reversal or *tenkō*" (GOTO-JONES 2005B, 16). The narrative usefulness of the image of Miki as Marxist-turned-apostate-turned-martyr—the very fact that this image allows him to represent the intellectual movements of the prewar *in extremis*—should perhaps make us a little bit suspicious. Michiko Yusa and Massimiliano Tomasi flatly state that "The description of Miki Kiyoshi as a 'Marxist' and as someone who gave his life for his ideological conviction is a myth," albeit one "believed by many" (YUSA and TOMASI 1998, 655); I would suggest that the description of Miki as an apostate too might have a slightly mythic quality.

which he sought to "take Shinran out of the temple, and out of Japanese philosophy shaped like a Western-style temple, and… release him in the vicinity of the peasants—the very place where Shinran was when he was alive" (cited in Yoshida 2006, 386). The temple Hattori is referring to is Honganji, the power center of institutionalized Jōdo Shinshū; the Japanese philosopher he has in mind is Miki, whose interpretation of Shinran he reads as distorted by a desire to serve the interests of the state (Yoshida 2006, 387). Although some of the details of Hattori's interpretation are later called into question (Yoshida 2006, 387), and the issue of just which segments of the peasantry Shinran worked with becomes a matter of debate for social historians, the idea that what Shinran gained through the experience of exile was a new sense of class consciousness and that his tradition was rooted in solidarity with the underclass proves to have considerable appeal. Tomoko Yoshida suggests that Hattori's vision of Shinran as a social reformer exerts an influence on both Ienaga Saburō and Kuroda Toshio in terms of their assessments of the historical significance of Jōdo Shinshū, and it seems to me that the image of Shinran we find in the *Shinran nōto* continues to have a certain currency in later sectarian studies as well, with Hirose Takashi, for example, arguing that Shinran's ideas of equality derive from his experience of social exile (Hirose 1980, 45–48).

Miki is not writing a social history of the feudal period, and so his Shinran is not immediately recognizable as the doctrinaire Marxist Shinran. But more than that, the doctrinaire Marxist Shinran is in some sense called into being precisely as a critique of Miki's Shinran—it is not only that the usual Marxist version of Shinran does not happen to resemble Miki's version: it *specifically* does not resemble Miki's version. So the context for the reception of Miki's Shinran essay over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century is one in which it is easy to read the Shinran essay as Miki's last work and in which the received understanding is that at the end of his life, Miki's relationship to Marxist thought was one of profound struggle; one in which there is a widely circulated image of the Marxist Shinran and Miki's Shinran is pointedly not that version; and one in which Miki himself is remembered by the Kyoto School as a Marxist but by the Marxists as a member of the Kyoto

School. All of this, I think, encourages the setting aside of Marxian categories of analysis when reading the Shinran essay.

If, however, we go back to Nagatomo's assertion as to what the Shinran essay is really about—"the concept of the ego developing into religious awareness"—we find something worth looking at more closely. It is true that Miki has much to say about realization (*jikaku* 自覚)[2] in the Shinran essay, but he qualifies this as historical realization, writing that for Shinran, "the realization of one's humanness is intimately bound up with the realization of history" (MIKI 1999, 173) and that Shinran "realized himself in the age, and the age in himself" (MIKI 1999, 181). Elsewhere, Miki is critical of Japanese philosophy's lack of interest in the temporal, characterizing Japanese thought as featuring

> a pattern of thinking which is expressed by the term *soku* [即]… in which I see an essence of this [so-called Eastern] naturalism… insofar as it is *soku*, it is not of process and temporal in its meaning, and consequently it is not historical. Even in Nishida's philosophy, which is the very first philosophy to infuse humanism into Eastern philosophy, what is still lacking is the process, and temporal, historical perspective. (cited in NAGATOMO 1995, 19, his interpolation)

In Jōdo Shinshū, he finds a variety of Buddhist thought that he can position as exquisitely temporal and historical in its concerns.

SHINRAN'S HISTORICAL REALIZATION

The *shōzōmatsu* view of history holds that history begins unspooling with the enlightenment of Śākyamuni Buddha and proceeds through three ages: the age of true dharma (*shōbō* 正法), the age of counterfeit dharma (*zōbō* 象法), and the age of final dharma (*mappō* 末法). According to the calculations of late-Heian Buddhists, the age

2. I am translating *jikaku* as "realization" here in order to preserve what I take to be the Buddhist ring Miki intends the word to have in the particular context of the Shinran essay, and because it is easy to render as both a verb and a noun. See SAKAI 1991, 162 n.6, though, for a discussion of the complications of translating the term *jikaku*.

of final dharma began during the eleventh century. The defining characteristic of the age of final dharma is that while the Buddhist teachings remain in the world, they have lost all of their efficacy, and neither practice nor enlightenment is possible—the Buddhist path is, for all intents and purposes, closed. This means that everyone born during the age of final dharma is, necessarily and without exception, a *bonbu* 凡夫—someone who has not entered the Buddhist path and who therefore has not come into contact with the Buddha's transformative power. The *bonbu* is an abjectly ordinary person. The practice of *nenbutsu* 念仏, or calling the name of Amida Buddha in order to gain rebirth in his Pure Land, comes to possess immense appeal under these circumstances, because it purports to be effective even for the *bonbu*. Shinran's teacher, Hōnen, identifying *nenbutsu* as the practice that will work for the *bonbu*, and identifying his age as one in which everyone is a *bonbu*, holds that *nenbutsu* must therefore be the practice selected especially for his age. Hōnen thus identifies *nenbutsu* as the primary practice and every other practice as support for the *nenbutsu*. Shinran takes up Hōnen's view that *nenbutsu* is primary, and insists that every other practice be abandoned.

As Shinran understands it, the practitioner is assured of birth in the encounter with Amida; this encounter takes place in the calling of the name (*myōgō* 名号) but is actually the working of the vow. This means that true calling, the calling through which the practitioner is assured of birth in the Pure Land, must be the *nenbutsu* of other-power (*tariki* 他力) and not the *nenbutsu* of self-power (*jiriki* 自力), which at best lands the practitioner in the womb palace or castle of doubt. The *nenbutsu* of other-power is then from the standpoint of the practitioner the abjection of self-power and subjection to absolute other-power; this means that it is subjectively experienced on the one hand as the joy attendant upon being grasped by Amida, and on the other hand as an apprehension of the self itself as totally and wretchedly lacking self-power. To call the name, in other words, is to realize the self as abjectly ordinary.

This turns out to be quite interesting when cast in the light of the *shōzōmatsu* understanding that all beings born during the age of final dharma are abjectly ordinary, if you happen to be a philosopher whose primary concerns are history and subjectivity. It means that when the practitioner realizes herself as abjectly ordinary, she does not arrive at

a kind of psychological self-awareness or a purely subjective self-awareness; rather she arrives at historical self-awareness—realizing the self as abjectly ordinary is to realize the historical fix in which one finds oneself. This makes calling the name a practice of realizing one's historical situation, which is what Miki means, I think, when he says that Shinran realizes himself in the age. At the same time, although the accounts from the sūtras make it possible to assess either through calculation or empirical observation whether or not one has been born into the age of final dharma—that is, they make it possible to grasp the historical situation objectively—in calling the name, the historical situation is grasped not as external reality but as internal, subjective reality (MIKI 1999, 180). This makes calling the name the practice of realizing that subjective reality, which restores the practitioner to subjectivity as a human being in history, which is what Miki means, I think, when he says that Shinran realizes the age in himself. Calling the name thus becomes the practice of naming the relationship between history and human beings.

If, however, Shinran's historical realization is understood only as a realization of the present moment (or the reality of final dharma) (MIKI 1999, 175) and not as the present age contingent upon past ages, then that realization is temporal, but not really historical. If, in other words, the age of final dharma is conceived of as a way simply of talking about being in time or in samsāra, in contrast to Amida Buddha's being outside of time or outside of samsāra, then there is no age other than "the age of final dharma," and the significance of the preceding dharma ages as past historical realities is lost. And as Michael Marra has pointed out, the equation of the age of final dharma with samsāra itself, or human existence itself, is in fact usually taken to be one of the chief innovations of Shinran's thought (MARRA 1988, 292). Miki thus has to find a way to maintain that the three dharma ages are discrete, and that they are subjectively grasped as such by Shinran. He does this by developing an unorthodox interpretation of Shinran's experience of turning through the three vows (*sangan tennyū* 三願転入).

The process of turning through the three vows is described in the final chapter of Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* as follows: "I, Gutoku Shinran… departed everlastingly from the temporary gate of the myriad practices and various good acts and left forever the birth attained under the twin

śāla trees. Turning about [*kainyū* 回入], I entered the 'true' gate of the root of good and the root of virtue.... Nevertheless, I have now decisively departed from the 'true' gate of provisional means and, [my self-power] overturned [*tennyū* 転入], have entered the ocean of the selected Vow" (Shinran, *Kyōgyōshinshō* VI:68; translator's interpolation). The three fields here—the gate of the myriad practices and various good acts, the gate of the root of good and the root of virtue, and the ocean of the Original Vow—are understood to correspond to vows nineteen, twenty, and eighteen of Amida's forty-eight-fold vow, and to the path of the sages, the path of self-power *nenbutsu*, and the path of other-power *nenbutsu*. Shigematsu Akihisa writes of this process

> in asserting the superiority of the eighteenth vow over the nineteenth and twentieth (the so-called *sangan tennyū*), Shinran concedes that he himself had earlier dwelled at the intermediate stages of the nineteenth and twentieth vows: looking back on his life, Shinran recalls that during his days on Mt. Hiei, he was guided by the nineteenth vow; [and] as Hōnen's disciple, he came to follow the twentieth vow. (Shigematsu 1997, 305)

This kind of interpretation suggests that the course of Shinran's institutional life is the course traced in his reflection upon the three vows, and further that the moments at which Shinran turned from the nineteenth vow to the twentieth vow, and from the twentieth to the eighteenth, can be identified as moments in his social life as a practitioner, so to speak; as Miki points out, one of the principal questions of interest arising from this understanding of turning through the vows is when the two conversions took place exactly (Miki 1999, 200). Miki vigorously criticizes this question as betraying a confusion of the chronological for the historical: "Attempting to precisely establish the sequence of years in a confession like this—in an account of his own interior life—is meaningless, if not impossible.... The chronological and the historical are not the same" (Miki 1999, 202).

Against this chronological approach, Miki proposes his own "thoroughly historical" reading (Miki 1999, 202), which takes the account of the turning through the three vows as a description of the course of Shinran's interior life. The turning through the three vows must there-

fore take place in the hidden depths of Shinran's interiority, and—if we follow this line of thinking—Shinran himself must in some sense be both that which is turning through or overturning and that which is turned through or overturned. Furthermore, Miki says, it is a mistake to think of turning through the three vows as simply an assertion of the superiority of the eighteenth vow; it is true, he allows, that the nineteenth and twentieth vows are subject to criticism from the standpoint of the eighteenth vow, because the eighteenth vow negates the nineteenth and twentieth vows, but it is a negation that appropriates (*sesshu* 摂取) what it negates. I think we can say then that the eighteenth vow—the so-called Original Vow—emerges out of the sublation of the nineteenth and twentieth vows. The process of turning through the three vows, properly understood, is dialectical.

This matters for two reasons. First, Miki has already tried to establish that there is an intimate relationship between Shinran's interior life and history, and so if the turning through the three vows describes the course of Shinran's interior life, it must also describe the course of history itself. Miki suggests that each of the three vows corresponds to a different dharma age—the nineteenth vow is for the age of true dharma, which Miki has earlier characterized as the age of keeping the precepts; the twentieth vow for the age of counterfeit dharma, earlier characterized as the age of breaking the precepts; and the eighteenth vow for the age of final dharma, earlier characterized as the age of no-precepts (*mukai* 無戒) (Miki 1999, 184). This makes turning through the three vows into turning through the three ages. Miki can thus understand Shinran himself as having realized not just the age of final dharma, but each of the three dharma ages, as subjective personal experience, making his awareness of his own historical situation one granted through an awareness of the totality of the historical process.

Second, it means that the dharma ages themselves can be understood as unfolding dialectically, with the age of true dharma (keeping the precepts) negated by the age of counterfeit dharma (breaking the precepts), and sublated in the age of final dharma (no-precepts). Against the usual view of the dharma ages as a way of logically divvying up a twelve-thousand year period of continuous decline then, Miki can hold both that the age of final dharma is a new age, separated from the preceding ages

by what I think we can characterize as an epistemic rupture—"in the age of final dharma, there must be *another Buddhist teaching*… the Buddhist teaching of this time must be completely separate from that of the age of true dharma" (Miki 1999, 184)—and at the same time maintain that the age of final dharma is historically given by the preceding ages. *Shōzōmatsu* is thus made to describe not steady degeneration but a dialectic giving rise to the age of final dharma; the Buddhist view of history is revealed by Miki to have been, all along, a dialectical view of history, realized by Shinran subjectively as the birth of Shinran himself.

It is true that the vocabulary Miki uses in the Shinran essay tends toward the Buddhist rather than the Marxist—it is the *bonbu* who concerns him here rather than the members of the proletariat, and the I-Thou relationship that gives rise to the I here is the relationship between the practitioner and Amida rather than the buyer and the seller—but he does finally allow that the *shōzōmatsu* view of history is in some sense "analogous to the development of the Concept [*gainen* 概念] in Hegel" (Miki 1999, 194).[3] Where for Hegel, however, the question at hand is the question of the Concept and human beings are only instruments of the Concept, for Shinran, human beings themselves are the question (Miki 1999, 195). I would point out here that it is hard to imagine it having escaped Miki's notice that there was another thinker who was, like Hegel, concerned with the development of history through the dialectic, but for whom the question was not the question of the idea but the question of concrete human existence—that thinker, of course, being Karl Marx.

What Miki is doing in the Shinran essay then, it seems to me, is interpreting Shinran's question as a Marxian question, and concluding that Shinran's answer is a Marxian answer. That is to say, the essential event

3. In his "Centering and the World Beyond," Takeuchi Yoshinori argues for an even more fully developed Hegelian reading of Shinran, saying that the triad among "the threefold vow, the threefold movement of eschatology, and the threefold transformation of the religious individual represents a central relationship that we may, without exaggeration, liken to the Hegelian triad of the absolute spirit, the objective spirit, and the subjective spirit. There is such a dialectic method of a 'phenomenology of the religious spirit' at work in the way Shinran develops the final part of his major work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*" (Takeuchi 2004, 53).

in Shinran's life—the event of calling the name—is understood by Miki as Shinran's realization of himself as *bonbu*, that is as an individual historical subject located inextricably at the heart of a universal historical process, such that said-universal process is realized in Shinran *not* as a universal process but as "more than anything else, an unsparing critique of Shinran alone" (Miki 1999, 182). In this apprehension of the self as a historically-given subject at the center of history, the liberating function of history—Amida's original vow—is likewise realized "as striking at the core of his own self" (Miki 1999, 210), as being "entirely for the sake of Shinran alone." So in realizing the self as a human subject thoroughly and primordially enmeshed in the dialectical unfolding of socio-historical time, Shinran achieves absolute freedom as a real human being.[4] This Shinran is Marx's *Gattungswesen*, or species-being, who even in absolute isolation is the "totality of human manifestation of life" (Marx 1975, 299).

Shinran as a maker of history

If Shinran's realization is historical in the sense that it is given through and as awareness of the three dharma ages, it is also historical in the sense that it opens up the evental moment in which Shinran, as the founder of the Jōdo Shinshū, becomes what Miki calls "a new point of departure" (Miki 1999, 195). Against his initial implication that Miki's turn to Shinran represents a weary flight out of the twentieth century back to some native home then, I think Harootunian is right when he says later that in fact the same notion that circulates in Miki's writings on historical materialism—that "what characterized history as actuality was its capacity 'to realize the self in history as an oppositional one'"

4. We can get a sense of how far Miki is from the center of the Kyoto School here by comparing this understanding of Shinran's "for the sake of myself alone" with Nishitani Keiji's understanding of the same passage. Nishitani writes in his "The Problem of Time in Shinran" that Shinran's "for the sake of myself alone" is the expression of a Shinran who has been "extracted from world history and the entire span of time," who "passes clear of the scene of joint-existence with other men and stands, as it were, as the only person, alone in the universe" (Nishitani 1978, 21).

(Harootunian 2000, 374)—is what drives his interest in Shinran. For Miki, Harootunian suggests, "Shinran's greatness stemmed from this conception of an oppositional self" (Harootunian 2000, 374). What Shinran uncovers in the depths of his interior subjectivity is socio-historical reality; what he produces out of this realization is an alternative socio-historical reality, a field on which to practice a new set of social relations—Shinshū's *dōbōdōgyō* 同朋同行 (fellowship of practitioners). This is a vision of Shinran as a reformer not of the class structure but of the whole fabric of socio-political reality.

If we hold that the Shinran essay is concerned primarily with the individual ego, if we treat it as divorced from socio-political thought, we miss the significance of Miki's suggestion that the *dōbōdōgyō* is the real product of Shinran's *nenbutsu* and that through the *dōbōdōgyō* a revolutionary egalitarian social order is established. Miki's reading of Shinran then is not a Marxist reading, but it is surely a Marxian reading, concerned with the same questions of subjectivity and history that otherwise preoccupied Miki, and coming, it seems to me, to the eminently Marxian conclusion that what prompted Shinran's historical realization was not the happenstance of exile but his having understood that the question posed by *shōzōmatsu* was "at its origin and in every respect, that of his own *present moment*" (Miki 1999, 176), and thus acquiring what Walter Benjamin has called the historian's revolutionary awareness of history as "time filled by the presence of the now" (Benjamin 1992, 261). Amida's Pure Land comes to be understood in this light not as a paradisical afterlife or way out of death, but as a revolutionary socio-historical order: that which appears when—to borrow from Miki borrowing from Rennyo—in the form of the *dōbōdōgyō*, "the Buddha-land [*bukkoku* 仏国] is built upon the earth" (Miki 1999, 210).

On the other hand, if we hold that the Shinran essay is only a reiteration of Miki's Marxian concerns, we miss the significance of Miki's note that while in the face of the original vow, all beings, as *bonbu*, are equal, "this kind of equality"—religious equality—"does not reduce human beings to 'the masses' [*gunshū* 群衆]" (Miki 1999, 185). In valorizing "religious equality" in this way, Miki comes to emphasize the face-to-face encounter between the individual and Amida, which has to be unmediated: the self that conceives of itself as in relation to Amida only as "an

example of the category [*ruigainen* 類概念]" is, according to Miki, "not the truly real self" (MIKI 1999, 209). The category returns—it is what becomes the "concrete universal" of *dōbōdōgyō* (MIKI 1999, 210)—but in the moment of historical self-realization, it is dropped off. So the I-Thou relationship between individual and society that Miki examines elsewhere is supplanted in the Shinran essay by the I-Thou relationship of individual and Buddha, and society is displaced to a secondary position; when it returns, it returns as the absolute equality of the *dōbōdōgyō*. In other words, while Miki is interested in the way in which religion might coax out historical consciousness, the material he is working with here, and the way in which he is working with it, do not seem to provide any moment in which that historical consciousness can manifest as *class* consciousness. I think that Miki is doing this on purpose; he is plainly concerned with differentiating the existential religious equality on offer through Shinshū from "external social equality" (MIKI 1999, 185). But obviously in setting aside class, he sets aside a critical category of Marxian historiography. Bearing in mind then that the Shinran essay is unfinished and in some key places fragmentary, it seems to me that it describes a Marxian Shinran, and intimates a classless Pure Land, without imagining the necessity of a historical class revolution in between.

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Transcendence of the State in Watsuji's Ethics

Bernard Bernier

In *Rinrigaku* 倫理学 [Ethics, 1937], Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960) defines the state (*kokka* 国家) as the ethical organization of ethical organizations (*rinriteki soshiki no rinriteki soshiki* 倫理的組織の倫理的組織) (Watsuji 1962, 595–96). This expression has a double meaning. The first, more literal, is that the state is the all-encompassing organization that gives each of the included levels of organization (the couple, the community of siblings, the family, the territorial organization, and finally the cultural community) its proper place in an ethical hierarchy. Since the state is the only level of organization that has no ego (*shi* 私), it is also the only one that can transcend all the others and give them their proper ethical places. Other levels of organization have their own ethical aspect, but one limited by a specific kind of egoism that requires a higher level of organization. This higher level of organization is the state, as the ethical organization of ethical organizations. The state is the only level of organization that is synthetic and conscious of itself, thus the only one without egoism. Therefore, the state is the only level that can guarantee ethics without egoism.

But there is another possible reading of this passage and many others in the section entitled "Kokka" in the first volume of *Rinrigaku*. It is

this alternative reading that I want to explore. I base my analysis not only on the quote given above about ethical organizations, but also on other passages in *Rinrigaku* and in *Fūdo* 風土 [Climate, 1935]. These give us a somewhat different vision of what Watsuji sees in the state.

Watsuji defines the state as the community that is thoroughly ethical, even though any state is limited in its manifestation of human relations. This limitation comes from the historical-climatic nature of the state, that is, from the specific historical development of each state in its milieu (Watsuji 1962, 15–22). The state as totality, in its concrete forms, is always relative and limited, but this is the way in which the human totality manifests itself (at least up to now, but we can infer from Watsuji's way of writing about it that it is really the highest possible level of human organization). Despite this limitation, the state, when organized and acting properly, embodies ethics, albeit in a special cultural form, in a special definition of morals. Even more, a humanity-encompassing state would destroy cultural diversity, and thus destroy the basis of morality. Whatever its form, the state defines the ultimate ethical principles. As was mentioned, it encompasses all other communities or organizations and it guarantees their ethical aspects and their hierarchical order. It is in this sense that Watsuji writes that "totality is always realized as a limited and relative totality, which is its way to manifest itself as absolute totality" (Watsuji 1962, 593).

As the basic ethical community, the state is the level that manifests most clearly the double negation that is the basis of ethics, according to Watsuji. The first negation is the one whereby the individual negates the community of which he is a part. The second negation is the one in which the individual negates himself and returns to his community (Watsuji 1962, 26–27). Whereas the first negation is necessary for ethics to exist, it is really the second that creates ethics in a proper sense. This double negation is the essence of ethics, but it is also the basis of the community and, above all, it is the fundamental principle of this all-encompassing totality that is the state.

The state can take different forms or be conceived in different manners. In Roman times, the state was *res publica*, a common thing. In England, the state is conceived as Commonwealth. For Watsuji, these definitions, which are centered on things, do not define the state properly, but they

at least identify what is central to the state, as something that people have in common (Watsuji 1962, 594). It is what people have in common that defines them as members of a state.

For Watsuji, what people of a state have in common is not a material thing or wealth. What they have in common is the fact that they live together in a historical-climatic community, that is, in a common ethical life, under the state and guaranteed by the state. This is what is called "public" (*kō* 公). According to Watsuji, the ancient Japanese recognized this character of the state when they defined it as *ōyake* 大家 (the great family). As public, the state transforms individual existence and makes use of all individualities to create an ethical system (Watsuji 1962, 594).

As such, the state cannot be conceived of as one part of a society, opposed to all other parts, such as the economy or churches. On the contrary, economic organizations, churches, and even regional communities are only parts of the state, which encompasses them. The state is the locus (*basho* 場所) of all other communities, and above all it guarantees their ethical character (Watsuji 1962, 597–8). The state cannot be reduced to the level of a part of society, whose function is to defend society or to maintain order. The fact that the state regulates communities at other levels, and upholds their ethical character, means that the state is superior to these other levels. Watsuji sees Western individualism as the origin of the conception of the state as only a part within society, because Western theories derive the state from individual interests. In the theory of individual rights, the state is generated by the people as a collection of individuals whose acceptance is essential to the existence of the state as public. In Watsuji's view, this is wrong, because there is no state whose sovereignty is based on a contract that is imposed from the outside on a people and a territory.

Sovereignty for Watsuji is the consciousness of the totality of human existence, and the intermediary of this consciousness is the cultural community (the nation). But this consciousness is complete only with the state. In this sense, it is the state as an ethical organization, which transcends communities at all other levels, that links in a concrete way the three abstract elements of people, territory and sovereignty (Watsuji 1962, 605–606).

While encompassing all other communities, the state does not define their content in detail. It only gives the general rules to be followed. The state disseminates these rules through education. But it can also impose them by force. This force emerges from the ethical character of the state. In primitive societies, the law is god-given, and any crime appears as the profanation of the sacred (*seinaru* 聖なる) (Watsuji 1962, 601). This indicates that the law is the emanation of the living totality and, as such, it has a force that is stronger than any individual's. All individuals are born into a society that already accepts the sacred. This sacred is the authority or the power (*iryoku* 威力) of the totality (Watsuji 1962, 602).

The force of the state that emanates from its sacred character is manifested in laws (Watsuji 1962, 604). It is through laws that the state defines the way and the degree of application of its own capacity for coercion, its own force. The state also defines its own internal organizations for the definition and application of the laws, that is government administration and the courts.

In circumstances defined by law, the force of the state can be physical and violent. Any person who goes against the law will be punished by the brute physical force of the state, a force that can be military. What gives the law and the state such strength is their sacred nature as representations of the totality. The totality has authority (*ken'i* 権威) not on the basis of force, but rather on the basis of its authority (Watsuji 1962, 602). Even the military force of the state derives from its sacred character (*shinseisei* 神聖性) as totality (Watsuji 1962, 602). The exercise of force by the state is public and never arbitrary or selfish (*shi'i* 姿意) because it is based on ethical principles (Watsuji 1962, 604). Furthermore, it is conscious of itself, as is demonstrated by the constitution of each state (Watsuji 1962, 604–605). It is this self-consciousness (*jikaku* 自覚) on the part of the state that makes it superior to the cultural community as the absolute totality (*zettaiteki zentaisei* 絶対的全体性) (Watsuji 1962, 605). Any state that is included in a larger totality loses its character as state. Any state that loses its sovereignty is no longer a state because sovereignty (*shukensei* 主権性) cannot be superseded by any other authority (Watsuji 1962, 605). As a

consequence, the state as sovereign is the supreme totality (*kyūkyokuteki na zentaisei* 究極的な全体性) (Watsuji 1962, 605).

Watsuji also defines emptiness (*kū* 空) or nothingness (*mu* 無) as the absolute totality (Watsuji 1962, 27). There is thus in Watsuji's ethics the question of articulating this type of absolute totality with the state. In *Rinrigaku*, Watsuji does not give any indication of the way this problem might be resolved.

What distinguishes modern states from primitive chiefdoms, according to Watsuji, is usually the separation, in the former, of the state from the sacred. This separation, which is linked to the development of individualism in the West, has obscured the basic sacred character of the state as totality. But there is a modern society that has kept this sacred character of the state as totality, and it is the Japanese imperial state, as indicated by the term *matsurigoto* 政, or more literally 祭事 (Watsuji 1935, 149). According to the conception which is associated with this term, the emperor is at the same time the political leader of the state and the supreme religious leader. He embodies both aspects of the totality that is the state. As such, his nature as political-religious leader is a purer manifestation of the supreme sacred totality Watsuji 1935, 150).

It is the definition by Watsuji of the state in general as the ultimate sacred totality, the absolute totality, and of the Japanese imperial state as its clearest and most complete embodiment, that can be construed as referring to the state as transcendent. Following this position, the state stands above all communities and above all individuals. There is no totality that stands above it. As such, the state defines its own way of exercising authority. Moreover, as we saw, it is the totality that encompasses all other levels of community. Finally, this totality is sacred, and this sacred character is especially clear in the Japanese imperial state.

In an earlier paper (Bernier 2008), I examined how Watsuji, while rejecting any transcendence based on a personal God outside of this world, or on abstract principles, as in the West, finally reverted to positing the transcendence of the Japanese imperial state as sacred, because of the descent of the imperial line from Amaterasu Ōmikami (Watsuji 1935, 150). Here, I have tried to show that this transcendence, while perhaps derived fundamentally from Watsuji's reverence for the emperor (although he also refers to sacred chiefdoms in so-called

primitive societies to buttress his position), can also be seen in his philosophical and theoretical development on the state in general, even outside of Japan. It is clear in *Rinrigaku* that he attempts to establish the sacred and absolute character of the state in a universal way without making use of Japan's imperial system.

Watsuji's theory of the state shares some similarities with Durkheim's theory of religion: Durkheim conceived of the sacred as derived from society itself, as the sacralization of society, in *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* [The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1912]. But there are also differences. Watsuji's position seems closer to Durkheim's when limited to stateless societies, in which case, according to him, the sacred totality is not conscious of itself. Therefore, for Watsuji, in this type of society, the sacred character as derived from the totality is less clear as compared to state societies, where the state is consciously, at least in Japan, the supreme embodiment of the sacred totality. Moreover, according to Watsuji, it is not society as such, but *kokka*, the state, which is the ultimate sacred totality, because it is conscious of itself as totality. Watsuji's position on this point differs from Durkheim's. We could say that Durkheim's position is sociological, in the sense that the sacred derives from society, whereas Watsuji's is more political, centered on the state.

For Watsuji, the state is the ultimate transcendent totality, because it is sacred, and also in the sense that it cannot be superseded by any other form of organization. Furthermore, in the case of Japan, Watsuji conceives of the sacred character of the state as deriving not only from the totality as sacred, but also from the imperial line as descendant of Amaterasu Ōmikami. Despite these differences, there is a similarity in the position of Durkheim and Watsuji in linking totality to the sacred despite the fact that one sees totality as society and the other as the state.

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Guiding Principles of Interpretation in Watsuji Tetsurō's *History of Japanese Ethical Thought*

With Particular Reference to the Tension between the *Sonnō* and *Bushidō* Traditions

David A. Dilworth

Considering that Watsuji's *Nihon rinri shisōshi* 日本倫理思想史 [History of Japanese Ethical Thought] appeared in 1952, this seminar affords us the opportunity to look back and assess its contents fifty years later. My own approach will be both appreciative of his literary psychology and yet frankly critical of his ethical thought.

In the preface to his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* Kant remarks that "there are scholars for whom the history of philosophy (both ancient and modern) is philosophy itself; for these the present *Prolegomena* are not written" (Kant 1977, 1). This critical coin finds purchase in those who have conflated and do conflate *philosophy* with the *history of philosophy*. After Kant, such conflation actually achieved a huge legitimation in the right- and left-wing Hegelian schools. In the 1920s Watsuji and other Kyoto School writers bought into a latter-day version of this legitimation when they read Heidegger's *Being and Time* and other contemporary European works of the period.

In the aftermath of Hegelianism in Europe, strains of so-called Con-

tinental Philosophy (e.g., in Heidegger, and especially in the Parisian Heideggerians) featured sense-constituting historico-cultural assumptions of their own. In contemporary postmodernism, history is refracted into differences, that is, into competing cultural histories—and "herstories"—which is to say, into agonistic linguistic matrices and their attendant cultural symbolics foundationally legislated as to their irreducible particularities. If I may evoke the spirit of the American philosopher Charles S. Peirce, I call such deliberately particularistic constructions *nominalistic*, and I don't think they can withstand serious scrutiny. (Moreover, while it is beyond the scope of this seminar, I think the particularistic premises of multiculturalism need urgently to be scrutinized in the light of the threat of Islamic extremism in the world today—a point that will become clearer as I proceed.)

To stick with my more rarified subject, the postmodern discourses, as they claim to break away from the universalistic thought patterns of modernity—that is, of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European Enlightenment thought with its provenance in ancient Greek philosophy—decidedly take their stand on a hermeneutical principle of *cultural differences.* This tendency was also exhibited in the Kyoto School writers whose agenda in large part consisted in assimilating the Hegelian and post-Hegelian thought patterns even while asserting *their* dialectical differences from them. The perhaps shining example of this was Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960), the bottom line of whose career-text can be regarded as commuting "ethics" into "theocracy"—the theory that the state is the temporal manifestation of the divine order. In such terms Watsuji's postmodernism joins hands with pre-modernism in its most crucial respect, namely theocracy, as witnessed again by Islamic fundamentalism today.

Mention should be made of the complex dialogue that took place among the principal Kyoto School writers in the war years of the 1930s and 1940s. This was a time when the Japanese philosophers especially strove to be *nihonteki* 日本的 ("Japanese"). They subscribed to differential historicist views of "East" and "West." They were generally prone to imply the superiority of Japanese thought even in Asia, and to assert what they featured as Japan's philosophical mission in world history.

Given this atmosphere in which Watsuji among others rose to aca-

demic prominence, one of the hidden variables for our seminar to consider is that of *historicism* itself in the form of the advocacy of *cultural hermeneutics* rather than *philosophy* universally considered. Another is to consider that cultural hermeneutics in its various postmodern formulations joins hands with pre-modernism, especially in the form that boils down to theocracy. Yet another issue that comes out of this paper is whether either Watsuji's cultural hermeneutics of *sonnō* 尊王 (Veneration of the Emperor) or the separate strains of *bushidō* 武士道 (the Way of the Warrior) can legitimately be called *ethical* theories at all, as distinguished from descriptions of *politico-theological* symbolics.

Although this is something of an aside, let me approach the same point in terms of the multicultural *politics* that dominates the modern university today. Wittingly or unwittingly, the modern university already fosters differential historicist thinking in the way it divides academic life into such administrative units as "Western philosophy," "Asian philosophy," and "Asian Studies." "Asian Studies" and "Asian philosophy" indeed are often somewhat strangely placed under other academic umbrellas, such as Religious Studies or Comparative Literature. Asian Studies or Religious Studies becomes the "home" of further administrative cuts made among Middle Eastern, Indian (South and Southeast Asian), Chinese, and Japanese thought traditions. In this bureaucratic way the university forces genuine forms of *perennial philosophy* to survive in the form of *regional-based* tracks of academic courses taught out of unrelated anthologies, as for example in the various "sourcebooks" of Indian, Chinese, and Japanese traditions. The "Asian" varieties are generally manned by scholars who work independently of "Western" varieties. But, to be sure, the Western traditions also tend to be split up into scholastic specializations such as Continental, British, and American schools of thought, often accompanied by a hegemonic promotion of a particular disciplinary establishment.[1] In effect, the university establishes competing "histories of ideas" and students learn to think in such eristic terms. Instead of philosophers canvassing the traditions with a goal of discovering the perennial true ideas—the most adequate system or sys-

1. Cf. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) which endeavors one still fashionable kind of deconstruction of intellectual history writ-

tems of ideas and their overlapping or complementary features—their tendency is to burrow into separate turfs—which is to say, into the sanctuaries of their own hermeneutical circles.

I now turn back to Watsuji Tetsurō who contributed his own considerable prestige to these multicultural and historicist premises. As you all know, his many writings featured a method of doing what he termed "philosophical anthropology" that centers on the "existential spatiality" or "human climaticity" (*fūdo* 風土) of cultures. In that framework he depicted the "typhoon nature" of Japanese culture and constructed a literary narrative of the superiority of Japan's spiritual culture grounded in its pristine mythology of Veneration of the Japanese Emperor.

We can catch the gist of this if we briefly attend to Watsuji's evolving career-text. After youthful studies of Schopenhauer (1912), Nietzsche (1913), and Kierkegaard (1915), Watsuji, at the age of 29, produced a best-selling work, *Gūzō saikō* 偶像再興 [Revival of Idols, 1918]. Apparently the young Watsuji took no heed of a central tenet of Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche which consisted in their strong rejections of Hegelianism.[2] Instead, his attention gradually "turned" toward Heidegger's existential phenomenology. After reading *Being and Time* in Berlin in 1927, he went on to interpret Japanese artistic and religious cultures in such works as *Nihon seishinshi kenkyū* 日本精神史研究 [Studies in the History of the Japanese Spirit, 1926–1934] and in another best-seller, *Fūdo* 風土 [Climate: a Philosophical Consideration, written in 1928–1929, published in 1935]. His appropriation of Heidegger's existential phenomenology only continued and intensified as he matured. It is deeply inscribed in his three-volume *Rinrigaku* 倫理学 [Ethics] of the 1930s and 1940s and finally blended into his *Nihon rinri shisōshi*, said to be the crowning work of his career.[3]

ten in a Foucauldian perspective. In contrast to this approach, I am lamenting the balkanization of philosophy into "niche ontologies" that produce regional specializations at the expense of the perennially universal truth-qualities of the great philosophical classics.

2. William R. LaFleur gives a plausible account of the young Watsuji's *Sturm und Drang* period, in which he Romantically rediscovered Japan's ancient Buddhist shrines, as a Taishō period intellectual's gesture against the older generation of the Meiji period (LaFleur 1990).

My thesis is that, in view of his overall achievement, Watsuji can now—fifty years later—be regarded as a pioneer in the Japanese advocacy of the principle of particularistic multiculturalism that only later has become the rising tide lifting all boats in Western postmodern circles. In the larger historical picture, it is fair to say that the Kyoto School writers of the pre- and postwar years rang the changes on the Meiji-period motto of "Eastern ethics, Western techniques" that contains the multicultural credo in its own way.[4] If anything, the contemporary postmoderns, post-colonialists, and the like are "Johnny-come-latelies" compared with their Japanese counterparts (cf. DILWORTH 1987).

The Japanese scholars who actually studied in Europe—including Tanabe, Watsuji, Kuki, Miki, and Nishitani—understandably brought back the latest philosophical news from Berlin or Paris. They returned to Japan to engage the European authors in homemade polemics. But my critical point here is that these Heideggerian and post-Heideggerian trends—Eastern and European—had the net effect of reducing philosophy to differential cultural hermeneutics. In that trajectory the gamut of philosophical questions were largely addressed within the politicized framework of "Eastern ethics, Western techniques."

WATSUJI'S HERMENEUTICAL LINE IN THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE ETHICAL THOUGHT

Let me now turn to Watsuji's hermeneutics of Japanese culture in *Nihon rinri shisōshi*. Watsuji's heuristic of the "Japanese Spirit" proceeds in two overlapping patterns of articulation. One is "dialectical" in the technical sublational sense. This methodic operator is at work in Watsuji's insistence that the *historically negated* strata of Japanese aristocratic culture (centering on Veneration of the Emperor from the earli-

3. In preparing this paper I was greatly aided by the stimulating work of Graham Mayeda, *Time, Space, and Ethics in the Philosophy of Watsuji Tetsurō, Kuki Shūzō, and Martin Heidegger* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

4. According to *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1993), Sakuma Shōzan (1811–1864) is generally credited with coining the slogan *wakon yōsai* 和魂洋才 ("Eastern spirit, Western techniques") in the Meiji

est mythologies and on the political institutions of the Nara and Heian court cultures together with their religious and aesthetical sensibilities) *lived on as negated* in the "middle" or feudal periods of Japanese history and provided the driving force for the Meiji Restoration and beyond. The theoretical model here is of a kind of quantum lattice in which the pristine cultural "spirit" of the Japanese national consciousness is stored and energizes the phases of Japanese "ethical thought." To put it in the framework of his philosophical anthropology, "ethos" and "ethical" as used by Watsuji have the sublational connotations of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* or the equivalent in his own technical concepts of *fūdo*, *ningen sonzai* 人間存在 (human existence), *hito to hito to no aidagara* 人と人との間柄 (betweenness), and *yo no naka* 世の中 (the social world) which he parsed in various totalistic articulations of individual and communal consciousness.

A second conspicuous pattern of conceptual organization of the work shows up in Watsuji's agonistic mindset. By agonistic I refer to the way he constructs an eristic tension between "Western" philosophical, religious, and cultural concepts and his Emperor-based "Japanese" model, to say nothing of contrasting the Shinto-Buddhist-Confucian syncretisms of Japanese religiosity with the three Abrahamic religions of Europe. "Japanese *fūdo*" works in Watsuji's writings as a kind of conceptual *sakoku* 鎖国 (closed country)—a barrier and a buffer against the "abstractions" of "Western rationalism," and more specifically against the "Western Enlightenment" with its universalistic forms of ethical individualism, social contract theory of sovereignty by institution, aesthetical universalism, and even Marxist internationalism.

But again, in his agonistic hermeneutics of indigenous Japanese "ethical thought," Watsuji's *fūdo* concept works to devaluate and condemn the military-class leadership of the Japanese feudal eras in favor of the ever-resurfacing tradition of national consciousness of the Japanese people centering on Veneration of the Emperor. Essentially, he blames the ascendancy of the warrior class in Japan's feudal history for Japan's falling behind the progress of Western civilization in the comparable time

period. Shōzan's version has its precedent in an earlier (ninth-century!) motto, *wakon kansai* 和魂漢才 ("Japanese spirit, Chinese knowledge").

period. He does so by rehearsing a line of criticism inscribed in such monumental historiographical works as Kitabatake Chikafusa's *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記 [Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns], the Mito School's *Dai Nihonshi* 大日本史 [History of Great Japan], Arai Hakuseki's *Tokushi yoron* 読史余論 [Lessons from History], and Rai San'yō's *Nihon gaishi* 日本外史 [Unofficial History of Japan], each of which carried forward the narrative of imperial loyalism within feudal settings.

Reading Japanese political history in this perspective, Watsuji was presumably taking a position against the rise of the military establishment in his own times. At least he took his political stand to the "left" of such ultra-nationalistic authors as Inoue Tetsujirō and Nakamura Rikizō who advocated the relation of *bushidō* and *sonnō* in more nostalgically "feudalistic" terms—but, tragically, there was nothing in his Kyoto School dialectics of individual and nation that offered any real resistance to Japan's ascendant ultra-nationalism of the 1930s and 1940s.[5] His vintage postwar *Nihon rinri shisōshi* of 1952 systematically expressed its own principle of premodern—or, if you prefer, postmodern—theocracy at odds with the universalistic premises of political modernity.

From the japanese spirit (1934) and "the way of the japanese subject" (1943)

Let me now explicitly focus the tension between the *sonnō* and *bushidō* traditions as treated in Watsuji's thought. For this purpose we can see that *Nihon rinri shisōshi* basically reprised and gave historical embodiment to the themes of his *Nihon seishin* 日本精神 [The Japanese Spirit, 1934] and his wartime piece "Nihon shindō" 日本神道 [The Way of the Japanese Subject, 1943] on the subject. There is therefore a consistent thread of thought stretching over twenty years that climaxed with the appearance of *Nihon rinri shisōshi*.

5. But in volume two of his *Rinrigaku* Watsuji notoriously produced his own version of totalitarian state-ethics; he introduced changes in the second edition of 1949—changes which, in the words of Gino Piovesana in 1968, "are still open to question" (Piovesana 1968, 144).

In *Nihon seishin* Watsuji was keen to establish the "active subject" of the "Japanese spirit" as the Japanese people themselves. He depicted this as a kind of Rousseauian "general will" (*volonté général*) of "national self-consciousness" (*kokumin jikaku* 国民自覚) hovering above individuals. He went on to trace the source of Meiji Enlightenment thinking on autonomous political subjects to its origin in the "abstractionism" (that is, universalistic concepts) of the European Enlightenment. Marxism entered Japan shortly after the heyday of the Meirokusha writers of the first years of Meiji but only to feature its own new brand of "international abstractionism" not suited to Japanese *fūdo*.[6] Having thus focused the "active subject" of Japanese culture in a Shinto-nationalistic self-consciousness of the Japanese people in *The Japanese Spirit*, Watsuji addressed the indigenous Japanese ethical spirit as manifested in the his-

6. See "The Japanese Spirit" (Watsuji 1998a). Sections 1–3 discuss how certain political slogans such as "the Japanese Spirit" (*Nihon seishin*) and "Japanese Soul" 大和魂 (*Yamato-damashii*) only retrospectively acquired a conservative cast though in their day they were progressive ideas. Section 5, 245ff. takes up the relation of past "manifestations" of the Japanese Spirit to future ones; this is also expressed sublationally. Watsuji's recurrent logical operator is that the traditional layers live on *qua* negated, and he contends that this Japanese phenomenon is a unique and now creative force in world history.

In Section 7 of *Nihon seishin* Watsuji proceeds to insist that even the Japanese trait of admiration of foreign cultures is a manifestation of the deeper tradition. Ancient foreign artifacts in the early tombs were already connected with Japan's national religion (*matsurigoto* 政). The same basic pattern of indigenization was evidenced in the waves of importation and assimilation of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Meiji Westernization. According to Watsuji, the Japanese people have a remarkable penchant to idealize foreign countries, and then to admire their own idealizations. That they do so to a superlative degree is a mark of the national character which is grounded in its unique religious sense of the indeterminacy of its mythic *kami*.

In Section 8 Watsuji explicitly takes up the theme of the *jūsōsei* 重層性 or multi-layered character of Japanese *fūdo*. E.g., the *kuge* 公家 aristocratic culture lived on in the upper warrior class even while negated by the warrior class; the Japanese people's "double life" in clothing, food, dwellings, etc.; the Meiji era phenomenon of Shinto *matsuri* coexisting with Buddhism and Christianity—in contrast to the Abrahamic religions' record of destroying their rivals. Early on, the synthesis of *kami* and Buddhas was witnessed in the *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 (the ancestral *kami* are manifestations of the Buddhas) concept, and this con-

torical relation between the *sonnō* and *bushidō* traditions in *The Way of the Japanese Subject*. Thematizing front and center the famous samurai frame of mind, he maintained that "the Japanese standpoint that transcends life and death" manifested in the samurai ethics is one that is devoid of egocentric considerations and falls outside of all the Western eudaimonistic frameworks of the Good Life.

In Watsuji's historical analysis, after the rise of the warrior class to power in the Kamakura period, *bushidō* split into the two forms of *gekokujō* 下克上 ("the lower orders overcoming the higher") as played out in the Ikkō and Nichiren sect rebellions and subsequently in the rise to power of the new Sengoku period "heroes"—that is, the newer breed of *daimyō* such as Hōjō Sōun, Takeda Shingen, Uesugi Kenshin, Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu—who eventually reunified Japan. But again, his thesis is that both forms of *gekokujō* eventually fused with the deeper currents of Imperial loyalist thought.

Kamakura Buddhism had first elevated *bushidō* to a sense of an "absolute consciousness that transcends life and death" within its "ethics of chivalry," e.g., in the unity of Zen and swordsmanship. *Bushidō* involved not only martial spirit and skill with weapons, but also absolute loyalty to one's lord, together with a strong sense of personal honor, devotion to duty, and the courage, if required, to sacrifice one's life in battle or in ritual suicide. *Junshi* 殉死 (the practice of self-immolation by retainers of a feudal lord) and *katakiuchi* 敵討ち (vendetta) were further manifestations of the *bushidō* code.

In Watsuji's analysis, this *bushidō* sense of death-transcending spiritual dignity and honor was loosely linked with both Buddhism and Confucianism in the Muromachi period, as eclectically inscribed for example in the House Codes of the Sengoku-period *daimyō*. Francis Xavier's testimony as to the moral quality of the Japanese people was an important historical witness to the same around 1550. Edo-period Neo-Confucian-

tinued in the Meiji and Taishō eras *jingū* as well, especially in the sphere of the fine arts. In net effect, Watsuji argues, Japanese culture can be said to be unique in the world for so accepting the new without displacement of the old, and this is due to Japan's religious grounding in the indeterminate absolute traceable to the ancient mythology of the Imperial institution.

ism, which was strategically promoted by the Tokugawa shoguns, then rationalized *bushidō* in respect of the feudal pressures of the times. Now there were two strains of *bushidō*, the Buddhist and the Neo-Confucian, the latter conspicuously fusing with Shinto in various amalgamations—and these were all eventually sublated in the *sonnō no michi* process culminating in the Meiji Restoration.

In historical effect, Watsuji contended, *bushidō* did not accept Kamakura-period Zen's disparagement of the political dimension, and therefore it eventually merged back with the *sonnō no michi* 尊王の道 (The Way of Veneration of the Emperor). Subtending these negations and sublations, there was always the undercurrent of the ancient mythic teaching. The essence of the mythic teaching consisted in an ethics of the "pure and clear heart" (*seimyōshin* 精妙心)—namely, a "purity" or "sincerity" of heart that already connoted "sacrificing oneself in serving the Emperor." One of its grandest historical manifestations was the dismantling of the feudal institutions in the Meiji Restoration. Another was the Japanese war effort when Watsuji wrote "The Way of the Japanese Subject" in 1943 (Watsuji 1998b, 279–88).

Conclusion

As I have suggested above, Watsuji's *Nihon rinri shisōshi* climaxes his entire career. Its rich tapestry can be appreciated from various angles, not the least being its consistent fabric of interpretation woven out of the heuristic concepts of *fūdo* (climaticity) and *jūsōsei* 重層性 (the stratified or laminated character of Japanese culture). However, Watsuji's text is not a historiographical work *per se*, but rather a literary-hermeneutical one which re-mythologizes Japanese culture in theocratic-nationalistic terms. It even manages problematically to subsume the traditions of *bushidō* within his master-narrative of *sonnō*. But the question remains whether either the *sonnō* or the *bushidō* traditions—which center on concepts of vertical relationships between Emperor and his subjects and between feudal lord and his retainers, respectively—can legitimately be interpreted as *ethical* concepts. On face value, both *sonnō* and *bushidō* are *political* concepts. And, as portrayed by Watsuji, with

the colors of particularistic religiosity which they traditionally carry, they amount to cultural symbolics of a premodern sort.

As well, if Watsuji's *Nihon rinri shisōshi* is the crowning work of his career, it can be seen to pioneer a multicultural historicist mindset that both repossesses a premodern "ethics" (that is, politics) and advocates a postmodern one.[7] I have made the point that in large part his central project of writing cultural phenomenology *qua* philosophical anthropology was the product of his interacting with Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Post-Heideggerian trends buy into precisely such a sense-constituting principle of particularism in their eristic advocacies of cultural-symbolical "differences." For the most conspicuous example today, contemporary Islamic fundamentalism is trading on the same mindset in political and academic settings.

Frankly I am of the opinion that this kind of polarizing ethnocentric rhetoric has not superseded the universalistic achievements of the European Enlightenment—philosophically considered, in such principal authors as Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Newton, Locke, Hume, and Kant—which Watsuji and the other Kyoto School writers frequently impugn. Their kind of anthropological hermeneutics of Asian intellectual history also diverts our attention from the genuinely universalistic forms of Asian philosophy and literature (as found for example in the classics of Indian thought and in the classic works of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism). The *nihonteki* side of the Kyoto School writers' mindset, I fear, led them reactively to appropriate the Hegelian and Heideggerian strains of philosophical historicism that Kant, in effect,

7. In "Reasons for The Rubble: Watsuji Tetsurō's Position in Japan's Post-War Debate about Rationality" (LaFleur 2001), William R. LaFleur (with input from Richard Rorty's neo-pragmatism) portrays a postwar Watsuji with the progressive mindset of a Francis Bacon. In pursuit of this thesis he provides a footnote to the effect that, while Watsuji's *Nihon rinri shisōshi* is "arguably the major work of his entire career," it is not relevant to his Baconian/Rortyan interpretation (LaFleur 2001, n.4). But in fact, Watsuji's hermeneutics of *sonnō* in that crowning work requires that we probe how postmodernism and pre-modernism tend to dovetail, as for example on the theocracy issue. See also Dilworth 1987.

had already denounced in his *Prolegomena* as wrongly conflating philosophy and history of philosophy.

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Towards a Transnational Ethics of Care

Erin McCarthy

In both Japanese philosophy and feminist philosophy we find concepts of self that provide alternatives to liberal individualism's concept of self as the autonomous, isolated individual, and the ethics that result from such a conception of self. When the relational aspect of selfhood is foregrounded, when being in relation is recognized as an integral part of what it is to be a human-being-in-the-world, then we are one step further on our way toward an ethics of care. Robert Carter suggests that this view of self and the resulting views of ethics in fact characterize much of Asian philosophy—that "Taoism, and Zen Buddhism, and Buddhism teach us that we are intrinsically interrelated, and the ground of ethics and the foundation of ethical sentiment is the selfless recognition that we are each other's hopes and aspirations, sufferings and dis-

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appointments" (Carter 2001, 32). Shifting the focus in a concept of self from individual to relational creates room for a concomitant shift in epistemology and ethics.

In *Intimacy or Integrity: Philosophy and Cultural Difference*, Thomas Kasulis proposes a very useful way of thinking about different ways of relating, knowing and being-in-the-world with the aim of coming to better dialogue across cultures (Kasulis 2002). He suggests that there are two orientations of being-in-the-world—intimacy oriented and integrity oriented, while at the same time noting that it "is unlikely that any culture is ever a perfect example of either an intimacy-dominant or integrity-dominant culture (generalities always have qualifications or exceptions), but the hope is that the analysis and critical tools presented… may help us see connections and differences we might have otherwise missed" (Kasulis 2002, 11). We can see through his analysis that much of Western philosophy and the concepts of selfhood and identity that arise out of this tradition are integrity oriented, as are the values that dominate an ethics of justice. An integrity-oriented culture emphasizes:

1 Objectivity as public verifiability.
2 External over internal relations.
3 Knowledge as ideally empty of affect.
4 The intellectual and psychological as distinct from the somatic.
5 Knowledge as reflective and self-conscious of its own grounds. (Kasulis 2002, 25)

This reflects the characterization of the liberal individualist view of self as rational, autonomous independent individual.

Intimacy-oriented culture looks different, and brings out some of the values that Carter also suggests are found in Asian philosophy:

1 Intimacy is objective, but personal rather than public.
2 In an intimate relation, self and other belong together in a way that does not sharply distinguish the two.
3 Intimate knowledge has an affective dimension.
4 Intimacy is somatic as well as psychological.
5 Intimacy's ground is not generally self-conscious, reflective, or self-illuminating. (Kasulis 2002, 25)

While the liberal ethics of justice is rooted, we might say, in the integrity model, an ethics of care lends itself more to the intimacy model but contains aspects of both. As Kasulis points out, rare is the culture that is purely one or the other. Indeed, within Western philosophical culture there are subcultures, such as feminist philosophy, wherein we find a model more reflective of the intimacy orientation, even though the dominant culture is one of integrity.

Let us move now to examples of what we might call more intimacy-oriented ethics from two different philosophical cultures. Watsuji Tetsurō's (1889–1960) definition of human being as *ningen* 人間 includes self *as both* individual and relational, as well as embodied. Watsuji's concept of human being *as ningen* argues against the Western concept of self as *purely* individual, where relationships with others are contingent. The very terms used to designate self—*homo*, man, *mensch*—he argues, indicate that self, in the West, is conceived of in terms of the isolated individual. Such a concept, he maintains, is merely an abstraction, for as *ningen* we are always in relation with other human beings. *Ningen* is "the public, and, at the same time, the individual human beings living within it.... What is recognizable here is a dialectical unity of those double characteristics that are inherent in a human being" (Watsuji 1996, 15). It is a dynamic concept of self, one that John Maraldo has suggested be understood not as a metaphysical entity, but rather as an interrelation (Maraldo 2002, 185). For Watsuji, one cannot be fully human, nor ethical, (for if one is a human being in one's fullest potential, one is also ethical), unless one is, as well as being an individual, also in relation with other human beings. The dynamic nature of *ningen* is such that there is a constant movement back and forth between the poles of individual and social. So for Watsuji, ethics is the study of human beings, or *ningengaku* 人間学—human beings as individual and as social in the betweenness (*aidagara* 間柄) among selves in the world.

An ethics of care describes the self similarly. And while care ethics has changed significantly in the last thirty years, the concept of self that it seeks to foster and sees as central has remained constant. Two of the most significant contributors to care ethics in its beginnings were Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings. Gilligan's *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* famously suggested that girls

approached moral problems from a different perspective from that of boys (Gilligan 1982). Critical of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development for using only boys in the study that led to the theory, and Kohlberg's conclusion that girls' moral development lags behind that of boys, Gilligan studied girls' and women's moral development. Her conclusions suggested that women and girls placed more importance on relationships and context than boys who, according to Kohlberg's theory, ended up more frequently at the highest level of moral reasoning which appealed to more abstract principles and rules. While Gilligan's work would prove in fact to be quite problematic in some ways for some feminisms, there is widespread agreement that her work did serve to name care, which had previously been left out of the discourse of morality, as philosophically significant. Up to this point, Gilligan maintained, the kind of moral reasoning that seemed to belong to over half the population had been left out of the picture. In the introduction to *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education,* Noddings argues that "[e]thics has been discussed largely in the language of the father: in principles and propositions, in terms such as justification, fairness, justice. The mother's voice has been silent" (Noddings 1984, 1). If we make space for this voice, however, we find, contrary to the rational autonomous being of liberal individualism typical of an ethics of justice, a relational being that acknowledges the necessity of interdependence for human survival and flourishing. This is an aspect of care ethics that has not been left behind in the development of the theory.

In 1984 Noddings pointed out, immediately following the above assertion that the mother's voice has been silent, that "[h]uman caring and the memory of caring and being cared for which I shall argue form the foundation of ethical response, have not received attention" (Noddings 1984, 1). She further argued that this approach of caring is a fundamentally feminine view, but not limited (here parting company with the way Gilligan has been interpreted) to women. The majority of us, after all, can recall being cared for, and those who were not cared for are deeply affected by such neglect and the absence of care given or received. Care "is feminine" she says, "in the deeply classical sense—rooted in receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness" (Noddings 1984, 2). Over twenty years later, Virginia Held, in her 2006 book *The Ethics*

of Care: Personal, Political, and Global, while maintaining "that the ethics of care has moved far beyond" these original foundations, still insists that "the central focus of the ethics of care is on the compelling moral salience of attending to and meeting the needs of the particular others for whom we take responsibility" (HELD 2006, 10). Her description of the concept of person that is the starting point for an ethics of care is "as relational, rather than as the self-sufficient independent individuals of the dominant moral theories" (HELD 2006, 13). Furthermore, her ethics of care "sees persons as interdependent, morally and epistemologically. Every person starts out as a child dependent on those providing us care, and we remain interdependent with others in thoroughly fundamental ways throughout our life. That we can think and act as if we were independent depends on a network of relations making it possible for us to do so. And our relations are part of what constitute our identity" (HELD 2006, 13–14). It is here where we begin to hear the similarities with Watsuji's concept of *ningen*. There are differences, to be sure, and it is quite certain that Watsuji had no notion of feminist philosophy; but nonetheless there are resonances with an ethics of care.

For Watsuji, Noddings, and Held, we are always already in relation. Both the self as Watsuji's *ningen* and the self of an ethics of care evoke the concept of interrelation which is at the core of human being in the world. As Watsuji's *ningen* takes relation as fundamental, so does an ethics of care. Noddings explains "Taking *relation* as ontologically basic simply means that we recognize human encounter and affective response as a basic fact of human existence" (NODDINGS 1984, 4). For an ethics of care and Watsuji's philosophy, it is this relation, this basic fact of human being-in-the-world, that obligates us to care for the other. Contrasting it to the ethics that arises out of the liberal individualist concept of person that in some sense sees related-ness as not significant, Held states: "The ethics of care is, instead, hospitable to the relatedness of persons. It sees many of our responsibilities as not freely entered into but presented to us by the accidents of our embeddedness in familial and social and historical contexts. It often calls on us to *take* responsibility, while liberal individualist morality focuses on how we should leave each other alone" (HELD 2006, 14–15). As Noddings and Held both use the mother-child and family relationships as, in their best instances,

exemplary of the foundations of caring and relatedness, so too Watsuji places importance on just this embeddedness in his discussion of basic ethical principles. He uses the family, for example, and aspects thereof throughout *Ethics* as a key example for demonstrating how such relationships and embeddedness define us and determine our responsibilities. As a mother or father, for example, one must obey certain rules and adhere to certain behaviors—those appropriate to the role one has in the family. One may not have chosen such a role, but as a child or spouse, one takes on a certain responsibility to others in the family due to this "accident of embeddedness." As soon as the family comes into being, then, one is in this betweenness and its attendant moral obligations—and Watsuji extends this example further to society more broadly writ. As human beings, he explains, "we cannot first presuppose individuals, and then explain the establishment of social relationships among them. Nor can we presuppose society and from there explain the occurrence of individuals. Neither the one nor the other has 'precedence'"(Watsuji 1996, 102).

The structure of being human and society for Watsuji then, reflects the fundamental interdependence that care ethics too seeks to bring to the fore. In his more specific discussions of the examples of friendship and the mother-child relationship, Watsuji evokes both the interdependence and the caring that we find in an ethics of care and introduces something that I believe has not been introduced fully enough into the discussion of an ethics of care—that this interdependence includes the body[1]:

> So far as physiological bodies are concerned, they can be spoken of as easily as individual trees. But this is not the case with bodies viewed as expressions of the subjective or as persons in their concrete qualities. A mother and her baby can never be conceived of as merely two independent individuals. A baby wishes for its mother's body, and the mother offers her breast to the baby. If they are separated from each

1. See Maurice Hamington's *Embodied Care*: *Jane Addams, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Feminist Ethics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004) for an example of including embodiment as philosophically significant in care ethics in the Western tradition.

> other, both look for each other with all the more intensity.… As is evident, a mother's body and her baby's are somehow connected as though one.… This power of attraction, even though not physical attraction alone, is yet a real attraction connecting the two as though one.… To isolate them as separate individuals, some sort of destruction must occur. (WATSUJI 1996, 62)

Mother and child know one another *bodily*, not just psychologically. They are interdependent, and connected through caring. At the stage described by Watsuji, of course, this goes only one way. However, in this relationship there is the potential for reciprocity, which, as we will see shortly, is another key element of an ethics of care.

The second example is that of friendship: "That one wishes to visit a friend implies that she intends to draw near to the friend's body. If she does go to visit a friend who is at some distance by streetcar, then her body moves in the friend's direction, attracted by the power that draws them together" (WATSUJI 1996, 62). Here we see the concept of interdependency of both bodies and minds—something that I think care ethics can benefit from appropriating in some way, for relationship between two people for Watsuji is not merely psychological. He maintains that the "mind" relation between two people cannot be separated from the "body" relation. We recall that Kasulis's list of the aspects of intimacy-oriented cultures includes the somatic as well as the psychological. "Even when intimacy is not carnal (and usually it is not)," Kasulis elaborates, "it is still incarnate. That is: human intimacy is embodied" (KASULIS 2002, 42). Intimacy-oriented ways of being-in-the-world, then, don't ignore the importance of embodiment. As Kasulis explains it, we "enter into intimate relations by opening ourselves to let the other inside, by putting ourselves into internal relations with others or recognizing internal relations that already exist" (KASULIS 2002, 43). Intimacy, he says, is an incorporating of the other, drawing the other into the body. We see this most clearly in the example of the mother-child relationship above.

However, for Watsuji we also experience this in our normal, everyday existence and this further links us to others. The human body, in our everyday being-in-the-world, he explains "is not, of its own accord, something individually independent. To make it individually indepen-

dent we must cut its connections with other human bodies and completely dissociate it from its attraction to others" (Watsuji 1996, 66). For Watsuji even the movement of the body in the carrying out of an act, for example, involves neither merely "physical relations nor biological ones. Instead, it involves as well the relationship between one subject and another, as distinct from the relation between a person and a thing" (Watsuji 1996, 238). As betweenness-oriented beings, as *ningen*, then, human bodies are connected (Watsuji 1996, 68). This is the place, I believe, of caring: the place of ethics (Watsuji 1996, 10). An ethics of care seeks to recognize the complex interdependence of human relations—the connections that include but also go beyond both the psychological and corporeal—in our daily lives in a way that has not been recognized in the context of "traditional" ethics. Once we acknowledge this interdependence, obligation is immediate when faced with one in need of care.

What is necessary in care ethics is also, as mentioned briefly above, however, at least the potential for reciprocity—this is of particular concern for feminists of course—for without reciprocity, the dangers of exploitation loom large. Held points out that since "even the helpful emotions can often become misguided or worse—as when excessive empathy with others leads to a wrongful degree of self-denial or when benevolent concern crosses over into controlling domination—we need an *ethics* of care, not just care itself. The various aspects and expressions of care and caring relations need to be subjected to moral scrutiny and *evaluated*, not just observed and described" (Held 2006, 11). What can appear to be care may prove on closer inspection not to involve care at all, and indeed the opposite—not care for the other, but completely self-referential or selfish actions.[2] Held's above-mentioned examples of excessive self-denial and the benevolent concern that becomes controlling domination, even though they might appear to be caring or be masked as care, are in the end both self-referential. Both the rich potential as well as the possible exploitative, self-referential aspects of care resonate with the Japanese concept of *amae*.

2. Joan Tronto notes that one requirement of care, along with some kind of engagement is the following: "First, care implies a reaching out to something other than the self: it is neither self-referring nor self-absorbing" (Tronto 1993, 102).

Japanese psychoanalyst Takeo Doi brought this phenomenon to the attention of the psychoanalytic community in *The Anatomy of Dependence* (Doi 1973). Defined by Doi as "the desire to be passively loved" (Doi 1973, 7) or "passive dependence, or passive love" (Doi 1985, 34 n.8), *amae* is something that is generally accepted as an important part of child development in Japan. Faith Bethelard and Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, in their article "Cherishment Culture," in which they translate *amae* as cherishment, demonstrate how care and the need for care is fundamental to human being. Also psychoanalysts, they explain that Doi "proposed that the infant begins in a condition of relatedness that is predominantly ego instinctual, not predominantly aggressive, or libidinal. The relation that Freud thought existed only between a mother and her male child is, in Doi's view, the norm" (Bethelard and Young-Bruehl 1998, 528). They seem to be suggesting that the care instinct is primordial—that we come into the world fundamentally care-oriented, reaching out to the other or, we might say, intimacy-oriented: "Infants want cherishing, and caretakers, if they are cherishers, read the infant's preverbal signals and cherish them. The infant stretches out to the caretakers, in order to receive; the caretakers receive, hold, literally and intrapsychically, the infant and her needs, in order to give. They are a circuitry, like the symbol of infinity. Cherishment is the elemental form of reciprocity" (Bethelard and Young-Bruehl 1998, 530). As Young-Bruehl explains in a later article, which focuses on the adult manifestation of *amae* in love relationships, "[i]n the *amae* state we say: I wish that your only wishes were to sweetly, indulgently love me and to receive my sweet and indulgent love! Cherish me, and I will cherish you! In the *amae* state we desire relationship, reciprocity, interplay—the paradigm of all play. The little lover feels the caretaker's love as such, as cherishing, caretaking; solicits its continuance; and gives in turn what he or she has felt" (Young-Bruehl 2003, 282). On this interpretation of *amae* then, we see again how part of what it is to be human is interdependence and how a web of interdependence begins immediately and lasts throughout one's life. We see more and more clearly how ethics must involve the other, that as Watsuji puts it, "ethics is not a matter of individual consciousness alone" (Watsuji 1996, 10), and the near absurdity of the concept of the isolated, purely autonomous individual upon

which so much has been built. A more recent explanation of *amae* by Kazuko Behrens, however, brings out the potentially exploitative aspect of *amae* that echoes the potential for exploitation also inherent in care: *amae* "represents a cluster of behaviors, an emotional or internal state, and a philosophical construct for Japanese people that can be viewed either positively or negatively… [but] always consists of some expectation or assumption on the part of the *amae* doer of being understood and accepted, whether it is for pure affection or instrumental needs, either within intimate or non-intimate relationships" (Behrens 2004, 2). Behrens goes on to discuss the fact that while *amae* behaviors are for the most part desired by both giver and receiver, there are cases of "manipulative *amae*." For example, on *amae* beyond childhood, contradicting Young-Bruehl's interpretation above, Behrens cites a woman from Tokyo who says "I'm over thirty now but still live with my parents. I keep telling myself that I should leave home and be independent, but I am doing *amae* because of the convenience of having 'home'" (Behrens 2004, 15). Her study also shows evidence of the use of manipulative *amae* by husbands toward their wives, noting that men expect "things will get done without their involvement and expecting their wives to understand what they want and comply with even unstated requests at times" (Behrens 2004, 17).[3] Behrens also gives examples of abuses of *amae*, mostly of women, at corporate levels. So we can see how important it is to have an *ethics* of care that, as Held puts it, evaluates rather than just describes. Care ethics seeks to address injustice of many kinds and has the potential to expand the power of this ethics to address global and political problems.

It is the relational orientation at the foundation of this concept of self that obligates us to behave ethically. If we begin, as in Watsuji and care ethics, to rethink the concept of person as relational, we see that "we cannot refuse obligation in human affairs by merely refusing to enter relation; we are, by virtue of our mutual humanity, already and perpetually in potential relation" (Noddings 1984, 86). And here, we see that

3. It is important to note that Behrens also demonstrates that wives use *amae* to manipulate their husbands, but the majority of her examples of various kinds of manipulative *amae* do indicate that women are usually the ones being manipulated.

Noddings's earlier critique of liberal individualism seems to resonate with Watsuji's. As Held puts it: "Moralities built on the image of the independent, autonomous, rational individual largely overlook the reality of human dependence and the morality for which it calls" (HELD 2006, 10). The reality of human dependence without morality results, often, in exploitation.

What is clear in both Watsuji and feminist ethics of care is that one's individuality can be preserved and yet influenced and mutually informed by an other. Recall Held's observation that our thinking and acting as if we were independent in fact rely on a network of relations, in other words on interdependence, and yet we don't feel as if we've lost a sense of self. For Watsuji, self dissolves into community and then re-emerges as the individual again, only to resume the process once more. It is not in the sense of a repetition that yields the same results, a repetition that serves only to reinforce the starting and ending points of the cycle; rather, as Watsuji explains, the self thus becomes dynamic, open, receptive, adaptive, capable of responding to the given situation or persons as required, as appropriate—a description that, as we saw earlier in Noddings's definition of caring, has often been identified with the feminine, but here is identified simply as human:

> For human beings it is not that the individual and the whole are something fixed that necessarily exclude each other. Rather, an individual is an individual only when in a whole, and the whole is a whole only in individuals. When the whole is considered, the conflicts among many individuals must be recognized; and when individuals are spoken of, the unifying whole must be understood to be that which underlies all of them. In other words, an individual is an individual in its connection with multiplicity and individuality. Human beings possess this dynamic structure of reciprocal transformation. (WATSUJI 1996, 124)

The structure of *ningen* recognizes the interdependence that is critical to human flourishing in the globalized world. Watsuji, I believe, recognizes that we as human beings are *both* individuals and in relation. And, as cited above, an ethics of care acknowledges this as well. Neither philosophy, on my reading, necessarily denies the importance of autonomy; rather, each suggests that autonomy is not the only defining characteris-

tic of persons nor necessarily the best or only concept on which to build a moral theory. Held, as cited above, believes, like Watsuji, that relations partly constitute our identity, and goes on to say: "This is not to say that we cannot become autonomous; feminists have done much interesting work developing an alternative conception of autonomy in place of the liberal individualist one. Feminists have much experience rejecting or reconstituting relational ties that are oppressive" (Held 2006, 14).

While I have been drawing heavily on the work of Virginia Held, who is concerned with applying an ethics of care in the global arena, it is important to note some possible differences between her view and my own project here. She is, I would argue, one of the most prominent philosophers of care ethics today. Having defended similar views elsewhere,[4] I share her belief in the power of care ethics in a global context and agree with, for example, her claim that "[w]e can, for instance, develop caring relations for persons who are suffering deprivation in distant parts of the globe. Moral theories that assume only individuals pursuing their own interests within the constraints supplied by universal rules are ill-suited to deal with the values of caring relations and of relational persons"(Held 2004, 144). I also agree when she asserts that "[a] globalization of caring relations would help to enable people of different states and cultures to live in peace, to respect each other's rights, to care together for their environments and to improve their lives so that all their children might have hopeful futures" (Held 2004, 153). However, while I believe that the constructive comparative enterprise that I have engaged in here, however briefly, can further the goals of an ethics of care, it is not so clear to what extent Held would agree. In the above-cited article she also says:

> Although there are similarities between the ethics of care and communitarianism, and between the ethics of care and Confucianism and what are sometimes thought of as 'Asian values,' many now argue that any *satisfactory* ethics of care, or perhaps even any ethic that deserves the name 'ethics of care,' will be a feminist ethics that includes an

4. See McCarthy 2003.

> insistence on the equality of women, not one accepting a traditional gender hierarchy. (HELD 2004, 146)

As I have stated above, I do believe that an ethics of care is a feminist project and agree that it must be a feminist ethics. However, I just as strongly believe that this obligates us to take very seriously the idea of interdependence upon which an ethics of care is founded, *especially* if we want this ethics to be of relevance in a global context, and to move beyond an "orthodox" or conservative understanding of care that could, as critics have pointed out for the last twenty years, reinforce the idea that women's concerns are limited to *Kinder*, *Küche* and *Kirche*. Turning to other philosophies that provide alternatives to the liberal individualist view of self and ethics, where not just women but human beings in general are defined more relationally, can help overturn this critique of an ethics of care. It seems to me, in fact, a natural extension of Held's theory to suppose that the notion of interdependence at the heart of her view must include consideration of the interdependence of philosophical traditions—be the other Confucian or, as I have suggested here, Watsujian—and that this *does not* in any way make the comparative approach to an ethics of care any less a feminist project. Comparing the ethics of care with Watsuji's philosophy, for example, could help correct Watsuji's arguably patriarchal slant but at the same time, provide proponents of care ethics a way of thinking about the self that is inherently nondualistic, that resists the mind/body split that many feminist philosophers rightly call into question. It may also provide a way of conceptualizing a knowing body that includes more than so-called "female knowledge" and in so doing help to address critiques of feminist ethics of care. Held maintains that "To be acceptable, it must be a *feminist* ethic, open to both women and men to adopt. But in being feminist, it is different from the ethics of its precursors" (HELD 2006, 20). Again, here I agree with Held almost entirely. What I have been suggesting in this essay, using Watsuji to enrich feminist ethics of care and vice versa, is not by way of slipping feminist ethics in the back door, claiming that Watsuji is a feminist, nor saying that feminism is incidental to care ethics because we can find similar notions in Japanese philosophy, nor again claiming that Watsuji and Held have identical philosophies. Rather,

what I am concerned with doing is building bridges, fostering interdependence and critical exchange between two philosophies such that the power of such an ethics can grow. If we are truly concerned, for example, with addressing problems of both women and men globally, are we not also obliged by interdependence to look for links, to negotiate points in common with cultures other than our own to begin dialogue across difference? Held states that the "ethics of care builds on experience that all persons share, though they have often been unaware of its embedded values and implications" (Held 2006, 21). Again, I agree with her. I would only like to add that there are philosophies, such as Watsuji's, wherein these embedded values have at least somewhat been recognized and these implications thought through. And while Watsuji and others have yet to consider questions of gender and feminist concerns, there is nothing to suggest that such concerns cannot be incorporated into new theories of feminist care ethics that can come out of such views.

Held states that her own view "is that to include nonfeminist versions of valuing caring among the moral approaches called the ethics of care is to unduly disregard the history of how this ethics has developed and come to be a candidate for serious consideration among contemporary moral theories. The history of the development of the contemporary ethics of care is the history of recent feminist progress" (Held 2006, 22). What is not clear is whether Held assumes that the bridge between cultures that will allow care ethics to spread globally and, as she states in the concluding sentence of her book, "help enable people of different states and cultures to live in peace, to respect each other's rights, to care together for their environments, and to improve the lives of their children" (Held 2006, 168), is already built, and that care ethics as she formulates it *is* that bridge. Or does her work invite and indeed require appraisals adapted from nonfeminist versions of caring in order to enhance, enrich, and strengthen our views of feminist care ethics? If this is not the case, then her version risks excluding other philosophical and cultural perspectives.

From my standpoint as a comparative feminist philosopher, I see no reason not to incorporate ideas inspired by or found in nonfeminist versions of care into a global feminist ethics of care. We are not left with an either/or proposition and in fact we can adapt, adopt, appropriate

such ideas into a feminist ethics of care, while maintaining a feminist approach and a commitment to feminist ethics of care. As I see it, to proceed in this way leads to more of the feminist progress that Held so astutely and powerfully outlines and contributes to in her most recent book. The very project of a feminist ethics of care, with its call for recognizing and valuing interdependence, I believe requires that we move beyond our own philosophical culture to engage others.

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Subjectivity, *Rinrigaku*, and Moral Metaphysics

Watsuji Tetsurō and Mou Zongsan

Lam Wing Keung

This paper attempts to explore the notions of "subjectivity" developed by Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960) and Mou Zongsan (1909–1995) in line with their respective theories of *rinrigaku* 倫理学 (ethics) and moral metaphysics (*daodexingshangxue* 道德形上學). Instead of examining ethical standards—concepts of right or wrong, good or bad for instance—these two contemporary philosophers stress that "subjectivity" is the fundamental element of ethics. Having been baptized in both Western philosophy and their own respective intellectual traditions, Watsuji and Mou did not confine themselves merely to what was given to them philosophically, but sought to produce philosophies of their own making; *rinrigaku* and moral metaphysics represent their "unique systems."

By advocating ideas like communality (*zentaisei* 全体性), the individual (*kojin* 個人) and betweenness (*aidagara* 間柄), Watsuji makes the focus of his concern the existence of human beings (*ningen sonzai* 人間存在),

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an area that does not closely relate to metaphysics, whereas Mou stresses the indivisibility between Heaven (*Tian* 天) and morality (*daode* 道德) with his theory of moral metaphysics. The former basically (though not completely) follows the philosophical approach of Heidegger, whereas the latter heavily relies on Kantian moral philosophy, seen through a pair of Confucian glasses. The relationship between the two different philosophical approaches to ethics/morality and the notion of "subjectivity" is where the concern of this paper lies. In contrast to the broad and in-depth comparative research already undertaken on the Kyoto School and Western philosophy, it moves to uncover a philosophical dialogue taking place in the East, between two profound philosophical schools: the Kyoto School and New Confucianism.

Why watsuji and mou?

Of course, it is an open question whether or not Watsuji can be considered one of the "members" of the Kyoto School. Apart from the six criteria from the so-called "Western" perspective, suggested by John Maraldo,[1] there are basically two camps regarding what constitutes membership in the "Kyoto School." One party claims that whenever the term "school" is used, it must point to a shared area of concern. As Ōhashi Ryōsuke repeatedly argues, "nothingness," "absolute nothingness," "emptiness" (*kū* 空), and "place" (*basho* 場所) are the themes common to the group of scholars properly identified as the Kyoto School. If it is confined to a group of disciples of Nishida Kitarō and Tanabe Hajime, it is more proper to identify it as "Kyoto philosophy" rather than as a "school" (see Ōhashi 1990, preface; 1995, 158–60; 2001, 12–13;

1. Maraldo argues that there are six criteria for defining the membership of the Kyoto School: their relationship with Nishida Kitarō; their connection with Kyoto University; their posture toward Japanese and Asian thought; their engagement with the question of the future of the race, including questions around Marxism, the ethnic nation, and the Pacific War; their posture toward Buddhism and religion in general; and their stance on Absolute Nothingness (Maraldo 2001). Maraldo says that these six criteria unveil the "ambiguous set" (*aimaina shūgō* 曖昧な集合) of the Kyoto School.

2004, 5–10).[2] The other party, as represented by Fujita Masakatsu and Takeda Atsushi for instance, holds that it is not a must for the philosophers of the Kyoto School to share a common theme, but that the appellation refers rather to an intellectual network centering around Nishida Kitarō and Tanabe Hajime (FUJITA 2001, i–iv and 234–37; FUJITA 2007, 182–84). The former camp does not count Watsuji in as the member of the Kyoto School, whereas the latter seems relatively liberal in its definition (though Watsuji is not in fact included in Fujita's *Kyōtōgakuha no tetsugaku* 京都学派の哲学 [The Philosophy of the Kyoto School, 2001]). For my part, questions remain around the definition of phrases like "absolute nothingness" and "intellectual network." Should Watsuji's idea of an "absolute emptiness" (*zettai kū* 絶対空) that undergoes the activity of negation of negation (*hitei no hitei* 否定の否定) be considered as another form of "absolute nothingness"? Should the intellectual and personal interactions between Watsuji and Nishida be considered as signs of an "intellectual network"? If so, there would seem to be no sufficient reason for expelling Watsuji from the "school," classifying him as an outsider to the Kyoto School or understanding him as doing only "Kyoto Philosophy." Instead of continuing this debate over the boundaries of the "Kyoto School," I am inclined to agree with James Heisig's conclusion that it "was hardly a 'school' in any ordinary sense of the term, but rather the kind of spontaneous academic vitality that so often emerges around great thinkers" (HEISIG 2001, 5). Whether or not Watsuji should be considered as a member of the Kyoto School proper, he is one of the "great thinkers" who demonstrates a kind of "academic vitality."

As for Mou, the debate does not revolve around his identity as a "New Confucian" but rather to which generation of New Confucianism he belongs. Zheng Jiadong suggests that Mou should be considered as the third generation (ZHENG 1990, 14–16), whereas Liu Shu-Hsien proposes he belongs to the second generation (LIU 2004, 137; 2007, 92). Like the Kyoto School, New Confucianism carries the hope of establishing a new and unique philosophical system, in contrast to Western philoso-

2. Ng Yu-kwan shares his idea, saying that "absolute nothingness" should be considered the common theme unifying the Kyoto School (NG 1995A, 1995B, and 1998).

phy. What makes the two different is that while the former seems not to take on the responsibility—or even burden—of "reviving" a particular intellectual tradition (although of course it does not deny Japanese traditions or Asian traditions more generally either), New Confucianism does take the "revival" of Confucianism, through dialogue and confrontation with Western philosophy, as its mission. As Zheng Jiadong points out, New Confucianism is a successor to both Classical Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism in terms of the idea of "inner sage, external king" (*neishengwaiwang* 内聖外王); all three insist that from the ethical side, "inner sage" is their fundamental belief, and from the political side "external king" is their ideal. Unlike Classical Confucianism—exemplified by Confucius and Mencius, and the attempt to revive Zhou laws of etiquette and music (*liyuefagui* 礼楽法規)—and Neo-Confucianism—oriented around a Song-Ming effort to purge Confucianism of Buddhist influence—New Confucianism is considered "New" insofar as it adopts certain Western philosophical ideas in providing a metaphysical ground for the ethical ideal and state of life (*daodelixiang he renshengjingjie* 道德理想和人生境界) (Zheng 1990, 7–9). By tracing the background for the emergence of contemporary New Confucianism, Liu argues that "in comparison to the Western culture, it [Chinese culture] does not develop adequately the political subject, the knowing subject, and the technical subject.… The Confucian tradition should never be misunderstood to teach only a secular ethics; in fact, the ideal of Heaven and Humanity in union (*T'ien-jen-ho-i* 天人合一) certainly has a transcendent aspect and hence religious import" (Liu 2003, 36).[3]

As such, we come to understand the importance of comparing Watsuji and Mou, especially in the context of ethics/morality. First, both Watsuji and Mou intend to innovate "new" philosophical systems, namely, *rinrigaku* and moral metaphysics, in keeping with the convictions of the founding members of the Kyoto School and New Confucianism. Second, both Watsuji and Mou intend to establish a new "ground" for ethics/morality in line with their own traditions. For example, Watsuji's

3. This is an interpretation of "A Manifesto for a Reappraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture," signed by Carsun Chang 張君勱, Tang Chun-I 唐君毅, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 and Hsu Fu-kuan 徐復觀.

philosophical interpretation of *ningen* 人間 embraces not only Japanese but also Chinese traditional thought, and Mou's moral metaphysics does not rely solely on the moral philosophy of Kant, but also on the idea of *Tian*. Third, both Watsuji and Mou focus on "subjectivity" in the course of developing their theories of *rinrigaku* and moral metaphysics. For Watsuji, *rinri* is defined as "the study of practical acting subjects" (*jissentekinaru shutai no gaku* 実践的なる主体の学) (WATSUJI 2007, 198), while Mou insists on a "moral consciousness with greater importance attached to subjectivity" (MOU 1997, 76). As such, there is ample reason to compare these two representatives of the Kyoto School and New Confucianism.

WHY SUBJECTIVITY?

In the eyes of Watsuji and Mou, ethics/morality is not confined to a study of bad or wrong, good or evil, but must be rather a study of the subject. Watsuji not only defines *rinrigaku* as "the study of practical subjects," but also holds that it is a study of the "matters arising between person and person":

> The locus of ethical problems lies not in the consciousness of the isolated individual, but precisely in the in-between of person and person. Because of this ethics is the study of *ningen*. Unless we regard ethics as dealing with matters arising between person and person, we cannot authentically solve such problems as distinguishing of good from evil deeds, obligation, responsibility, virtue and so forth. (WATSUJI 1996, 10)

By defining ethics as the study of *ningen* (*ningen no gaku* 人間の学), not only does Watsuji prioritize the "in-between of person and person" (*aidagara* 間柄) in contrast to the individual, he also gives precedence to *ningen* over good and evil, virtue and so on. As John Maraldo notes, "In Watsuji, ethics replaces ontology as first philosophy, and the ordered realm of the interpersonal replaces the authenticity of the singular person" (MARALDO 2002, 79).

The idea of "in between" is without doubt one of the main contributions that Watsuji makes—regardless of whether it is unique or not—to

the study of ethics. We should not overlook, however, the "persons" or "subjects" that lie "in between", especially their relation to acts, in talking about ethics. As Watsuji himself writes,

> Human relations… are *act-connections* between person and person like *communication* or *association*, in which persons as subjects concern themselves with each other. We cannot substain ourselves in any *aida* or *naka* without acting subjectively. At the same time, we cannot act without maintaining ourselves in some *aida* or *naka*. For this reason, *aida* or *naka* imply a living and dynamic betweenness, as a subjective interconnection of acts. (Watsuji 1996, 18)

Watsuji believes that subjectivity is the object of inquiry that determines the method of ethics:

> By the way, our question was "what is ethics?"… Questioning belongs to the *sonzai* of *ningen*…. What is sought here is *ningen*, the *sonzai* of *ningen*, which is from beginning to end a practical acting subject, as well as subjective interconnections…. This means that the subjectivity of what is inquired into here is the second point that determines the method of ethics. This issue must be assessed from two sides: one, the "subjectivity" of the object of inquiry; two, that this subject is *ningen*. (Watsuji 1996, 31–32)

For Mou too, subjectivity is primary—he holds that it should be considered the key element of Confucianism, as well as of Chinese philosophy in general. He contends that, in contrast to the overwhelming emphasis Western philosophy places on "objective knowledge," Chinese philosophy concerns itself with subjectivity (*zhutixing* 主體性) and inner morality (*neizaidaodexing* 內在道德性).

> Chinese philosophy emphasizes "subjectivity" and "inner morality." The three main streams of Chinese thought—Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism—all emphasize subjectivity, though only Confucianism, the mainstream of the three, gives a particular definition of "inner morality," that is as moral subjectivity [*daodezhutixing* 道德主體性]. In contrast, Western philosophy does not pay attention to subjectivity as much as to objectivity. Its focus and development mainly have to do with knowledge. (Mou 1998, 5–6)

Undoubtedly, extensive and critical study is needed before we draw Chinese and Western philosophy into such a dichotomy. This is not the place, however, to judge Mou's analysis. "Subjectivity" is unquestionably his own top priority in examining Chinese philosophy, particularly Confucianism. Similar to Watsuji, Mou also stresses the importance of "interhuman" relationships in the study of subjectivity, although he does not confine them to the framework of *ningen sonzai*. Mou believes that the subject (*zhuti* 主體) of practice exists in relation to both matter (*shi* 事) and Heaven as well.

> Chinese philosophy emphasizes practice.... The primordial meaning of philosophy is intellect [*mingzhi* 明智]. When intellect is made moral [*dexinghua* 德性化] and personal [*rengehua* 人格化], it becomes that of the sage [*sheng* 聖].... The sage king [*shengwang* 聖王] finds in practice that his process is the activity of politics. Such activity comes from the self [*ziji* 自己] that is in relation with human beings, matter and Heaven. The success of politics, therefore, depends on the subject's rational [*heli* 合理] and harmonious [*tiaohe* 調和] relationships with others [*waijieren* 外界人], with matter and with Heaven. (MOU 1998, 15)

We now may understand why this short essay attempts to explore the meaning and significance of subjectivity. First, subjectivity plays the key role in the ethical/moral philosophical systems of Watsuji and Mou; second, it helps to unveil the differences between the philosophical approaches that Watsuji and Mou employ. In declaring that there should be one more agenda for the study of the Kyoto School, not only do we intend to compare it with another Eastern philosophical tradition—that is, New Confucianism—but also to attempt to elucidate the different philosophical approaches embedded in *rinrigaku* and moral metaphysics.

SUBJECT/SUBJECTIVITY: *NINGEN* AND THE SELF

As mentioned above, Watsuji defines *rinrigaku* as *ningen no gaku* 人間の学 (the study of *ningen*); *ningen* here refers to the interhuman or communal rather than the individual. *Rinri*, therefore, should

be conceived of as the "subjective interconnections" of *ningen*, that is, of practical acting subjects. And again, as above, according to Watsuji, subjectivity determines the method of ethics, that it "must be assessed from two sides: one, the 'subjectivity' of the object of inquiry; two, that this subject is *ningen*" (Watsuji 1996, 32).

With respect to the method of ethics then, not only should subjectivity be considered as the "object of inquiry," but so too should the "subject" of *ningen*. As indicated in the preface to *Ningen no gaku toshite no rinrigaku* 人間の学としての倫理学 [Ethics as the Study of *Ningen*, 1934], Watsuji's objective is not to provide a systematic narration of *rinrigaku*, but only to address its meaning and method (Watsuji 2007, 5). Watsuji believes that *ningen* must be grasped as a practical acting subject (*jissenteki shutai* 実践的主体) (Watsuji 2007, 191), as which it should neither be a contemplative subject (*kanshōteki shutai* 観照的主体) nor a contemplative object (*kanshōtekikyakutai* 観照的客体). "Subjectivity" must be assessed as the subject of *ningen*, as "*ningen* is embedded in we ourselves in a particular *aidagara*" (Watsuji 2007, 190).

Like Watsuji, Mou also perceives the "subject" as embracing a relationship between human beings (*ren* 人), though not embedded in *aidagara*. For Mou, to be a subject indeed entails being in relationship with human beings, but also with matter and Heaven. Mou argues that there must be an ontological ground for human beings as subjects. Although it is not very clear whether Mou distinguishes the duality of subjectivity and objectivity from the contemplative perspective, for Mou the subject is definitely not limited to the existential level that Watsuji stresses, that is, to the facts of daily life (*nichijōteki jijitsu* 日常的事実).

Another difference between Watsuji and Mou is their understanding of the relationship between the communal and the individual. Watsuji emphasizes that there is a kind of dialectic relationship between the two, in which the communal takes priority over the individual:

> In the continuous production of individual, it is absorbed by the communal.… *Ningen sonzai* should not be stopped at the activity of negation between the individual and communal, but rather revive the communal through the uncountable individuals in contrast to the division of self and others. (Watsuji 2007, 35–42)

According to Mine Hideki, Watsuji does not provide a very clear picture of why precedence should be given to the communal over the individual. Mine questions why it is necessary to base the communal on the negation of individual, and why the activity of negation arises (MINE 2002, 80). Watsuji's disdain for the individual, as against the communal, on the level of object theory (*taishōronri* 対象論理) is much more obvious than Nishida Kitarō's, despite the criticism that has fallen upon the latter (MINE 2002, 68).

As for Mou, it seems that he does not concern himself much with the relationship between the communal and the individual. The interpretation of *rinri*, or *lunli*, in the context of five cardinal relationships (*wuchang*, *gojō* 五常) is different for Watsuji and Mou. For Watsuji, *jō* (常) refers to the five orders of *ningen kyōdōtai* 人間共同体 (community of human beings) found in the *aidagara* of father and son, ruler and subject, elder and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. For Mou, however, it refers not to the *aidagara* but to the situational difference embedded within the five relationships (MOU 1998, 34).

What then produces these different manifestations of benevolence? Mou emphasizes that it is Heaven that determines what is benevolent. Unlike Kantian philosophy, Confucianism does not merely stress the matter of "ought" and deny the ontological problem in view of morality. Although the idea of Heaven is not stressed by Confucius, this does not mean that it is disregarded. Mou argues that "it is Heaven that takes the responsibility of ontology, in which Confucius's benevolence and Mencius's nature [*xing* 性] are interlinked [*xiangtong* 相通] with Heaven and become united into one" (MOU 1997, 76).

In brief, Watsuji's definition of *rinrigaku* as the study of *ningen* indicates the existential orientation of *ningen*, especially the interconnections of practical acting subjects within *aidagara*, whereas Mou insists that there must be a metaphysical ground for determining the enacting of benevolence or nature. The difference between Watsuji's *rinrigaku* and Mou's moral metaphysics rests in the difference of their philosophical approaches—that is to say, Watsuji's Heideggerian approach as against Mou's Kantian approach. But why and how do Watsuji and Mou come up with these two different philosophical approaches? In what way do they relate to Watsuji's *rinrigaku* and Mou's moral metaphysics? What

significance do the two philosophical approaches have in terms of the contemporary Sino-Japanese philosophical interchange around ethics/morality?

Subjectivity and philosophical approaches

Flipping through the writings of Watsuji, especially those related to *rinrigaku*, it is not difficult to find the shadow of Heidegger. Watsuji himself explicitly admits that there are many things to learn from Heidegger in the examination of *rinrigaku* (Watsuji 2007, 182, 191, 218). Of course, Watsuji does direct considerable criticism toward Heidegger—see for example, his criticism in *Fūdo* 風土 [Climate] of Heidegger's overemphasis on time and neglect of space (Watsuji 2004, 3–4). Watsuji's concern for *ningen sonzai*, however, clearly demonstrates how influential Heideggerian agendas like that of *Sein und Dasein* are for *rinrigaku*. For Mou, on the other hand, it is widely known that Kantian philosophy played an important role for him in establishing his philosophical system, for moral metaphysics, though at the same time his criticisms of Kant's moral philosophy should not be overlooked.

Emphasizing *rinrigaku* as the interconnection of the acts of practical acting subjects, Watsuji criticizes Kant for overstressing the "immediate consciousness in the individual" by overlooking its "ground of a definite betweenness":

> Kant took his departure from the facts of immediate consciousness in the individual, and inquired into the self-determination of the subject practically disclosed in these facts. But the practical interconnection of acts includes the mutual understanding of subjects on a deeper level than is the case with the consciousness of obligation of the individual. On the basis of these subjective connections, obligatory consciousness arises. And what is more, it arises on the ground of a definite betweenness; that is, on this basis, the relations of social ethics are established in the form of self-realization as a way of acting within this betweenness. (Watsuji 1996, 33)

Considering *rinrigaku* as "a way of acting within this [subjective]

betweenness," Watsuji is dissatisfied with Kant's giving precedence to the individual instead of to the communal, or to be more precise, to the subjective connections between individuals. The subject that acts within betweenness should not be conceived of as indicating a duality between self and others, but on the contrary, as revealing the non-duality of self and others that form that betweenness. Watsuji states,

> I think that all attempts to deal with ethics from the angle of analyzing individual consciousness are unfit, for ethics is the study of the subject conceived of as the practical interconnection of acts. An act is not something constructed out of various activities of the individual consciousness but the movement itself in which subjects, although splitting into self and other, combine in a nonduality of self and other to form a betweenness. (WATSUJI 1996, 34)

Prioritizing the communal over the individual, Watsuji employs the hermeneutic method of Heidegger, claiming that the communal *sonzai* can only be understood through the "expression" (*hyōgen* 表現) of the subjective *sonzai* of *ningen* (*ningen no shutaitekina sonzai* 人間の主体的な存在). From the theoretical point of view (*gaku no tachiba* 学の立場), *ningen sonzai* is a problem of understanding the expression of daily life. In order to obtain objectivity of understanding, we must look to the method of hermeneutic, in which it should be taken as a question of *Sein* rather than *Seiendes*. In other words, Heidegger does not follow a Husserlian phenomenology that emphasizes *Seiendes*, but rather holds that *Seiendes* can only be understood through its everyday expression as *ningen sonzai*.

> Phenomena… are the expression of *ningen sonzai*. It is… *ningen sonzai* that is in question…. The existence of subjective *ningen* can only be established through its expression. On top of that, we must first grasp its expression and understand its existence through the interpretation it undertakes. (WATSUJI 2007, 255–58)

Instead of tracing the metaphysical ground of *ningen sonzai*, as seen in Mou's metaphysics, Watsuji repeatedly says that we must go back to the "everyday expression of the subject" in order to grasp the dynamic structure of *ningen sonzai*:

> Thus, the hermeneutic method as the method of ethics, consists in grasping the dynamic structure of *ningen's sonzai* through its most basic everyday expression… the effort to deal with everyday facts as expressions of the subjective constitutes the most important aspect of this method. (Watsuji 1996, 43–44)

Mou emphasizes, however, that there must be a metaphysical ground—that is, Heaven—for morality, instead of confining it to an everyday expression of subject and its interpretation. By borrowing Kantian moral philosophy, Mou emphasizes that the highest virtue (*zuigaoshan* 最高善) is the necessary object (*birandeduixiang* 必然的對象) of practical reason in Kant, for whom it must refer to the existence of God. Although this sounds quite similar to the Confucian understanding that morality must somewhat relate to a kind of metaphysical ground, Mou criticizes Kantian moral philosophy for emphasizing morality rather than metaphysics, holding that therefore it can be only considered as a kind of metaphysics of morals (*daodedixingshangxue* 道德底形上學). The word "metaphysics" in Kant refers to "metaphysical exposition" rather than to the question of being or ontology. (Mou 1997, 76). Unlike Kant, Mou does not simply correlate morality with God and form a kind of moral theology (*daodedishenxue* 道德的神學), as he believes Confucianism does not concern itself with the theology that religion normally embodies.

In the eyes of Mou then, Kant is only concerned with moral theology and not moral metaphysics. Moral is an adjective in the phrases moral metaphysics and moral theology, meaning that they reveal a morality grounded in metaphysics or religion. "As it is not a religion, Confucianism does not posit a moral theology but a moral metaphysics. In Confucianism, Heaven takes responsibility for existence, in which Confucius's benevolence and Mencius's nature [性] are interlinked [相通] with Heaven and become united into one.… The Confucian metaphysics of morals definitely embraces a moral metaphysics" (Mou 1997, 76).

Mou's insistence on having a "metaphysical ground" for morality is somewhat related to his analysis of the Confucian "subject." Mou believes that "the emphasis of Confucius is benevolence, in which it correlates to subject. And the strength of moral consciousness concerns the subject" (Mou 1997, 77). For Mou, benevolence represents a sub-

ject, which can also be considered as reason (*li* 理) and the way (*dao* 道) (Mou 1997, 79). The Confucian subject is not confined to mere subjectivity, but also refers to objectivity, that is, the "metaphysical" ground of morality.

Again, the question of whether or not Mou's understanding of Kant is convincing is outside the scope of this paper. My question is rather why does Mou want to insist on the metaphysical ground for Confucian morality but not ask the question of *Sein* that Watsuji highlights, and vice versa? What messages do the two different philosophical approaches have for the study of ethics/morality in the context of contemporary Chinese and Japanese philosophy?

For my part, I would propose that philosophy never goes beyond history, regardless of its concern for universality. As indicated in *Fūdo*, Watsuji had been highly influenced by Heidegger, since his days in Germany. It would be hard to imagine Heidegger having had such an influence if Watsuji had not had that first-hand experience. Of course, Heidegger was not Watsuji's only dialogical partner: we also see in his work the influence of Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Hermann Cohen and so on. Nonetheless, Heidegger remains the most influential figure. Unlike Mou, although Watsuji does undertake the study of traditional Chinese and Japanese thought, including Confucianism and Buddhism, his concern is not with reviving this tradition in the face of Western philosophy; rather, his philosophical agenda is to develop a kind of "universal" *rinrigaku* that goes beyond both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions. Mou, however—as clearly seen in the "Manifesto for a Reappraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture"—is dedicated to the revival of Chinese philosophy, Confucianism in particular, in the face of the invasion of Western learning and philosophy in the early twentieth century. Unlike Watsuji, Mou had not gone abroad for any formal and first-hand training in Western philosophy, and the historical situation of China partly served as a factor leading Mou to take on the responsibility of reviving Confucianism. His reliance on Kant, therefore, is definitely not coincidental, but rather indicates Kant's philosophical intimacy with the "moral metaphysics" of Confucianism.

Subjectivity, *Rinrigaku* and moral metaphysics

We can say by way of conclusion that subject or subjectivity plays a key role in both Watsuji's *rinrigaku* and Mou's moral metaphysics. Both emphasize that it is the subject that underlies ethical/moral deeds. Mou even suggests that Chinese philosophy takes subjectivity as its particular concern, rather than the intellect that is the basic focus of Western philosophy. What distinguishes the two contemporary philosophers are first, that Watsuji puts his emphasis on the "betweenness" of subjects, whereas Mou is inclined to conceive the individual in relation to others, matter, and Heaven; and second, that Watsuji's *rinrigaku* heavily relies on Heideggerian philosophy, including his concern for *Sein* instead of *Seiendes* in his definition of *rinrigaku* as *ningen sonzai* while Mou borrows Kantian moral philosophy in strengthening his philosophical project of reviving Confucian moral metaphysics, arguing that there must be a metaphysical ground for morality—i.e., Heaven. Of course, questions remain whether these interpretations of Heidegger and Kant are persuasive.

A final significant distinction lies in their different understandings of *gaku* 学 or *xue* 學. As twice noted above, Watsuji defines *rinrigaku* as *ningen no gaku* 人間の学; the *gaku* here may refer to a kind of study (*manabu koto* 学ぶこと) that constitutes a relation of giving and receiving. It does not necessarily correlate to the metaphysics that Mou's moral metaphysics denotes. As we have seen Maraldo points out, in Watsuji, "ethics replaces ontology as first philosophy, and the ordered realm of the interpersonal replaces the authenticity of the singular person" (Maraldo 2002, 80). By contrast, Mou emphasizes that Chinese philosophy—including Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism—is about "the study of life" (*shengmingdixuewen* 生命的學問), its focus the study of mind and nature (*xinxingzhixue* 心性之學), in which neither mind nor nature can be detached from Heaven, which is the metaphysical ground of morality. In the face of the question of modernity that was embedded in the historical and philosophical situations of Japan and China in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Watsuji and Mou's different understandings of study reminds us of the importance of putting one more agenda on the table as we examine the Kyoto School—putting

it into dialogue with New Confucianism indicates the richness of philosophical dialogue within as well as without the traditions of the East.

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The Comparative Philosophies of Mou Zongsan and Nishitani Keiji

Xiaofei Tu

New Confucianism and the philosophy of the Kyoto School are comparative philosophies *par excellence*. They stand or fall with the validity of the comparisons their thinkers have made regarding Western and Asian religious and philosophical systems and conceptions. The thinkers in both schools, while mainly writing for their fellow citizens, constantly and self-consciously take European philosophy as the reference point for their own philosophizing. Just as Asian people cannot afford not to reckon with the Western capitalist market system and liberal democratic politics, neither are they able to ignore Western thought, which has become the universal reference if not the norm in the world market of ideas. Founded on Western theoretical frameworks and conceptions, yet necessarily in constant negotiation with indigenous thought, modern East Asian religious philosophy became comparative in approach. The comparative approach is both a stratagem and a necessity for Asian thought if it wishes to respond to the Western impact.

Yet comparative philosophy and comparative religion in and beyond Asia have recently received criticisms in plentitude. Questions that have been raised include: is it not an essentializing fallacy to take Asian philosophy and religion out of their historical and social contexts and present

them as unchanging entities? Are the across-space-and-time comparisons between Asian and Western philosophy and religion farfetched and forced?

To answer these questions, this paper presents two case studies of the kinds of comparative philosophy in which the New Confucians and the Kyoto School thinkers engage. The first is Mou Zongsan's (1909–1995) comparison of Kantian and Confucian metaphysics. The second is Nishitani Keiji's (1900–1990) comparison of Buddhism and Heidegger. After showcasing the two, at the end of this paper I shall consider the validity of comparative philosophy and its implications for our appraisals of New Confucianism and the Kyoto School in particular.

Mou's post-kantian confucianism

According to Mou, the difference between ancient Chinese and Western traditions is that the West first sought "the ultimate being" in either Nature or God, while the Chinese looked for it in the Mind (*xin* 心), which is understood as the spiritual aspect of human existence that synthesizes cognitive, emotional, and, most important, moral faculties. The Mind is the "locale" where the world of human spirit and values unfolds. In this world of spirit and values, morality is prioritized over other attributes such as beauty and intellect. Indeed, a distinctive characteristic of Mou's thought is his emphasis on the ontological meaning of morality. To this end, he distinguishes between "metaphysics of morals" and "moral metaphysics." While the former investigates the nature of morality and corresponds to what is usually termed meta-ethics, the latter is concerned with a metaphysical system that is founded on a uniquely Confucian understanding of morality.

For Mou, the Mind is primarily understood as moral self-consciousness. However, it has multiple levels of meaning to be explored. First of all, it is the self-directing and self-affirming activity that is present in humanity's moral praxis. At this level, it comprises moral intentions, decisions, and actions. On a second level, this Mind as moral self-consciousness is recognized as the essence and nature of all human beings; as such, it is "wired" to Heaven.[1] Finally, the Mind is perceived as *creating*

the "outside world." The words "outside world" are in quotes because indeed nothing can elude the orbit of the all-encompassing Mind. It is worth pointing out that here Mou is not advocating an epistemological solipsism, alleging that nothing exists but the individual human mind. Indeed, epistemology has never been a major concern for the Confucians, Mou included. The Confucians are concerned with providing an anchorage for human morality, not with pure epistemological purposes. What Mou means by saying that the Mind "creates" is that this Mind imposes moral meanings and moral relations onto the world it touches and therefore transforms it into a human world.

In an attempt to reappropriate Confucianism and to position it as a part of world philosophy, Mou incorporates Western philosophical perspectives on this issue and selects Kant as his dialogue partner. In fact, unlike such German philosophers as Leibniz and Christian Wolff, Kant does not hold Chinese thought in very high regard.[2] The reason for Mou's selection of Kant lies in Mou's belief that Kant represents "modern" philosophy in the spirit of the Enlightenment epoch. Mou's intention is for Confucianism to speak to modernity.

More specifically, Mou is impressed by Kant's affirmation of the absoluteness of moral imperatives, and the Kantian effort to reach the transcendent via practical reason, in which Mou sees parallels to the Confucian tradition, which highlights the unity between Heaven and humanity.[3] Nevertheless, Mou contends that despite Kant's worthy intent, he was not successful in reconnecting the transcendent and the immanent. Kant views the human mind only in perceptive and cognitive terms, and as such the mind is not able to reach the *Ding an sich*. Kant makes an insurmountable distinction between noumenon and phenom-

1. The concept of *Tian* 天 (Heaven) had gone through certain metamorphoses in Confucianism. For Mou and his Song-Ming predecessors, Heaven refers to the impersonal transcendent power that is aligned with moral order but dependent upon human agents to actualize its will. See Feng 1983 and Riegel 2006.

2. Leibniz saw an affinity between medieval Confucianism and his own philosophy. Wolff was banished from Prussia partly because of his sympathy to "atheist" Chinese thought. See Roetz 1984, 5–8.

3. Interestingly, Mao Zedong also sees an affinity between medieval Confucianism and Kantian philosophy (Li 1985, 220).

enon, that is, that which can be the object of empirical knowledge and that which cannot. Any attempt to gain certain knowledge about the fundamentally unknowable is bound to fail.

Mou argues against Kant that this noumenon is not a lofty *Ding an sich* indifferent to the human world. Rather, it is what the Confucians traditionally called the Way of Heaven which brings moral meaning and moral values into being. Mou believes that reaching the noumenon is humanly possible for the following reason: both Kant and Confucianism agree that moral commands are unconditional. Hence the giver of moral commands should be unconditional. Moreover, such a giver cannot be God—moral laws given to humans by an Other are conditioned by this Other. If God is the author of moral obligation, then ethical obligation is unconditional but humans are not free. Humans can only be morally free if the moral imperative is self-imposed. Therefore, moral commands must be given by the human Mind. Since unconditional things cannot be given by something conditioned, the human Mind must be unconditional too. The next step is that since (a) the human Mind and the Way of Heaven are both unconditional, and (b) there cannot be two things that are both unconditional, the two must, as a result, be one (Mou 1971). If the above argument smacks of the ontological argument of Anselm that has been criticized by Kant, we need to note that Mou philosophizes not in order to interpret Kant but in order to improve upon and move beyond Kant. As such, Mou tries to sublate Kant and other philosophies, including the thought-forms that Kant had deemed invalid.[4]

Based on the argument above, the Mind elevated by perfect moral exertion must be both human and transhuman because the Mind is radically identical with the Way of Heaven. As such, the Mind itself is noumenon, and there would be no difficulty in its self-understanding and self-realization. Thus Mou believes that ancient Chinese thought already had the answer to the dilemma Kant discovered in his critique of human reason. The problem for Mou rather lies in how it could be possible

4. It is still an open question whether or not Kant successfully dismantled the ontological argument. For a theological defense for Anselm, see e.g. Barth 1985. For some recent discussions, see Swinburne 1984 and Plantinga 1990.

for his transcendent Mind to engage the phenomenal world. Here Mou borrows the notion from the Buddhist text, the *Dacheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 [The Awakening of Faith] that the worlds of nirvāna and samsāra both arise from the same original Buddha Mind. In Mou's system, the selfsame Mind is able to act in both noumenal and phenomenal spheres, but in different ways. While the Mind understands and embraces the Way of Heaven as a form of self-understanding and self-realization, for it to grapple with phenomena the Mind would have to voluntarily impose limitations on itself and thus change itself into a limited agent of intellect, with its synthetic moral character being transmuted to a purely cognitive quality. This self-restraint is not in any sense a process of degeneration but an act of "self-emptying," and a necessary step for the possibility of empirical knowledge.

Time and being in heidegger and buddhism, as seen by nishitani

Nishitani's philosophy is existential through and through. For him, the fundamental problem of philosophy is the question of the self (Nishitani 1990, 1). In other words, the first order of things in any philosophical query is to ask: "Where are we from, what do we do, and where are we going?" The lurking threat of death and negativity behind the self reveals the hypocrisy of a purely intellectual approach to philosophy. Therefore, nihilism that is brought about by the constant negation of life has to be confronted by philosophers. Nihilism in this sense, unlike what the common usage suggests, has little to do with moral cynicism and decadence. Rather, nihilism is an honest appraisal of human conditions and a brave embrace of each and every aspect of life, including its negation. Thus "one strives resolutely to be oneself and to seek the ground of one's actual existence" (Nishitani 1990, 2). In this sense, nihilism transcends the limits of time and space and reaches to the core of human existence. On the other hand, nihilism is a historical phenomenon, which has been highlighted and aggravated in the modern era of Europe: "Nihilism is a sign of the collapse of social order externally and of spiritual decay internally—and as such signifies a time of

great upheaval" (Nishitani 1990, 3). In particular, nihilism in Europe has been symbiotic with the rise of "historical consciousness." As the traditional notion of transcendence, be it the Platonic Idea or Christian God, was eclipsed by the impact of modern humanism and rationalism, human history became the foundation of values. It turns out, however, that historicity without a transhistorical dimension is unable to stand the weight and collapses. As a result, human values are also in shambles. This, according to Nishitani, is the origin of European nihilism. According to Nishitani, it is Heidegger who turns nihilism from a profound understanding of nihility into a sophisticated metaphysics that promises an authentic human existence (Nishitani 1990, 157).

Heidegger does so by revealing nothingness as the ground of existence. Dasein, as Heidegger terms human existence, is permeated with a nullity that is discovered in death. Once this nullity is revealed, the world in which Dasein exists surrenders all its pretended significance, for the world stands against the backdrop of the immense silence of the "nothing." Paradoxically, the groundlessness of existence that the anticipation of death uncovers also gives Dasein freedom to look back at the possibility of his ownmost potentiality-for-Being. That is, although Dasein finds himself thrown in the world in such a way that he is already "abandoned" and "delivered over" to the power of his death, in the thrownness Dasein is released to exercise the power of his finite yet inalienable freedom. In this moment Dasein is freed from all illusions and stands alone by himself, overwhelmed with joy.

Now Heidegger's concepts of human existence as guilt and nullity, according to Nishitani, corroborate the Buddhist teaching about the emptiness and no-self of all existence. In fact, the quagmire of European nihilism serves to remind the Japanese who are obsessed with Westernization that their own tradition may have in store solutions for modern times. The Buddhist notion of emptiness or nothingness carries real potential to support and surpass the "creative nihilism" of Heidegger (Nishitani 1990, 179). With all the differences there may be, the above statement of Heidegger's does call to mind the Buddhist notion of blissful enlightenment, which also validates the prominence of non-Being: the enlightened mind sees that nullity is the true aspect of the world and thereby transforms itself into nirvanic awareness.

From nothingness as the ground of existence we get a sense of ontological anguish at the universality and inevitability of loss. However, transience can be interpreted both negatively as a source of suffering, grief and despair, and positively as a celebration of the promise of renewal and a symbol of awakening. Buddhism at once encompasses and transcends human emotions of sorrow and grief concerning the transience of nature (NISHITANI 1990, 15 and 58). One is liberated only when he has realized the permanence in impermanence. Nishitani concludes that Buddhism and Heidegger find the answer to life and death in an aesthetically and ecstatically enveloping confirmation of impermanent existence.

The use of Heidegger in Nishitani's critical appraisal of Buddhism certainly does not mean that the former is in any sense more transparent than, or adequate in explaining, the latter. In the spirit of Buddhist parables, the attempt is analogous to a blind, crippled person wandering in darkness. When this person tries to move forward, he has to put the weight of his body on his stick, even if he is not completely certain—and there is no way to make certain—that the stick is on solid ground.[5]

NISHITANI AND MOU

What are the connections between Mou's and Nishitani's comparative philosophies? First of all, both of them are self-conscious efforts to reposition their respective traditions in the face of modern Western thought. Theirs can be seen as part of the gigantic Asian effort at modernizing itself. There is certainly dispute about the origin, nature, and outlook of modernization. For the purpose of this paper, I will consider certain aspects of modernization, namely, the influences of the post-industrial European West on Asia since the nineteenth century, i.e., a dominant discourse of science and progress; imported Western social and political systems; individualism and liberal democratic values; and a theologically sophisticated Christianity. I proceed with the awareness that neither "modernity" nor the "West" is a static, given entity.

5. Losing one's direction can have a positive meaning in Zen. See POLLACK 1985, 25.

Rather, both have multiple layers and facets; moreover, it is precisely in the interaction with the "old world" and "non-West" that they constantly assume new identities and are redefined. Predating Edward Said, Takeuchi Yoshimi pointed out that European identity had been shaped by the expansion of its colonialism (Takeuchi 2005). On the other hand, the New Confucians and the Kyoto thinkers have also deployed the ideas of modernity and the West for the purpose of seeking out and defining their own self-identity.

It is against this background that we consider the comparative thought of Mou and Nishitani. As Nishitani pointed out, while European philosophers and religious thinkers could proceed with their speculative enterprise without bothering with Asian thought, it was not possible for their Chinese and Japanese colleagues to work without referring to European traditions. Founded on Western theoretical frameworks and conceptions, yet necessarily in constant negotiation with indigenous thought, modern East Asian philosophy became comparative in approach. While Kant is the most indispensable figure in modern philosophy, Heidegger is modernity's profound critic. The New Confucians and the Kyoto School thinkers use said philosophers not for the sake of mere curiosity or innovation, but to tackle the issue of modernity and also to negotiate a place for their traditions in the global gallery of ideas.

The second connection between Mou and Nishitani is the existential trait present in their comparative philosophy. Borrowing from Steven Collins, by "existential" I mean "an intellectualist attempt to find a reflective, rationalized ordering of life, and death, as a conceptual and imaginary whole, and to prescribe some means of definitively (if only imaginatively, so far as a non-believer can tell) escaping suffering and death" (Collins 1998, 22). As Zheng Jiadong, a leading scholar of New Confucianism, noted, Mou's existential concerns are particularly strong, and are rather noteworthy since a traditional Confucian is typically portrayed as being in harmony with nature and society and thus "worry free." The same existential concerns are even more salient in Nishitani. Mou's use of Kant is an effort to establish a moral subjectivity as a response to human existential conditions, while an important part of Heidegger's appeal to Nishitani is his existential consideration for death.

Levinas remarked that humans have two ways to access the outside world, namely, by vision and by contact. Thus in our language, we metaphorically say that we "see" or "grasp" the truth. We find an example of the philosophy of vision in Plato when he famously compares the human world to an arena (THILLY 1957, 17). The least worthy people in the arena are the peddlers who try to make a profit. Better than the first group are the athletes competing for prizes and honor. But the worthiest among all people are the spectators who observe and reflect without participating. In real life, the best people are the philosophers who observe life without active participation.[6] On the other hand, we could argue that Buddhism and Confucianism are philosophies of contact. They are always in contact with human life and its concerns. Confucian and Buddhist practitioners demand a total commitment and expect a complete intellectual and spiritual transformation for themselves. The goal for Confucians is "to combine the unfathomable truth with daily life." In Buddhism, theories that cannot be put into practice are considered a mere "play of words" (*prapañca*). Mou's and Nishitani's philosophies for life are well placed in the Confucian and Buddhist traditions.

Indeed, for Mou and Nishitani, the challenge of modernity and existential concerns are interconnected. With the dawn of modernity in Asia, as the traditional value worlds were crippled, and traditional means of spiritual consolation brought into question by the inroads of Western thought, the New Confucians and the Kyoto School thinkers experienced a devastating sense of spiritual dislocation. Moreover, I want to point out that their personal spiritual struggles were not detached from their concerns for their countries and cultures. A paradox exists in the core of New Confucianism and Kyoto School philosophy: the thinkers of both schools believed that their philosophies were carried out "for the sake of oneself," that is, for one's own moral perfection or enlightenment. For instance, Langdon Gilkey points out that Nishitani's philosophy is "individualistic" in this regard (GILKEY 1989, 49).

6. I do not intend to pigeonhole Western philosophy as merely being observant. Pierre Hadot has pointed out that classical Greek philosophy was a way of life, and it was not until the time of the Roman Empire that philosophy began to become a profession of professors (HADOT 1995).

At the same time, they seemed to believe that the sum total of the self-motivated, individual effort at moral and religious self-cultivation would lead to the renewal of cultural life and the prosperity of their nations. This belief carried political/ideological implications because it diametrically opposed the vision that the human situation could be changed only by manipulating social and political arrangements. This belief helped to explain the personal political involvement, or lack thereof, of these thinkers and their political philosophy vis-à-vis the surging Marxism and statism of twentieth-century Japan and China.

If Marxism historicizes and politicizes existential concerns, then the New Confucians and the Kyoto School thinkers existentialize history and politics.[7] On this account, Nishitani critiqued Marxism:

> Matters like the meaning of life and death, or the impermanence of all things, simply cannot be reduced without remainder to a matter of economic self-alienation. These are questions of much broader and deeper reach, indeed questions essential for human being. (Nishitani 1990, 183–4)

To Mou, the political chaos in his lifetime was nothing but a symptom of the ambiguity of human existence. This prioritizing of existential concerns is most pointed in Nishida's statement that no one, except perhaps for the mentally challenged, would care only about material interests.

Methodological reflections

Our discussion inevitably involves a bigger issue of the meaning and validity of comparative studies in general. There have been friendly worries about the comparative method. Roger Ames praises Mou for continuing "the Confucian lineage by translating and in fact transforming their strongest rival, who is by intention exclusive and imperialis-

7. An example of the Marxist stand is Bruce Lincoln's argument that death should not be considered as a universal human concern. Instead, he says, we have to take into account class divisions to correctly understand death as a social and political phenomenon (Lincoln 1991).

tic, into a vocabulary consistent with their own premises" (AMES 2001, 84). He nevertheless worries that by overstating the similarity between Western and Asian thought, we could end up underappreciating Chinese philosophy as a real alternative to Western thinking (AMES 2001, 94). On the other end of the spectrum, critics such as Bernard Faure dismiss the philosophical affinity between Asia and the West discovered by comparativists as superficial and ideologically motivated.[8] They often imply that comparativists are methodologically naïve in that the latter take both Asian and Western concepts at face value and readily pick up on superficial similarities. Moreover, it is suggested that such comparisons, by focusing on the world of ideas stripped of social and political realities, ideologically reinforce the status quo. By their own account, these methodologically sophisticated anti-comparativists would rescue Asian thought from the shrouds of myth and ideology and restore the real, historical facts about those traditions. This methodological overconfidence calls to mind Nishitani's critique of Eurocentrism. Nishitani observed that Christianity propagated a totally undeserved divine love, by virtue of which the Christian "sinners" became the holders of an absolute religion. Similarly, today's anti-comparativists claim to be critics of Western military and cultural imperialism, as well as critics of unjust social reality. By virtue of their claims to being "critical" and ideology free, they give themselves a privileged position.

Most recently, we have witnessed in some scholars a zealous drive to deconstruct and to debunk, which is, of course, by no means limited to the field of Asian philosophy and religions.[9] The relevance of this

8. Faure talks about the Kyoto thinkers with sarcasm. He puts quotation marks on Nishitani's "philosophy," suggesting that Nishitani is not a serious philosopher, and asserts that Nishitani's comparison between Heidegger and Zen is sterile without carefully looking into either Nishitani or Heidegger (FAURE 1995, 256, 249ff.).

9. Lionel Jensen argues that "Confucianism" was a fabrication of the Jesuits who came to China for missionary purposes in the sixteenth century. An early parallel is the German philosopher F.W.J. Schelling. Schelling contended that China had had no advanced philosophy, and the positive reports of Chinese thought by Jesuits were motivated by the latter's plan to change China into an overseas Catholic stronghold. See QIN 1993, 141.

deconstruction fever to comparative studies is that such deconstruction supposedly pulls the ground from under the comparative approach. A comparison of two "manufactured" systems is unwarranted and even ludicrous—in Buddhist terms, "a dream in a dream." Several factors contribute to this deconstruction phenomenon. First of all, historians of ideas have always been self-reflective and self-correcting. The constant (re)writing of the history of Asian philosophy is no exception. Some of the deconstruction and reconstruction is part of the routine of scholarly practice. Second, we have to note the pressure on scholars to break new ground under the current academic administrative system. We all know too well that we need publications to survive in academe, and new publications supposedly take new ideas. For this purpose, we need to make currently circulating ideas outdated. Finally and perhaps most importantly, this overzealous dismantling is of a positivist bent. The positivistic tendency not only doubts received history and traditions, but goes to the extreme view that whatever is not preserved in extant writings or inscriptions did not happen at all. This calls to mind King Milinda's questions to Nāgasena:

> "Have you seen the Buddha?"
> "No, Sire."
> "Then have your teachers seen the Buddha?"
> "No, Sire."
> "Then, Venerable Nāgasena, there is no Buddha."
> (quoted in Rhys Davids 1963, 109)

The positivistic attitude, however, does not take into account, say, the randomness of the preservation of ancient documents that have had to survive all sorts of natural and human damage in history, and the possibilities of future archeological discoveries. Second, this radical positivism is self-defeating. It pulls the ground from underneath everybody, and loses a place on which it itself might stand. Husserl expressed his concern regarding historicism and positivism in the first half of the twentieth century: "Historicism, if pushed to its logical extreme, will become radical skepticism and subjectivism" (Husserl 1965, 51). Radical skepticism, according to Wittgenstein, "is a sign of a kind of deadening of the

world, an unwillingness to allow things to speak to us as well as a denial of our need to listen" (quoted in MINAR 2001, 43).

Above we have first discussed the comparative philosophies of New Confucianism and the Kyoto School, showcasing Mou Zongsan and Nishitani. In assessing these comparisons, the issue was not how accurate a picture Mou and Nishitani have painted of Eastern and Western traditions; rather my intention was to examine the reasons for and purposes of their comparisons. Thus we have pointed out that the background against which such comparisons emerged was the impact and challenge of the West and modernity. Contrary to the critics of the comparative method, I conclude that the New Confucians and the Kyoto School thinkers should be commended for their philosophical sophistication, sincere concern for humanity, and vigilance to recent developments in the Western intellectual world. For Mou Zongsan and Nishitani, the foremost significance of comparative studies is the acknowledgement of diversity in culture and human thinking. In the final analysis, comparative studies is a mind open to new ideas and new possibilities.

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Hidden Aspects of Temporality from Nishida to Watsuji

Jacynthe Tremblay

The famous aporia about time which has become commonplace since Aristotle is well known: The past is not any more and the future is not yet; as for the present instant which separates the future from the past, it will immediately meet the past. From Plato to Plotinus, through the great Augustinian moment, and to Husserl and Heidegger, this aporia has been constantly taken up again and solved in many ways.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the problem of time would have attracted the attention of Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945)[1] who,

1. See especially the following four essays in NKZ 6: "Eien no ima no jiko gentei" 永遠の今の自己限定 [The Self-Determination of the Eternal Now, 1931], 181–232; "Jikanteki naru mono oyobi hijikanteki naru mono" 時間的なるもの及び非時間的なるもの [The Temporal and Non-Temporal, 1931], 233–59, "Jiai to taai oyobi benshōhō" 自愛と他愛及び弁証法 [Self-Love, Love of the Other and Dialectics, 1931], 260–99, and "Watashi to nanji" 私と汝 [I and Thou, 1932], 341–427. For a French translation of the first of these essays, see Nishida 2008, trans. Jacynthe Tremblay. For translations of the other three essays, see Nishida 2003, trans. Jacynthe Tremblay. Nishida's temporality reached its maturity in 1932 with the book entitled *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* 無の自覚的限定 [The Determination of Nothingness in Accordance with Self-Awareness] (NKZ 6). It was developed especially in relation to the thought of

while standing within this wide current of thought, was able to reinterpret temporality and bring to it an original configuration by grafting it onto his "logic of basho" (*bashoteki ronri* 場所的論理), whose center of gravity is precisely the notion of *basho*.[2] Nishida's conception of temporality is therefore extremely logical and rigorous.[3] The logic of *basho*, with its encompassing structure, indicates a global dialectical movement between the *basho* and its content. It will be used as a framework of analysis concerning temporality in the thought of the other philosophers of the Kyoto School.

There has been little research before now on the topic of temporality. And yet, Kuki, Tanabe, Nishitani and Watsuji have all looked into the issue, although to a lesser extent than Nishida. In this article, these voices will be put into dialogue since each has something judicious, even important to say. They will address the following topics: First, a reevaluation of rectilinear time will make it possible to reexamine the status of

Augustine, to whom Nishida very often turned, more often even than to Plotinus. The strong influence that Augustine exerted on Nishida can be felt not only through the elucidation of the problem of temporality, but also when it is a question of determining the deepest stage of self-awareness (*jikaku* 自覚), a decisive topic which is inseparable from temporality.

2. Nishida gave his logic of *basho* its final configuration from 1926 onward, especially in the essay entitled "Basho" 場所 (NKZ 4, 208–89), and then in the whole of the book *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei* 一般者の自覚的体系 [The System of Universal in Accordance with the Self-Awareness, 1930] (NKZ 5). The best translation of the word *basho* is an expression which Nishida also used abundantly, namely "that in which" (*oite aru basho* 於てある場所). *Basho* can also be translated by "place," but at the risk of being deprived of its most original meanings. For that reason, it is preferable to leave it in transliteration and without italics, in order to allow its polysemia to be seen through the various contexts in which it appears.

3. The stages, clearly detectable in his essays, by which Nishida proceeds to draw a total configuration of temporality are as follows:

All that is, is located in something (NKZ 6: 223);
All that is real is located in time (NKZ 6: 341);
Time is the fundamental form of reality (NKZ 6: 341–2);
Time is the self-determination of the present (NKZ 6: 182, 341–2 ; NKZ 9: 149);
The self is the *basho* of time (NKZ 6: 187, 277; NKZ 12: 79);
Time turns in the eternal now (NKZ 6: 366, 377);
The instant is the point of temporalization of the self (NKZ 6: 187).
For a detailed exposition of each of these stages, see TREMBLAY 2007.

the past and the future. Second, the past and the future will be brought back to their site, which is the present, in relation to the concept of "eternal now," the "other" of time. Then, the acting of the human being within the present will be discussed. In conclusion, the problem of representation regarding "absolute present" and "eternal now" will be pointed out.

A reexamination of rectilinear time

The prevailing feature that can be found among all the philosophers of the Kyoto School regarding temporality is the importance attached to the present (*genzai* 現在) as *basho*, or site of time. This insistence aimed first and foremost at criticizing the prevalence of the rectilinear conception of time, as can be seen clearly in Nishida.[4] At the beginning of the essay "The Self-Determination of the Eternal Now," Nishida answers the age-old question, "Originally, what is time?" by recalling its current definition: "Time is regarded as a rectilinear progression flowing out from the infinite past to the infinite future" (NKZ

4. Nishitani pointed out that the rectilinear conception of time is found especially in Western Judeo-Christian thought. It is inseparable from the self-centered self which projects its shade onto everything. What Nishitani asserts is that Christianity supports a personal standpoint that allows people to be centered on themselves. He goes so far as to question the whole of Christianity on the basis of its faith in God as a personal God, and thus centered on himself. On this point, Nishitani's thought lacks nuance (see Nishitani 1982, 207). In Buddhism and among the ancient Greeks, time is conceived of as cyclical, recurring and ahistorical. This cyclical conception of time is appropriate from the standpoint of nature, in which one finds four seasons, twelve months and one year following another in a cyclical manner: "Nature's 'time,' including astronomical time, returns without fail to its starting point, time after time, following the same circuit" (Nishitani 1982, 205). Human life has traditionally been formed with this type of recurring time, as can be seen in annual festivals. In other words, since everything has aged at the end of one year, it must be regenerated at the end of the annual cycle. Cyclical time, however, leaves room neither for history, nor for the conscience of freedom. It is only with Christianity and the place that it grants to the awareness of the individual that time ceases to be recurring; there, each stage of human life becomes part of the drama and each moment of time becomes something new and creative, from whence new things can emerge.

12: 39).[5] He considers that the rectilinear conception of time is derived from an abstract way of approaching it. It is in that case nothing more than an infinite movement which "passes eternally from the past to the future" (NKZ 10: 525). Nishida also notices that time conceived of in a rectilinear way constrains us, at the very most, "to be carried along causally" in a world considered in a mechanical or causal way, or from the multiple to the one (NKZ 6: 264, 277–78, 290). On the whole, a simple continuity passing objectively from one point to another is inconceivable. It makes it impossible to think either true time—that in which the present self-determines—or the true present (NKZ 6: 264).

To counter the unilateral character of this rectilinear conception of time, Nishida proposed an interpretation of time as "continuity of discontinuity" (*hirenzoku no renzoku* 非連続の連続) (NKZ 6: 343). Continuous time, which is flowing from the past to the future, must be determined by discontinuity and be in it (NKZ 6: 286). The unique character of each moment would be neglected if time were thought of as a simple continuity. To say that time is "continuity of discontinuity" means that it disappears (or is negated) from instant to instant and is born from instant to instant (NKZ 12: 39).

The reevaluation of the prevalence of the rectilinear conception of time involves *ipso facto* a new definition of the past and the future. Nishida limited himself to the Augustinian conception of past and future when he pointed this out: "However, the future has not arrived yet; and even if it is affirmed that the past has appeared, it has already passed. And what is more, it is absolutely impossible for us to know the past of the past" (NKZ 6: 182).[6] At this stage, the principal question is as follows: "How can time be, if the past is not any more, if the future is not yet and

5. See also NKZ 6: 182, 234; NKZ 10: 525. Obviously, Nishida stands in continuity with Augustine who asked in book eleven of the *Confessions*: "Qu'est-ce donc que le temps?" (AUGUSTIN 1964, 264), before putting in confrontation the *intentio* and the *distentio animi*, which are two features of the human soul.

6. See also NKZ 6: 240, 262, 290. In Augustine, the main aporia was that of the measurement of time, itself located within the framework of a more fundamental aporia, that of the being and the non-being of time. Augustine tended towards the second option by taking up again the well-known skeptical argument (AUGUSTIN 1964, 264).

if the present is not always?" (NKZ 6: 264).[7] As will be seen in the next section, Nishida ends by giving past and future back their ontological pregnancy by locating them in the present itself. But before developing this point further, let us examine the status of the past and the future, as well as their relationship, in the other Kyoto School philosophers.

Tanabe recalls that contemporary existential philosophy speaks about the contingency of historical facts in terms of "thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*), used by Heidegger to express the past of the Dasein, which is also "thrown" into history. The true nature of human beings is thus to be directed towards the past that embraces them. They have no choice but to accept their own contingent character, for the nature of the past is to be contingent. It is outside our control; it is given to us from without, determines our existence and mediates it. It constitutes the foundation of any free decision. Existential philosophy, Tanabe continues, expresses the future of the Dasein in terms of "project" (*Entwurf*). Whereas contingency means a total absence of subjectivity, the notion of project implies a freedom which makes it possible to turn contingency into choice and a decision of the subject. Contingency is in fact brought to self-awareness only through the mediation of a free project in the future. Self-awareness belongs to the activity of the free subject, and without a subject which projects itself into the future and which thus freely determines its own being, it would have no thrownness at all. Thus, it is not contingency but freedom which is the principle of history and the essence of reality.

Watsuji adopts the same perspective as Tanabe when he stresses that the past is expressed in terms of "already." It does not yet exist, except as the authenticity that it contained. However, the relational character that characterizes the human being during a past experience is not something that is now gone and somehow perished; it still exists in actual practice and determines that practice. Watsuji holds that the foundation out of which the human being comes forth is the past as authentic wholeness (WATSUJI 1996, 189). As for the future, it consists in this: that the present-walking implies a possibility of relationship, a "beforehand."

7. This starting paradox is used as a point of anchoring to the central paradox of measure. Indeed, how can one measure what is not?

The human relationships that determine the present fact of walking "beforehand" form the authentic future, defined by Watsuji as follows: "'Future' is, in every kind of practical activity, the possible betweenness that gives this activity its direction; that is, its possible *ningen sonzai*" (WATSUJI 1996, 183).[8] These remarks make it possible for Watsuji to unify the past and the future as follows: "What is possible 'beforehand' is 'already' determined. The already established human existence that belongs to the future is its authentic 'past'; that is, its 'bygones.' The present walking is determined by the future that exists in the form of the past and thereby reveals the manner of transportation characteristic of *ningen*" (WATSUJI 1996, 183–84).

As for Nishitani, he establishes the limits of a conception of time centered only on the past and future. The sciences and every kind of positivist theory, which turn to the past to find the causes of present phenomena and consider the bottom as a beginning, turn their backs on their own ground. The same applies to scientific philosophy and to the idealism of progress, which turn to the future in search of an ideal understood as a *telos*, or a bottom as an end. But these theories are in every case illusions which must be rejected. They share in common the self-affirming independence of the intellect, that is to say the secularization of reason. Modern science tries to find the causes and the finality of temporal things strictly within the framework of these temporal things. No bottom located beyond time is taken into account and every religious quest in connection with a transtemporal ground is rejected.

THE PRESENT, SITE OF TIME

At this point in the analysis, it is a question of bringing back the past and the future—that is to say rectilinear temporality—within their site, which is the present. On this topic, the Kyoto School phi-

8. Watsuji defines human existence (*ningen sonzai* 人間存在) as "an incessant movement in which one becomes an individual by departing somewhat from the communal and then negating this individuality and bringing to realization the community in one way or another, so as to return to one's authenticity" (WATSUJI 1996, 186).

losophers are almost unanimous. The exception is Kuki Shūzō.[9] Rather than attempting to locate time in the present and, ultimately, in the eternal now, Kuki advocates straightforwardly a liberation out of rectilinear temporality.[10] In "L'expression de l'infini dans l'art japonais" [The Expression of the Infinite in Japanese Art, 1928] he affirms that the mysticism of Buddhism and the pantheism of Daoism are both the expression of the same spiritual experience, namely liberation from time and space (Kuki 1998a). In the artistic field, the visual arts make it possible to be liberated from space, while poetry and music allow liberation from measurable time. The human being, who tends towards the infinite, can thus reach truth, morality and beauty.

Kuki again insists on the idea of liberation in "La notion du temps et la reprise sur le temps en orient" [The Idea of Time and the Repossession of Time in the Orient, 1928] with regard this time to the topic of the will and its link with time (that of transmigration) (Kuki 1998b). Time, he says, is for the will, since it does not exist if there is no will. In this context, transmigration is an infinite rebirth, a perpetual repetition of the will and an endless return of time. However, the human being needs to be saved from this type of time. Insofar as for Buddhism the will is the cause of all evil and of all pain, it is enough, in order to be liberated from

9. During and after his eight-year stay in Europe, Kuki focused his activity between 1929 and 1939 on the three following topics: the problem of time; the problem of literature, especially of poetry or rhyme; and the problem of "contingency," located at the junction of the first two. Kuki's idea of time was influenced by Bergson, Husserl and Heidegger on the one hand, and on the other hand by Nietzsche's eternal return and the Indian theory of time. He tried to develop it in "The Problem of Time" and "The Metaphysical Time." One also finds this idea in his doctoral thesis *Gūzensei no mondai* 偶然性の問題 [The Problem of Contingency, 1935]. There, Kuki closely connected time to contingency. He continued to be concerned with these issues throughout his life.

10. It should however be specified that Kuki's conception of time is not constant. In his essay entitled "The Metaphysical Time," for example, he stressed the present moment. In his writings about literature, he insisted on a very deep present. In his texts concerning contingency, finally, he developed the relation between the present and the encounter of the "other." But in all these cases, one cannot speak of a concept of present which "contains" rectilinear temporality.

time, to deny the will. And time being that of the will, denying the will involves a liberation from time.[11]

Contrary to Kuki, Nishida never speaks about a "liberation" from time and will in order to reach an extra-temporal and extra-historical reality.[12] His intention is rather to locate the traditional conception of time in its own *basho* which is the absolute present (*zettai genzai* 絶対現在). He affirms that "we can know the past and the future only by centering ourselves on the present" (NKZ 6: 182).[13] This consists in admitting, as Augustine did, that "time is in the present" (NKZ 6: 183). Thus time is not limited to its rectilinear character. Rather, "the past flows while turning to the present, whereas the future flows while turning to the present. Our world comes from the present and returns to the present" (NKZ 6: 132).

The simple chronological past, when located in the present-*basho* or "present of the present"[14] which includes it and from which it comes,

11. The liberation in question here is transcendent and intellectualist. It consists in denying time in order for the intellect to know, in death and eternal repose, a timeless deliverance. At the end of this essay, Kuki refers also to another type of liberation, that immanent and voluntarist type which one finds in *bushidō*. It consists in not being concerned with time, in order to live in the indefinite repetition of the search for the true, the good and the beautiful.

12. In this sense, Kuki's perspective does not show an accurate philosophical analysis of temporality, at least compared to Nishida's. He was satisfied with accepting just as they were the conclusions of the Eastern religions concerning temporality. The purpose of his affirmations is ultimately to leave temporality.

13. Here, the "historical world" (and ultimately "absolute nothing"), just like the "absolute present," are not metaphysical absolutes (the Being, the One, like the traditional philosophical conception of God) since those could not undergo any determination or change from the orders which are "inferior" to them. Obviously, it is difficult to render an account of Nishida's temporal concepts at the conceptual level since they are non-substantial and operate on the meontological level. In order to reach them asymptotically, the concepts of determination, self-determination and reciprocal determination are most suitable.

14. The encompassing character of the present was already in embryo in Augustine, although one cannot of course detect yet in the *Confessions* a "present-*basho*" in Nishida's sense. Nevertheless, Augustine did not neglect to ask the question not only of the how of time, but also of its site: "Si le futur et le passé existent, je veux savoir où ils sont. Si je n'en suis pas encore capable, je sais du moins que, où qu'ils soient, ils n'y sont ni en tant que futur, ni en tant que passé, mais en tant que

does not pass irremediably into the past anymore; rather, its significance is modified insofar as it belongs henceforth to the present. The same holds true with respect to the future. The present thus appears as the center in which the past has already passed and simultaneously has not yet passed, and in which the future has not yet arrived, although it appears there already.[15] Therefore, Nishida goes beyond the notion of chronological temporality to reach the meontological dimension of the present. In other words, the present-*basho* is different from the chronological present, but the two are never irremediably separated. Indeed, the chronological present, like the past and the future, is located in the meontological present which is its very place of emergence.

Absolute present, ultimately, is in turn encompassed in "eternity" or the "eternal now" (*eien no ima* 永遠の今). The notion of eternal now is a question of capital importance in Nishida's temporality. He goes so far as to say that "time turns in the eternal now" (NKZ 6: 366, 377). According to the structure of the logic of *basho*, the eternal now is the ultimate encompasser of temporality and of its constituent parts.

Nishitani connects the same notion of eternal now to the infinite openness or nihility that he recognizes at the bottom of time. Although time is without beginning or end, what is present is present at the moment. According to this conception, the beginning and the end of time are always in the present. This means that "while each and every point of time is itself—the past inexorably as past, the future inexorably as future—they are also simultaneous with the present" (NKZ 6: 267). Through this simultaneity, the present encompasses all pasts and all futures, and holds them.

Granting this, Nishitani addresses the question of the "instant"

présents. Car si le futur y est en tant que futur, il n'y est pas encore; si le passé y est en tant que passé, il n'y est plus. Où dont qu'ils soient, quels qu'ils soient, ils ne sont qu'en tant que présents" (AUGUSTIN 1964, 267–68).

15. This close link established by Nishida between the concept of present and that of *basho* appears more clearly when it is noted that the present is inseparably related to the notion of space. A coexistence of innumerable moments, one of the multiple, the present appears similar to a "place" (*tokoro* 所), a "space of time" (*toki no kūkan* 時の空間), or a "temporal space" (*jikanteki kūkan* 時間的空間) (see NKZ 9: 149, 150, 152). In this sense, any present moment is a temporal synthesis in space-*basho*.

(*shunkan* 瞬間). Here, he does not quote Nishida as his authority, but their conclusions are similar. Indeed, for Nishida, what self-determines at the root of time is the instant.[16] The instant appears at the bottom of the temporal determination which, as noematic determination, moves continuously from the past to the future. The infinite past and the infinite future originate from this determination-instant (*shunkanteki gentei* 瞬間的限定) which goes beyond rectilinear time (itself the self-determination of the eternal now), and which consists in disappearing from instant to instant. For this reason, Nishida states, the determination-instant, conceived of noetically as continuity of discontinuity, must be, noematically, a continuous motion going from one point to another, that is to say, rectilinear time. It is impossible to consider separately these relations between the noema and the noesis (NKZ 6: 281).

Nishitani, in a similar way, affirms that each point of the past and each point of the future are simultaneous with the present instant. Each one temporalizes itself as instant, which is always a "now." In this sense, the present occurs simultaneously with each point of the past and the future. The present instant projects (reflects) in itself all possible pasts and all possible futures. In return, it becomes manifest insofar as it is the place into which are projected all the pasts and all the futures. The instant is what maintains all pasts and all futures at the bottom of the present. This is why Nishitani asserts that it is a monad of the eternity (which projects into the present the totality of infinite time).

Tanabe also focuses on the present, in order to connect time and eternity. His main question is as follows: How can one connect the "thrown-

16. "Time turns in the eternal now. It is conceivable neither from the absolute past, nor from the infinite future, but from the fact that the present self-determines. The instant must self-determine at the root of time. The instant which self-determines in that way is conceivable only as self-determination of the eternal now which encompasses time. Located in the self-determination of the eternal now—which self-determines in oneself—the instant is determined in countless ways, as it is said in Plato's *Parmenides*. The instant which, by its own determination, determines time, must have the significance of an extension of the eternal now" (NKZ 6: 377). For Nishida, the principal source of inspiration regarding the instant is Plato. He places the instant out of time, in the same way that Plato located it between motion and rest and then established that motion is transformed into rest, and rest into motion (PLATON 1999, 207; NKZ 6: 376).

ness" of the past to the "project" of the future, so as to achieve a unified conception of time? History, says Tanabe, belongs to the past and is diametrically opposed to freedom, by which human beings connect themselves to the future. The contingency of the past and the freedom of the future are opposed, but on the other hand, they are equal because they are both nonexistent in the present.[17] However, stressing their non-existence—i.e. their negation—is not sufficient since at the same time, they exist in the present and are able to establish the unity of time. Therefore, one can go so far as to advocate a "present of the past" (which makes possible the existence of the past) and a "present of the future" (which makes possible the existence of the future); both form a unity-in-contradiction within the absolute eternal present, understood as "present of the present."[18] Regarding the central role of the present, the perspectives of Nishitani and Tanabe are almost similar. However, they show a major difference with Nishida's. For Nishitani, as for Nishida, the present is the origin of the ecstasies towards both the past and the future (Nishida would speak, in that sense, of the "self-determination" of the present). Nishitani, however, does not distinguish between the chronological present and the absolute or meontological present. The former seems to be directly the latter. Tanabe proceeds in a similar way. When he affirms that the past and the future are unified in the present, he seems to adopt something of the Nishidian present-*basho*, but without distinguishing between the chronological present and the present-*basho*. Apparently, he locates himself only on the continuous line of rectilin-

17. Nishida would speak of a "coexistence" of the past and the future in the present. Unlike the Nishidian absolute present, Tanabe's notion of present seems to belong to rectilinear time. It is true that Tanabe mentions the absolute present, but without differentiating it from the chronological present.

18. These formulations are those of Augustine, who expressed the triple structure of the present in the following way: "Ce n'est pas user de termes propres que de dire: 'Il y a trois temps: le passé, le présent et l'avenir.' Peut-être dirait-on plus justement: 'Il y a trois temps: le présent du passé, le présent du présent, le présent du futur'" (Augustin 1964, 269). Tanabe conformed himself to the Augustinian formulations in his work *Zangedō toshite no tetsugaku, Shi no tetsugaku* 懺悔道としての哲学, 死の哲学 [Philosophy as Metanoetics; Philosophy of Death, 2005], 75. It is therefore unjustifiable to translate them into English as "the presence of the past," "the presence of the future," and "the presence of the present" (see Tanabe 1986).

ear temporality, without seeking like Nishida and Nishitani the other of time (absolute present or eternal now).[19] We will see in the next section that the same can be said about Watsuji. His insistence on space and relationality enables him to emphasize not only the individual person but also society, and to establish a link between society (community) and temporality.[20] Nevertheless, the status granted by him to the present does not seem to go as far as with Nishida.

The acting of the self in the present

Finally, let us address the issue of the relationship between temporality and the self. As noted, the present is the *basho* of time, i.e. the place of emergence of the temporal series formed by the past, the present (in the chronological sense) and the future. Now Nishida, remaining under the influence of Augustine, comes to this affirmation: "The past, the present and the future are in our spirit" (NKZ 4: 42–43).[21] This Augustinian inspiration makes it possible for Nishida to bring a solution to the problem of the relations between these three determinations of time within the present-center or present-*basho*: "The relations between the past, the present and the future are established when centering ourselves on the present, we combine with the past through memory and anticipate what has not arrived yet" (NKZ 6: 182). It appears from this

19. It must be said to Tanabe's credit that he pointed out the close link between time and eternity. He rejected the Augustinian conception of "eternity" or "eternal now" because while encompassing time, it remains purely transcendent and does not imply the self-manifestation of eternity through a negative conversion into irreversible time. Tanabe explains the continuity of time and eternity not as starting from the transcendent aspect of time towards eternity, but as a movement in which eternity moves in order to return to time. For him, eternity is not a static transcendence embracing dynamic time, beyond the becoming of time, and subsisting in itself. Far from being a being identical to itself, it is continuously mediated by time through the negation, which allows time to develop in a continuity.

20. In Nishida, the link between temporality and society is not always clearly established. However, he explicitly connects temporality to the issue of the "other," as one sees for example in his essay "I and Thou" (NKZ 6: 418).

21. See AUGUSTIN 1964, 269.

perspective that although the present is itself a *basho*, it is in turn (just like the past and the future) deeply encompassed in the self or the spirit which henceforth also has the status of *basho*. It follows that the true self is precisely the present self.[22] Moreover, the present exists where the self self-determines. In other words, "it is not the self which is in time, but time which is in the self" (NKZ 6: 187).[23]

Nishitani, just as explicitly, affirms that the human being exists here and now and that the self is where the instant is. Self can grasp the absolute present in the instant of time only by opening itself in this instant, and thus by becoming itself the equivalent of the absolute present. Therefore, the acting of the human being is also grasped at the bottom of the present. Being-in-time consists of a constant acting which requires remaining in the infinite openness of nihility, where the individual is connected to everything else. When the human being is located thus at the bottom of the present, where time and eternity intersect, all times are perceived as simultaneous.

As for Tanabe, he addresses the link between self and the present by pointing out that time comes to self-awareness through the standpoint of the self. Here, he draws his inspiration from Heidegger, who defined the contradictory unity between the past and the present with the help of the expression "thrown project" (*geworfener Entwurf*) (TANABE 1986, 70–71). Metanoetics, understood as a principle constituting the fundamental form of the action, intervenes here in the sense that the contingent determinations of the past are not merely a thrownness which has already passed, but a present whose significance is constantly renewed in a circular movement in accordance with the future that mediates it (TANABE 1986, 74, 241–42).[24] These determinations are connected with

22. See NKZ 2: 128. From *Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究 [An Inquiry into the Good, 1911] and *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* 自覚に於ける直感と反省 [Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness, 1917], pure experience (*junsui keiken* 純粋経験) was always presented as an experience of the present. Actually, the present is "the point towards which the totality of the immediate experience converges" (NKZ 2: 126) and in which the human being comes into contact with the heart of the universe.

23. See also NKZ 6: 277; NKZ 12: 79.

24. Heidegger, says Tanabe by way of criticism, failed to explain in a dialectical way "the negation and transformation of 'thrownness' through 'pro-jection'—break-

the practical subject who, while determined by the past, breaks through them by means of his/her freedom and is infinitely opened towards the future. The highest and deepest self comes from this breaking through the self by the means of the action, which mediates the self-awareness.

Let us recall lastly Watsuji's perspective on the same topic. "Human existence" possesses a temporal structure thanks to which the past and the future are unified within the present (WATSUJI 1996, 189). He expresses this unification in terms of "beforehand already."[25] In other words, the human being is already determined in its present movement. Its existence consists in the unified structure of past, present and future. Insofar as the fundamental unity of the human existence is temporality, Watsuji goes so far as affirming, as Nishida did before him, that the human being does not exist in time; it is time which emerges from the human existence (WATSUJI 1996, 190).[26]

CONCLUSION: THE PRESENT-*BASHO*, A REPRESENTATION-LIMIT

These remarks lead to the important problem of representation which arises when one emphasizes the absolute present. This problem is evident above all in Nishitani. According to his conception of tem-

ing through the previously fixed determinations of the past inherent in thrownness" (TANABE 1986, 77). The definition of the project, especially the self-awareness of the can-be (*Sein-können*), is very close to potentiality or possibility in the Aristotelian sense. The changes that occur are likely to remain those that occur within a being identical to oneself. For these reasons, continues Tanabe, the theory of time presented in *Sein und Zeit* lacks metaphysical depth.

25. It should be noted that this "beforehand already" is not equivalent to memory and anticipation, which are limited in Augustine to the standpoint of the individual consciousness (see AUGUSTIN 1964, 269).

26. Watsuji takes care to specify that human existence is also spatial since temporality is the movement which links opposite human beings with each other, but in a manner which is connected to their spatial structure: "The structure of *ningen sonzai* is a temporality that allows past authenticity to arise nondually as the future, in and through present dualistic activities, and that consists of the self and other. Oppositions and unities that are spatial, motivate time to arise. Space and time are the two

porality, rectilinear time is grounded on a boundless and transcendent openness which is directly beneath the feet of human beings, namely the bottom of the present. Nishitani comes to this conclusion after criticizing the traditional Christian conception of a merely transcendent God located beyond the world. It appears however that he maintains the transcendence, but reinterprets it in terms of infinite openness located "below" the world. Regarding the representative schemes, it seems that there is little difference between the Christian conception and that of Nishitani. With this kind of representation, Nishitani might easily make vacuity or unlimited openness a well-defined being.

No matter what, it seems that one is doomed to this kind of spatial representation. In spite of the criticisms that one can address to Kuki, his idea of liberation from time has the advantage of directing us towards this more general problem: How is it possible to conceive of the "other" of the will and time without reducing it to a conceptual system or to a merely transcendent absolute (it matters little whether this absolute is supra-temporal, non-temporal, post-temporal or infra-temporal)? But also, how is it possible to think the other of time without this other being, on the level of its essence, a part of time itself?

In short, another type of logic is needed here, one that corresponds to Nishida's logic of *basho*. For Nishida, absolute nothingness, of which everything is self-determination, is located neither beyond the historical world, nor below it, nor at its end. Understood above all as encompassing, it is like an unlimited circle whose center is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere (this metaphor of the unlimited circle is extended by Nishida to the topics of the eternal now, absolute present, and self). It is the only representation that Nishida ventures. Let us notice however that it is a representation-limit in the sense that as soon as it is posed, it is immediately deconstructed and projected towards the infinite, that is to say, towards the absence of any possible representation, thanks precisely to the unlimited nature of this circle and its lack of circumference. By limiting himself to the notions of *basho* and unlimited circle, i.e. by using notions not easy to represent, Nishida insists on

ways of grasping the same structure and do not subsist independent of one another" (Watsuji 1996, 223).

the relational aspect that this "other" of time allows within temporality itself, just as he insists on an openness of temporality that makes it possible to go beyond the simple rectilinear conception of time.

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Abbreviation

NKZ *Nishida Kitarō zenshū* 西田幾多郎全集 [The Complete Works of Nishida Kitarō]. Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎, 19 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978.

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Sensation and Image in Nishitani's Philosophy

Hosoya Masashi

The problem of existence: nihilism and emptiness

Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990) took his stand at the standpoint of emptiness, which is rooted in the tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism, in order to overcome nihilism. The essay "*Kū to soku*" 空と即 [Emptiness and Immediacy, 1982] from the final years of his life, marks, in one sense, the culmination of his thought. In this essay, Nishitani develops his thought using two concepts: "making being transparent" (*u no tōmeika* 有の透明化) and "imaging of emptiness" (*kū no imējika* 空のイメージ化). These concepts are grasped existentially as a matter pertaining to "emptiness in sentiment" *(jōi no uchi no kū* 情意の内の空) and are ultimately related to the problem of "elemental imagination" (*kongenteki kōsōryoku* 根源的構想力). In other words, as a result of the elemental imagination that arises from what is described in Kegon philosophy as the "Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other" *(jiji muge hokkai* 事

* Translated by Robert F. Rhodes. Quoted passages are translated directly from the Japanese, but references to alternative existing English translations have also been provided where possible.

々無碍法界), the thing itself appears by being reflected in (*utsusare* 映され) and transferred to (*utsusare* 移され) "emptiness in the world of sentiment" (*jōi no sekai ni okeru kū* 情意の世界における空). The appearance of this thing itself (as a provisional illusion-like existence [*ke* 仮]) is what is meant by the "imaging of emptiness" and "making being transparent." However, in "Emptiness and Immediacy," Nishitani emphasizes the "imaging of emptiness" (or the self-delimitation of emptiness), and the problem of "making being transparent" (or self-emptying of being) does not become a major issue. Nishitani says that "everything is image and nothing more" (NKC 13: 152; NISHITANI 1999, 211), but in order to clarify the dynamic, transformative relation, i.e., the relation of *soku* 即 (immediacy) found at the site where an image is created, it is first necessary to consider the relationship between emptiness and nihilism. Hence I would like to begin by outlining the development of Nishitani's philosophy leading to the notion of "elemental imagination."

Although Nishitani had already published a volume entitled *Nihirizumu* ニヒリズム [Nihilism] in 1949, it is only in *Shūkyo to wa nanika* 宗教とは何か [What is Religion?] published in 1961 that he comes to focus on the relationship between nihilism and emptiness. It is especially in the final two essays in this volume, "Emptiness and Time" and "*Kū to rekishi*" 空と歴史 [Emptiness and History] that we can see most clearly the kinds of issues that concerned Nishitani at this time. In contrast to the popular view (such as that proposed by Arnold Toynbee), Nishitani argues that "historicity can be fully realized" (NKC 10: 238; NISHITANI 1982, 217) only from the standpoint of emptiness, which is attained by overcoming nihilism. This is because nihilism is a "historical concept" that became manifest to Nietzsche's consciousness as "a historical event that welled up from the bottom of (modern European) history itself" (NKC 10: 232; NISHITANI 1982, 212). The nihilism that Nishitani attempted to overcome was not a pessimistic or decadent mode of thought characterized by subjective feelings of nothingness or loss of meaning and value. Rather it was Nietzsche's so-called "creative nihilism." Nishitani's main concern was how to get beyond Nietzsche. In Nishitani's view, as long as Nietzsche's notion of the "will to power" is rooted in the standpoint of the will, it is something that still must be transcended.

There is no question that in Nietzsche "the fundamental question concerning history in its entirety and the problem of the ontological essence of human existence came together into one focal point and became one question" (NKC 8: 14; this passage is omitted in NISHITANI 1990). Through this process, both God-centered Christianity and modern human-centered secularism (scienticism and humanism) were transcended. However, according to Nishitani, Nietzsche's philosophy, to a certain degree, still lacks self-awareness and, insofar as it is rooted in the will, cannot escape the influence of a demonic, self-centered will. In contrast, the standpoint of emptiness is an absolute negation of the will which lies at the bottom of all forms of self-centeredness. Nihilism still functions as a metaphysical conceptual apparatus in Nietzsche's philosophy, but by completely existentializing it (or by getting beyond it), Nishitani opened up the field of emptiness, making it genuinely possible to overcome nihilism.

Concerning the standpoint of emptiness, Nishitani, for example, states, "In contrast to the situation where one cannot encounter God no matter where one looks for Him in the universe, [the standpoint of emptiness opens up] the situation where one can indeed encounter God wherever one looks for Him in the universe" (NKC 10: 44; NISHITANI 1982, 38). But the important thing is that, once we reach the standpoint of emptiness, there is no need to make any reference to God at all. Or it can be said that it refers to the standpoint wherein all things can be explained without taking recourse in any metaphysical conceptual apparatus, such as Nishida's "self-limitation of the locus of absolute nothingness" (*zettai mu no basho no jiko gentei* 絶対無の場所の自己限定). This is the reason why Nishitani did his best to avoid using the term "absolute nothingness" and used "emptiness" instead.

In any case, Nishitani's reflection sweeps away all metaphysical thought. Situating himself at the point where "body and mind drop off" completely, he seeks to ground his existential foundation (the standpoint of emptiness) in temporality, through and through. The central topic of *Shūkyo to wa nanika* is "the transition from the standpoint of nothingness to the standpoint of emptiness." In other words, it was a transition from "the standpoint that one's own self is empty" to "the standpoint where emptiness is one's own self, i.e., the standpoint of absolute empti-

ness, [that opens up] on this shore [of the stream of birth and death]" (NKC 10: 170; NISHITANI 1982, 151). I will discuss this point in greater detail below, but such a position is eminently realized (in the sense that "manifestation is immediately apprehension" (*genjō soku etoku* 現成即会得)) when it is interpreted not ontologically but in the context of the theory of time.

This is already apparent in the general conclusion of Nishitani's *Nihilism*, where he describes "the standpoint where one 'transcends to the world' wherein there is an 'elemental unity between creative nihilism and finitude'" (NKC 8: 184; NISHITANI 1990, 180). The "elemental unity between creative nihilism and finitude" spoken of here becomes possible only by awakening to one's finitude, which, according to Nishitani, means that "the *Dasein* reveals at the ground of its own existence a nothingness that is working to negate oneself. In other words, it means that the self completely becomes its own finitude" (NKC 8: 171; NISHITANI 1990, 170). Here, Nishitani succinctly states that the *Dasein* is essentially a temporal existence, that he or she exists "in time" and that the self does not exist apart from time. Furthermore, the world "to which one transcends" in the phrase above does not mean the realm of *sophia* or the yonder shore beyond birth-and-death (*higan* 彼岸) but "this shore" on this side of the stream of birth-and-death (*shigan* 此岸). However, the "this shore" spoken of here is an "absolute this shore," which is opened up even closer to this side than the "this world" we usually take to be our world.

I will discuss this "absolute this shore" later, but if I were to describe it in one word, I would say that it refers to the clearing of the "*Da*" which the *Dasein* finds spreading out beneath his or her feet. It is the place dominated by the non-repeatability and uniqueness of the "here and now" or a place where each thing manifests itself in a particular moment in time. "Birth and death are the innate characteristics of their respective moment in time. Birth and death exist completely in 'time' in their own respective moment in time. In other words, they are temporal in essence, through and through. At the same time, however, they are, just as they are, devoid of substantiality from one moment to the next" (NKC 10: 84; NISHITANI 1982, 75).

Let me summarize here the characteristics of nihility as described by

Nishitani. On his view, nihility is characterized by (1) lack of faith in, and doubt concerning, all metaphysical explanation of the world; (2) groundlessness (*Grundlosigkeit*); (3) lack of meaning and purpose; (4) sense of impermanence with regard to time; and (5) disorder, incoherence and chaos. Moreover, it is also possible to add (6) "absolute self-enclosure (*zettaiteki jikonaiheisasei* 絶対的自己内閉鎖性) and profound solitude" (NKC 10: 273; NISHITANI 1982, 249) as characteristics of nihility. These characteristics derive from the negative character of nihility itself. At the same time, however, there is a positive meaning to nihility as well. For example, the first characteristic (lack of faith in, and doubt concerning, all metaphysical explanations of the world) closes off all nihilistic attempts to seek the truth in the "further shore" (the world lying "behind" this world) and provides us with the opportunity to turn to the absolute "this world."

Likewise, even though the second characteristic, groundlessness, indicates the loss of all support and foundation, it makes possible "a bottomless freedom" which derives from our awareness of "a clearing akin to the empty sky which cannot be confined to any systematic closure" (NKC 10: 240; NISHITANI 1982, 219). Furthermore although the fourth characteristic—sense of impermanence—negates "permanence" insofar as it implies the sense of being vested with specific limitations, it simultaneously opens up a horizon where ceaseless novelty and creativity become possible. As Nishitani says,

> "Nihility" and "time," in which all things have been nullified, bespeak a free and easy agility like that of a flying bird that never remains stationary and motionless in the sky for an instant; they bespeak a levity unencumbered by any burden. Or, like a bird that leaves no trace in the sky, they imply freedom from all constraints, whether it be restrictions arising from some current state of things or bonds arising from one's past behavior. (NKC 10: 243; NISHITANI 1982, 222)

Moreover, the final characteristic—attachment to the self expressed in the term "absolute self-enclosure"—is related to the fourth characteristic—impermanence—and the fifth characteristic—disorder, incoherence and contradiction. The concept of nihility is thus ambivalent and self-contradictory insofar as it has both positive and negative meanings.

It is well known that the first person to present a profound discussion of time was Augustine. In his *Confessions*, he argues that time, as something that "exists now," is rooted in the present. But when it is "no longer present," it is already past, and when it is "not yet," it is still in the future. In this way, the present moment is an instant sandwiched between two states of non-existence, "no longer" and "not yet." Moreover, this present moment arises and passes away instantaneously. Augustine's question concerned the nature of this Archimedean point of time called the "present"—the instant of time that "exists now."

Nishitani understands the essential structure of our being-in-time as a dynamic relationship between "existing," "doing," and "becoming," explaining that the act of "doing" something brings forth a new entity "existing" in time. In other words, he holds that existence is maintained through time only because something is continually "being done." Driven by an infinite impulse, one must continually do something, indeed cannot refrain from doing something continually. In this sense, Nishitani discerns the Buddhist notion of karma within the essential structure of "being" in "time." Furthermore, on it he superimposes the concept of self-centeredness, the cause of so many problems in modern society, which takes the form of attachment and the will to domination. Seen in this light, history appears as the site where karma and effects of past karma (*shukugō* 宿業) function.

In short, Nishitani sees the roots of temporal existence not in self-identity, as is commonly assumed, but in self-centeredness. Moreover, such nihilistic self-centeredness is identified with karma. He says, "Even as we seek the home-ground (*moto* もと) of our own selves, we continually transmigrate through 'time.' This is our own karma. In other words, this is the true form of our temporal existence—that is to say, the way we exist in time" (NKC 10: 272; NISHITANI 1982, 248). This clearly reveals the nihilistic self-contradiction of karma: even though we seek to discover our true selves, as karmically conditioned beings we are compelled to transmigrate endlessly through time.

Since ancient times, karma was closely associated with the notion of transmigration. The theory of karma teaches us that in this being called "I" there is "continually manifesting the entire web of relationship arising through dependent origination, in which everything is mutually

related to, and dependent upon, all other things" (NKC 10: 265; NISHITANI 1982, 241). Furthermore, "Our 'existing,' in continually 'doing,' continually 'becomes' (generates and changes). The 'doing' is possible only by doing something. And to do something is only possible within the entire web of relationships in the world" (NKC 10: 264; NISHITANI 1982, 240). Here nihility manifests itself as karma (or karmic existence) transmigrating endlessly within time. Time here is understood as the underlying basis of the entire web of relationships in the world. Moreover, as Kant's discussion of the actions of transcendental wisdom indicates, the act of "doing" breaks through time even while remaining within time. In other words, while time is within experience and is bound by experience, it is beyond all experience. It has this dual experiential-wisdomic (*keikenteki–eichiteki* 経験的—叡知的) structure. This can also be expressed as while being in time, it is always at the beginning of time. In this sense, time is ambivalent, just as nihility is ambivalent.

Inasmuch as nihility rises up to awareness from its roots in time and history, the "transition from the standpoint of karma to the standpoint of emptiness" becomes a concrete possibility. Nishitani discovers this transition not in attaining an other-worldly *nirvāna* by transcending this painful world of birth-and-death, but in recognizing the "im-mediate" identity of birth-and-death and *nirvāna*, as depicted in the Buddhist notion that "birth-and-death is immediately *nirvāna*" (*shōji soku nehan* 生死即涅槃). Nishitani took his stand on this thorough-going existential standpoint, founded on the realization (in such a way that manifestation is immediately apprehension) of "immediacy."

> From the locus (*ba* 場) wherein "birth-and-death is immediately *nirvāna*," the finitude of birth-and-death becomes truly genuine finitude. In this situation, *nirvāna* is immediately the negation and affirmation of birth-and-death and serves to make birth-and-death truly birth-and-death. *Nirvāna* becomes the real nature of birth-and-death, as well as its reality and bottomless nature.…
>
> There, at each and every moment [a living being] manifests itself as a bottomless entity, or at each instant of the life of *Dasein* in birth-and-death, it [i.e., the entity or *Dasein*] is "immediately" realized (in such a way that manifestation is immediately apprehension) as the life of the Buddha. Concerning such existence, from one instant to the

> next, we are bottomlessly within time. Bottomlessly encompassing the boundless past and boundless future, it brings time to fullness at each and every instant. This is what is meant by the words "falling away of body and mind, body and mind falling away" (*shinjin datsuraku*, *datsuraku shinjin* 身心脱落、脱落身心). (NKC 10: 203; NISHITANI 1982, 181)

The main point of Nishitani's religious philosophy is to comprehend (*kokoroeru* こころえる; literally "acquire in the heart/mind") "the reality expressed by the word 'immediately' in the phrase 'birth-and-death is immediately *nirvāna*' and to attain realization of such reality (in such a way that manifestation is immediately apprehension)" (NKC 10: 200; NISHITANI 1982, 178). In Nishitani's view, such comprehension is both a "pre-philosophic" and "post-philosophic" matter, and there is no way to comprehend it except through existential realization. Such an existential method of philosophizing constitutes the distinctive feature of Nishitani's thought. At the same time, it also contributes to making Nishitani's thought quite difficult to understand. The following quotation, so reminiscent of the later Schelling, clearly reveals Nishitani's understanding of "existence."

> A transition occurs from great death to great life. We are unable to ask "why" it happens. There can be no conceivable reason for it. Nor is there any ground for thinking why it can happen. This is because this transition arises from an even more basic level than those types of matters that have conceivable reasons or grounds. If we try to find a reason for it, we can only attribute it, like religious figures of ancient times, to the gods and Buddhas. We can only attribute it, for example, to providence or love or the original vow. However, the reason offered from the side of the gods or Buddhas, is not the kind of reason that humans are impelled to seek.… Ultimately we can only say, "That's the way it is." Where "*Was*" ["what" or "why"] cannot enter, there is only "*Dass*" ["that" or "thus"]. Or else, we can only say that "the existent is like that." (NKC 10: 254; NISHITANI 1982, 231–32)

The qualitative leap through which this transition is effected is transcendental and beyond human understanding. However, the locus of this transition is in "time." In this regard, the transition is an eminently existential matter and none but the existent can realize this transition.

Moreover, without the self-overcoming and transcendental transition which existence undergoes in time, there can be no standpoint of emptiness which is none other than the absolute this shore. This is because "we are essentially attached to ourselves" and "we shut ourselves off from the standpoint of emptiness which is none other than the absolute this shore" (NKC 10: 117; NISHITANI 1982, 104).

Therefore, the standpoint of emptiness that Nishitani speaks of cannot be reached by contemplation and detached observation (*Zuschauen*). We are required to deal with it existentially.

> Emptiness empties even the standpoint where emptiness is represented as an empty "thing." Only then does emptiness really become emptiness. Emptiness is not set up as something outside and apart from being. Rather it means that we realize it in its oneness or self-identity with being. When we speak of "being is immediately nothingness" (*u soku mu* 有即無) or "form is immediately emptiness" (*shiki soku ze kū* 色即是空), we do not think of being on the one hand, and nothingness on the other, and then bring them together. "Being is immediately nothingness" means rather to stand at the point of "immediacy" and to see, from this standpoint, that being is being and nothingness is nothingness. (NKC 10: 109; NISHITANI 1982, 96–97)

"To stand at the point of immediacy" means to stand in awareness of the bottomless abyss of existence. It is for this reason that "emptiness in sentiment" is said to be "the locus of the profound mobility of imagination" (*kōsōryoku no fukai kidō-sei no ba* 構想力の深い機動性の場). The locus of emptiness "is where the reality of things that exist come simultaneously to be vested with the character of 'provisional illusion-like existence' (*ke* 仮). It is where things, just as they are, become illusions, and the thing itself is phenomena" (NKC 10: 165; NISHITANI 1982, 147). Elemental imagination is set in motion at such a locus of emptiness.

Sensation as the absolute this shore

The distinctive feature of Nishitani's thought lies in its existential method of philosophizing. This is particularly evident in the fact

that he casts away all metaphysical thinking and self-consciously takes his stand at the "standpoint of emptiness that is the absolute this shore." This is because "the locus of emptiness appears to our awareness as the absolute this shore" (NKC 10: 170; NISHITANI 1982, 151) and such awareness is a thoroughly existential one which shuns all speculation and contemplation. According to Nishitani, "The distinctive feature of Buddhism lies in the fact that it is a religion of the absolute this shore" (NKC 10: 112; NISHITANI 1982, 99). He continues,

> Even Buddhism, which teaches the standpoint of emptiness, speaks of transcendence to the further shore. However, this transcendental further shore goes beyond the usual distinction between this shore and the further shore. In this sense, we become aware of it as the unfolding of a horizon which may be called the absolute this shore. (NKC 10: 112; NISHITANI 1982, 99)

What is this "horizon which may be called an absolute this shore" which Nishitani emphasizes here? And how does it relate to the standpoint of emptiness? These questions may be rephrased as follows: Nishitani says that the standpoint of emptiness, "inasmuch as it is an absolute this shore… is opened up as a place that is even closer to this shore than we ourselves" (NKC 10: 147; NISHITANI 1982, 130)—where exactly can we find "a place that is even closer to this shore than we ourselves"?

The "we ourselves" in the phrase above refers to the "self" (*jiga* 自我) or "subject" (*shutai* 主体) that became prominent in the modern age. More specifically, it refers to Descartes' ego or Kant's transcendental ego. The "standpoint of the subject," which is the representative form of "the self-interpretation of modern man," first made its appearance in Descartes' *cogito* ("I think") and was further deepened in Kant's theory of pure apperception. From this standpoint, the world of nature and phenomena was understood to be "composed of innate forms consisting of our sensation and understanding." However, the "thing" grasped here "is only the form which has appeared to us" as the object of our senses. For this reason, we are compelled to say that it is nothing more than something that exists "insofar as it appears to our sight." In other words,

> It is none other than a form of the "thing" reflected (*utsusareta* 映された) in its relationship to us. It does not reveal the "thing" lying at its source. Rather it is the form that has been transferred (*utsusareta* 移された) to us from its source. The "thing" is transferred to us from its own source and is reflected in our "consciousness" or in our senses and intellect. (NKC 10: 147; NISHITANI 1982, 130)

Hence, as long as we remain at the standpoint of the modern self or subject, the "thing" cannot reveal itself. In contrast, Nishitani states that, for a thing to reveal itself as it is, there must be opened up "even closer to this shore than we ourselves" a place where a thing originally manifests itself from the beginning. The world that is opened up here has been called Suchness (*Tathatā*) since ancient times. "The place even closer to this shore than we ourselves" is none other than the place where it becomes possible for a thing to appear just as it is. The standpoint of subjective awareness which was opened up to modern men and women by Kant's Copernican Revolution is here turned around another 180°, so that what results is a 360° rotation. This is a standpoint of absolute passivity, wherein the subjectivity of the self has been totally negated.

This absolute passivity, however, is not identical with Schleiermacher's "intuition and feeling of the universe" or the state generally referred to as "mindlessness" (*mushin* 無心) in the Orient. This so-called standpoint of mindlessness cannot help but remain at the level of a mental attitude and disassociated from time. Rather, the essential point about absolute passivity is that it is "concentrated on itself and free from distraction." Hence, rather than "mindlessness," it may be more appropriate to say that absolute passivity refers to the state of "meditative absorption" (*jō* 定; *samādhi*; literally "[the state in which the mind is] settled down") which, together with precepts (*kai* 戒) and wisdom (*e* 慧), is traditionally emphasized in Buddhism.

Indeed, Nishitani uses the term "settled down in its own place" (*jōzai* 定在) to describe the state in which the thing manifests itself just as it is (NKC 10: 145). Moreover, towards the end of his life, Nishitani took up the problem of "elemental imagination" to consider how a thing can manifest itself as something "settled down in its own place." In the writings from this period, he interpreted "elemental imagination" quite

creatively, as the locus where "the power to sense things" (NKC 13: 154; NISHITANI 1999, 212) and "the power of imagination included within sensation" (NKC 13: 128; NISHITANI 1999, 193) can be brought into play. For this reason, "the place even closer to this shore than we ourselves" is considered to be the locus where a thing reveals itself, i.e., the "primal site where sensation comes into play" (NKC 13: 106). It is the source from which Schleiermacher's "intuition and feeling of the universe," too, can arise.

Here it is necessary to give a brief account of Nishitani's theory of sensation. The distinctive feature of his theory of sensation lies in the emphasis he places on the "elemental nature" (*kongensei* 根源性) of sensation. "The basic primal form of sensation is of such a character that we can't do anything about. It has an aspect which cannot be reduced to some other deeper level or be resolved at a higher, more comprehensive level" (NKC 13: 107). This derives from the distinctive character of "the power of sensation" (also called *sensus communis*) which is qualitatively different from understanding or reason. It refers to a privileged uniqueness possessed only by sensation whose essence lies in its contact with "things" from one instant to the next. The fact that sensation possesses a distinctive "root" that cannot be reduced to anything else derives, as Kant notes, from the passive structure of sensibility and sensation. In other words, from the beginning, sensation is premised on the fact that it arises in contact with something that is given to it. The fact that "something is given to it" or "something is being manifested"—we may call this "phenomenological given"—is *a priori* in the sense that it belongs to the realm of primal "facts" occurring here and now. It is, moreover, an absolutely passive event.

The elemental nature of sensation is directly related to the problem of the distinctive mode of existence of an individual "thing" which can only be described as "this thing" (*dieses*). Nishitani calls this "the ultimate distinctiveness or particularity that each and every thing in the universe possesses" (NKC 13: 140; NISHITANI 1999, 202), and proceeds to consider the problem of the "brute facticity" (*ganko na jijitsu* 頑固な事実) latent in such things. According to this analysis, at the primal site where sensation arises, all "things" manifest themselves as "bare facts" (*hadaka no jijitsu* 裸の事実) that are given to us just as they are. When

all things manifest themselves as things—that is to say, at the basic site where they are given to us in sensation—they are given to us in their "brute facticity." In contrast to the fact that logic and logos belong to the realm of reason and pure thought—that is to say, to the realm of principle—Nishitani argues that the thing given in its brute facticity is "pre-logical" and, simultaneously, "post-logical."

In order to sustain their lives, highly evolved organisms have developed immune systems, a self-defense mechanism that works by identifying foreign substances that have entered the body and expelling them as something "other" than the self. This is an example of "the ultimate distinctiveness or particularity that each and every thing in the universe possesses" taken from the world of biology, but it helps clarify what is meant by self-identity. In fact, each and every thing possesses its own distinctiveness and is marked off from all other things by a high wall. This is what Nishitani refers to as "absolute self-enclosure" and "brute facticity," and it is in order to overcome this separation that it is necessary to "make being transparent." However, we will fall into nihility if we simply empty (or negate) existence in order to do this. The fact that something actually exists means that it is an absolutely unique existence and possesses a unique peculiarity. It means that it exists in the world as itself. A world without particular entities is no world at all.

As is well known, Hegel began his *Phenomenology of Spirit*—a work he called "the study of the experience of consciousness"—with a discussion of "sensational certainty," wherein he analyzed the way in which "this thing" is known through sensible perception. There he mainly argued that sensation cannot be recognized as elemental, and that "sensational certainty" necessarily moves dialectically to "perception." In Hegelian philosophy, all existents are grounded by the Idea in the process of the Idea's self-development. Hence there can be no such thing as "brute facticity" or things in their distinctiveness and particularity. In contrast, Nishitani says that the "brute" in "brute facticity" refers to the fact that nothing can be done about it by any other thing. This succinctly expresses the characteristic that leads Nishitani to speak of the elemental nature of the senses. The senses, so to speak, "have their feet planted firmly on the ground." As things-in-the-world, all things that exist have their foundation in the senses that are firmly planted "on

the ground." Everything we experience is similarly grounded. This is what Kant referred to as the "touchstone of experience." Just as a police detective always returns to the scene of the crime to start over when the trail he or she had been following reaches a dead end, sensation is the fundamental ground to which humans must always return. Nishitani's profound study of the nature of sensation is connected at a deep level with the existential nature of his thought.

The "realization of existence" is a key term in Nishitani's philosophy. Nishitani's position is that existence is not an object of abstract contemplation but is something to be "realized existentially" (in such a way that "manifestation is immediately apprehension"). Here, the term "realize" means both to "bring to reality" and "to know." In contrast to knowing things logically, to realize something means that we encounter "a reality that is manifesting itself just as it is" and that it is being realized experientially in a real way. It can be said that "we experience existence in an existential manner only when a thing arises as the existential realizing of existence." Here the word "realize" has two meanings: "to bring to reality" and "to know." It refers to the situation wherein *manifestation is immediately apprehension*. This dual structure, which is simultaneously epistemological and ontological, is similar to the situation described by the term "the elemental nature of sensation."

Incidentally, Nishitani explains "knowing" in terms of the clarity of "awareness" that accompanies sense perception. "Sensation, in sensing what it senses, arises in the clarity of awareness that is direct (unrepeatable and unique). Sensation is that kind of thing. Sensation is sensation only when the object that is sensed is directly clear and obvious to the person or thing that senses" (NKC 13: 109). As the phrase "coldness and warmth are known naturally" indicates, the characteristic feature of the direct and primal "awareness" of sensation is that coldness and warmth are directly obvious to the sensing person, even when it is not explained in words. However, a sensation can be directly known only by the sensing person, i.e., the person who experiences the sensation, and only when the sensation is occurring. In these ways, sensation is, in a certain sense, limited. Just as a thing, in its brute facticity, exists as an entity enclosed in itself and possessing its own particularity, direct apprehension of sensation, i.e, the clarity of its "awareness," is also self-enclosed

in such a way that it "does not accept any light from the outside." The simultaneous existence of the light of awareness and obscure darkness of concealment in the horizon of knowledge is the fundamental contradiction inherent in sense perception. For this reason, the question of how to break through such self-enclosure and concealment—that is to say, the question of how to make sensation transparent without being disconnected from the elemental nature of sensation—is a central problem in the theory of sensation. Nishitani's thought is also devoted to this problem of image and the elemental imagination from which images arise.

Let me consider Nishitani's reflections concerning sensation a little further by clarifying what he means by the "three constituent factors of sensation." As in the analysis of the relationship between *noesis* and *noema* in Husserl's phenomenology, when we see something that exists, this is identical with the fact that it is appearing and manifesting itself before us. As Nishitani says, "The act of seeing is to open up an actual place wherein things can be seen. This act of seeing actually occurs only insofar as it serves as the field where things manifest themselves" (NKC 13: 106). Hence, the three fundamental factors constituting sensation are (1) the act of seeing, (2) the thing seen, and (3) the field where they manifest themselves. The act of seeing and the "thing" seen are both "features" of the open field where things manifest themselves. The three form a unity and cannot be separated from each other.

The discussion above also indicates the fundamental factors that allow phenomena to manifest themselves. The fact that phenomena manifest themselves means that they are given to us from the world. Moreover, they appear to us as definite things with their own shapes and contours. That is to say, they appear to us as things with prescribed forms. They provide us with the fundamental structure enabling us to see them, to hear them and so forth. This is because, unless we perceive things as entities with prescribed shapes, the written words we see will only appear as ink blots and the voices we hear will be nothing more than vibrations in the air. This is a fundamental point which is presupposed above all in any discussion of "the primal place where sensation arises."

Moreover, the recognition that sensation is already endowed with some kind of "form" leads us to posit "an underlying sensation serv-

ing as the foundation of apprehension" in the form of "perception" or "discriminating sensation." Furthermore, when the "awareness" of various sensations (such as the sense of touch or taste) becomes the clarity of awareness that has passed through "form," the "brute facticity" of things becomes transparent and their self-enclosure is ruptured and broken through. This is because the "form" possesses a universality which makes it essentially different from the particular content (shape, voice, fragrance, taste etc.) of the specialized senses (sense of sight, sense of hearing, sense of smell, sense of taste, etc.). Generally speaking, whether it is called its "shape," "form," "pattern" or "feature,"

> inasmuch as the configuration of a thing refers to the way in which it appears or manifests itself as a phenomenon, i.e., as the appearance or visible form of the thing in identity with the thing itself, it belongs to the senses. At the same time, however, it is the starting point of the action of seeing things. It allows us to see a thing as, for example, a tea bowl, as a pine tree or bamboo, as a cat or dog—to give it a name by which it can be called and to define it conceptually. In this way, it is related to the realm of the intellect. (NKC 13: 157; NISHITANI 1999, 215)

Once we have come this far, we are already concerned with the problem of images.

On image

The literary critic Kobayashi Hideo once remarked that "there are beautiful flowers, but there is no such thing as the beauty of flowers." Nishitani takes a similar position concerning "perception." For example, when we are looking at an apple, we see the apple within the red color we are looking at. There does not exist any "thing" that we call by a common noun, such as "red," "color" or "apple." Within the sphere of sensation, there only exists what is "here and now": this "red," this "color" and this "apple." What we see continually changes and never appears to us twice as the same thing. It is unrepeatable and unique at each and every instant. Heraclitus famously declared that "we cannot

step into the same river twice." The same can be said of perception since it is a direct knowledge in which subject and object are not yet distinguished. In this sense, it is prior to representation or conceptualization by the intellect. Moreover, it is essentially temporal and Heraclitean. In other words, perception is unrepeatable and unique, dominated by what is "here and now." It is a completely localized knowledge. However, this knowledge arising in a localized space and particular instant of time is none other than what we call experience. Things that manifest themselves there are, as a rule, called "real" and "actual."

Nishitani states,

> For example, the act of seeing a particular apple, the apple that is seen, and the perception or experience that arises there are all real at that time and place, and are truly existing. Here I will call this mode of being common to all things that are said to be "factual" or "actual"—i.e., the way in which they are localized in the "here and now"—the "particular" [*ji* 事] in contrast to "principle" [*ri* 理]. Perception and direct experience belong to the realm of the particular. In contrast, all things that arise in a place disassociated from the localized "here and now" belong to the realm of "principle." (NKC 13: 104)

What Nishitani calls the absolute this shore refers to this realm of the particular. It forms the horizon of experience which is an exceedingly existential mode of existence localized by the "here and now." It must be kept in mind here that, despite Kant, phenomena and the thing itself do not constitute two distinct worlds. Instead, an actual horizon called experience is opened up "here and now" as the absolute this world. In terms of its temporal structure, this horizon is characterized by unrepeatability and uniqueness, constituting a Heraclitean flow of continual dispersal and coalescence. Only in such a this-shore-like horizon can this matter of emptiness become actualized. As Nishitani insists, only in this situation of emptiness can "things" manifest themselves just as they are while remaining illusions; only there can a thing manifest itself as a phenomenon, while essentially remaining an illusion:

> The fact that existence is existence only by being one with emptiness means that, fundamentally, existence has the character of "provisional

> illusion-like existence." It means that all existence is essentially an illusion. (NKC 10: 146; NISHITANI 1982, 129)

However, in this case the locus of emptiness is localized in the "here and now" and, for this reason, manifests itself as a thing that must necessarily be actually experienced through sensation. If not, it cannot help becoming a type of metaphysical speculation. This is because by becoming disassociated from the "here and now," all principle is separated at all times from the realm of sensation and time, as well as the realms of experience and actual existence.

"As long as it exists, each and every thing exists in the world of 'existence': it is only in the clearing called the 'world' that it becomes possible to make this statement" (NKC 13: 139; NISHITANI 1999, 201), declares Nishitani. As noted above, Nishitani argues that the standpoint of emptiness is the absolute this shore. This suggests that the clearing of the world is to be found only in the localized standpoint of the "here and now," or in a place characterized by such localization. He argues that we must go back to "the very clearing constituting the world" which is characterized by "the two extremes in the entire network of relationships constituting the world: on the one hand, the clearing of the world itself and, on the other hand, the actual reality of the myriad things in the universe that are manifesting themselves" (NKC 13: 142; NISHITANI 1999, 203). Such a clearing is none other than the localized region of the "here and now" in which arise "the ultimate distinctiveness and particularity that each of the myriad things in the universe possesses." There is no room here for metaphysical concepts like "absolute opening where there is no thing" or "total nothingness." Rather the problem is how each thing that exists, with its own distinctiveness, "finds its own place" in its localized space in the world. By the phrase "to find its own place," Nishitani means that a thing is in its proper position, that it is settled down at its own place and has found itself in the realm where everything is settled down in its own appointed place. The pine tree and the bamboo has each "found its own place" and is content with its place. It is for this reason that Bashō admonished, "Learn about the pine tree from the pine tree and about the bamboo from the bamboo." Let me consider this point further by taking the following verse as an example.

In his essay "Emptiness and Immediacy," Nishitani presents a detailed analysis of the following verse from Jōsō:

Sabishisa no	From under sadness
Soko nukete	The bottom has fallen out:
Furu mizore	The falling sleet.

According to Nishitani, this verse expresses succinctly the direct experience we have at the primal locus where sensation arises. The bottom falling out from under sadness and the falling sleet are two different things. The former is an event in the heart of the author Jōsō, while the latter is an event taking place in the outer world of nature. At first sight they appear to be unrelated. In fact, the inner emotional event and the outer worldly event are "connected holistically, so that the whole thing is one event." But this connection is not a direct relation such that "the inner is transferred to the outer, or the outer affects the inner." It is not a prosaic event, as when one feels sad upon seeing sleet fall. Nor is it a psychological event in which a subjective feeling of sadness triggered by the falling sleet is thoughtlessly projected on the objective scene spread out before one's eyes. Rather, as Nishitani says, "this verse speaks of the situation prior to the separation between the emotional feeling and outer event. Or perhaps, it can be said that such a 'locus' is being revealed here" (NKC 13: 120; NISHITANI 1999, 187). "Bottomless sadness" simply expresses the author's feeling and is not an adjective modifying sleet. It is "the very locus where sleet falls" or "the very locus where sleet manifests itself as actually falling" and this locus of manifestation "is the clearing where the bottom has fallen out from under sadness." This is what Nishitani refers to as "emptiness in sentiment." In the sleet that manifests itself as falling, i.e, in the sleet that falls with the bottom having fallen out from under sadness, we may say that "the world is worlding" (*sekai ga sekai shiteiru* 世界が世界している). The resonance between the words and the overlapping of images in the poem is possible only in the clearing that provides the locus in which things manifest themselves. In other words, the place where images resonate with each other forming a continuity within discontinuity is "the locus of a profound mobility of poetic imagination" (NKC 13: 160; NISHITANI 1999, 217).

In ontological terms, the poetic expression in which "images mutu-

ally overlap and mutually resonate" corresponds to the "circuminsessional network" (*egoteki renkan* 回互的連関) which Nishitani presents as the basic format for the structure of the world. In *Shūkyo to wa nanika* Nishitani notes that "each thing in the universe has an absolute individuality but, at the same time, is gathered into one" (NKC 10: 160; NISHITANI 1982, 148). This indicates "a relationship in which all things alternately become 'master' and 'servant' in relation to one another" (NKC 10: 166; NISHITANI 1982, 148). Nishitani calls this a "circuminsessional" relationship. However, in "Emptiness and Immediacy," he describes this relationship using the metaphor of "a wall between two rooms." Through this metaphor, he emphasizes the contradictory role of a "boundary" which demarcates, while simultaneously joining, different entities, creating continuities within discontinuities. He describes it in the following way: suppose there are two rooms, rooms A and B, separated by a wall made of a single wooden plank. The side of the wall facing room A indicates the limits of room A while serving to represent room B in room A. In other words, this side of the wall, while belonging to room A and being entirely a part of room A, is the manifestation of room B in room A. The same thing can be said of the other side of the wall facing room B. The important thing about this reciprocal relationship between rooms A and B is that "something that essentially belongs to A manifests itself by reflecting [*utsusu* 映す] itself, transferring [*utsusu* 移す] itself or projecting itself onto B. Moreover it does not manifest itself in the form of A within B but as a part of B" (NKC 13: 133; NISHITANI 1999, 197). Nishitani refers to this situation "wherein A is reflected in a totally different thing called B by taking on the appearance of B itself" as "the imaging of A." He also describes it as the situation where "A thinks itself towards [*hineinbilden*] B" (NKC 13: 134; NISHITANI 1999, 197).

According to Leibniz, even though a monad has no window into the world, it is simultaneously a living mirror that reflects the entire universe. He finds the true nature of the monad, with its own distinctiveness, in "expression" and developed his thought concerning the network of the world in terms of expression. In the final analysis, Nishitani's "circuminsessional network," inasmuch as it is a theory of images, ultimately becomes a problem of expression. But in any case, his analysis of how

the world is structured through the circuminsessional network of things is quite suggestive.

Returning to Jōsō's verse above, the sleet and the sadness are manifesting themselves "here and now" as basic facts that are unique and unrepeatable. Phenomenologically speaking, the sleet is an external phenomenon in nature while sadness is nothing other than an inner state of mind. However, when these basic facts manifest themselves, they are like rooms A and B, each of which reflects the other and transfers itself into the other room through the wall between the two. In this way, the sleet is no longer a "bare fact" which can be apprehended through the five senses, but is something that has been turned into an image. In other words, the movement of the "sleet that falls as if the bottom has fallen out from under the sky" is reflected in one's sentiment in just the same way that room B is expressed in room A through the wall. Likewise, the "bottomlessly sad" state of mind is reflected in the sleet just as room A is reflected in room B. In this way, they are mutually reflected in each other. Therefore, the figure of the sleet and the sad state of mind overlap—or turn into—each other, creating a single image: that of the falling sleet in which the bottom of sadness has fallen through. Henceforth, the sleet becomes, for us, "the falling sleet in which the bottom of sadness has fallen through." In other words, "the falling sleet in which the bottom of sadness has fallen through" comes to describe for us the very form of the sleet itself. Being is made transparent (*u no tōmeika* 有の透明化) when "a particular thing expresses itself in the other" in this way. Conversely, it also means that emptiness is made into an image (*kū no imējika* 空のイメージ化) when each particular thing finds its place in its proper position in the world.

When sleet is reflected and transferred into sadness, and sadness is reflected and transferred into sleet, the sadness that has become one with sleet becomes sadness itself (i.e., sadness is made into an image). This is because the bottom of the raw, vivid emotion of sadness which is private and accessible only to a particular individual has, so to speak, fallen through. Henceforth, sadness is "sadness in which sleet falls." There is no other kind of sadness. Sadness is no longer a private, internal psychological state, a mere psychological phenomenon. Masaoka Shiki once wrote the following verse: "A cockscomb:/ there may be/

fourteen or fifteen of them." Concerning the verse, Yamamoto Kenkichi said, "A cockscomb grows in such a way that 'there may be fourteen or fifteen of them.' 'There should be fourteen or fifteen of them' reveals the very way in which cockscombs exist. When I read a verse like this, I can no longer imagine a cockscomb being anything other than there being 'fourteen or fifteen of them'" (Yamamoto 2006, 86). Earlier, I discussed the notion of the clarity of "knowledge," but this verse reveals the power of image found at the basis of such "knowledge."

I stated above that emptiness is made into an image where existence in its distinctiveness attains its localized "place." But for the myriad things in the universe to attain their rightful place, i.e., for the world to world, it is necessary to consider another important factor. This is the factor of time. Citing the words, "when a speck of dust flies up, the world is contained therein; when a flower blossoms, the world arises," Nishitani states as follows: "As one speck of dust flies up from the ground when the wind blows… as a flower quietly blossoms, the world manifests itself in a new activity of birth" (NKC 13: 137; Nishitani 1999, 200). However, he gives no further explanation as to what he means by "activity" or "new activity of birth." Hence I will take up "Plum Blossom," the fifty-third chapter of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*, and consider the role of time in the reciprocal network constituting the world. In this chapter, it is written, "When an old plum tree 'suddenly blossoms,' there arises the world in full bloom. When the world arises in full bloom, that is the coming of spring." This means that, when a plum blossom opens, the world worlds, and that event is identical with the coming of spring. What, then, does it mean for spring to come? At the end of "Plum Blossom," Dōgen cites the words of the patriarchs and venerable Buddhas, "Spring is in the plum blossom and enters the picture," and explains:

> To draw a picture of the spring, you should not draw a willow, a plum, a peach or a damson plum [*sumomo* 李]. You must draw the spring. If you draw a willow, a plum, a peach or a damson plum, you are drawing a willow, a plum, a peach or a damson plum. You have yet to draw spring. It is not that you can't draw spring. But aside from the patriarchs and venerable Buddhas, there is no one between the western heavens and the eastern lands who has managed to draw spring.…

> Because plum blossoms send us the spring, it is taken into the picture and drawn into the trees. It is an expedient device.

The spring does not exist apart from the willow, plum, peach and damson plum. But the willow, plum, peach and damson plum are just that, and even if we draw them, they are not spring. If we are asked to draw not a willow, plum, peach or damson plum, but spring itself, we become frustrated because spring itself does not exist anywhere. Only the brushes wielded by the patriarchs and venerable Buddhas, Dōgen declares, are able to reveal spring in the plum blossom. The point which Dōgen wants to make here is this: it is mistaken to say that the plum blossoms open with the arrival of something called spring. Rather, *the very place where the plum blossom opens is spring*. The literary critic Karaki Junzō states, "the term 'the opening of the plum in early spring' indicates both that the plum opens in early spring and that the plum opens [the season called] early spring. This phrase indicates just this kind of relationship" (Karaki 1967, 123). Moreover, Karaki argues that the notion of immediacy provides the key to understanding this relationship. On his view, "immediacy" here means "to set in motion," and indicates "an unobstructed world in which Rujing sets spring in motion, the plum blossom sets spring in motion, spring sets spring in motion, spring sets plum blossoms in motion, and the plum blossom sets plum blossoms in motion."

I mentioned earlier that the locus of transformation is "time" and that transformation is an exceedingly existential matter. To "stand at the standpoint of immediacy" is to open up the "locus of a profound mobility of imagination" welling up from the bottomless abyss of existence. When the time is ripe, the world unfolds itself as the world. This is none other than "the arising of the world in full bloom."

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Abbreviation

NKC *Nishitani Keiji chosakushū* 西谷啓治著作集 [Collected Writings of Nishitani Keiji]. Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治, 26 vols. Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1986–1995.

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Nishitani Keiji's Theory of Imagination

The Theory of Imagination in "Emptiness and Immediacy"

Ono Makoto

"*Kū to soku*" 空と即 [Emptiness and Immediacy, 1982], which became the last lengthy essay that Nishitani wrote, explains how "elemental imagination, which arises from the sphere called the 'Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other' [*jiji muge hokkai* 事々無碍法界] is set in motion" (NKC 13: 160; Nishitani 1999, 217). In it, Nishitani advances his distinctive theory of emptiness in relation to the problem of image. He begins the essay by considering the problem of images expressed in poetry and the arts. As the essay proceeds, we are lead from poetry and the arts, both of which express "the 'principle' [*ri* 理] which we apprehend at the very site of our experience of things" and "the primal form of 'the non-obstruction of principle and things,' to the realm where all words, as well as their logos or principle, fade away, and things appear just as they are" (NKC 13: 130; Nishitani 1999, 194)—that is to say, the realm in which there is no obstruction between things. During the course of this analysis, we encounter Nishitani's discussion

* Translated by Robert F. Rhodes. Unless otherwise indicated, quoted passages are translated directly from the Japanese, but references to alternative existing English translations have also been provided where possible.

of image, a key concept in this essay, as well as his theories of "*sensus communis*" (often rendered in English as "common sense") and "imagination" (*kōsōryoku* 構想力; literally "power to construct mental images"), which lie at the basis of his notion of image.

According to Nishitani, the principle governing the relationship between images is already a major theme in poetry which "attempts to express things at the original source where the thing is given and manifests itself to us" (NKC 13: 131; NISHITANI 1999, 195). Moreover, once the possibility of the impossibility of the principle of image is uncovered, what is opened up is the region where "reality appears just as reality" (NKC 13: 132; NISHITANI 1999, 196), i.e., where "things appear just as they are." This is the region where "all things interpenetrate each other," i.e., the horizon of religion. In this shift to the horizon of religion, image plays a leading role. According to Nishitani, the "being" of "things" in this world is, originally, closed in on itself, without connection to other things, and completely "non-circuminsessional" with other things. However, mediated by image, a thing, without ceasing to be itself, comes out from within itself and "from the perspective of its relationship with the world, enters into a circuminsessional relationship with other things" (NKC 13: 141; NISHITANI 1999, 203). Nishitani considers this fundamental change of status, in which an entity located in a specific place in the world enters into a relationship with other things, to be "unfolding the inner landscape hidden within 'being'." As he says, "fundamentally speaking, it is a transfer from an actual existing thing to its image" (NKC 13: 141; NISHITANI 1999, 203). It means that the "image, which is within and identical with the thing, reveals its own distinctive form as an image," and moreover, that "the power that is within, and is identical with, each of the five senses, appears as imagination" (NKC 13: 141; NISHITANI 1999, 203).

However, on Nishitani's view, if the being of things just stands within the network of relationships constituting the world, it remains at a stage that can be described as the "Dharma-realm in which there is no obstruction between principle and things" (*riji muge hokkai* 理事無碍法界). The world in which principle and things are unobstructed must at some point come to a realization of an "absolute contradiction" in this world-relationship: that there is an absolute contradiction between the

"absolute one" and "absolute many," which "indicate the two extremes delimiting the dominion of the logos characterized by the non-obstruction of the principle and things" (NKC 13: 143; NISHITANI 1999, 203). It is necessary to become aware of this contradiction in which "the clearing that constitutes the world," where there is nothing, and the "myriad things" are able to come into existence simultaneously, while the contradiction itself remains. The "Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other" is described as the "place where things return to their origin, a place that embraces both being and non-being, knowing and non-knowing, while at the same time, principle and things are made circuminsessionally identical [*egoteki ni sōsoku seshimeru* 回互的に相即せしめる] with each other." It is also described as "the realm of realization in which one goes beyond the Dharma-realm in which there is no obstruction between the principle and things" (NKC 13: 145; NISHITANI 1999, 205–206).

The Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other is a world in which all "principle" (or logos) has been eliminated. It is rather a world of "chaos" and absolute absurdity. Even then, it has meaning at the religious level. As Nishitani declares, "the fact that a religious world is opened up, means that the human mind is opened up towards a source where the clearing of the world is an absolute clearing" (NKC 13: 151; NISHITANI 1999, 210).

However, the myriad things, while existing within a world of absurd "chaos," exists as themselves. Moreover, they exist as things that are at one with "thoroughgoing nothingness," i.e., emptiness. Here one experiences a world that conforms to the ultimate thing itself. It is a world in which the myriad non-circuminsessional things exist as images of emptiness. From the level of religion, the Dharma-realm in which there is no obstruction between principle and things remains inadequate, insofar as its way of approaching "things" is still governed by a certain "principle": that of the relationship among images. When one ultimately enters the world of the thing itself, one realizes that the myriad things, while remaining non-circuminsessional, are nothing other than images of "nothingness," i.e., images of "emptiness." For this reason, this is truly "the realm of realization in which one goes beyond the Dharma-realm in which there is no obstruction between principle and things."

Nishitani describes this realm as "a place where everything is an image and nothing more, including even images that are absurd and nonsensical" (NKC 13: 152; NISHITANI 1999, 211). As examples, he gives the verse at the beginning of the "Uji" 有時 [Being-Time] chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼蔵 [Treasury of the Dharma Eye][1] and the episode of Zen Master Tairyū, who composed a verse on a blizzard on a bright sunny day. Such images come extremely close to approximating the Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other. However, inasmuch as it employs language, it is still expressed from the level of the Dharma-realm in which there is no obstruction between principle and things. But these images have, at some point, passed through the Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other. According to Nishitani, they are expressed when "the elemental imagination arising from the region called Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other is set in motion." Images from the Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other are not simply the products of the human intellect. Rather, even though the images arise in human beings, they are the result of the spontaneous activity of the imagination that transcends human beings.

In this way, the problem of image holds an extremely important place in Nishitani's philosophical reflections around the time he writes "Emptiness and Immediacy." A characteristic feature of his reflections, moreover, lies in the fact that it is based on the notions of "*sensus communis*" and "imagination." Unfortunately, Nishitani does not explain what he

1. Editor's note: Hee-Jin Kim translates the verse in question as follows:

> An ancient buddha said:
> There is a time to stand on top of the highest peak;
> There is a time to walk at the bottom of the deepest ocean;
> There is a time to be a three-headed, eight-armed [being];
> There is a time to be a sixteen foot or eight-foot [buddha];
> There is a time to be a staff or a whisk;
> There is a time to be a pillar or a lantern;
> There is a time to be Chang's third son or Li's fourth son;
> There is a time to be the great earth and empty sky.
> (From *Flowers of Emptiness: Selections from Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*, 224. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.)

means by "imagination" at any length. Neither is it emphasized in *Religion and Nothingness*, Nishitani's major work from his middle period. But in "Emptiness and Immediacy," imagination and image suddenly come to hold an important place at the center of Nishitani's philosophy. In this essay, it is intimated that the problem of image is related to Aristotle's theory of *sensus communis*. In the pages below, I will attempt to clarify the philosophical basis and range of issues associated with the theory of imagination developed in "Emptiness and Immediacy."

During the period in which he wrote "Emptiness and Immediacy," Nishitani's theory of *sensus communis* is developed within the horizon of Buddhist thought, including the notion of emptiness. Although *sensus communis* is closely associated with Aristotle, Aristotle's concept of God ("the unmoving mover") is basically incompatible with Buddhist thought. How then is it possible to integrate Aristotle's theories of *sensus communis* and imagination with Buddhist thought? Nishitani gives no explanation. In this paper, I will also discuss this problem and explore the background of Nishitani's theory of imagination as found in "Emptiness and Immediacy."

The source of nishitani's theory of imagination: studies in aristotle

As we have seen, the theory of image found in Nishitani's essay "Emptiness and Immediacy" is closely bound to concepts like "*sensus communis*" and "imagination." After treating how the human senses are integrated while augmenting each other, he continues:

> All of the various senses, which have become specialized into different types depending on which of the five sense organs they are associated with, possess in common a function called sensation, or a characteristic which is the "power" to sense things. In a word, this is the basis of the [human senses]. This is what has been called "*sensus communis*" since ancient times. It is the basis which helps to integrate the senses mentioned above with one another. From the standpoint of the original and natural nature of the senses, *sensus communis* refers to the unrestricted (or a priori) nature of the senses before they are subject

> to specific restrictions. It is none other than the "power" (*physis*) to sense things, contained innately in each of the five senses. They are the "enabling cause" (*nōsa-in* 能作因; *kārana-hetu*) which allows the senses to function in the first place. On the other hand, this same *sensus communis* simultaneously exists apart from sight, hearing and the other specialized senses and has its own distinctive function. This function is universal (in that it is not bound to any of the specific senses). Its function is to produce images (representational forms or mental likenesses), and from this perspective, *sensus communis* can be called "imagination." (NKC 13: 154; NISHITANI 1999, 212–13)

Here Nishitani argues that imagination is the ability to produce images. But the *sensus communis* and imagination are not exactly the same thing. In a different section of "Emptiness and Immediacy," Nishitani describes the *sensus communis* as "the power to form mental likenesses which seems to be contained within, and is united with, the power of the senses which is 'passive' or 'receptive' (or the ability to be passive or receptive)" (NKC 13: 128; NISHITANI 1999, 193). Furthermore, he distinguishes imagination from *sensus communis*, saying that the former is the "independent activity of the very 'ability'" to produce images, which, although rooted in *sensus communis*, is relatively free from the senses. In "Emptiness and Immediacy," Nishitani does not discuss *sensus communis* and imagination in any further detail. But from the lectures that Nishitani gave at Ōtani University around the same time, we can see that the framework of his theory of *sensus communis* derives from the notion of *koine aisthesis* (common perceptual sense) which Aristotle developed in *De Anima* (NKC 25: 418). In fact, in his early volume, *Arisutoteresu ronkō* アリストテレス論攷 [*Studies in Aristotle*, 1948; referred to hereafter as *Studies*], Nishitani presents a detailed study of Aristotle's theories of *sensus communis* and the power of imagination. In other words, the source of Nishitani's theory of imagination is to be found in his early *Studies.*

It must be noted here that there are major differences in opinions concerning what Aristotle meant by *sensus communis.* Moreover the question of whether or not Nishitani's interpretation of *sensus communis* is correct is another problem altogether. However, I will not go into these problems here, since my main concern is to elucidate Nishitani's interpretation of Aristotle to see how it is related to the argument found in

"Emptiness and Immediacy." In the pages below, I will consider Nishitani's understanding of *sensus communis* as found in his *Studies* and see how it relates to the concept of imagination.

Sensus communis is a controversial topic, but it is generally said to have its origins in Aristotle's discussion of *koine aisthesis*, found in *De Anima*. In Book 3, Chapter 1 of *De Anima*, Aristotle declares:

> …but of the common objects we have from the start a common sense (*sensus communis*), not a *per accidens* awareness; so it is not a special sense.… The senses perceive the proper objects of one another *per accidens* (in virtue not of being the particular senses they are, but of being species of one genus), when there is a simultaneous perception of both qualities in the same object.… (ARISTOTLE 1961, 268)

Commenting on this passage, Nishitani declares that *sensus communis* is "a particular ability which can distinguish between different varieties of sensation, and therefore stands in the position of an integrator within the entire field of sensation" (NKC 5: 57). Moreover, *sensus communis* is defined as "the elemental sense faculty" or "the source of the various sense faculties that have developed into diverse forms" (NKC 5: 57). As for the way it actually functions, Nishitani begins by using the idea of "within" (中 *chū*; ト・メソン *to meson*; the mean). He says, "*Sensus communis*, insofar as it can distinguish, for example, between white and blue, integrates, on the one hand, the function of sight and, on the other hand, the function of taste. At the same time, insofar as it can distinguish between white and blue, or to put it differently, as *sensus communis* itself, it is neither [the function of sight or taste]. Rather it must be within [the sense of sight or taste]" (NKC 5: 58).

According to Nishitani, *sensus communis* "always works, only through, or together with, the various specialized senses" (NKC 5: 59). However, it is "not identical with any of the specialized senses. Rather, it is something that integrates them at their source. That is to say, what is seen at the source of the various specialized senses is, simultaneously in itself, the original source (*arche*) of all specialized senses" (NKC 5: 60). Therefore, the fact that the *sensus communis* is "within" the senses means that it is "like the center of a circle where many straight lines with different end points converge" (NKC 5: 60). It is the single center "within" a cir-

cle. In this way, it can be said that all things within the field of the senses can be found in the *sensus communis* with its power to integrate all the senses. It is for this reason that the *sensus communis* can distinguish and compare the data given to the various different senses. It is also for this reason that "the sensing consciousness and the actual consciousness of the *psyche* that senses" (NKC 5: 71) are both found in *sensus communis*. Moreover, on Aristotle's view, sensation of "'things that are sensed in common' such as movement, stillness, form, size, number and oneness" also belong to *sensus communis*.

The concept of *sensus communis* is an attempt to locate the power to integrate the various data given to the senses within the senses themselves. It shows that Aristotle was not satisfied with locating the power to integrate the senses outside the senses. According to Nishitani, "By thinking in this way, Aristotle brought the distinctive character of the understanding down into the senses" (NKC 5: 80). Of course, this does not mean that he ignored the essential difference between sensation and understanding/reason. As Nishitani notes, "He simply sought to recognize, not only the disjunction and discontinuity, but also the living continuity, between sensation and understanding" (NKC 5: 80).

What then is the relationship between *sensus communis*, which mediates between sensation and understanding, and imagination? Nishitani provides the following lucid interpretation: "When a movement which has a sense-impression as its inner essence shakes the sense organ to its very foundation and remains even after the present sensation has passed away, a figure of imagination arises." Stated in greater detail,

> It is none other than the fact that the *sensus communis*, which lies at the basis of the specialized senses, is being stimulated. That is to say, when a stimulus in one of the specialized senses stimulates even the *sensus communis*, and there remains a qualitatively different agitation arising from the stimulus, i.e., the pathos of sensation, even after the initial sensation has ceased, that is the figure of imagination. Therefore, "The figure of imagination is the pathos of *sensus communis*" (*De mem.* I, 450a10) and imagination is the production of the representation or figure of imagination. (NKC 5: 86)

Therefore, imagination is "that aspect of the *sensus communis* that *can*

be passive [in order to receive sense impressions]" (NKC 5: 88).[2] When the sense organ is shaken to its very foundation and the *sensus communis* is stimulated, both sensation and imagination arise. But the latter "while being a *sensus communis* that has arisen from the present sensation, remains as residue after the sensation has ceased. Therefore, there is a time lapse between it and the sensation" (NKC 5: 87). In other words, what appears before the *psyche* in imagination is the "sense impression itself" (NKC 5: 87). Hence imagination is "due to its distance from the sense object, free from the direct influence of the object. Being separated from the sense object, it can on occasion become creative" (NKC 5: 89). But at the same time "in contrast to sensation which is always accurate, imagination can, as a result of this distance and separation, sometimes prove mistaken" (NKC 5: 89).

We can discern here a distinctive feature of Nishitani's interpretation of Aristotle. This is his idea that "the passive is active" (*judō soku nōdō* 受動即能動). Nishitani points out that there are two aspects to *sensus communis*: that which is included in the specialized senses and that which is unique to itself while remaining a part of the specialized senses. In other words, the former is the aspect that is subject to stimulus by means of the agitation remaining within the sense organ, while the latter is the aspect that appears in front of the *psyche* as the figure of imagination which arose as a result of this stimulation. But these two aspects are one, in that they are simultaneously passive and active. It is because of this that a mental fact called imagination can come into being" (NKC 5: 91). Concerning the specialized senses, too, Nishitani says, "Sensation is simultaneously passive and active. Only by being *apathes* can our senses be *paschein*. If this non-passive aspect is lacking in our senses, we cannot receive sense impressions at all" (NKC 5: 46).

Furthermore, Nishitani distinguishes imagination itself into two types: sensational imagination (*kankakuteki kōsō* 感覚的構想) and deliberative imagination (*shiryōteki kōsō* 思量的構想). The latter serves to mediate between sensation and intellect (reason). The power of imagination, inasmuch as it remains passive, does not escape the full play of the abil-

2. Nishitani emphasizes the term "can" here, indicating that he stresses the active aspect of *sensus communis*.

ity of sensation. When recollection arises, Nishitani maintains, "the power of imagination is freed from the power of sensation, and instead becomes associated with the power of speculation. This is comparative or deliberative imagination.… Just as sensational imagination arises in association with emotional perception (*kanjō chikaku* 感情知覚) and the power of deliberative imagination, it can be said that the power of deliberative imagination arises in association with the power of sensational imagination and speculation" (NKC 5: 112).

With the discussion above in mind, let me turn to how Nishitani's interpretation of Aristotle found in *Studies* is related to the arguments set forth in "Emptiness and Immediacy." In the foreword to *Studies*, Nishitani states that the "essential points that I wanted to discuss in this volume" (NKC 5: 4) can be summarized as follows:

1 "The first concerns the mutual identity and interpenetration of the 'natural' and the 'logical' or *physis* and logos in Aristotle's philosophy" (NKC 5: 4);
2 "The second point concerns the fact that the activities of the various abilities possessed by the *psyche*, whether they belong to the emotions or to reason, include a non-passive aspect within the constitution of their passivity, even while they are passive in that they receive their form from the object" (NKC 5: 8);
3 "The third concerns the interpretation of the relationship between active reason and passive reason" (NKC 5: 9);
4 "The fourth concerns the point of view that I expressed in this volume using terms like, for the time being, 'present' (*Da*) and 'present consciousness'" (NKC 5: 10).

Nishitani makes no reference at all to the first point above in "Emptiness and Immediacy" and it is unclear how much this particular concern is carried over into this essay. However, the analysis of the structure of the soul found in *Studies*, to which the second point above refers, is, I believe, carried over into "Emptiness and Immediacy." For example, the interpretation of Aristotle's theory concerning the relationship between *sensus communis* and imagination found in *Studies* is also found in "Emptiness and Immediacy." As I noted above, Nishitani says that the power of imagination is "that aspect of the *sensus communis* that can be pas-

sive." This means that the sense organs are shaken to the foundations, the *sensus communis* arises, and imagination is produced passively by the *sensus communis*. But the aspect in which the *sensus communis*, while passively receiving the sensation, produces imagination is referred to as the power of imagination. In other words, the passive aspect is taken up independently. This is parallel to the relationship between *sensus communis* and imagination found in "Emptiness and Immediacy." Moreover, in "Emptiness and Immediacy," the power of imagination is also defined as a "universal primal function unique to itself, which is distinct from specific functions like sight and hearing" (NKC 13: 154; NISHITANI 1999, 212). This agrees with the following statement from *Studies*: that imagination is "due to its distance from the sense object, free from the direct influence of the object. Being separated from the sense object, it can on occasion become creative" (NKC 5: 89).

Nishitani's discussion concerning the fourth point is strongly influenced by Heidegger. Briefly stated, the problem that Nishitani wished to discuss here is that of the "self-consciousness" of the *psyche*. This is related to the problem of "sensibility" which he took up in his lectures at Ōtani University, that is to say, the problem of how the entire world, including oneself, is reflected in the senses. However I cannot discuss this point any further in this essay.

The most problematic point is the third: the interpretation of the relationship between passive reason and active reason. In this context, Nishitani discusses Aristotle's understanding of God. In the foreword to *Studies*, Nishitani declares that it "resembles the problem of the relationship between Original Awakening and Incipient Awakening in Buddhism." Unfortunately, this point is not developed at all in *Studies*. At the very least, it can be said that he does not deal with the question of how active reason (God) and the Buddhist notion of awakening are related to one another. To repeat, in this volume, it is still unclear how Aristotle's thought can be integrated with Buddhist ways of thinking, such as those based on emptiness.

Of course, as Nishitani himself says in *Studies*, he wrote this book simply to help further his own understanding of Aristotle's philosophic standpoint (NKC 5: 4). For this reason, the results of his research were not used in any special way to deepen his own philosophy. Even in *Shūkyo*

to wa nanika 宗教とは何か [What is Religion?, 1961], one of Nishitani's major works, the power of imagination is not a particularly important topic. However, it suddenly comes back to prominence in "Emptiness and Immediacy," where it is subject to detailed analysis, especially as it relates to such Buddhist concepts as emptiness and the Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other. Unfortunately, Nishitani neglects to explain how or why he came to focus once again on the role of imagination in this essay. Hence the process by which Nishitani returned to the problem of imagination remains a "missing link" in the study of Nishitani's philosophic development. How then was Nishitani able to integrate his understanding of Aristotle with Buddhist thought? Through what process was Nishitani able to open up a horizon of thought encompassing both Aristotle's *anima* theory and Buddhist philosophy? It is necessary to consider these questions in order to fully appreciate the significance of "Emptiness and Immediacy."

Nishitani's distinctive theory of imagination: the overcoming of *noesis noeseos*

In his summary of the distinctive features of Aristotle's philosophy in *Studies*, Nishitani presents his interpretation of the words, "When reason apprehends and thinks of the *noeton* (the object of thought), it (i.e., reason) becomes the *noeton*, found in Chapter 7, Book 12 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*." Nishitani's interpretation is as follows:

> "When reason thinks of *noeton*" means that it (reason) enters into an activity that is identical [*ichinyo* 一如] with the active reason of God. "By thinking of *noeton*, it becomes *noeton*" means that, in thinking of the active reason of God, it enters into an activity that is identical with the active reason of God that eternally reflects upon itself. From such a standpoint, reason also becomes a *noeton* to itself. In other words, this means nothing less than the fact that, by becoming a *noeton* that is identical with the *noeton* of God, it becomes a *noeton* identical with God as *noeton*. In other words, the action of seeing God (*noesis*) itself becomes one with the action of God (*noesis*) and to become one with the action of God is to see the self along with God. (NKC 5: 189)

Moreover, God, the prime mover of the universe, is the unique primal principle of the universe and "the substance of all things" (*Met.* 12–10, 1076 a1). Hence, "the act of seeing the world is included within the act of seeing God. However, to think of things in the world and the various forms they take does not necessarily include the act of seeing God" (NKC 5: 192). In any case, "in thinking wherein reason sees both God as *noeton* and itself, the universe is also seen as one entity" (NKC 5: 194). In other words, "it reaches a sphere of contemplation that may be described as 'all is one and one is all'" (NKC 5: 193).

Concerning God's contemplation, Nishitani writes, "at the time passive reason turns its back on emotions and imagination and turns towards active reason, it becomes an actual force which is identical with things. When it (i.e., reason) sees itself within things, it can be said that 'the divine' contained within reason becomes manifest" (NKC 5: 178). The actual force of divine reason means that, in thinking of God, which is the object of thought, human reason becomes identical with the eternal active reason. "It is, as it were, an action in which one sees God by means of the very action through which God sees his own self. This is called '*noesis noeseos*' (thought thinking itself)." In "thought thinking itself" the activity of *nous* of thinking (*energia*) is identical with God's *energia*. By approaching the pure contemplation of God, life discovers value within itself. This is the most virtuous way to live.

As we saw above, Nishitani gives the notion of "thought thinking itself" as one of the distinctive features of Aristotle's philosophy. In his view, "thought thinking itself" is the distinguishing characteristic and goal of philosophy. The structure of the human soul, including such things as passive reason, is raised to a higher level when it becomes identified with active reason through the process of "thought thinking itself" and becomes actualized. "Even while transcending emotions, passive reason acts in association with emotions. It is here that perception of actual things comes into existence. However, passive reason functions as a result of the actual force of active reason. Therefore, at the basis of the perception of emotional actual things, the actual force of active reason exists" (NKC 5: 174). All workings of the soul, from passive reason to emotions, are fundamentally actions due to the actual force of active reason. According to Nishitani's interpretation, Aristotle's entire

philosophy, including his understanding of the formation of images, is based on the idea of "thought thinking itself."

In *Studies*, Nishitani points out that the notion of "thought thinking itself" is also important for Hegel. Says Nishitani, "I may also add that the passage from the *Metaphysics* given above[3] is, as everyone knows, quoted verbatim by Hegel at the end of his *Encyclopedia*. In my opinion, Hegel's position represents the deepest understanding of Aristotle's thought (even though it is, of course, not a faithful reproduction of the latter)" (NKC 5: 191).

Nishitani believes that the notion of "thought thinking itself" provides the basic framework of Western philosophy from Aristotle to Hegel. He reiterates this view in the essay "Hannya to risei" 般若と理性 [*Prajñā* and Reason, 1979], which was written at around the same time as "Emptiness and Immediacy." In "*Prajñā* and Reason," Nishitani attempts to overcome Hegel's philosophic standpoint, which is based on the notion of "thought thinking itself," through the use of Buddhist concepts. In the section in this essay dealing with the relationship between Aristotle and Hegel, Nishitani declares,

> In Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* the standpoint of *noesis noeseos* (that is, direct knowledge of direct knowledge by means of direct knowledge) discussed in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is declared to be the standpoint of philosophy itself, …that is to say, the standpoint of philosophy as absolute knowledge. This is the standpoint from which one perceives directly (i.e., through *sophia*) the function of the direct perception (*sophia*) of the totality of all things in their totality, i.e., as totality itself. In other words, it is the ultimate standpoint of "contemplative knowledge" wherein direct knowledge contemplates itself. Philosophical thought is, first of all, thought that concerns itself with the totality of things, and from such a standpoint, the thinker and the object of thought are always one. In that sense, unlike reflective knowledge in which the subject that knows and the object that is known are opposed to each other, knowledge always has the character of absolute knowledge. (NKC 13: 71)

3. This refers to the passage from *Metaphysics* Chapter 12, Section 7, where Aristotle states that the self-contemplation of reason is divine and the highest good.

Nishitani describes the main current of Hegel's philosophy as found in the chapter on Absolute Spirit in the *Encyclopedia* as follows: "In the realm of Absolute Spirit, being and knowledge, both of which have an absolute character, are one. Absolute Spirit develops towards a state in which there remains no duality or opposition at all between absolute being and knowledge" (NKC 13: 80). This is not found even at the level of "revealed religions." This is because "Absolute Spirit is still represented as absolute being" (NKC 13: 80). At this level, God is still "considered to be an entity called God, as the Other, so to speak" (NKC 13: 80). Indeed, even though an attempt is made there to make an infinite contact between God and humans, still "it cannot be said that the knowledge of God is identical to God's knowledge of Himself" (NKC 13: 80). God knows and loves Himself, but the absolute knowledge that humans possess can only know and love God. The duality is abolished when God's knowledge operates directly in the form of human knowledge. We reach such a standpoint when knowledge knows itself. According to Nishitani, "The ultimate standpoint of absolute knowledge is that of the knowledge of absolute knowledge" (NKC 13: 81). From such standpoint, "there is only the act of knowledge and knowledge is the act of knowing that act of knowing.… This is the position that was called *noesis noeseos* in Aristotelian philosophy and Plotinus's Neo-Platonism which followed" (NKC 13: 81).

On Nishitani's view, Hegel's concept of Absolute Spirit can be regarded as "the final summit of Western philosophy that resembles a lofty range of mountain peaks, that developed from Plato and Aristotle" (NKC 13: 85). Aristotle's *noesis noeseos*, while dressed up in this concept of Absolute Spirit, appeared within Nishitani's thought as the fundamental framework of Western philosophy. However, Nishitani criticizes *noesis noeseos* as presented in Hegel's philosophy in the following words:

> The standpoint of *noesis noeseos* certainly breaks free, through self-negation, from the standpoint of detached observation, or *Zuschauen*, which lurks within all human philosophic thought. According to Hegel, human philosophical knowledge has its foundation in absolute knowledge. However, it is also endowed with "freedom from absolute knowledge" which prevents it from being swallowed up by

> the object of knowledge. This is due to the manifestation of "absolute negation" or "freedom" which knowledge itself possesses. It is here that the progress of knowledge as a discipline of absolute knowledge becomes possible. At the final stage of this system, absolute negation negates even the standpoint of detached observation (*Zuschauen*) and becomes one with the thought of the Absolute Being. In this sense, absolute negation is fulfilled and is free from self-contradiction. However, on the point that this final stage is that of the "thinking of thinking," it has "not yet become absolutely free from its character as thinking." To further fulfill the absolute negation of knowledge, knowledge must escape from freedom in the sense of "freedom from something" and attain liberty or thoroughgoing freedom to act without any constraints. (NKC 13: 84)

Knowledge that has been affirmed absolutely "must be of the nature of unconstrained absolute affirmation or *Positivität* towards all things" (NKC 13: 84). Therefore it means that, insofar as it remains knowledge, "it still remains insufficient in getting to the bottom of the substance of what is called knowledge" (NKC 13: 84). This standpoint is still not free of the tacit assumption that the substance of Absolute Being is "knowledge." Even though Hegel's philosophy begins from the Absolute, the Absolute is defined as "being." This, Nishitani repeatedly points out, is a major problem in Hegel's philosophy.

How then can we overcome *noesis noeseos*? One way is to get to the bottom of the standpoint of knowledge and advance on to unconstrained absolute affirmation which may be called "knowing of nonknowing." But Nishitani is skeptical about any attempt to deepening a given entity as "knowledge" or "academic discipline." He asks, "When a thing, whatever it may be, appears before us as a distinct existent (*jitsuzai* 実在), can its facticity or existentiality be fathomed through knowledge?" (NKC 13: 85). Then he continues, "Instead of taking the path of logical understanding, which is different from directly knowing a given fact as it is, there is the way of deepening this direct knowledge itself." Nishitani considers this to be sole standpoint of truth. In other words, this is a question of where one should begin one's religious or philosophical quest. In his words, "It is a question of where their 'starting point' is and where we can discern its source" (NKC 13: 92). Concerning

this "starting point," he says, "it must be something that is prior to all knowledge, all thought, all logic, etc. Moreover, it must be the starting point of all knowledge and thought" (NKC 13: 92). Stated differently, "It is the standpoint from which one can freely go into and out of the world of knowledge, thought, and logic. Or else, it is the power to negate knowledge, thought, and logic while at the same time affirming knowledge, thought, and logic. It is, so to speak, simultaneously the power of non-knowing and the power of knowing" (NKC 13: 92).

Nishitani understands this power to be "absolute negation" itself. This absolute negation is not something which anticipates some thing to be negated, nor is it something which presupposes its opposite, absolute affirmation. "Absolute negation, in its true form, does not have anything that it needs to negate. In this sense, absolute negation is simultaneously absolute affirmation. Absolute nothingness is immediately absolute being (*zettai mu soku zettai u* 絶対無即絶対有). Hence it is the origin of all negation and affirmation" (NKC 13: 93). Since absolute negation has nothing to negate, through its act of negation, it manifests its power of absolute affirmation. Nishitani further explains:

> This power has its locus at the site indicated by the term "immediate" [*soku* 即], where absolute negation is none other than absolute affirmation. If we refer to the site indicated by the term "immediate" in the phrase "absolute nothingness is immediately absolute being" by the word "emptiness," this locus of emptiness is at the same time the locus of knowledge. Knowledge always implies negation or the freedom to negate because it is empty. At the same time, the site of emptiness is the place where all existence is allowed to exist or where all things manifest themselves as things that exist. In addition to being the place where all things exist, it is the place where we can perceive all things as existing. (NKC 13: 93)

Nishitani points to emptiness or absolute negation as the site where both "thought thinking itself" (*noesis noeseos*) and the being that is presupposed as the starting point of absolute knowledge can come into existence. The standpoint of *noesis noeseos* itself comes into existence in the field of emptiness and, moreover, possesses the possibility of returning to the site of emptiness. It can be said that the standpoint of empti-

ness which Nishitani arrived at in the final years of his life was reached by overcoming and absorbing Aristotle's notion of *noesis noeseos* via Hegel. Here the locus of emptiness is opened up as the site where "thought thinking itself," which is the final stage of knowledge's journey, can come into existence. The absolute negation that is emptiness is, to repeat, "the power to negate knowledge, thought, and logic while at the same time affirming knowledge, thought, and logic." For this reason, the whole range of the soul's activities—from feeling and perception to imagination and acts of reason—is grounded in emptiness. It also means that absolute negation is at work in acts of feeling and perception. As Nishitani has already pointed out in *Religion and Nothingness*, "All acts of consciousness are emptied from their very foundations" (NKC 10: 172; NISHITANI 1982, 153).

The starting point of Hegel's dialectic logic is the "self-identity" of the "thing itself," that is to say, "the form in which the thing itself is still undifferentiated from the 'principle' or concept it contains" (NKC 13: 54). This can be likened to the experience based on the power of sensation, "in which imagination and judgment are included in a 'seed-like' original nature" or a primal "reality of the experience of sensation" (NKC 13: 153; NISHITANI 1999, 212) described in "Emptiness and Immediacy." The standpoint of *noesis noeseos* is severed from sensation, which is the basis of relative knowledge, and, turning its back on knowledge based on sensation, seeks to turn toward active reason. In contrast, as he suggested in "*Prajñā* and Reason," Nishitani does not seek to deepen his understanding of things through "knowledge" or "academic discipline" but attempts to inquire into the truth by "directly knowing a given fact as a given fact" or to "deepen the direct perception itself." That is to say, he seeks to deepen the experience of direct perception by going back to the very source of sensation. If emptiness is absolute negation, it is working, for the time being, at the level of self-identity that is the primal form of logos. That is to say, it is working at the level of direct perception in which a thing is grasped by means of image based on *sensus communis*. The standpoint of *noesis noeseos* emphasizes and carries through to its logical conclusion the ability of the "knowledge" that absolute negation possesses to develop itself. If however, from the viewpoint of the "freedom" that absolute negation possesses, it is necessary to break

away from the level of image and proceed to "knowledge," it must mean that this standpoint is premised on the notion that "the true nature (of knowledge) is 'knowledge'." If one completely realizes the freedom to act without constraints, there is no need to proceed towards "knowledge." Therefore, concerning this position, Nishitani indicates the need to take one further step from the "thought thinking itself" (knowing knowing itself) to the negation of the standpoint of knowing, i.e., to "knowing of non-knowing" (*muchi no chi* 無知の知).[4] Nishitani entrusts himself to the negative tendency already working at the level of this primal experience and presses on to the "thing" itself.

What, then, does it mean to entrust oneself to the negative tendency manifested at the level of image? Nishitani hardly develops his thoughts on this point, but I believe it can be described as follows: It is to awaken to the fact that the world of circuminsessional relationship (*egoteki sekai* 回互的世界) that comes into existence through images, i.e., the world constituted by the network of images, contains within itself an absolute contradiction—the contradiction between absolute oneness and absolute multiplicity. It means to hear and awaken to the self-confession of absolute negation arising from the "Dharma-realm in which things are unobstructed with each other" itself, wherein all attachment to the world of circuminsessional relations constituted by the network of images has disappeared. This is nothing other than the standpoint of the self-overcoming realization of the Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other. The world of the Dharma-realm in which all things interpenetrate each other is a sequence of mute and absurd images in which no order can be found. They freely create a series of images to express themselves and may even develop into poetry. It is impossible to ask for a reason or "meaning" there. Is not the "setting in motion of elemental imagination" something natural and free like this? In "Emptiness and Immediacy," Nishitani, while using Aristotle's theory of *sensus communis*, goes beyond it to the standpoint of emptiness based on absolute negation. In this way, he takes the first steps in creating his distinctive Buddhist theory of imagination.

4. Cf. "*Prajñā* and Reason," 85 (NKC 13).

References

Abbreviation

NKC *Nishitani Keiji chosakushū* 西谷啓治著作集 [Collected Writings of Nishitani Keiji]. Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治, 26 vols. Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1986–1995.

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Letting Go of God for Nothing

Ueda Shizuteru's Non-Mysticism and the Question of Ethics in Zen Buddhism

Bret W. Davis

> The highest and final letting go, of which humans are capable, is letting go of God for the sake of God.
>
> —Meister Eckhart (Eckhart 1963, 214)[1]
>
> If you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha.
>
> —Linji (Iriya 1989, 96–97)
>
> Shed deluded passions, and empty yourself also of thoughts of holiness. There is no need to linger where the Buddha is; and pass quickly over where the Buddha is not.
>
> —Kuoan, *The Ten Ox Pictures* (Akizuki 1989, 101)[2]
>
> Do not dwell in dualism.... No sooner do we have "right" and "wrong" than the mind is lost in confusion.... In the ultimate state, the farthest extreme, there are no fixed rules.
>
> —Sengcan, *Record of Trust in the Mind* (Akizuki 1991, 40, 71)

Ueda Shizuteru (1926–), the central contemporary figure in the Kyoto School tradition of Japanese philosophy, is best known for his

1. Unless other translations are cited, all translations in this paper from German, Japanese, and Chinese are my own.

2. These are the opening lines of Kuoan (Kakuan)'s comments on the eighth picture, the empty circle. Akizuki refers us to an earlier, almost identical saying by Zhaozhou (Jōshū): "Don't dwell where the Buddha is, and run quickly past where the Buddha is not."

original interpretive developments of the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), of the radical mystical thought of Meister Eckhart, and of what he calls the thoroughgoing "non-mysticism" of Zen Buddhism.[3] His interpretations of Eckhart and Zen, and specifically his thought of non-mysticism, will be the topic of this paper.[4]

What Ueda means by non-mysticism (*Nicht-Mystik* or *hi-shinpishugi* 非神秘主義) is not a simple rejection of, but rather a movement *through and out of* mysticism. It is both a fulfillment of the genuine thrust of mysticism and a breakthrough beyond mystical union. I have suggested that this dynamic movement through and out of mysticism may be more appropriately referred to as "*de*-mysticism" (*Ent-Mystik* or *datsu-shinpishugi* 脱神秘主義), and in this paper I will use this term interchangeably with "non-mysticism."[5] Non- or de-mysticism involves a double negation, a release from the ego and then from God. God is let go of for

3. In 2001–2003 Ueda published a revised and thematically rearranged edition of his Japanese works as *Ueda Shizuteru shū* 上田閑照集 [Ueda Shizuteru Collection, hereafter USS] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten). For an illuminating review article, see James W. Heisig, "Approaching the Ueda Shizuteru collection," *Eastern Buddhist* 37: 254–74 (2005). Also see the first monograph to appear on Ueda's thought, Steffen Döll's *Wozu also suchen? Zur Einführung in das Denken von Ueda Shizuteru* (Munich: Iudicium, 2005). Both contain useful bibliographies of Ueda's works (the latter includes works in Japanese as well as in Western languages).

4. Ueda's first extensive treatment of Eckhart and Zen can be found in the final chapter of his German dissertation, UEDA 1965, 145–169. His Japanese texts on this topic have now been collected in volume eight of *Ueda Shizuteru shū*, which is entitled *Hishinpishugi: Ekkuharuto to zen* 非神秘主義——エックハルトと禅 [Non-Mysticism: Eckhart and Zen]. In the afterword to this volume Ueda tells us that although he initially coined the German term "Nicht-Mystik" in order to distinguish Zen from Eckhart's "Mystik," he later came to apply the new term to the most radical element in Eckhart's thought as well (USS 8: 330). As we shall see, however, Zen remains for him the paradigmatic form of non-mysticism.

5. In a conversation at his home in July of 2006, Professor Ueda agreed with my preference for this way of putting it. I now think that the manifold senses of the German prefix *Ent-* may be particularly appropriate here, since they can signify an actualization and development of a potential (as in *entflammen* and *entwickeln*), as well as an undoing and removal of a burden (as in *entfesseln*, *entladen* and *entgiften*). An *Ent-Mystik* could thus be understood both, on the one hand, as a *commencement and development of* mysticism, and, on the other, as a *shedding of and release from* mysticism.

the sake of nothing, that is, for an experience of absolute nothingness, which in turn returns us to a direct engagement in the here and now of everyday activity.

The aim of the first half of this paper will be to explicate and elaborate on Ueda's account of this dynamic movement of non- or de-mysticism. In doing so, I will not only refer specifically to Ueda's works, but will also look through the lens of his thought at the writings of Eckhart and Zen. In the second half of this paper, I will raise, and attempt to respond to, what I see as potentially the most vexing question for this philosophy of radical reaffirmation of the here and now: When one breaks through the transcendent being of God to an absolute nothingness, to an open expanse wherein all things can manifest themselves in the immediacy of their suchness, what principle is left for distinguishing right from wrong or good from evil? If God, as a transcendent foundation of values, is let go of for the sake of an enveloping or pervasive "nothing," what principle grounds or at least guides our ethical decisions?

Non-mysticism as a movement of de-mysticism

Before looking at how Ueda develops his thought of non-mysticism through his interpretations of Eckhart and Zen, let me begin with a schematic overview of the idea. Non-mysticism or de-mysticism is not a static state of being, but rather a movement through negation to affirmation, then on to a second negation, and finally back to a radical reaffirmation. It is thus a movement made up of the following four moments:

1. An ecstatic transcendence of the ego;
2. A mystical union with God or the One;
3. An ecstatic breakthrough beyond God or the One into an absolute nothingness;
4. A return to an ecstatic/instatic engagement in the here and now.[6]

6. The exact formulation of this four-part schema reflects my interpretation; however, on the occasion of a presentation of an earlier Japanese version of this paper to

Despite this analysis into four apparently discrete moments, these ideally make up a single fluid movement from one to four. Yet what Ueda calls "mysticism," in the narrow sense, stops short at the second moment. In other words, mysticism consists of a conjunction of the first and second moments only. What is distinctive of non-mysticism is the addition to these first two moments of the third and fourth moments.

The first and third moments of this complete movement of non-mysticism together make up a double negation; one must let go not only of habitual identification with the self-encapsulated ego, but also of the mystical experience of union with the divine. The first moment, the transcendence of the ego, is perhaps common to all forms of religion. The second moment, the experience of union with God, is often considered to be the hallmark of mystical experience. The third moment, the breakthrough beyond mystical union to an absolute nothingness, can be understood as a self-overcoming of mysticism. And the fourth moment, the return to an ecstatic/instatic activity in the midst of the everyday world, completes this self-overcoming process of de-mysticism.

We can understand this entire movement of non-mysticism in terms of a series of "ecstasies." Ecstasy—in the strict sense of *ek-stasis*, literally a "standing outside oneself," which implies, as the Japanese term *datsuji* 脱自 literally means, a "shedding of the [ego] self"—is an initial prerequisite for the mystical union. Yet, as mysticism intensifies towards de-mysticism, beyond this initial *ekstasis*, beyond this letting go of the ego for the sake of union with God, we find a second *ekstasis*, a letting go of God for the sake of nothing, that is, for the sake of an experience of "absolute nothingness." This absolute nothingness is not an apophatic indicator of an ineffably transcendent Godhead beyond God; it is not a negative theological sign for something "wholly Other" that lies "beyond Being." Rather, Ueda understands absolute nothingness

the Kyoto Philosophy Research Group in October of 2003, Professor Ueda made no objections to it, and indeed he expressed a general appreciation for my interpretive summary of his conception of non-mysticism. While I have taken some further liberties of interpretation and elaboration in the present paper, I have attempted throughout to remain faithful to the gist of his thought.

dynamically as "the activity of emptying out" (*kūkai no hataraki* 空開の働き), that is, as the ecstatic movement of de-mysticism itself. He also understands absolute nothingness *topologically* as the "open expanse" (*kokū* 虚空) wherein the true self is realized in and as an ecstatic engagement with the everyday world. The true self is realized as a "self that is not a self" (*jiko narazaru jiko* 自己ならざる自己) in the sense that it is itself only in not being itself; that is to say, the true self realizes itself as an "*ekstasis/instasis*," a *standing outside* of itself and *into* a nondual engagement with other persons, things, and events.[7] In the process of non-mysticism, not only the ego, but God or Buddha too must be negated, let go of, or, in Dōgen's terms, "dropped off." Thus Ueda, following his teacher Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990), speaks of Zen as a "mode of body-mind-dropped-off mysticism" (*shinpishugi no shinjin-datsurakutai* 神秘主義の身心脱落態) (NKC 7: 7).[8] The genuine thrust of mysticism finds fulfillment in its own self-abnegation. The movement of this thrust through and beyond mysticism is what is meant by non-mysticism or de-mysticism.

In Ueda's own words:

> If we provisionally divide the entire dynamic of "from union to *ekstasis*" into two segments, referring to the moment of union with the usual term mysticism, and naming the moment of *ekstasis* in particular as non-mysticism, then my intent is to attempt to clarify the relation and connection between these aspects…. I regard true mysticism as the entire movement "from union to *ekstasis*," that is to say, the entire movement "from mysticism to non-mysticism," hence up to the point of including the moment of "to non-mysticism." In fact, in this case the expression mysticism ceases to be fitting; it is no longer appropriate. True mysticism is not mysticism. Rather, it is appropriate to call it non-mysticism. With mysticism as a springboard, to go beyond and shed mysticism by means of the ecstatic thrust inherent

7. On the notion of the "self that is not a self," see USS 6: 230–44, and USS 10: 23–24 and throughout.

8. The work cited here, Nishitani's 1948 book on Meister Eckhart, *Kami to zettaimu* 神と絶対無 [God and Absolute Nothingness], exerted a significant influence on Ueda's interest in and interpretation of Eckhart.

> in mysticism itself, this is what we can speak of as the mode of body-mind-dropped-off mysticism. (USS 8: 38)

The non-mysticism of meister eckhart

Ueda defines the core of "mysticism" as the *unio mystica*, the experience of union with God (USS 8: 304). It should be noted in passing that other religious experiences, such as that of a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* or of a loving interpersonal rapture, so long as they remain dualistic, would be considered not (yet) perfectly mystical. For Ueda, such experiences of theophany or communion, however extraordinary, are still on the way to a nondual union with the divine.

In his interpretation of Meister Eckhart, Ueda subordinates the "birth motif" to the "breakthrough motif." In the first, a union with God is brought about by way of the birth of Christ in the soul. In complete passivity, one receives the Son of God in and as one's own soul. In the words of Paul, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). Since the Son is in essence one with the Father, human persons thus become united with the Person of God.

The breakthrough motif is more radical still, demanding as it does an *ekstasis* not only of the soul, but also of the Person of God as the transcendent Creator. Here Eckhart speaks of "letting go of God for the sake of God."[9] For example:

> Therefore I pray to God that he may make me free of "God," for my real being is above God if we take God to be the beginning of created things.… [In] the breaking-through… I come to be free of my will and of God's will and of all his works and of God himself. (Eckhart 1963, 308; translation by Colledge and McGinn from Eckhart 1981, 202–3)

Eckhart goes on to say that "in this breaking-through I receive that

9. In addition to the first epigraph to this paper, see also Bernard McGinn, who quotes Eckhart as writing that "the greatest honor the soul can pay to God [is] to leave God to himself and to be free of him" (McGinn 2001, 145).

God and I are one." But the God that is united with here is no longer the divine Person; it is rather the "Godhead" (*gotheit*) as the impersonal (trans- or prepersonal) essence of divinity. Moreover, elsewhere Eckhart makes clear that, beyond the passive reception of the birth of the Son in the soul, what he calls the "little spark" in the soul actively seeks to unite with the transpersonal Godhead beyond the Trinity, with the divine ground (*grunt*) beyond or before any personification and indeed any determination whatsoever of "God." Eckhart's radical mysticism aims not at a communion with an interpersonal Other, for "the spark in the soul… wants nothing but God, naked, just as He is…. [It] wants to get into… its simple ground, into the silent desert into which no distinction ever gazed, of Father, Son, or Holy Ghost" (ECKHART 1963, 316). Eckhart indeed sometimes speaks of this "silent desert" of the Godhead in apophatic terms as a "nothingness" (*niht*).[10]

Furthermore, Eckhart does not stop at a contemplative absorption in a mystical nothingness. In his account of the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38–42), Eckhart reverses the traditional interpretation—which uses the story to assert the preeminence of the *vita contemplativa* of Mary over the *vita activa* of Martha—to claim that Martha's activity, "busy about many things," is in fact a profounder expression of union with God than the passivity of Mary, who remains seated at Jesus' feet (ECKHART 1963, 280ff). Martha's business expresses the "pure activity" (*lūter würken*) which comes directly out of God (ECKHART 1963, 306). More radically put, the life of this pure activity might be said to arise "without why" out of the silent desert of absolute nothingness.

If one were to ask Martha why she lives a life of good works, the answer could no longer refer to any outside reason or ground, not "for the sake of God" nor "for the sake of the moral law" and certainly not "for

10. In general, Eckhart speaks of "nothingness" in two distinct senses: that of creatures insofar as they are nothing without their Creator; and that of God or the Godhead insofar as He or It transcends all determinations of being. See ECKHART 1963, 328ff. and ECKHART 1978, 122ff. McGinn writes in this regard: "Poised between two forms of nothingness, the *nihil* by way of eminence that is God, and the *nihil* that marks the defect of creatures, Eckhart's mystical way will be an invitation to the soul to give up the nothingness of its created self in order to become the divine Nothing that is also all things" (MCGINN 2001, 105).

the sake of salvation." Eckhart writes: "If anyone were to ask a truthful man who works out of his own ground: 'Why are you performing your works?' and if he were to give a straight answer, he would say nothing else than: 'I work, therefore I work'" (Eckhart 1958, 92). When one lives from out of the abyssal *grunt* of indistinction, one no longer seeks an external reason for one's works, for now "life lives out of its own ground and springs from its own source" (Eckhart 1958, 92). For this life of ecstatic engagement, having let go of the subjective inside, there can no longer be, nor is there any need for, an external objective answer to the question "why." The life of blessedness and justice would be, at bottom, like Angelus Silesius's rose, without why.[11]

The non-mysticism of zen

Ueda finds profound resonances between Eckhart's breakthrough beyond the *unio mystica* to an absolute nothingness and back into a pure activity without why (i.e., without explanatory reference to a transcendent ground) and the path of Zen Buddhism.[12] As is well known, Zen discourages reliance on an "Other-power" (*tariki* 他力); indeed, insofar as one is inclined to cling to the Buddha as a transcendent Other, one must "kill the Buddha" along with all other attachments and projections of the ego.[13] Rather than calling on an Other-power, Zen calls for Bodhidharma's "direct pointing to the human mind, seeing into one's true nature and becoming a Buddha." Moreover, as Hakuin reminds us in his *Zazen wasan* 坐禅和讃 [Song of Zazen], this "Buddha-nature" or

11. This paragraph is adapted from a portion of "Releasement to and from God's Will: Excursus on Meister Eckhart after Heidegger," chapter six of my *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit* (Davis 2007, 135–36).

12. For a summary account in English, see Ueda 1982, 158–59.

13. Not only does Linji famously state, "If you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha," but he also most strikingly expresses the Zen negation of dualistic otherworldly salvation as follows: "If you love what is holy and hate what is ordinary, you float and sink in the sea of birth and death." Or again: "You seek the Buddha and you seek the Dharma. You seek liberation; you seek to leave the triple world. You fools, where do you want to go when you leave the triple world?" (Iriya 1989, 52, 101); these are modified from the translations in Cleary 1999, 21, 33–34.

"self-nature" (*jishō* 自性) is in truth "no-nature" (*mushō* 無性); it is not the essence of a substantial being but rather the activity of a spontaneous freedom and a compassionate openness. The Buddha-mind is in truth "no-mind" (*mushin* 無心), which refers not to a meditative absorption in Nothingness, but rather to the sincere "everyday mind" (*byōjōshin* 平常心) of an ecstatically intimate engagement in the activity of the here and now, whether it be washing your bowls, carrying firewood, or carrying a woman across a stream.

This everyday no-mind of total engagement in the here and now is both the nearest thing to and the farthest thing from our usual mental state of being. The "distinguishing feature of Buddhism," writes Nishitani, "consists in its being a religion of the absolute near side [*zettaiteki shigan* 絶対的此岸]." But because this absolute near-side, like Meister Eckhart's *Gottheit*, lies "nearer to the self than the self is to itself," it is necessary to speak of it as a "transcendent near-side" (NKC 10: 112, 102; NISHITANI 1982, 99, 90).[14] A "trans-descendence" to this absolute near side can be made only by way of radically "stepping back" (*taiho* 退歩) through a thoroughgoing process of negation or letting go.

This theme of "letting go" is pervasive in Zen. Even the thought (conceit) of having let everything go is to be let go of:

> Yanyang (Gonyō) asked Zhaozhou (Jōshū): How about when one arrives carrying not a single thing [i.e., having let go of all attachments]? Zhaozhou (Jōshū) responded: Cast that down [i.e., let go of your attachment to the idea of having let go of all attachments]! (YASUTANI 1973, 321)

Dōgen, who also uses the expression "casting down the body-mind" (*shinjin-hōge* 身心放下), most famously speaks of the liberating experience of letting go in terms of a "dropping off the body-mind" (*shinjin-datsuraku* 身心脱落).[15] This casting off is not undertaken for the sake of taking

14. On "trans-descendence" in Nishitani's philosophy of Zen, see my "The Step Back Through Nihilism: The Radical Orientation of Nishitani Keiji's Philosophy of Zen," *Synthesis Philosophica* 37: 139–59 (2004).

15. In the *Hōkyōki* 寶慶記 [Record of Treasury Salutations] Dōgen recounts his enlightenment experience upon hearing Rujing exclaim, "In *zazen* one should straightaway drop off the body-mind!" Dōgen frequently uses this key expression

leave of psycho-physical existence, but rather so that free and unattached use can be made of "the body-mind dropped off" (*datsuraku-shinjin* 脱落身心). In Dōgen's double formulation, "dropping off the body-mind; the body-mind dropped off," we find succinctly expressed the circular movement of non-mysticism whereby everyday human existence is radically negated (reifications and attachments dropped off) and then reaffirmed (freely and compassionately picked up again).

This movement of negation/reaffirmation is also succinctly formulated in the Heart Sūtra's well-known lines, "form is emptiness; emptiness is form." Emptiness negates attachment to a reification of forms, but is itself empty of independent substantiality. Although it is the identical essence to which all phenomena can be reduced, it is essentially nothing other than the interdependent origination of singular phenomenal events. Hence, as emptiness or absolute nothingness, the One—or rather, as Nishitani puts it, "the None beyond the One" (NKC 11: 243)—does not dissolve but rather enables the distinct presencing of the Many.

> A monk asked Zhaozhou (Jōshū), "All things are returned to the One; but where does the One return to?" Zhaozhou said, "When I was in Qingzhou (Seishū) I made a hempen shirt. It weighed seven pounds." (*Hekiganroku* 碧巌錄 [Blue Cliff Record] Case 45; IRIYA 1992, 2: 141)

Following Ueda, we can interpret this dialogue as follows. The One is here the *unio mystica*, the Absolute which embraces the self and all things. In the parlance of Zen, this is expressed as "Heaven and earth and I are of the same root; all things and I are of one body." But while this mystical absorption may be a necessary moment, it becomes a trap if one sets up a dwelling there. Nanquan (Nansen)'s response to a monk's reiteration of the above statement was to point to a flower and say: "People these days see this flower as though in a dream" (*Hekiganroku* Case 40; IRIYA 1992, 2: 99–100).[16] To see a flower such as it presents

(for example in the *Genjōkōan* 現成公案 [The Presencing of Truth]), often pairing it with the inverse formulation, "the body-mind dropped off."

16. See also Nishitani's reflections on this kōan in NKC 13: 31ff.

itself, not as an object standing over against my ego, and not as a homogeneous part of the Self/Buddha, one must pass through and wake up from the profound yet precarious dream of the One. Ueda writes:

> "All things are returned to the One." To begin with, for Zen too, all is One; and it is necessary to directly stand at this standpoint of the "One" where all things lose their differences and distinctions and the "equality of one taste" is thoroughly apprehended. This experience is indispensable. However, Zen is found neither in the view that all things return to the One nor in the direct experience of that One. If we simply extract this moment, what we have is rather… one more common example of a standpoint of mysticism. Going beyond the standpoint of this provisional precondition, only when it is asked "Where does the One return to?" does a world open up wherein Zen can exhibit its original element…. [According to Zen] the truth of the "One" is "None and yet Many" [*mu ni shite ta* 無にして多]. Here, the Many is the variety of the One, while the One is the oneness [*ichinyo* 一如] of the Many; and this dynamic relation itself is the concrete body of the None [i.e., of absolute nothingness]. (USS 8: 5–7)

Ueda is fond of making the seemingly abstract philosophy of this dynamic non-mysticism concrete by way of commenting on the Zen classic, *The Ten Ox Pictures*.[17] In the first six pictures, a boy searches for an ox (his true self), finds its traces, sees it directly, catches and tames it, leads and then rides it home. The seventh picture can be understood as representing both the peaceful power and the potential danger of the mystical union. Here the boy, having merged with and finally "forgotten" the ox (i.e., having overcome the duality between his ego and his true self), sits at peace with himSelf, or, as some versions have it, sings his praises to the moon (a traditional metaphor for enlightenment). He has realized his enlightened Buddha-Self. But the eighth picture, the empty circle, which Ueda understands as the experience of the place

17. See Ueda's essay in Ueda Shizuteru and Yanagida Seizan's 1992, *Jūgyūzu: Jiko no genshōgaku* 十牛図——自己の現象学 [The Ten Ox Pictures: A Phenomenology of the Self] (Tokyo: Chikuma), as well as his 2003 *Jūgyūzu o yomu* 十牛図を読む [Reading the Ten Ox Pictures] (Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku). Both of these texts are included in volume six of USS.

of absolute nothingness, radically breaks through the *unio mystica* and indeed through every possible attachment, every possible reification, every possible dwelling in sanctimonious Self-satisfaction (USS 6: 225ff).

Ueda then reads the last three pictures as a dynamic set: the empty circle of the eighth picture as the absolutely denuding experience of emptiness; the river and tree of the ninth picture as the egoless suchness of natural phenomena; and the sage returning to the marketplace and greeting a boy of the tenth picture as the compassionately engaged interpersonal encounter (USS 6: 208, 263). While the first seven pictures recount the necessary path toward ecstatic mysticism or self-realization, it is the "forgetting the self" (Dōgen) in the leap into a circling between the last three pictures that, for Ueda, portrays the ultimate dynamic of Zen's de-mysticism.

Eckhart's residual mysticism and zen's thoroughgoing non-mysticism

At the beginning and again near the end of his *Non-Mysticism: Eckhart and Zen*, Ueda tells us that he was inspired by the brief comments made by Rudolf Otto on Eckhart and Zen in an appendix to *Mysticism East and West* (USS 8: 1–2 and 322ff).[18] In reference to a presentation of *The Ten Ox Pictures* by D.T. Suzuki, Otto affirms that "we [Westerners] can at best only gain access to the strange world of experience in [this] mysticism of an entirely peculiar character by starting out from Eckhart, and only from a few of his rarest and deepest moments" (Otto 1971, 269).

The main focus of Otto's comparative study is the Christian mysticism of Meister Eckhart and the Advaita Vedānta of Śankara. Although in the first part of his book he explores a number of profound similarities between these two, when, in the latter part of his book, he investigates

18. Ueda's reference is to the third edition of Otto's *West-östliche Mystik* (Otto 1971, 269–272; originally published in 1926). Unfortunately, the English edition of Otto's work, *Mysticism East and West*, translated by Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne (Otto 1960), does not contain this appendix.

their differences, Otto's preference for the ultimately world-reaffirming vitality of Eckhart's "dynamic mysticism," over against what he sees as the life-denying and static mysticism of Śankara, is clear. In a crucial passage Otto writes:

> The goal for Śankara is the stilling of all *karmāni*, all works, all activity of will: it is quietism, *tyāga*, a surrender of the will and of doing, an abandonment of good as of evil works, for both bind man to the world of wandering. The real Being does not work. It would be possible to find even in Eckhart the most astonishingly parallel passages and to make him also into a quietist, and we ourselves have done it above. It would then be possible to find counter-passages, which show him to be the most zealous actualist. He could be drawn in this way into the most hopeless contradictions, but there would be no realization of the profound unity of his fundamental intuition. In some ways, this intuition reminds one of the paradoxical Mahāyāna doctrine: "Nirvāna is samsāra." Eckhart's position is neither mystical quietism nor secular activity, but an identity of the deepest unity and the most vivid multiplicity, and therefore of the most profound quiet and the most vital motion.... Both masters seek and behold unity and the Eternal One in contrast to multiplicity, but with this difference: the relationship of the One to the many is for Śankara one of strict exclusion, but for Eckhart one of the most live polarity. Śankara—in his *parā vidyā*—is a strict monist, but not like Eckhart, a philosopher of identity, as regards the One and the many. (OTTO 1960, 191–92)[19]

Eckhart's paradoxical coaffirmations of the One and the Many, and of profound stillness in the midst of vibrant activity, do indeed bear striking resemblances to the non-mysticism of Zen.

19. I will not attempt to examine here whether Otto does justice to Śankara, other than to note that, when discussing the source of the world of multiplicity in Advaita Vedānta, he tends to downplay the more world-affirmative connotations of *māyā* as "appearance" in the sense of the "divine play" (*līlā*) of Brahman's self-manifestation, and instead emphasizes the more world-negating connotations of "illusion" based on human ignorance (*avidyā*). For Otto's passing yet emphatic contrast of the dynamism of "the Taoist and Zen schools of China" along with Mahāyāna Buddhism in general to Śankara and "the massive substantiality of the Brahman idea," see OTTO 1960, 166–67.

But let us look further at Otto's account of the structure and orientation of Eckhart's thought. He explains the dynamism in Eckhart's mysticism along the same lines as what Bernard McGinn has more recently called the "metaphysics of flow," made up of a circular movement between a "flowing out" (*exitus*, *effluxus*, *uzvliezen*) from the indistinct Godhead and a "flowing back" (*reditus*, *refluxus*, *inganc*) to this ineffable Source (McGinn 2001; Eckhart 1981, 30–31). In this regard Otto writes:

> God is, in Himself, tremendous life movement. Out of undifferentiated unity He enters into the multiplicity of personal life and persons, in whom the world and therewith the multiplicity of the world is contained. Out of this He returns, back into the eternal original unity. "The river flows into itself." But it is not an error to be corrected by Him, that He is eternally going out from and entering "into" Himself; it is a fact that has meaning and value—as the expression of life manifesting its potentiality and fullness. The issuing forth becomes itself the goal again of that process enriched by the course of its circuit. (Otto 1960, 188)

One might think that this "metaphysics of flow" bears striking resemblances to the circulation found in Zen's path of non-mysticism. And yet there remains, I think, a crucial difference in primary and ultimate orientation.

Despite the world-affirming character of Eckhart's thought, his metaphysics of flow begins and ends with the Godhead as a trans-worldly source and eschatological end of the created world.[20] The path of Zen, on the other hand, begins and ends with the everyday world. Life in the midst of the nondual multiplicity of the world is affirmatively engaged in by way of passing through and beyond the One, as opposed to the world being affirmed as an outflow of and pathway back to the Godhead. Whereas Eckhart's metaphysics of flow begins and ends with the

20. Otto admits that, despite the fact that "the whole idea of a 'beatific vision' which was the eschatological ideal of his time—of Thomas and Dante—is thoroughly alien to him," nevertheless, "Of course [Eckhart] would agree that what is begun here will later be fulfilled," in other words, that there is "the difference between complete actuality there and its partial achievement here" (Otto 1960, 230).

Godhead beyond God in Heaven, Zen's non-mysticism begins and ends here on earth, with the oak tree in the garden, with three pounds of flax in our hands, or even with a shit-stick lying at our feet.

According to Ueda, Eckhart "comes to point to almost the same world as Zen" when, beyond the "death/rebirth" found in dying to the self for the sake of being reborn in the life of God, he intimates a thoroughgoing "great death" and a rebirth from out of an absolute nothingness (USS 6: 303). But after exploring their profound resonances, Ueda goes on to mark a number of critical distinctions between Eckhart and Zen, distinctions which imply that the latter offers in the end a more thoroughgoing path of non-mysticism.

To begin with, Eckhart's sole concern is said to be with the soul's relation to God, and he pays little attention to the world of nature (USS 8: 151), whereas, for Zen, natural phenomena express the very concrescence of the non-egoity of the true self (USS 8: 77). To be sure, Eckhart does not only denigrate "creatures" as nothing (in the negative sense of a privation of being) on their own, but also talks of learning to see all things "in God" (ECKHART 1963, 89–90). But unlike Zen he does not let go of God so as to simply affirm the suchness of natural phenomena, that is, things such as they present themselves as they are within nothing but the empty expanse of absolute nothingness. Quoting Eckhart as saying: "To one who looks at a stick in the divine light, the stick looks like an angel," Ueda writes: "Eckhart's affirmation of the stick is not an affirmation of the stick as stick, but of the stick as an angel in divine light. Zen Buddhism speaks more straightforwardly: 'Mountain as mountain, water as water'…" (UEDA 1982, 160).

Moreover, for Eckhart, the human interpersonal relation remains mediated by the soul's relation to God, whereas, for Zen, the place of interpersonal betweenness is ultimately nothing but the open expanse of the empty circle. Ueda illustrates this point by way of comparing two pictures: on the one hand, the tenth of the ox pictures, which shows the old recluse returning to the town and greeting a young boy within nothing but the empty circle; and, on the other hand, a painting of the Mary and Martha story, which shows Martha working in the kitchen in the foreground, and Mary kneeling before Jesus in the background. Even as Martha turns from contemplation (mysticism) to action (non-

mysticism), the significance of her activity appears to remain anchored by this withdrawing yet still present reference to transcendence (USS 8: 133–5; see also UEDA 1965, 146ff).

In the final analysis, Ueda concludes, Eckhart's "nothingness" remains a negative theological sign pointing towards an inexpressibly higher Being: "In the case of Eckhart, because of the excellence of the suprabeing (*Überwesen*) of God's being, it is called nothingness" (USS 6: 304–5). When all is said and done, Eckhart's nothingness of the absolute (*zettai no mu* 絶対の無) is an adjective modifying a substance. In contrast, Zen's absolute nothingness (*zettai mu* 絶対無) is a verb referring to "the activity of emptying out" (*kūkai no hataraki*) (USS 8: 147; see also UEDA 1965, 165). In short, despite Eckhart's most radical moments of breaking through the strictures of mysticism into the freedom of non-mysticism, Ueda finds metaphysical residues in his thought which impede the realization of the suchness of things in absolute nothingness, and which inhibit the free and compassionate life without (the question) why.

Only in Zen does Ueda find the nothing pushed through to a transcendence of transcendence, a negation of negation that enables a profound and intimate reaffirmation of the everyday. He writes:

> The negation of negation in Zen Buddhism is thus the "beyond negation" and, "at one with this," a sheer affirmation, that is, an utter affirmation of the everyday as such. It is a matter of the unity of infinite negation and utter affirmation; the unity of the "thither of the thither [*jenseits des Jenseits*]" and the "hither of the hither [*diesseits des Diesseits*]." (UEDA 1965, 152)

Whereas in "Eckhart's thought it is the category of 'substance' that is, in the last analysis, definitive," Zen's absolute nothingness "dissolves substance-thinking."

> Put in philosophical terms, [absolute nothingness] refers to the negation of negation, which entails a pure movement in two directions at the same time: (1) the negation of negation in the sense of a further denial of negation that does not come back around to affirmation but opens up into an endlessly open nothingness; and (2) the negation of negation in the sense of a return to affirmation without any trace of mediation. (UEDA 1982, 160–61)

The question of ethics

According to Ueda, as we have seen, despite all its heretical radicality Eckhart's thought still harbors orthodox residues of divine transcendence and substantiality. But let us now ask: What is at stake in either, on the one hand, leaving a trace of transcendence in the picture, or, on the other hand, wiping away all such traces? To be sure, if it is a question of the reaffirmation of the here and now, a question of the immediacy of engagement with phenomena such as they are, then we may indeed conclude that Zen offers a more thoroughgoing path of non-mysticism. But what if it is a question of ethics? Does ethics require at least a background trace of substantial transcendence?

The problem for Zen would apparently be opposite of that for Advaita Vedānta. According to Otto, Śankara's mysticism is ethically deficient, not because it radically affirms life in this world, but rather because it totally negates it. Śankara's mysticism is too otherworldly; it abandons not only bad action, but all action. "The Mukta, the redeemed, who has attained *ekatā* or unity with the eternal Brahman, is removed from all works, whether good or evil"; whereas Eckhart's "wonderfully liberating ethic develops with greater strength from the ground of his… mysticism of the surrender of the personal will to the active and eternal will" (Otto 1960, 225). According to Otto's interpretation at least, Eckhart's mysticism would then not completely let go of the divine Will of God as a referential ground for ethical activity.

According to divine law ethics, an action is good insofar as it accords with God's Will. This notion of God's Will not only preserves transcendence, it also connects it with immanence. And precisely here arises our question for Zen's non-mysticism: Does ethics require such an otherworldly reference? The answer might appear to be yes. After all, do not ethical judgments and decisions depend on making distinctions between good and evil; and do not such distinctions require a transcendent anchor, such as God as the source and measure of all goodness, or the Idea of Justice as the standard by which just and unjust actions are judged? It has been suggested that many Westerners might see emptiness (*śūnyatā*) or absolute nothingness as "ill-suited as a basis for a system of ethics. It does not offer a God or a divine Will that reveals the

good, gives laws, directs events, or persuades people in the direction of greater value" (Ives 1992, 39). Having let go of God and His Will for the sake of absolute nothingness, and for the sake of a radical affirmation of the suchness of "all beings whatsoever" (USS 8: 152), does the nonmysticism of Zen then not leave any grounds for making fundamental distinctions between good and evil?

We may learn to let go of attachment to the beauty of roses and of hate toward the repulsiveness of maggots, but would it not be clearly perverse to no longer evaluatively discriminate between beautiful natural scenery and a malicious scene of torture? From the standpoint of Zen, one could respond here that a metaphysical reification of Emptiness as a static One that simply obliterates the possibility of making evaluative distinctions is a case of what is called "bad equality" (*aku-byōdō* 悪平等). Wallowing in a disengaged affirmation of the suchness of all phenomena without distinction, including the scene of torture, would be just as pernicious a misunderstanding of emptiness as is the "emptiness sickness" (*kūbyō* 空病) that frees one from a reification of beings only to plunge one into a nihilistic annihilationism.

According to the basic teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism, a bodhisattva must not abide in nirvāna (emptiness), or rather, true nirvāna must be found in the midst of samsāra (interdependent origination). Zen follows Nāgārjuna in thinking that the ultimate truth (*paramārtha satya*) is but the clear recognition of, and unattached compassionate engagement with, conventional truth (*samvrti satya*) understood as conventional truth. While good and evil, right and wrong, may ultimately be "empty" (i.e., interdependent and conditional) distinctions, they are nevertheless conventionally very real and very important.

Masao Abe makes this point by playing on Weixin's famous three stages of insight, where a mountain is first seen as a mountain (i.e., as a conceptual reification), then not as a mountain (i.e., as empty of independent substantiality), then really as a mountain (i.e., in the suchness of its interdependent origination). In terms of ethical distinctions, Abe reformulates this to read:

> Before Buddhist practice, I thought "good is good, evil is evil." When I had an insight into Buddhist truth, I realized "good is not good,

> evil is not evil." But now, awakening to true Emptiness I say, "good is really good; evil is really evil." (ABE 1995, 199)

The step from the first to the second stage does indeed entail a "thinking neither good nor evil," a suspension of all reified dualisms along with all "picking and choosing," for we discover that even our cherished ethical distinctions are habitually made from the standpoint of our egocentric (and ethnocentric) values. Nevertheless, in terms of the process of non-mysticism, while the breakthrough beyond the *unio mystica* (union with God as the Good) into the experience of absolute nothingness or emptiness may dissolve all reified distinctions, this breakthrough in turn returns us to the midst of everyday life. And everyday life certainly involves, once more, drawing distinctions and making ethical decisions.

Still, one may wonder, is an acceptance of the necessity of making ethical judgments as part and parcel of engaged living in a world of conventional truth all that Zen's non-mysticism has to offer ethics? For it seems that we are still left with the question: What principle would guide such "non-discriminating discrimination" (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu* 無分別の分別)? Good and evil are interdependent contraries (such that it does not make sense to absolutize either one), and their sense depends on any number of situational variables. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that there is a right and a wrong thing to do in many specific situations. The question is: How does one come to know what is right when and where?

A ZEN PATH OF VIRTUE ETHICS

It could be said that there is in the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition at least one cardinal rule to be followed in making ethical decisions, namely the first of the Four Great Vows: "However innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to liberate them all" (*shujō muhen seigando* 衆生無辺誓願度). Whether a particular act is good or not could be determined in terms of whether it helps or hinders the fulfillment of this vow.[21] Beyond

21. See Masao Abe's attempts to correlate this "horizontal dimension" of compassion and teleology with the "vertical dimension" of wisdom and enlightenment in "Ethics and Social Responsibility in Buddhism," in his *Zen and the Modern World*,

this general rule, however, I agree with a number of scholars that Buddhist ethics is best understood as a kind of "virtue ethics." I also think that this is how the relation between Ueda's non-mysticism and ethics is best understood. In order to make this point, it will be helpful to first review and comment on some highlights in the literature on ethics in (Zen) Buddhism.

According to Damien Keown, "the growing consensus among scholars is that Buddhist ethics bears a greater resemblance to virtue ethics than any other Western theory" (Keown 2005, 25).[22] Virtue ethics, as first developed in the West by Aristotle, focuses on developing the character of the moral agent through habituation, as opposed to developing intellectual formulas for decision-making based either on rational rules of categorical obligation (deontology) or on calculations of painful and pleasurable consequences (utilitarianism). According to virtue ethics, only a good person, equipped with a non-formalizable "practical wisdom" (*phronesis*), will be able to make good decisions in the concrete and complex situations of real life.

Although he does not employ the term, Christopher Ives implies that Zen is concerned with virtue ethics when he writes that "Zen promotes what might be called a 'foundational' ethic, for it concentrates on fundamental ways of being as opposed to principles of good and evil applied to extreme situations" (Ives 1992, 3). "The pivotal question," he later adds, "is that of what one should be, not what one should do" (Ives 1992, 109). The point here is certainly not that what we do is unimportant, but rather that our actions are fundamentally determined by our way of being. The primary purpose of Zen practice is thus not to learn to obey rules for action, but rather, in the words of a modern Zen master, "the perfection of character."[23] Robert Carter also agrees that we should understand Buddhist ethics in terms of virtue ethics, claiming

edited by Steven Heine (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 24–35.

22. Other noteworthy studies which compellingly interpret Buddhist ethics in terms of virtue ethics include Damien Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); Simon P. James, *Zen Buddhism and Environmental Ethics* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004); and Cooper and James 2005.

23. Attributed to Yamada Kōun by Robert Aitken in Aitken 1984, 155; cited in Carter 2001, 107.

that its central feature "is not prohibition, but transformation resulting in an incredibly strong compassionate identification with all other beings, and an intense desire to eliminate their suffering and to rejoice in their happiness." Ethical behavior in Buddhism is ideally "occasioned from the inside of a person, rather than the result of external attempts at prohibition and enforcement" (CARTER 2001, 84–85).

Recent Zen teachers in the West, such as Robert Aitken and Philip Kapleau, have agreed that, while the Buddhist precepts are necessary guidelines for as-yet-unenlightened practitioners, they "are not moral commandments handed down by an omniscient or divine being" (KAPLEAU 1980, 231–32; quoted in CARTER 2001, 107), but rather codifications of the spontaneous acts of enlightened persons. "Precepts are useful for the Zen student, who seeks to internalize them, to find their source in the mind, and to make morality altogether familiar" (AITKEN 1984, 156; quoted in CARTER 2001, 107). The person found at the end of this process, however, "doesn't imitate the precepts; they imitate him" (KAPLEAU 1980, 231–32; quoted in CARTER 2001, 107). This view has traditional moorings, notably in Dōgen's treatment of the famous lines of the *Dhammapada*, which he says are first of all understood as a normative *injunction*, "Do no evil; do good,"[24] but which he says should ultimately be reread as an actual *description* of enlightened acts, "The nonproduction of evil; the performance of good" (DŌGEN 1990, vol. 2: 230–46).[25]

We should not of course overlook the fact that there does also exist a more radically antinomian element in Mahāyāna Buddhism. While the second of the ten stages (*bhūmi*) of the *bodhisattva* is morality (*śīla*), the seventh is "skillful means" (*upāya-kauśalya*), which is often understood to allow and even require that a *bodhisattva* at this stage break the precepts whenever compassion (*karunā*) so demands. Indeed, "the doctrine of skillful means authorizes a *bodhisattva* to commit the 'Ten Bad Actions,' including killing, stealing and lying, in the service of com-

24. A recent translation of the whole verse from the Pali reads: "To shun evil; To do good; To purify one's heart; This is the teaching of all Buddhas." *The Dhammapada*, trans. Ananda Maitreya (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1995), 52.

25. For a clear and insightful commentary on this section of the *Shōbōgenzō*, see

passion." Still, we should bear in mind that "the *bodhisattva* violates the precepts if, and only if, he believes that such a violation will be justified by the suffering it alleviates" (Cooper and James 2005, 63–64) and that such transgressions are motivated by the virtue of compassion; it is for the sake of alleviating suffering that the legalism of the precepts is overridden, not for the sake of demonstrating a transcendence of good and evil altogether.[26]

Beyond good and evil, and back again

However, as we have seen, does not the path of Zen quite explicitly lead one beyond good and evil? If, in a sense, it does, it also entails that one must not abide there. Let us now consider this crucial issue a bit more carefully. It is first of all necessary to understand the sense in which clinging to distinctions of good and evil is thought to be problematic. Sengcan tells us that "the ultimate Way is without difficulty, it just eschews picking and choosing. Only refrain from clinging, desire and hatred, and it will become clear and bright" (Akizuki 1991, 8). And Huineng famously prods: "Without thinking of good, without thinking of evil… what is [your] original face?" (*Mumonkan* 無門関 [Gateless Barrier] Case 23; Nishimura 1994, 98). In order to realize the ultimate Way or to awaken to one's "original face," even one's cherished distinctions between good and evil must be let go, along with the ego that cherishes them. The zealous moralist who does not pass through this radical experience of letting go would remain driven by the three poisons of desirous attachment to whatever has been posited as categorically good, hate of whatever has been posited as categorically bad, and delusion with respect to the impossibility of categorically reifying reality into discrete entities on whose essences fundamentalistic ethi-

Thomas P. Kasulis, *Zen Action/Zen Person* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1981), 93ff.

26. Due to limitations not only of space but also of familiarity, I will forego a discussion of ethical transgressions in Tantric Buddhism. The question would be whether even these remain within the purview of cultivating and expressing the virtue of compassion.

cal judgments can be passed. There is a sense, then, in which the "great death" of Zen takes one into the uncharted and eternally unchartable region of "vast emptiness, nothing holy" (Bodhidharma), where there is "originally not a single thing" (Huineng) much less a table of commandments for judging things.

Nevertheless, we must also pay attention to Huineng's more subtle statement: "*Although you see… evil and good*, evil things and good things, *you must not throw them aside, nor must you cling to them*, nor must you be stained by them, but you must regard them as being just like the empty sky" (YAMPOLSKY 1967, 146–47; my emphasis). Ives interprets this to mean that "although distinctions must be broken through to open up Awakening, they are said to be reestablished in their proper place: as pragmatically useful distinctions rather than as unchanging, metaphysically grounded essences" (IVES 1992, 48). The point would be to make distinctions, including ethical judgments, while remaining unattached to them and without reifying them. In this context Ives quotes Abe as stressing that the affirmation of things in their suchness is "not an uncritical affirmation of the given situation. On the contrary, it is a great and absolute affirmation beyond—and thus not excluding—any critical, objective, and analytical distinction" (ABE 1990, 32; quoted in IVES 1992, 44).

To be sure, the actual Zen tradition has hardly always lived up to this ideal potential of reestablishing critical ethical discernment. In fact, as "Ichikawa Hakugen, [Brian] Daizen Victoria and others have pointed out, the most conspicuous theme in this history is the close connection between Zen and the political status quo" (IVES 1992, 67).[27] In critical response to this history it must be clearly stressed today that the breakthrough to an experience of emptiness and the radical equality of things is never on its own sufficient for ethical deliberation on how to properly engage in the world of differences. D. T. Suzuki recog-

27. Along with chapters three and four of IVES 1992, for a chilling exposition of the uncritical support given by Zen masters and institutions to the Japanese war effort, see VICTORIA 1997. Also see James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (eds.), *Rude Awakenings: Zen, The Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

nized this when, after the war, he amended his earlier view—according to which the enlightened person is like a "golden-haired lion" who is "autonomous," "for he has nothing behind him, he is 'the whole truth'" (Suzuki 1959, 348–9; quoted in Carter 2001, 116)—to say that "by itself satori is unable to judge the right and wrong of war. With regard to disputes in the ordinary world, it is necessary to employ intellectual discrimination" (Suzuki 1970, 411; quoted in Victoria 1997, 148–49; also see Carter 1992, 119). *The radical path of Zen can deconstruct and revitalize thoughtful discrimination and ethical deliberation, but it cannot replace them.* On the other hand, it could also be said that rational deliberation can clear a space for intuitive spontaneity and compassionate insight, but it cannot replace them. Both legs are needed to walk.

In any case, in order to understand the proper place of ethical deliberation in Zen, and in order to critically reform the actual role (or lack thereof) it has played, we need to be clear on how the transcendence of good and evil in Zen practice and enlightenment should ideally relate to a renewed ability to engage in ethical judgment. To summarize and supplement what has been said above in this regard, let me quote here a passage where Ives concisely addresses this issue:

> Zen talk of overcoming good and evil thus signifies several things. First, Zen starts with the subjectivity that operates primarily in terms of the self-other split and sets up things in the world as objects of attraction or aversion, as good or evil. To liberate oneself from this subjectivity and the suffering it causes, and to enable oneself to function freely to eradicate "evil" without being hindered by certain forms of self-attachment, one must move beyond discriminating consciousness and its distinctions, including the distinction between good and evil. Second, in breaking beyond such consciousness to non-distinction, one awakens to the larger context of existence which has no inherent good or evil and which is will-less and spontaneous, but one does not linger there: one reemerges as a "self," as subjectivity able to reflect and discriminate, yet grounded in the realization of the larger matrix. Third, one gains an understanding of normal distinctions between good and evil and right and wrong as pragmatically important though not indicative of essences. (Ives 1992, 49–50)

In order to act compassionately as a human in the world, as is portrayed in the tenth ox picture, it is necessary to first transcend the "all too human" egocentric manner of discrimination between good (attraction) and evil (aversion), and to pass through the "will-less and spontaneous" realm of the natural world depicted in the ninth ox picture. But just as we should not "linger where the Buddha is," we must also "pass quickly over where the Buddha is not" and return to a non-egoistic ecstatic/instatic engagement in the everyday world of weighing "three pounds of flax" and making concrete ethical judgments of right and wrong.

It is in the sense of this circular process of transcending and reentering the conventional world of evaluative discrimination that I think we can best understand the ethical implications of Ueda's non-mysticism. What is crucial, however, is that we first acknowledge here a meta-level distinction between, on the one hand, the ultimate value of maintaining the movement of the process of transcendence/descendence itself, and, on the other hand, the provisional values operative at the conventional level. In other words, in saying that all specific evaluative distinctions need to be repeatedly deconstructed and critically reevaluated by way of both transcending and returning to the conventional world of good and evil, what is implied is that *maintaining this dynamic process itself is a root source of goodness, while inhibiting it is a root source of badness.*

Putting this now in terms of Ueda's thought, we could say that the *unhindered movement* of the process of non-mysticism is a wellspring of goodness, that is, of compassionate intention and skillful ethical judgment. An effect of this unhindered process would be that decision-making is performed from the empathetic perspective of the ecstatically engaged non-ego, the self that is attached neither to the ego, nor to a reified account of good/evil, nor to the experience of absolute indistinction. On the other hand, stopping either at the ego or at mystical union could be understood as a root source of badness.

Stopping before the process starts, namely at an attachment to the self-assertive ego, is more obviously a potential source of badness. But why would stopping at a union with the divine be ethically problematic? Ueda writes: "If one stops at the place where the accent is on the union, this becomes so-called mysticism. Here various perversions and deformations of mysticism frequently arise… [and] in extreme cases this

can lead to the origin of so-called cults" (USS 8: 39). In such cases, "the 'union between God and me' gets dragged in the direction of the 'me', and the danger of God serving as a means to inflate the 'me' arises" (USS 8: 330). The mystical union must in the end be seen as an expedient means for letting go of the ego; otherwise, it can all too easily end up serving to inflate it. And the only thing more powerfully pernicious than egoism is Egoism.

I have suggested that we can understand the unhindered movement through mysticism to de-mysticism as a radical source of goodness, that is, of wise and compassionate decision-making. To be sure, this principle of maintaining a dynamic process does not provide us with a list of specific ethical laws. Indeed, it remains antinomian in spirit, insofar as it cultivates a response-ability to the presence of unique singularities rather than a formula for subsuming particulars under universal rules. Yet if we think in terms of virtue ethics, it promises something much more vital. Precisely because of Zen's abandonment of fixed transcendental norms, the character of the ethical agent becomes central. And non-mysticism does indeed provide a radical path for the cultivation of the pivotal virtue of ecstatic compassion, along with—as a condition for the cultivation and exercise of practical wisdom—an instatic engagement with the singular contingencies of the here and now.

Everyday practices of non-mysticism

One might be left here with the impression that Zen's path of non-mysticism—while it may indeed also offer its practitioners a profound source of ethical virtue—is first of all a profoundly demanding religious endeavor. To be sure, to follow this path to the end demands the ultimate experience of what Zen calls the "great death"; the ego must completely perish, not, to be sure, by way of an escapist death to life, but rather by way of an unreserved dying into the nondual activity of engaged living. Yet, one may wonder, is the pathway to this utter reengagement in life then only open to the very few who are capable, not just of becoming mystics, but furthermore of breaking through and beyond mysticism?

In fact, however, Ueda often brings this apparently lofty path of non-mysticism back down to the earthly level of the everyday. To begin with, he suggests that the dynamic circling between the final three ox pictures can be understood, not just as a distant course for enlightened masters, but also in terms of the basic threefold Zen practice of *zazen* 坐禅, *samu/angya* 作務· 行脚, and *sanzen* 参禅 (USS 6: 248). In the silence and stillness of seated meditation (*zazen*), one experientially embodies the emptiness of letting everything go; in daily work (*samu*) or on the path of pilgrimage (*angya*), one nondually enters into and learns from the natural way of things; and in the face-to-face interviews with the teacher (*sanzen*), one learns how to engage in the "not one and not two" betweenness of interpersonal encounter.

Moreover, Ueda does not restrict this movement through ego-abandonment towards reaffirmation of nature and community to the institutional practice of Zen. For example, he suggests that it is not just formal meditation, but also the simple everyday act of breathing in and out which can be experienced as an exhaustive exhalation of the ego and a reaffirmative inhalation of the open expanse of the world (USS 6: 278). Breathing out, I let go of my attachment to my ego and its self-centered environs; breathing in, I affirm the nondual unity of my true self and the encompassing world.

Ueda also frequently uses the everyday Japanese greeting of the bow as an example to illustrate how mutual self-negation—the emptying of all ego-centered presumptions and agendas—returns us to the openness of a radical nothingness that we share in common beneath the roots of our personal being. When one sincerely bows, "by way of making oneself into a nothingness, one returns into the infinite depths of that 'between' where there is neither an I nor a you.… Then, when we rise again so as to come back to life anew and face one another, this becomes a matter of, as Dōgen puts it: thus am I; thus are you" (UEDA 1991, 67; see also USS 6: 274–75 and 10: 107ff). Rising up together out of nowhere, I do not greet you as either a friend or a foe of my ego, nor even as a fellow child of God, but rather, just such as you are.

With such models and suggestions, drawn from the daily routine of Zen monks and the customary greeting of the Japanese, the task for us

would be to find and establish in our own lives an everyday practice of non-mysticism.

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Abbreviations

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