

JAPANESE
PHILOSOPHY
A SOURCEBOOK

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EDITED BY
JAMES W. HEISIG
THOMAS P. KASULIS
JOHN C. MARALDO

JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY: A SOURCEBOOK

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Japanese Philosophy

A SOURCEBOOK

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| KoS | KOBORI Sōhaku 小堀宗柏
<i>Zen Buddhist</i> | PLS | PAUL L. SWANSON
<i>Buddhist</i> |
| KōS | KŌSAKA Shirō 高坂史朗
<i>Kyoto School</i> | RB | ROBERT H. BROWER
<i>Aesthetics</i> |
| LS | LEONARD SWIDLER
<i>Culture and Identity</i> | RdM | RICHARD DEMARTINO
<i>Zen Buddhist</i> |
| MET | MARY EVELYN TUCKER
<i>Confucian</i> | RDM | ROSEMARY D. MERCER
<i>Confucian</i> |
| MFM | MICHAEL F. MARRA
<i>Kyoto School, Twentieth Century, Aesthetics</i> | RF | ROBIN FUJIKAWA
<i>Women</i> |
| MH | MATSUMARU Hisao 松丸壽雄
<i>Zen Buddhist, Twentieth Century</i> | RFC | RICHARD F. CALICHMAN
<i>Culture and Identity</i> |
| MLB | MARK L. BLUM
<i>Buddhist, Zen Buddhist, Pure Land Buddhist</i> | RFS | RUTH FULLER SASAKI
<i>Zen Buddhist</i> |
| | | RHB | R. H. BLYTH
<i>Zen Buddhist</i> |

- RJJW Robert J. J. WARGO
Twentieth Century
- RMo Rosemary MORRISON
Twentieth Century
- RMü Ralf MÜLLER
Kyoto School
- RMR Richard M. REITAN
Modern Academic
- RR Rein RAUD
Zen Buddhist
- RTA Roger T. AMES
Prelude
- RTy Royall TYLER
Zen Buddhist
- RVM Roger Vansila MUNSI
Buddhist
- RWG Rolf W. GIEBEL
Buddhist
- SF SUEKI Fumihiko 末木文美士
Buddhist
- SHY Samuel Hideo YAMASHITA
Confucian
- SLB Susan L. BURNS
Shinto
- SMB Steven M. BEIN
Twentieth Century
- SN Sey NISHIMURA
Shinto
- ST SAITŌ Takako 斎藤多香子
Modern Academic
- TC Teruko CRAIG
Women
- TH Thomas HARE
Aesthetics
- TK TERAŌ Kazuyoshi 寺尾芳寿
Aesthetics
- TPK Thomas P. KASULIS
- TR TSUNODA Ryūsaku 角田柳作
Confucian
- TY TAKEUCHI Yoshinori 武内義範
Kyoto School
- TYK Thomas Yūhō KIRCHNER
Zen Buddhism
- VM Viren MURTHY
Twentieth Century
- VV Valdo Viglielmo
Kyoto School
- WB William BODIFORD
Zen Buddhist
- WJB Willem J. BOOT
Confucian
- WM WATANABE Manabu 渡邊 学
Twentieth Century
- WNH Wilburn N. HANSEN
Shinto
- WRL William R. LAFLEUR
Aesthetics
- WSY Wayne S. YOKOYAMA
Buddhist, Zen Buddhist
- WTB William Theodore DE BARY
Confucian
- YM YUSA Michiko 遊佐道子
Kyoto School, Women
- YT YASUNAGA Toshinobu 安永寿延
Confucian

Framework

The idea that people of different cultures actually think differently has been slow to find its way into the heart of western philosophy. Over the past century or so, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and cognitive scientists have often examined this issue and compared results. But until recently, the majority of philosophers in the West have exempted themselves from the debate, often assuming that philosophy's kind of thinking is universal and transcultural. Others have claimed to the contrary that philosophy is so distinctively western an enterprise that there is little point to look for it elsewhere. In either case, "nonwestern philosophy" is dismissed as an oxymoron.

Meanwhile, Japanese studies has seldom focused specifically on the philosophical dimensions of the culture, typically treating them only in the background or margins of scholarly works in literature, religion, politics, intellectual history, or the arts. Although books dedicated to Indian philosophy and Chinese philosophy have played a central role in the development of Asian studies for many decades, this has not been the case for Japanese philosophy. This omission leaves the impression that, even compared with its Asian neighbors, Japan has not been very much engaged in philosophical reflection, analysis, and argument. Indeed, the romanticized image of Japan in much popular writing explicitly says as much. Japanese culture's face to the western world is one of haiku, Zen gardens, tea ceremony, the martial arts, woodblock prints, novels, and, more recently, anime and manga. Behind those phenomena, however, are powerful critical traditions of thought and value for which there is no better word than "philosophy." A focus on Japanese philosophy, therefore, can broaden and deepen not only our understanding of philosophy, but also of Japan.

This *Sourcebook* addresses these issues by making available, for the first time in a single volume, translations of a wide variety of texts from multiple intellectual traditions spanning the whole of Japan's recorded history. Our working assumption is that the philosophical nature of a cultural heritage—its forms of analysis, its use of distinctions, its patterns of argument, its selection of issues on which to focus—cannot be fully appreciated by looking at any single work by any given author from any particular period. Rather, Japanese thinkers can

best be appreciated as philosophers only by seeing how they have argued with each other, how intellectual traditions have developed over centuries, and how individuals and traditions have responded throughout history to new ideas from continental Asia or the West. The *Sourcebook* not only tries to establish parameters for the study of Japanese philosophy in the West; it also aims to address readers intrigued by the question of how culture and systematic thinking have interacted in a sophisticated literary tradition radically different from that of Western Europe.

The perception of what counts as philosophy in Japan today is radically ambiguous. First, it has come to represent a meticulous study of mainline currents of western philosophy, and along with that a large number of minor currents, some of which are given attention disproportionate to what they enjoy in the cultures of their birth. As the discipline took hold in universities a little over a century ago, its study broadened to include parallels in Islamic, Russian, and Jewish thought, not to mention a healthy interest in the esoteric traditions accompanying them.

Second, Japanese scholars have not merely approached western philosophy as a subject of historical and objective interest; they have taken their own critical stance, making their own adjustments and contributions in light of their own experience and intellectual history. In a few notable cases, this has led to major contributions to philosophy that have attracted attention around the world. Most often, however, the changes have been more subtle and aimed at specialists in the field. In both instances, the primary audience for philosophical texts has been Japan and the language Japanese. What is known to scholars abroad through translation is a small, and often far from representative, sampling of the entire contribution.

Third, preceding the entrance of the western academic discipline, there were traditional Japanese systems of theory and praxis associated with Buddhism, Confucianism, artistic expression, and Shinto. These contained understandings of language, truth, human nature, creativity, reality, and society that were explained and argued in a variety of ways. For many Japanese today, these may not be “philosophy” in the modern academic sense, but they are parallel to traditions of what we call in English “classical Indian philosophy” or “classical Chinese philosophy.” They are part of the cultural background against which modern Japanese thinking develops. That modern Japanese thinkers have typically filtered so much of western philosophy through their own modes of thought, aesthetic feeling, and religious experience is hardly surprising. Such filtering belongs to the story of great ideas and great philosophical systems everywhere; as they cross back and forth between civilizations and from one epoch to another, they become transfigured, reoriented, even radically inverted.

Yet there are special circumstances that set the history of philosophy in Japan apart. The most obvious of these is that academic philosophy, and indeed the university system itself, as it is known throughout the West and much of the rest of the world, did not arrive until about one hundred and fifty years ago. As a result, the technical term *philosophy* came to be reserved for what was fundamentally a foreign import. Cut off from the long history of conflict and synthesis that led to the forms of western philosophy that came to Japan as completed systems of thought, Japanese thinkers at first tended to embrace the western import not so much as a colleague to be engaged in dialogue, but rather as a foreign dignitary to be shown respect and proper attention. This reception was further reinforced by the awareness, never far from the mind of Japanese scholars, that by the time literacy had come to Japan, this western discipline called *philosophy* was already into its second millennium.

More important for the aims of the *Sourcebook* are the native resources on which Japanese philosophy as a modern academic discipline draws for its critical appraisal of ideas. These differ from those of traditional philosophy in the West. The ways of thought tacitly embedded in religious scriptures, literature, theater, art, and language that run between the lines and beneath the surface of western philosophical texts received from abroad are, at least until recently, largely absent from the Japanese mind. In their place we find different, no less rich and variegated, ways of thinking and valuing. Assumptions transparent to the western historian of ideas are often opaque to the Japanese, and vice-versa.

The range of resources open to the Japanese thinker is as broad and deep as the culture itself, and any attempt to generalize about them is fraught with danger from the start. One way to get at them is to probe the history of Japanese ideas for philosophical “affinities,” that is to say, comprehensive worldviews, systematizations of moral values, methods of analysis and argument, and, in general, reflection on what we consider universal questions about human existence and reality. This is the task we have set ourselves in the pages of the *Sourcebook*.

The *Sourcebook* is divided into two parts of unequal length. The first, historical part treats philosophical resources from the major traditions of Japanese intellectual history: Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto and Native Studies, and Modern Academic Philosophy. The second part, “Additional Themes,” picks up a sampling of recurrent topics that are not treated in detail elsewhere and that cut across the lines defining the traditional schools of Japanese thought. In settling on this dual method of presenting the material, we were aware that the story of philosophy in any cultural context not only has to respect the development of arguments and themes within schools of thought, but also has to take into account important topics that overlap traditions and involve the interface of philosophy and other forms of intellectual discourse.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Historical accounts of philosophy deal with both the chronological development of ideas over time and the timeliness of those ideas in response to the specific social conditions and challenges of their eras. The *chronological* perspective follows *a particular line of thought* as it develops through the years, emphasizing the progressive aspect of philosophizing. New ideas build on former ideas by expanding, modifying, or even rejecting them. In this way schools of thought emerge and the chronological perspective focuses on a community of thinkers who may agree or disagree, but who always share common ground: a cluster of problems, technical vocabulary, forms of analysis, and points of departure.

In the modern West, for example, it is entirely natural to understand J. L. Austin's arguments about language if we see them as responding to ideas from Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and other logical positivists; or to follow Jean-Paul Sartre's arguments by relating them to the thought of Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl. Similarly, in the Japanese context, it is most natural to view the philosophy of Ogyū Sorai in light of Confucian predecessors like Itō Jinsai and Hayashi Razan, or to read the modern Pure Land Buddhist thinker, Kiyozawa Manshi, with an eye to predecessors in the Pure Land tradition like the medieval thinkers, Shinran and Hōnen.

However insightful and influential a thinker may be for history in general, that alone seldom guarantees a place as a major thinker in the history of philosophy. For that, we must also consider the aspect of *the timeliness of ideas*. The great philosophers—the ones who find their way into historical surveys and sourcebooks such as this—are those whose ideas not only push philosophical thinking forward, but also respond with insight to the surrounding spirit of their times.

To help us understand the aspect of timeliness, which is necessarily muted in the chronologically organized selections in the book, a brief historical overview of the times and contexts in which Japanese philosophies developed may prove helpful. It can at least give us a glimmer of the zeitgeist behind each of the various Japanese thinkers in history whose selections will follow. Thus, for example, we want to know what social, political, and economic factors influenced thinkers in each of the major periods of Japanese history. Regardless of their commitments to differing schools of philosophy, what issues of the day might be in the background of every major Japanese figure writing in the same century? The following historical overview, although too brief to take up these questions in depth, will be complemented in part by the overviews provided for each tradition and the short introductions to each of the thinkers treated in the appropriate chapters of the *Sourcebook*.

Prehistory to 794

Obviously, it is hard to claim there was philosophy in Japan before the introduction of writing. Even if there was thinking that might be classified as philosophical, there was no way to record it for posterity. Nevertheless, what we do know of the indigenous spiritual orientation of prehistoric Japan belongs to the general background against which Japanese philosophical thinking was to take shape in ensuing centuries.

Given both archaeological evidence and meager accounts by the occasional Chinese visitor in the fourth and fifth centuries, scholars generally assume that the preliterate Japanese culture was animistic: the ancient Japanese understood the world as filled with awe-inspiring *tama* or “spiritual power.” Where the locus of such *tama* was particularly discernible—be it in some object in the natural world, in an exceptional person, a ghost, or a celestial deity—it was referred to as *kami* and given deferential treatment in ritual, art, and architecture. Even spoken words could resonate with a power beyond the capacity of those who spoke them, a *kotodama* or *tama* of words.

In the sixth and seventh centuries, as Chinese texts began to find their way into the country from the mainland, often by way of Korean immigrants and traders, the Japanese adopted Chinese as their literary language. They often studied it much the way the Chinese themselves did—by reading the classics, typically texts revered as canonical by Confucian traditions at the time. Around the same time, Buddhism entered the country and the Japanese were initially attracted primarily to its cultural and ritual contributions. Immigrants from Korea and China, including some Buddhist monks and many artisans, introduced exotic Buddhist chanting, architecture, rites, sculptures, and paintings that fascinated the Japanese court aristocrats. This soon led to an interest in Buddhist texts (written in Chinese) as well.

Hence, by the dawn of the seventh century, an intellectual culture was in place among the aristocratic elite (and the occasional Buddhist monk not of aristocratic background). This elite culture had developed enough that by the first or second decade of the seventh century, the court was able to write a “constitution” for the courtiers running the state. If we can say with Aristotle (and most historians of western philosophy since then) that Thales’ claim that all things are water was the origin of western philosophy, we could say that Prince Shōtoku’s *Seventeen-Article Constitution* marked the birth of Japanese philosophy. It has been included in this *Sourcebook* as a Prelude.

Although evidence today suggests that the traditional biography, and maybe even the very existence, of the Prince may be more legend than history, it is the text, not the author, that most interests us. First, the constitution was definitely a product of Japan, even if the writer was not ethnically Japanese but a foreign scribe within the Japanese court, as some scholars argue. Most Japanese laws

and regulations at the time, as in centuries to follow, were either direct or modified codifications of Chinese models. The *Constitution* was different; it had almost nothing to do with laws and regulations. Instead, it prescribed extra-legal attitudes and behaviors for the courtiers, the elements that would make a lawful, centralized state “harmonious.” This seems Confucian in spirit but unlike Confucianism, the *Constitution* did not emphasize achieving this harmony primarily through *ri*, ceremonial propriety. Instead, it stressed Buddhist values of personal development and practice. Indeed, it suggested Buddhism should become a state religion.

Aristotle placed Thales at the birth of Greek philosophy because of his attempt to explain the world in physical terms without relying on religious or mythical narratives. From that time on, Aristotle maintained, the course was set for Greek philosophers. The *Constitution* had similar paradigmatic value in Japan. For the first time, a Japanese thinker broke away from merely borrowing ideas and systems of mainland thought to propose a consistent integration of two traditions. Basically, the *Constitution* argued that court behavior should follow Confucian norms, but that psychologically and spiritually one should cultivate a Buddhist egolessness and control of emotions. The *Constitution* suggested that only an egoless Buddhist could act appropriately as an accomplished Confucian courtier. Buddhism is for personal psychological and spiritual development; Confucianism for social standards. The model of philosophizing here is that one can borrow ideas and values from outside, but the goal is to integrate them into something new, a system more suitable to the Japanese cultural context. This is the course that most Japanese philosophers have followed ever since.

Prince Shōtoku’s Soga family, strong advocates of Buddhism, fell out of power soon after his death. The remainder of the seventh century was a time of political turmoil overlaid with repeated attempts to put into place a viable legal system, both penal and civil, adapted from Chinese models. There was little philosophical creativity in evidence here. During the Nara period (710–794) a greater degree of social stability was achieved as the imperial center of power began to crystallize and Japan began to look more like a unified state. For the first time, the Japanese built a permanent capital, located in the city of Nara. Previously, because of indigenous taboos concerning the polluting nature of death, the imperial palace had to be relocated after the death of an emperor or empress. The construction of a great capital city modeled on the Chinese capital of Chang’an brought with it a rapid increase in the number of Buddhist communities located in temples that were less like centers of monastic practice than scholarly academies where massive numbers of Chinese Buddhist texts were gathered and studied. In this way, Japanese intellectuals came to develop a sophisticated knowledge of Buddhist terminology and to acquaint themselves

with a variety of Buddhist philosophical systems. Philosophically speaking, however, the Japanese remained by and large in a phase of borrowing and assimilating with limited creative reflection and reconstruction.

The Nara period also produced two large chronicles, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. The later was composed in Chinese and followed more closely the style of Chinese chronicles. Its narrative began with the time of creation, but went into greatest detail in describing court events from the earliest periods of recorded history. In contrast, the *Kojiki* placed more emphasis on myth and prehistory. It was also an early experiment in finding a way of writing Japanese by using Chinese characters or sinographs as phonetic rather than semantic units. The result at times was an almost unintelligible hybrid of Japanese and Chinese, which persisted until the ninth century when the Japanese succeeded in finding a way to put their language into writing satisfactorily by inventing two purely phonetic syllabaries: *hiragana* and *katakana*. Insofar as the two chronicles codified creation stories and established the ideology of an imperial family descended from the sun *kami*, Amaterasu, they set the ideological foundations for what would eventually become a Shinto justification for imperial rule.

In sum, after the Shōtoku *Constitution* (and three commentaries on Buddhist sutras also attributed to Shōtoku's patronage), there was little philosophical development in the seventh and eighth centuries. Nevertheless, Japanese schools of learning, especially the Buddhist study centers in the capital, were acquiring the raw materials for creative thought, setting the stage for a breakthrough in Japanese Buddhist philosophizing that would take place at the outset of the ninth century, mainly through the efforts of Kūkai (774–835) and Saichō (767–822).

The Heian Period (794–1185)

The Heian period brought an increased centralization of power in the court and the capital city, which had since moved to Kyoto. It was a period of transition during which repeated efforts to import more of the cultural, philosophical, and religious traditions of China gave way to their assimilation and reformulation into a distinctively Japanese cultural expression. In subsequent centuries most Japanese thinkers would look back to the Heian period as a blossoming of creative Japanese intellectual and aesthetic activity. While the court and government system as well as the Buddhist monastic institutions maintained much of the superstructure of Chinese models, its thinkers gave freer rein to innovation in advancing ideas and values more attuned to native sensibilities, including the deliberate restoration of elements of ancient animism neglected by former generations. The Buddhist scholarly monastic institutions and the court with its intellectuals and aesthetes interacted extensively as the two elite centers of philosophizing.

The hubs of most creative Buddhist thinking during the Heian period were in the Shingon tradition founded by Kūkai and in the Tendai tradition founded by Saichō. We can single out three focal points in their philosophical analyses. First, they tried to make sense of the wide variety of Buddhist ideas, texts, and practices that had been flowing into Japan for the previous three centuries. Tendai constructed its interpretations around the classifications of teachings and texts developed in the Chinese Tiantai school, especially those centered on Zhiyi (538–597). The Shingon school, meantime, followed the classifications devised by Kūkai in what he called his “theory of the ten mindsets.” Each of the two schools made use of its own hermeneutical taxonomy to argue for its own superiority and comprehensiveness vis-à-vis other forms of Buddhism. Kūkai’s analysis even included non-Buddhist traditions from the mainland, mainly Confucianism and Daoism. Their aim of the classification systems was not so much to refute other schools as to locate them within a single hierarchy, with either Tendai or Shingon at the top. Hence, the teachings of other traditions were not dismissed as erroneous but embraced as incomplete parts of a larger, more universal doctrine.

The second major philosophical motif, also Buddhist in focus, had to do with the nature of enlightenment and its relation to religious practices. The impact of Buddhist esotericism was decisive here. On the one hand, Shingon argued for the preeminence of the esoteric over the exoteric. The exoteric was regarded as bound to intellectual understanding and unable to involve the whole person—body as well as mind. Participation in esoteric rituals (contemplating mandalas, performing sacred hand gestures, and chanting mantras) was taken as a fuller engagement, both physically and intellectually, with the workings of reality itself. The aim was to embody understanding rather than to observe and analyze it with a detached mind. In Kūkai’s words, enlightenment is achieved “with and through this very body,” a process inseparable from true intellectual understanding. On the other hand, the Japanese Tendai tradition diverged from its Chinese lineage by increasingly integrating esotericism into the exoteric Tiantai teachings received from the mainland. Whereas Shingon argued that the esoteric is the ground of all Buddhist teaching and practices, including the exoteric, Tendai typically viewed the esoteric and exoteric as complementaries, insisting its students be proficient in both. Shingon and Tendai philosophizing tended to focus on such issues as the relation between praxis and insight, the integration of the somatic and the intellectual, the metaphysical basis of enlightenment, the relation between words and reality, and the connection between the nature of persons and the nature of reality.

In the third place, the Heian Buddhists also engaged the indigenous animism then characterized generally in terms of *kami* worship, a tradition that would ultimately develop into a key aspect of Shinto. Whereas the animistic

orientation still profoundly influenced Japanese feelings about nature, there had been little doctrinal and intellectual development that could be called distinctively Shinto. Shingon and Tendai, employing predominantly esoteric Buddhist categories, were able to incorporate a great deal of animistic sensitivity and *kami*-related ritual practices into their own systems, including the idea that *kami* are surface manifestations of deeper Buddhist realities. Thus began a Buddhist-Shinto relationship that continued in full force until the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Meantime, pockets of Shinto philosophizing took shape during that same period, drawing on Buddhist analyses but giving them a distinctively Shinto twist. For the most part, however, Shinto's intellectual tradition was almost entirely absorbed into esoteric Buddhism and it was not until the medieval Kamakura period that it began to come into its own.

For their part, Heian court intellectuals discussed similar questions about theory and practice, though generally from a more aesthetic perspective, including especially the critical analysis of poetry. How does poetry arise? What is the relation between words and things? How does creativity integrate innovation with the mastery of traditional forms? How is the relation between fiction and reality different from the relation between nonfiction and reality? Their analysis was never fully detached from religious concerns. Indeed, poetic theory found itself time and again asking how aesthetic sensitivity can enhance the understanding of such Buddhist teachings as impermanence and egolessness.

*The Kamakura (1185–1333), Muromachi (1333–1568),
and Momoyama (1568–1600) Periods*

The transition from the late Heian to the ensuing Kamakura period was one of de-centering. The political influence of the court had become increasingly effete. The aristocrats, who had been spending increasing amounts of time in Kyoto, had put the samurai in charge of administering their provincial domains. Eventually the samurai (often headed by distant scions of the imperial family who had been excluded from the direct lineage) took over control of the provincial territories and waged war with each other. This came to a head in 1192 when Minamoto no Yoritomo established the first military government, the Kamakura feudal system or shogunate. From then on it was the warriors, not the court nobles, who controlled the government, with the main administrative offices now moved to Kamakura. Kyoto remained the site of the court and the official capital. It also retained its status as the principal center of culture, although shogunal patronage became ever more important for cultural, intellectual, and religious institutions. As if the devastation of internal warfare were not enough, Kyoto suffered an unfortunate series of other disasters: typhoons, epidemics, fires, and earthquakes. With the dawn of the

Kamakura period, the mood in the capital city had darkened. As its former ebullience and confidence faded, the grand philosophical syntheses of the Heian Buddhist thinkers with their cosmic visions seemed ever less relevant. Philosophizing took a more personal, existential turn as the Japanese, rulers as well as commoners, sought a way through the turbulence of the times.

As the Heian court watched its influence as a center of intellectual activity erode, so did the scholarly communities of Buddhist monks suffer a decline. At the beginning of the Heian period, Buddhists had primarily addressed their writings to the educated elite, namely, the Heian courtiers and the other educated scholar-monks. Gradually, however, highbrow, sophisticated doctrines began to interact more directly with popular Buddhist folk practices that had flourished from the time Buddhism was first introduced into the country. As a result, Buddhist thinkers found themselves addressing two audiences: ordinary people with a limited education, and a cultivated intellectual elite.

In the Kamakura period, the juxtaposition of these two worlds in Buddhist ideas had become commonplace. A clear example was the belief that the country had entered an age of degeneracy called *mappō*, in which the teachings of Buddhism could no longer be understood in depth and its practices could not be performed in a way conducive to enlightenment. It was a time for extraordinary measures. The despair—or at least the potential for despair—behind this idea was as evident to ordinary people as it was to philosophers. Even those who rejected that reading of the historical situation—Zen philosophers such as Dōgen, for example—still acknowledged that desperate times called for a different, more focused kind of practice. Virtually all the new spiritual traditions of the Kamakura period emphasized paring down the complex practices of Buddhism to simpler forms, such as invoking the name of Amida Buddha, or simply sitting in meditation, or trusting oneself solely to the saving power of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Here, too, the two sectors of society that Kamakura philosophers aimed to address came into play. For the ordinary laity, the great advantage of focusing on a single practice was that, unlike the demanding and complicated rituals of Shingon and Tendai, it was open to anyone regardless of educational background. The greater philosophical problem was how to justify such practices to the other audience, the educated elite and especially the Buddhist scholars among them. By themselves, the individual practices all belonged to the comprehensive Tendai and Shingon repertoire, but the claim now being made was that a *single* practice sufficed to achieve enlightenment. What is more, each of the new Kamakura schools—the Pure Land schools, the Zen schools, the Nichiren school—had to prove that *their* single practice, and theirs alone, was truly efficacious. This in turn gave rise to other issues. Among the general problems that affected all the schools alike was how to explain the attainment

of enlightenment. Does it come about by doing something or by ceasing to do something? Is one to assume that the path to awakening entails the initiative of “commencing enlightenment”? Or is it rather a matter of acknowledging an “original enlightenment” that has been there from the start, whatever one does? Not only did both ideas enjoy currency in medieval Japanese Buddhist thought; often enough they were held concurrently, which called for some philosophical justification of how one could logically hold two such apparently mutually exclusive views.

Other questions calling for analysis and explanation were more tradition-specific. For traditions like Pure Land and Nichiren that advocated the *mappō* theory, a nest of interrelated issues appeared: Is *mappō* an actual historical event? If so, what sense of history does it imply? Or does it merely describe a mental attitude? If so, what are the psychological dynamics behind it and how can they be given general philosophical validity? The burden for traditions like Zen that rejected the theory of *mappō* was how to explain why Buddhist practice seemed so difficult in the circumstances of those times. If the cause does not lie in history but in human failing, what is the nature of that failure and how can it be overcome? Another set of tradition-specific questions had to do with the focus on a single practice. How should one characterize the mental attitude involved in a particular practice? The Pure Land philosopher Shinran, for example, maintained that the calling on the name of Amida (*nenbutsu*) arose from a special state of mindfulness called *shinjin* or trusting faith. What exactly is this *shinjin* and how does it fit into broader Mahayana Buddhist understandings of mind, thought, and affect? How does it strike the traditional balance between willful practice and practiced surrender of the will? How can it be said to lead ultimately to enlightenment, the engagement with reality as it is? Zen Master Dōgen, meantime, argued instead that seated meditation or *zazen* was the only thing needed for enlightenment. But what is the mental state achieved in meditation and how does it relate to the broader Mahayana teaching of practice as a means and enlightenment as a goal? What is it that makes *zazen* the single most definitive practice?

While Buddhist philosophy concentrated on those sorts of questions, there were also advances in aesthetics, permeated with Buddhist sensitivities but more secular in nature. From the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries, new modes and theories of aesthetic expression were taking shape (such as *waka* poetics) and new art forms such as the tea ceremony and Nō drama were emerging, each of which called for its own philosophical reflection. Parallel to developments in Buddhist thought, there was greater attention given to analyzing the states of mind involved in artistic performance and appreciation. How does an artist cultivate the proper attitude for creative expression? What is the proper balance between tradition and innovation? Is it possible to articulate

steps in the creative process? What is the relation between the artist and reality or between the performance and audience? What distinguishes art from imitation? In tackling these questions, philosophers came to rely increasingly on Zen Buddhist ideas and metaphors, especially in the Muromachi and Momoyama periods.

The Edo or Tokugawa Period (1600–1868)

From the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, the struggle for power among samurai groups continued intermittently. A long-lasting peace arrived for the nation only with the establishment of the Tokugawa family's shogunate. For nearly the whole of the Edo period (1600–1868) Japan severely restricted its interaction with the outside world, confining its foreign relations to Korea and China and its western interaction to a minimal trade agreement with the Dutch. The practice of Christianity, which Catholic missionaries had brought to Japan in the sixteenth century, was proscribed. The Tokugawa shogunate negotiated agreements with the provincial daimyō, granting them considerable autonomy but also reserving certain hegemonic powers for itself. The shōgun established a highly bureaucratic government, giving them unprecedented oversight on Japanese society, from the education system to business practices to religious institutions. The imposition of peace brought with it an increase in nationwide trade and the rise of urban centers as the hubs of mercantile activity. These large cities—especially Edo (present-day Tokyo), Osaka, and Kyoto—became the major cultural and intellectual centers as well. The need to educate the emerging merchant class brought secular urban academies into prominence as the major centers of philosophical activity.

The arrival of neo-Confucian thought from China was the most important intellectual import of the era. During the fifteenth, and especially the sixteenth century, Japanese intellectuals, many of them Zen monks, had traveled to China and returned with new texts, among them the writings of the great neo-Confucian thinkers, Zhu Xi (1130–1200) and Wang Yangming (1472–1529). Chinese neo-Confucian philosophers had developed a grand synthesis of Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian thought by broadening traditional Confucian categories. Integrating Confucian concerns for appropriate behavior and social harmony with metaphysical and psychological ideas borrowed from Daoism and Buddhism, they were able to construct an epistemological framework for both moral values and natural phenomena. Importing these ideas meant both a new vocabulary and a new set of problems for Japanese philosophizing: What is the metaphysical relation between pattern or principle (*ri*) and generative force or vital energy (*ki*)? Does principle determine force, as Zhu Xi claimed? Or is principle no more than an abstraction for the way *ki* functions, as the Japanese thinker Kaibara Ekken proposed? In the end, most Japanese followed

Ekken, but the whole framing of the problem and the vocabulary used to solve it derived from Chinese tradition.

Due in part to the influx of western science starting in the sixteenth century, and its continued inroads throughout the Edo period under the rubric of “Dutch learning,” the number of philosophers interested in the natural world was on the rise. For example, thinkers from the merchant class like Yamagata Bantō (1748–1821) skeptically regarded both commonsense observations of natural phenomena and received interpretations of history and morality, and insisted that they be related to a universal theoretical principle he called the “center.” The problem of how to categorize natural phenomena and their interaction also prompted creative and distinctively Japanese approaches, such as Miura Baien’s (1723–1789) theory of *jōri* to explain natural phenomena in terms of the dialectical dynamic between a complex catalog of oppositional pairs. Meantime, Japanese mathematics, astronomy, and medicine were finding their own direction. Mathematicians like Seki Takakazu (1640–1708) made discoveries in algebraic studies, sometimes preceding comparable developments in the West. Initially astronomy and medicine were more reliant on Chinese thought, but the entry of western astronomy and anatomy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries eventually began to erode that dependency. The real impact of western medicine would not occur until the modern period, however. All in all, in comparison with developments in the West at the time, little lasting scientific discovery emerged from the Edo period. Yet, the model of science as the rational and empirical study of nature enabled Japan to assimilate western science quickly when it became important to the agenda of the modern period.

Given the need to stabilize the social order and to provide a clear set of values for the growing urban population, most creative philosophizing in the Edo period focused on moral, social, and political theory. Confucianism, in both its neo-Confucian and in its classical revival forms, dominated the intellectual terrain and its primary questions: What are the essential human virtues? Are they learned or innate? How are virtues related to feelings or emotions? What is the ideal structure of social relations for maximum harmony to be achieved? Are virtues like loyalty values or affects? Confucian philosophers like Itō Jinsai (1627–1705) and Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728) disdained the metaphysical ruminations of the neo-Confucians, but also followed those neo-Confucians who focused on returning to the fundamental meanings of the ancient Confucian terms. Their philosophy of language maintained that by understanding the significations, functions, and interrelations of key terms, one could clearly fathom the basis for harmony in the world with all its ethical implications and logical rationale. Their methodology, although philological in form, was philosophical and moral in purpose. It also stimulated the application of this approach to the study of native Japanese texts and terms.

Inspired by the methods of the new breed of Confucian scholars, the Native Studies or *Kokugaku* School adopted philology and the close reading of ancient Japanese texts (principally classical poetry and the *Kojiki* chronicle) as a basis for reconstructing the supposedly indigenous Japanese—and thus “Shinto”—answers to many of the questions raised by the Confucians. In the early nineteenth century, certain currents in the Native Studies tradition turned their philosophizing to developing an ideology of Japanese ethnicity centered on the imperial state.

While Confucian and Native Studies philosophies defined the intellectual horizons of Edo-period thought, Buddhism focused more on institutional developments, a few of which had philosophical implications. For example, the Tokugawa peace brought many unemployed samurai into civil life, some of whom gravitated toward vocations as Buddhist monks, especially Rinzaï Zen monks. In response, we find Edo-period Zen thinkers like Takuan (1573–1645) and Suzuki Shōsan (1579–1655) referring explicitly to the values of the samurai and the importance of death as a major spiritual theme. In relation to the increasingly explicit public discourse about Confucian values, other Zen masters like Bankei Yōtaku (1622–1693) and Hakuin Ekaku (1686–1769) took pains to explain Zen principles in relation to everyday life and to Confucian values like filial piety.

Some philosophical thinkers, like the previously mentioned Miura Baien, Tominaga Nakamoto (1715–1746), and Ninomiya Sontoku (1787–1856) do not fall easily under any of the three great traditions of the period—Confucianism, Buddhism, or Native Studies. Baien developed basically a system of his own without concern for allegiance to any school, Tominaga sharply criticized all three schools, and Ninomiya found it convenient to think of them as complementary. For the sake of simplicity, we have placed selections of such Edo-period philosophers in the Confucian section, since Confucianism more than any other tradition defined the intellectual discourse of the era.

One further comment is relevant in discussing Edo-period thought—the place of *bushidō* or the Way of the samurai. Although it is commonly believed that this tradition had its roots in the early Edo-period, in fact, what we normally think of as the system of *bushidō* thought is a modern construction. This tradition is more fully explained in the chapter devoted to it in the “Additional Topics” section of the book.

The Modern Period (1868 to the Present)

The government policy of relative seclusion ended with the western demand that Japan open itself to global trade, resulting in the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate and the restoration of the imperial system in 1868. To protect itself from colonization by western powers, Japan set out to become a

modern industrial and military power in its own right. The government sent its brightest young intellectuals to Europe and the United States to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for modernization. Along with medicine, engineering, agriculture, postal systems, and education, knowledge of western thought was prized as a means to understand the foundations of modern society and the ideas behind western science and technology. Naturally, this would involve intimate familiarity with western philosophy. After a brief period of interest in British utilitarianism and American pragmatism, Japanese philosophers began to look to Germany for guidance. As philosophizing left the Tokugawa academies and Buddhist scholarly centers for the newly established secular universities, it took on the form of a western academic discipline, calling itself *tetsugaku*, a loose translation of *philo-sophia*. Although defined initially as the study of western philosophy, *tetsugaku* slowly took on its own connotations as Japanese philosophers began to diverge from western systems to forge their own philosophical positions, often as direct critiques of western thought. In the background of these developments lay a newfound confidence that came from the highly successful modernization processes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

At the outset, the explicitly expressed guiding principle of modernization in Japan was to borrow western technology and science but maintain Asian values. As the process unfolded, however, it became clear to many leading Japanese intellectuals that modernization brought with it ideas of self, society, knowledge, education, and ethics that ran counter to many traditional Buddhist, Confucian, and Shinto values. In many ways, this was nowhere more visible than in the rethinking of the status of women in Japan. As in other countries, East and West, modernization in Japan brought a heightened sensitivity to the analysis of gender. The women's rights movements in the West of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a profound impact on many Japanese women intellectuals who were given access to Japanese higher education and publication venues for the first time in Japanese history. Women philosophical thinkers faced the challenge, on one hand, of defining themselves against the patriarchal and often misogynist ideologies of the premodern schools of Japanese thought and, on the other hand, of resisting many western assumptions about the nature of self and society underlying the Euro-American women's movement. This intellectually rich phenomenon does not fit readily into the categories of academic philosophy because it is so intertwined with direct social and political action. Therefore, we have given the topic its own chapter in the "Additional Themes" section.

In response to the new ideas from the West, a great many philosophers in the Japanese academy simply abandoned the premodern traditions as sources for their work, devoting themselves entirely to expositions and critiques of

major western figures; they constitute perhaps the majority of philosophy professors in Japan even today. Japanese philosophers in the paradigm of doing philosophy exactly as westerners do philosophy are well represented in western-language philosophical venues and do not fall within the purview of this volume. An exception is Japanese bioethics. Although most philosophy of science in Japan neatly fits the western models of that discipline, bioethics, by its very nature, crosses the line between science and cultural or social values. Therefore, Japanese philosophers often bring a fresh perspective to this otherwise western field. For that reason, we have also included a chapter on bioethics in the “Additional Themes” section of the volume.

In contrast to the majority of their colleagues in philosophy, some Japanese philosophers have been eager to graft the newly introduced discipline of western academic philosophy onto its premodern Japanese antecedents. The conflict with traditional values proposed a whole host of new questions: Can one articulate an original yet comprehensive epistemology that would give western empiricism and logic an appropriate place but subordinate it to a dominant “Asian” basis for thought and values? Can one develop a viable ethics that places agency in a socially interdependent, rather than isolated and discrete, individual? Can one construct an interpretation of artistry based in a mode of responsiveness that is also the ground for knowledge and moral conduct? Can one envision a political theory of the state that allows for personal expression without assuming a radical individualism? Along with these fundamental issues, a great deal of attention was devoted to a still more basic question: What is culture and what affect does it have on philosophizing?

Far from representing a retreat to premodern modes of thought, the majority of Japanese philosophers of this sort were committed to answering these questions in terms that would be persuasive on general rational grounds and that would make sense to the rest of the world, not only Japan. This did not stop nationalistic ideologues during the first half of the twentieth century from twisting these ideas to the service of an ethnocentric militarism and staining the image of Japanese philosophy as a whole in the process. The prospect of imprisonment or death for philosophizing in the “wrong direction” infected even the most creative of Japanese thinkers, silencing some, compromising others, and raising clouds of suspicion over the field that have yet to disperse completely.

Throughout the postwar period many Japanese philosophers have continued to specialize in the scholarly study of western philosophy. In these cases, the western continental traditions, modern as well as contemporary, and the study of the history of western philosophy, have tended to attract more attention than Anglo-American analytic modes of philosophizing. Especially since the 1960s, there are also, as one will find represented in this *Sourcebook*, individuals and

philosophers who have explored new provocative directions, drawing their ideas from a wide range of sources including western science, psychoanalysis, and phenomenology as well as traditional Asian thought and medicine. This phenomenon is another example of the pattern initiated in the *Seventeen-Article Constitution*: the assimilation and adaptation of foreign ideas against the background of an ongoing tradition.

DEFINING PHILOSOPHY

As a work on Japanese philosophy, the *Sourcebook* aims both to challenge the limitations of the prevailing definitions of “philosophy” and to demonstrate by its selection of texts some distinctively Japanese alternatives. In other words, it is presented as textual support for the thesis that long before the term *tetsugaku* was coined in the mid-nineteenth century to designate the imported academic discipline of philosophy, Japan already had in place a solid philosophical tradition rooted in an intellectual history that provided it with resources comparable to but very different from those that have sustained western philosophy. The criticisms against applying the term *philosophy* to “non-western” traditions like those treated here did play a part in Meiji-era discussions, as the Overview for that section of the book will show. As part of the overall framework of the *Sourcebook*, however, some initial account should be given of the positive and cogent reasons for designating currents in these traditions as philosophy.

The Case for Rethinking Philosophy

To begin with, philosophy by its nature is an evolving discipline, enriched by the plurality of perspectives that different times and cultures have brought to it, and impoverished by any attempt to harness it to specific political, economic, or religious regimes. In the context of its “western” heritage, too, we have always to speak of “philosophy in the making.” As such, the pursuit of philosophy is inseparable from the constant effort to reintegrate the past in the light of new modes of thought and new methods of critical evaluation.

At the same time, insofar as philosophy is embedded in the very world it aims to understand, it is forever denied a definitive external standpoint from which to present ideas as if they were detached from cultural and linguistic expression. In this sense, the definition of philosophy is permanently bound up with the practice of philosophizing within distinctive cultures. Moreover, philosophizing—if by that we broadly mean the critical investigation of deeply perplexing questions, such as what is the best way to live, what is true and how can we best know it, and what are our obligations to one another—is a widespread and perhaps even universal phenomenon, especially among highly

literate cultures. There is no a priori reason, therefore, to say that philosophy is limited to the way it has been construed in any one cultural context, whether it be the classical cultures of the Mediterranean basin or the modern cultures of the so-called western world. Rather, the challenge is to understand the context and rules of philosophizing in a variety of sometimes radically different environments. We can only judge how good a philosophical answer is after we are sure we have understood the question the answer is addressing. To do so, the most important thinkers to study are those who develop systematic philosophical articulations rather than ad hoc solutions to particular isolated issues. By understanding the projects of critical, systematic thinkers, we are better equipped to uncover the premises and rules of reasoning that inform their answers.

In the premodern Japanese context, these projects rarely coincide with those of the West. This makes it difficult for readers today to recognize the kinds of analysis, argumentation, reasoning, and style of disputation that characterize philosophical investigations in Japan and set it off from those derived from the ancient Greeks. One of the predominant assumptions in current academic philosophy is that philosophical thinking should be restricted to forms of rationality European in origin but presumed universal in scope and applicability. In the attempt to break with this imposition, the *Sourcebook* undertakes to confront the forms that rationality takes within a very different heritage. Instead of simply assuming that Japanese Confucian, Buddhist, and nativist thinkers did not know how to reason, explain, and analyze, we are summoned to recognize, criticize, and appropriately assimilate their very different contributions.

The challenge is not new. It has been brewing for more than two centuries through the increase of western access to eastern philosophies. What is more, the posture of intellectual hegemony that seeks to marginalize the challenge runs counter to the very spirit that has infused western philosophy since its beginnings.

Philosophy, especially since Kant, prides itself on being essentially self-reflexive. Disciplines like economics and history can be applied to cultures that had not developed theories of their own. Not so with philosophy. Precisely because it is critically self-conscious by nature, it cannot be applied to tacit, virtual, or unarticulated modes of reasoning. In other words, the claim to “discover” philosophical thought only in hindsight would be a contradiction in terms. If we were to apply too strictly the criterion of philosophy as always being self-conscious of itself as philosophy, however, we would have to exclude from the canon of western philosophy the pre-Socratics, whole blocs of Greek and medieval thinkers, probably even Rousseau and many other moderns with him—not to mention medieval Jewish, or Chinese and Indian thinkers. On the contrary, if we are to sustain the defining bond between philosophy and

thinking that reflects on its own assumptions and limitations, then the burden of studying other traditions is to uncover their own modes of critical thinking and self-understanding, undeterred by what our own tradition biases us to demand of them.

Japanese Senses of Philosophy

As practitioners of a notably self-reflexive tradition, modern Japanese thinkers have debated at least four distinct senses of the term *tetsugaku*, all of them self-conscious responses to a historical encounter with non-Japanese traditions, western and Asian. As such, each of the definitions reflects a particularly Japanese problematic.

First, following those Meiji-era critics who rejected out of hand the notion that Japan had any philosophy of its own, Japanese *tetsugaku* was taken to designate philosophy conducted by Japanese scholars in a European key. These include principally professional philosophers in academic positions who work on the texts of Plato, Kant, Heidegger, James, Bergson, Rorty, Derrida, and other western philosophers, adding their own critiques and refinements as they do so. They can be as “original” as any other philosopher composing in the same key, and as such there is nothing peculiarly “Japanese” about what they do. In short, Japanese philosophy in this first sense means simply philosophy of a Greco-European vintage distilled by people who happen to be Japanese. With few exceptions, such philosophers do not regularly analyze or even cite texts from their own tradition; and even where they do, there is no claim that these indigenous sources qualify as “philosophical.” For them, the methods and the themes of philosophy must be western in origin.

This Anglo-American-European approach to philosophy as it has been carried out in Japan places too severe a limit on *tetsugaku* and belies the fact that philosophy has always undergone development under the influence of “non-philosophical” traditions. For these reasons, Japanese philosophers who devote their studies strictly to traditional western philosophy have by and large been excluded from the *Sourcebook*.

In the second place, and at the other extreme, Japanese philosophy is taken to refer to classical Japanese thinking as it was formulated prior to the introduction of the European term and its accompanying discipline. As long as this thought deals with ultimate reality or the most general causes and principles of things, it is considered philosophical. Philosophy in this second sense may be shown to derive from or relate to Chinese thought, but it is not informed by European philosophy. Thus, one of the pioneers of *tetsugaku* in Japan, Inoue Tetsujirō, claimed to have discovered philosophy proper in premodern Japanese Confucian schools of thought, arguing that their concern with fundamental questions was comparable to those addressed in western philosophy.

This second approach to philosophy, although important in identifying fundamental questions, has tended to drift away from critical awareness of its own reconstructive nature. Such philosophy accounts for a sizable proportion of the *Sourcebook*, particularly in the premodern period, but is ultimately most interesting when viewed through the lens of later, more methodologically aware philosophical thought.

A third sense of Japanese philosophy acknowledges that philosophical methods and themes are principally western in origin, but insists that they can also be applied to premodern, prewesternized, Japanese thinking. Those who practice Japanese philosophy in this sense understand it primarily as an endeavor to reconstruct, explicate, or analyze certain themes and problems that are recognizably philosophical when viewed objectively. Works that deal with Dōgen's philosophy of being and time, or with Kūkai's philosophy of language, are examples of this third meaning. Granted, it takes a practiced hand to identify the philosophical import of premodern writing and engage them in the light of modern philosophical terms and methods. Moreover, even where engagement takes the form of a more or less explicit dialogue between Anglo-European-style philosophy and premodern Japanese texts, modern philosophical presuppositions often remain decisive.

A small number of philosophers in Japan allow for the kind of balanced dialogue where the critique is allowed to run in both directions. These thinkers, who understandably have been given a prominent place in this *Sourcebook*, not only read traditional Japanese texts in light of modern philosophy; they also use premodern concepts and distinctions to illuminate contemporary western philosophy and to propose alternative ways to solve modern or contemporary philosophical problems. Whether these endeavors unearth philosophy retrospectively from traditional Japanese thought, or go further to use that thought as a resource for current philosophical practice, their aim is inclusion: making the Japanese tradition part of an emerging, broader tradition of philosophy. One thinks here of the efforts of Ōmori Shōzō to reexamine the relation between words and objects by reinterpreting the theory of *kotodama*, the spirit of words; or of Yuasa Yasuo's reappraisal of the body-mind problem in the light of Japanese Buddhist texts. Japanese philosophy in this third sense, then, means traditional and contemporary Japanese thought as brought to bear on present-day philosophizing.

This third understanding of *tetsugaku* recognizes not only the historical fact of the Greek origins of western philosophy but also the enrichments made possible by the incorporation of non-philosophical sources and resources, including Asian intellectual history. It also understands philosophy as an unfinished work of deconstruction and reconstruction, a continuation of the radical questioning that has always been the hallmark of its self-understanding.

In general, the principle of selection at work in this *Sourcebook* inclines to this third sense of philosophy. That said, the clear disadvantage to this definition of Japanese philosophy is that it does not provide specific criteria to select the full range of texts and resources required to make the *Sourcebook* a representative anthology.

A fourth and final sense of Japanese philosophy concentrates on those qualities that explicitly set it off from non-Japanese philosophy. Japanese *tetsugaku* here designates thinking that is not only relatively autonomous and innovative but demonstrates that “markedly eastern or Japanese character” that Takahashi Satomi and Shimomura Toratarō recognized in the achievement of that most celebrated of twentieth-century philosophers, Nishida Kitarō. Insofar as this approach highlights contributions to philosophy that are *uniquely* Japanese, it has been criticized as an instance of inverted orientalism: an appraisal weighted in favor of things Japanese, stereotyping differences from things non-Japanese, and minimizing the importance of historical variants. In terms of the politics of defining philosophy, such a criticism of the fourth sense of Japanese philosophy ironically ends up supporting the attempt to strip *tetsugaku* of its Japaneseness, reducing what is left to no more than a vestige of western intellectual colonialism. Viewed in that light, the fourth sense of Japanese philosophy can be seen to be like a post-colonial attempt to identify and valorize a precolonized layer of Japanese ideas and values. In any event, the purpose in trying to locate specifically Japanese elements in a philosopher’s thought is to draw attention to that surpassing of sources, eastern as well as western, where Japanese philosophy has something to say to philosophies of a different provenance.

Obviously, this fourth definition of *tetsugaku* easily slides into neglect of the conditions for innovation and distinctive differentiation. Nevertheless, keeping this vulnerability in mind, we can generalize certain fundamental orientations as commonly or typically “Japanese.” Whatever singularity Japanese philosophy represents, it does not necessarily entail a fall into the vainglory of national pride. On the contrary, a critical awareness of the historical, cultural, and linguistic conditions that shape its thinking are a necessary condition for identifying original or creative contributions to philosophical thinking.

In the end, a catalogue of criteria for what is to count as philosophy cannot be drawn up in advance of an examination of the texts themselves. To come to a new definition that avoids the vicious circle, only the interplay between working definitions of philosophy and an acceptance of the historical records as a heuristic for challenging those definitions will do. In that sense, the preparation of this volume has been more in the nature of a thought experiment than a categorical proposal. It is offered as *a resource* for the ongoing practice of philosophizing, and not merely a collection of historical *sources belonging* to a particular field of inquiry we call philosophy.

Working Assumptions

Since this is a *Sourcebook*, it cannot reflect the variety of debate over how to interpret one or the other author or tradition, except as such debates are included in the texts extracted. By the same token, it does not aim at representing the whole of the thought of particular figures. Rather, the attempt has been made to select texts of general philosophical interest, even when this means choosing what would otherwise be considered minor texts. Still more obviously, no one can be more aware than the editors of how much has been left out, even in a volume extending to more than half a million words. For example, in defining the criteria of inclusion, we have limited our selections from living philosophers to those born before 1950. In part such arbitrary decisions are inevitable; in part some decisions do no more than mirror the interests and preferences of the editors.

At the same time, underlying the experiment at redefining philosophy are certain working assumptions that have only been hinted at obliquely in the foregoing. Here we may lay them out simply and without the fuller argumentation they deserve.

First, insofar as philosophy is inherently ongoing and dialogical, it relies on texts and their transmission both within and across cultures and traditions. Translation and the continued assimilation by succeeding generations are part and parcel of the practice of philosophy.

Second, the project of selecting and translating texts as examples of Japanese philosophy has necessitated certain linguistic adjustments, both semantic and syntactic. The overriding goal has been clarity of communication, which in turn requires a certain leeway with regards to the idiomatic conventions of specialists in the field. The balance is a delicate one. On the one hand, strict lexical fidelity easily produces texts that can be understood by the general reader only when accompanied by an extensive running commentary. Such an approach falls wide of the concerns of the *Sourcebook*. On the other, a translation should not distort the original merely to make it more familiar to the reader, since the subject matter and the method of inquiry can be as significant for their divergence from recognized philosophical practices as they are for their parallels. The process of assimilation assumes that philosophy proceeds by forming contrasts and articulating alternatives, and that this process in turn derives as much from reading and questioning the texts as entering into the fuller context that only linguistic and historical expertise can bring. It is hoped that the translations will aid readers in thinking through the texts rather than simply thinking about them. Moreover, to the extent that the definition of philosophy is one of the aims of the *Sourcebook*, the volume itself is an unfinished project. The challenge is to let the texts themselves provide criteria for identifying and developing a wider understanding of what it means to philosophize.

Third, the reader familiar with western philosophy needs to have some idea of what to expect in the way of novelty in these pages. The traditional modern western philosophical canon has more or less systematically assumed a universal logic that is conducive to theoretical science pursued for its own sake: it searches for a reality that changes according to fixed laws or a nature independent of human artifice, all in service to knowledge as objective and justifiable. Still, we need to entertain the possibility of cultural logics where propositions are not separable from linguistic expressions, where reality is what is actualized and not merely what is settled from the beginning, where knowledge is practical and transformative, and where the natural and human worlds are closely intertwined. In other words, whereas philosophy has traditionally been considered timeless, reflective, discursive, analytical, rational, skeptical, aimed at clarity through opposition, focused on principles, and deriving definite conclusions through sound inference or deduction, engagement with Japanese philosophy needs to allow for a style of thinking that rather puts the emphasis on being organic, generative, allusive, relational, syncretic, aimed at contextual origins and underlying obscurities, and negation as a way to transforming perspective.

TRANSLATING THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDIOM

For readers without a background in Japanese history and language, the translation of Japanese philosophy into English obviously must render texts from one idiom into another. The original language is obviously important to the formation of ideas, but if those ideas are to reach a wider audience and to receive the critical attention of as many philosophical readers as possible, reliable translations are crucial. What if Aquinas' readings of Aristotle had been dismissed on the ground he read him in Latin? What would have been the impact of Kierkegaard if only those philosophers who could read Danish were allowed to use his ideas critically? Still, reading Kūkai or Dōgen in a western language is not the same as reading Kierkegaard. After all, he was part of the European philosophical tradition and was conversant with many of the same philosophical works that his readers in English, German, French, Spanish, or Italian would know. What is more, he shared with them a common background in the Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman worldview, very different from the worldview of Kūkai or Dōgen which had its roots in China, Korea, and India. In the case of modern Japanese philosophers, many of whom were trained abroad, we find greater familiarity with the western philosophical idiom. This is one reason so much attention in the West has focused on modern rather than premodern Japanese philosophy. Nevertheless, the intellectual background of most modern Japanese philosophers has more in common with Kūkai,

Dōgen, Shinran, Razan, Sorai, and Norinaga than it does with Plato, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kant, or Hegel.

This brings us to a second and more difficult task for translation: to bridge the gap in assumptions between the western philosophical reader and the original Japanese thought. There are two things we can do. First, whenever we try to understand philosophers from any tradition, we need to pay close attention to the questions they are trying to answer. It is easy to make the error of asking *our* questions of a philosopher from another tradition or time. For example, in his doctrine of the oneness of mind and body, Dōgen was not addressing Cartesian dualism anymore than Aristotle was in his theory of the inseparability of formal and material cause. To understand Dōgen's philosophy, we must at least start with the issues that his philosophy was addressing, such as how Zen practices relate to enlightenment and whether one becomes a buddha through mind or body or both.

This much would seem obvious, if not for the disturbing evidence that the more professional training one has in western philosophy, the more difficult it is to sympathize with cultural and intellectual assumptions from non-western traditions. The irony is that this lack of sympathy is a betrayal of the founding ideals of philosophy itself. Plato and Aristotle, Athenians to the core, would not consider ignoring the thought of the Milesians in Asia Minor, any more than Thomas Aquinas would ignore the Arab and Jewish theology of his time. Leibniz studied Chinese neo-Confucianism to help clarify his own ideas of preestablished harmony, and Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Emerson would not think of ignoring ideas from India brought to the West through the translations by missionaries and scholars. In the past century or two, however, to secure its place in the university, philosophy has become an academic *Wissenschaft* fitted out with its own "scientific" foundations and methodologies. As a result, students of western philosophy grow agitated when the Japanese philosopher they are reading does not answer, and in some cases does not even appear to *understand*, what to them are the most obvious questions.

We therefore need at least a basic articulation of common assumptions and motifs that run throughout the Japanese tradition as general tendencies in its philosophical thinking. These are offered not as an orientalist project of essentializing the thinking of the "other," but quite the contrary, to deconstruct the hidden assumptions of the western philosophical reader, especially when those are *not* the assumptions of the Japanese thinker being read. There is no way properly to judge generalizations about Japanese philosophy without traversing the territory for oneself. We present the following motifs only as landmarks for negotiating a path through what remains, when all is said and done, a tradition very different from that of western philosophy.

The Preference for Internal Rather than External Relations

Most Japanese philosophers have historically favored the understanding of relations as being internal instead of external. That is, if I say “*a* and *b* are related,” the paradigm of external relations assumes that *a* and *b* can exist independently, but insofar as there is a relation between them, a third factor *R* is required to connect the two. By contrast, the paradigm of internal relations assumes that if I say “*a* and *b* are related,” I mean that *a* and *b* are intrinsically interlinked or overlapping, and that the *R* is the shared part of *a* and *b*. If our modern western philosophical tradition tends to make external relations the default, most Japanese philosophers throughout history are inclined towards thinking in terms of internal relations. Although both modes of thought are to be found in both traditions, awareness of this difference in fundamental orientation can help postpone hasty judgments and help direct attention to suitable cognates.

Take, for example, the relation between knower and known. If that relation is external, the philosopher will assume that the subject (the knower) and the object (the known) exist independently and that they become connected through the creation of a third item, the relation called “knowledge.” Various theories will arise to explain what makes the knowledge “true.” When we think in terms of internal relations, however, knowledge represents not what connects the *independently* existing knower and known, but rather the overlap, the *interdependence* between knower and known. The more expansive the knowledge, the greater the overlap and the more inseparable knower and known become. The ideal would be the point in which there is complete interpenetration between knower and reality such that there is no obstruction between mindfulness and reality. Such a model of knowledge stresses engagement and praxis in preference to observation and analysis. Whereas a model of knowledge emphasizing external relations involves making a connection between knower and known, a model emphasizing internal relations involves erasing, or at least permeating, the artificial boundaries between knower and known.

A first corollary of this fundamental orientation is that the ideal knower is not distinguished by a dispassionate, detached, disinterested mentation but by an engagement of the whole person. If knowledge is an internal relation, then it is always somatic as well as intellectual. It involves concrete praxis as well as abstract speculation. This is reflected in the fact that one of the principal Japanese words for “mind,” *kokoro*, carries the meaning of affective sensitivity as well as rational thought, a meaning prior to the bifurcation of bodily and mental acts. Further, if one assumes human being in its entirety to be part of the world, then knowledge of the world, in the final analysis, means that part of the world knows itself.

A second corollary concerns the transmission of knowledge. If one assumes

that knowledge R can serve as an external link between the knower a and the known b , this means that it is basically something objective and independent, something that can be passed on systematically from one independent mind to another. But where internal relations are primary, teacher and student form an interdependent unity of praxis that enables the transmission and assimilation of insight. This relation in turn reflects an understanding of truth as modeling oneself—thought, word, and deed—after reality by immersing oneself selflessly in it under the guidance of a mentor. In the West, this mode of learning is more akin to the master-apprentice relation than it is to the accumulation of knowledge as information.

A third corollary to the fundamental orientation of internal relations is the emphasis on understanding *how* knowledge comes about rather than simply *what* it is. Thus, for example, Japanese poetics is less concerned with articulating the characteristics of a good poem than with retracing the path that ended in a good poem. The priority given to the “way” over the focus on mere technique has an important role to play not only in the performing arts but in philosophical argument as well.

A Holograph of Whole and Parts

The inclination to pursue internal relations affects more than epistemology. It reaches across a range of philosophical questions because of its association with another guiding assumption of Japanese philosophy: the unity of whole and parts. On a model of external relations, we would say that the whole consists of its parts and the relations connecting them to each other. We see this assumption at work in the atomistic view that to understand something, we break it down into its smallest parts, analyze the nature of those parts, and then explain how those discrete parts are linked in external relationships with each other. Alternatively, a “holographic” approach sees a “whole inscribed” in each of its parts as, for example, the DNA of every cell contains the genetic blueprint for the whole body of which the cell is a part. Not only are the parts in the whole, but the whole is in each of its parts. This is only possible if the parts are related internally rather than externally. Holographic thinking, though not entirely absent in the western philosophical tradition, is very much the default mode of thinking in the Japanese.

This is most evident in Buddhist thinkers, but is even more basically rooted in native animistic religious practice. In the modern West, when we find a part standing for the whole, we tend to consider it merely a figure of speech, a case of metaphor or synecdoche. Within Japanese thought, however, the holographic relation is often assumed to be as literal and factual as the DNA that links every cell with the whole body.

Argument by Relegation

The preference for internal relations and an interdependence of wholes and parts is also reflected in the logic of argumentation by relegation. Here opposing positions are treated not by refuting them, but by accepting them as true, but only true as a part of the full picture. That is, rather than denying the opposing position, I compartmentalize or marginalize it as being no more than one part of the more complete point of view for which I am arguing. This is different from argument by refutation, a form of disputation very common in the West and, interestingly, also in India. In that form of argument, the purpose is to obliterate the opposing position by showing it to be faulty in either premises or logic. The argument by refutation implicitly accepts the laws of the excluded middle and the law of non-contradiction. That is, assuming there is no category mistake in the formulation of the position, either p or $not-p$ must be true and they cannot both be true in the same way at the same time. Therefore, in the refutation form of argumentation, if I can show the opposing position to be false, my position is affirmed with no need to say anything more.

Argument by relegation, which is much more common in Japanese philosophy, has its own advantages. Logically, it broadens the scope of discussion. Even if I am persuaded that another's view is incorrect in some respect, it is nevertheless a *real* point of view and my theory of reality must be able to account for its existence. It carries with it the obligation to show how, given the way reality is, such a partial or wrongheaded view is possible in the first place. Rhetorically, an argument by relegation has the appearance of being irenic or conciliatory rather than agonistic or adversarial, but if we both share the model of argument by relegation, we will indeed be competing over which position can relegate which. Argument by relegation does engage in a kind of synthesis, but the purpose of this synthesis is not to show the complementarity of positions, but instead the superiority of one position over the other. This style of argument is pervasive in Japanese intellectual history and helps, in part, explain the enduring fascination with Hegelian dialectical thought in modern Japan, but with an important difference that brings us to a final generalization.

Philosophy in Medias Res

Hegel's dialectic used sublation to transform opposing positions from being externally related as exclusive opposites into a more integrated, internally related synthesis. As easily understandable as this was to modern Japanese philosophers, they diverged at a fundamental point. Rather than embrace Hegel's vision of a future telos towards which history was evolving, they turned the question on its head to ask where the dialectic had come from. If Hegel recapitulated an entire western tradition of bringing opposites into a final unity, Japanese philosophers were drawn to the logical place, the ontological or

experiential ground of unity out of which reality split into discrete, mutually exclusive polarities. To see the diversity as ultimately real is equivalent to confusing what is discrete in the abstract from what is unified in its most concrete reality. Thus, to return to an earlier example, the mind-body problem is not a matter of establishing connections between a mind and a body existing independently, but rather of asking how the concrete body-mind unity came to be thought of as a relation between independent, opposing substances.

In its inquiry into the abstract diversification of a single, unified reality, Japanese philosophers are not trying to lay out a historical aetiology that harks back to a distant past before things had fallen apart. They are concerned with recovering and expressing the experience of the here-and-now within which the original unity of reality is to be recognized. The preference for doing philosophy *in medias res* begins in the gaps left by abstract concepts about reality. It is a kind of experiential ground out of which the abstractions of philosophy emerge and to which they must answer. Here the use of negative (and not simply apophatic) language is crucial. The ground of meaning must itself be intrinsically meaningless; the ground of the world of being and becoming must be intrinsically empty, a nothingness. Just as often, the language can be radically affirmative in a sense that western languages find clumsy, as in Buddhist expressions of “suchness” or “of-itselfness” of reality, to which we might prefer something like William James’ allusion to the “blooming, buzzing confusion” out of which all thought and reflection emerges.

EDITORIAL CONVENTIONS

Our aim in editing the over two hundred translations that make up this book has been to spare the reader as much inconsistency as possible and to make for an overall more readable text while at the same time allowing for a wide variety of style and interpretation. The balance is a delicate one and required the full collaboration of all three editors on the volume in its structure and content. From the outset, we decided it best to dispense with some technical apparatus that specialists might expect. Where words have been added to a translation to do no more than adjust syntax or specify a pronominal reference, the square brackets ordinarily used to set them off have been omitted. All other annotations have been kept to a minimum and relegated to footnotes, transitional comments, or the Glossary. All this has been done with an eye to making the texts read more smoothly for a wider audience without forfeiting fidelity to the original. For the same reasons, minor adjustments to the wording of existing translations have been made rather freely, without drawing any attention to the fact. In cases where a published translation has been substantially revised, an indication is given in the corresponding bibliographic reference at the end of the volume.

'nothingness'	Raised brackets (‘ ’) indicate technical terms treated in the Glossary (first appearance in a chapter only).
Motoori Norinaga*	Asterisk (*) indicates authors given their own chapter (first appearance in a chapter only).
[RDM]	Cf. the list of Translators and Contributors.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> NŌ AND THE BODY KONPARU Zenchiku 1455, 197–204 (24–31) </div>	Title of selection Author and date of work as it appears in the Bibliography, pages of citation in original source (pages of citation in English translation as given in the Bibliography, where applicable)

In addition, the following conventions have been adopted throughout:

Transitional comments. In a few cases, particularly in classical Buddhist thinkers, comments have been inserted by the editors into a selected passage to aid in the transition of an abbreviated text. These comments are extracted and set in italic type.

Footnotes. In order to keep footnotes to a minimum, information supplied by the editors concerning technical terms, texts, and historical persons is provided only on the first appearance and offset in square brackets. Footnotes belonging to the original text are left without brackets.

Personal names. As a rule, native Japanese, Chinese, and Korean names are given with the family name first, followed by the personal name. Since Japanese often refers to classical personalities by their personal name, artistic name, or ordination name (for example, Motoori Norinaga is commonly referred to as Norinaga), a cross-reference has been added to the concluding Index. Chinese names are generally given with their Chinese pronunciation, which has meant adjusting some of the existing translations that employ Japanese pronunciations. In such cases, both names are referenced in the concluding Index.

Glossary of technical terms. Terms that appear with some frequency in the volume and are likely to be unfamiliar to many readers have been gathered together into the Glossary, where they are given their equivalents in Japanese, Chinese, and Sanskrit as required, along with a brief and generalized definition. These terms are flagged with raised brackets (‘ ’) on their first appearance in a chapter, unless they are defined in context. As far as possible, English equivalents have been employed in the texts. Terms in Japanese and Sanskrit that have come into common use are generally given

without diacritical marks, with a few exceptions (for example, *nirvāṇa* and *kōan*). Pages on which terms in the Glossary appear are included at the end of each entry.

Chronology. A Chronological Table of Authors has been included at the end of the volume to help locate thinkers in their respective eras. Recognizing minor disagreements among scholars concerning the starting and ending dates of certain historical eras (the Tokugawa era, for example), dating here has been standardized in accordance with the *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*.

Chinese and Japanese script. All Chinese characters (or sinographs) and Japanese script (hiragana and katakana) have been omitted from the text. The Sino-Japanese written form of proper names, places, and transliterated terms are provided in the Glossary or General Index. Chinese names and terms have been uniformly transcribed in pinyin.

Bibliographical information. Complete bibliographic information is provided in the Cumulative Bibliography at the end of the volume. Where the collected works of an author in question are available, they have been used to cite the original texts. Selections that appear in more easily accessible standard collections have also been identified as such. Classical Chinese works cited in the text are included among the abbreviations at the beginning of the Bibliography, along with a listing of one or more standard English versions.

Cumulative bibliography. The Cumulative Bibliography is made up of four parts: (1) abbreviations used in the text; (2) abbreviations used in the bibliography; (3) complete information on texts and translations cited in major selections; (4) other sources cited briefly in the text.

Indexes and searches. If you wish to explore a technical term, start with the Glossary where you will find both a definition and a complete list of occurrences in the *Sourcebook*. If you are interested in philosophical concepts, begin with the Thematic Index, where you will find a general scheme with particular themes cross-referenced to the body of the book. To search for proper names, titles of classical works, or special terms, you will find a complete list of page references in the General Index.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We regret that there is no way except by a general acknowledgment to pay gratitude to the many translators and contributors who put up with our editorial quirks and endless queries over details without losing faith in the overall aims of the volume. In particular, the dozens of scholars from around the world, who participated in workshops held in Japan and abroad, debating the structure and contents of the *Sourcebook*, bringing their expertise to bear on the project, and sustaining us in the hope of seeing it to completion, have kept us constantly aware that a book of over half a million words is the work of many more minds and hands than our own. They have aided us in everything but the mistakes, which we have managed quite well on our own.

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The Editors
La Serra de Pruit, Catalunya
 1 August 2010

Prelude
The Shōtoku Constitution

Prelude

The Shōtoku Constitution

It is folly to think of any single historical person or event as marking the beginning of philosophy in a given culture. Still, any treatment of a philosophical tradition has to start somewhere and we may take a cue for how to proceed from Aristotle. In his narrative about the development of his own intellectual heritage, Aristotle crowned Thales of Miletus as the first philosopher (*Metaphysics* 1.3) and to the present day, most histories of western philosophy follow Aristotle's lead. He believed Thales to be the earliest Hellenic thinker to seek not merely an explanation for everything, but an explanation based in the natural rather than supernatural or mythological, and grounded in reason and observation rather than in tales about Olympian deities. For Aristotle, that characteristic epitomized the philosophical legacy he and his contemporaries had inherited. The lesson we take from this, then, is that we consider a tradition's philosophical origins not to recapture some pristine moment when philosophy began, but to contextualize the nature of philosophy by selecting an ancient figure or text as emblematic, serving as an inspiration for what would follow.

Applying this to the Japanese philosophical tradition, a good place to begin is the *Seventeen-Article Constitution*, long believed to have been issued by the legendary figure of Prince Regent Shōtoku (574?–622?) in the year 604. This work is hardly more philosophically sophisticated than Thales' pronouncements that all things are water and that everything is full of spirits. Nonetheless, the *Constitution* is exemplary of what many Japanese philosophers have in fact done throughout the ensuing fourteen centuries.

First, it attempts to harmonize diverse ideas from various sources, giving each idea its function within a more comprehensive system in response to the particular needs of Japan at the time. For Shōtoku, Confucianism teaches proper social behavior and governmental leadership, whereas Buddhism teaches self-understanding and control of inner motivations. Second, the *Constitution* emphasizes the continuity between the social and natural worlds, urging humans to act in accord with the patterns and cycles of nature. And lastly, it addresses the pursuit of truth as a collective enterprise. Specifically, the Constitution counsels:

- (1) that we are not all that different from each other and so insight may come from anyone among us; thus, it is as important to include all that is true as it is to exclude what is false;
- (2) that impassioned, egoistic motivations about winning an argument can lead us astray from finding the truth; and
- (3) that we think most effectively—compensating for each other’s weaknesses—by cooperation and synthesis instead of confrontation.

Overall, that is probably as much a prolegomenon for a philosophical method as we could find in the pre-Socratic Greeks. And like the role of the pre-Socratics for the West, the *Shōtoku Constitution* sets the tone for much of what would follow in the Japanese philosophical tradition.

[TPK]

THE SEVENTEEN-ARTICLE CONSTITUTION

SHŌTOKU 604, 12–23

1. Take harmony to be of the highest value and take cooperation to be what is most honored. All persons are partisan, and few indeed are sufficiently broad-minded. It is for this reason that some offend against lord and father, and some transgress wantonly against neighboring villagers. But when those above are harmonious and those below live congenially with each other, and when mutual accord prevails in resolving the affairs of the day, then all matters without exception will be properly and effectively dispatched.

2. Revere in earnest the three treasures: the Buddha, the ‘dharma’, and the clergy, for these are the final refuge for all sentient beings and are the most sacred and honored objects in the faith of all nations. What persons in what age would fail to cherish this dharma? There are few persons who are truly wicked. Most can be instructed and brought into the fold. Without repairing to these three treasures, wherein can the crooked be made straight?

3. On receiving imperial commands, execute them. The lord is the sky and the ministers are the earth. When the sky covers and shelters all and the ministers provide their support, the cycle of the four seasons turns smoothly and all of the life forces in nature flourish. If the earth were ever to take up the function of the sky, it would be an utter catastrophe. Thus the lord dictates and the minister receives; those above take action and those below obey. Therefore on receiving imperial commands attend to them scrupulously; to do otherwise would be disastrous.

4. The conduct of all of the various high ministers and officials must be rooted in the observance of ritual ‘propriety’. As for the root of bringing proper

order to the people, its very core lies in the observance of ritual propriety. If those above do not observe ritual propriety, those below will be disorderly, and where those below do not observe ritual propriety they will inevitably succumb to wrongdoing. Thus, when the various ministers comport themselves according to ritual propriety, rank and status is properly observed. And when the people comport themselves with ritual propriety, the nation is properly ordered of its own accord.

5. Put an end to inducements and overcome partiality; be fair-minded in hearing and adjudicating lawsuits. The indictments brought by the people are endless, and if they are so numerous on any given day, how many of them will pile up when measured in years? When those who preside over lawsuits take the garnering of personal profit as their one constant and those who hear litigation do so with a view to receiving bribes, the cases brought by the propertied will be like stones thrown into water, while those brought by the indigent will be like water thrown against stone. This being so, the poor people will not know where to turn, and the proper way of ministering to them will have been compromised.

6. Punish wickedness and encourage goodness: such was a golden rule of antiquity. Thus, do not let goodness go unnoticed and, on seeing wickedness, set it right. As for sycophants and charlatans, they are a sharp weapon that can bring about the overthrow of the state and a lance that can annihilate the people. Indeed, glib talkers and flatterers are good at rehearsing the faults of their subordinates to those above, and at impugning and slandering the character of their superiors on encountering those below. Such people know nothing of loyalty to their lord or of kindness to the people. Indeed, they are the root of untold chaos.

7. Persons should each have their charge, and should manage what is appropriate to their office without interfering in the business of others. When the worthy and the wise are appointed to office, the sounds of praise rise to the heavens. When the depraved are given office, calamities abound. There are few indeed who are naturally wise; it takes sustained reflection to become sagacious. In all things great and small, getting the right person is essential for success. Whatever the occasion, whether it be urgent or otherwise, when the worthy person arrives on the scene, all will be resolved. Understand this, and the nation will be long-lived and its temples of state will be free of danger. It is thus that the ancient sage kings sought the right person to fit the office and did not assign the office to accommodate the person.

8. All of the various high ministers and officials should arrive at court early and retire late. They must not be remiss in superintending the affairs of state; an entire day is hardly sufficient to attend to all of its business. It is thus that if

officials show up late they cannot cope with urgent business, and if they retire early, the work will not get done.

9. Trust is the root of what is fair and just. There must be trust in everything: it is the difference between good and bad, between success and failure. If the various ministers trust each other, what cannot be accomplished? And if they fail to do so, all will end in ruin.

10. Contain the fury; rein in the irate glare. Do not respond with anger at personal differences. People all have their own mind and all hold their own opinions. What is right for us can be wrong for them; what is wrong for them can be right for us. And there is no guarantee that we are the sages and that they are the fools. We are all just ordinary people. How can anyone set a rule for what is right and what is wrong? We all have our share of wisdom and of foolishness like an endless circle. This being the case, even though others glare at us irately, let us instead worry about our own failings. And even though we alone are in the right, let us go along with the multitude and offer them our support.

11. Give careful scrutiny to merit and fault, for rewards and punishments must be on the mark. These days, reward does not follow upon merit nor does punishment follow upon crime. You high ministers who would superintend the affairs of state: be properly clear on rewards and punishments.

12. Neither provincial governors nor local authorities can exact levies from the people. The nation cannot have two lords and the people do not serve two masters. All of the people within the nation's boundaries take the sovereign as master, and those officials and governors that he appoints are all his ministers. How can they presume, along with the legitimate government, to levy taxes on the people?

13. All of the various persons entrusted as officials are alike in having to attend to the duties of their offices. Sometimes because of illness and sometimes because of being dispatched on business, they fall behind in their work. But the day they return to their duties, they need to catch up on what they need to know. They do not want to obstruct public business on account of being uninformed.

14. All of the various ministers and officials should be free from envy and jealousy. If we are jealous of others, they will be jealous of us. The trouble brought on by envy and jealousy knows no bounds. It is thus that if someone's intelligence is greater than one's own, one becomes displeased, and if their talents are more generous than one's own, one becomes envious. It is no wonder that we encounter a truly worthy person only every five hundred years and that it is difficult to get even one sage in a whole millennium. But if we do not have worthy persons and sages, how can we govern the nation properly?

15. Turn away from private interests to serve the public: this is the proper way

of the minister. Generally speaking, persons moved by private interests are sure to have disaffections, and being resentful toward others, are sure to be contrary. Being contrary, they will allow their private concerns to obstruct the interests of the public. As resentment rises, it is hostile to the forces of order and subverts the law. Stated above is the first principle: those above and below should be harmonious. Is this not the same thing?

16. Employ the people at the proper time: such was a golden rule of the ancients. Thus, during the winter months when the people have leisure they can be conscripted for public works. But spring through autumn is the farming and silk-raising season, and the people should not be recruited as *corvée* labor. If they do not farm, what will they eat? If they do not raise silkworms, what will they wear?

17. Important matters of state should not be decided unilaterally; they must be discussed, as needed, with others. Small affairs are less important and do not require such consultation. It is only in coming to discuss weighty matters where there is a worry something might go amiss that such affairs should become a matter of shared deliberation, thereby guaranteeing the right outcome. [RTA]

Buddhist Traditions

Kūkai

Kakuban

Myōe

Nichiren

Original Enlightenment Debates

Jiun Sonja

Ishizu Teruji

Nakamura Hajime

Tamaki Kōshirō

Buddhist Traditions Overview

Of the three streams of ethico-religious culture shaping Japanese philosophy over the past fourteen centuries—Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism—Buddhism has been the most influential in shaping how the Japanese have thought about the most difficult and universal questions of human existence. This is partly because of the harmonious relationship among the three systems during the ancient and medieval periods. At that time, Japan's Shinto-related *kami* worship addressed such practical issues as protection and fertility while Confucianism formed the basis of ethics, political theory, and education, with little debate about *which* form of Confucianism should be normative. By contrast, during those same periods, the Buddhists engaged in a lively intellectual culture of debate that pervaded all aspects of Japanese society. Conversely, when similar debates heated up among both the Confucians and the Shinto-related Native Studies thinkers in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, Buddhists were focusing most of their attention on philology, the systemization of doctrine, and the building of institutions. Reflecting this historical pattern, most premodern Buddhist thinkers represented in this *Sourcebook* predate the year 1600, the beginning of the Edo period, and most premodern Confucian and Shinto thinkers postdate it.

Buddhism began to trickle into Japan by individual immigrant families from Korea and China from as early as the fourth century, but its real impact began in the mid-sixth century with a political alliance between the Japanese emperor and the king of the Korean state of Paekche. Within fifty years, a robust exchange of teachers and students was underway that expanded to the other Korean states and China proper. At that time Chinese was the lingua franca in all three nations for Buddhist scriptures and their exegeses. As a result, it served as the universal language of communication for Buddhist thought throughout East Asia, a phenomenon that continued until the nineteenth century. Japan invented a phonetic syllabary for its own language in the ninth century, but it was largely limited to poetry and fiction until the thirteenth century, when it first became acceptable to express Buddhist thought in Japanese rather than

Chinese. Although Buddhist writing in Japanese did not replace Chinese as the language of scripture, some of the most original and influential Japanese religious and philosophical thinkers appeared at that time.

In most Buddhist societies we do not see a distinction between “philosophy” and “religion” until the modern period, in large part because Buddhist traditions themselves commonly use dialectic and analysis when presenting their own teachings, thereby drawing society’s philosophical minds into their doctrinal fold. In this, Japan is no exception. The particular form that Buddhism took in each country, moreover, was determined equally by the philosophical predilections of the recipient nation and the particular state of development of the imported religion at the time. In the case of Japan, the pre-Buddhist or “archaic” paradigm of Japanese religious life was an animism in which humankind was largely viewed as an integral part of nature. Life and death were understood to be natural processes not requiring either metaphysical justification or an inquiry into their teleological meaning. Most scholars find a very weak sense of transcendence in ancient Japanese religious thought in general: powerful or influential individuals were expected to become gods in their postmortem state, remaining close to the earth to guide and protect those left behind. As a basically positive view of humans and their place in the world, the assumption was that the dead were not entirely gone but remained involved in the affairs of the living. Buddhism’s arrival, however, raised a host of serious questions about life and death, transcendent divinities, and the question of teleology for not only individual existence but also for the world as a whole. Moreover, there were some accidents of history accompanying the timing of Buddhism’s arrival that were to have long-range effects.

One concerned the notion of history itself. Indian Buddhism is known for having a weak historical consciousness. There is typically little dating of texts, images, or constructed sites such as temples, shrines, and stupas. Chinese Buddhism, by contrast, reflects the Chinese concern for marking time. Therefore, we typically have records of when images or buildings were completed, when texts were copied or printed, and so forth. Responding to a serious persecution of Buddhism in northern China mixed with various suggestions about historical decline scattered throughout the scriptures coming from India, Chinese Buddhists at the end of the sixth century became convinced that there was a fixed sequence of historical periods marking the decline of their religious tradition after the death of its founder, ‘Shakyamuni’ Buddha. They believed they were entering the third and “final age of the dharma,” generally referred to as *‘mappō’* in Japan. This theory implied that the possibility of liberation or salvation was greatly reduced. This is precisely when Chinese Buddhism began to significantly transform Korean society and from Korea, to make its way to Japan. The paradoxical result is that just as it was completely transforming

Korean society and would do the same in Japan, Buddhism was received by the Japanese as a religious system not in ascendancy but in decline. This initial sense of crisis that accompanied the arrival of Buddhist thought in Japan gave rise to a sense of resignation about life and its possibility for change. Yet, a certain freedom of thought also sprang from a mentality that “desperate times call for desperate measures.”

One important yet not always explicit presumption of Japanese Buddhist thought is the deep-seated belief in the universal salvation of everyone. In original Indian Buddhism, there was a presumption that each individual can or will be liberated *eventually*, but this was not to be expected in this lifetime. Karmic reality is such that every living being is on a different timetable, meaning that while some may achieve ‘nirvāṇa’ in this lifetime, most require a number of future lifetimes to reach that goal.

This Indian presumption about transmigration changed as Buddhism moved eastward into China, Korea, and Japan because it was in direct contradiction with East Asian beliefs about the dead. In the Indian concept of ‘samsara’, the ‘karma’ from this life that determines a future rebirth did not necessarily maintain one’s continued connection to the same family over different rebirths; in fact, to be reborn even in the same country would be a rarity. In pre-Buddhist Japan, however, the dead were ritually transformed into ancestors charged with protecting the family. Thus, to the degree that one’s karmically determined transmigration was inviolable, ancestor worship became philosophically problematic. Even if someone did attain nirvāṇa and become a buddha, a buddha’s compassion is directed equally toward all living beings—not merely human beings and certainly not specifically one’s own family. Hence, expecting such special consideration from your ancestor who became a buddha would make no sense.

Yet, the way of thinking that Japan learned from its Buddhist predecessors in Korea and China was already working against the complete acceptance of karma as deterministic. By the seventh century in China, we find the creation of interpretive paradigms that stressed practices capable of bringing liberation at an accelerated pace, an idea that subverts the moral inevitability inherent in an individual’s stored karma. Within a century these newly formed systems of understanding were planting deep roots in Japan, forming the foundation for its most dominant philosophical Buddhist traditions—‘Kegon’, ‘Tendai’, ‘Shingon’, Zen, ‘Pure Land’, and Nichiren*—all of which argued for the potential in anyone to access the power of the sacred and attain the ultimate goal of nirvāṇa in either this lifetime or the one immediately following. In this regard there was an interesting debate in the ninth century between Saichō and Tokuitsu (781?–842?), two monks of rival Buddhist sects, over a Buddhist theory that categorizes individuals in terms of their inherent spiritual potential. Tokuitsu’s

'Hossō' School accepted the standard Indian model of five categories, called *gotra* in Sanskrit, the last of which is *agotra*, meaning "no category." Tokuitsu argued along strict doctrinal lines that, karmically speaking, the people in this group are simply born without any possibility of attaining nirvāṇa. But Saichō won out with his Tendai School's belief in a different set of scriptures that teach the universal potential for 'buddhahood', regardless of how someone may otherwise appear, thereby rejecting the five *gotra* theory entirely.

One difficulty some present-day western readers may have in following Japanese Buddhist thought is that its style of argument is typically based on the model of Buddhist exegetical analysis. With few exceptions, that model demands that philosophical statements must have a scriptural correlation. In saying this, however, it is important to point out that the Japanese thinkers had access to hundreds of Indian sutras and commentaries available in Chinese translation as well as hundreds of exegetical Buddhist essays written in China. Because these were all given nearly equal authority, there was a wide range of material for Japanese thinkers to choose from and, given the riches of religious and philosophical perspectives in the Buddhist traditions, one could find proof texts for an extraordinarily wide range of positions. Therefore, once the proof text criterion was met, the strength of the argument was evaluated in terms of coherence, comprehensiveness, pragmatic usefulness, and the strength of critiques of opposing positions. The major drawback was that participation in the debates required a serious education devoted to learning complex systems of doctrine in the foreign language of Chinese, which itself was riddled with little understood Sanskrit words.

Beginning in the sixth century, Indian Buddhists developed their own epistemological and logical tradition based on the *pramāṇa*, the valid sources of knowledge. Those Indian theories of knowledge resemble some western systems of epistemology, but very few of those works appeared in Chinese translation, and those that did were quite difficult to read in their Chinese form. As a result, Buddhist logic never took hold in East Asia, including Japan. Probably the main obstacle was linguistic. Sanskrit thinkers often differentiated subtle shades of meaning among various nouns and participles that had been formed from the same verbal root, thereby developing an extraordinarily rich and nuanced lexicon for philosophical analysis. For an uninflected language like classical Chinese that lacked a linguistic analog to this, however, such linguistic-philosophical distinctions were simply impossible to express in any straightforward way. This is just one example of how Indian argumentative style is heavily dependent on linguistic analysis, a tendency particularly evident in treatises on logic. By contrast, the Chinese at that time lacked a vocabulary for discussing grammar since meaning was largely based on word order and semantic context. Thus, despite the significant influence of Indian Buddhist logic on subsequent

Indian and Tibetan thought, no active intellectual tradition of logical inquiry developed in East Asia until the twentieth century.

Rather than inquiring into the rules for acquiring knowledge, the vast majority of Japanese Buddhist thinkers sought to explain the meaning of what we know or have received. Thus their writing tends to be hermeneutical or aesthetic in tone, offering hope in the midst of the presumed theory of historical decline. Kūkai* (774–835), the founder of Shingon Buddhism, was the first to introduce esoteric or ‘Vajrayana’ thought to Japan systematically. Its focus on the power of ritual has had a sustained impact in Japan down to the present day. Kūkai was also a poet and calligrapher of the first order, and was particularly able to explicate the complicated use of symbolic language characteristic of this form of Buddhism. His writing is a rich source of philosophical inquiry, but always within the context of ‘Mahayana’ Buddhist doctrine and is thus always somewhat jargon specific.

In Kūkai we have the beginning of a long history of Japanese fascination with what we might call “the esoteric perspective” where phenomena of otherwise neutral or ambiguous religious value are revealed to contain a dimension that reflects a more profound, a more “true” reality. The same element of existence, whether it be internal to the individual’s thought processes or part of the external world, has both a mundane, exoteric meaning described in sutras, and a religious, esoteric meaning taught in Vajrayana treatises, some of which themselves require esoteric decoding formulas available only to initiates.

For example, karma is created by the three “behaviors” of thought, speech, and action. Since karma is what binds us to samsara, the cycle of transmigration, these three realms of human experience have, at best, an ambiguous moral status. Yet, from the esoteric perspective, Kūkai argues, ritual enables the practitioner to align the three with their counterparts as enacted by a cosmic buddha, who is not only perfectly aligned with, but actually a manifestation of, true reality. Humans can recognize the power of a buddha’s behavior, but its esoteric function and meaning cannot be fathomed intellectually. The rituals harmonize one’s own speech, thought, and action with the same “three mysteries” in a buddha, conflating the distance between them. In doing so, the rituals express the essence of a totalistic or even holographic universality in which the whole is in each of its parts. In this way, the body of buddha, the bodies of all living beings, and the individual believer’s body all coalesce in a multilayered texture of meaning. From this perspective, the mythic relationship between individual and buddha as savior figure is concretized in one’s own ‘body-mind’, which thereby becomes the avenue for accessing the sacred. Since in theory *anyone* can become a buddha, this process is understood to unlock an unseen dimension of one’s own spiritual potential. Kūkai termed this “attaining buddhahood in this very body.”

Largely due to the contributions of Kūkai and his contemporary Saichō (767–822), Buddhist philosophical inquiry begins in earnest in the Heian period (794–1185) when a rivalry develops between the Shingon order founded by Kūkai and the Tendai order founded by Saichō, each reflecting different contemporary developments in Chinese Buddhist thought and practice. By the eleventh century, the Tendai sect had grown into Japan’s dominant religious form, primarily through the support of the aristocracy in the capital who commonly sent their third and fourth sons to Tendai monasteries, whose administrative center was located on a mountaintop only a day’s journey from the court. Philosophically, both sects were very much pluralistic institutions with significant freedom in study and practice, although this did not prevent sectarianism from developing in the form of individual lineages within each sect, each devoted to a specific hermeneutical tradition. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Tendai dwarfed all other forms of religious or philosophical inquiry in Japan, but its hegemony was based in an eclecticism of discrete lines of interpretation. Thus, for example, under the Tendai rubric one could undertake exoteric, esoteric, Pure Land, or Zen study and practice, or could focus on monastic rules, debate, or the theory of consciousness.

With the political and social breakdown of the Heian court society in the twelfth century, new perspectives emerged that would eventually eclipse these older forms of the religion. These new forms are usually referred to as “Kamakura Buddhism” from the name that historians give to this era, the Kamakura period (1185–1333). All these new forms of thought and practice emerge from lines of religious heritage within the Tendai School, and they all continue the earlier legacies of universality *and* sectarianism. Historians tend to focus on their institutional footprint, but philosophically they all embodied some form of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine found in middle-period Mahayana texts in India. The term *tathāgatagarbha* literally means “buddha-womb” and relates to two key tenets: living beings possess the seed of buddhahood deep within themselves, and living beings are embraced within a metaphorical womb of buddhas “who look upon them as if looking upon their own children.” This teaching fit well with an ancient Chinese way of understanding the world in terms of “essence” and “function,” itself a common hermeneutic tool used in Tendai exegetical texts written in China, Korea, and Japan prior to the Kamakura period, and many of which formed the philosophical basis of the new thought of Kamakura Buddhism as well.

While Kamakura Buddhism is known for stressing the importance of practice and religious experience, this tendency grew out of a felt need to commit to some practices at the expense of others, an attitude that itself was the result of philosophical argument. One can see this as a kind of resurgence of the exoteric against the esoteric mentality so popular in the Heian period. For example,

Hōnen* (1133–1212), who essentially founded the Kamakura period style of argumentation of focusing on one form of practice and belief, overlapped by ten years the life of Kakuban* (1095–1143), an esoteric thinker in the Shingon lineage, who was equally devoted to the same buddha 'Amida'. Kakuban saw Amida within the individual, echoing Kūkai in enabling a fusion of samsaric and nirvanic dimensions simultaneously within oneself. Hōnen, in contrast, was expressly exoteric in directing his followers to regard Amida as existing in his Pure Land, an *other* place that one aspires to reach. They both taught devotional focus on Amida, but appear to have had very different ideas about what that practice meant. Hōnen argued that the invocation of Amida's name, or '*nenbutsu*', was effective precisely because anyone could do it, but Kakuban's Amidism was clearly directed to dedicated monastics. Hōnen's student Shinran* (1173–1263) further questioned how this *nenbutsu* worked, stressing the importance of "hearing the teachings" first, which then empowers the *nenbutsu* of the believer, which in turn empowers the believer himself. Shinran's generation used the rubrics of 'self-power' and 'other-power' as a way of interpreting religious experience, an approach also seen in his contemporaries, Zen master Dōgen* (1200–1253) and Nichiren* (1222–1282).

The paradox between inevitable decline and universal liberation reached a peak tension in this same Kamakura period, which is probably why these new approaches to Buddhism had such a lasting impact, with Hōnen and Nichiren directly using the *mappō* doctrine to justify their often radically new approaches, and Shinran and Dōgen instead insisting that their doctrines were applicable to anyone at any time. All these Kamakura-period schools of Buddhism are with us today and their hermeneutic perspectives remain plausible to many.

A second paradox that engaged the minds of several Heian and Kamakura Buddhist thinkers had to do with the necessity of practice as a means to enlightenment, on the one hand, and on the other, the idea that beings both sentient and nonsentient in some sense already possess enlightenment. This latter notion of "original enlightenment" is one of several ideas that we still find at the center of debates in twentieth-century Japanese Buddhism.

Modern Buddhism includes thinkers who draw on scriptural resources to address specifically contemporary issues much the same way as modern religious thinkers make use of Christian and Jewish scriptures. Already in the writing of Jiun Sonja* (1718–1804) we see a precedent for such an exegetical shift. The scriptural allusions remain, but they serve as a basis for commentary on social and personal issues expressed in everyday language. In the twentieth century, Ishizu Teruji* asks what mode of being religious experience calls for in our time. Nakamura Hajime* suggests that traditional Buddhist views of dharma as a universal "natural law" question the predominant view that ethical laws are merely human conventions. Tamaki Kōshirō* offers a typology based

on meditative experience to rethink major turning points in philosophical thinking. Here, as in other sections of this volume, we see that the most compelling modern Japanese philosophers to emerge from the world of Buddhism are those with strong ties to either Pure Land or Zen, or in the case of many, to both. Separate overviews of these two traditions will detail their respective concerns.

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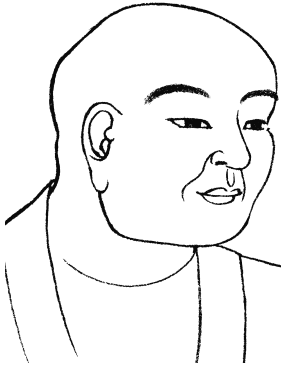
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[MLB]

KŪKAI 空海 (774–835)



Likely the most famous Buddhist figure in Japan, Kūkai founded the Japanese 'Shingon' ("Truth Word" or "Mantra") School of Esoteric ('Vajrayana') Buddhism. Famed for his calligraphy, his Chinese literary criticism, and his systematic dictionary of Chinese characters, Kūkai was a ritual master par excellence, the subject of innumerable legends, and an influential figure in the emerging polity of Heian Japan. He was posthumously awarded the imperial title Kōbō Daishi ("Great teacher who spread the dharma"). Born to a lower-tier aristocratic family on the island of Shikoku far from the country's cultural centers, in 791 he enrolled in the imperial college at the capital, Nagaoka, for classical Chinese literary and Confucian studies as preparation for a career in the court bureaucracy. Dissatisfied with that academic approach to knowledge, he dropped out of the program after a few years to undertake a spiritual quest in the mountains and isolated regions of Japan. Coming across a copy of the 'Mahāvairocana' sūtra, Kūkai was struck by the alternative model of knowing implied in the esoteric text. Rather than studying about the world only intellectually as exoteric philosophies do, it suggested a form of insight that arises from the full engagement with the processes of reality through ritual practices involving the whole person, body as well as the 'mind'. He travelled to China in 804 to study under the Chinese Shingon (C. Chenyen) master, Huiguo (746–805), who eventually deemed him a successor.

Still a relatively unknown figure in Japan, upon returning, Kūkai had to wait on the southern island of Kyushu for three years before being given court permission to return in 809 to the new capital, Kyoto. His significant influence in the religious, social, political, and cultural worlds of the court began around 815. At about that time he acquired imperial permission to establish a Shingon monastic compound at Mt Kōya and also penned his first philosophical treatise, *Essay Distinguishing Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings*, beginning a career of prodigious philosophical output in which he systematized the esoteric tradition he had learned in China. At the same time, he helped design a scheme of religious liturgies to engage the spiritual power of the cosmic Buddha 'Dainichi', also called by the Sanskrit name, (Mahā-) Vairocana. Part of Kūkai's genius lay in his use of philosophy to give a metaphysical and epistemological justification for ritual practice. He developed radically new analyses of metaphysics, knowledge, language, and the 'body-mind' relation. One of his chief philosophical contributions to Japanese thinking was to reject the mainstream 'Mahayana' Buddhist view that the ultimate aspect of a buddha's enlightened experience—his 'dharma-body'—is an abstract principle, formless and inaccessible

to speech or thought. The dharma-body, Kūkai claimed, is personal: it is the Buddha 'Dainichi'. Like any other person, Dainichi's activities are the functions of thought, word, and deed, so that this cosmic buddha is a pulsing source of spiritual sustenance that nourishes—through a kind of divine energy emanating from its mind, speech, and body—all living things. Insight into reality derives, therefore, from the merging of the Shingon Buddhist's body, speech, and mind—the so-called three "mysteries" or "intimacies" —with those of cosmic reality or Dainichi.

The selections below display various angles from which Kūkai sought to develop the philosophical framework of his Shingon ritual practice. His central ideas found here include: an argument for the superiority of incantational language over ordinary language for revealing the deepest ontological truths; the efficacy of symbolic practice that integrates the body's ritual gesture (*mudrā*), the voice's incantation (mantra), and visionary mental imagination (mandala); the categorization of the mindsets of all known philosophical schools into a hierarchy based on their levels of insight, and the explanation of how ritual practice opens liberating and ecstatic dimensions to our understanding of our own experience. In sum, Kūkai employs philosophy to enhance the force of ritual practice in human life.

[DLG]

ESOTERIC AND EXOTERIC TEACHINGS

KŪKAI 815, 75–110

*In arguing for the superior power of esoteric teachings for bringing practitioners to enlightenment and securing worldly benefits, Kūkai relies on an interpretive strategy that sees the variety of Buddhist teachings as deriving from different embodiments, or bodies, of the Buddha. Esoteric 'Shingon' teachings are said to derive from the Buddha's 'dharma-body'—also called the dharma-buddha—taken in most Buddhist schools to represent the ultimate dimension of the Buddha, and a wisdom that is beyond the power of mind to conceive or words to express. Kūkai challenges this view, arguing that Shingon teachings employing ritual gesture (*mudrā*), sacred utterance (mantra), and imaginative visualization (mandala) not only derive from the dharma-body of the Buddha but enable a practitioner to unite with the meditative state of this Buddha. They are thus portrayed as the most efficacious and direct path to reach the Buddhist goal of enlightenment.*

The Buddha has 'three bodies', whose teachings are of two kinds. The teaching of the responsive bodies is called *exoteric*. Its language is manifest yet abbreviated, and it accords with the capacity of its audience. The teaching of the dharma-buddha embodiment, on the other hand, is known as the *esoteric* store. Its language is secret and hidden, and it is the teaching of reality itself.

There are billions of scriptures for exoteric teachings. This collection can be divided into one, ten, or fifty categories. Speaking in terms of vehicles to

enlightenment, these teachings enumerate one, three, four, and five vehicles. In terms of practice, the core is the six 'perfections'. As for the time it takes for the attainment of 'buddhahood', they acknowledge it to be three great aeons. The great sage 'Shakyamuni' clearly explained the basis for all this.

On the other hand, according to the teaching in the *Vajra Peak Scripture* of the esoteric collection, Shakyamuni, the transformed human body, conveyed the teachings of the three vehicles for the sake of those who had yet to attain the first plateau of 'bodhisattva' development, for the disciples of the two vehicles (the 'Hinayana' and the 'Mahayana'), for ordinary beings, and so on. Meanwhile, the Buddha's celestial body-for-the-sake-of-others taught, for example, the exoteric single inclusive vehicle for bodhisattvas above the first plateau. Those are both *exoteric* teachings. The Buddha's body in-and-for-itself along with its retinue, for their own delight in the 'dharma', together preach the teaching of the three mysteries. That is called the *esoteric* teaching.

The teaching of the three mysteries is known as the realm of the wisdom of inner realization. Even the virtually enlightened and bodhisattvas at the tenth plateau cannot enter this chamber. So how could disciples of the two vehicles and ordinary beings? Who can proceed into this hall?

And so the Dilun and the Shelun schools¹ proclaim that this realm transcends the capacities of beings; the 'Consciousness-only' and 'Middle Way' schools lament that this is a realm where words end and the 'mind' ceases. This view of an absolutely removed realm is discussed only from the perspective of the causal stage of development; these are not applicable to one who has already attained the result: buddhahood. How can we know this? It is perfectly clear in the sutras and treatises; the evidence is abundant, as I will show subsequently. You who aspire to buddhahood, I beseech you to become intimately familiar with the contents of the texts I will cite.

Like a sheep whose horns get stuck in a fence, students of Buddhism get tangled in the net of exoteric teachings. Like a horse that is reined in to stop, a provisional barrier blocks them. Their situation is like that of the well-known scriptural references to travelers who decide to stop at an illusory palace, or the children who crave willow leaves thinking they are gold. How will they be able to preserve what they already own, the inexhaustible adornment of the virtues of awakening, numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges River? Their situation is like that of someone who passes up the nectar of ghee in favor of milk, or who tosses out a wish-fulfilling gem only to pick up a shiny white fish's eyeball. It is like a person whose seeds of awakening are dormant, or one who has an irremediable stomach ailment: the King of Medicine folds his arms in

1. [These are two early Chinese schools focusing on 'Yogacāra' thought.]

frustration. What benefit is there in the nectar of his healing teachings in circumstances such as these?

If virtuous men or virtuous women would just once catch the fragrance of the esoteric teachings, they would see clearly their own minds, just as the fabled mirror of Emperor Qin could enable people to see what was right and wrong in their bodies and hearts. The ice that obstructs understanding of the difference between the provisional and the real teaching would melt away.

Although there is abundant evidence in the sutras and treatises to verify my assertions, for now I will simply point out one corner of it. I pray this may be of some benefit to beginners.

Someone asks: Past transmitters of the dharma wrote treatises extensively, extolled and spread the teachings of the six schools, and lectured on the three collections of scripture. The scrolls would practically fill a huge house, and a person could barely ever read them all. Why the effort to add this essay? What benefit is there?

Response: There is much yet to accomplish and so there is a need for this composition. All that former masters transmitted is exoteric teachings, but here we have the esoteric store, which people still do not understand well. Therefore, as if with a bow and a fishing hook, I have carefully hunted essential passages from the sutras and treatises and combined them to provide a hand mirror for your reflection.

Question: What is the difference between the two teachings, exoteric and esoteric?

Response: The Buddha's celestial responsive bodies-for-the-sake-of-others and the Buddha's human responsive body give teachings in accord with the capacities of beings—that we know as *exoteric*. The teaching by the dharmature Buddha-for-its-own-sake is the realm of the wisdom of inner realization—that we know as *esoteric*.

Question: All Buddhist schools acknowledge the preaching of the responsive bodies. But the dharma-body is without color or form. It is commonly acknowledged that for the dharma-body, linguistic expression stops short and mental workings halt. It lacks teaching and lacks any means of indication. The sutras all uniformly teach this message, and the treatises state the same. So why do you now say that the dharma-body teaches the dharma? What is your evidence?

Response: This message is abundantly presented in the sutras and treatises. And yet, it gets concealed because people read texts according to their prejudices. It is simply that what meaning is manifest depends on one's capacity. To use an analogy, it is like the difference between how heavenly beings and ghosts see, or the difference between how a bird can see in the dark but a person cannot.

Question: If, as you say, the teachings contain this message, why did the former transmitters of the dharma not discuss it?

Response: The Buddha's teaching is like medicine dispensed according to the illness. There are a thousand varieties of needles and moxabustion for the myriad different beings. The teachings that accord with beings' capacities have much that is provisional and little that is truly real.

When bodhisattvas of the past composed treatises, they explicated in accordance with meanings found in the sutras, and dared not contradict or go beyond what they were familiar with there. For this reason Vasubandhu made reference in the *Treatise on the Ten Plateaus* to the theory that only the realm of causes for enlightenment can be taught, and Nāgārjuna's² *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise* notes the theory that the resultant "realm of the oceanic perfection" does not get taught. These perspectives rely on the sutras and are not the final word.

Yet, the masters who transmitted the exoteric teachings encountered the profound, although they followed the superficial. Without giving it a thought, they forsook the secret purport. Generations of teachers held in their breast the esoteric meanings; they followed the oral tradition of passing down the exoteric while concealing in their minds the esoteric. Student after student has produced discourses by piling up their learning according to the teachings of their respective schools. They have competed in using halberds that served their goals, but never considered employing any swords that might challenge them.

Furthermore, the teachings of Shakyamuni spread eastward into China and grew from being insignificant to being formidable. Beginning with Emperor Ming of the Han dynasty up until the Empress Wu of the Zhou only the exoteric teaching was transmitted. From the time of emperors Xuanzong and Taizong, during the days of the masters Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra,³ however, the esoteric teachings flourished and discussion of the secret doctrines thrived. But the days of the new medicine are still young and the old illnesses have yet to be cured. So when people see passages like that in the *Lañkāvatāra sūtra* about the preaching of the dharma by the dharma-buddha, or in the *Commentary on the Wisdom Sutra* concerning the marvelous forms of the Buddha's dharma-body in itself, their minds are elsewhere when they encounter the text. Their exegesis

2. [Vasubandhu was a fourth-century Indian monk and one of the founders of the Yogācāra School. His *Abhidharmakośa* was widely used in Mahayana Buddhism in India and Tibet before spreading throughout eastern Asia. Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250), one of the most influential of Indian Buddhist philosophers, is best known for his dialectical logic of the 'middle way'.]

3. [Vajrabodhi (671–741) was an Indian Buddhist monk who traveled with his student Amoghavajra (705–774) to China, where they worked on translations of esoteric texts.]

is no more than promoting the doctrines of their own school. How lamentable that these past savants never tasted the precious ghee of the esoteric teachings!

Question: If what you say is true, what sutras and treatises elaborate on the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teachings?

Response: I shall explain by selections from texts....

Question: Please let us hear of this evidence.

Response: Certainly! I will shatter your darkness by hurling the disc of the sun, and crush your confusion by brandishing the 'vajra'.

Kūkai proceeds to quote a long sequence of Buddhist texts, both sutras and commentaries, making brief remarks on each. The Chinese 'Huayan' School author of the following passage, Fazang (643–712), writes that the highest realm of truth cannot be put into words. The causal realm deals with the conditions for delusion and enlightenment. Those conditions can be well addressed by the exoteric teachings. The resultant realm, the enlightened immersion into the reality of the dharma-body, by contrast, is ineffable. Kūkai stresses the phrase "the resultant realm cannot be expressed" because he sees it as synonymous with the nondualistic engagement in the dimension of the Buddha-in-itself as reality, that is, in the Buddha's dharma-body.

Fazang writes: The meaning of this single-vehicle teaching can be divided into two gates. The first is the distinct teaching and the second is the common teaching. Within the first there are again two. First is the resultant realm of oceanic essence, which entails the principle of the inexplicable. Why is this? It is because this realm does not accord with teaching. It is the realm specific to the ten buddhas around Dainichi. This is what the *Treatise on the Ten Plateaus* refers to when it says that the realm of what causes enlightenment can be explained, but the resultant realm of enlightenment itself cannot be explained. Second is the causal realm of 'dependent origination'.

.....

Kūkai's comment: The *Treatise on the Ten Plateaus* and the passages on the inexplicability of the "oceanic essence" from the *Text on the Five Teachings* accord remarkably well with Nāgārjuna bodhisattva's words on the inexplicability of nondualistic Mahayana's "completely perfect oceanic essence." The so-called "causal realm that can be explained" is the territory of the exoteric teachings. The "resultant essence that cannot be explained" is thus the home ground of the esoteric treasury. How can this be known? It is because it is clearly explained in the *Vajra Peak Scripture*. Persons of wisdom should think carefully on this.

Kūkai highlights Nāgārjuna's discussion of five different kinds of linguistic expression and ten different types of cognitive process from his commentary on the "Awakening of Faith." Only one form of language engages reality rather than merely talking about it and only one form of cognitive process interpenetrates with reality instead of only witnessing it as something external. Both are, according to Kūkai, the language and cognitive process of esoteric Buddhism.

Nāgārjuna writes: The fifth is verbal expression that accords with reality.... Four among these five kinds of verbal expression⁴ are vacuous and deluded modes of expression, they cannot describe reality. Only the last kind of verbal expression is a true mode of expression, and it alone can convey reality. Based on the former four modes of expression, Aśvagoṣa⁵ bodhisattva taught that truth is beyond the marks of verbal expression....

The first nine of these ten types of cognitive process⁶ do not connect with the truth. Only the last kind of mind is capable of connecting with the truth and of embodying its realm. Based only on the first nine kinds of cognitive process, therefore, it was taught that truth is beyond the reach of the mind.

Kūkai's comment: The meaning of reality's being separate and not separate from verbalization and cognitive process, and so on, is clearly explained in this treatise. Wise scholars of the exoteric teachings ought to ponder this in detail and dissolve their confusions.

Kūkai also cites passages from two texts well known to East Asian Buddhists, a Chinese version of the Laṅkāvatāra sūtra and the "Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom" attributed to Nāgārjuna, passages that do in fact state that the dharma-body engages in teaching. Here we find his citation and remark on the former. Such citations from scripture go a long way in Kūkai's eyes toward demonstrating to doubtful readers that there are important exceptions in the canonical literature to what many take to be the "standard" view of the dharma-body as an impersonal abstract principle incapable of teaching.

Fascicle 2 of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* reads:

O Mahāmatī, the preaching of the dharma by the dharma-buddha is separate from the preaching of substances correlated with mental factors. It derives from the realm where we have the holy function of internal realization. This is what is known as the character of the "dharma-buddha's preaching the dharma."

.....

4. [The five kinds of verbal expression are: those that arise from (1) the need to refer to the individual characteristics of things; (2) the delusional projection of previously experienced objects that are not presently there (so-called "dream speech"); (3) attachment to previously learned categories without seeing their inapplicability to what is really there; (4) habituated lines of analysis or argument that do not seriously engage or reflect how things really are; and (5) the accord or confluence of reality and words.]

5. [Aśvagoṣa (ca. 80–150), is the purported author of the *Awakening of Faith*.]

6. [The text lists the ten cognitive processes as those arising from consciousness based in: (1) the visual; (2) the auditory; (3) the olfactory; (4) the gustatory; (5) the somatic (or tactile); (6) the intentional (or introspectively intuitive); (7) the (delusive) ego-generating center that lends a sense of "me" and "mine" to experience; (8) the "storehouse" in which "seeds" of previous experience are stored; (9) the field of many-as-one and one-as-many; (10) the field of one-as-one outside all such distinctions.]

“Further, Mahāmatī, the preaching of the dharma by the dharma-buddha is apart from conditions, removed from the duality of subject and object, and removed from all sensory perception and its objects. This is not the domain of the teaching of Hinayana Buddhist monks, or of hermit Buddhists, or of non-Buddhists.”

.....

Kūkai’s comment: The realm wherein words are cut off and mind put to rest discussed in the exoteric teachings is the aforementioned realm of inner-realized wisdom of the dharma-body ‘Vairocana’....

Passages like these all refer to the realm of the dharma-body-in-and-for-itself in both the principle and wisdom forms. Due to their self-directed delight in the dharma, the dharma-body and other bodies teach this realm of inner-realized wisdom. These passages are in deep accord with the passage from the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* about how the dharma-body teaches the realm of the inner-realized holy wisdom while the manifestation body does not teach it. This realm taught by the dharma-body is the very place the exoteric teachings refer to as transcendent and removed. If a wise one looks clearly at these passages, the clouds and mists will clear up, the lock will open of itself, the minnow at the bottom of the well will escape to swim in the vast ocean, the caged bird will fly throughout the city, the hundred-year-old person blind from birth will suddenly perceive the color of milk, and the long eon of dark night will at once be filled with the light of the sun.

.....

Concluding Section

Question: According to what you have said, the preaching of the realm of the inner-verified/realized wisdom is called esoteric, and anything else is exoteric. Then why in the sutras taught by Shakyamuni is there a collection called “secret,” and into what collection would you place his teachings of ‘*dhāraṇī*’?

Response: The meanings of exoteric and esoteric are multiple, without limit. Viewed from the perspective of shallow teachings, deeper ones are “esoteric” and the shallow, abbreviated ones are “exoteric.” Thus, even in non-Buddhist texts there are teachings called *esoteric*. In the Buddha’s teachings there are many meanings of exoteric and esoteric. In comparison with non-Buddhist teachings, the Buddha’s Hinayana teachings can be considered profoundly esoteric. The same distinction of exoteric and esoteric can be made when comparing the Mahayana and Hinayana, and the teaching of the one vehicle earns the label esoteric when contrasted with the three-vehicle teaching. And the

dhāraṇī are called esoteric because of their brevity in contrast to the wordiness of ordinary language.

The preaching by the dharma-body is profound and hidden, while the preaching by the manifestation body is shallow and abbreviated. Thus we use the term *esoteric* for the former. Within the designation *esoteric* there are also two meanings. One is the secret of sentient beings and another is the secret of the Buddha. Because sentient beings cover their original nature of true awakening by ignorance and deluded thinking, we refer to their self-concealment.

The preaching of dharma by the manifest human body dispenses medicine in accordance with the capacity of the listener; its words are not in vain. The buddha-body-for-the-sake-of-others conceals its own realization without explicating this realm. Thus, even those near awakening cannot hope to learn of this realm; bodhisattvas of the tenth plateau are completely apart from it as well. This is known as the secret of the Buddha.

In this way, the word *esoteric* has innumerable meanings. What I mean by esoteric is the ultimate, highest private realm of the dharma-body. This is what I call the esoteric collection. And as for the teachings of *dhāraṇī* by the manifestation body, while these might be called esoteric, compared to the preaching of the dharma-body they are not true and real. Within the esoteric there are the provisional and the real, and these distinctions should be grasped accordingly.

[DLG]

REALIZING BUDDHAHOOD

KŪKAI 824, 17–31

In the text from which the selection below is excerpted, “The Meaning of ‘Realizing Buddhahood in this Very Body,’” Kūkai promotes the practice of Shingon’s three “mysteries” or “intimacies” of body, speech, and mind in order to attain buddhahood in one’s own lifetime. This contrasts with the exoteric Buddhist claim that innumerable lifetimes are required. In the essay, he also advances a cosmology in which the entire material cosmos of five elements is permeated by the sixth element of mind and infused with a dynamic harmony that, correctly understood, is identical with the meditative trance or ‘samādhi’ of the dharma-body buddha. The seamless wedding of soteriology and cosmology is effected by a power emanating from the Buddha known as “mysterious empowerment,” a force that charges one’s practice like sunlight reflected on water, and connects one to the entire cosmos.

Scriptural passages like these all take the six great elements⁷ as that which

7. [Earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness. Only the first five are commonly referred to in other Buddhist cosmologies.]

produces, and take the four dharma bodies⁸ and the three worlds as what is produced. The produced phenomena include everything from the dharma-bodies down to the six realms of rebirth. And while there are differences among coarse and fine, or large and small, still none of these escapes the six elements. The Buddha taught that the six elements constitute the essential nature of the phenomenal world. Within the exoteric teachings, the four elements are regarded as being non-sentient, but in the esoteric teachings it is said that these make up the fundamental vow of the symbolic buddha body to attain enlightenment.⁹ The four elements are inseparable from the mind. Although mind and forms are different, their basic nature is the same. Mind is none other than form and form is none other than mind. Neither precludes or obstructs the other. Wisdom consciousness is the same as the objects of perception, and the objects of perception are the same as wisdom. Wisdom is principle; the knower is the known; and principle is wisdom. They exist openly without obstruction. Although subject and object appear to be two distinct entities, in actuality there is nowhere any subject or any object. Things are just as they are. What could there be that creates? Terms such as subject and object are all “esoteric words.” Grasping onto the ordinary, shallow, incomplete meanings, one ought not make a myriad of empty speculations. It is in this way that we can understand how all the “bodies” that arise from the six great elements whose essential nature is the phenomenal world of reality interpenetrate and do not obstruct one another. Perpetually residing without change is the same as residing in ultimate reality. Thus my earlier verse stated, “The six great elements mutually non-obstruct in a perpetual state of harmony.”

To gloss this verse, “non-obstruction” means “crossing and entering freely.” “Perpetual” means not moving, not being destroyed; “harmony” means “united”; and “crossing and entering” is the meaning of “this very” from “realizing buddhahood in *this very* body.”

...

In my verse, “The mysterious empowerment of the three mysteries quickly manifests,”... “three mysteries” means the mystery of body, mystery of speech, and mystery of mind. The three mysteries of the dharma-buddha are exceedingly profound and subtle. Even those at the highest stages of the Buddhist path can neither see nor hear them. So they are called “mysteries.” Numerous

8. [The “self-nature body” as the dharma-body-in-itself, the “enjoyment body” as the celestial dharma-body-for-the-sake-of-self or of-others, the “transformed body” as a human historical buddha, and the “equally flowing body” as emanating into all unenlightened sentient beings.]

9. [The cosmos as a body of symbolic representations, where all phenomena signify aspects of Buddha’s awakened body, speech, and mind.]

as specks of dust, every single enlightened one equally possesses these three mysteries. They mutually interpenetrate—that becoming this—all holding together. The three mysteries of sentient beings are also just like this. Hence, we can speak of the “mysterious empowerment of the three mysteries.” If a Shingon practitioner observes this principle, and makes ritual gestures with the hands, chants mantras with the mouth, and abides in a state of meditative absorption with the mind, the three mysteries will unite in mysterious empowerment and the practitioner will quickly reach a state of great attainment.

.....

My verse says, “The mysterious empowerment of the three mysteries quickly manifests.” “Mysterious empowerment”¹⁰ expresses both the great compassion of the Buddha and the faith-mind of a sentient being.¹¹ The reflection of the sun of the Buddha’s compassion appearing in the mind-water of a sentient being is called “adding.” The ability of the mind-water of the practitioner to sense this light of the Buddha’s sun is called “holding.” If the practitioner is able to contemplate this principle, then the three mysteries will unite. In the present body one will quickly obtain the originally existent three buddha bodies. Hence the phrase, “quickly manifest.” As in everyday language when we refer to “at this time” or “on this day,” the phrase “this very body” of “realizing buddhahood with this very body” has the same sense of immediacy.

In my poem I have referred to “the multi-layered ‘Indra’s net’ called ‘this very body’” as a metaphor. It conveys how the three mysteries of all the deities, numerous as specks of dust, are perfectly interfused and without obstruction. “Indra’s net” refers to the jeweled net of the god Indra. “Body” here means my body, Buddha’s body, and the bodies of all sentient beings. These we call “body.” Then there are also the four kinds of buddha bodies: the self-nature, enjoyment, transformed, and equally flowing body.... And there are three more types: mantric letter, *mudrā* seal, and mandala shape. All these bodies are multi-layered—vertically and horizontally—just as the reflected image of a lamp’s light crosses and enters into a mirror. Thus that body is this body, and this body is that body. The Buddha’s body is the body of sentient beings, and the bodies of sentient beings are the Buddha’s body. They are not the same and yet the same; not different and yet different. All three are thus equal and without obstruction.

[DLG]

10. [The Chinese term Kūkai uses for “empowerment” includes sinographs for “adding” and “holding.” Hence the following comments.]

11. [The reference is to the first six domains of the cognitive processes listed in note 6.]

VOICE, WORD, REALITY

KŪKAI 817, 35–49

The three key terms of this selection from Kūkai's essay, "The Meaning of 'Voice, Word, and Reality,'" are difficult to capture in single English words. "Voice" or "sound" includes the inanimate sound or vibration of all material phenomena. "Word" or "sign" can mean the sinographs but also the conceptual construct to which sinographs refer. "Reality" includes the Buddhist concepts of 'suchness' and 'emptiness'. In addition, each term gets a special esoteric meaning. They can refer to a metaphysical relationship between human vocal utterances, the linguistic construct of meaning they assume within a culture, and the reality that such concepts designate. Moreover, in Shingon meditative visualization the three can also refer to the voiced vibration, the recitation of a sacred mantra, and the image of a deity which one holds vividly in one's mind as one recites.

The text lays a foundation for a theory of symbolic consciousness. The term rendered here as "signifying pattern" extends beyond the written word to any pattern recognizable by the mind, whether in sensory perception or human conceptualization. Kūkai's psychology integrated the metaphysical, the linguistic, and the epistemological. This vision of the totality of reality—the physical and non-physical, the inner and outer, and the "empirical" and the "spiritual"—is typical of Kūkai's efforts to unify all human pursuits into one "path" leading to Buddhist awakening.

First I will convey the basic ideas of this text and the essential meaning of the title. Then I will respond to questions.

To begin with the basic ideas, the Buddha's teaching always depends on signifying patterns. The essence of these signs derives from the six domains of perception.¹² The basis of the six sensory domains is the three mysteries of the dharma-buddha. The equivalent three mysteries pervade the phenomenal world of reality and are constantly present. The five wisdoms and four bodies of the Buddha possess all ten realms of sentient beings and lack nothing. Awakened ones we call "greatly enlightened"; deluded ones we call "ordinary sentient beings." Ordinary sentient beings are confused and in the dark, not knowing their own natural awakening. But through the power of his mysterious empowerment, the Buddha shows them the path of return to the truth. The basis of a path of return could not exist without verbal teachings. Verbal teachings could not come into being without sound. By clearly knowing sounds and attending to teachings that derive from them, reality becomes manifest. Thus the phrase "sound, word, and reality" means in fact the equivalent three mysteries of the dharma-buddha, which is the original mandala of all sentient

12. [The objects of our six sensory organs, which in Buddhist psychology include the mind.]

beings. This is why Buddha Dainichi taught the meaning of sound, word, and reality—to startle sentient beings out of their long slumber. Whether exoteric or esoteric, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, what teachings do not rely upon this starting point?...

Next I will explain the title and give the essential meaning of the text.

So, first is to explicate the title. When the air of our breath meets with the air outside and even slightly issues forth there is always vibration, which we call “voice.” Voicing is the very basis of vibration. The issuing forth of voice is not useless; it necessarily expresses the name of something, which we call a “word.” And the name of something must imply a substantial thing. This we call “reality.” Thus “the meaning” in the title interrelated these three—sound, word, and reality.

.....

On the essential meaning of the text:

The five great material elements all have vibration.

The ten realms all possess language.

The six domains of sensory perception are all signifying patterns.

The dharma-body is reality.

The first line fully conveys the substance of sound; the second line covers the truth and falsity of signifying patterns; the third exhausts internal and external signifying patterns; the fourth fathoms reality.

First, the five material elements refer to earth, water, fire, wind, and space. These five contain both exoteric and esoteric meanings. The exoteric five great elements accord with common understanding. The esoteric five elements are depicted as the five letters or the five buddhas or the entire oceanic assembly of all the honored deities as depicted, for example, in a painted mandala. This explanation is just as I expressed in “The Meaning of ‘Realizing Buddhahood in this Very Body.’” These five inner and five outer elements all contain sonic vibration, and all sounds are inseparable from the five elements. The five are, therefore, the original essence of sound, while vibration is its function.

.....

As for my saying “the six domains of sensory perception are all signifying patterns,” these six domains are color, sound, smell, taste, touch, and objects of cognition. Each of these six domains possesses the characteristics of signifying patterns. What then are the distinguishing characteristics of the signs of the domain of color? In a verse:

The manifest—shape, appearance and color—

All exist in the internal and external worlds that we experience due to our

past ‘karma’.

Within that, there is that which simply is, in its suchness, and that which arises from conditions.

Depending on the depth of one's understanding, these conditions can be a cause of delusion or a cause for awakening....

.....

All manifest forms are really the work of the eye. They belong to the visual realm and are the work of the eye consciousness—that which the eye consciousness grasps—but they are also the work of the mental consciousness and belong to it. They are in the realm of mental consciousness, that which the mental consciousness grasps. This is called discrimination. Such discriminations are signs. Each and every mark is a pattern or sign, and each and every sign has its own name. In this way we speak of signifying patterns.

.....

The unawakened can become attached to these signifying patterns, giving rise to the various afflictions due to greed, hatred, and delusion.

.....

All of these internal and external colors¹³ are poison for the dim-witted but are medicine for the wise. Thus the verse says “they can be a cause of delusion or a cause for awakening.” With reference to the myriad of colors—whether just as they are or arising from conditions—what can be said to be the maker and what the made? The *makers* are the five great material elements and the five colors, while the *made* is the threefold world.¹⁴ There are limitless differences within this threefold world. We call them the signifying patterns of things, just as they are in their suchness and of things that arise from conditions.

[DLG]

THE TEN MINDSETS

KŪKAI 830, 113–71 (141–215)

Kūkai's theory of the ten mindsets appears in two major works: his magnum opus, "The Secret Mandala: Treatise on the Ten Mindsets," and the briefer sequel, "Precious Key to the Secret Treasury," the source of the selections here. His schema explains the frame of mind and attitude of practice that generates every philosophical position known to him, putting them into a hierarchy to show the superiority of Shingon. Shingon assumes that all reality, even the atti-

13. [The word for “color” can also mean “material form,” or “visual object.” The meanings seem to overlap in this passage.]

14. [The threefold world is comprised of non-sentient matter, ordinary sentient beings, and awakened beings.]

tudes of mind that lead people to wrong conclusions and lifestyles, are in some manner manifestations of Dainichi Buddha's activity. Therefore, in "The Secret Mandala" Kūkai shows how each exoteric mindset (levels one through nine) contains some esoteric element, and in this work, "The Precious Key," he shows that each level contains the germ of an insight that could lead one to transcend that level. Together these two analyses guarantee that enlightenment is available to any person right here and now.

1. *The Ram-like Mind of Common People*

This is the mindset of unreflective hedonists who—blindly governed by animal drives—can still experience love, albeit without understanding its true nature.

What is the ram-like mind of common people? It is the name given to ordinary individuals who—madly intoxicated—do not distinguish between good and evil; to the foolish child who—stupid and ignorant—does not believe in cause and result. Ordinary people perform various actions and experience various effects, and they are born with myriad physical characteristics. Therefore, these individuals are called "common people." Because stupidity and ignorance are on a par with the inferior nature of the ram, they are likened to the latter.

.....

What is more, just as a magnet attracts iron, men and women run after one another, and just as a crystal draws water when exposed to the moon, parents and children have affection for one another. But although parents and children may have great affection for one another, they do not know the true character of affection, and although man and wife may love each other, they do not realize the true character of love. For them, it is as transient as water that flows in a continuous stream or flames that leap one from another. They are bound to no purpose by the rope of deluded thoughts and are intoxicated in vain by the wine of ignorance. It is as if they had met in a dream or come across each other at an inn.

2. *The Abstinent Mind of the Foolish Child*

This is the mindset of the Confucian or ethically minded Buddhist who recognizes the need to transcend animal drives, but limits the practice to scrupulously following the Confucian virtues or Buddhist precepts.

As things do not have any fixed nature, why should people remain forever wicked? When they encounter the right conditions, even common fools aspire to the Great 'Way', and if they follow the teachings, even ordinary people think of emulating sages. Ram-like individuals have no intrinsic nature of their own, and the foolish child need not remain foolish.

Therefore, when their original enlightenment suffuses them within and the

light of the Buddha shines from without, they promptly moderate their diet and perform acts of charity from time to time. Their goodness, like the sprouting, budding, and leafing of a tree, progressively develops and their minds, like the flowering and fruit-bearing of a tree, shrink from evil as if testing hot water and worry lest their good deeds are inadequate. They gradually learn the five virtues and reverently study the ten good deeds.

The five virtues are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity.... When people practice these five virtues the four seasons come in order and the five elements are in harmony. If a country practices them, then everything throughout the realm is at peace. If each household practices them, then no one will keep lost articles found by the roadside. These are excellent means by which to make a name for oneself and glorify one's forebears, and they are fine customs by which to keep a country at peace and secure the well-being of individuals. In Confucianism they are called the "five virtues," while in Buddhism they are termed the "five precepts." Though their names differ, their meanings merge, but though their practices are similar, their benefits are different. The precepts are the basis for cutting off evil and cultivating good, and they represent the starting point for gradually escaping suffering and gaining happiness.

3. *The Fearless Mind of the Young Child*

This is the mindset of the religious Daoist, or of any non-Buddhist, who recognizes the pain of this world but seeks to escape into immortality through alchemical or ascetic practice alone. Since some Buddhists also talk about rebirth in heavenly realms, Kūkai tries to explain the difference.

The fearless mind of the young child is the mind of non-Buddhists who loathe the human world and of ordinary people who long for heaven. Even though it is said that up above they are born in the station of neither thought nor non-thought, and below they dwell in the palace of transcendents, ... that they consider the world of human beings to be as transient as the mayfly, and that their radiance eclipses the sun and moon..., their inferiority and ignorance when compared with the Buddha are nonetheless like that of a child. Because they are to some degree free of the bonds of misfortune, they are without fear, but because they have not yet gained the bliss of nirvana, they are still young children.

.....

The teachings of the three vehicles and of the vehicles for rebirth as humans and heavenly beings were all expounded by the Tathāgata. If one practices in accordance with the teachings, one will certainly be born in heaven.

Question: In that case, are all the practices of non-Buddhists the same as the Buddhist dharma?

Answer: There are two kinds: those that conform and those that run counter... to the teachings of the 'Tathāgata'.... Although they were originally the Buddha's teaching, in the course of their continuous transmission from the beginningless past, their original purport has become misconstrued.... Teachings of this type have all lost their original meaning.

Question: If these are the Buddha's teachings, such teachings as the Buddha's vehicle leading to enlightenment should be expounded directly. Why is it necessary to expound the vehicles leading to goals like being reborn as a heavenly being?

Answer: Because they suit their religious capacity and because other medicines would have no effect.

.....

Non-Buddhists, wishing for a way to escape the karmic cycle of rebirth, torment their bodies and minds in various ways. With their teachings of annihilation and permanence, nonexistence, and existence, it is like seeking milk by squeezing a cow's horn. Once they realize that things arise on account of causes and conditions and are therefore empty, they will immediately attain liberation.

4. *The Mind of Aggregates-only and No-self*

This mindset represents that of the Hinayana Buddhist monastics who undertake Buddhist disciplines and rightly recognize the emptiness of ego, but are still motivated by a loathing for this world and its impermanence.

The great enlightened one, the world-honored one, expounded this vehicle as a goat cart to extricate people from the extreme suffering of the three evil paths and to liberate them from the karmic fetters of the eight sufferings. As for its teachings, the Hinayana canon is broad in its compass, and the Four Noble Truths are universally applicable. The thirty-seven factors of enlightenment serve as aides along the path, and the four approaches and four fruits represent the stages of the practitioner. When speaking of consciousness, there are only six consciousnesses and not a seventh or an eighth. As regards the accomplishment of buddhahood, it requires at least three lives or as long as sixty eons. To prevent wrongdoing, there are two hundred and fifty precepts, and to cultivate good, there are the four fields of mindfulness and the eight abandonments. Every half month they recite the list of offenses, and it becomes immediately clear who has committed any; at the end of the summer retreat they confess their sins at will, and the holy ones are promptly distinguished from ordinary people. They shave their heads, wear robes, and have an iron staff and a steel

begging bowl. They walk with care so as not to harm insects, and they sit with lowered heads, counting their breath. Such is their physical conduct....

In the meditative absorption of the emptiness of sentient beings they realize that the self is like an apparition or a mirage, and with the knowledge of non-arising and extinction they cut off future existences due to mental afflictions.... Loathing the foamlke and dewlike ephemerality of the five aggregates that constitute human beings, and detesting the tribulations of the three evil paths, they long for the refreshing state of mental equipoise, vast like the great void, tranquil, and unconditioned. Is this not bliss? They prize the reduction of the body to ashes and the extinction of knowledge.

Such is the general gist of this vehicle. Because they retain the dharmas and reject the individual person, it is called “the mind of aggregates-only and no-self”; “only” because it implies that one select and uphold only certain tenets.

5. *The Mind that Has Eradicated the Causes and Seeds of Karma*

This is the mindset of those Hinayana hermits who achieve insight and tranquility on their own without teachers, but are so absorbed in their own practice that they lose concern for helping others.

The mind that has eradicated the causes and seeds of karma is that which is realized by Hinayana hermits who live alone like the horn of a unicorn.... They meditate on causes and conditions in terms of the twelve links of ‘dependent origination’ and loathe ‘birth-and-death’ with its four constituent elements and five aggregates. Seeing flowers scattering in the wind and leaves falling to the ground, they awaken to the impermanence of the four phases of existence, and living in forests or villages, they realize meditative absorption in quiet.... They are endowed with the spontaneous precepts without having had them conferred, and they obtain teacherless wisdom by themselves.... They lack great sympathy and are not equipped with expedient means. They merely extinguish their own suffering and realize a state of quiescence....

Here are some verses:

Eradicating karma and mental afflictions, as well as their seeds,
They reduce their bodies to ashes and extinguish knowledge, and are just
like empty space.
Serenely they rest in meditative absorption for a long time, as if intoxicated,
But upon receiving the admonishments of the Buddha they turn their
minds toward the palace of one ‘thusness’.

6. *The Mind of the Mahayana Concerned for Others*

This is the idealistic mindset of ‘Hossō’ Buddhists who experience a oneness with all sentient beings and direct their practice to helping others as well

as themselves, but their focus on mental constructions limits their ability to experience oneness of mind and reality.

There is a teaching for bodhisattvas called “the vehicle concerned for others...”. With the twofold emptiness of persons and things and the three natures, they wash away the dust of self-attachment, and... they arrange practices for benefiting others. They contemplate the profound subtleties of storehouse consciousness and concentrate on how apparitions and mirages resemble the nonsubstantiality of the mind....

.....

Because they concern themselves for sentient beings throughout the dharma realm, this stage of the mind is called “concerned for others”; because it is contrasted with the goat and deer carts of the Hinayana monks and hermits, it has the epithet “great”; and because it carries both oneself and others to consummate nature, it is called a “vehicle.”

.....

Question: Is a buddha such as this, who has severed the two hindrances and realized the four attributes of nirvāṇa, to be regarded as the final goal?

Answer: Such a state has still not reached the original source.

Question: How can you know?

Answer: The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna has explained it in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*:

All such practitioners who cut off all evil, cultivate all good, transcend the ten stages, reach the unsurpassed stage of buddhahood, perfect the three bodies of the Buddha, and are endowed with the four attributes of nirvāṇa belong to the station of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge. [T 32, 637c]

Now, according to this evidential passage, the buddha of this stage of the mind has not yet reached the source of the mind; he has merely shut out the delusions outside the mind, but has not opened up the jewels of the secret treasury.

7. The Mind Awakened to the Non-Birth of the Mind

This analytic mindset is that of the Sanlun (Mādhyamika) School. Using logic to show the superficiality of all distinctions, it emphasizes nothingness. In so doing, however, it becomes disconnected from verbal expression and the world of multiplicity.

Know verily that the one is the mother of hundreds and thousands of existents, and emptiness is the root of provisional existence.... Matter, no different from emptiness, establishes all things, and yet it appears to be empty; emptiness, no different from matter, nullifies all attributes, and yet it seems to exist. Therefore, matter is emptiness, and emptiness is matter. All things are thus; what is

not so?... Emptiness is observed in inapprehensibility, and frivolous arguments are transcended in the eight negations.

.....

The expression “originally unborn” covers the eight negations of not born, not extinguished, not annihilated, not eternal, not identical, not different, not gone, and not come. Exponents of the Sanlun School cite these eight negations, regarding them as the ultimate Middle Path.

.....

Question: Has this stage of the mind, which has ended all frivolous arguments and is tranquil and unconditioned, reached the ultimate stream or not?

Answer: The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna has explained it in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*:

Since the beginningless past, pure original enlightenment has not looked to the cultivation of practice, nor has it been subject to some other power; its inherent virtues are completely perfect, and it is endowed with original wisdom; it both goes beyond the four propositions and is also removed from the five extremes; the word “naturalness” cannot express its naturalness, and the idea of “purity” cannot conceive of its purity; it is absolutely removed from verbalization and absolutely removed from conceptualization. An original locus such as this belongs to the margins of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge. [T 32, 637c]

8. *The Unconditioned Mind of the One Path*

Also called “Knowing One’s Own Mind as It Really Is” and “Mind of Emptiness and No Objects,” this is the mindset of the ‘Tendai’ Buddhist whose mind of oneness is realized in meditation as the unity of both tranquility and change. Kūkai sees this as approaching the esoteric view of reality, but it falls short by understanding dualism as something to be overcome, rather than recognizing it to be inherently nonexistent.

The state achieved through the meditation practice of calming and contemplation is tranquil and yet illuminating, illuminating and yet always tranquil. It is similar to the ability of clear water to act as a mirror, and like the way in which images are cast on polished gold. The water and gold are identical to the reflected images, and the reflected images are identical to the gold and water. Thus, know that the object is wisdom and wisdom is the object. Therefore, this state is said to have no external objects. This is, namely, to know one’s mind as it really is, and it is called awakening. Therefore, in the *‘Mahāvairocana’ sūtra* the honored one, Vairocana, addressed the Lord of Mysteries, saying:

“Lord of Mysteries, what is awakening? It means to know one’s mind as it really is... and there is not the slightest part of it that can be apprehended.

Why? Because awakening has the characteristic of empty space, and there is no one to comprehend it, nor is there any understanding of it.

.....

“Lord of Mysteries, how is one to know one’s own mind? For it cannot be apprehended by seeking it in distinctions or in colors or in shapes or in external objects or in matter or in sensation, ideation, volition, or consciousness or in ‘I’ or in ‘mine’ or in the grasper (i.e., subject) or in the grasped (i.e., object) or in the pure or in the eighteen realms or in the twelve sense fields or in any other distinctions. Lord of Mysteries, this gateway to the bodhisattva’s pure mind of awakening is called the path whereby the dharma becomes clear for the first time.” [T 18, 1c]

.....

Question: Is this principle of the phenomenal realm as oneness and the thusness of the One Path regarded as a mark of the ultimate buddha?

Answer: The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna has explained it in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*:

The mind of the phenomenal realm as oneness is not found in a hundred negations, it defies a thousand affirmations, and it does not correspond to the middle; not corresponding to the middle, it defies heaven (i.e., supreme truth), and since it defies heaven, discourses of flowing eloquence are stopped in their tracks and speculations of careful deliberation are left with no recourse. The mind of oneness such as this belongs to the margins of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge. [T 32, 637c]

9. *The Mind Utterly without Any Nature of Its Own*

This highest exoteric mindset represents that of the Japanese ‘Kegon’ (C. Huayan) Buddhist. In emphasizing the interpenetration of all phenomena as a substanceless flux, this mindset is so close to the esoteric view that Kūkai tries to clarify the subtle differences.

In interpreting this mind utterly without any nature of its own mind, there are two approaches: one is the exoteric cursory approach, and the other is the esoteric secret approach.

The exoteric cursory approach: ... That which is near and yet difficult to see is one’s own mind, and that which is infinitesimal and yet pervades space is one’s own buddha. One’s buddha is difficult to conceive, and one’s mind is vast... The remarkable among all that is remarkable, the absolute among all that is absolute—surely it is only the Buddha of one’s own mind.

.....

When the Buddha Vairocana first attained enlightenment, he discussed these matters extensively with ‘Samantabhadra’ and other great bodhisattvas during the second week, and this corresponds to the ‘*Flower Garland Sutra*’....

Entering this ocean-seal meditative absorption, he observed the perfect interfusion of dharma-natures, and shining on those whose religious capacity is elevated like the king of mountains, he showed that the mind and the Buddha are not different. He embraced the nine ages in a single moment, and stretched a single moment of thought into many eons. The one and the many interpenetrate, and the underlying truth-principle and phenomena interrelate.... With a single practice one practices all practices, and by cutting off one mental affliction one cuts off all mental afflictions.

.....

The Tathāgata Vairocana addressed the Lord of Mysteries in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, saying:

So-called emptiness is removed from the sense organs and sense objects, has no distinguishing characteristics and no cognitive objectivity, transcends all frivolous arguments, and is like empty space.... Then is born the mind utterly without any nature of its own. [T 18, 3b]

The canon master Śubhākarasiṃha explains that this one phrase “mind utterly without any nature of its own” completely encompasses all the teachings of the Kegon School [T 39, 612b]. The reason for this is that the general import of the Kegon School in probing the origins and seeking the end is to explain how the phenomenal realm of thusness does not sustain a nature of its own, but manifests in accord with conditions.

.....

Question: Is this original teaching of the mind of oneness the ultimate stage of the mind?

Answer: The bodhisattva Nāgārjuna has explained it in the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise*:

In the teaching of the Mahayana on the mind of oneness and its own three attributes of essence, aspect, and function, the mind of “oneness” cannot be a simple oneness since it is one yet all, but it is provisionally called “oneness” from the standpoint of entry to the Mahayana; likewise the “mind” of oneness cannot be simply the mind since it is one mind yet all minds, but it is provisionally called “mind” from the standpoint of entry to the Mahayana; although it is not really the referent of the term “self,” it is provisionally called “self,” and although it is not the referent of the designation “own,” it provisionally corresponds to “own”; it is termed “self” as if it were the self, but this is not the real self; and it is called “own” as if it were its own, but this is not the real meaning of “own.” It is more mysterious than the mysteriously mysterious and more remote than the remotely remote. Yet even a superior state such as this belongs to the margins of ignorance and not to the station of knowledge. [T 32, 637c]

10. *The Mind of Secret Adornment*

This mindset represents that of the esoteric Shingon Buddhist. Although the ninth mindset expressed the metaphysical nature of reality as well as it can be expressed, it still falls short because of the inexpressible character of that reality. However, one can know that reality not by verbally describing it but by directly engaging it in esoteric ritual practice.

The nine stages of the mind lack their own nature;
 Becoming progressively deeper and progressively more wondrous, they are
 all causes for the next stage.
 The esoteric teachings of the 'truth word' were expounded by the dharmabody,
 And the Secret Adamantine Vehicle is the supreme truth.
 The five phases, the five wisdoms, the essence of the realm of phenomena,
 The four mandalas, and the four seals are revealed in this tenth stage of the
 mind.
 Buddhas as numerous as the specks of dust of countless lands are the buddhas
 of one's own mind,
 And deities of the Vajra and Lotus families as numerous as the drops of
 water in the ocean are also one's own body.
 Every single mantric letter gateway incorporates myriad forms,
 And every single symbolic sword and *vajra* manifests the divine.
 The myriad virtues are completely perfected in their own nature,
 And in a single lifetime one succeeds in realizing the state of one of secret
 adornment....

All sentient beings have in the core of their minds a portion of purity that is completely appointed with all practices. Its essence is extremely subtle, clear, and bright, and it remains unchanged even when transmigrating in the six destinies. It is like the sixteenth phase of the moon. When the bright aspect of that phase of the moon meets the sun, it is merely deprived of its brightness by the rays of the sun and therefore does not appear, but from the start of the new moon that then rises, it gradually waxes day by day until the fifteenth day, when it is perfectly full and its brightness unobstructed.

.....

All those who cultivate the meditation practices of unifying yoga must fully cultivate the practices of the three mysteries and realize the meaning of accomplishing the body of a buddha in five phases.

.....

Question: We would once again ask you to explain the content of the verse at the start of this section.

Answer: The first two lines reject the nine minds explained previously, since none of them represents the ultimate fruit of buddhahood. The nine stages of

the mind are those from “the ram-like mind of common people” to “the mind utterly without any nature of its own.” Among these, the first one refers to the ordinary person who performs only acts of evil and does not cultivate the slightest bit of goodness. The next one represents the vehicle of human beings. The next describes the vehicle of heavenly beings; it corresponds to non-Buddhists who loathe the lower realms and long to be born in heaven, but while seeking liberation they eventually fall into hell. The above three minds are all worldly minds and cannot yet be called religious. The stages of the mind from the fourth “mind of aggregates-only and no-self” onward are called “obtaining the holy fruit.” Among the religious minds, “the mind of aggregates-only and no-self” and “the mind that has eradicated the causes and seeds of karma” correspond to the teachings of the Hinayana, while those from “the mind of the Mahayana concerned for others” onward are the minds of the Mahayana. The first two minds of the Mahayana are the bodhisattva vehicles and the second two are the buddha vehicles. Each of these vehicles may appropriate the name “buddha” for its own vehicle, but when viewed in light of the subsequent vehicles, it becomes a frivolous assertion. None of the previous stages of the mind is stationary, and therefore they are described as having no nature of their own; none of the subsequent stages of the mind is the ultimate fruit, and therefore they are all causes. When viewed successively in relation to each other, each is profound and wondrous, and therefore they become “progressively deeper and progressively more wondrous.”

The esoteric teachings of the truth word were expounded by the dharma-body.

This line reveals the expositor of the mantra teachings. The seven teachings apart from that of “the mind utterly without any nature of its own” were all expounded by the response- and transformation-Buddhas-for-the-sake-of-others. The secret treasury of the esoteric teaching of mantras in two divisions was expounded by the dharma-body, the Tathāgata Mahāvairocana, together with his retainers, the fourfold dharma-body, for their own enjoyment of dharma bliss while residing in the adamantine dharma-realm palace, the mantra palace, and so on. Passages in such texts as the *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies* are clear about this, and I will cite no further evidence.

And the secret adamantine vehicle is the supreme truth.

This line shows that the teaching of the mantra vehicle is the ultimate truth, transcending all other vehicles.

[RWG]

KAKUBAN 覺鑊 (1095–1143)

Kakuban was the most creative and influential 'Shingon' philosophical thinker after Kūkai*. Born in Kyushu, he became a monk in Kyoto at Ninna-ji. Rising through the ranks to become abbot of the Shingon monastic center on Mt Kōya, he encountered increasing resistance to his institutional, doctrinal, and practical reforms. This led to schism, his lineage eventually becoming known as Shingi (New Interpretation) Shingon.

Kakuban integrated into Shingon the increasingly popular Amidist or 'Pure Land' devotional tradition. In the selections below, Kakuban reaffirms 'Amida's' prominence in Shingon as an incarnation of 'Dainichi's' wisdom. By stressing the dynamic between the 'mind' of oneness and discriminative thinking, Kakuban argued that Amidism can be a way of merging with Dainichi, the cosmos-as-buddha. The two most important consequences of Kakuban's analysis were that this world itself is Amida's Pure Land and that Shingon can accommodate a practice exclusively devoted to Amida.

[TPK]

THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF "AMIDA"

KAKUBAN N.D., 149–52

As 'Shingon' traditionally teaches, 'Amida' Buddha incarnates the wisdom to discern and recognize the cosmos-as-buddha in itself. Amida is also the pervasive basis for all ordinary beings to attain awakening. If you validate for yourself the mind of oneness, you will discern the true reality of phenomena and if you validate for yourself all phenomena, you will know the mentality of all ordinary beings. Thus, the ground and figure of the mind of oneness are not distinct and together govern all aspects of the twofold truth.¹⁵ Every sentient form of life that is not buddha is still equally endowed with all five kinds of wisdom. Therefore, the everlasting great sages of all four great kinds of mandala are incarnate within you, even though you are only a temporary aggregate of the five constituents of human existence. The buddhas always involved in the three intimacies (of ritualized thought, word, and deed) pervade the ordinary mind in its nine kinds of deluded consciousness.

On one hand, since the 'mind' of oneness is itself all phenomena, the realm

15. [The two truths refer to the absolute enlightened standpoint and the provisional teachings that expeditiously lead ordinary beings to enlightenment.]

of buddhas and the realm of ordinary beings are two, but in a way that they are not really two. On the other hand, since all the phenomena are themselves the mind of oneness, the realm of buddhas and the realm of ordinary beings are not two, but in a way that they are really two. In this way, your mind and the Buddha are essentially one. Moreover, do not try to *make* your mind into buddha. As delusions go away, wisdom appears of itself and you become a buddha in your present body.

For benefiting those who have committed the gravest offenses or for guiding those whose delusions profoundly attach them to this world, some teachers may say such things as “the buddha’s body is outside your own body” or “the Pure Land is outside this ordinary, defiled world.” Accommodated to those audiences’ limited capacities, such preaching hides the real meaning and brings out only what is shallow and simplistic. But when the cosmos-as-buddha expounds the truth without such accommodations, he neutralizes those emotional attachments and opens up genuine wisdom. Therefore, whenever you realize the wellspring that is the mind of oneness, the nine-part mind-lotus will blossom into the pure mind of all nine consciousnesses. Whenever you verify your awakening in the three intimacies, the forms of the five buddhas become the same as your physical body of the five sense-organs. Who would then still long for the glorious land of treasures in the beyond? Who would still await its exquisite forms in some faraway future?

Because, as Kūkai* said, “both delusion and enlightenment are within you,” there is no body of the buddha apart from your own thoughts, words, and deeds. Since the true and the delusory are inseparable, you can find paradise within any of the five realms of ordinary existence. When you awaken to this truth, your mind of that very moment is called the ‘Bodhisattva’ of “Discerning All Existences.” Without anything holding you back, you awaken to the principle that this very mind of oneness in its impartiality is in all phenomena, whether conditioned or unconditioned. Furthermore, since you fathom this mind, free of all attachments and discriminations, you verify the mind of oneness as your natural virtue. For these reasons, giving this a name, it is “Amida Buddha.” This is the major point.

Next I will explain the true meaning of this Buddha’s names. In India, he was called “Amida” and in China went by various names including “Immeasurable Life” and “Immeasurable Light”—altogether some thirteen different names. These epithets have significance for their use in exoteric teachings. Yet, for esotericism, the meaning of all these appellations is only that they are esoteric names for ‘Dainichi’ Buddha. Still, I will proceed to interpret the true significance of these thirteen alternative names....

Kakuban then goes on to explain each of the thirteen names, concluding his discussion as follows.

Therefore, the names of all buddhas and bodhisattvas from all times and places are no other than different names for the one great cosmos-as-buddha. Or, alternatively, the buddhas and bodhisattvas of all times and places are different imprints of the wisdom of Dainichi Buddha. Furthermore, the words uttered by all sentient beings are nothing but his names in esoteric practice. Being deluded about this is what we mean by “ordinary sentient being”; fully realizing this is what we mean by “buddha wisdom.” For this reason, whenever one chants the three syllables “A-mi-ta,” this extinguishes one’s karmic sins from a time without beginning; and whenever one keeps one’s focus on just the one buddha Amida, this attains meritorious wisdom for a time without end. As the individual jewel at a node in Indra’s net instantly manifests exhaustively in its facets the images of all the other jewels at the other nodes, the one buddha Amida endows one swiftly with natural virtue without end.

Next, I will explain the extensional and intensional meanings of the syllables *A-mi-ta*. *A* signifies the impartial mind of oneness with its being innately unproduced by karmic activity. *Mi* signifies the impartial mind of oneness with its enlarged sense of egoless self. *Ta* signifies the mind of oneness in all phenomena with the tranquility of its being just as it is....

Kakuban then gives four further such interpretations of the three-syllable combination, concluding with the following summary statement.

The pedagogy of differentiation such as what we have just done refers to the extensional meaning of the syllables. But again, the extensional meanings like these are not mutually determined like the jewels in Indra’s net, where you cannot just pick or discard any of the jewels. Given the impartial mind of oneness, this cannot be done. So, here we find what we call the intensional meaning of the syllables. There is no extensional meaning without intensional meaning; there is no intensional meaning without extensional meaning. To take one and discard the other or to discard one and take the other—that is the discrimination of a deluded mind.

To have disdain for this world of ours and to long for paradise, to regard your body as evil and to revere the body of the Buddha—that we call “ignorance” or “delusion.” Though this may be the latter age of this degenerate world, if you keep discerning the impartial world of phenomena, how can you not enter the way of the buddhas?

[TPK]

THE ILLUMINATING SECRET

KAKUBAN 1143, 176-7, 219-21 (261-2, 325-7)

Those who for only a moment see a mandala and hear about its meaning attain in this life a vision of the Buddha and hear the true teaching. Those practicing one meditation and one recitation realize in the present body freedom from pain; they experience happiness. How much more so if one is faithful and pure and practices zealously! This is to grasp in the palm of the hand the enlightenment and realization of Dainichi Buddha and to rely on chanting for birth in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha. This is the virtue of chanting. How much greater is the virtue of contemplating reality!

In exoteric Buddhism, Amida exists apart from 'Shakyamuni', but in esoteric Buddhism Dainichi is Amida, the Lord of Sukhāvātī. One should know that the pure lands in all directions are all one buddha land for conversion. All buddhas are Dainichi. Dainichi and Amida are the same ground but have different names. Amida's Pure Land and Dainichi's Land Adorned with Mysteries are different names for the same place.

Through Dainichi's empowerment and through the virtue of discriminative wisdom, the figure of Amida appears on the ground of Dainichi. If one fully attains such a visualization, then from all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and sages above down to the eight orders of beings below—deities, gods, dragons, demons, and so on—there is nothing that is not the ground—Dainichi Buddha. In opening the gate of the five cakras through practice, one reveals the buddha-as-cosmos in itself. In erecting the gate of the nine mantric syllables, one refers to the celestial buddhas of bliss. One already knows that the two buddhas are the same. How, after all, should there be any differences among the wise ones? Amida's Land of Tranquil Refreshment and the Tuṣita Heaven of the future buddha, 'Maitreya', are the dwelling place of the same buddha. Dainichi Buddha's Pure Land Adorned with Mysteries and the Lotus Treasury of all phenomena are the lotus seat of the mind of oneness. How unfortunate that the ancient masters should quarrel about the difficulty or ease of attaining Amida's Western Paradise. How fortunate that here and now I have attained birth in that paradise! Moreover, the point of my esoteric commentary comes to this: The difficulty of rebirth is due to our passionate attachments.

Questions and Answers

Question: Based on the teaching of the five cakras, how many types of talented individuals are there?

Answer: There are two kinds of talented individuals. The first are those of superior ability and wisdom who aim for attaining 'buddhahood' in the present

body. The second merely have faith and superficial practice and aim for being born in the Pure Land immediately after death. Of these latter practitioners, there are also many types. The true dwell in the Pure Land adorned with mysteries, hoping to be born in the pure lands in all directions.

Question: Why does chanting the Dainichi mantra become the immediate cause for birth in the pure lands in all directions?

Answer: This mantra of five syllables is the incantation of all the buddhas in every direction. It is the heart of enlightened beings of past, present, and future. Thus by chanting this mantra, in accord with one's thoughts, one attains birth in the pure lands in all directions—Maitreya's abode, the caverns of the asuras, and so on. Likewise, the mantra practitioner of the nine syllables, in the phrase *namo amitābhāya buddhāya*, does not conceive superficial or fleeting thoughts. When one enters the Shingon practice, all words are mantras. How much more so the word "Amida?" Those who utter this, by the practice of these three syllables, encompass all practices. In brief, all three families of beings in the divisions of the Womb Mandala—the Buddha, the lotus, and the 'vajra'—are encompassed, causing knowledge of all deities....

Question: All teachings also make birth in the Pure Land dependent on the cultivation of the three karmic acts of body, speech, and mind. What is the meaning of our Shingon teaching about "being endowed with the three mysteries" of body, speech, and mind?"

Answer: The three mysteries of the Buddha-as-cosmos are extremely profound and subtle.

Even the wonderfully enlightened of exoteric Buddhism do not know these.

The six elements of the wisdom body are extremely mysterious and vast.

The perfectly enlightened of the esoteric school alone can realize these.

The buddha of calm illumination of the uncreated single path of 'Tendai' Buddhism frightens, exhorts, and abandons speech.

The deity with Indra's jeweled net, originally enlightened regarding the 'Kegon' School's three natures of essence, characteristic, and function, shows respect, abandons its realization, and seeks for true enlightenment.

The Buddha in the form of celestial buddhas is silent and does not answer.

The historical Buddha keeps the secret and does not talk.

The enlightened ones who occupy the abode of the future buddha, Maitreya, are perplexed by this realm.

The bearer of the light of the teaching, the buddha of the past, Kāśyapa, also is distant from this realm.

As the ground of forms is the mystery of the body, both active and still postures are the secret gestures, the mudras.

As the sounds of the voice are all the mystery of speech, even coarse and trifling words are mantras.

As all impure and pure mental perceptions are the mystery of the mind, both deluded and enlightened discriminations are wisdoms.

As spoken and silent feelings and thoughts are also so the mystery of thoughts, they are endowed with a complete mandala that encompasses all realms of phenomena.

As events and principles fundamentally are not two, both improper and proper contemplations are perfected meditative absorption.

As form and mind themselves do not differ, they are completely fused and interpenetrate like empty space.

The esoteric practices are not meant to be seen and heard openly.

The secret teachings must not be transmitted recklessly.

Since superficial wisdom overflows and is expressed openly, it loses effectiveness.

Inferior wisdom, similarly, is disputed because it has faults.

For those without faculties the treasure chest is hidden at the bottom of the spring.

Since the lack of faith certainly is the cause for the destruction of truth, for those without ability, speech is locked in the throat.

The birth of doubts is always the cause for falling into hell.

So, it is not that I selfishly wish to keep the proverbial sword that cuts through childish ignorance, but fear and erroneous thoughts do injure life.

Do not withhold practice—yoga—from the exoteric person, thinking that without unbiased faith, one only invites calamities.

One should not neglect and make light of the gems of the three families of beings in the mandala.

One should respect and honor the value of the three mysteries.

The power to take refuge is to enter deeply into the ocean of the lotus of the mind.

To have great faith is to look up mysteriously at the enlightened moon in the sky.

[DAT]

MYŌE 明恵 (1173–1232)

A Japanese monk ordained in both the 'Shingon' and 'Kegon' heritages, Myōe was an original and restive thinker who straddled the borders of traditional Buddhism and new directions of his age. His theory of universal salvation supported efforts to recognize the disinherited and marginalized members of society at the same time as he criticized the moral laxity of popular 'nenbutsu' practices and what he saw as the distortions of the "heretical" 'Pure Land' thinker Hōnen.* In its place, he championed a restoration of monastic discipline and advocated a "mantra of light" that focused on rebirth in the 'Pure Land' rather than the attainment of 'buddhahood' in this life as Kūkai* had taught. In a rich body of sermons, academic treatises, exegetical commentaries, poetry, rituals, and polemical tracts, Myōe sought to bring doctrinal abstractions to bear on religious and sociopolitical realities.

In the "Letter to an Island" reproduced here in the form reconstructed by his disciple Kikai (1178–1251), Myōe addresses the island of Karumoshima that seems to remind him of the causal production of all things in the mind. By identifying with the island and inviting it to "live inside of him," he seeks to appropriate the idea that all is consciousness and that all other persons and things themselves are beyond reach because of their own nature and qualities. Only by denying the disjunction of the knower from the object of knowledge, can one reach the ground where one can communicate with all things—even a cherry tree. The letter highlights Myōe's inmost feeling of being an integrated part of the world of beings, beyond their differences, all participating in the most excellent being that is Buddha.

[FG]

A LETTER TO AN ISLAND

MYŌE 1197, 36–39

To begin with, think of your own being as an island. This island is the object of attachment to the world of desire. In terms of the senses, it belongs to the categories of color and shape. It is apprehended by sight as an object of visual consciousness and is composed intrinsically of eight elements.¹⁶ Since it is in the nature of all things to know, there is no being that can escape awakening. And seeing that this knowing is by its nature the 'principle'¹ of all things, there is no place from which principle is absent.

16. [The four primary elements of earth, water, fire, and air, and the four derivative elements of sight, smell, taste, and touch.]

The principle of all things is their way of being, their 'suchness'. This suchness itself is the spiritual body, the undifferentiated principle of all things that is not distinct from the world of beings. In the same way, one cannot think of inanimate beings as existing apart from beings with sense. The body of the terrestrial realm is one of the ten bodies of the 'Tathāgata' and thus is not located outside the sublime being of 'Vairocana'. As the doctrine which states that all the six traits of things¹⁷ merge perfectly and without hindering each other, the island in its own being is a body belonging to the terrestrial realm.

In terms of one particular aspect, this island is the body of sensible beings, of retribution for acts, of the listener, of self-awakening, of the bodhisattva, and of the Tathāgata, and it is intelligent, spiritual, and spatial. Given that its own being is made of ten bodies that extend in all directions, the island exhausts 'Indra's net', merging freely and perfectly with everything. It is located high above all our conceptions and far surpasses the reach of knowledge. Thus, when one thinks hard about the principle that rules the island in the presence of the enlightenment of the ten buddhas of the '*Flower Garland Sutra*', one realizes that the secondary retribution (the receptacle world) and the principal retribution (the individual body) do not hinder each other. The One and the many move freely in and out of each other without obstruction, just as they merge into each other in the limitless expanse of Indra's net. The spiritual realm, which extends everywhere, is beyond conceiving, and the ten perfect and ultimate bodies of the 'Tathāgata' are complete.

Then why look for the Tathāgata 'Vairocana' elsewhere than in the very being of the island? It does not lie anywhere other than in each minute part of the vast sea of worlds adorned like a garland of flowers, a receptacle that extends in all ten directions. The teaching that it proclaims is as great as ten times infinity, and its teacher is the *Flower Garland Sutra* in which the principal and secondary merge perfectly. It is able to turn the wheel of dharma without having to ground itself in contemplation and to ascend to the six heavens of the world of the desire to preach without deviating from the tree of enlightenment. So there is no need to seek for it outside. Is it not the very being of the island itself?

As I have yet to attain the pure and the limpid eye of 'Samantabhadra' and be awakened to the nature of the spiritual realm, I can only see the vague outlines of a body of the terrestrial realm in the form of the passionate attachments and conceptual distinctions that animate and inanimate beings show. Since my eye has yet to glimpse the inexhaustible reach of Indra's net within the particularity of its subtle, spiritual body, my superficial ideas seem to separate me from you

17. [The six characteristics of conditioned phenomena are totality, distinction, sameness, difference, formation, and disintegration,]

as if you were not a living being. Still, a dear and close friend, on the face of it, would be no different from you! The only difference would be an illusory image set up in the objective field of my thought, the result of a mode of knowledge generated at a level of consciousness that analyzes the real in terms of the four forms of duration,¹⁸ which in turn are the results of ignorance and insufficient awareness.

In other words, as long as one remains in the sleep of ignorance, one is stuck in the realm of dream-thoughts that reflect that great dream of 'birth-and-death'. At the same time, since we have to do with an existence that lacks a nature of its own, it is not really possible to see how any living being could be different from you. Thus, since you are intimately related to the class of animate beings, I need to respect you as much as any human being close to me, so striking is your resemblance to others.

Though I have not seen you for a very long time, at those moments when I think of you with affection and with the hopes of seeing you again, I remember as if it were yesterday, walking along the seashore with you and making merry at your home. But those days long gone are but part of the endless cycle of conditioning. They, too, are but a dream belonging to the past.

Here the impermanence of the cycle of birth-and-death comes to mind. As I ponder this principle, I feel a true inner affinity for the views expressed by Vasubandhu in the *Abhidharmakośa* to refute the assertions of a sect of "conformists" who insisted that physical acts can be understood in terms of the movements of matter. He concluded that these acts are all temporary and dependent phenomena that perish instantaneously. Reflecting on the way in which dependent patterns of movement perish from one moment to the next, I felt the overwhelming presence of Vasubandhu, as if he were a friend I had known from afar. Pronouncing these words, I began to weep and had the sense that the doctrine of the impermanence of birth-and-death were being inscribed on my heart. Melancholy thoughts began to well up within me and I was distressed at the prospect that time would run out before I had a chance to see you as I so deeply hoped to.

Once the flower of perfect awakening has opened at the feet of the mountain of innate enlightenment, and the moon of knowledge born of the mind's culture has risen up within the emptiness of the nature of things, everything is seen to be akin to the spiritual realm. The principal and secondary retributions could no longer hinder each other. When the one and the many are detached, the unending interminable spiritual realm appears within each minute particle. But

18. [Myōe is referring to a sixth, subtle level of consciousness that analyzes facts in terms of the four modes of temporality (birth, abiding, change, and extinction), at work in duration, which itself is considered the result of unenlightened forces based on ignorance.]

as the one and the many fuse completely, the only real thought that remains is of the unending spiritual realm itself. The rolling waves of consciousness breaking against the shore of the ocean of absolute suchness are so much higher than our mental germinations. The distinctions of our minds look so dreadful in the garden where thought originates. I am too drunk with ignorance to embark on the ship of the six 'perfections'. Caught in the grip of agitated and wicked thoughts, I have no strength to draw the sword of wisdom. It is really pathetic and sad. I have not taken even a hundredth of a step across the vast ocean of birth-and-death to shed transmigration, nor have I cut away so much as a single branch of the gloomy, thick forest of passions.

And so, possessed by the heavenly fox of the seduction of appearances, I made my way step by step up Mt Atago, symbol of the 'three worlds'.¹⁹ And trained by the terrestrial fox of signs that produce acts, I revolve more and more around the sacred mound dedicated to Inari²⁰ where the six destinies of transmigration take shape. The road one takes has no beginning, so when shall one return home? If we remain in a state like this, it matters not if we are remarkable or dull, if we do things one way or another. We will never attain omniscience so long as we fail to ascend the stage of the absence of thought. Given this state of affairs, and though I know you are not alive any more, the desire has come upon me to send you this letter at a time I was longing for you.

Still, my spirit is not thinking only of you. Of the many cherry trees that line the central gates of Takao, there is one I used to speak to at night, when the moon and the other stars were turning bright and reddish. I find myself now at a distance and cannot see it any longer, but memory has taken me back to it again. I sometimes felt like sending a letter to the cherry tree to tell it what happened. But since I would have to be put away if I were mad enough to send a letter to a cherry tree, which cannot utter a single word, I refrained and dismissed it as a bit of folly. There are those among my friends who would agree with me that it would be folly to do something of the sort. In joining you to accompany the mariner 'Vajra' ("Detached"), who traveled the continent of jewels, and in letting my thoughts set sail in the company of the monk Sāgaramegha ("Ocean Cloud"), who dwells in the ocean, what would I lack?²¹ In speaking this way, I am referring to what I would like to be the case. In fact, the companions we

19. [The reference is to a demon said to bring misfortune in its earthly form but benefits in its heavenly form. The three worlds represented by the mountains are the worlds of desire, the sensible, and the supersensible.]

20. [Inari is a deity of grains and symbol of prosperity in general; the fox is its messenger who, for Buddhists, is thought to deceive people and lead them astray.]

21. [Vajra and Sāgaramegha are two of the spiritual teachers Sudhana meets on his pilgrimage to truth, as recorded in the *Gaṇḍavūhya* chapter of the *Flower Garland Sutra*.]

meet in dreams leave us with a bitter taste after we have woken up. It is precisely persons like this who have awakened to the spiritual realm that are true friends.

My only regret is that, for all these speculations, I have yet to dream of the four aspects of time that propel the individual mind. My behavior does not seem to follow my commands. Nevertheless, firmly convinced of the teaching that relates the authentic mode of being of things to their causal conditions, I embrace anyone who invites me to turn away from my ego in order to follow another, and when ignorance blocks the way to return to the origins, I do not let go of the principle that the absence of things is no different from emptiness. When a bodhisattva, having achieved the state of a spiritual body, comes out of meditation, distinctions resulting from attachment to things rise up before him. But when a bodhisattva has reached the stage of the path to subjugation, he deals the final blow to thoughts that produce phenomena, elevating them unconsciously to a path of higher dissolution until the bodhisattva arrives at the endpoint where thought is grounded. Once the winds of ignorance have subsided, there arrives the moment at which all the waves in the sea of the nature of things disappear.

Since we are dealing with degrees of discipline entailed in actualizing the principle step by step, the removal of the passions and realization of the fruit of this removal must take place gradually. That being so, I prefer to address myself to a companion with genuinely detached thoughts, something I find altogether attractive, rather than to one with an extraordinary mind. If you think of the world as it has been these many years past, it seems like a tale that has been dug up out of the earth. These are ancient matters; things today need to be suited to our own age. Listening to me speak this way, one might think there is some hope. But does the monastic community cultivate disciplinary rules in harmony? Does it live in a uniquely spiritual atmosphere? If one cannot give thought to companions close by, then one is not disposed to protect any beings. Generally speaking, these things are both passé and up-to-date.

[FG, RVM]

NICHIREN 日蓮 (1222–1282)

Among the founders of new Buddhist movements in the Kamakura period (1192–1333), Nichiren stands out for his strident opposition to the religious and political authorities of the day. Basing his teachings on an original interpretation of the *Lotus Sutra* that combined elements from the 'Tendai' and esoteric traditions, he preached attainment of 'buddhahood' and peace in the land through the recitation of a single mantra, '*namu-myōhō-rengekyō*', expressing devotion to the mystic law of the *Lotus Sutra*. In subsequent ages, his ideas would be put to the service of differing causes. For example, Nichiren's teachings were revived during Japan's modernization as a Buddhist form of individualism; on the other hand, they played an important role in the development of a right-wing, militaristic nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s. They were also key in the establishment of lay-Buddhist movements of the twentieth century such as Reiyūkai, Risshō Kōseikai, and Sōka Gakkai.

Born into a family of fishermen, Nichiren left home at the age of twelve to enter the local Tendai temple, Seichō-ji, where he was ordained four years later. From 1239 and 1253 he furthered his study of Buddhism, first in Kamakura and later in Kyoto and Mt Hiei. Upon completing his studies he made a public declaration at Seichō-ji, denouncing Hōnen's* popular '*nenbutsu*' practice and replacing it with his own mantra. Faced with the ire of his own religious superiors and of the local regents, he moved to Kamakura and continued his mission. Persecution followed him after he again provoked religious and secular leadership at the highest levels with his work *On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land* in 1260, and at one point he was even sentenced to exile and beheading. Beginning with the Buddhist doctrine of a universal potential for liberation in human nature, Nichiren saw one purpose of religion to be the transformation of society. In this paradigm, religion is not just a preparation for death, but a social calling. In the selections that follow we see the intimate bond between orthodoxy and orthopraxis that marked his turbulent life.

[MY]

BUDDHIST VIEWS ON CURRENT ISSUES

NICHIREN 1264, 1199–1200, 1202 (68–9, 71–2); 1266, 472–3 (308–9);
1275, 1276 (473–4.); 1277, 1466 (1121–2); N.D., 1597 (1126)

Moral Action

Are humans capable of effecting meaningful change through moral action for themselves and the world? Do we know what "good" actually means?

How do our particular historical circumstances affect our understanding of the “good”? In raising these questions, Nichiren challenges the assumption that what we think of as “intentional acts of good” are actually good, and offers instead a religious solution.

It is now some twenty-two hundred years since the ‘Thus Come One’s’ passing. For many years, the five impurities have flourished, and good deeds in any connection are rare. Though a person may do good, in the course of doing a single good deed he accumulates ten evil ones, so that in the end, for the sake of a small good, he commits great evil. And yet, in his heart, he prides himself on having practiced great good—such are the times we live in.

Moreover, you were born in the remote land of Japan, a tiny island country in the east separated by two hundred thousand *ri*²² of mountains and seas from the country of the Thus Come One’s birth. And you are a woman, burdened by the five obstacles and bound by the three obediences. How indescribably wonderful, therefore, that in spite of these hindrances you have been able to take faith in the *Lotus Sutra*!

Symbols and Semiotics

Knowledge and power are acquired symbolically and metaphorically, and there is a kind of compression that happens among symbols whereby grand expressions can be shrunk into small expressions and vice versa. But there is a hermeneutic operative here in that this process only occurs for what Nichiren considers authoritative.

First of all, when it comes to the *Lotus Sutra*, you should understand that whether one recites all eight volumes, or only one volume, one chapter, one verse, one phrase, or simply the ‘*daimoku*’ or title, the blessings are the same. It is like the water of the great ocean, a single drop of which contains water from all the countless streams and rivers, or like the wish-granting jewel, which, though only a single jewel, can shower all kinds of treasures upon the wisher. And the same is true of a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, or a million such drops of water or such jewels. A single character of the *Lotus Sutra* is like such a drop of water or such a jewel, and the hundred million characters are like a hundred million such drops or jewels.

On the other hand, a single character of the other sutras, or the name of any of the various buddhas, is like one drop of the water of a particular stream or river, or like only one stone from a particular mountain or a particular sea. One such drop does not contain the water of countless other streams and rivers, and

22. [A *ri* is equivalent to about four kilometers.]

one such stone does not possess the virtues that inhere in innumerable other kinds of stones.

The Status of Women

As a received tradition, Buddhism carries with it mixed messages about the status of women. Various forms of social prejudice from Indian and Chinese society had become embedded in Buddhism by the time it reached Japan, and Nichiren, along with some of his contemporaries, took issue with them. He sought a rational intellectual basis within Buddhism itself from which to argue the equal status of women. The following discussion centers on menstruation and reflects pre-Buddhist conventions particular to Japan in which all excretions of blood were considered polluting to individuals and their environment.

At times of menstruation, however, you refrain from reading the sutra. You ask if it is unseemly to bow in reverence to the seven characters or to recite *namu-ichijō-myōten* without facing the 'Gohonzon', or if you should refrain from doing even that during your menstrual period. You also ask how many days following the end of your period you should wait before resuming recitation of the sutra.

This is a matter that concerns all women and about which they always inquire. In past times, too, we find many persons addressing themselves to this question concerning women. But because the sacred teachings put forward by the Buddha in the course of his lifetime do not touch upon this point, no one has been able to offer any clear scriptural proof upon which to base an answer.

While the Buddha was in the world, many women in their prime became nuns and devoted themselves to the Buddha's teachings, but they were never shunned on account of their menstrual period. Judging from this, I would say that menstruation does not represent any kind of impurity coming from an external source. It is simply a characteristic of the female sex, a phenomenon related to the perpetuation of the seed of 'birth-and-death'. Or in another sense, it might be regarded as a kind of chronically recurring illness. In the case of feces and urine, though these are substances produced by the body, so long as one observes clean habits, there are no special prohibitions to be observed concerning them. Surely the same must be true of menstruation. That is why, I think, we hear of no particular rules for avoidance pertaining to the subject in India or China.

Nowhere outside of the *Lotus Sutra* is there any indication that women can attain 'buddhahood'. In fact, in the sutras preached prior to it, women are looked on with great distaste.

Thus the *Flower Garland Sutra* states, "Women are messengers of hell who can destroy the seeds of buddhahood. They may look like bodhisattvas, but at heart they are like 'yakṣa' demons." And the *Silver-Colored Woman Sutra* says, "Even

if the eyes of the buddhas of the three existences were to fall to the ground, no woman in any of the realms of existence could ever attain buddhahood.”

.....

If one goes by the sutras preached prior to the *Lotus Sutra*, one could not imagine it would be possible even for women of the human or heavenly realms to attain buddhahood. And yet the dragon king's daughter, a being of the realm of animals, without changing out of the form she had been born in as a result of lax observance of the precepts, attained buddhahood in that very body. What a marvelous event!...

Thus, reading one sentence or one phrase of this sutra, or writing out one character or one stroke of it, can become the cause that enables one to escape from the sufferings of birth-and-death and attain great enlightenment.

Ethics and Society

When the moral principles of Buddhism clash with local custom, how should one respond? Despite taking strong moral stances on many questions, Nichiren shows here his relativist stance on ethics and morals.

When we scrutinize the sutras and treatises with care, we find that there is a teaching about a precept known as following the customs of the region.... The meaning of this precept is that, so long as no seriously offensive act is involved, then even if one were to depart to some slight degree from the teachings of Buddhism, it would be better to avoid going against the manners and customs of the country.

Historical Consciousness and Liberation

The notion of “history” for Japanese of Nichiren’s time meant not the unfolding of truth in the world as part of some transcendent dispensation or covenant, but rather the inevitable decline and increasing degradation of society and the individuals that make it up. This change is natural and inevitable and not the product of any “fall” or retribution for human error. Acceptance of this truth, however, meant reconsideration of the human condition in light of what is essentially a doctrine of decreasing hope, and finding new avenues for accessing the sacred as a means of freeing self and community from the binds of hopelessness, as well as reconsideration of the meaning of religion, study, practice, and so forth. Writing on this topic typically consists of two themes: (1) demonstrating that this historical decline is real; and (2) showing the way out of the dilemma. Discussion of ‘mappō’ therefore brings forth consideration of its impact on persons and society, of relationships of power within society, and of the meaning of practice and what it can achieve.

Thus the former day of the law possessed all three: teaching, practice, and authentication, whereas in the middle day of the law, there were teaching and practice but no longer any authentication. Now in the latter day of the law, only

the teaching remains; there is neither practice nor authentication. There is no longer a single person who has formed a relationship with 'Shakyamuni' Buddha. Those who possessed the capacity to gain enlightenment through either the provisional or true Mahayana sutras have long since disappeared. In this impure and evil age, *Namu-myōhō-enge-kyō* of the "Life Span" chapter, the heart of the essential teaching, should be planted as the seeds of buddhahood for the first time in the hearts of all those who commit the five cardinal sins and slander the correct teaching. This is what is indicated in the "Life Span" chapter where it states, "I will leave this good medicine here. You should take it and not worry that it will not cure you."

.....

Question: You have mentioned above that the teaching, practice, and authentication are not all present in each of the three periods of the former, middle, and latter days of the law. If so, how do you explain the Great Teacher Miaolo's²³ statement, "The beginning of the latter day of the law will not be without inconspicuous benefit, for it is the time when the great teaching will be propagated?"

Answer: The meaning of this passage is that those who obtained benefit during the former and middle days of the law received "conspicuous" benefit, because the relationship they formed with the *Lotus Sutra* during the lifetime of the Buddha had finally matured. On the other hand, those born today in the latter day of the law receive the seeds of buddhahood for the first time, and their benefit is therefore "inconspicuous." The teaching, practice, and authentication of this age differ greatly from those of 'Hinayana', provisional 'Mahayana', the pre-*Lotus Sutra* teachings, or the theoretical teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*. There is no one now who can gain benefits like those of the former and middle days of the law. According to Miaolo's commentary, the benefits in the latter day are inconspicuous, and people can therefore neither perceive nor understand them.

Religion and Society

Based on the Buddhist doctrine of a universal buddha-nature existing in every person and its pointing to a universal potential for complete liberation, Nichiren considered one of the aims of religion to be the transformation of society. In this paradigm, religion is not merely preparation for death, but a social calling. Nichiren takes a creative response to this question, combining it with the Mahayana view of the 'Yogācāra' tradition.

Tiantai commented on this, saying that, "no worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality." A person of wisdom is not one who practices

23. [Miaolo Zhanran (711–782) was the Sixth Chinese Patriarch of Tendai Buddhism.]

Buddhism apart from worldly affairs but, rather, one who thoroughly understands the principles by which the world is governed.

The true path lies in the affairs of this world. The *Golden Light Sutra* states, “To have a profound knowledge of this world is itself Buddhism.” The *Nirvāṇa sūtra* states, “All of the non-Buddhist scriptures and writings in society are themselves Buddhist teachings, not non-Buddhist teachings.”

When the Great Teacher Miaolo compared these passages with the one from the sixth volume of the *Lotus Sutra* that reads, “No worldly affairs of life or work are ever contrary to the true reality,” he revealed their meaning and pointed out that although the first two sutras are profound, since their meaning is still shallow and fails to approach that of the *Lotus Sutra*, they relate secular matters in terms of Buddhism, whereas the *Lotus Sutra* explains that in the end secular matters are the entirety of Buddhism.

The essence of the sutras preached before the *Lotus Sutra* is that all phenomena arise from the ‘mind’. To illustrate, they say that the mind is like the great earth, while the grasses and trees are like all phenomena. But it is not so with the *Lotus Sutra*. It teaches that the mind itself is the great earth, and that the great earth itself is the grasses and trees. The meaning of the earlier sutras is that clarity of mind is like the moon, and that purity of mind is like a flower. But it is not so with the *Lotus Sutra*. It is the teaching that the moon itself is mind, and the flower itself is mind. You should realize from this that polished rice is not polished rice; it is life itself.

[GTC, MLB]

Original Enlightenment Debates

The Buddhist term “original enlightenment” plays a special role in the development of Japanese Buddhist thought as a nonsectarian concept that represents specifically Japanese variations on the core theme of realizing “enlightenment.” It is an extension of the ‘Mahayana’ teaching of ‘buddha-nature’, the potential and hope for realizing ‘buddhahood’. Given the ambiguity of the term and differences in interpretation, it can be translated into English in any number of ways. “Original enlightenment” is the most common, but this has a strong temporal connotation, implying some primordial or original state to be recovered or uncovered to fully realize enlightenment or buddhahood. “Innate awakening” and “inherent enlightenment” have a substantialist ring that seemingly contradicts the basic Buddhist rejection of a substantial self and insistence on the interdependency and ‘dependent origination’ of all things.

Developments in the Japanese ‘Tendai’ tradition in particular involved a special oral transmission of ideas that came to be called “original enlightenment thought,” a set of ideas based on the belief that all sentient beings (or all things, even non-sentient beings such as trees and rocks) originally or inherently have the potential to become enlightened—a buddha. Eventually this idea reached its apex in concluding that all beings are already endowed with enlightenment, that they are buddha just as they are.

This final idea—that all beings are buddha just as they are—has been called “absolute nonduality,” the complete identity of opposites. This is not just nonduality in the traditional Mahayana Buddhist sense of the necessary connection or interrelationship between opposites, such as big and small, light and dark, ignorance and enlightenment. In this traditional sense each side of the pair of opposites “depends” on the other in that there is no big without small and that there is enlightenment because there is ignorance, and so forth. For Zhiyi (538–597), the founder of Tendai philosophy, such opposites are “neither one nor two, and both one and two,” “neither completely different nor totally the same,” “nondual yet distinct.” In the original enlightenment tradition of absolute nonduality, however, there is a total identification of opposites: ignorance *is* enlightenment; the passionate defilements *are* the wisdom of the Buddha; this anxiety-ridden cycle of ‘birth-and-death’ *is* ‘nirvāṇa’; this defiled world *is* the Pure Land, just as it is. This is the logic of a total and simple identity of opposites.

Some contemporary scholars have judged the idea of original enlightenment as absolute nonduality to be the climax of Mahayana philosophy, while others

have dismissed it as a corruption of Buddhist teachings, or even not Buddhist at all. Yet no one can deny its importance in the history of Japanese ideas, and its pervasiveness in the Japanese consciousness or worldview, even today. A brief review of that history follows.

“Original Enlightenment” in The Awakening of Faith

The Chinese term for “original enlightenment” appears for the first time in the influential treatise, the *Awakening of Faith*, a text attributed to the famous Indian poet Āśvagoṣa but almost certainly compiled in China around the fifth or sixth century as an indigenous interpretation of the doctrine of “buddha-nature in all living beings” extolled in the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*. The term is paired with, and defined along with, “incipient enlightenment” or enlightenment “actualized” or “acquired.” That is, there is an “original enlightenment” that can be understood as the innate potential to become enlightened, or as the “original” state of all beings as inherently enlightened. There is also enlightenment that is “actualized” or “acquired” through various practices, or by somehow “realizing” enlightenment. The central passage concerning these terms and ideas is quite terse, ambiguous, and open to interpretation, but can be rendered as follows:

The meaning of “enlightenment”: The essence of mind is free from actual thoughts. The characteristic of being free from thoughts is to be like the realm of empty space, everywhere yet not in any one place, the one single characteristic of reality, the undifferentiated dharma-body of the ‘Tathāgata’. Grounded on the ‘dharma-body’, it is called “original enlightenment.” Why? Because the meaning of original enlightenment is explained in contrast to acquired enlightenment, and acquired enlightenment is in fact the same as/ identical with original enlightenment. The meaning of acquired enlightenment is this: grounded on original enlightenment, there is the actual state of non-enlightenment. Because there is non-enlightenment, we can speak of acquiring enlightenment. [T 32, 576b]

Although interpreted variously, it is clear that “original” and “acquired” or “actualized” enlightenment are not independent, and can be seen as radically nondual. Eventually in the Japanese Tendai tradition, this radical nonduality was interpreted to mean that all things are enlightened just as they are.

Medieval Debates over Original Enlightenment

Saichō (767–822), the transmitter of the Tendai tradition to Japan, conducted a famous debate over the idea of ‘buddha-nature’ with Tokuitsu (781?–842?), a monk of the ‘Hossō’ tradition. Tokuitsu had composed a tract

“On Buddha-Nature,” to which Saichō responded with an essay on “Vanquishing Misunderstandings about the *Lotus Sutra*.” Over the course of four years they engaged in what grew to be one of the most important doctrinal debates in Japanese Buddhist history. Saichō championed the idea of universal buddhahood, the ideal expounded in the *Lotus Sutra* that all beings are destined for the highest enlightenment of a buddha, while Tokuitsu supported the ‘Yogācāra’ interpretation that human beings can be divided into five categories of different latent potential, including those who have no hope of ever attaining buddhahood. The arguments in these texts, however, are more textual and authoritative than philosophical, that is, the main line of argument is to quote traditional sutras and treatises as support for one’s position. Thus we do not have an excerpt to present here as an example of philosophical argument. Instead suffice it to say that Saichō’s promotion of universal buddhahood became the accepted norm of Japanese Buddhism, and was developed further through medieval treatises on the theme of original enlightenment.

The development of original enlightenment thought was especially prominent in the Tendai School, where we find in the Middle Ages an independent movement called the “gate of original enlightenment” or “Tendai original enlightenment thought.” Texts devoted to the theme of original enlightenment made their appearance in the late Heian and Kamakura periods (tenth to thirteenth century), many of them attributed to prominent Tendai figures such as Saichō, Genshin (942–1017), and Ryōgen (912–985). These texts include “The Great Cord of Essential Truth,” a much later text attributed to Saichō, which interprets the most important Tendai teachings in terms of original enlightenment; “Hymns on Original Enlightenment,” with commentary attributed to Ryōgen and Genshin; and texts such as the “Private Notes on the Transmission from Xiuchan-si,” attributed to Saichō, which contains details on the oral transmissions of original enlightenment ideas, practices, and lineages. In these texts emphasis was placed on oral transmissions, with their accompanying lineages, and involved a subjective hermeneutics of understanding and of realizing enlightenment, through the “mind of contemplation” or “contemplating the mind.”

Building on the Mahayana idea of the identity (interrelatedness and non-differentiation) of this world of ‘samsara’ and the bliss of enlightenment or buddhahood (nirvāṇa), original enlightenment thought evolved into an ethos of absolute nonduality and total affirmation of the conventional, mundane world just as it is. This ideal is perhaps most commonly expressed in the phrase claiming that “the grasses, trees, mountains, and rivers all attain buddhahood,” a phrase that turns up almost incessantly in Japanese literature, art, theatre, and Buddhist philosophy. This religious idea constituted an unchallenged assump-

tion for most of Japanese Buddhist intellectual history, and continues to dominate today as an uncritical supposition in the wider Japanese worldview.

In the influential *Nirvāṇa sūtra*, buddha-nature was extolled as a 'dharma' or discrete phenomenon existing within all transmigrating individuals like a kind of karmic seed that enabled them to make the transition from ordinary, mortal, beings to buddhas. This was the Indian view. Because it was understood that plants lack affect, they have no conscious activity that would generate karma, good or bad. Hence the plant world in Indian Buddhism was not traditionally part of the conception of the life forms that transmigrate and are therefore in need of liberation. In China, however, the concept of buddha-nature in plants was broached in the seventh century by Jicang (549–643) and expanded upon by Zhanran (711–782). The fundamental idea of buddha-nature was understood by many as a psychological rather than ontological notion, which prompted considerable controversy in Japan. In the esoteric school of Kūkai* we find a freedom in the symbolic use of language that was not shared by the other schools of Buddhism. A century later, the rival Tendai School had become split into esoteric and exoteric branches, bringing this question into clear relief.

Meantime, the rise of Pure Land Buddhism sparked by Hōnen* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was seen as an explicit rejection of the original enlightenment thesis. Though Hōnen and his disciples were also Tendai monks, they emphasized facing the existential reality of suffering and the inability to achieve liberation through one's own efforts. At best, original enlightenment was little more than a useless diversion to this group, but the repeated suppression of Pure Land groups in the medieval period confirms the degree to which the original enlightenment perspective had become normative at this time.

The following selections reflect the breadth of the debate, which continues unabated from the Middle Ages to the present day.

[PLS]

UNIVERSAL BUDDHA-NATURE

SAICHŌ, 1480, 71–2

In the following selection from the "Private Notes on the Transmission from Xiuchan-si," Saichō emphasizes realizing the identity or nonduality of the practitioner and Buddha through the practice of contemplation.

First to be explained is the basic understanding of single-minded threefold contemplation. That is, one who practices calming-and-contemplation should calmly settle in a basic understanding of what the teaching and practice of calming-and-contemplation consists. Each and every dust-like phenomenon is simultaneously empty, conventionally existent, and the 'middle', completely

independent of emotional thoughts. When the sublime truth of this threefold contemplation is clearly discerned, one realizes that there is nothing to practice and nothing to realize. At the time of practice and realization, what is there to discuss with regard to “beginnings” or “origins”? The internal and the external are both mysteriously undifferentiated; external conditions and internal insight or contemplation are mutually quiescent. All thoughts arise in association with objects of sense experience; you should not become attached to them. One who dwells in threefold contemplation without a second thought is a true practitioner of calming-and-contemplation. In this way one should dwell securely in a basic understanding of threefold contemplation without attachment and as not something to be attained. One should cultivate threefold contemplation in three levels as follows: first, at a distinct time and place; second, in all aspects of daily life; and third, at the time of death.

As for the three levels of single-minded threefold contemplation, the first is single-minded contemplation at a distinct time. That is, one should prepare and adorn a place of practice, setting aside a distinct time of practice such as seven days up to a hundred days. The process for adorning the place of practice is as follows. Prepare a small room, avoiding places near the clamor and distractions of human habitations. Enshrine images of devotion on the walls of the four directions. Place an image of ‘Shakyamuni’ to the north, so that he can guide your practice. To the west ‘Amitābha’, to promote the contemplation of wisdom. To the south ‘Avalokiteśvara’, for attaining the state of non-retrogression. To the east Mañjuśrī, for your protection and the destruction of demonic influences. The practitioner should face directly at the image of Amitābha.

Again, a clear mirror should be placed in front of each image. When the buddhas and bodhisattvas respond and come, and appear through proper causes and conditions, the image of the practitioner and the image of the bodhisattva or buddha can be seen to appear as one in the mirror. Thus if a practitioner has single-minded threefold contemplation as an internal cause, and the appearance in the same mirror as a buddha or a bodhisattva as an external condition, this will lead to a fusion of internal and external causes and conditions and a quick completion of the fulfillment (of buddhahood). Offer flowers, burn incense, sit in the half-lotus position, and three times during the day and three times at night dwell with the mind concentrated on one object.

When you perform such a distinct practice for seven days, you should cultivate the “contemplation of the unity of sentient beings and buddhas” on the first day. If the mind is the essence of all phenomena, then sentient beings and buddhas are integrated together in the mind of oneness; how could they have a distinct essence or body? The appearance of the object of devotion and the practitioner together in one mirror is due to the nonduality of sentient beings and buddhas. If sentient beings and buddhas are really distinct and not nondual,

how could they appear together in one mirror? Light and darkness are each distinct, and therefore when there is light there is no darkness, and when there is darkness there is no light. If sentient beings and buddhas are essentially distinct, their image in the mirror should also be distinct. Thus the threefold physical, verbal, and mental activity of a practitioner is not at all distinct from the threefold activity of the object of worship. The practitioner who contemplates this, in his own body, the sublime body of the realm of enlightenment, that is, he is a buddha; he is forever liberated from the aspects of a common, ignorant person, and quickly abandons the nature of an ordinary person.

[PLS]

SUCHNESS

GENSHIN, N.D., 120-1, 124-5, 130-1, 133-4 (204-9)

“The Contemplation of ‘Suchness,’” a twelfth-century work not actually composed by Genshin but attributed to him retrospectively, also emphasizes absolute nonduality, claiming that “grasses and trees, tiles and pebbles, mountains and rivers, the great earth, the vast sea, and empty space” all are identical with Buddha in that they share ‘suchness’ as their fundamental essence.

Volume 1 of the *Great Calming and Contemplation* states: “Of every form and fragrance, there is none that is not the ‘middle way’. So it is with the realm of the self, as well as the realms of the Buddha and of the beings” [T 46.1c]. The “realm of the self” is the practitioner’s own mind. The “Buddha realm” indicates the buddhas of the ten directions. “The beings” means all sentient beings. “Every form and fragrance” means all classes of insentient beings, including grasses and trees, tiles and pebbles, mountains and rivers, the great earth, the vast sea, and empty space. Of all these myriad existents, there is none that is not the middle way. The terms for this identity are many. It is called suchness, the real aspect, the universe, the ‘dharma-body’, the ‘dharma-nature’, the ‘Thus Come One’, and the cardinal meaning. Among these many designations, I will for present purposes employ “suchness” and thus clarify the meaning of the contemplation of the middle way that is explained in many places in the sutras and treatises.

If you wish to attain ‘buddhahood’ quickly or to be born without fail in the ‘Pure Land’ of utmost bliss, you must think: “My own mind is precisely the principle of suchness.” If you think that suchness, which pervades the universe, is your own essence, you are at once the universe; do not think that there is anything apart from this. When you are awakened, the buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions of the universe and also all bodhisattvas each dwell within yourself. To seek a separate Buddha apart from yourself is the action of a time when

you do not know that you are yourself precisely suchness. When you know that suchness and you yourself are the same thing, then, of Shakyamuni, Amitābha, Bhaisajya-guru, and the other buddhas of the ten directions, as well as 'Saman-tabhadrā', Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, 'Maitreya', and the other 'bodhisattvas', there is none that is separate from yourself. Moreover, the *Lotus Sutra* and the other eighty thousand repositories of teachings and the twelve kinds of scriptures, as well as the myriad practices of all buddhas and bodhisattvas undertaken as the cause for their enlightenment, the myriad virtues they achieved as a result, and the boundless merit they gained through self-cultivation and through teaching others—of all this, what is there that is not within oneself?

When one forms this thought, because all things are the functions of the mind, all practices are encompassed within the mind of oneness, and in a single moment of thought, one comprehends all things: This is called "sitting in the place of practice." It is called "achieving right awakening." Because one thus realizes buddhahood without abandoning this present body, it is also called realizing buddhahood with this very body. This is like the case of the eight-year-old daughter of the dragon king who, on hearing the principle of the *Lotus Sutra* that all things are a single suchness, immediately aroused the aspiration for enlightenment and, in the space of a moment, achieved right awakening. Moreover, for one who contemplates suchness and aspires to be born in the Pure Land of utmost bliss, there is no doubt that one shall surely be born there in accordance with one's wish. The reason is: Attaining buddhahood is extremely difficult, because one becomes a buddha by self-cultivation and by teaching others and thus accumulating unfathomable merit, enough to fill the universe. But achieving birth in the land of perfect bliss is very easy. Even those who commit evil deeds, if, at life's end, they wholeheartedly chant '*namu-Amida-Butsu*' ten times, are certain to be born there.

Thus, when one contemplates suchness, one can even realize buddhahood quickly, which is difficult to attain. How much more is one certain beyond doubt to achieve birth in the Pure Land of utmost bliss, which is easy! This being the case, those who desire by all means to be born in the Pure Land should simply contemplate suchness. A hundred people out of a hundred are certain to be born there, surely and without doubt....

.....

Someone asks: I do not understand this about all beings being buddhas originally. If all beings were buddhas originally, people would not resolve to become buddhas through difficult and painful practices. Nor would there be the divisions among the six paths of transmigration, that is, hell dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, asuras, humans, and heavenly beings. Yet the Buddha himself taught that the beings of the six paths always exist. In the *Lotus Sutra* itself, it states, "I, with the eye of a Buddha, see the beings on the six courses, reduced to poverty's

extreme, having neither merit nor wisdom” [T 9, no. 9b]. Moreover, phenomena do not exceed what they actually appear to be. In reality there are humans and horses, cows, dogs, and crows, to say nothing of ants and mole crickets. How can one say that all such beings are originally buddhas? And, as people in the world are accustomed to thinking, “Buddha” is one endowed with the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of physical excellence, an unrestricted being whose supernatural powers and wisdom surpass those of all others. That is precisely why he is worthy of respect. How can such creatures as ants and mole crickets, dogs and crows, be deemed worthy of respect and revered as buddhas?

Now in reply it may be said: We ourselves and others are from the outset a single reality that is the principle of suchness, without the distinctions of hell-dwellers, animals, and so forth. Nevertheless, once ignorance has arisen, within the principle that is without discrimination, we give rise to various discriminations. Thinking of suchness or the universe merely in terms of our individual self, we draw the distinctions of self and other, this and that, arousing the passions of the five aggregates and the six dusts.²⁴ Toward objects that accord with our wishes, we arouse the defilement that is greed; toward objects that do not accord with our wishes, we arouse the defilement that is anger; and toward objects that we neither like nor dislike, we arouse the defilement that is folly. On the basis of the three poisons—greed, anger, and folly—we arouse the eighty-four thousand defilements. At the prompting of these various defilements, we perform a variety of actions. As a result of good actions, we experience the recompense of birth in the three good realms of heavenly beings, humans, and asuras. And as a result of evil actions, we invite the retribution of birth in the three evil realms of the hells, hungry ghosts, and animals.

In this way, living beings and their insentient environments of the six paths emerge. While transmigrating through these six realms, we arbitrarily regard as self what is not really the self. Therefore, toward those who go against us, we arouse anger and we abuse and strike or even kill them; thus we cannot put an end to the round of ‘birth-and-death’. Or toward those who accord with us, we arouse a possessive love, forming mutual bonds of obligation and affection throughout lifetime after lifetime and age after age. In this case as well, there is no stopping of transmigration. In other words, transmigrating through the realm of birth-and-death is simply the result of not knowing that suchness is you yourself, and thus of arbitrarily drawing distinctions between self and other, this and that. When you think, “Suchness is my own essence,” then there is nothing that is not you yourself. How could oneself and others not be the same?

24. [The five aggregates refer to the physical and mental constituents of existence: forms, perceptions, conceptions, mental volitions, and consciousness. The six dusts refer to the objects of the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and thought.]

And if you realized that self and others are not different, who would give rise to defilements and evil actions and continue the round of rebirth?

.....

Thus, if while walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, or while performing any kind of action, you think, “I am suchness,” then that is realizing buddhahood. What could be an obstruction to such contemplation? You should know that suchness is to be contemplated with respect to all things. Clergy or laity, male or female—all should contemplate in this way. When you provide for your wife, children, and retainers, or even feed oxen, horses, and the others of the six kinds of domestic animals,²⁵ because the myriad things are all suchness, if you think that these others are precisely suchness, you have in effect made offerings to all buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions and three periods of time, as well as to all living beings, without a single exception. This is because nothing is outside the single principle of suchness. Because the myriad creatures such as ants and mole crickets are all suchness, even giving food to a single ant is praised as encompassing the merit of making offerings to all buddhas of the ten directions.

Not only is this true of offerings made to others. Because we ourselves are also suchness—with each thought-moment being mutually identified with and inseparable from all phenomena—one’s own person includes all buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions and three time periods and is endowed with the hundred realms, thousand suchnesses, and three thousand realms, lacking none. Thus, when you yourself eat, if you carry out this contemplation, the merit of the ‘perfection’ of giving at once fills the universe, and because one practice is equivalent to all practices, the single practice of the perfection of giving contains the other perfections. And because cause and effect are nondual, all practices, which represent the causal stage, are simultaneously the myriad virtues of the stage of realization. Thus you are a bodhisattva of the highest stage, a Thus Come One of perfect enlightenment.

And not only are living beings suchness. Insentient beings such as grasses and trees are also suchness. Therefore, when one offers a single flower or lights one stick of incense to a single Buddha—because, “of every form and fragrance, there is none that is not the middle way”—that single flower or single stick of incense is precisely suchness and therefore pervades the universe. And because the single Buddha to whom it is offered is precisely suchness, that one Buddha is all buddhas, and the countless buddhas of the ten directions without exception all at once receive that offering.... When one contemplates suchness with even a small offering, such as a single flower or stick of incense, one’s merit shall be

25. [The domestic animals referred to are horses, oxen, sheep, dogs, pigs, and chickens.]

correspondingly great. How much more so, if one chants the Buddha's name even once, or reads or copies a single phrase or verse of the sutra! In so doing, the merit gained by thinking that each character is the principle of suchness is so vast that it cannot be explained in full.

In this way, because all living beings, both self and others, are suchness, they are precisely buddhas. Because grasses and trees, tiles and pebbles, mountains and rivers, the great earth, the vast sea, and the empty sky are all suchness, there is none that is not buddha. Looking up at the sky, the sky is buddha. Looking down at the earth, the earth is buddha. Turning toward the eastern quarter, the east is buddha. And the same is true with the south, west, north, the four intermediate directions, up and down....

[JIS]

BUDDHAHOOD IN PLANTS

KAKUUN and RYŌGEN 1336, 309–10

The following excerpt from a mock debate between Kakuun and Ryōgen, two high-ranking tenth-century monks within the dominant Tendai School, addresses the presence of buddhahood in plants and expands the question to ask if plants or insentient life forms go through the same processes as sentient life forms in becoming buddhas. Both accept the plant world into the sacred realm of life defined by the buddha-nature inherent in each individual life form.

Question: Plants and trees do not have minds that contemplate things, so how can it be said that they have made commitments aspiring to liberation, carried out the appropriate practice, and thereby become buddhas?

Answer: ... In respect to the attainment of buddhahood by bodhisattvas, it has been argued that grasses and trees also embody the four aspects of temporal existence: birth, duration, change, and dissolution. Thus we know that when grasses and trees aspire to liberation and engage in practice, they practice like sentient beings. If sentient beings aspire to liberation through practice, then so do grasses and trees.

Moreover, in the perfect teaching of our Tendai School, we have the idea that all of life, both sentient and non-sentient life, is endowed with the two qualities of being at rest and being in forward motion. At rest, there is no aspiration and practice; in forward motion, there is. Both in the realm of ordinary living beings and in the realm of buddhas, there is worldly truth and transcendent truth; there are the merits of practice for oneself and the merits of practice aimed at the spiritual transformation of others. Grasses and trees are no exception.

.....

Doubt: Others say that although grasses and trees have 'buddha-nature' in

principle, they cannot have it in fact. So how could the wisdom of the buddha-nature and the practice that leads to it be available to them?

Reply: If you already admit to the existence of buddha-nature in principle, then you know that it is also possible in actuality. One may interpret the phrase “It goes without saying that the two bodies of Buddha—the dharma-body and its presence in the world—abide permanently” as affirming this idea. This is a wondrous principle of suchness whose essence has no form.

Sentience and insentience are not two. Sentient living beings are a ‘middle way’, and as such have the ‘wisdom’ and practice proper to buddha-nature. Grasses and trees are the middle way, and they, too, are so endowed. If this were not the case, we would fall into the error of seeing duality in the principle of the middle way.

.....

Question: If grasses and trees aspire to liberation and engage in practice to this end, then why is there no reference to any of them excelling at their practice? This is what leads us to conclude that they have no experience in aspiring to liberation or engaging in practice.

Answer: There are many different senses to their aspiration and practice. From the point of view that “one action is all action; one practice is all practice,” we might say that no phenomena are lacking in the virtue of aspiring for liberation and engaging in practice, since all phenomena share in the enlightened essence of aspiration, practice, and the attainment of buddhahood. This makes it plain to me that you have not understood that the doctrine of “the entry of forward motion” is part of the essential teachings. The aspect of being at rest is all the more remarkable because motion may enter into sentient or non-sentient life forms that are not aspiring for enlightenment or engaging in practice and urge them to do so. Eventually this will be clear to you.

[MLB]

CRITICAL BUDDHISM

HAKAMAYA Noriaki, 1989, 9–10

MATSUMOTO Shirō, 1989, 5–8, (169, 171–2)

The assumptions of nonduality and original enlightenment, though widely accepted in Japanese thought, have occasionally met with critical objection. A recent movement called “Critical Buddhism” by its main proponents, Hakamaya Noriaki and Matsumoto Shirō, Buddhist scholars affiliated with universities of the Sōtō Zen School, directs philosophical criticism at the absolute nondualism of original enlightenment thought. Hakamaya cites three defining characteristics of Buddhism in contrast to the idea of original enlightenment as absolute nonduality:

1. The basic teaching of Buddhism is the law of causation (*pratītya-samutpāda*), formulated in response to the Indian philosophy of a substantial *ātman*. Any idea that implies an underlying substance (as a *topos*), and any philosophy that accepts a *topos*, is called *dhātu-vāda* (“substance/basis-ism”). Examples of *dhātu-vāda* are the *ātman* concept in Indian philosophy, the idea of “nature” in Chinese philosophy, and the “original enlightenment” idea in Japan. These ideas run counter to the basic Buddhist idea of causation.

2. The moral imperative of Buddhism is to act selflessly (*anātman*) to benefit others. Any religion or philosophy that favors the self to the neglect of others contradicts the Buddhist ideal. The original “enlightenment idea” that “grasses, trees, mountains, and rivers have all attained buddhahood, that sentient and non-sentient beings are all included in the substance of buddha,” leaves no room for this moral imperative.

3. Buddhism requires faith, words, and the use of the intellect (wisdom) to choose the truth of causation. The Zen allergy to the use of words is more native Chinese philosophy than Buddhist, and the ineffability of ‘suchness’ asserted in original enlightenment thinking leaves no room for words or faith or critical thinking.

[PLS]

Dhātu-vāda is a “Sanskrit” neologism coined by Matsumoto, who also claims that the absolute nondualism of original enlightenment thought should not be uncritically accepted.

It has been known for some time now that *buddha-dhātu* is the original Sanskrit for the term buddha-nature as it appears in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* phrase, “All sentient beings possess the buddha-nature.” In spite of this identification, buddha-nature is still commonly taken to mean the “possibility of the attainment of buddhahood,” “the original nature of the Buddha,” or “the essence of the Buddha.” I find this incomprehensible. The etymology of ‘*dhātu*’ makes it clear that its meaning is a “place to put something,” a “foundation,” a “locus.” It has no sense of “original nature” or “essence.”

.....

To sum up, the basic structure of *dhātu-vāda* is that of a singular, real locus (*dhātu*) that gives rise to a plurality of phenomena. We may also speak of it as a “generative monism” or a “foundational realism”... The structure of *dhātu-vāda*, whose affirmation of identity and nondiscrimination ironically ends up affirming and absolutizing actual differences, can also be seen in the Japanese notion of “original enlightenment”...

The important point here is that Shakyamuni’s doctrine of causality can only be understood when viewed as antithetical to the theory of a singular ground or cause of the manifold world—that is, to the idea of *dhātu-vāda*.

[JH]

JIUN Sonja 慈雲尊者 (1718–1804)

Jiun Sonja was a leading Buddhist reformer, scholar, and apologist during the Edo period (1600–1868). At a time when the Buddhist establishment was increasingly occupied with tasks imposed on it by the Tokugawa government, such as keeping registers of the local citizenry, and conducting funeral and memorial services, Jiun devoted himself to reviving traditional monastic life, based on the model of the historical Buddha and grounded in Buddhist philosophy. To study early Buddhism, he undertook the study of Sanskrit, using the limited resources available to him in Japan, and compiled the 1,000-chapter *Guide to Sanskrit Studies*, a work unparalleled in premodern Japanese history. In his dharma talks, delivered to the laity and monastic communities alike, he stressed the fundamentals of Buddhism in an attempt to transcend sectarian divisions and return to “Buddhism as it was when the Buddha was alive.” Although ordained in the ‘Shingon’ Vinaya Sect, his close ties to Zen gained him a wide audience.

In the following passage, Jiun provides a brief commentary on a well-known line from the *Diamond Sutra*, one of the “wisdom texts” aimed at evoking an appreciation of the ‘mind’ and paradoxical existence of the ‘bodhisattva’, one who understands the empty and mentally constructed nature of reality, but who remains committed to compassionate action in the world. The bodhisattva “abides,” but he or she “abides in no place.” “The profound meaning of all the wisdom texts is contained in this one line,” Jiun argues below. “Indeed, the meaning of all the sutras is contained within it.” Jiun presented this talk between 1758 and 1771 during a period of retreat on Mt Ikoma, east of Osaka.

[PBW]

THE NON-ABIDING MIND

JIUN Sonja 1758, 351–60

I have been asked to explain the passage from the *Diamond Sutra* which runs, “Produce a mind that abides in no place.” What we call ‘*prajñā*’ is wisdom. By this wisdom we do not mean worldly wisdom and cleverness; rather, it is that single moment of thought within people that is originally bright and clear. This single ‘moment of thought’ is originally pure; it penetrates the limits of the past, present, and future, and yet it did not arise in the past and, in the end, does not become extinct. Not for a moment does it abide anywhere. If you thoroughly penetrate this, this is the original “abiding in no place” of the *Diamond Sutra*. If people can themselves believe and understand this, even in

the slightest degree, they will achieve a place of great ease. But this is difficult to believe and understand....

When people who misunderstand the 'mind' see squares, circles, and triangles after having seen green, yellow, red, and white they think that the mind of green, yellow, red, and white becomes extinct and the mind of squares, circles, and triangles arises. After seeing forms, they hear sounds, after hearing sounds, they smell scents, after smelling scents, they experience tastes, after experiencing tastes, they sense textures; then, when after sensing textures, they become conscious of good and evil, true and false, right and wrong, gain and loss, they think that moment by moment their earlier thoughts become extinct and their later thoughts arise anew. When they see tall grass after having seen a pine tree, they think that the mind of the pine tree becomes extinct and the mind of tall grass arises. These are just the vicissitudes of imaginary objects. They have nothing to do with your own true mind.

Your true mind exists in a state of solitary release beyond all these images and, transcendent, it relies on nothing. It originally has no relation to arising and extinction. Because it has no relation to arising and extinction, when it is found among buddhas, it is not increased; when it is found among sentient beings, it is not diminished. It fills the 'dharma-realm' of the ten directions, yet is not great. It fits into a square inch, yet it is not small. It is called a "diamond." It is said that there are diamond gems in the world that, even if struck with metal or stone, do not crumble and that themselves can destroy metal and stone. Even if placed in fire, they are not consumed, and even if placed in water, they are not damaged by moisture. Further, within a gem an inch square, the images of mountains, rivers, the earth, sentient and non-sentient beings are reflected for a distance of a day's march.

The diamond gem of your own mind is also like this. Arising, abiding, differentiation, and extinction can not affect it. Even amidst the fires of anger, it is not destroyed. Even amidst the floods of lust and desires, moisture does not penetrate it. Concealed in a square inch, it reflects the images contained in all worlds.

In a single moment of thought, you can illuminate all things. When you encounter a buddha, the buddhas of the three periods of time, apart from language and concepts, become the attributes of your own mind. When you encounter sentient beings, all sentient beings, apart from language and concepts, become your own gate to the dharma. And when you encounter mountains, rivers, the earth, grass, trees, and forests, each, apart from language and concepts, becomes great 'nirvāṇa' and manifests the true character of all things. This is what we call *prajñā*. The buddhas of the three periods of time, with this in mind, achieve unsurpassed enlightenment. In the *Heart Sutra*, mention is made of "gaining unsurpassed enlightenment." The bodhisattvas of the ten directions, with this in mind, practice the six 'perfections', the basis of all acts, and benefit all sentient

beings. In the *Heart Sutra*, mention is also made of “the mind without obstacles that has distanced itself from all perverted views.” The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, with this in mind, meditate upon the four noble truths and the twelve conditions of existence and realize nirvāṇa both with and without remainder. These people are referred to as great śrāvakas and are called “perfected.”

Fundamentally, *perfected* means “having reached the other shore.” It refers to the realm of the buddhas. If we say “realm of the buddhas,” it would appear as though, by positing a realm beyond our own, we fall into a duality. But the buddhas, just as they are, have reached the other shore. It is also the realm of the bodhisattvas. Again, if we say “realm of the bodhisattvas,” it would appear as though there is a subject and object. However, the bodhisattvas, just as they are, have reached the other shore. Conscious of the realm of sentient beings, they arouse great compassion. The realm of sentient beings too, just as it is, has “reached the other shore.”

The perfection of *prajñā* is profound and inconceivable. It is the realm of the buddhas alone and not even enlightened bodhisattvas of the tenth stage can know that state. How much less is it something of which the ordinary follower of the two vehicles can have knowledge. It is nothing other than the wisdom regarding the true character of all things, entrance to which can be gained through the ‘*samādhi*’ of signlessness. Therefore, among his major disciples, the great Sage, the World-Honored One, expounded upon his teachings especially for Śāriputra, who was first in wisdom, and for Subhūti, who was unrivalled in the practice of emptiness.

In particular, the *Diamond Sutra* is instruction directed at Subhūti concerning the manner in which a bodhisattva subdues and controls his mind, and concerning where the bodhisattva’s mind should and should not abide. The essence of this text lies in the line, “Produce a mind that abides in no place.” The profound meaning of all the Prajñā texts is contained in this one line. Indeed, the meaning of all the sutras is contained within it. For the practitioner, all teachings concerning the control of the mind and the attainment of enlightenment are contained within it.

Many illustrious masters of ancient times pondered and commented on this passage. Even today, should people take it up, read, ponder, and comment on it, they will realize that its words are of great value and benefit. If they are true followers of the Way, should they hear this passage just once, surely they will attain a boundless and great awakening. Remember that the great teacher Huineng, having heard these words just once, attained a great awakening. Even if a person of small and inferior capacity who has not yet reached the status of a true follower should for a moment accept them in faith, these words become the seeds that will lead him to the stage of true practice and a distant cause for his attainment of liberation from ‘birth-and-death’....

The preceding passage reads: “Do not produce a mind that abides in forms. Nor produce a mind that abides in sounds, scents, tastes, textures, or dharmas.

Produce a mind that abides in no place.” By “forms” in this passage, we mean mountains, rivers, the earth, grass, trees, forests, sentient and non-sentient beings; that is, anything that enters your line of sight or that can be analyzed into its constituent parts. These are altogether referred to as forms. As regards the words “produce a mind,” ask yourself: When you see green grass, do you produce a “green” mind? When you see a mountain, do you produce a “high” mind? When you see men and women and large and small things, do you produce a mind that makes judgements of good and bad? Do you establish names and become attached to appearances?

Remember that forms are fundamentally things that are distinct from language and concepts and that exist in a state of ultimate liberation. When did you call the grass that you see before you “grass”? When did you think of it as “grass”? When did you call it “green”? When did you think of it as “green”? It is simply that words and phrases, petty knowledge and subjective thinking exist in the world, and based upon these, people make distinctions between this and that and speculate, comparing one thing with another. Therefore, when you see grass, for the moment, it appears as “grass” and it appears to be “green.” False and imaginary thoughts, for the moment, abide in the world taking on these attributes. Fundamentally, however, these false and imaginary thoughts have nothing to do with the objects before you. False and imaginary thoughts are just that; they abide nowhere. The objects before you are just that; they abide nowhere. Fundamentally, they are not things that we must refer to as “forms.” How much less are they something within which your mind should abide or that should occasion its rise. Names are just names and abide nowhere. Attributes are just attributes and abide nowhere.

All sentient beings misperceive the mountains, rivers, earth, men, and women, and the large and small things before them, and adding on yet another layer of ignorance and affliction, they distinguish between the desirable and the undesirable. In regard to the desirable, they give rise to greed, and in regard to the undesirable, anger. In extreme cases, drowning themselves in material possessions and romantic affairs, they darken their own minds, pollute the minds of others, injure themselves and harm others. It is wrong, too, for people to see a buddha and to place their faith in his thirty-two major and eighty minor marks. Regarding this, the *Leng yan jing*²⁶ says that when the Buddha addressed Ānanda and asked the reason for his having aroused the thought of enlightenment, Ānanda replied that he did so after seeing the Buddha’s thirty-two major marks. Thereupon the Buddha rebuked him, saying that from the first moment that he had aroused the thought of enlightenment, he was in error. Further, to see the supernatural

26. [The *Shouleng’yan jing*, a Chinese rendition of the *Śūramgama sūtra* made in 705, is often used as a guide to meditation.]

powers and wondrous capacities of a buddha and produce a mind fascinated with the extraordinary is to be overly influenced by externals and deceived by your eyes. And to hear a sermon and produce your own interpretation is to be overly influenced by externals and deceived by your ears. Hence, the sutra says, “Do not produce a mind that abides in forms,” and “Do not produce a mind that abides in sounds,” but rather “Produce a mind that abides in no place.”

In general, we call someone who, in regard to forms, produces a mind that abides in the desirable and undesirable “an ordinary person.” We call someone who produces a mind that abides in the views of nihilism or eternalism, nonbeing or being, “a follower of heterodox teachings.” Seeing the suffering, emptiness, transiency, and no-self of forms, disciples analyze forms into their constituent parts and exhaust their limits; transcending the three worlds, they realize nirvāṇa both with and without remainder. They produce their minds, abiding in the principle of the unconditioned realized through the destruction of afflictions, and in the principle of the partial truth of the emptiness of self. We refer to this as the inferior wisdom of the two vehicles. In order to counter this delusion, we expound upon the line, “Produce a mind that abides in no place.”

Though bodhisattvas have mastered the fact that dharmas have no ‘self-nature’, and though they strive for three great *kalpas*,²⁷ practice the ten perfections, and save innumerable sentient beings, still they are blinded by ignorance of that point that is the current focus of their attention, and can not attain liberation. In order to control this delusion, we expound upon the line, “Produce a mind that abides in no place.” By ignorance of that point that is the current focus of their attention, we mean that place where the mind abides. Though the bodhisattvas of the first stage have merits innumerable and without limit, still they produce a mind that abides in the perfection of giving. And though the bodhisattvas of the second through tenth stages each have merits innumerable and without limit, still each produces a mind that abides respectively in the perfection of the precepts, patience, diligence, meditation, wisdom, expedient means, vows, powers, and knowledge. Only partially cutting off ignorance, only partially do they realize the ‘middle way’. It is like the movements of an inchworm. Though in the worlds of the ten directions they pass through the eight stages of the life of a buddha, realize the Way, and save sentient beings, still they produce a mind that abides in the sentient beings they seek to transform. To counter these types of ignorance, we expound upon the line, “Produce a mind that abides in no place.”

You must examine this for yourselves. Forms abide in the world, but have no limit. Sounds manifest themselves in all things, but neither arise nor become

27. [“Three great *kalpas*” was traditionally understood as the amount of time it took a bodhisattva to become a buddha.]

extinct. Scents permeate the three periods of time, but abide nowhere. Tastes fill empty space, but are without obstructions. Textures include both the coarse and the fine, but are beyond either being grasped or discarded. dharmas encompass both delusion and enlightenment and appear and disappear from view.

Is it permissible not to produce a mind? If you do not, you are the same as blocks of wood or stone. Then, is it permissible to produce any mind at all? If you do that, you are, as before, an ordinary person or a follower of heterodox teachings. Produce a mind that abides in no place. How can you produce a mind that abides in no place? Ask yourself: Does your mind have a prior limit in time? Does it have a future limit in time? Does it abide within? Does it abide without? Does it abide somewhere in between?

All sentient beings are originally the manifest form of nirvāṇa. All mountains, rivers, the earth, grass, trees, and forests are originally the body of enlightenment. The mind that realizes this is referred to as the mind that abides in no place. If you want to move, move. If you want to sit, sit. Your moving is the moving of a 'Tathāgata', and your sitting is the sitting of a Tathāgata. Open your eyes and see forms. The buddhas of the three periods of time appear within them and expound on the bodhisattva who understands the purity of forms. Open your ears and hear sounds. The buddhas of the three periods of time appear within them and expound on the bodhisattva who understands the purity of sounds. Arouse your mind and become aware of good and evil, true and false, right and wrong, gain and loss. The buddhas of the three periods of time appear within them and expound on the bodhisattva who understands the purity of desires.

Why is this so? The dharma realm of the ten directions is of just one form, and there is neither self nor other. The dharma realm of the ten directions is of just one sound and there is neither arising nor extinction. The dharma realm of the ten directions is of just one dharma and there is neither shallowness nor depth. The buddhas of the three periods of time are another name for yourself. Forms, sounds, scents, tastes, textures, and dharmas are other names for your own mind. The Buddha 'Vairocana' achieves unsurpassed enlightenment in your own mind. The Buddha 'Amitābha' establishes his heavenly world within your own mind. 'Avalokiteśvara' and Mahāsthāmaprāpta save sentient beings within your own mind.

[PBW]

ISHIZU Teruji 石津照璽 (1903–1972)

As an undergraduate at Tokyo Imperial University, Ishizu Teruji specialized in religious studies. Among his teachers were Anesaki Masaharu (1873–1949), an internationally known pioneer in the study of Japanese religions, and Shimaji Daitō (1875–1927), who piqued Ishizu’s interest in the philosophical analysis of ‘Tendai’ Buddhism. Ishizu later went on to teach at Tōhoku University, where he remained until 1965, and then later, until his death in 1972, at Keiō and Komazawa universities.

A specialist in Kierkegaard and Heidegger, Ishizu’s best-known works on the philosophy of religion were published late in life. But probably his most original work was *Studies in the Tendai Theory of Real Aspect*, published in 1947. In a bold attempt to express in modern philosophical terms one of the central tenets of Tendai scholars, the “real aspect of things,” Ishizu distinguishes ‘three worlds’: the domains of self and of other, and a “third world” at which the two collide and weave into one another. As the selection below will demonstrate, each of these domains is then associated with one of the “three truths” of Tendai teaching: ‘emptiness’, conventional existence, and the ‘middle’. It is in this final “middle” realm that one can reach existence in its ultimate form, that is, come to know the “real aspect of things.” While the influences of Nishida Kitarō’s* logic of place and Heidegger’s “being-in-the-world” are obvious, the dizzying interplay, in both ideas and vocabulary, of ancient Tendai doctrine and modern philosophical parlance make for a complex and impressive contribution to the history of Buddhist philosophy.

[JNR]

THE REAL ASPECT OF THINGS

ISHIZU Teruji 1947, 15–13, 129–31

What has been achieved by the buddhas is a rare ‘dharma’, difficult to understand; that only a buddha can fully grasp a buddha is beyond explanation.²⁸ Yet it is here that we arrive at the real aspect of all ‘dharmas’..., the mode of the being of things as they exist in their reality, the ultimate form of existing things. The locus at which things are just as they are is the realm of ‘nirvāṇa’. If we try to sum up the meaning of this boldfaced statement, we may come to the following.

The theory of the real aspect of things sees things, but it does so from a supremely subjective posture. In our dogged pursuit of what is most concrete

28. [A paraphrase of the opening of chapter 2 of the *Lotus Sutra*.]

and serious among the realities that life confronts us with, we find ourselves running right into it in the here and now, precisely at the point that the present rises up to meet me. For each and every one of us, the moment-to-moment concreteness of this reality in the real form of the here and now is the locus of love and hate, of pleasure and pain, as they are woven in so many different forms into the mundane course of our lives. The ultimate locus of our life is always fixed to something or other and cannot be anywhere other than where it is. This is the inescapable place where reality takes place for us, from which our lives, from beginning to end, can never step away and which nothing can substitute. This here and now may also be considered the place at which the “real aspect of all things” is made manifest to us.

Just what *is* this precise point at which things are, just as they are, in their concreteness and reality? This ultimate locus may be where we ordinarily find ourselves in reality, but just as ordinarily we are not really *there* in the sense of being aware that we are positioned in reality just as it is. To awaken to the modality of things “being just as they are” without awareness or clarity of perception requires a variety of ideas and ritual means, but these are matters best left for later. To cite the most obvious example, one ordinarily takes affirmation of oneself and opposition to the other for granted. One establishes oneself because of an other who stands outside and opposed to oneself. As life goes on in reality, a divide is set up between self and other. True, the outer parameters of the domain of the self, the limit or boundary that separates it from the domain of the other, is sometimes made conscious and sometimes not. The question at hand has to do with what lies within those borders, and we shall therefore postpone inquiring into the extent of its reach, except to point out that the fact of being positioned in reality presupposes the two domains of a self who sustains its distinction and borders on the other, and an other who confronts this self.

If we examine those two domains by centering our focus on the domain of the self, we can think of it, in its most ordinary sense, as the realm of the ‘mind’ or *subjectivity*. That on the one side. On the other, we have the self’s partner who represents what is other to its mind or subjectivity—namely, *objectivity*. For the time being, we shall refer to the domain of the self as the primary world and the domain of the self’s partner, the other, as the secondary “world” (in the broad sense of “category” or “division”). Even if we speak of a “partner” or an “other,” the point of reference is in fact the position of the self. The other is always qualified in terms of its relationship and interaction with the self. This locus of actual, present reality, the point at which the self and its partner run into each other and combine to really exist, we may provisionally call the “tertiary world.”

To put it bluntly, the concrete locus at which we really exist in actual life—from one place to the next, from one moment to the next—is *not* what we have

called the primary or secondary world. It is in the tertiary world, in that third domain, which does not belong to me here or to the partner there, but is the point at which the two are, as it were, interwoven. In real-aspect theory, insofar as self and other, mind and things, and the whole other multitude of phenomenal situations really do exist, the authentic reality of their existence, just as they are, lies entirely in that tertiary world.

The Role of Mind

A question then arises concerning the ultimate nature of being situated in such a condition in real life. That is, we want to know what it means for someone or something to exist “just as it is.” How are we to understand this and make it clear? A convenient place to begin is by clarifying this situatedness in and through the mind.

Even within real-aspect theory, much profound philosophy and religion seeks such clarification by way of mind or in reliance on mind, in much the same way that idealism pursues this line of thinking. All of them speak of “mind,” but the meaning they assign to the term is varied and far from consistent. There are different schools with differing discourses, but when they talk about that third world located precisely at the point of reality, they do so either from the standpoint of some metaphysical, conceptual idealism or by reducing the locus of reality to something conceptual. But if our aim is to describe that truly concrete tertiary world as identical to the “real aspect” of things just as they are, it does not seem right to address the question directly from the standpoint of mind or mental phenomena, or to explain it by relying on metaphysical or psychological approaches to the mind. To do so would seem to miss entirely the shape of things *as* they are and *where* they are in the sense just described.

To be sure, as a metaphysical strategy it would seem only natural to propose something spiritual or mental. But from our point of view, Tendai real-aspect theory precludes such approaches because it aims to elucidate a real, given place in its immediate form, just as it is, that is, as situated within such a place, and to view things just as they are in it. But first, a note of caution about attempting to discourse this way on the locus of the “real aspect” of things. In terms of real-aspect theory, in what sense can we speak of *clarifying* this tertiary world or domain through the medium or agency of the mind? Even if that theory can provide a description in mental terms, that in itself by no means constitutes—either in a metaphysical or psychological sense—an actual situation that can itself be called mind or mental, or that can be said to have been generated by anything belonging to mind. Nor shall we regard things as being brought to mind as if set on a stage.

However, when it comes to reflection, and especially practice, it is both more

useful and more to the point to describe the real aspect through the agency of mind. To do so, we will provisionally assign to the world of the mind the actual situation that we face in the tertiary world, although in fact this world in its real concreteness cannot communicate directly with any primary world of thought we might propose. The two separate; in fact, neither mind in itself nor things in themselves exist as such. In that sense, the primary and secondary worlds do not really exist. Their only purpose is to help us open up a path from what we are provisionally designating “mind” in order to get a glimpse of the tertiary world. Thus the tertiary world will be assigned the “ability to grasp” the secondary world. Following this line, we will then be able to get hold of the world of things within the secondary world. All of this comes to the fore when we treat “the totality of the universe in thought” and the “totality of the universe in form.”

Now in order to demonstrate the situatedness of the tertiary world, and in particular to elucidate its relation with the world of mind, consider the simile of an image reflected in a mirror. We may liken the locus in which we stand face to face with our partner or “object” within the tertiary world where we actually exist, to the image-world on the face of the mirror. Granted there probably is something that accounts for the image, but from the standpoint of the mirror that can only hold that thing as an image reflected on its surface, there is no reason to take that “something” directly into account. So far, this is all rather straightforward. In the case of the mirror, the locus as it really is—that is, the tertiary world—does not lie outside the image-world. There is no other place for it to stand. The image is always only on the face of the mirror, and consequently, each image is variously nuanced according to the clarity and intensity of the surface and brightness of the reflecting mirror. Applying this simile to the mind, particular phenomena in our minds or in our self-awareness are colored by the conditions of the face of the mind which serves at the locus and site of those phenomena. To put it differently, the mode of being of phenomena is woven into the state of the mind with its temporal and spatial conditions.

In the case of the mirror, then, the image-world on the face of the mirror is the locus of our reality. The figures that appear on its surface are the forms of things located in the mind; they are the mode of being, the existential reality of things situated in the mind. Thus the locus of mind may be called the supreme form of the concrete in real life.

But let us consider further what is implied when we talk about the surface of the mirror. From within our locus in reality, we need to scrutinize what is entailed by the locus of mind and the surface of consciousness. The mirror’s face and brightness can be present even without an image, but the mind is not so clearly defined. Mind as such, or the locus of mind, may indeed be posited provisionally, but in reality the essential mode of being of mind is to be always

related to something. This is stressed again and again in real-aspect theory where wisdom and its object—the inconceivable object or the '*dharmadhātu*'—continually come into question. In fact, mind never arises on its own but necessarily exists through a conditioning object and subsists indefinitely in reliance on it. Whatever mind is, there is nothing in reality that corresponds to the face of the mirror, no locus or surface of mind on which things or phenomena are situated. At any given point in reality, mind is only actually present insofar as it is related to and reliant on something that confronts it as a “partner” object.

Thus, when we examine the locus of mind as a place where such a partner presents itself to us in its reality and concreteness, we discover that no such locus exists in the concrete. This means foregoing talk of mind progressing towards a concrete pole. In the simile of the mirror, this would mean renouncing the idea of the mirror's face in order to be left with only the form of the image. Only in this way can the place and real, concrete mode of being particular to the mind come into relief....

The Three Worlds and the Three Truths

If we grant that, in the final analysis, the actual form of reality exists in such a locus and mode of being as the tertiary world, how can we apprehend it from our side? And what would the mode of being of our side be? This brings us to the question of 'emptiness'. In terms of mere apprehension, it is only a matter of locating an object in its own distinct realm and grasping it either in its own world or in our own. But the tertiary world is located at a level distinct and separate from the primary and secondary worlds. To use a time-worn image, it is like the sound of a bell, which is something different from the bell and its clapper. Just as we cannot perceive the sound of the bell from any of its parts, so, too, we cannot apprehend the locus of anything in its own reality but only from the point where we exist concretely, that is, from the tertiary world, whose own mode of being is originally and fundamentally beyond our grasp. Neither the object nor the mind can account for it. As a realm that lies outside of both these worlds, whichever side we approach it from, it remains a structure and a mode of being beyond our apprehension. The ultimate meaning of such a place may be likened to a phantom or an illusion, but when all is said and done, the mode of being of the truly real locus cannot be made relative to our apprehension and may therefore be characterized as “empty.” The fact that the real locus does not belong to and cannot be grasped as a relative determination is the basis of the idea of emptiness without substantial action, that is, of emptiness as a property of the 'Great Vehicle' and in particular of the real-aspect theory....

Emptiness as such is not a mere vacuity; we can only say that its actual state is something like being located in a mode of being that is empty. Furthermore,

as a real and concrete locus, it is not simply nonexistent but finds itself in a variety of states and situations that can best be captured in the term “conventional existence.” When we examine this real and concrete locus, it turns out to be a tertiary world that does not belong to the realm of a thing in itself. But to refer to what lies beyond the ordinary realm as emptiness or conventional existence is to revert to a localizing, relative way of speaking. What is confined to the primary and secondary worlds cannot adequately convey the mode of being of the tertiary world. To convey this tertiary territory as it exists, we need to speak of the “middle.” Talk about it does not make it distinct. We can only say that the mode of being of this locus is best seen as a middle that combines the modes of being of emptiness and of conventional existence. In other words, the middle expresses nothing other than a transcending and letting go of all relative and definable determinations.

In this way, the locus in which we really exist lies in a place and mode of being beyond fixed determination. It is a middle that is at the same time both empty and conventional. In the locus of the middle, the empty and conventional modes of being are not cut off, nor is there any reason for them to vanish. Each individual locus as it really exists in itself belongs within a middle, empty, and conventional existence....

Approaching Real-Aspect Theory

The approach followed here cannot be called historical; neither is it doctrinal or apologetic. Its sole purpose is to put real-aspect theory to the service of answering the question I wish to pose. That question, simply put, comes to this: What is the ultimate ground of existence from which each subject can partake of a determinate religious experience? What is the actual mode of existence of the subject where religion constitutes the essential mode of being?

As such, this question has to do with the essential facticity and ultimate ground of religion. We may conjecture as follows: the essential and original facticity of religion is to exist in a locus of one’s own transcendent being, that is, in a locus marked by the absence and vacuity of existing entities, a locus, moreover, at which entities possess their own existence such as they are.... It is in the locus of a transcendent existence that surpasses what is posited as a self as well as the realm of its partner objects, in the nothingness of self conceived of as an individual, that the radical, original ground of religion may be thought of....

If we do not proceed directly to an examination of scholarly doctrines or dogmatics, it is because we consider the field of our inquiry to be religious philosophy. Accordingly, we may seek an answer to our question by transferring, as it were, real-aspect theory to that field of inquiry. By no means does this mean commenting on or explaining Tendai tenets from a predetermined point of

view. We will rather refer directly to the original intent of the foundational texts, and what we thus come to understand will merely be referred back to those same texts. Not that the goal is simply to make pronouncements on the founding dogmas of Tendai. The results must lead us to attempt an answer to the guiding question as we have stated it. Our primary concern is not whether what we have to say is consistent with traditional Tendai teachings or not, but rather to find out how far we can advance while holding to their original intent.

[JNR]

NAKAMURA Hajime 中村 元 (1912–1999)

Nakamura Hajime was one of the leading representatives of twentieth-century scholarship in Buddhology and Indian philosophy. After completing undergraduate studies at Tokyo Imperial University in 1936, he went on to doctoral studies with a 1943 dissertation on *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy* and subsequently took up a teaching post at the same university. After retiring from active teaching in 1973 he served for two years as Japan's Minister of Culture. Although holding subsequent administrative posts, he devoted the rest of his life to Buddhist scholarship. Never known to be caught in a narrow specialization, Nakamura's writings range across the history of thought East and West, ancient and contemporary. His extraordinary linguistic skills and learning—he wrote in both English and Japanese—helped make his work accessible to a wide audience at home and abroad. At the same time, he threw himself into the meticulous scholarly task of compiling a now classic three-volume *Dictionary of Buddhist Terms*.

As a historian of ideas, Nakamura rarely pursues particular philosophical questions to any depth, but he stands unparalleled as a thinker who showed the world how to treat western and eastern philosophy as equals, who uncovered eastern thinking and set it shoulder to shoulder with European worldviews and values. During the time of moral confusion that set in after Japan's defeat in World War II, in works such as *Modernity in Japanese Religion* Nakamura set out from a rational, modern standpoint to rethink traditional ideas and religion. Following the lead of Maruyama Masao's* search for the fountainhead of the opposition between human action and the “natural order” in modern thinking, Nakamura took a wider perspective to question the simplicity of his conclusions. Both of these concerns are reflected in the selections that follow.

[SF]

JAPANESE CULTURE, WORLD CULTURE

NAKAMURA Hajime 1998, 270–4

In the past, various kinds of ethnic cultures existed around the world. In contrast to this plurality of cultures, the world today is becoming one, which seems to raise the question of a single world culture. This, in turn, raises the question of the relationship between the singularity of world culture and the plurality of ethnic cultures.

Among Japanese intellectuals, the dominant tendency is to identify world culture with western culture. To be sure, the reality of the West's dominion in recent history belongs as much to common sense as the transformation of the

world into a single unit. It hardly needs saying that politically and economically no people or country can survive in isolation from the West. In the realm of the arts and sciences as well, the impact of western culture has been decisive. In this sense we can speak of the unification of the world and its westernization in the same breath. If the unification of the world is obvious in the way material nature has been worked on, brought under control, and put to use, when it comes to language, morals, religion, the arts, customs, and the like, popular spiritual mores are not so easily given to change. Take, for instance, the arrival of westerners in India at the end of the fifteenth century. Eventually the country was brought under the control of the westerners, but for all their skills at administration, the number of Christians does not amount to much more than two percent of the total population. The vast majority of the people hold to traditional beliefs passed on from ancient times. Things are not much different in neighboring China. On the one hand, the peoples of East Asia have taken in western ideas and been influenced by western culture, but on the other hand, their ways of thinking and speculative tendencies are not easily reformed. This is not something that can be brushed aside as a sign of the backwardness or stagnation of the oriental mind.

There will be those who argue that perhaps these tendencies are not for the best and try to account for Asia's refusal to break with its backwardness. In any event, there is no denying the gravity of the fact. But it is not that the peoples and cultures of the East are entirely stagnant and backwards. In some cases they show a progress that parallels that of the West. In some ways the major peoples of the world are going through a common process of development. This process can be seen in their religions, morals, social systems, and political structures. But even as the world advances in the same direction, differences between peoples do not simply fade away. To the extent that these differences persist, we need to continue thinking of the peoples and cultures of the West as distinctive.

The thinking of those who identify westernization with globalization goes something like this: "The cultures of the East will ultimately be subordinated to western culture. The several and distinctive ways of thinking of eastern peoples will, in the end, have to be overcome by those of the West. The cultures of the West possess universality; those of the East do not." But what can it mean to deny the capacity for universality? Obviously the kind of scientific knowledge and technology that arose in the West in recent times is easily understood and absorbed virtually just as it is without any change in form. But when it comes to other cultural domains, can one really sustain the claim that the cultural products of the West can all be seen as universal while none of the cultural products of other peoples enjoy such universality? A glance through the history of the human race will show that in various ways the ideas of the East have

had an influence on western thought. When we come to the modern age, fairly detailed knowledge of eastern ideas has come to the West, even if only through translation. Since then the impact of eastern ideas on the formation of French and German thinking is truly remarkable.

If we limit ourselves for a moment to the inner world of the “East,” the cultural exchange that took place in the past was on a grand scale. Buddhism was transmitted to nearly all of Asia. While the degree to which Confucianism defined actual life in Japan is a question that needs further research, there is no denying that fact that it had a certain regulatory power on the actual social life of Japan in the past. How can it be said that doctrines and theories that wrought such universal awakening should be lacking in universality?

When it comes to building a new world from here on, what place will Japanese culture occupy?

The Place of Japanese Culture

Thinking about things abstractly and systematically has been the weak point of the Japanese. Japan has long been poor in systematic philosophy, and logic has not been cultivated as part of the intellectual foundation of Japan. Even after Indian logic was introduced into Japan, in no time it was turned into textual rubrics until in the end it became no more than a ritual decoration in Buddhist temple services.

Nowadays the Japanese cultural consciousness, so perceptually striking in the colors of its paintings, in its sculpture, architect, gardens, and so on, have received an international recognition that the appeal of its systematic thought has yet to achieve. The religions and thought of Japan are seen as trifling to Europe and America, while to the nearby countries of Asia they remain altogether unknown. A modicum is known of Zen thought, but the language barrier, for one thing, remains great.

Might Japanese ideas, then, be lacking in globality? Are they of such a nature as to make them unacceptable to other countries and peoples? However clumsy the Japanese may be at abstract thinking, the fact that the Japanese people have been living on these islands for over two thousand years is a stubborn, indisputable fact. More than just living, they were never without *ideas* that were understood in practical terms.

According to many of today’s so-called intelligentsia, the Japanese form of thinking is inscrutable in the extreme and needs either to be reformed or displaced by western ways of thinking. In particular, the decisive blow of losing the war has given more and more weight to this claim. Western Europe is the norm. Such views are especially visible among the intelligentsia.

Say we were to try taking over the thought patterns of Western Europe, what

would the concrete norms be? The “West” has different standpoints and opposing parties with incompatible ideas. The Americans, the British, the French, and so forth think themselves superior and look down on other peoples. It stands to reason that as Japanese we cannot blindly adopt the particular views of others.

NATURAL LAW AND CONVENTIONAL LAW

NAKAMURA Hajime 1956, 331–41

The Sanskrit word ‘dharma’ refers to the norm or criterion of human actions, and in the Chinese Buddhist canon it was translated as “law.” As such it was held to be eternally appropriate and a norm for behavior. When it came to its actual content, however, one finds completely different views pitted against one another.

For Brahmanic followers, the distinctions between the four castes of people were fixed at the time of the creation of the universe. Each of the castes has its own obligations: (1) the Brahmins (priests) shall study the Vedas, perform rites for themselves and for others, and make and receive donations; (2) the Kṣatriyas (rulers) shall protect the people, make donations, perform rites for themselves, study the Vedas, and not be contaminated by the pursuit of carnal pleasure in the physical world; (3) the Vaiśyas (peasants) shall engage in the domestication of animals, make donations, perform rites for themselves, study the Vedas, engage in commerce, accumulate wealth, and engage in agriculture; and (4) the Śūdras (serfs) shall serve the above classes without discrimination. The differences between the four castes are strictly enforced, and strict observance of the code set down in the Brahmanical literature constitutes the dharma for us.

In opposition to Brahmanism, Buddhism declares that such actions do not correspond to the dharma. The distinctions of caste and class that exist among people are claimed to be arbitrary and completely meaningless inventions. In the oldest strata of the early Buddhist canon we read that there is not the slightest class distinction in the parts of the human body; thus, in the human race “there are no distinctions of traits from birth,” and even if there are distinctions between one life and another,

nothing of the sort is present among human beings. Differences among people are merely nominal conventions.... Family names and personal names are no more than words. (*Suttanipāta* 610–11, 648)

The *Assalāyana sutta*, another work in the Buddhist canon, compares the social structure of the Aryans with the upheavals in social structure that occurred among the Greeks of western India in order roundly to deny caste differences. Such rejection of the caste theory was a cause taken up in later

ages, notably in the *Vajra Needle* of Aśvaghōṣa. This work goes so far as to say that nations were created in ancient times by mutual discussions and contracts among people, and that the “king” is someone employed by the people to pool their resources.

Thus, one expects Buddhism to view society as a fabricated convention. Instead, an appeal is made to true and eternally valid dharmic principles. For example, there is the principle of ‘*pratītya-samutpāda*’, or interdependent co-origination, of which it is said in a classic passage:

Whether there be an arising of ‘*tathāgatas*’, or whether there be no such arising, this nature of things (*‘dhātu’*) just stands, this causal status, this causal orderliness, the relatedness of this to that. Concerning this, the Tathāgata is fully enlightened and fully understands. (*Samyutta Nikāya* II.25.3)

This kind of idea was transmitted to the Buddhism of later ages. Jiaxiang (549–623), for example, says, “Whether there are buddhas or no buddhas, the nature of things continues to function all the same” (T 38, 893c).

Buddhism thus takes the authority of an eternally valid dharma seriously and even places it higher than the authority of the Buddha. It is as an incarnation of dharma that the Buddha is able to be Buddha. It is to the dharma taught by the Buddha that the very gods chant their praise and devote themselves.

These ideas call to mind Stoic thought and the thought of Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), whose conception of *jus naturale*, unlike *jus civile*, was a law that could be understood philosophically. Laws based on human nature are the same everywhere and for everyone. Natural law is immutable and even the gods cannot alter it. Indeed, even if there are no gods, as long as there are people, natural law holds true. As far as this way of expressing law is concerned, there is a remarkable similarity between Buddhist and western theories of natural law. The difference is that Buddhism does not make an issue of laws governing behavioral relations among people but tends rather to consider the basic conditions that bring about public behavior and subsistence only insofar as they affect the inner life of the individual.

This is not the place to pursue this question in any depth, but the ideas just set out strongly resemble the views expressed by Zhu Xi and the neo-Confucians. According to Hayashi Razan* (1583–1657), ethical relations between lords and vassals, parents and children, husbands and wives, belong to an order of things without beginning or end, so that “even if there are universes outside of our given universe, wherever there are people, it would be present among them.” ... Or again, as Kumazawa Banzan* (1619–1691) has it, “In times when there are no sages to teach us, this Way is already in effect.”

When we pause to consider the commonalities in these ways of thinking, can

we not think of Buddhism as establishing an eternal law even as it acknowledges conventional logic?

If this is so, then how can a logic of reform be possible within Buddhist thinking? According to Buddhism, when people deviate from the eternally valid and true principles of human existence, they arbitrarily set up mistaken institutions that need to be reformed in order to realize the true dharma. It is here that the significance of political praxis is brought into the picture. In early Buddhism, the ideal state was grounded in the dharma, and politics, or *rajja*, was to be carried out “through the dharma, without killing or being killed, without vanquishing or being vanquished, without suffering sorrow or bringing sorrow on others.” The ideal emperor is one who “administers the nation through dharma” (*Suttanipāta* 1002). The classic example of this ideal is King Ashoka.

Ashoka, like Buddhists in general, believed in the existence of universal principles that all people throughout the world were obliged to keep, and it was this that he called the dharma. As long as there are people, this law is eternally valid. Not only is it “a law from of old” but a law that is to be honored “as long as there is a sun and a moon.” Ashoka pursued what he called “practice of the dharma” and desired for ordinary people to “advance the dharma.” Politics was to exert itself for the benefit of the people. He regarded “the welfare and happiness of the people” as the greatest joy. He also considered it the duty of the nation. “Indeed,” he writes, “there is no more noble work than promoting the welfare of all.” He even went to far as to proclaim that “government based on the dharma begins with me, Ashoka.” Not only did he aim at administering his extensive territories through the ideals of the dharma, he also dispatched emissaries to spread that dharma to other lands. He took pride in his goal of becoming king of the whole world in a spiritual and universal sense. Thus we find in the person of King Ashoka the concept of the yet-to-be realized ideal of dharma that was not contradicted by, and indeed was even complementary to, the theory of progressive change made possible by political reformation. The kind of thinking promoted by King Ashoka continues to live on in the political leaders of India today, at least as far as their personal awareness of his legacy goes.

Of course it was because dharma theory already had an accepted place within the preexisting social order that it was retained. It might therefore be seen as an impediment to reform, as indeed was the case in the Indian Buddhism of later ages. According to later Buddhist canonical texts, the king is to revere the traditions of the past and protect the ancient dharma of days gone by. “It is through turning to the old dharma of past ages that people today can receive its present form without interruption” (T 17, 317b). Further, the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* says:

Suppose there is a king who desires to govern the state in accordance with the dharma and thus secure a comfortable life for his people. He consults with his

wise ministers on the matter and they tell him of the laws of former kings. If the king takes their words to heart and implements them sincerely, governing the country according to the dharma, none will bear him ill will. In this way the people enjoy peace and are free of worries. (T 12, 754b)

Here we are assured that all of the conventional laws and legal prescriptions that have come down to us are justified just as they are. Where such a way of thinking dominates, whatever is old is seen as good. Buddhists of later generations would generally tend to praise the past as an ideal world while viewing the present as a latter-day world of *'mappō'* that has fallen into corruption. In fact, later Buddhism was by no means conservative, as the effects of its development attest. In its theory, by contrast, it was clearly conservative. This may have something to do with the generally traditional character of thought at the time. It may also be explained as a form of resistance against the ever increasing enforcement of the caste system by Brahmanism. Or yet again, it may be related to the strong orientation of traditional Indian thought to the eternal and immutable. One hesitates to favor one explanation over the other.

In spite of everything that has just been said, the idea of dharma as an eternally valid principle does not necessarily impede reform. Regarding the order imposed by the caste system, the leaders of the modern Indian reformation have taken the position that dharma stands for human equality. From there they have argued that the established social order was not based on dharma and that they must therefore inaugurate a reform grounded anew in the dharma. The social reforms of modern India cannot be isolated from the fact that they have been swept up into a worldwide economic, political, and cultural process with its ties to the mechanistic culture of the West, and yet the concept of dharma remains uppermost in the minds of the reformers. The influence of the *Bhagavad Gītā* is particularly notable here.

Whether in the end the concept of dharma can adequately express an eternally valid principle for humanity or not is another question. Any such principle would have to adapt its appearance to different times, social forms, and living environments. A pure form would be hard to come by. It would mean taking relatively pure notions like respect for the person, love, compassion, equality, and community, and establishing them as foundational political principles. Even so, is not the task of locating the concrete forms such dharmic principle can take and grasping their structural relations something to be left to scholars?

As can be seen from the above examination, in some aspects the Indian concept of dharma differs considerably from the Chinese concept of "nature." The Chinese Buddhist dismisses as erroneous the "naturalist heresy" that supposes all things to have been born of a self-arising "nature" (T 43, 262c). According to this theory, everything that moves and exists comes about through the

external or transcendent principle of self-arising. The Buddhist explanation has it that all things exist in a union of causes and conditions known as *pratītya-samutpāda*. While the Chinese Buddhist canon recognizes the wisdom and compassion of buddhas and bodhisattvas as natural in the sense of “appearing of themselves,” in Buddhist theory even these things have to be seen as caused and conditioned. The Confucian intellectual Andō Shōeki* (1703–1762) criticized Buddhists like Linji for their ignorance of the principles of “mutuality” and self-arising “nature,” even though, curiously, his own theory of mutuality coincided remarkably with theories found in the *Treatise on the Middle* and the *Flower Garland Sutra*⁷.

A concept of “law” identical to the dharma is similarly dominant in Japanese Buddhism, but ties to political movements were few. Examples of reform movements based on the notion of dharma exist but they are rare. Nichiren* (1222–1282), perhaps the most noted opponent of the ruling feudal powers, stressed the authority of the true dharma: “The Buddha’s law is truth. Truth is superior to the lord.” What Nichiren is saying here is that truth stands above the monarchy. In a different context, this same kind of thinking governed the followers of the Ikkō sect in their struggles against the samurai. This point may be compared to the practice of the “rule of law” in the medieval West. When we come to modern times, however, we see Buddhist social reformers basing themselves on the notion of dharma. We can find passages written by the Zen master Shidō Bunan* (1603–1676) and by the author of the *Monkey Sermons* that criticize the system of personal property and the feudal social structure. The Zen master Suzuki Shōsan* (1579–1655) claimed that all occupations were significant as manifestations of the absolute—a veiled criticism aimed at helping outcasts suffering discrimination—and argued against the cruel practices of samurai testing their swords on innocent bystanders, and attendants committing suicide after the death of their lord. Reform, as things turned out, was not so simple.

In modern Japan, the frustrations of reform movements by Buddhists has been attributed to Buddhists basing themselves on principles along Confucian lines, but this is an oversimplification. More research needs to be carried out here. The work of Maruyama Masao* has focused on examining the political ideas of the intelligentsia, but we also need to examine more closely the political consciousness of ordinary men and women. Why did no reform movements emerge from among the people themselves? Even if a minority of pioneers championed reform, without the people everything would have ended there. It is important here to analyze the psychology of popular subservience. I therefore take seriously the need to inquire into what relationship Buddhism has had in modern times to the political awareness of the people.

TAMAKI Kōshirō 玉城康四郎 (1915–1999)

Tamaki Kōshirō graduated in 1940 from what was then the Tokyo Imperial University and taught there from 1959 until his retirement in 1976, after which he taught at Tōhoku University and Nihon University. Along with Hisamatsu Shin'ichi* and Nishitani Keiji*, Tamaki is one of the finest representatives of Japanese Buddhist philosophy. A specialist in early Buddhism, he also lectured in subjects as varied as modern Indian thought, German idealism, Jungian psychology, and contemporary philosophy of science. Not only did he have detailed knowledge of modern Buddhist scholarship, he pressed for greater attention to religious experience and philosophical thought. Already as a young man he had pursued his own path for deepening his Zen experience and on that basis developed a unique philosophy that blended ideas East and West, old and new. Beginning with his 1961 doctoral thesis on the unfolding of the idea of 'mind', his interests in the history of ideas gave rise to such books as *What Lies at the Ground of Thinking East and West* (1983), from which a short excerpt is included here, and *Studies in Comparative Thought* (1985).

For Tamaki, objective scholarship was “object-oriented thinking” in contrast to Zen meditation which was “thinking of the total person,” and in his last years it was this that occupied his attention in a special way. Such thinking united body and mind and not only embraced the unconscious mind but reached the truth of the universe root and branch. Only a subject engaged in a thinking that brings to light “pure, formless life” can achieve awakening, “the radical conversion of humanity itself.” This led him to take the traditional Buddhist notion of the “karmic body”—the body and mind in this world that represents the ripening of past karma—and add the timeless dimension of the “manifestation of the dharma” that expressed the intermingling of all things from the infinite past in the world of time.

[SF]

BUDDHISM AND THE TOTAL PERSON

TAMAKI Kōshirō 1982, 301–4

What Zen refers to as enlightenment or “seeing into one’s nature” should rather be taken to mean that one’s nature *is seen into*. Returning to the origins of Buddhism, we arrive at the words of the Buddha, “the ‘dharma’ becomes manifest.” If one repeats this again and again in meditation, trying day after day to understand it, at some point images of the Buddha and the scriptures will pass away. One will then realize that not only Buddha but Socrates, Empedocles, and Heraclitus, the revered portions of the Chinese classics, as well as Jesus and Paul—for all their differences of expression—are at bottom

essentially the same. That is to say, Zen meditation has to do with awakening to the universal form of the human person that I am, and from that point on, the Buddhist term “Zen meditation” can be replaced with the general term “thinking and reasoning of the total person” or “engagement of the total person.”

To pursue the matter further, there is an object-oriented thinking and reasoning that is universal to the human race. This contrasts with another, equally universal, form of thinking and reasoning that engages the whole person. This latter form of thinking was recognized at least as far back as the classical ages of East and West, and it has been passed down, often in great detail, through the established methods of Indian yoga and Buddhist meditation. The task that lies ahead is to actualize it in contemporary form as part of the common heritage of humanity.

Now if we examine the various strata of Buddhist meditation, the link between the Buddha and the sutras of the Mahayana tradition gradually comes to light. A central line evolved from the sutras of early Buddhism to the *Wisdom Sutras* and to the *Lotus Sutra*, and it is most fascinating to trace this central line of development through its sources. The meditation that sustains it throughout can itself be considered a Buddhist archetype embracing every sort of school.

The research on Buddhist ideas until now has been able to do nothing more than focus on historical descriptions of particular schools. But if one thinks about it carefully, a system of doctrinal classifications did arise in traditions like ‘Tendai’ and ‘Kegon’, which viewed the whole range of Buddhist doctrine on the basis of the *Lotus Sutra* and ‘*Flower Garland Sutra*’ respectively. Later, in Japan, we find Kūkai’s* classification of the ten mindsets and his division of Buddhism into exoteric and esoteric, or Shinran’s* two ways and four teachings—all based on upholding one or another sutra. Such doctrinal classifications continued on after the Kamakura period. With the Meiji period, however, Buddhist studies underwent a reform and to this day has made remarkable advances. Still, the fact is that a new system of doctrinal classifications has not arisen and this can only be blamed, to be honest, on the laxity of us Buddhist scholars.

If a contemporary version of a doctrinal classification should come about, the following is one way that it might be expected to take shape. Unlike former classifications, the distinctions would not be based in different sutras but rather in the Buddhist archetype that has sustained meditation throughout the sutras from early Buddhism through to ‘Mahayana’. As a *primordial state* this archetype goes beyond the modalities of mere *form* and is a dynamic vitality flowing in concert with our own meditation. The idea of schools and sects as we have known them needs to be rethought from such a primordial Buddhist state.

In this connection another question of decisive importance has to do with the “dharma becoming manifest to the subject.” Just *where* in the subject does the dharma appear? Several years ago, when I was in the city of Sendai examin-

ing an early Buddhist sutra, I ran across the Buddha's idea of "the maturing of karmic fortune" (*kamma vipāka*). Something that I had long been agonizing over without being able to find it—unexpectedly, there it was before my eyes. I could not contain myself from jumping with joy and immediately set to writing an essay. But of course! The dharma becomes manifest through the maturing of karmic fortune!

The maturing of karmic fortune is karmic reality, what I call the "personal body." The effects of actions that have been performed continuously from an infinite past intermingle with each and every thing that exists, with everything that breathes and lives. These effects are manifest here and now in the substrate of my whole existence. This is the outer limit of this entity called "I," and therefore also of my *privateness*. At the same time, its intertwining of all things is the outer limit of *publicness* as the essence of things at their highest level. In other words, while remaining an individual personal body, it is a personal body held in common.

What is the essence of this maturing of karmic fortune? It is nothing but the swirling, bottomless vortex of self-attachment and illusion. It is not only individual but communal, the self-attachment of the world itself gushing forth endlessly. It is like some dirty black mineral freshly dug up from the bowels of a mountain in the middle of the jungle.

This is what the Buddha calls the "darkness of ignorance." Yet throughout the subsequent history of Buddhist thought, the issue of this dark ignorance has not been squarely faced. The Abhidharma idea of the disposition to evil and the 'Yogācāra' idea of a store-consciousness took a step toward making a response, but the other Mahayana sects, truth be told, have yet to take it up.

The question of where the personal body fits into the "thinking of the total person" remains not only a task for Buddhist scholarship but for all of us for whom the future of human existence has become a problem.

[JWH]

A VIEWPOINT OF EXISTENCE

TAMAKI Kōshirō 1983, 15–24

Humanity is today faced with problems unlike anything in the past, bringing it to the brink of an ominous abyss. The methods of science and scientific technology are coming into question as problems of population, food supply, and the scarcity of materials press upon us, as humanity shudders in terror at the crisis posed by nuclear weapons. Economic phenomena are swirling around in a way that makes no sense to traditional ways of thinking, modern or

Marxist; international relations are at a loss to discover a new order, foundering in their halting attempts to escape confusion.

Under such circumstances it is hardly the time to expect the birth of a stable philosophical view of the world. Humanity finds existence problematic in a double sense. First, there is the crisis of its own survival vis-à-vis the problems of population, food, and nuclear weaponry. Second, in such an environment of urgency, there arises the question of what it means to be human, of whether there is any meaning to humanity's suffering through such challenges and finding a means of survival. These two questions are not always easily linked. Even if we find no meaning for human survival, we might still develop various new forms of wisdom and make plans so that the effort toward survival can continue. We may indeed say that this is already underway in a variety of fields.

But I cannot bring myself to think that that would be enough. *All events are impermanent, all things flow and change.* Whatever has life invariably dies, and humanity, too, will one time be buried underground and vanish from sight, just as the day will come for the earth itself to disappear. We need to expand our vision to bring this vast flow of time into the picture in order to clarify the meaning of human existence and from there reflect on the problem of human survival. That is easily said, but hard to actually realize, and the present situation only makes it all the more difficult.

Two Pivotal Points

Nowadays we are reconsidering our idea of nature. Until now, the modern world's basic orientation has been to examine nature, investigate it, and dominate it—in short, humanity has been concerned with overcoming nature and using it. This attitude has come to a dead end due to external circumstances, resulting in the pressure to change. Instead of the one-directional aim to conquer and use nature, the time has come to think in terms of living within nature, of coexisting with the plant and animal world. The idea that this will assist in the survival of humanity may lie in the background, but it represents a dramatic conversion of attitudes concerning our idea of nature.

This way of thinking was originally dominant among the ancients. Their approach was to clarify how human beings are part of nature and exist within it. Allowing that the ancient Greek view of nature, as well as the Indian and Chinese views, each had its own way of thinking about the natural world, in broad terms they all still seem to share a common basic character. Namely, they show this tendency to grasp nature in a total, unified, essential manner and to see human beings as belonging within it. The operation of thought in this process of knowledge necessarily involved the whole person, the whole body. It was not, as is the case with certain standpoints seen today, merely logical or rational.

That ancient view is the first of the pivotal points I wish to register here. We see this in the philosophers and poets of the Indian Vedas and Upanishads, as well as in Zhuangzi²⁹ in China and those with similar standpoints. We find it as well in Socrates and the pre-Socratic “natural philosophers.” Indian Yoga and Buddhist meditators especially practiced this sort of whole-person thinking for an extended period of time and systematized it.

A second pivotal point of utmost importance is one that has been most difficult to understand: the distancing of oneself from the human, from the self’s homeground. This is not to say all the sages of old did this, but even granted the variety of positions taken by the philosophical thinkers in India, China, and Greece, I believe that in engaging the whole person, they also came to this second pivotal point. They attained a way of living that drew its breath from an infinite expanse, inner and outer, that transcends the foundations of the human.

In what does this second pivotal point consist? To try to put it as simply as possible, we might say that by nature the human is segmented. That is, there is no alternative but for us to see things from our own “segment” of the whole. No matter how wide my segment may be, it is always and invariably limited to one section of the whole. Things are seen according to what is in front of me, the *Vor-sein* that fate presents me with. Accordingly, we are never outside of what we express; it is always placed in front of us (*vor-gestellt*). In this way we are persuaded that the only unerring knowledge is our knowing things from our own segment as we set them in front of us. In other words, that humans are by nature *segmented* entails that they are by nature *perspectivist* as well. To transform this original, segmental perspectivism is the second pivotal point. The ancients all had their own ways of embodying it, but as time passes, the perspectivist aspect becomes stronger. We see this process at work in western history, given that western thought has come to be dominant in contemporary civilization.

Self-Reflection on the Dominance of Western Thought

In Heraclitus and Socrates, the second pivotal point starts out as the self-enclosure of the human being, and this was opened up by way of the first pivotal point—the thinking that involves the total person. But when we look at Heraclitus’ fragments and Plato’s writings, only a small elite group of wise individuals was able to realize this opening up of the second pivotal point. And we can only nod in agreement at their foreseeing the difficulties this would entail for others. Still, the world that thus opened up for them was not a matter of a temporary inspiration or a special mystical realm; it was reality itself and it was

29. [Zhuangzi is remembered as one of the most important of ancient Chinese Daoists.]

realizable within one's own life. This was true in the case of Gotama Buddha and it is also exactly why Socrates could take up the cup of hemlock with joy in front of his weeping disciples. So important was the reality of this second pivotal point.

Such was not the case, however, in Plato and Aristotle. Just as Plato's intuition of the Ideas represented a final stage, the second pivotal point was something ultimate in his philosophical system, something final. It is doubtful whether Plato finally succeeded, after striving his whole life, in realizing this second pivotal point. The same would surely hold for Aristotle.

In contrast, the second pivotal point was clearly realized in Jesus and Paul. Ever filled with the spirit, Jesus continued to pray and act. The same thing is evident if one looks at Paul's letter to the Romans and Second Corinthians. Yet both Jesus and Paul saw the realization of the second pivotal point as the *advent of the Kingdom of Heaven*, as something proceeding from a transcendent world. For this reason Christianity gave shape to a special "religious" (in the Christian sense) world that stands in opposition to philosophy and science. On this point, it stands in marked contrast to Buddhism. In Buddhism, transcendence does not refer to a distinct place but is one with reality. The transcendent overlaps, blends with, and stands face to face with the real. There is no opposition between the religious and the philosophical. That said, there is no denying that this reality has been conceptual, lacking a praxis and philosophy that engages with actual society. Christianity, meantime, came gradually to strengthen its formal aspect, and particularly with the Council of Nicea to establish doctrinal orthodoxy regarding questions like the Trinity. From when it first rejected other standpoints, the power of a truly living freedom may have faded away. Occasionally transcendent experiences aimed at unity with God appeared, and these would clash with such narrow doctrines while attempting to withstand persecution for heresy. Intellectual historians called this "mystical experience" and took it to be a special kind of religious experience. Later scholars labeled it "mystical thought," setting it up as a special standpoint that further entrenched the original problem. In effect, the complete perspective that embraces both the first and second pivotal points dropped away and the tendency to sectionalism gained strength. For Plato and Aristotle, the discipline dealing with human thinking was comprehensive, encompassing philosophy, religion, and science. This comprehensiveness is what has been lost.

When we speak of mystical thought we include figures such as Plotinus from the late Hellenistic period, Augustine, Eckhart, and in the same current Tauler from the Middle Ages, as well as moderns like Boehme. The experience of Plotinus was intense—the special ecstatic experience of unity with the Primal (τὸ πρῶτον), a matter on which my own opinions have changed greatly of late. Augustine was also for a time enthralled by this stage until finally arriving at

divine grace. Eckhart, too, exhibits an intense experience, breaking through the system of Thomas Aquinas and not stopping there but going on to expand the experience freely. Thomas had borrowed Aristotle's standpoint to systematize theology, but he, too, in the end arrived at the divine light in what might qualify as mystical experience.

Nevertheless, when we come to the modern world, even in the mystical world of special experiences, this power quickly declined. Leaving this aside, we need to trace back the path to decline because, as I explained when introducing the meaning of the second pivotal point, human beings are by nature segmented and thus harbor as a matter of course the tendency to sectionalism. Humans can only see what is *in front of them*. It was the sudden rise of the scientific attitude that spurred a weakening of the mystical, in the sense that it pursued the rationalization of what is *in front of us* to what is *placed before us*. Even so, at the beginning of the modern age one could still see vestiges of this transcendence. The rationalist Descartes is at the forefront of modern philosophy, and at the base of his standpoint is the philosophical experience that awakened him to the *cogito, ergo sum*, as he recounts it faithfully in his *Discourse on the Method*. As a transcendent experience, this is no more than a first step, but it bears noting that such an experience lays the groundwork. Or again, we might refer to Francis Bacon, who laid the groundwork for this way of thinking. In his explanation of the "idols of the mind," he probes the uncanny fallacies rooted in human existence. All this is not to be forgotten.

What probably deserves most attention, though, is Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Bearing in mind the mathematics and physics of the day, Kant tried to lay their foundations while carrying out a critique of reason. In Kant the strength to transcend had vanished; what remained was only a sense for the transcendent. It is as if that strength had weakened and retreated in the face of the development of science. One can see in Kant a watershed in the advance of science and the decline of spirituality. Yet it is his critique of reason that is important. No matter how strict and circumspect he was in this thinking, he was led to complain of the emergence of rational fallacies into which reason falls. This does not mean, however, that we refuse to acknowledge the dignity and autonomy of reason itself. Indeed, this issue is a weighty one when we reflect on human existence today. Whenever I touch on this point in Kant's rigorous speculation, I cannot repress a strange sensation: his speculations did not engage the whole person. They were no more than reason floating above the surface of thinking at the first pivotal point, but they must be returned to the ground of the total person.

The later German idealism that took Kant as its starting point spread its wings broadly, but not far enough to achieve the first pivotal point, let alone the second. Consider Schelling. As he himself claimed, and I concur, the positive phi-

losophy of his later years proceeded necessarily from the origins of philosophy. But this was only a call; the content of this philosophy was hollow and devoid of essence. In contrast, the *Great Calming and Contemplation* of the Tiantai master Zhiyi, and even more so the *Shōbōgenzō* of Dōgen, represent the positive philosophy Schelling was speaking of: they are not just a call for a return to the origins of philosophy but a real development of it. From the viewpoint of world philosophy today, Dōgen's work offers highly significant suggestions. Moreover, Schelling embraced natural science and the philosophy of science into his system, but to our amateur eye, it seems no more than a forced effort.

So, had reason originally no status at all in Indian and Buddhist thought? I hardly think so. To be sure, it lacked the establishment of reason in the western sense (which, seen from the first and second pivotal points, floats in the air, abstractly), but its assent to reason involving the whole person was in full force. For instance, prior to his enlightenment, Gotama had studied under two ascetics and arrived at the same stage as they. *Judging* that this was not true 'nirvāṇa', he was awakened beneath a bodhi tree and *judged* this to be the achievement of true nirvāṇa. This kind of *assent* of the total person may be thought to represent reason at work in its original form, reaching to a ground deeper than Kant's critique of reason. Up until a generation ago, western philosophy was taken to be rational and eastern thought to be experiential, a distinction we now recognize as absurd.

Thus, the opening of the first and second pivotal points that was realized in a short period of time in ancient Greece—from natural philosophy to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—subsequently yielded to an ever stronger sectionalism, and from the modern age to our own the natural sciences have taken to going on alone. It has since become clear how uncanny the pursuit of scientific truth in this form is, how meaningless it ends up, and how the totality of the human undergoes one fragmentation after another, leaving the pieces to decay just as they are.

[JWH]

THE ZEN TRADITION

Dōgen

Musō Soseki

Ikkyū Sōjun

Takuan Sōhō

Suzuki Shōsan

Shidō Bunan

Bankei Yōtaku

Hakuin Ekaku

Imakita Kōsen

Suzuki Daisetsu

Hisamatsu Shin'ichi

Karaki Junzō

The Zen Tradition

Overview

The Kamakura period (1185–1333) was a time of political upheaval, conflict, and an unusual series of natural disasters. The aristocracy had lost its political power to the newly risen samurai who aspired to capture the cultural authority of the court; the social and natural turbulence oppressed and demoralized the peasants and urban poor; the Mongols twice invaded southern Japan, threatening its sovereignty.

Of the three new religious traditions that emerged from this volatile climate in Kamakura Japan—Zen Buddhism, Nichiren Buddhism, and the various forms of Pure Land Buddhism—Zen was at first the least populist. It began with two strategies of development: an elitist approach that sought the patronage of the political centers of power and authority, and a separatist approach that founded monasteries for spiritual practice far from city distractions.

The Rinzai (C. Linji) line of Zen immediately succeeded in the former strategy. It secured support from the ‘shogunate’ to build temples of culture, learning, and Zen practice in the two major cities of Kyoto (the capital) and Kamakura (the center of the shogunate). Adopting an institutional model from Chinese Zen, this enterprise eventually led to the so-called “Five Mountain” temple system in each city.

The other major medieval school of Zen, the Sōtō (C. Caodong) School founded by Dōgen* (1200–1253), at first failed to make inroads into the urban centers. Consequently, it erected its first major monastic center of rigorous training in the remote area of present-day Fukui prefecture. Two generations later, Keizan Jōkin (1268–1325) built up the populist base of Sōtō Zen by introducing practices from folk religion and Buddhist esotericism. Today the Japanese often associate Zen Buddhism with either the fine arts or a strict sense of discipline. That Zen enjoys both associations suggests that, in the long run, the two models of Zen institution influenced each other.

The predecessors of Japanese Zen, the Chan Buddhists of China, had stressed the Mahayana Buddhist restriction of analytical and speculative thought in favor of directly engaging the present. That is, their teachings were not philo-

sophical analyses referring to external realities. Instead, they were heuristics for removing the self-delusions and inflexible presuppositions that cloud the ability of students to experience enlightenment on their own. In that regard, Zen Buddhism concurs with the general Mahayana Buddhist perspective that wisdom (*prajñā*) surpasses discriminating understanding (*vikalpa*), that expressing an engagement with reality is of greater value than analyzing it with detachment, and that enlightenment is discovered to be something inherent rather than attained or developed. Zen's distinctiveness lies in the rigor it brings to upholding this position: it rhetorically disparages the scholarly reading of scriptures, ridicules the scrupulous adherence to precepts as a means of becoming "good," and calls for displaying one's insight right here and now, without preconceptions or deliberation. For Zen, the traditional practices of other Buddhists run the risk of taking the heuristic, the expedient, and the provisional to be absolute truths.

Zen's response to the general Kamakura mood of frustration and despair was vigorous. It showed a way to cut through the complexity, to discard the trappings, and to present an insight that, at least theoretically, was immediately available to anyone. The two Japanese traditions of Rinzai and Sōtō Zen did not at first differ markedly, but as each pursued its own line of development, they came to have different emphases, especially in technique. To complement seated meditation, Rinzai stressed shouting, hitting, and the testing with 'kōan'. Such aggressive methods created in students a crisis so great that only a sudden breakthrough in which they could "see their own nature" would bring relief. In contrast, Sōtō Zen, though not necessarily excluding the more forceful Rinzai methods, focused more on being attentive to the ceaseless flow of experiences as a way to become aware of one's true nature. Accordingly, seated meditation remained its paradigmatic practice.

To establish legitimacy, the Rinzai and Sōtō Zen schools wrote their own institutional histories, tracing their lineages through their respective Japanese "founders," Eisai and Dōgen, back to Chinese lines of transmission. In fact, neither of the Japanese figures considered himself to be founding a new Buddhist school. Eisai (or Yōsai, 1141–1215) was a Tendai monk who had spent four years in China where he received official certification in Rinzai Zen Buddhism. Recognizing the benefits of its special techniques, Eisai's aim was to adopt Zen methods to supplement, but not replace, the Tendai mix of esoteric and exoteric practices. His successors would be left with the task of creating a discrete tradition of Rinzai Zen in Japan.

Dōgen took a more radical tack, calling for reform rather than merely the addition of new practices. He did not see himself as founding a new sect because he believed he was simply returning to something original, that is, to the core orthopraxis of Buddhism: '*zazen*'. In fact, he took the strong position

that meditation is not a *means* to gain enlightenment but an actual *practice* of enlightenment. In other words, to practice correctly is to express the enlightenment one already has. Dōgen's case was more difficult to make than Eisai's. It needed a complex philosophical project encompassing an analysis of experience, language, thought, and reality. Not only did Dōgen prove capable for the task; he went on to become the premodern Japanese thinker most often cited by Japan's modern academic philosophers.

Musō Soseki* (1275–1351), a Japanese Rinzai Zen leader in the tradition of Eisai, is one master credited with giving that lineage its distinctive character. A poet, calligrapher, and renowned designer of gardens, Musō's life exemplified the beginnings of what would become an intimate relation between Rinzai Zen Buddhism and the arts, both of which value spontaneity, creativity, and the break with rigid conventions. In strengthening the “Five Mountain” system in Kyoto and Kamakura, Musō also solidified the institutional basis for that relationship, effectively weaving Rinzai Zen into the fabric of urban culture in Japan. Philosophically, Musō's teachings on “original nature” set the tone for a line of analysis that continues in the Rinzai tradition up to today. Like Dōgen, he considered enlightenment intrinsic to all experience but clouded over by delusions arising from a habitual dependency on received categories. True to the Zen tradition, Musō did not seek a solution in conceptual reasoning. He clearly states that his reflections on the nature of mind, self, and phenomenal reality are no more than improvised heuristic expressions that might, or might not, help others find their way back to a prelinguistic engagement with reality—what he calls “original nature.”

By the early fifteenth century, Japan was once again in the throes of social unrest as the détente between the outer provinces and the central authority of the Ashikaga shogunate, located in the Muromachi area of Kyoto, began to dissolve. The Ōnin War (1467–1477) devastated the capital and thrust the country into a century of tumult known as the Warring States period. The Rinzai Zen master Ikkyū* (1394–1481) played a key role at the time in saving and restoring Daitoku-ji, an important Zen temple in Kyoto. Renowned as a literary figure and bon vivant, Ikkyū specialized in the shock value of unorthodox behavior, a brand of “mad Zen” that set out to violate people's assumptions about appropriate behavior. By unmasking and deconstructing dominant habits of thought, Ikkyū opened the way to an engagement with the inexpressible “original field,” his term for what Musō had called “original nature.” His essay “Skeletons,” a personal and poignant expression of the Buddhist notion of impermanence, appealed to a wide audience. His literary style both articulated the existential mood of his times and served as an apology for his own aberrant lifestyle. In addition, Ikkyū's personal relations with many of the key literary figures of his time further cemented the connection between Rinzai Zen and the arts.

As the Warring States period faded into the Edo period (1600–1868) under the peace and seclusionist policies imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate, the urban areas of Ōsaka, Kyoto, and Edo (present-day Tokyo) flourished as major mercantile and cultural centers. As their military skills became increasingly unnecessary, many samurai set up secular academies or became Buddhist, especially Rinzai, monks. In this way, the warrior ideals of discipline and moral integrity filtered into Rinzai Zen discourse and practices. As a result, Zen interest in the arts widened to include martial arts like sword fighting, and its talk of “death to the ego self” reflected this combination of Buddhist and samurai ideals. We find this new theme in the writings of Takuan Sōhō* (1573–1645), Suzuki Shōsan* (1579–1655), and Shidō Bunan* (1603–1676). Takuan, who was equally skilled in arms and letters, drew on the principles of responsiveness, openness, and flexibility in the art of the sword to express analogous Buddhist principles. Meanwhile, Shōsan employed Buddhist, Confucian, and Shinto teachings about egolessness, concentration, and impermanence to cultivate the proper attitude toward dying needed in a warrior setting out for battle. Bunan addressed the fear of death in monks and warriors by urging them all to immerse themselves in impermanence as the true way of things. All three figures remained faithful to the founding vision of Zen by alerting their readers to the fact that their writings were only heuristic and provisional, mere verbal cues pointing to the possibility of a direct experience and a flexibility in responding to it that lay beyond words and concepts.

As the Edo period progressed to refine its own form of urbane culture, certain Rinzai Zen masters sensed that their tradition had become disengaged from life, retreating into monastic quietism or indulging in artistic aestheticism. Bankei Yōtaku* (1622–1693) and Hakuin Ekaku* (1685–1768) both sought ways to restore Zen to its former vitality. Bankei reached out to ordinary people, explaining to them that their inherent enlightenment, which he called the ‘unborn’, is accessible to anyone—man, woman, layperson, monk, criminal, saint—in the events of everyday life. For Bankei, enlightenment consists in the fluid, spontaneous movement of attention, untrammled by reflection, learned patterns of behavior, or a conscious effort to keep moral precepts. Hakuin, in contrast, focused mainly on reforming Rinzai monastic life, bringing a range of psychological insights to bear on the dynamics of personal transformation. Since enlightenment is inherent, the only place to find it, Hakuin insisted, is within oneself. The task of the Zen master is to clear anything external—text, person, or teaching—on which students are wont to rely, and thus to induce a state he named the “great doubt.” The only path to resolving that doubt lay in an inner transformation he referred to as “realizing the ‘great matter’” or, harking back to a theme from Zen masters of a century before, the “great death.” Having

achieved such a state, all phenomena, just as they appear in experience, reveal “enlightenment in the midst of daily activities.”

With the introduction of neo-Confucianism, the Edo period witnessed a renaissance of Confucian thought in Japan. In China neo-Confucianism had absorbed many Buddhist ideas into its own terminology, only to argue its own superiority by relegating the remaining Buddhist ideas to the status of merely partial truths. When Japanese Zen monks first brought neo-Confucian texts back with them from China in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Confucianism was generally considered as a complement, rather than alternative, to Buddhism. As the Edo period progressed, however, a rivalry developed between the two traditions that often became intense. An important exception to the mutual animosity was the thought of Imakita Kōsen* (1816–1892). As a Rinzai Zen master, he tried to show that many Confucian values were compatible with Buddhism. For example, he correlated the classical Confucian emphasis on the innate goodness of human nature to Buddhism’s idea of an inherent ‘buddha-nature’. The difference, Imakita claimed, is that while both the Confucian and the Buddhist *recognize* this inherent nature, only the Buddhist *engages* it directly in experience.

The reopening of the country to the West in 1868 signaled the dawn of the modern era in Japan. In newly founded secular universities modeled on western institutions, philosophy became a major academic discipline. As a result, some students with personal connections to Zen Buddhism applied western ideas, terms, and methods to the analysis of their experience. Some of the writings of D. T. Suzuki* (1870–1966), Hisamatsu Shin’ichi* (1889–1980), and Karaki Junzō* (1904–1980) fall into this category. The Kyoto School of philosophy was a center for this interface between Zen ideas and western philosophy, and indeed all three thinkers had close personal contacts with its founder, Nishida Kitarō.* Although none of the three may be called philosophers in a strictly academic sense, they all studied western philosophy in a way that influenced their understanding of Zen. Suzuki, for example, tried to explain the traditional “logic” of Zen in terms of “affirmation-in-negation,” whereas Hisamatsu focused on the Buddhist concept of “nothingness.” But however much their language was colored by their encounter with western philosophy, they were still engaged in the primary Zen task of developing a heuristic explanation intended to lead their audience to an experience that cannot be explained, analyzed, or conceptualized. For that reason, both Suzuki and Hisamatsu insisted on the difference between Zen and western philosophical thinking. Karaki, in comparison, was more a literary critic who brought his insights to bear in interpreting classic Buddhist texts. In the selection included here, he selects a few provocative passages from Dōgen on “impermanence” to underline the strong role of aesthetics in traditional Japanese thinking.

In surveying the wide range of thinkers included in this section, one point stands out. Each of them, in one way or another, accepts the basic tenet that Zen is fundamentally concerned with directly engaging the ground of experience prior to its coloring by concepts, reflective thought, and unquestioned assumptions. Therein lies the source of creativity, spontaneity, and the enlightened way of life. To communicate this fact to others, of course, one inevitably has recourse to heuristic, expedient, or provisional language. It is hardly surprising that the nature of that idiom reflects shifts in social conditions or the intellectual zeitgeist. To reach the not-yet-enlightened, Zen has first to engage them on their own ground, something that needs always to be remembered in considering the interplay between Zen and philosophical ideas. In that reciprocal relation we see Zen's discovering new forms of instrumental expression even as it continues to enrich Japanese philosophy with its own questions and insights.

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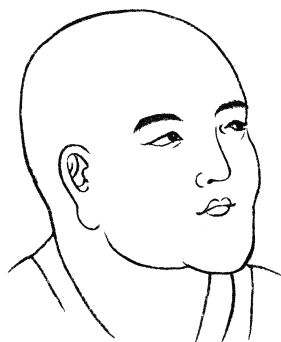
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[TPK]

DŌGEN 道元 (1200–1253)



In Japanese religious history, Dōgen (1200–1253) is revered as the founder of the Japanese school of Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Tradition says he was born of an aristocratic family, orphaned, and at the age of twelve joined the Tendai Buddhist monastic community on Mt Hiei in northeastern Kyoto. In search of an ideal teacher, he soon wandered off from the central community on the mountain and ended up in a small temple in eastern Kyoto, Kennin-ji. The temple had been founded in 1203 by Myōan Eisai (or Yōsai). Also a Tendai monk, Eisai (1141–1215) had spent four years in China studying and receiving credentials in Rinza

Zen (C. Linji Chan) Buddhism.

Although scholars doubt whether Dōgen ever actually met Eisai, he did become the pupil of Eisai's immediate successor, Myōzen (1184–1225). When Myōzen went to China for further training in 1223, he took Dōgen with him. After Myōzen died two years later in China, Dōgen became the student of the Chinese Sōtō (C. Caodong) master, Tiantong Rujing (1163–1228). Under Rujing, Dōgen achieved a spiritual insight upon hearing the phrase that in 'zazen', "mind-and-body drop off." Authenticated in his insight by Rujing, Dōgen returned to Japan in 1227.

Dōgen's religious career in Japan centered on his advocating seated meditation (*zazen*) as the core orthopraxis of all Buddhism. This emphasis on "just sitting" in meditation was at odds with the established Tendai integration of a variety of practices, both esoteric and exoteric. As a result, Dōgen found himself increasingly marginalized by establishment religious and civil authorities and went to an isolated region of what is now Fukui Prefecture in 1243 to establish his own monastery, eventually called Eihei-ji (Temple of Eternal Peace). In the remaining years of his life, Dōgen focused mainly on developing a comprehensive monastic rule for Eihei-ji based on his experience of Zen communities in China and on his own conviction that enlightenment is not the goal of practice, but a way of practicing. His insistence on disciplined, mindful engagement as a means to transforming the spirituality of the ordinary activities of daily life has been his most visible contribution to the spirituality of ordinary Japanese, both laity and clergy alike.

Dōgen's major philosophical work, and the source for all the selections below, is his *Shōbōgenzō* (*Repository of the Eye for the Truth*). The book is a series of ninety-five essays (in the longer edition) written from 1231 until his death in 1253. With a few important exceptions, the essays considered most philosophical are those composed in the period just preceding the establishment of Eihei-ji, that is, from approximately 1240 to about 1243. Each essay generally centers on a basic theme,

very often framed by an analysis of a key Zen item: a poem, a 'kōan', a traditional story, a painting, or a famous Buddhist metaphor or phrase. His commentaries were designed to disorient the reader, to deconstruct the usual interpretation of well-known snippets of the Zen tradition. In this respect, it is significant that *Shōbōgenzō* was arguably the first philosophical text in Japan to be written in Japanese rather than classical Chinese. Since Dōgen was, in effect, inventing a new language for expressing philosophy, he showed great creativity in devising new forms of expression. Given his intricate wordplay, his extensive allusions to other Buddhist texts, and his penchant for neologisms, *Shōbōgenzō* was considered so recondite that the text was not widely read at all for centuries after his death.

In Japanese philosophy of the twentieth century Dōgen seemed finally to have found his audience. Several major thinkers such as Watsuji Tetsurō*, Tanabe Hajime*, Nishitani Keiji*, Ueda Shizuteru*, and Yuasa Yasuo* wrote significant works about Dōgen, citing him as a major philosopher of premodern Japan. In the 67-volume *Library of Japanese Thought* (NST), Dōgen was the only individual thinker to be allotted two volumes. Why this sudden shift in the appreciation of Dōgen as a pivotal Japanese thinker? Perhaps because there is something startlingly contemporary in his philosophical perspective. This is true of his methodological approach: his sense of intertextuality, the emphasis on deconstruction, the concern for something like a phenomenological analysis of experience, and the distinctive way he viewed the master-student or author-reader relationship. His contemporary feel is just as true in the topics he explored: the inseparability of mind and body, the nature of temporality, the contextual basis of meaning, the intimacy between humanity and nature, and the function of tradition in light of the relativity of ethics.

[TPK]

ZEN AS PRACTICING ENLIGHTENMENT

DŌGEN 1243A, 88–9; 1243B, 90, 94

Principles of Zazen (last revised version, 1243)

According to Dōgen, to sit in meditation ('zazen') in the proper way is to be practicing enlightenment. It is not a matter of practicing in order to become enlightened. He claims that if one sits for even a moment in the proper way, for that moment, one is a buddha. The basics of the technique itself are outlined as follows:

Studying Zen is *zazen*. For *zazen*, one should have a quiet place. Spread a thick sitting mat... Cast aside all involvements and discontinue the myriad affairs. Good is not thought of; evil is not thought of. It is not 'mind', intellect or consciousness; it is not thoughts, ideas, or perceptions. Do not figure to make a buddha; slough off sitting or reclining.... Sit in either the semi-cross-legged

or fully cross-legged position.... Straighten your body and sit erect.... The eyes should be open, neither too widely nor too narrowly.

Having thus regulated body and mind, take a breath and exhale fully. Sitting fixedly, think of not thinking. How do you think of not thinking? Nonthinking. This is the art of *zazen*. *Zazen* is not the practice of 'dhyāna'. It is the 'dharma' gate of great ease and joy. It is undefiled practice and verification. [CWB]

Lancet of Zazen (1242–1243)

If zazen itself is practicing enlightenment, then the nature of the relationship among thinking, not-thinking, and nonthinking (the latter is also sometimes translated as “without thinking” or “a-thinking”), must be crucial. For Dōgen, nonthinking lies at the basis of all cognitive activity, both thinking and not-thinking. It occurs when one is no longer trying to become a buddha but is fully engaged in the practice as an end in itself. Dōgen explains more fully what he means by referring to a famous Zen story.

Once, when the Great Master Hongdao¹ of Yaoshan was sitting in meditation, a monk asked him, “What are you thinking of, sitting there so fixedly?”

The master answered, “I’m thinking of not thinking.”

The monk asked, “How do you think of not thinking?”

The master answered, “Nonthinking.”

Verifying that such are the words of the Great Master, we should study fixed sitting, we should participate in the correct transmission of fixed sitting. This is the investigation of fixed sitting transmitted in the way of the buddha. Although he is not alone in *thinking, sitting fixedly*, Yueshan’s words are singular: *thinking of not thinking*. *Thinking* is the very “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow,” *not thinking* is the very skin, flesh, bones, and marrow.

“The monk asked, ‘How do you think of not thinking?’” Indeed, while *not thinking* may be old, here it is *how do you think?* Could there be no *thinking* in sitting *fixedly*? How could it fail to penetrate beyond sitting *fixedly*? If we are not the sort of fool who “despises what is near,” we ought to have the strength, we ought to have the *thinking*, to question sitting *fixedly*.

“The master answered, ‘Nonthinking.’” Although the employment of *non-thinking* is “crystal clear,” when we *think of not thinking*, we always use *nonthinking*. There is someone in *nonthinking*, and this someone maintains us. Although it is we who are sitting *fixedly*, our sitting is not merely *thinking*; it presents itself as sitting *fixedly*. Although sitting *fixedly* is sitting *fixedly*, how could it *think* of sitting *fixedly*? Therefore, sitting *fixedly* is not the “measure of the buddha,” not

1. [Hongdao is the posthumous title of Yaoshan Weiyan (745–828), around whose disciple, Dongshan Liangjie (807–869), the Sōtō (C. Caodong) Zen tradition crystallized in China.]

the measure of the dharma, not the measure of awakening, not the measure of comprehension.

.....

Be it known that, for studying the way, the established means of investigation is pursuing the way in seated meditation. The essential point of its standard is the understanding that there is a practice of a buddha that does not seek to make a buddha. Since the practice of a buddha is not to make a buddha, it is the realization of the 'kōan'.

[CWB]

MEANING AND CONTEXT

DŌGEN 1252, 7–10

In the Zen tradition, the kōan, as a conundrum to which one responds without thinking, is central to many practices. In addition, “kōan” can sometimes refer to the equanimity of all phenomena as they appear to the enlightened Zen Buddhist in meditation. These two meanings merge in Dōgen’s phrase “genjōkōan.” In their raw givenness within the state of nonthinking, phenomena are open or empty (this is sometimes referred to as ‘suchness’). Yet, in their “presencing” (genjō), they coalesce into meaningful matrices appropriate to their context or “occasion.” Thus the same meaningless phenomena can configure themselves in multiple possible matrices of meaning (“there are many worlds everywhere”). This attention to meaning-in-the-making is the major theme developed in “Genjōkōan,” Dōgen’s most famous philosophical essay and one he himself highlighted when he starting collecting his own writings. Dōgen’s writing style is famously complex: full of Buddhist literary allusions, technical Zen terminology, numerous neologisms, and syntactic idiosyncrasies. Not surprisingly, since no single translation can do justice to all the nuances and implications and because of its importance within Japanese philosophy, this essay is one of the most frequently translated Zen texts.

Genjōkōan: The Case of Presencing (1233, revised 1252)

When phenomena are expressed as the Buddha’s teachings, on those occasions, there is “delusion/realization” and there is “praxis”; there is “birth” and there is “death”; there are “buddhas” and there are “ordinary beings.” On occasions when there is no “I” adjoined to the totality of phenomena, there is neither “delusion” nor “realization”; there are neither “buddhas” nor “ordinary beings”; there is neither “generation” nor “extinction.” In itself, the way of the buddhas leaps clear of both the richness and the lack of categories. Therefore, there is birth-extinction; there is delusion-realization; and there are ordinary beings-buddhas.

Yet, despite all this, cherished blossoms only scatter to our regret and weeds

only flourish to our dismay. To practice-authenticate the totality of phenomena by conveying yourself to them—that's delusion. To practice-authenticate yourself by letting the totality of phenomena advance—that's realization. The buddhas profoundly realize their delusions, whereas ordinary people are profoundly deluded in their enlightenment. And there are those who attain further realizations based on their previous realizations, while there are also those who keep on deluding themselves further while in their delusions. When buddhas are truly buddhas, they have no need to acknowledge themselves as buddhas. They are, nevertheless, authentic buddhas, and buddhas go on authenticating. When seeing forms and hearing sounds wholeheartedly with one's 'body-mind', one engages the phenomena intimately. Yet, it is not like capturing an image in a mirror or the moon's reflection on the water. In those cases, when you verify in one direction, the other is dark.

To model yourself after the 'way' of the buddhas is to model yourself after yourself. To model yourself after yourself is to forget yourself. To forget yourself is to be authenticated by the totality of phenomena. To be authenticated by the totality of phenomena is to completely drop away one's own body-mind as well as the body-mind of others. All traces of enlightenment are depleted and those depleted traces of enlightenment go on and on. When you first seek the dharma, you actually distance yourself from its environs, but when the dharma is already correctly transmitted to you, you are immediately what you really are. Suppose a person travels aboard a ship. If she turns her eyes to look back at the coast, she mistakenly thinks the shore is moving away from her. But if she fixes her eyes close by the ship, she knows it is the ship that is moving forward. Analogously, if she has a confused notion of her own body-mind, when she tries to sort out the totality of phenomena, she mistakenly assumes her own mind and her own nature are permanently fixed. Yet, if she returns inward, engaging her daily tasks intimately, she will have clarified the way of things—the totality of phenomena is there without an "I."

Firewood turns into ash and it cannot turn back into firewood. Yet, you should not take this to mean that earlier, it is firewood and later, it is ash. Think of it in the following way. Insofar as it persists in the phenomenal status as firewood, it has its own "earlier" and its own "later." Although one can say there is a before-and-after, the firewood itself is distinct from the temporal divisions of before-and-after. Similarly, ash, while persisting in its phenomenal status as ash, has its own "earlier" and its own "later." As the firewood, after becoming ash, cannot turn back into firewood, after one dies, a person cannot come back to life. Yet, one would not say life itself becomes death. As an established Buddhist teaching, we speak of the "unborn." Conversely, death does not become life. As a definitive enunciation of traditional Buddhist doctrine, we speak of the "unextinguished." In its phenomenal status, life is a particular moment and

death is a particular moment. This is like winter and spring, for example. One does not think the winter itself becomes spring and one does not say spring itself becomes summer.

When a person attains realization, it is like the image of the moon on the water. The moon doesn't get wet; nor is the surface of the water breached. Although the light of the moon may be expansive and great, it resides in the smallest drop of water. The images of the whole moon and sky dwell in dew-drops on blades of grass. They reside in even a single droplet. Realization does not destroy the person any more than the moon's image pierces the water. The person does not limit the realization any more than the dewdrop limits the image of the sky and the moon. The depth of the droplet must be the measure for the height of the image of the sky and moon. As for whether the occasion for a realization is long or short, one has to consider, as it were, the volume of the water and discern in it the expanse of the moon and sky.

When we have not yet fully engaged phenomena with the body-mind, we think that is all there is to the phenomena. If we sufficiently engage them with the body-mind, however, we sense there is something more left out. For example, suppose I board a ship and go out to sea beyond the sight of land. When I look around in all directions, what is visible is a circle of water with no distinguishing marks, nothing else. Yet, the ocean is not simply a circle or a square—one cannot exhaust all the other things the ocean can be. The ocean is like a palace to a fish and like a glittering string of jewels to a deity looking down at the glistening water from the heavens. It is just that what reaches my own eyes as an individual is, for the moment, nothing but the visible circle. The totality of phenomena is like this. Whether it is a delusion-permeated realm or something beyond, the world takes on many aspects. Yet, we see and grasp only what reaches our eyes in our practice. If we are to inquire into the manner and style of the totality of phenomena, we should know that beyond their being visible as circularity or angularity, there is no limit to the other things the ocean or the mountains can be. We should bear in mind that there are many worlds everywhere. And it is not just that the all-encompassing world around us is like this, but you should know that it is the same right here at your feet and in the single drop of water.

A fish swims through the water and however much it swims about, there is no limit to the water. A bird flies through the sky and however much it flies about, there is no limit to the sky. Yet, the fish has never yet left the water; nor the bird the sky. It is just that when the task at hand is great, the use of the water or sky is great; when the requirements are small, the use is small. The bird and fish neither fail to utilize completely each opportunity, nor fail to flit about everywhere. Yet, if the bird leaves the sky or the fish leaves the water, it will immediately die. You should certainly know that the fish lives because of the water and the bird

lives because of the sky. Conversely, the water has life because of the fish and the sky has life because of the bird: by means of this vitality, it is the bird; by means of this vitality, it is the fish. We can take this further: there is the oneness of authentication and practice as there is the oneness of life and longevity.

Nonetheless, were there fish or birds that would try to move only after they first found the boundaries of the water or sky, they would not be able to find their way in the water or sky, nor even know their own location. If we could fully be where we are, however, in carrying out the daily routine of the practice, we would be enacting the case of presencing. Whenever we find the way, carrying out that daily routine of the practice, that itself is the case of presencing. This place, this way—neither big nor small, neither mine nor another’s, neither something from the past nor something appearing now out of nowhere—is as we have just described it. Because it is like that, when people practice—authenticate the way of the buddhas, to get one teaching (or phenomenon) is to penetrate one teaching (or phenomenon); to engage one practice is to practice one practice. *This* is the place; the Way permeates everywhere. Therefore, we do not know its knowable limits because to know is a practice and a life inseparable from penetrating the truth of the buddhas.² Do not think of attaining this place as something you yourself can know perceptually or intellectually. Although we say the presencing of full authentication happens all at once, the most intimate being is not necessarily presencing. Its presencing is not determined.

While Master Baoche of Mt Mayu was fanning himself, a monk approached and asked, “The nature of the wind always stays the same and there is no place beyond its reach. So, why does the master have to use a fan?” The master replied, “You know only that the nature of the wind always stays the same, but you don’t know the way of things when it comes to there never being a place the wind does not reach.” The monk asked in return, “What is this ‘way of things’ at the basis of the ‘there is no place beyond its reach?’” Then the master did nothing but fan himself. The monk bowed in respect.

The authenticating test of the buddhas’ teachings, the living path of their correct transmission, is like that. If one says that because the nature of the wind stays the same, you don’t have to use a fan, and also says that even without using one, it is possible to feel its wind, then that person knows neither the nature of the wind nor its always staying the same. Because the nature of the wind stays the same, the wind of the buddha-heritage makes present the earth as a buddha realm of gold and, by its participation, the long river of life ripens into the cream of spiritual nourishment.

[TPK]

2. [That is, knowing—like the fish’s swimming and bird’s flying—is an activity, whereas boundaries or limits are where an activity, including knowing, stops.]

TEMPORALITY

DŌGEN 1240A, 181–94

In the selection above, the “Case of Presencing,” Dōgen made several comments about the nature of time. In the essay excerpted below, Dōgen approaches the topic in a more systematic fashion. The title of the essay is “Uji,” a compound word consisting of the character for “being” or “having” and the character for “time.” Ordinarily, the term “uji” would mean “at one time,” or “at one moment,” but Dōgen uses the compound nature of the word to inspire an analysis of experience as an array of “existential moments.” This array can be seen as either a series of immediate presents or as a “shifting” (kyōryaku) through the time frames of past, present, and future.

Uji: The Existential Moment (1240)

An ancient buddha has said:

An existential moment: I, standing on top of the highest mountain,
 An existential moment: I, moving on the deepest bottom of the sea.
 An existential moment: I, an *asura*³ with three heads and eight arms,
 An existential moment: I, a buddha with the sixteen-foot golden body.

This “existential moment” means that each moment is in itself an existence and that all existences are momentary. The “golden Buddha” is a moment and because it is momentary, it has its moment of ethereal glow. You should study that this is the context of the twelve hours of the present. The “three heads and eight shoulders of an *asura*” are just a moment, and because of this momentariness, their suchness is contained within the measurable twelve-hour system. The twelve hours of the day have length and distance, shortness and proximity, and even if you are not conscious of their measure, you still call this system “the twelve hours.” Because the marks of their going and coming are clear, people do not doubt them, but even if they do not doubt them, it is not the same as understanding them. Even if sentient beings do not make it a general principle to doubt everything and every event that they do not initially understand, it does not follow that they necessarily agree with everything before they start doubting it. Their doubts are no more than fleeting moments as well.

The I unfolds and becomes the world in its entirety, and one should see that all beings, all things, constitute moments in this entirety of the world. Just as different things do not interfere with each other, different moments do not interfere with each other either. This is why the mind arises in the same moment, the moment arises in the same mind. And it is the same with the practice and

3. [In Buddhist thought, the *asura* are devils fond of fighting.]

attaining the way. When the I unfolds, it sees itself as 'me'. The principle that the self is momentary works in the same way.

Because of how 'suchness' is, there are myriad forms and hundreds of blades of grass in the entirety of space, but you should also realize that the entirety of space is within each single blade of grass, each single form. The perception of this oscillating interdependence is the beginning of religious practice. When you have arrived in the field of suchness, there are singular blades of grass, singular forms; there is rational grasping and nonrational grasping of forms, rational grasping and nonrational grasping of blades of grass. Because they are nothing else than precisely present moments of suchness, each existential moment is the entirety of time: existing blades of grass, existing forms are all moments together. In this time of all moments, there is the entirety of existence, the entirety of the world. Look—is it or is it not the entirety of existence, the entirety of the world that is thus dripping through the fleeting moment of the present?

However, ordinary people who have not studied the Buddhist teaching have such views about time that on hearing the word "existential moment," they think: "*At one moment* someone was an *asura*; *at another moment* he was a buddha. This is just like crossing a river or a mountain. Even if the mountain and the river continue to exist, I have crossed them and my place is now in this jewel palace or vermilion tower. I and the mountains-rivers are like heaven and earth to each other."

Yet there is more to this principle than just such thoughts. At that moment of climbing the mountain or crossing the river, there was also an I, and there had to be the moment of the I. Whenever there is an I, the momentariness is unavoidable. If a moment is not just a sign of the transition, then the moment of climbing the mountain is the immediate present of the existential moment. If a moment fully contains all the signs of the transition, then the immediate present of the existential moment is there for me. *This* is the existential moment. The moment of climbing the mountain and crossing the river, the moment of palace-tower—does not the existential moment swallow them up and spit them out?

The *asura* is a moment of yesterday, the buddha is a moment of today. However, the principle of distinguishing between yesterday and today is the same thing one realizes at the time when, having gone directly to the mountains, one gazes at the thousands, the myriads of peaks in a range—nothing has gone by. The *asura* is one that completes its whole duration within my existential moment, and though he appears to be somewhere else, he is my immediate present. The buddha is one that completes its whole duration within my existential moment, and though he appears to be someplace else, he is my immediate present.

This being so, the pines are momentary and the bamboos are momentary as well. You should not conceptualize a moment as something that flies by, nor study *flying by* merely as the capacity of a moment. If moments could be fully defined by the capacity to fly by, they would be separate in space. If you do not accept the discourse of the existential moment, this is because you are concentrating on what is already past. To sum it up: the entirety of existences in the entirety of the world are particular moments that follow each other. Because they are existential moments, they are also the moments of my existence.

The existential moment has the quality of shifting. It shifts from what we call *today* into *tomorrow*; it shifts in turn from *today* into *yesterday* and from *yesterday* into *today*. It shifts from *today* into *today*; it shifts from *tomorrow* into *tomorrow*. This is because shifting is the quality of the momentary. The moments of the past and the present do not pile up on each other nor do they line up side by side....

Now, although the views of an ordinary person, as well as the 'dependent origination' that causes the views of this person, are what this person sees, it is not that the dharma is held by the ordinary person. It is rather that the dharma has, for a while, caused this ordinary person to be. You believe the *I* is not the golden buddha because of your habit of thinking that this very moment, this very existence, is not how the dharma is. But your intention to leave behind the view that the *I* is not the golden buddha is yet another splinter of an existential moment....

If you judge the moments only as something passing by, you will not understand them as incomplete. Of course, an understanding is in any case momentary, but this way they will not have a connection with each other. There is not a single being who has seen through the existential moment of the dharma-configuration by considering it as going and coming.

.....

You should not conceptualize the phenomenon of shifting as the wind and the rain moving from east to west. Nothing in the entire world is ever without movement, is ever without advancing or receding—it is always in shift. This shift is like "spring," for instance. Spring can have a multitude of appearances, and we call them "shifting." But you should realize that they shift without involving anything external. In this example, the shift of spring necessarily makes spring shift. Shifting is not in spring, but because it is the shift of spring, this is how the shift becomes the Way now that spring is here.

.....

At a certain time, Zen master Guisheng⁴ explained to the monks:

4. [Yexian Guisheng (dates unknown) was the fourth master in the line of Linji.]

At one existential moment, the mental image refers but the verbal designation does not refer.

At one existential moment, the verbal designation refers but the mental image does not refer.

At one existential moment, the mental image and the verbal designation both refer.

At one existential moment, neither the mental image nor the verbal designation refers.

Both the mental image and the verbal designation are existential moments: both referring and not-referring are existential moments. Even if the *referring* moment is incomplete, the *not-referring* moment arrives at its goal. Let us suppose we have a mental image that is of a donkey, but the verbal designation attached to it is *horse*. Even if we make *horse* to be the word, a donkey is what we have in the mind. *Referring* is not the same as *arriving*; *not-referring* is not the same as *incomplete*. This is what the existential moment is like. One reference interferes with another reference, but a non-reference does not affect it. One non-reference interferes with another non-reference, but a reference does not affect it. A mental image displaces a mental image and reflects a mental image. A verbal designation displaces a verbal designation and reflects a verbal designation. Interference displaces interference and reflects interference. Interference interferes with interference. That is how moments are. Although we can say that interference serves other dharmas, there never has been an interference that interferes with other dharmas. I meet a man. A man meets a man. I meet me. Departures meet departures. If these situations would not capture the moment, there would be no suchness.

That said, the mental image is the moment of actualizing the fundamental point (*genjōkōan*). The verbal designation is the moment of transcending the established order. Referring is the moment of casting away the body. Not-referring is the moment of simultaneous identification and separation. This is how to differ and agree; this is how to be the existential moment.

[RR]

NATURE

DŌGEN 124OB, 258–62, 264–7

In the “Case of Presencing,” we found Dōgen maintaining that in themselves things are limitless in their possible meanings. Meaning is not intrinsic to things, but the result of our engagement with them in a particular context, on a particular occasion. Whether our engagement—and the meaning generated—is valid depends on whether they are appropriate to the context as it presents itself

on a given occasion. This assertion has profound applications for the mutual engagement between the natural and the human. In the following essay, Dōgen takes up the traditional idea that mountains and waters can teach us, that they can be “sutras”—the words of the Buddha. Of course, for them to have such a function, we have to be aware of the open possibilities for their expression, and that is only possible if we free ourselves of the way we have been conditioned to engage them. Once freed from viewing the meaning of natural things in one and only one way, we can realize the mountains are not necessarily static, incommunicative, or something over which a monarch or country can hold title.

Mountains and Waters Sutra (1240)

These mountains and waters of the present are the expression of the old buddhas. Each, abiding in its own phenomenal status, fulfills exhaustive virtues. Because they are the circumstances “prior to the ‘*kalpa*’ of ‘emptiness,’” they are this life of the present; because they are the self “before the germination of any subtle sign,” they are liberated in their actual occurrence. Since the virtues of the mountain are high and broad, the spiritual power to ride the clouds is always mastered from the mountains, and the marvelous ability to follow the wind is inevitably liberated from the mountains.

Preceptor Kai of Mt Dayang addressed the assembly, saying, “The blue mountains are constantly walking...” The mountains lack none of their proper virtues; hence, they are constantly at rest and constantly walking. We must devote ourselves to a detailed study of this virtue of walking. Since the walking of the mountains should be like that of people, one ought not doubt that the mountains walk simply because they may not appear to stride like humans.

This saying of the buddha and the patriarch⁵ has pointed out walking; it has got what is fundamental, and we should thoroughly investigate this address on “constant walking.” It is constant because it is walking. Although the walking of the blue mountains is faster than “swift as the wind,” those in the mountains do not sense this, do not know it. To be “in the mountains” is “a flower opening within the world.” Those outside the mountains do not sense this, do not know it. Those without eyes to see the mountains do not sense, do not know, do not see, do not hear the reason for this. To doubt the walking of the mountains means that one does not yet know one’s own walking. It is not that one does not walk but that one does not yet know, has not made clear, this walking. Those who would know their own walking must also know the walking of the blue mountains.

.....

Do not slander mountains by saying that the blue mountains cannot walk,

5. [The reference is to Furong Daokai (1042–1118), who was instrumental in revising the Sōtō Zen tradition after its decline in China.]

or that the East Mountain does not move over the water. It is because of the baseness of the common person's point of view that we doubt the phrase *the blue mountains walk*. Because of the crudeness of our limited experience, we are surprised by the words *flowing mountain*. Without having fully penetrated even the term *flowing water*, we just remain sunk in our limited perception...

Even when we have the eyes to see mountains as the appearance of grass and trees, earth and stone, fences and walls, this is nothing to doubt, nothing to be moved by: it is not the complete appearance of the mountains. Even when there appears an occasion in which the mountains are seen as the splendor of the seven treasures, this is still not the real refuge. Even when they appear to us as the realm of the practice of the way of the buddhas, this is not necessarily something to be desired. Even when we attain the crowning appearance of the vision of the mountains as the inconceivable virtues of the buddhas, their reality is more than this. Each of these appearances is the particular objective and subjective result of past karma; they are not the karma of the way of the buddhas and patriarchs but narrow, onesided views. "Turning the object and turning the mind" is criticized by the Great Sage; "explaining the mind and explaining the nature" is not affirmed by the buddhas and patriarchs; "seeing the mind and seeing the nature" is the business of non-Buddhists. "Sticking to words and sticking to phrases" are not the words of liberation. There are words that are free from such realms: they are *the blue mountains constantly walking* and *the East Mountain moving over the water*. We should give them detailed investigation.

.....

The Great Master Yunmen Kuangzhen⁶ has said, "The East Mountain moves over the water." The import of this expression is that all mountains are the East Mountain. Therefore, Mt Sumeru and the other nine mountains are all appearing, are all practicing and verifying the buddha dharma.

.....

Water is neither strong nor weak, neither wet nor dry, neither moving nor still, neither cold nor hot, neither being nor nonbeing, neither delusion nor enlightenment. Frozen, it is harder than diamond; who could break it? Melted, it is softer than milk; who could break it?

This being the case, we cannot doubt the many virtues realized by water. We should study the occasion when the water of the ten directions is seen in the ten directions. This is not a study only of the time when humans or gods see water: there is a study of water seeing water. Water practices and verifies water; hence, there is a study of water telling of water. We must bring to realization

6. [Yunmen (J. Unmon) Kuangzhen (864–949), famous for his one-word retorts, appears frequently in the *Hekiganroku* and *Mumonkan* kōan collections.]

the road on which the self encounters the self; we must move back and forth along, and spring off from, the vital path on which the other studies, and fully comprehends, the other.

In general, then, the way of seeing mountains and waters differs according to the type of being that sees them. In seeing water, there are beings who see it as a jeweled necklace. This does not mean, however, that they see a jeweled necklace as water. How, then, do we see what they consider water? Their jeweled necklace is what we see as water. Some see water as miraculous flowers, though it does not follow that they use flowers as water. Hungry ghosts see water as raging flames or as pus and blood. Dragons and fish see it as a palace or a tower, or as the seven treasures or the wish-fulfilling gem. Others see it as woods and walls, or as the dharma nature of immaculate liberation, or as the true human body, or as physical form and mental nature. Humans see these as water. And these different ways of seeing are the conditions under which water is killed or given life.

Given that what different types of beings see is different, we should have some doubts about this. Is it that there are various ways of seeing one object? Or is it that we have mistaken various images for one object? At the peak of our concentrated effort on this, we should concentrate still more. Therefore, our practice and verification, our pursuit of the Way, must also be not merely of one or two kinds, and the ultimate realm must also have a thousand types and ten thousand kinds.

If we reflect further on the real import of this question, although we say there is water of the various types, it would seem there is no original water, no water of various types. Nevertheless, the various waters in accordance with the types of beings do not depend on the mind, do not depend on the body of these beings; they do not arise from different types of karma; they are not dependent on self; they are not dependent on other. They are liberated dependent on water. Therefore, water is not the water of earth, water, fire, wind, space, or consciousness; it is not blue, yellow, red, white, or black; it is not form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or idea. Nevertheless, the waters of earth, water, fire, wind, space, and the rest have been spontaneously appearing as such.

.....

Nevertheless, when dragons and fish see water as a palace, just as when humans see palaces, they do not view it as flowing. And, if some onlooker were to explain to them that their palace was flowing water, they would surely be just as amazed as we are now to hear it said that mountains flow. Still, there would undoubtedly be some dragons and fish who would accept such an explanation of the railings, stairs, and columns of palaces and pavilions. We should calmly consider, over and over, the reason for this. If our study is not liberated from these confines, we have not freed ourselves from the body and mind of the com-

moner, we have not fully comprehended the land of the buddhas and patriarchs, we have not fully comprehended the land of the commoner, we have not fully comprehended the palace of the commoner.

Although humans have deeply understood what is in seas and rivers as water, just what kind of thing dragons, fish, and other beings understand and use as water we do not yet know. Do not foolishly assume that all kinds of beings must use as water what we understand as water...

From the distant past to the distant present, mountains have been the dwelling place of the great sages. Wise men and sages have all made the mountains their own chambers, their own body and mind. And through these wise men and sages the mountains have appeared. However many great sages and wise men we suppose have assembled in the mountains, ever since they entered the mountains no one has met a single one of them. There is only the expression of the mountain way of life; not a single trace remains of their having entered. The “crown and eyes” of the mountains are completely different when we are in the world gazing off at the mountains and when we are in the mountains meeting the mountains. Our concept of not-flowing and our understanding of not-flowing should not be the same as the dragon’s understanding. Humans and gods reside in their own worlds, and other beings may have their doubts about this, or, then again, they may not.

.....

Although we say that mountains belong to the country, actually they belong to those who love them. When the mountains love their owners, the wise and virtuous inevitably enter the mountains. And when sages and wise men live in the mountains, because the mountains belong to them, trees and rocks flourish and abound, and the birds and beasts take on a supernatural excellence. This is because the sages and wise men have covered them with their virtue. We should realize that the mountains actually take delight in wise men, actually take delight in sages.

.....

We should understand that the mountains are not within the limits of the human realm or the limits of the heavens above. They are not to be viewed with the calculations of human thought. If only we did not compare them with flowing in the human realm, who would have any doubts about such things as the mountains’ flowing or not flowing?

.....

It is not the case simply that there is water in the world; within the world of water there is a world. And this is true not only within water: within clouds as well there is a world of sentient beings; within wind there is a world of sentient beings; within fire there is a world of sentient beings; within earth there is a world of sentient beings. Within the dharma realm there is a world of sentient

beings; within a single blade of grass there is a world of sentient beings; within a single staff there is a world of sentient beings. And wherever there is a world of sentient beings, there, inevitably, is the world of buddhas and patriarchs. The reason this is so we should study very carefully.

In this way, water is the palace of the “true dragon,” it is not flowing away. If we regard it only as flowing, the word “flowing” is an insult to water: it is like imposing “not flowing.” Water is nothing but water’s “real form just as it is.” Water is the virtue of water; it is not flowing. In the thorough study of the flowing or the not-flowing of a single drop of water, the entirety of the ten thousand things is instantly realized. Among mountains as well, there are mountains hidden in jewels; there are mountains hidden in marshes, mountains hidden in the sky; there are mountains hidden in mountains. There is a study of mountains hidden in hiddenness.

An old buddha has said, “Mountains are mountains and waters are waters.” These words do not say that mountains are mountains; they say that mountains are mountains. Therefore, we should thoroughly study these mountains. When we thoroughly study the mountains, this is the mountain training. Such mountains and waters themselves become wise men and sages.

[CWB]

ON GOOD AND EVIL

DŌGEN 1240C, 277–84;

In this essay, Dōgen addresses the conundrum of how Zen Buddhism can, on the one hand, affirm that phenomena lack intrinsic meaning and value so that the distinction between good and evil is contextual and relative; and on the other hand, continually emphasize precepts like “do no evil” and “devoutly practice good.” His response to the predicament is that in religiously following the precepts to not do evil and to devoutly practice good, the “not doing” and the “devoutly practicing” transform the person into one who becomes incapable of doing evil and fully active in performing good. It is as if “Thou shalt not kill” is taken first as a moral imperative and by living one’s life accordingly, one is transformed so that “thou shalt not kill” becomes no longer an imperative, but a descriptive statement about what one will not do because of what one has become. At that point, the distinction between good and evil as principles disappears because there is no longer a need for the distinction.

Not Doing Evils (1240)

Ancient buddhas say:

Not doing evils,
devoutly practicing every good,
purifying one’s own mind:
this is the teaching of all buddhas.

This, the universal precept of the seven buddhas, our founding patriarchs, is properly transmitted by earlier buddhas to later buddhas and is inherited by later buddhas from earlier buddhas. It is not just of the seven buddhas; it is the teaching of all buddhas. This truth must be investigated with concentrated effort. This so-called seven buddhas' dharma instruction must be as dharma-instructed by the seven buddhas. Intimately transmitting, intimately inheriting: it is each one penetrating the situation. It is already the teaching of all buddhas: hundreds, thousands, ten thousand buddhas' teaching, practice, and realization.

In the above quotation, the term *evils* refers to what is called morally evil among the categories of morally good, morally evil, and morally undefined. Its moral nature, however, is uncreated. The natures of morally good and morally undefined likewise are uncreated. They are untainted, they are the real aspects, which is to say that these three categories of moral nature encompass manifold varieties of dharmas. The category of morally evil encompasses: similarities and dissimilarities among evils of this world and evils of other worlds, similarities and dissimilarities among evils of former times and evils of latter times, as well as similarities and dissimilarities among evils of heavenly realms and evils of human realms. Even greater still is the divergence between the buddha path and the secular realm in terms of what is called evil, what is called good, and what is called morally undefined. Good and evil are temporal, but time is neither good nor evil. Good and evil are dharmas, but dharmaness is neither good nor evil. Sameness of dharmas is sameness of evil. Sameness of dharmas is sameness of good....

What one hears first is *not doing evils*. If one does not hear *not doing evils*, one is not hearing the buddhas' true dharma but the talk of devils. Know that hearing *not doing evils* is hearing the buddhas' true dharma. The meaning of the phrase *not doing evils* is not like what commoners first construe. Hearing this teaching as 'bodhi' talk is hearing it like it is. Hearing it like it is means hearing it as expressing words of unsurpassed bodhi. Because it is already bodhi talk, it talks bodhi. As unsurpassed bodhi's speaking turns into its hearing, one moves from the aspiration for "not doing evils" toward the practice of *not doing evils*. As evils become something one is unable to do, the power of one's practice suddenly appears fully. This full appearance fully appears in measure as vast as all the earth, all the universe, all of time, and all dharmas. Its measure is the same as the measure of *not doing*.

At that very moment that very person, regardless of abiding in or traveling in places where evils are done or becoming involved in occasions for doing evils or becoming mixed up with friends who do evils, nonetheless will be unable to do evils. Because the power of *not doing* appears in full measure, evils themselves do not express evil, for evils lack fixed proportion. This is the truth of "one hold-

ing, one releasing”: at that very moment one knows the truth that evil cannot transgress people and clarifies the truth that people cannot violate evil.

.....

It is not that evils do not exist, but that there is only *not doing*. It is not that evils do exist, but that there is only *not doing*. Evils are not emptiness; it is *not doing*. Evils are not form; it is *not doing*. Evils are not *not doing*, for there is only *not doing*. For example, spring pines are neither nonexistent nor existent; they just are not done.... Pillars, lamps, candles, whisks, staffs, and so forth, are neither existent nor nonexistent; they are *not doing*. One’s own self is neither existent nor nonexistent; it is *not doing*.

.....

Because this is so, to act on the assumption that “if evil already is *not doing*, then I can just do as I please” would be exactly as mistaken as walking north while expecting to arrive in Viet to the south.

.....

“Devoutly practicing every good”: the term *every good* refers to what is called morally good among the three categories of moral nature mentioned above. Within the category of morally good there exists every good, but this does not mean that every good is fully apparent beforehand just waiting for a practitioner. At the very moment of doing good, every good comes into existence. The myriad varieties of good may be invisible, but they accumulate where one does good faster than a magnet attracts iron. Their power exceeds that of a violent windstorm. All the karmic power generated throughout the great earth, the mountains, and the rivers in all the lands of the universe could not obstruct this accumulation of good.

.....

Every good is not existent, is not nonexistent, is not form, is not emptiness, nor anything else; it only is devoutly practicing. Wherever it fully appears, whenever it fully appears, it must be devoutly practicing. In this devoutly practicing, every good will certainly fully appear. The full appearance of devoutly practicing is itself the *kōan*, but it is not production and destruction, it is not causal conditions.... The causality of this good likewise is the fully apparent *kōan* of devoutly practicing. It is not a case of prior causes and subsequent results, but one of causes being fully perfected and causes being fully perfected. Sameness of causes is sameness of dharmas; sameness of results is sameness of dharmas. Although causes engender results, it is not a case of before and after. We know this because of the truth of the sameness of before and after.

“Purifying one’s own mind” is not doing’s *purifying*, not doing’s *one’s*, not doing’s *own*, and not doing’s *mind*. It is devoutly practicing’s *mind*, devoutly practicing’s *own*, devoutly practicing’s *one’s*, and devoutly practicing’s *purifying*. Because of these reasons we say that “this is the teaching of all buddhas.”

.....

Juyi⁷ asked: “What is the ‘buddha-dharma’s’ great meaning?”

Daolin replied: “Not doing evils, devoutly practicing every good.”

Juyi said: “If that is so, then even a three-year-old child could say so.”

Daolin replied: “A three-year-old child maybe could say it, but even an elder in his eighties cannot practice it.”

That being said, Juyi bowed and departed.

Truly Juyi was, even by the standards for judging a descendant of General Bai, a poet wizard the likes of which rarely exists.... While this is so, in the buddha path he was a beginner. He was a late starter. Regarding this “not doing evils, devoutly practicing every good” and its meaning, it was as if he could not see it even in his dreams.

Juyi thought that Daolin was aware only of an existing mind’s notion of saying that one must not act evil and that one must devoutly practice good. As for the buddha path’s ancient, primeval “not doing evils, devoutly practicing every good”—this truth which transcends past and present—Juyi did not know it and did not hear it. It was because he had not practiced the buddha dharma and because he lacked strength in the buddha dharma. Even an admonishment not to act evil and even a recommendation to act good are fully apparent “not doing.”

.....

Pitiful Juyi! You said what? Since you had not yet heard the buddha winds, could you really have known a three-year-old child? Could you really have known the truth with which a child is endowed at birth? If you knew a three-year-old child, then you must have known the buddhas of the three periods of past, present, and future.... It is the utmost stupidity to think that a three-year-old child could not mention buddha dharma or that whatever a three-year-old child mentions must be easy. For this reason, to clarify birth, to clarify death, is... the buddha family’s single great affair.

.....

The meaning of the Zen teacher’s saying is that there are words that can be spoken by a three-year-old child, and you must carefully investigate them. There are sayings that an elder in his eighties cannot practice, and you must concentrate your efforts on them. What a child can say is entirely entrusted to you. While this is so, it is not entirely entrusted to the child. What an elder cannot practice is entirely entrusted to you. While this is so, it is not entirely entrusted to the elder.

7. [Bai Juyi (772–846) was the lay disciple of Zen teacher Foguang Ruman. As governor of Hangzhou, he visited the Zen teacher Daolin (741–824).]

The buddha dharma finds truth in discerning, explicating, and grasping the meaning in this way.

[WB]

ON LANGUAGE IN ZEN BUDDHISM

DŌGEN 1243C, 393–6

In this essay, Dōgen addresses the problem of language in Zen Buddhist training. He begins with a discussion of the famous story of the founding of Zen Buddhism: with all the disciples assembled for a sermon, the Buddha silently held up a flower, twirled it, and winked. One monk, Mahākāśyapa, smiles and the Buddha transmits to him the “eye for the truth.” Based on this story, many have assumed that Zen transmission is either beyond all language or is embedded in special, secret transmission through “esoteric words,” the usual meaning of the term “mitsugo,” the title of the essay. In response, Dōgen says that the term means not “esoteric” in the sense of “secret,” but in the sense of “intimate.” Hence, the wonder is in communication itself: by using words we establish intimacy with others and even with ourselves. Zen does not use special language; rather, Zen realizes that all language is special.

Esoteric Words (1243)

Those who have not heard a genuine master’s instructions, though they may sit on a meditation seat like a buddha, have not even dreamed of the way things really are. They cavalierly say the twirling of the flower and winking at the great assembly of monks is the Buddha ‘Shakyamuni’s’ “esoteric language.” By that reasoning, the Buddha’s verbal exposition would be only superficial, as in what can be conveyed by matching names and forms. Twirling the flower and winking in nonverbal exposition—*that*, they think, would itself be an occasion for the technique of using esoteric language....

Yet, if you regard the Buddha’s verbalization as superficial, then twirling the flower and winking must also be superficial. If you regard his verbalization as just matching names and forms, then you are not engaging the ‘Buddha’s truth’. Although you have known verbalization to be names and forms, you do not yet know that there are no names and forms for the Buddha—your unenlightened feelings have not dropped away. The buddhas and patriarchs, having completely penetrated their body-minds and having let them drop away, expound the dharma, do so verbally, and turn the dharma wheel. Many are those who see or hear them and who derive benefit from them....

The Buddha says after seeing Mahākāśyapa’s smile, “I have the repository of the eye for the truth and the wondrous mind of nirvāṇa. I transmit these to Mahākāśyapa.” Is such an utterance verbal or nonverbal? If Shakyamuni dislikes

the verbal and prefers to twirl the flower, he should save the twirling for after speaking.

.....

Concerning the esoteric thought, words, and deeds of the Buddha's truth, the way of things is not as the anti-verbalists argue. On the occasion when you meet someone, you hear and express esoteric words. When you know yourself you know esoteric activity....

The word "esoteric" means the way of things as "intimacy." ...Intimate action does not know self vs. other, as if I alone can know my intimate self and do not understand any other person's intimate self. Because "intimacy is what is near you," everything exists through intimacy; each half exists through intimacy. Personally investigate this way of things with clarity and diligence in your practice.

[TPK]

ON TEACHER AND DISCIPLE

DŌGEN 1243D, 331-3

Given Dōgen's ideal of the intimacy in interpersonal communication, he must also have a special understanding of the communication between master and disciple (or perhaps even between himself as writer and us as his audience). The essay "Kattō" addresses this issue. Again, we find a transformation of the usual meaning of a central key term, in this case "kattō." In Zen discourse, the term usually refers to the student's delusional entanglement in words and concepts, and the master is to use various techniques (often nonverbal or non-conceptual such as shouting or hitting) to free the student so ensnared. Dōgen's image of engagement between master and student is presented here as something quite different. Rather than standing apart from the students and evaluating them as a master, Dōgen's image is that the master and student engage in kattō together. The master gets entangled with the student's entanglements and together they "use kattō to cut through kattō." Thus, the term now signifies the intertwining of master and student in the practice common to them.

Intertwining (1243)

Generally, saints set out in their personal practice to cut off the roots of *kattō*, but they do not personally practice this as slicing through *kattō* with *kattō*. They do not know about entangling *kattō* with *kattō*, to say nothing of knowing how to inherit *kattō* through *kattō*. Knowing the inheritance of the dharma itself to be *kattō* is rare—no one has heard of this. It has yet to be uttered. So few have authenticated it....

This take on the master-disciple relation leads Dōgen to give a new reading to yet another common Zen story: the supposed transmission of Zen from

Bodhidharma, the legendary founder of Zen in China, to the second patriarch. The story is told that the Master asks each of his four prime students to express their understanding. To the expression of the first, Bodhidharma says, "You have attained me in my skin." To the second, "you have attained me in my flesh." To the third, "You have attained me in my bone." To the fourth (Huïke, who would become the second patriarch in the tradition), he responds, "You have attained me in my marrow." The usual interpretation is that each successive student had a deeper insight. Dōgen's reading, in contrast, is that each student is intertwined with Bodhidharma in a different way and that despite that difference each attains full realization of Bodhidharma and his teaching.

Bear this in mind: the patriarch's words about skin-flesh-bones-marrow are neither shallow nor deep. Even if there were qualitative differences among the disciple's views, the patriarch only says "attaining me..." That doctrine—the device of saying "attaining me in my marrow" or "attaining me in my bones"—is suited to each person, is just picked up and discarded. Here there is no matter of being good enough or not. It is like Shakyamuni's twirling the flower or Bodhidharma's passing down his robe, for example. Bodhidharma's speaking for the sake of the four disciples is, at its root, on the same level. Although the patriarch's words may be on the same level, their four views should not necessarily be the same.

The four views may be distinct, but the patriarch's words are just the patriarch's words. There is no general rule that the patriarch's utterance and the disciples' views necessarily correspond. When the patriarch was instructing his four monks, for example, he said, "You have attained me in my skin." If there were hundreds or thousands of monks after the second patriarch, there should be hundreds or thousands of interpretations for the monks.... Even the "in my skin" must be a transmission of the dharma. The patriarch's body-mind is the patriarch—his skin-flesh-bones-marrow. It is not the case that the marrow is intimate and the skin distant....

You should pay attention to the phrases "you attain me," "I attain you," "attaining both me and you," and "attaining both you and me." In personally viewing the patriarch's body-mind, if we speak of there being no oneness of internal and external, or if we speak of the whole body's not being completely penetrated, then that is not the field of the patriarch's presence. Therefore, the very utterances are lines that leap out of themselves; student and master personally practice together. The very listenings are lines that leap out of themselves; student and master practice together. The common personal investigation of the master and disciple is the patriarchal intertwining (*kattō*). The patriarchal intertwining is the life of the skin-flesh-bones-marrow. The very twirling of the flower and winking are the intertwining.

[TPK]

MUSŌ Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275–1351)

Musō Soseki was one of the central figures in the extraordinary first generation of native-born and native-trained Japanese Zen masters who oversaw Zen's emergence as a widespread spiritual and cultural force in fourteenth-century Japan. Born in 1275 to an aristocratic family, he was placed at the age of eight in the nearby Tendai temple of Heien-ji, where he soon displayed the deep interest in sacred literature and profound love of nature that was to characterize his entire life. He received ordination in Nara, but after the difficult death of his 'Shingon' master, the course of his life changed drastically. Convinced that the deepest questions of existence could not be resolved through textual knowledge and ritual expertise, Musō embarked on a decade of Zen practice with some of the most eminent masters of the time. After his enlightenment in 1305 he spent some thirty more years in remote areas of Japan, finally consenting to settle in Kyoto, first as abbot of Nanzen-ji and then of Rinsen-ji. With this newly founded temple as his base, he founded Tenryū-ji, restored the famous moss-garden temple of Saihō-ji, and is said to have directed more than a thousand lay and ordained students.

Musō won renown as a poet, calligrapher, and garden designer, and served as a trusted adviser to both the 'shogunate' and the imperial court. The *Dialogues in a Dream*, his best-known work, dates from this period. This modest book, from which the following extract is taken, testifies to Musō's skill as a teacher, providing clearly reasoned answers to questions put to him by Ashikaga Tadayoshi, the younger brother of the ruling shōgun. The work covers a wide range of topics, including the true significance of ritual, prayer, 'kōan' practice, Zen teaching, and enlightenment. It testifies to Musō's profound knowledge of Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature and his respect for the doctrinal traditions, and yet consistently emphasizes that Zen teaching and understanding transcend all words and letters.

[MLB]

DIALOGUES IN A DREAM

Musō Soseki 1342, 123–4, 145–51, 155–6, 158–62, 170–4, 201–3
(125–6, 142–7, 150, 152–5, 161–4, 186–7)

Original Nature

Question: If the Zen School does not involve itself with contemplation of the mystic activities, owing to its emphasis on "the ground of original nature prior to the separation of sentient beings and buddha," why is it that from ages past students of the Zen School have engaged in practicing *zazen*, and good teachers have been careful to explain the correct and incorrect ways of applying the 'mind' in practice?

Answer: When one is writing a poem or composing a song, it is important to understand the theme first. If the theme of the poem is the moon, for example, it doesn't help to think about flowers. It is the same with Buddhism. The original nature of which Zen speaks is inherent in everyone, and is perfect and complete in each individual; there is no less of it in ignorant people nor more of it in sages. If you take up original nature as your theme but then start thinking of yourself as a deluded person who must engage in practice for the purpose of attaining enlightenment, you are turning your back on your theme. Just as a person seeking inspiration for a poem about the moon should not deliberate on flowers, so one with his heart set on original nature should not cling to the idea of himself as a deluded being, and thus seek enlightenment outside of himself.

.....

Question: If original nature is to be found neither in mundane forms nor in supramundane teachings, how can one possibly reach it?

Answer: This concern, common among people who wish to practice Zen, is based on an inadequate understanding of what the term "original nature" signifies. For example, if original nature were described to you as something like a worldly art, you would naturally wonder if you were talented enough to learn it; if it was described as a type of abstruse doctrine, you would worry whether you were intelligent enough to grasp it. However, having heard that original nature has nothing to do with either the mundane or the supramundane, it is senseless to wonder how to reach it.

Reaching the ground of original nature is not like traveling from the countryside to the capital, or from Japan to China. Rather, it is as though you were asleep in your house, dreaming that you were suffering in some horrible place or enjoying the pleasures of paradise, then having a wakeful friend tell you, "The horrible place and the paradise are both illusions in your dream. In your own original home, neither of them exist." If upon hearing these words you continued to believe that what was happening in your dreams was true, you wouldn't believe your friend. Instead, when you experienced suffering in your dreams you would consider ways to escape it, and when you experienced pleasure you would feel delighted.

In this way, you would remain under the influence of your dream experiences and never know original nature. Even if, in your dreams, a good teacher convinced you of the existence of the tranquil abode of original nature, you would still not have awakened from the overall dream and thus would be unable to let go of what you experienced in that dream. Thus you might ask the teacher how to reach this abode of original nature. "Should I get there by climbing these mountains and fording the rivers beyond?" "Should I learn to fly, then cross the mountains and rivers through the air?" Or you might question the teacher, ask-

ing him, “Is original nature part of the natural world or separate from it?” “How can I really know that the mountains, rivers, and earth are all original nature unless I’m able to see them in an entirely different way?” Such questions all arise because you haven’t yet awakened from the overall dream.

However, even if you haven’t awakened from this dream, if you realize that everything you perceive and do is nothing more than images in the dream and that you see as though you were blind and hear as though you were deaf, and if you therefore do not choose and discriminate, then you are basically the same as someone who *has* awakened. You are someone who attained faith in the realm of reality.

The teachings of the Buddha are similar to this. In original nature there are no traces of sacred or ordinary, no domains of pure or defiled. It is only because the dream of karmically darkened consciousness arises through the agency of ignorance that the realms of “pure” and “defiled” appear in the midst of formlessness, and that distinctions between “sacred” and “ordinary” are perceived in the midst of the uncreated. When we see ourselves as ordinary beings we run about from east to west seeking fame and fortune, and are overcome with sorrow if we fail to find them. When we regard ourselves as wise, we become arrogant and look down upon everyone else. Deceived by these perverted views, we have no faith in original nature. The false domain of the dream world has, in other words, confused our minds so that they cannot accept the realm of reality.

In the midst of all this, there are occasionally people of superior capacities who, although recognizing that “sacred” and “ordinary,” “pure” and “defiled” are nothing but ephemeral forms floating in karmic consciousness and that none of these things exist in original nature, are nevertheless susceptible to deception by illusory appearances since they have yet to attain the great awakening. Because they haven’t let go of the self-attachments that cause them to think of themselves as deluded beings, they long for enlightenment and aspire after eloquence and the supernatural powers. They end up arguing over which methods of training are correct and judging who bested whom in a question-and-answer session, like dreaming men who, while aware that everything in their dreams is itself a dream, can’t stop talking of right and wrong, gain and loss. This is because they haven’t awakened from the overall dream and are thus taken in by the world it creates.

People of the highest capacities, even if they hadn’t experienced great enlightenment, would clearly perceive that all calculations involving self and other, body and mind are nothing but the deluded workings of karmic consciousness, and thus would neither disdain transmigration nor seek emancipation. Those who view things in this way are people of true insight. If they then rest content in this true insight, however, they, too, fall into error.

True Mind

Question: Whether our social status is high or low, our bodies are all subject to birth, aging, sickness, and death. They are indeed just like phantoms. Our minds, however, have no shape or form and must therefore be eternal and not subject to destruction. Why then do you say that both body and mind are like illusions? Certain passages in the sutras state the mind is illusory, while other passages explain that the mind is eternal and imperishable. Which of these explanations is correct?

Answer: In Japanese the sinograph for *mind*, which can also mean the *heart* or *core*, is used in a number of different meanings. When the surface layers of a dead tree have entirely rotted away, the sound, undecayed wood that remains is known as the *core* of the tree. The Sanskrit word for this is *hrdaya*, a term the esoteric schools use to indicate the heart as a physical organ.... The word *core* is also used to describe the underlying function of discriminative thinking, possessed by all conscious beings. In this case the corresponding Sanskrit word is *citta*. *Core* as *citta* is what the ordinary person regards as “my mind”...

Because of these various considerations, the overall mind is provisionally divided into two parts, “true” and “deluded.” The discriminative thinking of the ordinary person is entirely of the deluded mind. When the four elements combine, the forms that temporarily appear are utterly lacking in substance, and thus are compared to phantoms or to flowers in the sky. Similarly, when for a time the deluded mind comes into existence through the action of the true mind, it has no actual existence. It is like the second moon that an injured eye sees when it looks at the real moon. Two moons don’t actually exist—it is just that the person with the injured eye speaks of a second moon in accordance with what he perceives. Two minds don’t actually exist—it is just that the deluded person regards as “my mind” something that is not real. It is thus called the “phantom mind” or the “mind of ‘birth-and-death.’” This deluded mind does not truly arise and pass away, however. From the sages’ point of view it is everlasting and imperishable, and thus they know it as the true mind....

That which the ordinary person regards as mind has no color or form; it appears and disappears from one instant to the next and is never still, like flowing water or flickering flame. Just like the physical body, it shows the four aspects of all phenomena: generation, duration, transition, and destruction. Thus, to think that the body undergoes birth and death while the mind is eternal is a non-Buddhist view. When the mind is said to be eternal, this refers to the mind in the sense of the “mind of oneness” that is the essence of the ‘dharma realm’, in which sacred and profane are the same and the body is not separate from the mind. Thus the enlightened person never regards the mind alone as eternal, but sees the body, too, as eternal.

.....

Question: If what you say about the mind is true, wouldn't it be a mistake to seek the true mind apart from the deluded mind?

Answer: It is very difficult to explain the difference between the true mind and the deluded mind. Saying they are alike and saying they are different are both incorrect.

The false mind is something like the illusory second moon, separate from the true moon, that you see when you press your finger against the side of your eyeball. As long as you continue to press, the second moon remains clearly visible, even though it does not actually exist. If you don't wish to see it anymore, however, simply deciding to remove it and see only the true moon is of no help whatsoever. You have to stop pressing your eyeball with your finger, and then there is no moon other than the true one.

.....

Question: Sages such as Confucius and Laozi, who are all said to be manifestations of the 'bodhisattvas', all teach the path of disciplining the thinking mind. Similarly, the doctrinal schools, despite their respective differences, all teach with regard to the thinking mind that our usual wicked thinking should be transformed into true wisdom. Why then do the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* and the *Sūramgama sūtra* speak of this mind as though it were nonexistent?

Answer: All phenomena, both physical and mental, are differentiated according to whether they arise as the result of causal conditioning or of the spontaneous functioning of nature. The temporary forms that come into being through the interaction of related causes exist by virtue of causal conditioning, while the innate qualities inherent in the 'buddha-nature' of things exist by virtue of the spontaneous functioning of nature.

Although the physical phenomenon of ordinary, causally produced fire lacks any real substance, it functions in accordance with conditions. When fire is skillfully employed it yields great benefits, such as warding off cold and cooking food; when badly employed it causes great harm, such as burning down houses and destroying property. Thus it benefits society to teach people how to use fire in a way that causes no harm. However, even if you know how to use fire in accordance with these teachings, you still don't know the natural, unconditioned, all-pervading fire-nature. If you wish to know fire-nature, you must avoid concerning yourself with the effects of conditionally generated fire.

The same is true of mental phenomena. The causally conditioned illusory mind has no permanent substance, but if it acts wrongfully it falls into the evil realms and undergoes all manner of suffering, and if it acts rightfully it is born into the higher realms and enjoys all types of favorable circumstances. It is because they understand this basic principle that even among ordinary people and non-Buddhists there are those who control the mind and refrain from

evil actions. However, even if you manage to control the conditioned, deluded mind, the only benefit this brings is rebirth in the human or celestial realms; since you have yet to know original mind, you will not escape the round of 'samsara'. Even the bodhisattvas of the three worthy states and the ten holy stages, who have rectified the biases of the deluded mind and attained an illusory form of wisdom, but who have not yet realized original mind, are unable to transcend transformational samsara. All this is at the level of properly utilizing ordinary conditioned fire....

The *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* says:

When the illusory body is extinguished, the illusory mind is also extinguished. When the illusory mind is extinguished, the illusory sense objects are also extinguished. When the illusory sense objects are extinguished, the illusory extinguishing is also extinguished. When the illusory extinguishing is extinguished, that which is not illusory is not extinguished. It is similar to how, when the dust is polished off a mirror, brightness appears.

Virtuous man, you should know that body and mind are both illusory dust. When the form of this dust is wiped away, purity pervades the universe. [T 17, 914c]

Certain people who have not yet awakened to original mind misunderstand this passage, taking it to mean that the complete extinguishing of body and mind is the true teaching of the Buddha. This view, however, is the '*samādhi*' of extinction taught by the two vehicles, or the imageless *samādhi* taught by non-Buddhists. It is like hearing that conditioned fire is to be rejected as not true fire, then concluding that true fire is the darkness that results from extinguishing all conditioned fire....

Question: A man of old said, "Bodhidharma came from the west in order to point directly to the human mind with no reliance on words and letters, so that people might see their own true nature and attain buddhahood." Since all 'Mahayana' schools teach that our own mind is buddha, why does Zen say "see *one's own true nature* and attain buddhahood" rather than "see the *mind* and attain buddhahood?"

.....

"Nature" is a single word, but it has several meanings. The Buddhist doctrines elucidate at least three senses in which "nature" is used. The first is nature as that which is immutable in a thing, as when the respective natures of pepper and licorice are said to account for why pepper can never be sweet and licorice can never be hot. The second is nature as that which differentiates one thing from another, as with the distinct essential natures of animate and inanimate objects. The third is nature as dharma-nature, that is, the nondual original source that is the intrinsic nature of everything that exists....

The basic stance of the Zen tradition is that of “a separate transmission outside the teachings.” Although Zen speaks of seeing one’s own nature, you should know that this “nature” does not mean the “dharma-nature” of which the doctrinal schools speak, much less the “nature” referred to in non-Buddhist texts. That which is fundamental to every human being cannot be labeled as either “mind” or “nature.” Nevertheless, it is by means of the words “mind” and “nature” that people are made aware of the fundamental, and therefore it is sometimes called “mind” and sometimes called “nature.”

To regard Zen’s self-descriptive dictum, “direct pointing to the human mind; to see one’s own true nature and attain buddhahood,” as referring to the ordinary deluded mind would be like mistaking the illusory second moon for the real thing. It is to make this clear that the word “nature” is used instead of “mind” in the second part of the saying. To speak of “seeing one’s own true nature” does not mean seeing it with the eyes, nor does it mean comprehending it with the intellect. Similarly, “attaining buddhahood” does not imply that you become a new buddha radiating light and manifesting all the distinguishing characteristics of a ‘Tathāgata’. It is more like a drunk man coming to his senses when the effect of the alcohol finally wears off. When everyday delusion suddenly vanishes and we directly realize original nature, this is called “seeing one’s own true nature and attaining buddhahood.”... There are many teachers nowadays who simply teach people the principles of “mind” and “nature” and believe that so doing represents “direct pointing to the human mind.” There are many students, too, who believe that understanding these principles constitutes attainment of the dharma. This is *explaining* nature, not *seeing* nature.

The Mysterious Principle of the Everyday

Question: The teachings speak of there being “no form of ‘buddha’ and no form of ‘ordinary beings.’” Is this not what Zen speaks of when it refers to the place “prior to the separation of buddha and ordinary beings”?

.....

Many years ago, while I was on pilgrimage with seven or eight other monks, we visited a place called West Lake, near Mt Fuji. Everything we saw amazed us, and it seemed we had entered the enchanted realm of the Daoist immortals. Meeting a fisherman by the shore, we hired him to take us out in his boat. With each new inlet he rowed us to, we were met by scenes of the rarest beauty. The monks, unable to contain their emotion, slapped the side of the boat and cried out in joy. The old fisherman, who had lived by the lake since childhood and had viewed its scenery from dawn to dusk every day, did not share in our enjoyment. Seeing the monks’ excitement, he asked, “What is it that makes you cry out like that?” The monks answered, “We are struck by the beauty of the moun-

tains and the wonderful views of the lake.” The old man couldn’t understand, and finally asked with a skeptical look on his face, “You mean to say that you came all the way here just to see the scenery?”

I said to the other monks, “If this old man asks us to explain what it is that so moves us about this place, how could we express this to him? If we pointed to the scenery and told him that *that* is what we find so moving, the old man would say he has seen the same scenery his entire life and noticed nothing remarkable about it. However, if we tried to correct this misunderstanding by telling him that what moves us is something quite different from what he sees, then he would conclude that we disdain what he sees because there is a place of great beauty somewhere away from West Lake. ...

When Zen masters attempt to disabuse students of such misconceptions by changing tack and saying that the Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings do *not* express the mysterious principle, and that the acts and deeds of living beings are nothing but delusion, then foolish people look for a separate transmission apart from the Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings, and seek the mysterious principle somewhere else than in the everyday activities of life. This is like the old fisherman concluding that the Zen monks were excited about some wonderful place apart from West Lake. The difference between the monks and the old man had nothing to do with the mountains, trees, water, and rocks that they were seeing, but with whether or not they were moved by the sight of them. The experience of being moved is not something that one learns through explanation. When the time is ripe and one’s heart is open to being moved, then the experience comes naturally. The same is true of original nature. One knows this ground only when one proceeds directly to it. Although crystal clear to the person who knows it, it cannot be picked up and shown to anyone else. Thus, although it is inherently possessed by all, when one is not in accord with it, then everything one does simply generates more samsaric karma. This is what an ancient master meant when he said that one either knows it completely or knows it not at all.⁸ It is because people are not awakened to the mysterious principle of the Bodhidharma that they compare the words and phrases of the scriptures with those of Zen masters, seeking similarities and differences and judging which is superior.

On Publishing these Exchanges

Question: I have taken the liberty of jotting down in Japanese script the contents of our discussions after each of our usual meetings. Would you

8. [The reference is to the *Record of Dahui Zonggao*, T 47, 867c.]

mind if I prepared a clean copy of this manuscript to show to laywomen and other people with an interest in the 'Way'?

Answer: The guidance of a Zen monk is not like that of a scholastic who teaches doctrines he has memorized or written down on pieces of paper. The Zen monk simply expresses in a direct and immediate way whatever the situation calls for. This is known as "face-to-face guidance." It is like a spark from a flint or a flash of lightning, and it is useless to seek its traces. An ancient master said, "The moment you realize the intention behind words you have already fallen into the secondary." How much worse is it, then, to write down those words and show them to others! For this reason the ancient masters all forbade the recording of their statements. However, if nothing was ever to be written down then ways of guiding people would be lost. Thus the Zen School has resigned itself to publishing the records of the ancients, though this is not what it would have wanted.

The ancients generally began their Zen practice only after a broad education in the Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics. Hence they were not biased in their understanding. Nowadays, however, there are Zen followers who have yet to discern the principle of cause and effect or perceive the difference between the true and the false. Even such people as these, however, if they remain ardent in the Way and tirelessly investigate the original nature beyond all words and understanding, are far superior to pedants with their shallow knowledge.

Looking around, one sees people neglectful of their meditation and unlearned in the sutras, treatises, and sacred teachings who, having sat a little and attained a level of understanding no greater than that of non-Buddhist or [Hinayana] meditators, imagine that, since their understanding resulted from [*zazen*], they are now fully enlightened. Or they intuitively grasp the teachings preached by a lecture master and assume that, since they are Zen monks, their understanding reflects the deepest tenets of the Zen School.

It is in an attempt to correct such errors that I regularly lecture on the sutras and treatises. Nevertheless, few people grasp my intended meaning when I speak on textual or doctrinal matters, or even on more detailed subjects like cause-and-effect or true versus false. Everyone interprets what I say in their own way, praising me or criticizing me according to the way they understand me. Thus neither the praise nor the criticism have anything to do with what I was actually attempting to express. I feel that recording our "dream conversations" will be of even less benefit.

However, if by considering my words people gain a deeper connection—whether positive or negative—with the teachings of Buddhism, how can I refuse to let them do so?

[TYK]

IKKYŪ Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394–1481)

Ikkyū lived at a time marked by social unrest, a struggle for power, and large-scale destruction of Kyoto's treasured monuments. It was also a time of an overturning of traditional values and of great creativity in classical arts and literature. A Rinzai Zen master and poet, he threw himself into the maelstrom of this world of change, emerging as one of the most colorful and unconventional, if also controversial, figures in Japanese Buddhist history. Like his poetry, his life was a mixture of abstract philosophical ideas and earthy sensuality. His life is so covered in legend, due in no small part to his own accounts, that little can be said with certainty except that he was born a son to the Emperor Go-Komatsu but left the court when his mother was banned and had to live as a commoner, and that he served as abbot of the monasteries of Daitoku-ji and Shūon-an. His memory as an enlightened master is often overshadowed by hagiographical tales recounting his prodigious childhood and popular tales of his frequenting brothels and taverns.

The edition of his *Skeletons*, reproduced below, was printed when he was sixty-three years of age, a few years before his scandalous love affair. His writings blend references to the pleasures of life and doubts about his own confirmed enlightenment with an open-minded tolerance to human weakness and—as is particularly evident in the *Skeletons*—a sense of the fleeting mirage of human life. Raw emotion and philosophical abstraction are woven together in such a way that the one provides an argument for the other, making him a paradigm of Zen poetry and an inspiration to later generations of thinkers.

[JWH]

SKELETONS

IKKYŪ Sōjun 1457, 227–34 (114–25)

The myriad laws are seen written in thin India ink. But the beginner must do 'zazen' earnestly. Then he will realize that there is nothing born into this world that will not eventually become "empty." Oneself and the original face of heaven and earth and all the world are equally empty. All things emerge from 'emptiness'. Being formless it is called "buddha." The 'mind' of buddha, the 'buddhahood', the buddha in our minds, buddhas, patriarchs, and gods are different names of this emptiness, and should you not realize this you have fallen into the hell of ignorance and false imagination. According to the teaching of an enlightened man, the way of no return is the separation from hell and rebirth, and the thought of so many people, whether related to me or not,

passing through reincarnations one after another, made me so melancholy, I left my native place and wandered off at random.

I came to a small lonely temple. It was evening, when dew and tears wet one's sleeves, and I was looking here and there for a place to sleep, but there was none. It was far from the highway, at the foot of a mountain, what seemed a 'Samādhi' Plain. Graves were many, and from behind the Buddha Hall there appeared a most miserable-looking skeleton, which uttered the following words:

The autumn wind Has begun to blow in this world; Should the pampas grass invite me, I will go to the moor, I will go to the mountain.	What to do With the mind of a man Who should purify himself Within the black garment, But simply passes life by.
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All things must at some time become nought, that is, return to their original reality. When we sit facing the wall doing 'zazen', we realize that none of the thoughts that arise in our minds, as a result of 'karma', are real. The Buddha's fifty years of teaching are meaningless. The mistake comes from not knowing what the mind is. Musing that few indeed experience this agony, I entered the Buddha Hall and spent the night there, feeling more lonely than usual, and being unable to sleep. Towards dawn, I dozed off, and in my dream I went to the back of the temple, where many skeletons were assembled, each moving in its own special way just as they did in life. While I marveled at the sight, one of the skeletons approached me and said:

Memories There are none: When they depart, All is a dream; My life—how sad!	If Buddhism Is divided into gods And buddhas; How can one enter The Way of Truth?
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For as long as you breathe
 A mere breath of air,
 A dead body
 At the side of the road
 Seems something apart from you.

Well, we enjoyed ourselves together, the skeleton and I, and that illusive mind which generally separates us from others gradually left me. The skeleton that had accompanied me all this while possessed the mind that renounces the world and seeks for truth. Dwelling on the watershed of things, it passed from shallow to deep, and made me realize the origin of my own mind. What was in my ears was the sighing of the wind in the pine trees; what shone in my eyes was the moon that enlightened my pillow.

But when is it not a dream? Who is not a skeleton? It is just because human beings are covered with skins of varying colors that sexual passion between men and women comes to exist. When the breathing stops and the skin of the body is broken there is no more form, no higher and lower. You must realize that what we now have and touch as we stand here is the skin covering our skeleton. Think deeply about this fact. High and low, young and old—there is no difference whatever between them. When we are enlightened concerning the one great causality we understand the meaning of unborn, undying.

If a stone
Can be the memento
Of the dead,
Then the tombstone
Would be better as a lavatory.

How dangerously foolish is the mind of man!

We have
One moon,
Clear and unclouded,
Yet are lost in the darkness
Of this fleeting world.

Think now, when your breath stops and the skin of your body breaks, you will also become like me. How long do you think you will live in this fleeting world?

To prove
His reign
Is eternal,
The emperor has planted
The pine trees of Sumiyoshi.

Give up the idea “I exist.” Just let your body be blown along by the wind of the floating clouds; rely on this. To want to live forever is to wish for the impossible, the unreal, like the idea “I exist.”

This world
Is a dream
Seen while awake;
How pitiful those
Who see it and are shocked!

It is useless to pray to the gods about your destiny. Think only of the ‘one great matter’. Human beings are mortal; there is nothing to be shocked about.

If they can serve
To bring us to loathe them,

The troubles of this world
Are most welcome.

Why on earth
Do people decorate
This temporary manifestation,
When from the first they know
It will be like this?

The body of a thing
Will return
To the Original Place.
Do not search,
Unnecessarily, elsewhere.

Not a single soul
Knows why he is born,
Or his real dwelling place;
We go back to our origin,
We become earth again.

Many indeed
The ways to climb
From the mountain foot,
But it is the same moon
That we see o'er the peak.

If I do not decide
The dwelling place
Of my future,
How is it possible
That I should lose my way?

Our real mind
Has no beginning,
No end;
Do not fancy
That we are born, and die.

If you give rein to it,
The mind goes rampant!
It must be mastered
And the world itself rejected.

Rain, hail and snow,
Ice, too, are set apart,
But when they fall,
The same water
Of the valley stream.

The ways of preaching
The Eternal Mind
May be different,
But all see the same
Heavenly truth.

Fill the path
With the fallen needles
Of the pine tree,
So that no one knows
If anyone lives there.

How vain
The funeral rites
At Mt Toribe!⁹
Those who speed the parting ghost
Can they remain here forever?

Melancholy indeed
The burning smoke
Of Mt Toribe!
How long shall I think of it
As another's pathos?

Vanity of vanities
The form of one
I saw this morning
Has become the smoky cloud
Of the evening sky.

Look, alas,
At the evening smoke
Of Mt Toribe!
Even it falls back and billows
With the rising of the wind.

It becomes ash when burned,
And earth when buried—
Could anything
Remain as evil?

With the sins
That I committed
Until I was three years old,
At last I also disappeared.

9. [A hill east of Kyoto where corpses were burned.]

This is the way of the world. Realizing how foolish they are who, not knowing that all things are and must be temporary and transient, are baffled, someone this very day asked how we should live in this fleeting world. A certain man answered: “Quite different from past times, priests nowadays leave their temples; formerly those who were religiously inclined entered the temples, but now they all shun them. The priests are devoid of wisdom; they find *zazen* boring. They don’t concentrate on their ‘kōan’ and are interested only in temple furniture. Their Zen meditation is a mere matter of appearance; they are smug and wear their robes proudly, but are only ordinary people in priestly garments. Indeed, their robes are merely ropes binding them, their surplices like rods torturing them.”

When we think about recurrent life and death, we know that we fall into hell by taking life; by being greedy we turn into hungry devils; ignorance causes us to be reborn as animals; anger makes us demons. By obeying the five commandments we come back to earth as men, and by performing the ten good deeds we are resurrected in heaven. Above these are the four wise ones; together, they are called the ten worlds.¹⁰

When we see this one thought, there is no form, no dwelling place, no loathing, no rejecting. Like the clouds of the great sky, the foam on the water. As no thoughts arise there is no mind to create the myriad phenomena. The mind and things are one and the same. They do not know men’s doubts.

Parents may be compared to the flint and the steel used for making fire. The steel is the father, the stone is the mother, and the fire is the child. The fire is ignited with tinder material, and it will die out when the contributing causes of the fire, the wood and the oil, are exhausted. It is similar to this with the production of “fire” when father and mother make love together.

Since father and mother are beginningless too, they decline finally to a mind of burnt-out passion. In vain are all things of this world brought up from emptiness and manifested into all forms. Since it is free of all forms, it is called the “original field.” All the forms, of plants and grasses, states and lands, issue invariably from emptiness, so we use a metaphorical figure and speak of the original field.

If you break open the cherry tree,
There is not a single flower.
But the skies of spring
Bring forth the blossoms!

Though it has no bridge,
The cloud climbs up to heaven;
It does not seek the aid
Of Gautama’s sutras.

10. [The five commandments enjoin against taking life, stealing, adultery, lying, and drunkenness. The bans against immoral language, slander, equivocation, covetousness, anger, and false views join the first four of these to account for the ten good deeds. The ten worlds refer to the states of existence of the four wise ones, or kinds of holy men; and the six realms of sentient beings: hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, demons, humans, and heavenly beings.]

When you listen to Gautama's preaching of more than fifty years, and practice exactly as Gautama preached, it is just as he taught at his last preaching when he said, "From beginning to end I have preached not a single word," and held out a flower, bringing a faint smile to Kāśyapa's lips. At that time he told Kāśyapa: "I have the exquisite mind of the right 'dharma', and with it I acknowledge your understanding of the flower." When asked what he meant, Gautama said, "My preaching of the dharma for more than fifty years may be likened to saying there is something in your hand in order to bring near a small child you want to take in your arms. My fifty years and more of dharma-preaching have been like a beckoning to Kāśyapa. That is why the dharma I transmit is like the taking up of a child to my breast."

Yet this flower is not to be known by bodily means. Nor is it in the mind. It cannot be known even though we speak of it. We must fully understand this present mind and body. Even though one may be called knowledgeable, he cannot therefore be called a person of the 'buddha-dharma'. The dharma flower of the 'One Vehicle', in which all buddhas of past, present, and future have appeared in this world, is this flower. Since the time of the twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese patriarchs there has never been anything in the world apart from the original field. As all things of the world are beginningless they are said to be great. All of the eight consciousnesses appear from emptiness. Yet the flowers of spring and the plants and grasses of summer, autumn, and winter come from emptiness, too. Again, there are four great elements: earth, water, fire, and wind, though people are ignorant of this fact. Breath is wind; fire is what makes us hot; water a vital liquid that makes us wet; when we are buried or burned, we become earth. Because these, too, are beginningless, none of them ever abides.

In this world
Where everything, without exception,
Is unreal,
Death also
Is devoid of reality.

To the eye of illusion it appears that though the body dies, the soul does not. This is a terrible mistake. The enlightened man declares that both perish together. Buddha also is an emptiness. Sky and earth all return to the original field. All the sutras and the eighty thousand dharmas are to be chucked away. Become enlightened by these words of mine and become a man of ease and leisure! But:

To write something and leave it behind us,
It is but a dream.
When we awake we know
There is not even anyone to read it.

[RHB, NAW]

TAKUAN Sōhō 沢庵宗彭 (1573–1645)

Beginning as a nine-year-old novice monk of poor farmer-warrior origins, by the age of thirty-six Takuan Sōhō had risen to become abbot of Daitoku-ji, the imperial Rinzai Zen monastic complex in Kyoto. Takuan's Zen was extraordinarily wide-reaching. It covered monastic theory and practice (extensive literary 'kōan' practice, dharma talks, popular sermons, temple regulations), literature (poetry, literary criticism, travel diaries, essays, extensive correspondence), martial and cultural arts (swordsmanship, tea ceremony, calligraphy, ink-wash painting, Nō drama criticism), ethics (Daoist and Confucian), Chinese science (metaphysical reflections on the *Book of Changes*), and Chinese folk medicine and hygiene.

Takuan's reputation as a Buddhist thinker is reflected in the following selection, an appeal to the Japanese art of swordsmanship to explain Zen awakening, based on a series of letters written to his patron, the master sword instructor of the Tokugawa Shōgun, Yagyū Munenori. In Indian Buddhism, change and impermanence were seen as something negative that needed to be transformed into a state of pure, empty enlightenment. In China, where change was seen as the metaphysical ground of the Dao, Buddhist practice needed to accommodate to the transforming flow of reality as it was recognized by all Chinese religious traditions. Takuan combines the ancient Daoist idea of "effortless action" with Buddhist notions of nonduality, nonattachment, and the practice of mindfulness, and traditional Japanese values of simplicity, emotive-intuitive awareness, and spiritual discovery through physical activity.

[DEL]

UNDISTURBED WISDOM

TAKUAN Sōhō 1642, 1–9, 16–23

Suffering as Being Stuck in Ignorance

Ignorance is a word that means lack of awareness; it refers to delusion. *Being stuck* is an expression that suggests resting or stopping. There are fifty-two stages to the 'bodhisattva' practice in the teachings of the buddhas. Among these fifty-two stages, any place where the 'mind' stops on anything is called *getting stuck*. It means *to stop*, and anytime there is a stopping on any object whatsoever, this is "the mind getting stuck on an object."

Let me explain this in terms of your practice of swordsmanship. If you get just a single glimpse of a slashing sword coming at you, and if your mind thinks of making contact with that sword, your mind is stuck on that sword coming at

you just at the point where you saw it. You will lose your freedom of movement and your opponent will slice into you. This is how the mind gets stuck.

Seeing a sword striking means that you see it—but your mind does not have to stop on it. Meet the rhythm of a sword coming at you—but you don't have to think about striking it. If no deliberation and no discrimination remains, your mind will not stop for even an instant, whether you see a swinging sword or not. By taking advantage of exactly this situation, you can catch the sword coming at you. The sword that is supposed to cut you down will be ripped away to your side; instead, it will be your sword that cuts into your opponent.

In the Zen schools this is known as “just grabbing the spear and stabbing the person back.” A spear is also a weapon. This phrase refers to wrenching away the sword held by the other individual and cutting into this opponent at the same time. This is what you call the “no-sword” in your martial tradition.

If your mind stops for even an instant on the slashing coming at you, or on the attack coming from you, or on the person slashing, or on the sword being swung or on the range or the rhythm of these actions, your own momentum will be lost completely. This means that you can be cut down. If you set your “self” up against an opponent, your mind will be captured by that opponent. And, do not fix your mind on your “self” either. Fixing your mind in tension on your “self” is what people do when they start training—this happens when one has a beginner's mind.

Your mind can be captured by a sword. If you fix your mind this way for just one moment, your mind will be captured for that one moment. If you position your mind on your sword, your mind will be captured by your own sword. If your mind stops within any of these situations, you will be nothing but a corpse. No doubt you can recall such experiences. We also speak of this in the Buddha's teachings about reality—where this stopping of the mind is known as “delusion.” That's why I have called this “suffering as being stuck in ignorance.”...

The Undisturbed Wisdom of All the Buddhas

We can speak of the undisturbed wisdom of all the buddhas. *Undisturbed* is a word that means *not shifting at all* or *not being interrupted*. It does not suggest being totally unalive or immobile like stone or wood. A mind that does not stop in the slightest degree as it moves any way it wants to—forward, to the left, to the right, or in any of the directions—is known as “undisturbed wisdom.”

For instance, even though ten men come at you, each with a slashing sword, if you ward off one sword after another, your mind does not have to get stuck on any lingering traces. If you simply abandon one trace and then abandon another trace, none of your movements toward ten men will be wasted. The mind moves

ten times against ten men, but it does not get stuck on even one person, so your movements in response to one opponent after another won't be lost. If, on the other hand, your mind does come to stop on any one person in front of you, even though you are able to ward off that person's striking sword, you may not be able to escape harm if there are two or more individuals.

Statues and paintings of 'Kannon', the bodhisattva of compassion, have one thousand arms with hands—each holding an object. If this bodhisattva's mind were to stop on the specific hand that holds a bow, all the other nine hundred and ninety-nine hands would be useless. It is because the bodhisattva's mind does not stop at any single position that all of its hands are useful. How can a bodhisattva of compassion possess a thousand arms on a single body? This form was created to show people how all of a thousand arms on a single body could be used at the same time—if undisturbed wisdom is realized.

Suppose, for example, that you're facing a solitary tree. If you see only one red leaf on it, your eyes will not see the other leaves. If your mind gets caught by any single leaf, all the other leaves are out of sight. If your mind does not stop on any one leaf, thousands of leaves are visible. Someone who achieves this mind is exactly like the thousand eyes and thousand arms of Kannon.

Not Even a Hair In-Between

There is an expression, “not even a hair in-between”. I can offer an example in your martial practice. *Between* refers to the space lying between two objects when one is put on top of another so that there is not even enough of an opening for a single hair to fit. For example, in clapping, the instant that one hand hits the other, the sound “crack!” comes out. There is no space in which to stick a single hair in the instant that the sound comes out as the hands are clapped. This is not a question of clapping one's hands, then thinking about sound, and finally the sound coming out. The hands clap and just like that—the sound appears.

If your mind is captured by the sword of your opponent as it strikes, there will be a space—an interval—and your timing will be lost. If not even a single hair can be slipped into the interval between your opponent's slashing sword and one's own movement, your opponent's sword will be your sword.

This state of mind can also occur in the practice of dialogue between Zen master and disciple. It is detrimental in the practices of the buddhas for the mind to linger by stopping on an object. That's why the mind stopping is technically called *defilement*. Moving like a ball drifting down a swiftly flowing stream, the mind that rapidly floats along without stopping even a little is priceless.

.....

The Mind of Some-mind, the Mind of No-mind

If there are any thoughts in your mind, even though you're listening to someone else speaking, you don't really hear because your mind has stopped on a thought. Your mind resides in this thought; it is not on course because it is leaning off to one side. Even though you are listening directly to something, you won't hear it because your mind is leaning to one side; even though you are looking right at something, you won't see it. It's because there is something in your mind—a thought is there. If you can get rid of whatever is there, this is the "mind of no-mind"; it will act whenever you need it exactly how you need it. A mind that is thinking about getting rid of whatever's there is still a mind with something in it. If you do not think, it will go away by itself and will naturally become 'no-mind'.

If your mind is continually empty of things, eventually it will get to this level by itself. If you try to do this suddenly, there will be no progress. An old poem says:

Thinking about not thinking
is thinking of something,
I can't even think of
thinking at all.

Throwing a Round Gourd into the Water—Push it Down, Yet it Never Stops Spinning

"Pushing down a round gourd" is shoving it down with one's hands. If you throw a gourd in the water and press it down, it will probably shoot off to the side. Whatever happens, it will never stop in a single position. The mind of an accomplished person does not stop upon anything, even in the slightest. It is like a gourd pressed down into the water.

Give Rise to the Mind without Its Stopping Anywhere

...Whatever you are doing, if your mind comes up with a thought of "I'll do this," your mind stops upon this doing. So you have to develop a mind that stops nowhere. While a mind must arise to move your hands, if a mind arises that could stop on your moving hands but does not stop during such action—this points to the masters of many Zen arts. A mind full of attachments arises from a mind stopped, as does 'karma' and rebirth. The mind stopped describes the very obstacles of living and dying.

When you look at flowers and autumn leaves turning, your mind arises looking at flowers and autumn leaves turning—but you need to achieve "not stopping" during this action. There is the poem of the Tendai monk Jien:

A flower giving fragrance at the brushwood door,
 Doing so no matter what happens;
 But I remain staring at it—
 A scene from this bitter world.

The flower is fragrant with 'no-mind', but the "self" stops its mind upon the flower and one's mind tragically becomes tainted with this. Not stopping the mind upon a single position is the ultimate achievement with any kind of seeing or any kind of hearing.

The feudal term *allegiance* really means "one's master alone and unrivaled." It is settling the mind upon a single entity and not moving it to any other. When unsheathing one's sword to strike, it is essential that one's mind does not veer away to the act of slashing. Particularly when receiving the commands of one's master, this term *allegiance* is crucial.

The term *allegiance* is also found in Buddhism. When a chime is struck three times during Zen practice, one's hands are brought together in allegiance to the 'buddha-nature'. First of all, "Buddha" is chanted with this mind of allegiance to "one's master alone and unrivaled"—this is the same as a singular mind undisturbed. Yet this mind of allegiance is not very advanced Buddhist practice. It is a beginner's stage of learning about how to control the "self" and to focus the mind so that it is no longer confused. It takes months and years of such practice to enable one's mind to move in any direction to function without obstruction. Thus "giving rise to the mind without its stopping anywhere" is precisely this accomplishment.

Interruption Between Past and Future

There is what is called an "interruption between past and future." It is dangerous not to completely abandon one's awareness of the past and to retain any traces in mind of the immediate present. So this refers to cutting out and getting rid of any interval between past and present. This also means obliterating any disruption between past and future. It indicates not stopping the mind.

[DEL]

SUZUKI Shōsan 鈴木正三 (1579–1655)

After serving for several years as an officer of the guard at Osaka Castle, Suzuki Shōsan shaved his head and spent two years wandering, homeless and in a life of severe austerity. He entered a temple and was ordained, but gradually became impatient with the isolation and quiet. He was appointed by the feudal government to reassert Buddhist influence in the heavily Christian island of Amakusa and later moved to the capital, Edo, in order to preach within the secular realm. As a soldier he had kept pretty much to himself and had a liking for monks and temples. Once a monk, he distanced himself from the Zen establishment. He accepted the tradition of mingling Daoist and Confucian elements with Buddhism, just as he mixed Zen and the 'Pure Land' practice of the *'nenbutsu'* with belief in the Shinto deities as manifestations of the Buddha. His use of *nenbutsu* was detached from Pure Land doctrine and presented merely as a convenient way to concentrate and quell the passions. Like the *'Shingaku'* movement of his age, he saw an underlying unity, both metaphysical and moral, of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto. He did not, however, accept Christianity as part of the mix.

The following passages are taken from a tract written the year before Shōsan left the military to become a monk, and from a collection of recorded sayings published forty years after his death. Shōsan's is a moral philosophy, not one based on a formal argument of principles but on a few key ideas pursued wholeheartedly. Indeed, Shōsan was critical of scholarship that hears only with the ears but is "inattentive to the heart." His language reflects well the way in which the practical philosophy of Zen can begin from any experience and within any way of life and then open the mind to the 'one great matter'—release from the cycle of 'birth-and-death' through an almost fanatical disgust with the body. In the case of Shōsan, this is particularly striking because of his experience as a warrior before becoming a monk.

[JWH]

DEATH ENERGY

SUZUKI Shōsan 1619, 49–54 (31–5, 39–40); 1696, 149, 154, 160–2, 171–4, 238, 240–1, 249 (90, 95, 103–6, 115–18, 147, 151–2, 163–4)

We must know without a doubt that joy lies in knowing 'birth-and-death'. Now the truth that all who are born must die is upon our lips, but we do not realize it in our hearts. Youth is soon over, the hair turns white, wrinkles furrow the brow, the physical body declines day by day, and with every sunrise and sunset our dewdrop of a life approaches its term. And yet this never astonishes us. Last year gives way to this, spring passes and fall comes, but we do not understand what is meant by the scattering of the blossoms and the falling of

the leaves. Though sparks from the flint flash before our eyes we do not grasp that they are transient, illusions. Truly, even those who wear around their neck the robe and bowl, who enter the 'Way' of renunciation and in this manner seek to know the emptiness of all phenomena, in the end find it hard to rid themselves of the profound urge toward permanence. Therefore, since we believe this body to be everything, our sufferings never cease either by day or by night.

If you are one of those really concerned about the body, forget it right now. Where does suffering come from? From a 'mind' in love with the body. A warrior, especially, must know birth-and-death in his own life. When you know birth-and-death, the Way is automatically present. When you do not, 'humane-ness', 'righteousness', 'propriety', and 'wisdom' are absent, too....

What should your practice be? Simply to rid yourself of your self. Alas, you can remind people that many of those they love, and many of those they do not, will die before they themselves do. But they will think that you are talking of someone else and will let your words go right over their head. Who lingers on for long? What thing endures the least while? This world, all dreams and fantasies, takes our whole gaze, fills our ears. Know then, that this world has always been changing. If you clearly recognize that it does not last, what can stand in your way?

What is it, this body that battens onto a dream world and in which we delight as though it were our own? Earth, water, fire, and air join in temporary union to give it form. It is not ours at all. When we cling to the four elements, the four elements bewilder us....

There is a self, but it is not a self. Though distinct from the four elements, it belongs with them. It accompanies the four elements and avails itself of them. An ancient has said, "There is something that precedes heaven and earth. It is without form and its root is still. It is truly the master of the myriad shapes, and the four seasons around it never wither."¹¹

Know yourself by reflecting upon yourself. Let your learning be as great as you please, and your erudition as vast, yet you know nothing if you do not know yourself. Until you know yourself, therefore, you cannot know others. Those who know themselves not at all make the foolish self the foundation of their mind. In slandering others, in liking only those who agree with them, in detesting those who do not meekly yield to them, and in raging over every little thing, they torment themselves and torture their minds. All this is due to their own wrongs. If everyone is out of tune with you, know that you yourself are out of tune with everyone. One who harbors no ill does not give up on anyone; all are the same. Why? Because the genuine person is humble and upright, genuine

11. [Compare the opening of chapter 25 of the *Daodejing*.]

in all things and possessed of deep compassion. One who knows oneself and who harbors no evil within is a person of virtue. When we are wrong our sufferings never cease. You must know therefore, without a doubt, that whatever is wrong is your foe, and you must take care to reflect upon yourself unremittingly, twenty-four hours a day. There are many people in the world, but few of them know themselves.

People think that they know their rightful station in life. But possessing as they do a body bound to die, they forget all about death and look ten thousand years ahead. None of them grieves at the passing of time; and in the meantime they devote themselves to greed, anger, and perverse falsehoods. They violate loyalty and 'filial piety' and fail to understand humanness or righteousness. They flatter, deceive, and contort themselves. They do not bother with family duties but take pleasure in worthless things. Ignoring what is wrong with themselves, they discourse upon the rights and wrongs of others. Their infatuation with themselves is so powerful that they have no compassion for others. Greedily attached to whatever pleases them, they hold what displeases them at a distance. Sometimes happy, sometimes sad, they make distinctions at random and go against everything. When by chance they hear the Way, they turn it into a ruler for measuring others. Why is this? Even if you do not know the genuine principle, you will never get anywhere until you recognize your own wrongs. Some say that anyone, having heard such truth as this, would know what his rightful station is, but that wrongs, being ingrained through long years of habit, are hard to reform speedily. If you really recognize that the errors are your own, however, you will hardly claim that they are difficult to correct....

Although all things are distinct from one another, the original mind is one. What are we to call "self" and "other"? For the ignorant person, individual selves are separate from one another. For the accomplished person, there is no distinction between "self" and "other." Thus the genuine person puts sympathy first, and his compassion is deep. Lord 'Shakyamuni' feels compassion toward the beings of the 'three worlds' as though they were his only son. Are we not indebted to him? The undivided waters flow along and part into myriad waves. The one moon in heaven is reflected in countless ponds and pools, and human nature is in no way different. Thus there is nothing to be despised, nothing to be held at a distance. You must awaken to the principle that all beings have the 'buddha-nature'.

I prefer death energy to understanding. Myself, I've had a feeble energy ever since I was young, but it was only much later that death energy came to me. Say someone had his head cut off right now—I'd get it as though the head cut off were my own. When I hear someone has died, I get the energy just like that. Alas, I don't suppose much of this is getting through to your hearts. In my case,

when I say that the pain of death assaults me, I mean my chest pounds and I am really in agony. If this were to go on long, the energy would wane. I myself at first thought it might be a bad thing, but on later consideration I realized that this energy is the medicine for all ills. Everything is still, and the very truth stands out in its workings. Even now people with death energy get good as time goes on. So I feel death energy may well be the start of leaving birth-and-death....

It doesn't always happen, but sometimes death energy presses me hard. And every morning at a particular time the 'great matter' comes up from below my navel, and fills my chest to bursting. It's not something just to dispel with a sigh.... The only reason I practice is that I don't want to die, but if I happen to be killed I want to make sure I can hold my head out without a thought and die free. For unless I die, I will not escape the hells of beasts and hungry ghosts. Is my wanting to get out of there any better than the people who think nothing at all of being there? There's no special way I'm better than anyone else. If you want to listen to me, you'll have to be a know-nothing through and through....

.....

The substance of all virtues that shows up in action... is 'no'-mind and no-thought. That's where everything comes into action. When you're in a state of no-mind and no-thought you're in tune with everything. It's the state of mind you're in when you're really one with a rhythm or with a 'Nō' chant....

I myself once gave instruction to a fellow who told me, "I love to kill, teach me to be a buddha by killing." I said, "Do you enjoy the way each bird you kill squawks out its life, its wings all askew? If you do, are you going to enjoy your own death, too? Die gladly, and that's 'buddhahood'. Being a buddha means dying untroubled. So every time you kill, practice having your own limbs and bones smashed, practice dying, too. You have to get so you die roaring with laughter. Whoever does that really kills. If that's not the way you kill, your killing's just a warrior's amusement." After that the man carried out a firm decision to give up killing, and later he advanced in his practice. I myself didn't learn about all virtues from anyone special, I know it because I feel it's agony not to die free, and because I've trained myself in various ways. What I teach is Buddhism for cowards....

Originally there's no body. It starts as a drop, then it gets bigger and bigger until it becomes a human body, and since it's a clot of bad karma and passions from the ground up, it's a most foul thing. Tears, snot, shit, and piss—there's nothing clean about it. And what's the present that comes wrapped up in all this? It isn't the 'bodhi mind', no, and it's not the spirit of compassion. It's just hate and love and greed.... Deeply believe this, never let yourself be led astray by this rotting flesh. If you can just drop preoccupation with the body you'll have peace.

.....

It's best to practice 'zazen' from the start amid hustle and bustle. A warrior, in

particular, absolutely must practice a *zazen* that works amid war cries. Gunfire crackles, spears clash down the line, a roar goes up, and the fray is on: and that's where, firmly disposed, he puts meditation into action. At a time like that, what use could he have for a *zazen* that prefers quiet? However fond of Buddhism a warrior may be, he'd better throw it out if it doesn't work amid war cries.... This energy of Zen '*samādhi*' is everything. The man of arms, however, is in Zen *samādhi* while he applies his skill, then loses it when he lays down his sword. On the other hand, he who practices Buddhism always acts from this energy and never lets it go, so nothing ever defeats him. Gradually he trains himself and matures until he's attuned to Nō chanting, to rhythm and such things; and being in harmony with all things, he's complete in all virtues. A disposition like that I call Buddhism.

.....

The ordinary man's mind always sees reality as solid. And if you don't practice with the ordinary man's mind, what will you practice with? A lot of people these days harm others by falling into the 'nothingness' view. Some, too, are full of "original 'emptiness'." This is the height of solid reality. The mind that seeks enlightenment from awareness of this reality generally gets away from such reality. It's the mind that comprehends original emptiness and so proceeds from nothingness that doesn't get away from reality....

Just practice dying. When I was young I'd charge into an armed host over and over, and that was how I worked at dying; but I always made it out. Or else I'd pit myself against two or three men with spears, and try dying pierced through. But I couldn't die, I'd end up winning no matter what I did. I'd grip the cormorant's neck and smash the spears. Couldn't be beaten. That's the way I've worked at dying, so I know the energy.

It's while you're about the warrior's duties that you should practice warrior's glare *zazen*. I've failed, myself, through all my practices, to exhaust all clinging to self; so I've practiced being a leper, too. But I realize that doesn't work for me now, I can't put it in action. It's with battle glare *zazen* that I know for sure the energy of Zen *samādhi*. Buckle on your six weapons then, all of you! Wield the long sword and the short, and the crossblade lance. Call on Hachiman,¹² screw yourself up, glare ahead, and practice *zazen*. If there were any old suits of armor around here I'd have you monks put them on yourselves and do *zazen* like that. Be as lazy a monk as you please, you'd change your mind on the spot if you put on the six-piece armor and wielded the long sword and the short, and the crossblade lance.

12. [A *kami* of war, Hachiman was taken by the Buddhists to be a vestigial manifestation of the Buddha Daijizaiten, who is in turn an adaptation from Mahesvara, one of the many names of the God Shiva.]

.....

If it was up to me I'd say I practice just because I hate death. I'd say it just that simply.... I don't have the energy to guard this state constantly, though, so I can't talk about it. The whole time they're listening to my teaching, everyone's reading essays and records of sayings by other people. They compare the others to me this way and that, and they make judgments about them. No one has ever heard what I have to say. Everybody loves Buddhism. I know nothing about Buddhism. All I work at is not being subject to death....

.....

I once read in the *Hōbutsushū* how Sessen Dōji¹³ was moved to trade his life for the line "All actions are impermanent," and at that moment the meaning of "All actions are impermanent" came across to me in a rush. Then again later on, when I was sixty, one morning at four o'clock I fully caught the Buddha's awareness that all sentient beings in the world are his children. Really, at the time, the sight of the very ants and crickets made me pity the way living beings enjoy and suffer in their lives; and I wondered deep down if there wasn't some way I might save them. That feeling stayed with me three days, then disappeared. Still, even now it benefits me, because ever since then I've had a little compassion.

Nor have I missed out on the experience of enlightenment. When I was sixty-one, at dawn on the night of the twenty-seventh to the twenty-eighth of the eighth month, I was removed completely from birth-and-death and certainly encountered the "original nature." The meaning of it all, I realized as I danced in joy and gratitude, is that there's nothing, nothing at all. At the time you could undoubtedly have chopped my head off and I wouldn't have seen anything real about it because there was nothing, nothing. I was like that thirty days. But it occurred to me that this wasn't like me at all, and I felt this experience had come to me because of just one burst of energy. So from then on I let it all go. I came back to my original state of mind, set death as usual deep in my chest, and practiced hard. Just as I'd thought, the whole thing was rubbish; and now here I am, hoarding this bag of filth called Shōsan.

.....

At first I thought totally empty *zazen* was a good thing, and I practiced it for a long time. But one day I changed my mind. I realized no-thought and no-mind would never surpass the Buddha Shakyamuni. The Buddha did use actual thoughts to preach all the sutras he ever taught, however, and he based himself on discrimination between right and wrong. It occurred to me there's no doubt a validity to no-thought; it can't be a state of vacuous blankness. Then

13. [Sessen Dōji is one of the names of Shakyamuni Buddha in a previous life. He appears in the *Hōbutsushū*, a twelfth-century collection of pious tales.]

I disposed myself with the warrior's glare and attuned myself somewhat to the source, whereupon my cowardice receded. Each of you, too, should distinguish right from wrong, and in all you do you should practice *zazen* in a state of no-thought.

I used to be sorry I'd never pursued living in the mountains, but now I think it's a blessing. My reason is that if you just sit like that, you won't even know you're turning into a good devotee and you'll never realize your faults. But being constantly in the world you know your own shortcomings and that you're an ordinary man.

You do become good, though, there's one thing that's unendurable. Such is my nature that I've never forgotten death. Act it, no matter where I am. The only thing I have over others is the degree to which I detest death. That's what's made me practice with the warrior's glare. Really, it's because of my very cowardice that I've made it this far.

[RTy]

SHIDŌ Bunan 至道無難 (1603–1676)

A Zen master in the Myōshin-ji lineage of the Rinzai School, Shidō Bunan (or Munan) is best known for his teaching that the best approach to Zen would be “to die while you are alive” and then try to remain that way for the rest of your life. One of Bunan’s disciples became the master of Hakuin, and thus the germ of Hakuin’s notion of “the great death” of the self originated with Bunan. Growing up in present-day Gifu prefecture, when a Zen monk named Tōshaku briefly stayed with his family, he was so impressed that in walking with the monk to see him off, the boy ended up following him all the way to the big city of Edo, where he was ordained and given the name Bunan, meaning “no problem.” Bunan attained enlightenment at age forty-seven, according to one record, and built a small temple for himself in the Azabu district of Edo, now one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Tokyo. Afterwards his reputation grew and he became spiritual advisor to a number of *daimyō*. Bunan appears in a number of stories from that time, for example, one of refusing a lord’s invitation by sending a note back that consisted of nothing more than a splotch of ink made with a rice cake.

[MLB]

THIS VERY MIND IS BUDDHA

SHIDŌ Bunan 1670, 5, 9–10–27, (89, 93–112)

The reason death is abhorred is that it is not known. People themselves are the buddha, yet they do not know it. If they know it, they are far from the ‘buddha-mind’; if they do not know it, they are deluded. I have composed the following verses:

When you penetrate the fundamental origin
You go beyond all phenomena.
Who knows the realm beyond all words
Which the buddhas and patriarchs could not transmit?

If people know ‘birth-and-death’, it will be the seed of a false mind. Even though I may be censured for having done so, I leave these trifling words scattered here, in the hope they may be of help to the young and uninitiated.

.....

The *‘nenbutsu’* is a sharp sword, good for cutting off one’s karma. But you should never think of yourself as becoming buddha, for not becoming buddha is buddha.

When one’s ‘karma’ is exhausted,

There is nothing at all.
 To this, for expediency,
 We give the name “buddha.”

.....

The teachings of Buddhism are greatly in error. How much more in error it is to learn them. See directly. Hear directly. In direct seeing there is no seer. In direct hearing there is no hearer.

.....

To a certain person I said, “As for the ‘buddha-dharma’, people today are perplexed, and seek buddha outside of themselves. For example, in the term “wondrous existence,” *wondrous* is original ‘nothingness’ and *existence* is where nothingness moves or operates. Nothingness can never be manifested without being, which is why they are combined. One is known according to the right or wrong of the ‘dharma’ by which one lives. When one has insight into one’s own nature in all one’s behavior in everyday life, and uses one’s body in accordance with this nature, then we may speak of the buddha-dharma.

People say that enlightenment is difficult. It is neither difficult nor easy; nothing whatsoever can attach to it. It stands apart from the right and wrong of things, while at the same time corresponding to them. It lives in desires and it is apart from them; it dies and does not die; it lives and does not live; it sees and does not see; it hears and does not hear; it moves and does not move; it seeks things and does not seek them; it sins and does not sin. It is under the domination of causality, and it is not. Ordinary people cannot reach it, and even ‘bodhisattvas’ cannot actualize it. Therefore, it is called buddha.

While one is deluded, one is used by one’s body. When one gains awakening, one uses one’s body.

The teaching of Buddha is, after all nothing, yet how foolish the human ‘mind’ of man is (to interpret it in various ways). There is nobody in the world who is not deluded by fame. It is understandable that people get lost in sexual desire or the acquisition of wealth, but if they become aware that even those things are in vain, what then is fame? If you single-mindedly follow the path of the Buddha, other things will be settled one way or another. It is worthless to cling to fame.

A person’s delusion by fame
 Is the greatest folly in the world.
 People should be as those
 Who know not even their own name.

One usually sees others in the light of one’s own standards. The way a foolish person sees is very dangerous; because of one’s greediness one sees others as greedy. A sensual person sees others as sensuous. It is dangerous for anyone but

a sage to judge others. Even if there were a person who followed the great 'Way' of the Buddha, few would recognize such a one correctly. As a consequence of this, the great Way is degenerating.

A wise person handles others using keen insight into their natures, and makes what they have in their minds operate usefully, even though their natures are quite different. Then they will come to work properly. One who leads others should keep these things in mind.

It is easy to live consciously apart from worldly affairs. To live without consciousness apart from worldly affairs is difficult to achieve.

For instance, fire burns things, and water makes them wet. But fire is not conscious of burning things, nor is water conscious of wetting them. A buddha has compassion for all beings and is not conscious of that compassion.

.....

The person who tries to enter the great Way without having seen a true master will suffer from sexual desire and cupidity. Such a one will be greatly in error. One who wishes to live in the great Way should consider that the defilement that permeates all existence is produced wholly by one's own body. One has to have a keen insight into what is common, not only to heaven and earth, but to the past, present, and future as well. Having seen this, if one keeps the oneness of this within, there is no doubt that such a one will be freed naturally from the karma of the body and will become pure.

A certain person asked me, "What is the way of 'Mahayana', the Great Vehicle?" I said, "In the Great Vehicle, you are upright, and there is nothing to observe."

"Then," it was asked, "what is the way of the ultimate vehicle?" I said, "In the ultimate vehicle, you do as you will, and there is nothing to observe. It is a wonderful thing, and it is very rare in this world."

I said to my disciples: "When you labor over 'kōan', why do you indulge in so many difficult things? All things you do are your seeing directly, hearing directly."

Master Rinzai said, "There is a follower of the Way who listens to the dharma and depends upon nothing.... If you have awakened to this non-dependence, there is no buddha to be obtained." Huineng, the sixth patriarch, attained 'satori' upon hearing the words of the *Diamond Sutra* which say, "Awaken the mind without fixing it anywhere."

.....

Everything has a time for ripeness. For instance, as a child, one learns the alphabet. Then, as an adult in the busy world, there is nothing one is unable to write about, even about things of China. This is the ripening of the alphabet. People who practice Buddhism will suffer pain while they are washing the

defilements from their bodies; but after they have cleansed themselves and become buddha, they no longer feel any suffering.

So it is with compassion. While one is acting compassionately, one is aware of his compassion. When compassion has ripened, one is not aware of his compassion. When one is compassionate and unaware of it, one is buddha.

Since all compassion
Is the work of bodhisattvas,
How can misfortune
Be fall a bodhisattva?

.....

There is nothing more ignorant than a human being. While walking, sitting, or lying, people suffer pain and sadness, mourn the past, fear the uncertain future, envy others, and consider things from their own point of view alone. Thus they are bound in sadness by the affairs of the world. Their life in this world is spent in worthless pursuits. Yet in the worlds to come, no matter how they may suffer from pain in their successive lives, they will be unable to rid themselves of them. Indeed, the human being is possessed of deep delusions.

.....

A priest is said to be one who possesses a solid appearance (having long practiced 'zazen'). His external aspect and his inner being have become completely one. He is, after all, like a dead man revived. A dead man wants nothing; he needs neither to flatter nor hate any person. Having attained the great Way, he naturally sees the right and wrong in others, and is able to lead them to the Way of Buddha. This is a priest.

.....

To one who asked me how to practice the great Way in everyday life, I said:

Ordinary people are themselves buddhas. Buddhas and ordinary people are originally one. Therefore, one who knows is an ordinary man, and one who knows not is a buddha.

.....

To someone who practices *nenbutsu*:

Unless you recite the name,
There is neither you nor buddha.
That is it—
'*Namu-Amida-Butsu*'.

To a priest who preaches the dharma:

When it has totally perished,
You are nothing but nothingness itself—

Then you may teach others.

.....

On the Buddhist life's abhorrence of knowledge:

You should remember,
Knowledge stems
From the various evils of others,
And your own evils as well.

On Rinzai:

You became a monk—
A commandment-breaker monk—
Because you killed the buddhas
And the patriarchs.

.....

Grass, trees, land, and state, all are to become buddhas.

There are no grasses or trees;
There is no land, no state;
Still more,
There is no buddha.

.....

To a person suffering from life's troubles:

Consider everything you do
As the practice of the Way of the buddha,
And your sufferings will disappear.

On teaching the Way:

Do not be deluded
By the word "Way";
Know it is but the acts
You perform day and night.

[KoS, NAW]

BANKEI Yōtaku 盤珪永琢 (1622–1693)

Bankei was a Zen monk of the Rinzai School who, after studying with both Japanese and immigrant Chinese Zen masters, initially settled into a quiet life away from the major cities, tending to the spiritual needs of his local community. But in his fifties he was invited to preside over major teaching monasteries in Kyoto and Edo (later Tokyo) and quickly became a famed master of many in both metropolitan areas. Bankei is famous for his teaching of what he called the unborn mind. Humans determine or significantly impact the nature of their own reality by their attention. This principle operates on emotional, intellectual, and religious levels, but in the Zen and 'Pure Land' traditions, "willful" attention is postulated as self-destructive, where a passive, spontaneous focus on things is proffered as having greater spiritual power and religious authority. For Bankei, this is expressed by means of the psychological relationship within the individual to the unborn mind, an absolute principle that echoes the Buddhist doctrines of 'buddha-nature' within all sentient beings and the "non-arising and non-disappearing nature" of phenomena that recognizes their inherent sacredness. Whereas these Buddhist doctrines typically have a metaphysical nuance in India, in Bankei they are translated or demonstrated in terms of everyday life. So while skeptics regard his claim as internal and personal, Bankei claimed to be able to "prove" the reality of the unborn mind to others.

[MLB]

THE UNBORN

BANKEI Yōtaku 1690, 15–16, 19, 27–8, 82, (58, 69–70, 76–7, 102–3, 80–1)

The Power of Attention

Bankei's central point below is that when our attention focuses naturally on one or more tasks, our inherent 'buddha-nature' manifests without effort, but when we begin to fuss over what we should be doing or saying, we lose that "infusion" of buddha-nature in our thought processes, and by willing our attention toward this or that issue, our conscious mental activity is uncoupled from our buddha-nature, and this rupture manifests as tension or stress.

The 'unborn' 'buddha-mind' deals freely and spontaneously with anything that presents itself to it. But if something should happen to make you change the buddha-mind into thought, then you run into trouble and lose that freedom. Let me give you an example. Suppose a woman is engaged in sewing something. A friend enters the room and begins speaking to her. As long as she listens to her friend and sews in the unborn, she has no trouble doing both. But if she

gives her attention to her friend's words and a thought arises in her mind as she thinks about what to reply, her hands stop sewing; if she turns her attention to her sewing and thinks about that, she fails to catch everything her friend is saying, and the conversation does not proceed smoothly. In either case, her buddha-mind has slipped from the place of the unborn. She has transformed it into thought. As her thoughts fix upon one thing, they're blank to all others, depriving her mind of its freedom.

Human Nature and Free Will

For Bankei, human nature is naturally good because all sentient beings are born with the buddha-nature, which is the potential for 'buddhahood'. People are not born burdened with any unwitting sin or alienation from truth, but descend into confusion and trouble by means of self-deception. Thus the pain in one's life is the result of how one chooses to live that life. The following discussion on personal accountability grows out of a dialogue with a monk who is troubled by his own bad temper. Bankei is asserting that there are no inborn or inherent conditions that predetermine a person to bad (or good) behavior, and claims that such things are the result of choice. We can infer from this a doctrine that human nature is never immutable, that free will is always at hand, but it may take some time for individuals to realize this.

Bankei: Is your temper here now? Bring it out here. I'll cure it for you.

Monk: I'm not angry now. My temper comes on unexpectedly, when something provokes me.

Bankei: You weren't born with it then. You create it yourself, when some pretext or other happens to appear. Where would your temper be at such times if you didn't cause it? You work yourself into a temper because of your partiality for yourself, opposing others in order to have your own way. Then you unjustly accuse your parents of having burdened you with a short temper. What an extremely unfilial son you are!

Each person receives the buddha-mind from his parents when he's born. His delusion is something he produces all alone, by being partial to himself. It's foolish to think that it's inherent. When you don't produce your temper, where is it? All delusions are the same: as long as you don't produce them, they cease to exist. That's what everyone fails to realize. There they are, creating from their own selfish desires and deluded mental habits something that isn't inherent, but thinking it is. On account of this, they're unable to avoid being deluded in whatever they do. You certainly must cherish your delusions dearly, for you to change the buddha-mind into them just so you can be deluded....

All your parents gave you when you were born was a buddha-mind. Nothing else. What have you done with it? From the time you were a tiny baby you've watched and listened to people losing their tempers around you. You've been

schooled in this, until you, too, have become habituated to irascibility. So now you indulge in frequent fits of anger. But it's foolish to think that's inherent. Right now, if you realize you've been mistaken and don't allow your temper to arise any more, you'll have no temper to worry about. Instead of trying to correct it, don't produce it in the first place. That's the quickest way, don't you agree? Trying to do something about it after it occurs is very troublesome and futile besides. Don't get angry to begin with, then there's no need to cure anything. There's nothing left to cure.

.....

No mother ever gave birth to a thief. The truth of the matter is this. From the time the thief is a small child, he begins to be habituated unwittingly to the wrong inclinations, taking what belongs to other people. Little by little, as he grows to manhood, his selfishness comes more and more to the fore, until he learns to be a skillful thief and is unable to keep his hands off others' property. Now if he didn't steal to begin with, he'd have no need to stop. But he doesn't make the slightest mention of his own failing. He claims that his inclination to steal others' property is something he can't stop because he's a born thief. That's ridiculous. The proof that a mother doesn't bear children to be thieves is that there are no congenital thieves. People turn into thieves by watching others exercising their bad habits and imitating them, stealing things of their own accord, because of their own greed. Now how can that be called inborn?

A thief may rationalize his problem by laying the blame on his 'karma', telling you that he can't help himself; he's unable to keep from stealing because of his bad karma. There's not a word about the selfish desires that have fixed this reprehensible habit deeply in his character over a long period of time. It's a lot of nonsense. You don't steal because of karma. Stealing itself is the karma. Supposing theft were caused by karma, supposing stealing were inborn, it's still possible for a thief to realize that what he's been doing is wrong and to stop stealing. So it's not true that he can't stop. There's not even any reason for him to stop, if he doesn't steal to begin with.

Even the greatest scoundrel who ever lived, a man who until just yesterday may have been the object of everyone's contemptuous pointing and whispering, if he realizes today that what he's been doing is wrong and starts to live in his buddha-mind, that man is a living buddha from then on.

When I was a youth, we had a rascal in this neighborhood called the "Kappa." He was a notorious robber... and plied his trade on the highways. Anyway, he was eventually caught and thrown into Osaka prison. After a long spell locked up in a cell because he was such a master thief, his death sentence was finally lifted and he was released, on the condition that he work as an agent for the constabulary. He later became a sculptor of Buddhist images, living in Osaka, and made a name for himself as a master sculptor. At the end of his life he

became a practitioner of the 'Pure Land' faith and passed away peacefully in a *nenbutsu-samādhi*.

By mending his ways, even a notorious thief like the Kappa died with a deep aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land. So where is a man who steals because of the depth of his karma or the blackness of his sins? Robbery's the bad karma. Robbery's the sin. If you don't steal you don't have the karma or the sin. Whether you steal or not is determined by you yourself, not by any karma.

On Good and Evil

Bankei accepts the reality that some people lead lives that are devious or evil, but like the majority of Japanese Buddhist thinkers, accepts the doctrinal tradition within the religion that asserts that all beings possess buddha-nature, here expressed as buddha-mind, another name for the Zen tradition as a whole.

Furthermore, even wicked people aren't deprived of the buddha-mind; all they have to do is change their minds, go back to the buddha-mind, and they're living in the unborn. Let me give you another example.

Two men are walking toward the city of Takamatsu. One is a good man and the other an evil man, though of course neither of them is conscious of that. As they walk on engaged in conversation on a variety of subjects, if something occurs along the road, they will see it, though they have no thought to do so. The things they come upon appear equally to the eyes of the good man and the evil man. If a horse or a cow approaches from the opposite direction, both men will step aside to let it pass. They step aside, even if they are conversing at the time, despite the fact that neither man has made up his mind beforehand to do so. If there is a ditch they must jump over, they both jump over it. When they come to a stream, they both ford it. You might suspect that the good man would step aside to let the horse or cow pass without prior reflection, whereas the evil man would not be able to do so as readily, that is, without some deliberation, but the fact is, there isn't the slightest difference between them in performing this act. It shows that the unborn buddha-mind is found even in an evil man.

Lack of Sanctity in Religious Observances

Bankei respects people who keep religious precepts, but regards such behavior as only of instrumental value. He sees nothing inherently spiritual in the rules of behavior that define a tradition, or in their observance. For Bankei, committing oneself to such rules reflects one's need for them, thus it manifests weakness, not strength.

Monks: We observe all the 250 Buddhist precepts. We believe that will enable us to attain buddhahood. Would you say that is good? Or bad?

Bankei: There's nothing in the least wrong with it. It's a good thing. But you

can't say it's the best. It's shameful to wear your rules as a badge and call yourselves the "Precepts Sect," as if you think that's somehow superior. Basically, precepts are something initiated by the Buddha because of evil priests who transgressed against the 'dharma'. The 250 precepts enumerate the different kinds of offenses committed by disreputable priests. Priests of the true stripe never take it upon themselves to uphold precepts so that they won't violate the dharma's conventions. For a person who doesn't drink, there's no need for precepts against alcohol. Those who don't steal don't need precepts against theft. Precepts against lying are wasted on a truthful man. You tell me that you observe the precepts, but to observe them or violate them is actually something which should be of concern only to an evil priest. When you start saying, "We're the Precepts Sect," and set up precepts as superior, you're advertising yourselves as evil priests. Why, it's like a person parading as an evil man, imitating him, even though he's a good man. Wouldn't you think that reproachable?

The unborn is the mind of the buddhas. If you live according to it, then from the first there's no distinction between observing and not observing. Those are designations that arise after the fact. They're one or more times removed from the place of the unborn.

[NAW]

THE SPIRITUAL ABILITY OF WOMEN

BANKEI Yōtaku 1690, 45-7, 52 (97-101, 107)

Bankei is aware of the tradition within Buddhist culture that regards women as having weaker spiritual potential than men, and rejects this as a mistake.

Don't forget, if you miss the chance to become buddhas in this life, you won't be born into the human world again, and get another chance, for millions of ages. By all means, then, you want to confirm yourselves in the unborn buddha-mind now, and keep yourself free of illusion. When you've done that, the men will live undeluded in their men's buddha-minds, and the women in their women's buddha-minds—you'll all be buddhas. Enlightened buddhas.

And while we're on the subject of women's buddha-minds, I know there are many women who are deeply troubled by the people who say that they're cut off from buddhahood just because they're women. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I'm addressing the women here now, so listen carefully. How could women be any different from men in this? Men are buddha-beings. Women are too. You needn't doubt it for a moment. Once you've got the principle of this unborn fixed in your minds, you're unborn whether you're a man or woman. Men and women are not the same in appearance. We all know that. But there's

not a whisker of difference between them when it comes to their buddha-minds. So don't be deluded by outward appearances.

.....

You see, you are always unborn. You go along living in the buddha-mind quite unconscious of being a man or woman. But while you are doing that, perhaps you'll happen to see or hear something that bothers you, perhaps someone will make a nasty remark about you, saying they don't like you, or whatever. You let your mind fasten onto that, you begin to fret over it, and thoughts crowd into your mind. You may feel that you want something, or you may feel unhappy, and yet if you don't allow this to lead you astray into thinking that it can't be helped *because you're only a woman*, then you will be able to gain a strong confirmation of the unborn. Then you yourself are a buddha, of the same substance not only as other men and women but also as all buddhas of the past and future. So there are no grounds whatsoever for saying women can't become buddhas. If they really couldn't, now what would I gain by going around lying to everyone?...

This subject reminds me of something that happened last year when I was in Bizen to give a sermon. Among the people who attended was a party of four or five people, including a couple of women.... One of the women sent word to me that she wished to ask me something. She didn't feel it was right for a woman to raise questions during the sermon itself, so she wanted to know if it would be possible to ask her questions in private....

Sometime later she arrived and explained, "... I'm married and lead a very average life. My husband and I have no children of our own, but by my husband's former wife there is a son whom I've raised. Now that he's grown, he treats me with the same consideration he would show a real mother. It's just like having a son of my own, so I'm pleased with the way things have worked out. But there is one thing I am concerned about. I heard that a childless woman can't become a buddha, no matter how great her desire for the Pure Land. I've asked Buddhist priests whether it was true or not. They told me it was, that women can't attain buddhahood. So here I am. I've had the good fortune to be born a human being, yet I'm cut off from buddhahood. I can't help feeling that gaining human form was meaningless after all. I deplore my bad luck in being born as a woman. It's made me sick pining over it. As you can see, I've wasted away to skin and bone...." The people with her spoke up: "It's just as she says. The idea that childless women can't become buddhas has been tormenting her ever since she heard about it. It worries her day and night. She hasn't really been well for several years now. She has wasted away to a shadow. There must be many childless women in the world, but surely none is more concerned about her future existence than she is. She thinks of nothing else. You can see for yourself how deeply troubled she is...."

To prove to her that people without children can become buddhas, I cited the fact that in all the generations of Zen masters, beginning with the first patriarch Bodhidharma and continuing right up until myself, there has never been a single one of us who had children. I asked if she had ever heard that Bodhidharma or any of the others had fallen into hell. She said that although we didn't have any children, she didn't believe it possible for people like us—she said we were buddhas—to fall into hell no matter what we did. “Do you mean to tell me,” I said, “that the minds of childless women work differently from those of other people? You have a buddha-mind, regardless of your sex. When you hear the sound of a bell, there's no difference in the way that buddhas, patriarchs, me, you, or anyone else hears it. If you really want to be born as a buddha, you can. Anyone who says you can't is wrong. It's as simple as that.... Think of all the women in the past who have become buddhas.

.....

Women are unlike men in being quite straightforward about things. They may be somewhat more frivolous than men in their basic dispositions, yet when you tell them that they will go to hell if they do something evil, they understand it right away, without any skepticism. And when you tell them they will become buddhas if they do good, their thoughts turn single-mindedly to becoming buddhas—and their attainment of faith is all the deeper. When they hear my teaching of the unborn and come to be convinced of it, women in their simple directness are the ones who become buddhas, rather than men with their shrewd intellectuality.

[NAW]

HAKUIN Ekaku 白隱慧鶴 (1685–1768)

Born into a working class family, Hakuin Ekaku was attracted to Buddhism at an early age, studying its literature before dedicating himself to Zen practice at the age of twenty-two. Confident of his “awakening” two years later, he went to see the reclusive Zen master Shōju Rōjin who at first ridiculed him, but under whose direction he achieved his spiritual breakthrough. Hakuin eventually returned to his hometown where he had a long career as a Zen master in a small, rundown temple, attracting students from throughout Japan. In his later years, he began to make drawings of himself and of various religious themes as gifts to donors which are prized as expressions of his enlightenment.

Hakuin is credited with revitalizing the Rinzai School of Zen by reformulating its methods of training, and criticizing the spiritual weakness of the clergy. He is best known for using intellectual riddles called ‘kōan’ to stimulate his students into new ways of thinking about the basic problem of being human. Traditionally, these were based on stories of what seems like irrational behavior among famous Zen masters in China known as “patriarchs,” but Hakuin invented many kōan himself, the most famous being “what is the sound of one hand clapping?” Key to understanding Hakuin is the Buddhist belief that all living beings possess the ‘buddha-nature’ that manifests itself as “own nature.” The goal is self-transformation but not by intentional action—by practice in the usual sense—but by a spontaneous awakening to the liberated state symbolized by the buddha. Deep paradox lies in the notion, on the one hand, that the buddha is within us even though we are not liberated, and on the other, that there is a need for sustained, dedicated practice even though there is no guarantee that this will yield the awakening we seek. This is a path that one must travel alone and that must emerge suddenly and unexpectedly within one’s own experience; to depend on understanding or knowledge learned from a teacher is to further distance oneself from truth.

[MLB]

THE AWAKENED MIND

HAKUIN Ekaku 1743, 412 (61–2)

How should one approach the paradoxical nature of the Zen quest for liberation? Hakuin directs adepts to search within themselves and nowhere else, lambasting reliance on anything beyond personal experience, rejecting any other authority, even scripture and religious leaders (himself included).

Buddha means, “One who is awakened.” Once you have awakened, your own ‘mind’ itself is buddha. By seeking outside yourself for a buddha invested with form, you set yourself forward as a foolish, misguided man. It is like a person

who wants to catch a fish. He must start by looking in the water, because fish live in water and are not found apart from it. If one wants to find buddha, one must look into one's own mind, because it is there, and nowhere else, that buddha exists.

Question: "In that case, what can I do to become awakened to my own mind?"

What is that which asks such a question? Is it your mind? Is it your original nature? Is it some kind of spirit or demon? Is it inside you? Outside you? Is it somewhere intermediate? Is it blue, yellow, red, or white?

It is something you must investigate and clarify for yourself. You must investigate it whether you are standing or sitting, speaking or silent, when you are eating your rice or drinking your tea. You must keep at it with total, single-minded devotion. And never, whatever you do, look in sutras or in commentaries for an answer, or seek it in the words you hear a teacher speak.

When all the effort you can muster has been exhausted and you have reached a total impasse, and you are like the cat at the rat hole, like the mother hen warming her egg, it will suddenly come and you will break free. The phoenix will get through the golden net. The crane will fly clear of the cage.

But even if no breakthrough occurs until your dying day and you spend twenty or thirty years in vain without ever seeing into your true nature, I want your solemn pledge that you will never turn for spiritual support to those tales that you hear the down-and-out old men and washed-out old women peddling everywhere today. If you do, they will stick to your hide, they will cling to your bones, you will never be free of them. And as for your chances with the patriarchs' difficult-to-pass kōan, the less said about them the better, because they will be totally beyond your grasp.

[NAW]

MEDITATION

HAKUIN Ekaku N.D. 256 (251-2); 1747, 113-14, 135-6, 143-4 (37-8, 58, 67)

The following is a famous poem by Hakuin praising the deep meditative trance known as 'samādhi' that reveals the unity of self and buddha.

Living beings are intrinsically buddha.
 It is just as it is with ice and water:
 Apart from water there is no ice,
 Apart from living beings there is no buddha.
 They do not know how near at hand he is;
 How vain their seeking in far distant places.

They are like one who cries, "I thirst!"
 Whilst standing in the midst of water;
 Or like the child of a rich household
 Who goes astray in some poor village.
 The cause of their endlessly traversing the six ways,
 Is it the dark road of their own ignorance?
 Treading one dark pathway, then another,
 When can they ever leave 'samsara'!

O the *samādhi* practice of the 'Mahayana',
 There are no words with which to praise it!
 Charity, morality, and the other 'perfections',
 Reciting sacred names of buddhas, repentance, and religious practice,
 These and good deeds countless in variety,
 All are embraced within it.
 Even he who achieves the merit of but one sitting in meditation
 Wipes out his immeasurable accumulation of transgressions.
 Where can he find the evil ways? Indeed the 'Pure Land' is not far distant.
 When graciously this truth vouchsafes
 To touch his ear but once,
 He who offers praise and adoration
 Will thereby gain illimitable blessings.

How much the more, then, if you turn and enter in it,
 And directly prove your own true nature!
 Your own true nature, being no-nature,
 Already is far removed from wanton words.
 The gate of the oneness of cause and effect opens,
 The non-dual, non-triple road lies straight ahead.
 The formless form now being your form,
 Going or returning you go not elsewhere;
 The thoughtless thought now being your thought,
 Singing and dancing are the voice of the 'dharma'.
 How vast and unobstructed the empty sky of *samādhi*!
 How perfect and bright the moon of the four wisdoms!
 At this moment, what is there more for you to seek,
 With 'nirvāṇa' itself manifest before you?
 This very body, this is buddha.

[RFS]

Hakuin urged devotion to meditation practice not as a trance-like introspection but as focused concentration in the midst of normal sensory activity. When meditation deepens to the level of trance known as samādhi or 'dhyāna', the objects of perception are seen as meditation just as much as the mind perceiving them. Meditation is thus construed not as a means to an end, but as the source of truth and liberation itself.

If you suddenly awaken to the wisdom of the true reality of all things of the 'One Vehicle' alone, the very objects of the senses will be Zen meditation, and the five desires themselves will be the One Vehicle. Thus words and silence, motion and tranquility are all present in the midst of Zen meditation. When this state is reached, it will be as different from that of a person who quietly practices in forests or mountains, and the state to which he attains, as heaven is from earth. When Yongjia (665–713) speaks of the lotus facing the flames, he is not here praising the rare person in this world who is practicing Buddhism. Yongjia penetrated to the hidden meaning of the 'Tendai' teaching that "the truths themselves are one." He polished the practice of calming and insight meditation in infinite detail, and in his biography the four comportments¹⁴ are praised as always containing within them the *dhyāna* contemplation. His comment is very brief, but it is by no means to be taken lightly. When he says that *dhyāna* contemplation is always contained within the four comportments, he is speaking of the state of understanding in which the two are merged. The four comportments are none other than *dhyāna* contemplation, and *dhyāna* contemplation is none other than the four comportments. When Vimalakīrti says that the 'bodhisattva', without establishing a place for meditation, practices amidst the activities of daily life, he is speaking about the same thing.

Because the lotus that blooms in the water withers when it comes near to fire, fire is the dreaded enemy of the lotus. Yet the lotus that blooms from the midst of flames becomes all the more beautiful and fragrant the nearer the fire rages.

People who carry on their practice, shunning from the outset the objects of the five senses, no matter how knowledgeable they may be in the doctrine of the 'emptiness' of self and things and no matter how much insight they may have into the 'Way', when they take leave of quietude and enter into the midst of activity, they are water goblins out of water or monkeys with no tree to climb. Most of their vitality is lost and they are just like the lotus that withers as soon as it approaches the fire.

But if you dauntlessly persevere in the midst of the ordinary objects of the senses, and devote yourself to pure, undistracted meditation and make no error whatsoever, you will be like the man who successfully delivered the several hundred pieces of gold, despite the turmoil that surrounded him. Dauntlessly and courageously setting forth, and proceeding without a moment's interruption, you will experience a great joy, as if suddenly you had made clear the basis of your own mind and had trampled and crushed the root of 'birth-and-death'. It will be as if the empty sky vanished and the iron mountain crumbled. You will

14. [A monk should comport himself properly in body and mind while walking, standing, sitting, and reclining.]

be like the lotus blooming from amidst the flames, whose color and fragrance become more intense the nearer the fire approaches. Why should this be so? It is because the very fire is the lotus and the very lotus is the fire.

.....

What is this true meditation? It is to make everything: coughing, swallowing, waving the arms, motion, stillness, words, action, the evil and the good, prosperity and shame, gain and loss, right and wrong, into one single kōan. Imagine a lump of iron settled in the space below your navel; then think of the shōgun as the main object of worship, and the various ministers and high stewards as the many bodhisattvas who appear in this world, engaged in the same work as you. Consider the various 'daimyō', both great and small, attending on the lord and living at a distance, as the great 'Hinayana' disciples such as Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. Consider the multitude of the common people as sentient beings eligible for salvation, who are to us as children and for whom particular benevolence must be felt.

Make your skirt and upper garments into the seven- or nine-striped monk's robe; make your two-edged sword into your resting board or desk. Make your saddle your sitting cushion; make the mountains, rivers, and great earth the sitting platform; make the whole universe your own personal meditation cave. Consider the workings of *yin* and *yang* as your two meals of gruel a day; heaven, hell, pure lands, and this impure world as your spleen, stomach, intestines, and gall bladder, the three hundred pieces of ceremonial music as the sutra reading and recitation at morning and night. Think of the countless million Mt Sumerus as fused into your single backbone and all the court ceremonies and military studies as the mysterious operations of the countless good activities of the bodhisattva. Thrusting forth the courageous mind derived from faith, combine it with the true practice of introspection.

High value is placed on maintaining one's meditative awareness in the midst of activities, not confining it to quiet times in the meditation hall.

At no time has there ever been a buddha, a patriarch, or a learned sage who has not seen into his own nature. If, as seems to be the custom nowadays, you depend upon a common understanding, foolishly generated in the heart, and think that the knowledge and discrimination of the 'one great matter' that you have arrived at for yourself is sufficient, you will never in your life be able to break the evil net of delusion. A trifling knowledge is a hindrance to enlightenment, and it is this that these people possess.

In the Middle Ages when the Zen sect flourished, samurai and high officials whose minds were dedicated to the true meditation, when they had a day off from their official duties, would mount their horses and, accompanied by seven or eight robust soldiers, gallop around places crowded, like Ryōgoku and

Asakusa are today. Their purpose was to test the quality and validity of their meditation in the midst of activity.

[PBY]

KŌAN AND THE GREAT DOUBT

HAKUIN Ekaku 1743, 412–13 (62–4); 1751, 232–4 (144–6.); 1792, 324–5 (163–4)

Hakuin's method requires strong faith in the liberation to come but equally strong suspicions about one's own understanding. Kōan practice continually pushes one deeper into doubt until, with nothing to rely on, one breaks through to liberated consciousness.

A priest of former times, Gaofeng Yuanmiao (1238–1295) said, “A person who commits himself to the practice of Zen must be equipped with three essentials: a great root of faith, a great ball of doubt, and a great tenacity of purpose. Lacking any one of them, one is like a tripod with only two legs.”

By “great root of faith” is meant the belief that each and every person has an essential ‘self-nature’ one can see into, and the belief in a principle by which this self-nature can be fully penetrated. Even though you attain this belief, you cannot break through and penetrate to total awakening unless feelings of fundamental doubt arise as you work on the difficult-to-pass kōan. And even if these doubts build up, and crystallize, and you yourself become a “great doubting mass,” you will be unable to break that doubting mass apart unless you constantly bore into those kōan with a great, burning tenacity of purpose.

It is with great respect and deep reverence that I urge all you superior seekers who investigate the secret depths to be as earnest in penetrating and clarifying the self as you would be putting out a fire on top of your head; to be as assiduous in boring through your doubt as you would be seeking a lost article of incalculable worth; to be as hostile toward the teachings left by the buddha-partriarchs as you would be toward a person who had just slain your parents. Anyone belonging to the school of Zen who does not engage in the doubting and introspection of kōan must be considered a deadbeat rascal of the lowest type, a person who would throw away the greatest asset he has. Hence Gaofeng said, “At the bottom of great doubt lies great enlightenment.... A full measure of doubt will become a full measure of enlightenment.”

[NAW]

The first kōan alluded to in the following passage has to do with a conversation between a student monk and a Zen master named Zhaozhou in which the student asked if a dog has 'buddha-nature', as humans do. Zhaozhou's answered in the negative by saying "Mu!"—literally “no” or “nothing.” The meaning is not

literal however, since 'Mahayana' doctrine is quite explicit that all animals do indeed have buddha-nature. It is rather a riddle about the nature of affirmation and negation in human communication and their relation to reality. It was the kōan that brought Hakuin himself to religious awakening.

To all intents and purposes, the study of Zen makes as its essential the resolution of the ball of doubt. That is why it is said: "At the bottom of great doubt lies great awakening. If you doubt fully, you will awaken fully." Foguo¹⁵ has said: "If you don't doubt the kōan, you suffer a grave disease." If those who study Zen are able to make the great doubt appear before them, a hundred out of a hundred, a thousand out of a thousand, will without fail attain awakening.

When a person faces the great doubt, before him there is in all directions only a vast and empty land without birth and without death, like a huge plain of ice extending ten thousand miles. As though seated within a vase of lapis lazuli surrounded by absolute purity, without his senses he sits and forgets to stand, stands and forgets to sit. Within his heart there is not the slightest thought or emotion, only the single word 'mu' ("no!"). It is as though he were standing in complete emptiness. At this time no fears arise, no thoughts creep in, and when he advances single-mindedly without retrogression, suddenly it will be as though a sheet of ice were broken or a jade tower had fallen. He will experience a great joy, one that never in forty years has he seen or heard. At this time "birth, death, and nirvāṇa will be like yesterday's dream, like the bubbles in the seas of the three thousand worlds, like the enlightened status of all the wise men and sages." This is known as the time of the great penetration of wondrous awakening, the state where the "Ka!" is shouted. It cannot be handed down, it cannot be explained; it is just like knowing for yourself by drinking it whether the water is hot or cold. The ten directions melt before the eyes, the three periods are penetrated in an instant of thought. What joy is there in the human realm and in heaven that can compare with this?

This power can be obtained in the space of three to five days, if the student will advance determinedly. You may ask how one can make this great doubt appear. Do not favor a quiet place, do not shun a busy place, but always set in the area below the navel Zhaozhou's *Mu*. Then, asking what principle this *mu* contains, if you discard all emotions, concepts, and thoughts and investigate single-mindedly, there is no one before whom the great doubt will not appear. When you call forth this great doubt before you in its pure and uninvolved form you may undergo an unpleasant and strange reaction. However, you must accept the fact that the realization of so felicitous a thing as the great matter,

15. [Foguo, the posthumous name of Yuanwu Keqin (1063–1135) was a Rinzai Zen master credited with composing hundreds of kōan and noted for his brief but clear answers to disciples' questions.]

the tramping of the multitiered gate of birth-and-death that has come down through endless 'kalpas', the penetration of the inner understanding of the basic enlightenment of all the 'tathāgatas' of the ten directions, must involve a certain amount of suffering.

When you come to think about it, those who have investigated the kōan *mu*, brought before themselves the great doubt, experienced the great death, and attained the great joy, are countless in number. Of those who called the Buddha's name and gained a small measure of benefit from it, I have heard of no more than two or three. The abbot of Eshin-in (942–1017) has called it the benefits of wisdom or the power of faith in the mind. If you investigate the *mu* or the "three pounds of flax" or some other kōan, to obtain true reality in your own body should take from two to three months to a year or a year and a half. The efficacy gained from calling the Buddha's name or reciting the sutras will require forty years of strenuous effort. It is all a matter of raising or failing to raise this ball of doubt. It must be understood that this ball of doubt is like a pair of wings that advances you along the way. A man such as the Reverend Hōnen* (1133–1212) was virtuous, benevolent, righteous, persevering, and courageous. As he read the sacred scriptures in the darkness, if he used to some extent the luminescence of his eye of wisdom, he must, to the extent that this ball of doubt was formed, have attained to the great matter in the place where he stood; and have determined for himself his rebirth. What a tragedy it was that the rope was too short, so that he could not draw the water from the bottom of the well.

Hakuin employed his famous kōan, "the sound of one hand clapping," as an effective way to open up to the buddha-nature within one's self.

Five or six years ago I made up my mind to instruct everyone, "Listen to the Sound of the Single Hand." I have come to realize that this kōan is infinitely more effective in instructing people than any of the methods I had used before. It seems to raise the ball of doubt in people much more easily and the readiness with which progress in meditation is made has been as different as the clouds are from the earth. Thus I have come to encourage the meditation on the Single Hand exclusively.

What is the Sound of the Single Hand? When you clap both hands together, a sharp sound is heard; when you raise the one hand there is neither sound nor smell. Is this the high heaven of which Confucius speaks? Or is it the essentials of what Yamanba¹⁶ describes in these words: "The echo of the completely empty valley bears tidings heard from the soundless sound"? This is something that can by no means be heard with the ear. If conceptions and discriminations are not mixed within it and it is quite apart from seeing, hearing, perceiving, and

16. [In Japanese folklore, Yamanba is a mountain witch who preys on the young.]

knowing, and if, while walking, standing, sitting, and reclining, you proceed straightforwardly without interruption in the study of this kōan, then in the place where reason is exhausted and words are ended, you will suddenly pluck out the karmic root of the endless cycle of birth-and-death and break down the cave of ignorance. Thus you will attain to a peace in which the phoenix has left the golden net and the crane has been set free of the basket. At this time the basis of mind, consciousness, and emotion is suddenly shattered; the realm of illusion with its endless sinking in the cycle of birth-and-death is overturned.

[PBY]

IMAKITA Kōsen 今北洪川 (1816–1892)

During the final decades of the early modern period (1600–1868), Confucian scholars intensified their long-standing criticisms of Buddhism, depicting it as immoral and economically wasteful. Imakita Kōsen, an important Rinzai Zen master whose life spanned the transition into the modern era, responded to these challenges by writing an erudite treatise entitled *One Wave in the Zen Sea*, in which he sought to elucidate the common ground between the two traditions. Imakita was well equipped for this apologetical mission: before taking the tonsure he had taught in a Confucian academy for several years, and continued to study, debate, and lecture on the Chinese classics and commentaries throughout his monastic career. He later became known for his encouragement of lay activities at the Kamakura monastery, Engaku-ji, during the 1870s and 1880s—an initiative continued by his better-known disciple, Shaku Sōen (1860–1919).

Completed in 1862, *One Wave* uses the language of the Confucian classics and the neo-Confucian commentaries to interpret thirty classical passages from a Zen Buddhist perspective. The two excerpts presented here exemplify Imakita's argument for the unity of the two traditions, which is premised on the idea that all human beings are endowed with a true, enlightened nature. In the first, he aligns Mencius' concept of human nature with key Confucian ideas like 'bright virtue' and heaven, as well as with Buddhist notions like enlightenment and 'suchness'. He concludes by emphasizing the importance of experiencing the truth by means of concrete practice ("seeing"), as contrasted with a more intellectual mode of "knowing." In the second passage, Imakita notes that, contrary to general assumption, the Confucian classics explicitly acknowledge the ineffable quality of the truth; he further argues that this imperceptible dimension is intimately related to the Confucian emphasis on ritual. Imakita goes on to chide Confucian scholars in turn for overlooking the parallel balance in Buddhism, which involves not simply dwelling in 'emptiness', but also the "strenuous practice" through which one gains entry to the truth.

[JAS]

THE ONE TRUE REALITY

IMAKITA Kōsen 1862, 231–2, 235

Mencius said: "Those who dedicate themselves know their nature; knowing their nature, they know heaven" [*Mencius* 7A.1]. We call it heaven. We call it buddha. We call it nature. We call it the 'bright virtue'. We call it 'bodhi'. We call it utmost 'sincerity'. We call it 'suchness'. One reality, many names. The nature was born before heaven and earth. It spans both the past and present,

it is constantly *here*. Its essence is wonderfully and profoundly empty, perfectly brilliant and serene, unfathomably vast and great. Former rulers understood it and were thus able to govern their own persons; they used their remaining energies to govern the empire and the state. Therefore, there have never been sages and worthies who failed to attain it, or Buddhas and patriarchs who failed to attain it. The *Book of Changes* states: “The humane person sees this and calls it ‘humaneness’. The wise person sees this and calls it ‘wisdom’” [1.5.26]. That is all.

The sages and worthies promoted moral education in China, India, and Japan. Even though each differed in their approach, and especially in their words, the reality that they grasped in their hearts was completely the same. Mencius understood this reality profoundly and thus was able to identify it, calling it the “nature” and calling it “heaven.” Excellent. The only thing I regret is that he did not say “see the nature.” If the snake exposes its head one inch, one can easily know its length. I always say: “Many know the nature; few see the nature.” If you know the nature, you simply know heaven. If you see the nature, you attain heaven. I hope those who have blood circulating under their skin will not take my words lightly.

.....

According to the *Doctrine of the Mean*, “In the *Book of Odes* it is said: ‘I cherish your brilliant virtue, which makes no great display in sound or appearance’ [*Mean* xxvii]. The Master said: ‘In transforming people, the use of sounds and appearances is secondary.’ The *Book of Odes* also says: ‘His virtue is as light as a hair.’ But a hair can still be compared. ‘The operations of heaven have neither sound nor smell’ [*Odes*, 235, 260]. Precisely.”

These passages are the key to the learning of the sages, the great merit of the school of Confucius. To begin with, the subtle wonder of virtue begins in the realm of no sound and no form, and ends in the three hundred rules of ritual and the three thousand rules of conduct [*Mean* xxvii]. It is then completely expended in the three hundred rules of the rites and the three thousand rules of conduct, and returns back to the realm of no sound and no form. In this way, the substance and function of the great ‘Way’ are fulfilled. Its coming and going, and its concealment and manifestation, are marvelous and difficult to express in words. In our Zen School we call it “light and dark intermingled” [*Hekiganroku*, 51].

If one wishes to attain this ‘*samādhi*’, one must act like a person who is learning to shoot. One slowly practices, then naturally attains the wondrous effect; every shot will effortlessly hit the mark. This is what Confucius meant when he said that at the age of seventy he followed his heart’s desire without transgressing the rules [*Analects* 11.4]. Once one reaches this beautiful place, for the

first time one understands that “in transforming people, the use of sounds and appearances is secondary.”

Long ago, Huitang of the Song told Zhu Shiyong:

When I first entered the Way, I expected it to be extremely easy. However, after I reached the point of having an audience with our former teacher, Huanglong, I drew back and reflected on my daily affairs, and realized that there were a great many things that contradicted the ‘principles’. Finally, after three years of strenuous practice, in spite of suffering extremes of cold and heat, I hardened my resolve and no longer wavered. Later, I in fact understood that every single thing is like the principle. Coughing and spitting and waving one’s elbows are the meaning of the patriarch Bodhidharma’s coming from the West.¹⁷

Confucian scholars tend to say: “The Buddha chooses only ‘emptiness.’” In particular, they do not understand that the emptiness of our school is not empty, and that we have a teaching as marvelous as this. Confucius also spoke of the operation of heaven as having no sound, no smell. This, too, is not empty, as I clarified earlier. Is it not stated in the *Analects* that “When you do not know, to allow that you do not know—this is knowledge” [11.17]? I pray that scholars will not be like Han Lu chasing a clod of earth.¹⁸

[JAS]

17. [Huitang Zuxin (1025–1100) was one of the dharma heirs of the Huanglong stream of the Linji lineage in China that was later brought to Japan by Eisai (1141–1215). The passage cited is from Part 1 of the *Zenmon hōkun*, and the allusion to Bodhidharma’s coming from the West is the basis of a famous kōan.]

18. [Han Lu was a fast-running dog who allegedly chased a hare until he died of exhaustion (*Hekiganroku*, 43). The sense is that, distracted by trivialities, one misses the essential.]

SUZUKI Daisetsu 鈴木大拙 (1870–1966)

Suzuki Daisetsu (Teitarō) enjoyed an extraordinarily productive career bringing Zen Buddhist ideas to the West. Born in Kanazawa, he grew up with Nishida Kitarō*, Japan's most famous modern philosopher. While taking classes at Tokyo Imperial University, Suzuki began a life of practice as a Zen layman under Zen Master Shaku Sōen from Engaku-ji in Kamakura, who attended the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, where he met Paul Carus, the editor of *The Monist*. He then introduced Carus to Suzuki, who later served as his collaborator and translator for several years. Returning to Japan, he eventually settled permanently at Kyoto's Ōtani University in 1921, where he founded the Eastern Buddhist Society and the English-language journal, *The Eastern Buddhist*.

After World War II, Suzuki's writings on Zen and mysticism became immensely popular in the West and he spent several years as a visiting professor in the United States, including a period from 1952 to 1957 at Columbia University. During this latter period of his life, he engaged many western thinkers, including philosophers, theologians (he was a member himself), psychologists, and theologians. His works in English include *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (three volumes), *Zen and Japanese Culture, Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, *Zen and Psychoanalysis* (co-authored), and annotated translations of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* and Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*. His collected works in English and his collected works in Japanese each exceed thirty volumes.

Moving freely between textual criticism and religious interpretation, Suzuki never made any pretense to arguing philosophically, but others did sometimes apply his ideas to philosophical questions. The following excerpts on what Suzuki dubbed “the logic of affirmation-in-negation”—the core of what he has to say on the subject—are prime examples of this. In the first, he applies it to Zen thinking and in the second, to the ‘Pure Land’ Buddhist idea of ‘other-power’.

[TPK]

THE LOGIC OF AFFIRMATION-IN-NEGATION

SUZUKI Daisetsu 1940, 510; 1944A, 274–83

I do not claim to know very much about philosophical logic, but I would like to say something about how Buddhism understands the term. There is a sutra whose name I translate as the *Prajñā Wisdom Sutra*. The Sanskrit word ‘*prajñā*’ was rendered into Chinese as “wisdom,” but as this does not capture the full meaning, I prefer the somewhat redundant term “*prajñā* wisdom”.... To understand why, let us begin by contrasting *prajñā* with the Sanskrit word for

consciousness, 'vijñāna'. The prefix *vi-* carries the sense of “dividing,” reflecting the fact that the role of consciousness is to distinguish one thing from another. It is this clash between *prajñā* and *vijñāna* that Buddhist philosophy has developed. It shows up in a variety of forms in the *Prajñā Wisdom Sūtra*, such as the following: “The ‘mind’ is not the mind, therefore it is the mind”... The Chinese rendition of the Sanskrit original, *taccitam acittam yaccitam* (“mind is not mind, which is to say, it is mind”) uses the copulative *soku*, “which is to say.” Thus we may speak of a “logic of affirmation-in-negation (*soku-hi*)” in which affirmation immediately entails negation, and negation affirmation. Such is the logic of *prajñā* wisdom....

In today’s language, we would say that affirmation and negation are “self-identical,” which is in fact the force of the copulative *soku*. This does not mean the kind of relationship in which one thing here is negated by another thing there. What is there remains there, and what is here remains here, but at the same time as we affirm this, we also affirm that what is here is there, and what is there is here. To our customary way of thinking about words and things, when we place two elements in an affirmative or *soku* relationship the effect would be to negate their two-ness. Not so for Buddhism where the negation (*hi*), just as it is, is an affirmation (*soku*). Thus when two elements are related to each other negatively, that relationship is at the same time an affirmation. It is not that the negation stands in opposition to the affirmation. Rather, what is expressed as negation *is* itself the affirmation.

Historically and grammatically, our ordinary language of predication has been contrived in such a way that, as an expression of affirmation, it cannot be made to signify a negation. And conversely, an expression of negation cannot be allowed to signify an affirmation. We rely on these conventions to construct our sense of the world. Let philosophers philosophize as they may to explain why it is so, but the fact is, those who speak from Zen experience resort to expressions that defy this ordinary logic: “The Sumida River flows backward”; “Swallow all the water in Shinagawa Bay in a single gulp!”

The Logic of Prajñā Wisdom

I should like to discuss from a Zen viewpoint what may be regarded as the central concept of the *Diamond Sutra*. We begin with the words from the thirteenth chapter..., which amount to this:

What the Buddha calls *prajñā* wisdom, this in itself is not *prajñā* wisdom; therefore, it is called *prajñā* wisdom.

This logic, which is fundamental to the philosophy of *prajñā* wisdom, is also the logic of Zen and of Japanese spirituality. Set in a formula, we would have:

For A to be affirmed as A, A has to be non-A; therefore, it is A.

Here affirmation is negation and negation is affirmation. In the *Diamond Sutra* this passage is followed by other statements such as:

What the 'Tathāgata' calls particles, these in themselves are not particles; therefore, they are particles.

The Buddha is said to have thirty-two identifying marks, but those thirty-two marks are not thirty-two marks; therefore, they are indeed the thirty-two marks.

In this pattern of thought all ideas have first to be negated before they are allowed to be affirmed.

Someone may object that this is downright irrational. All I can do is try to state it in simpler words. When you see a mountain, you might say, "There's a mountain over there." Or when you see a river, you might say, "Look, there's a river." This is how we ordinarily speak. But in the philosophy of *prajñā* wisdom, a mountain is not a mountain, a river is not a river, and *for that very reason* a mountain is a mountain and a river is a river. How could this not look irrational to an ordinary mode of thought? The special trait of the logic of *prajñā* wisdom is that it takes all our words and ideas and treats them this way, passing them through a filter of negation before making any affirmations. This, it insists, is the authentic way of looking at things....

We take it for granted that we can look at things in an everyday, common-sense sort of way or we can look at them scientifically. *Prajñā* wisdom makes its presence felt in turning this idea on its head. Rather than "take in" some object or other, it begins by "keeping it out." It first says, "It is not" and only then comes around to saying, "It is." What a waste of time, you might think. What conceivable reason can there be for taking such a roundabout route? From the start it is obvious that "the willows are green, the flowers are red," so why not just say as much and save the extra step? To begin with the claim that "the willows are not green, the flowers are not red" is like looking for waves on dry land: it can only end up in confusion.

Perhaps. But remember: if there is any confusion, it is in our heads; it is something we have generated and was not there in the first place. If there are any waves whipped up on dry land, the blame falls entirely on us. So while it might seem odd to say that a mountain is not a mountain, is it not equally odd that we talk about being born and dying, or dying and being born, when from the start there is no such thing as birth or death? And when we say we want to go on living and do not want to die, are we not looking for waves on dry land?

The critic of such a logic might find it counter-intuitive to carry on negating mountains or rivers or flowers or what have you. And when it comes to our own

lives, it is hard to see birth and life from the standpoint of the 'unborn' without ending up negating the "unborn." When you look at life and death in the light of the "unborn," it all sounds as irrational or useless as talk about mountains not being mountains or about the red flower not being red. Those with their two feet planted firmly in intellectual discrimination and driven by the demand for what is useful will never come to direct spiritual insight. The logic of *prajñā* wisdom is a logic of spirituality; to appropriate it you must have an experience that lifts you out of such a standpoint.

Zen adopts this logic but does not treat it in a logical manner. This is its uniqueness. When a person is faced with a life-and-death problem, Zen logic might say: "This life-and-death problem that you want to escape, just exactly where is it? This problem that has you all tied up in knots, can you locate it? And just who is the person who has you tied up? Who is it that has made it impossible for you to move?" This demand that turns questioners back on themselves for answers is what is unique about Zen logic.

In other words, first ordinary consciousness is negated, and then that negation is itself negated, bringing us back to our original affirmation. Again, this may seem a roundabout way of doing things, but our consciousness is such that unless we take this route, it is reluctant to accept things as they are. Viewed in the light of wisdom, that is, when we see things with the eyes of direct spiritual awakening, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers from the very first and there is no need for any posturing. As experience reminds us again and again, however, negotiating a path from immediate feelings to such spiritual awakening is no easy matter.

Yet for all our difficulties at coming to insight, the spiritual life is our special gift as humans, one that sets us apart from the rest of creation. It is only in the human species, and not plants and animals, that we find the problem of 'birth-and-death' or struggle between the afflictions of desire and the liberation of 'nirvāṇa'. Dogs and cats have nothing to say about what birth and death are, about what is good or evil, pleasing or unpleasing. They are born when they are born, die when it comes time to die, eat what they like, and when their stomachs are full, curl up and go to sleep. Only human beings wonder *why* they were born, *why* they must die. No other creature makes such a fuss about wanting to live and not die. Plants and animals do not want to die either, but when the time comes to wither and die, they do so quietly and without complaint. Not like humans who put up a fight. In this sense human beings are no match for plants and animals. But who among us aspires to be a dog or a cat! When we see a mountain, we can see first that the mountain is not a mountain, and then see the mountain. Human beings prefer this circuitous logic. In this uniquely human circuitousness lies the tragedy and comedy of human life.... Not even gods, should they exist in a realm beyond our own, would put themselves through

this. The capacity to be circuitous, worried, and troubled is distinctively human. The wisdom to see this clearly opens up the world of the spiritual life. [wsy]

THE LEAP ACROSS TO OTHER-POWER

SUZUKI Daisetsu 1942, 234-7

Faith in its ordinary sense implies faith in something outside of ourselves, something to which we have an intellectual connection. In Buddhism, and 'Pure Land' Buddhism is no exception, faith emerges on a dimension where there is nothing outside of oneself. It is referred to as "coming to believe in one's mind of oneness." To put it radically, one's mind comes to believe in the mind of oneness. Awakening to the mind of oneness, there is no call to seek anything outside. This timeless moment is what the Pure Land sect calls our "one moment." "Faith is our mind of oneness, and this mind is the mind that is true, real, and believing" is how Shinran puts it..., "the shortest possible moment in which our faith reveals itself" (*Kyōgyōshinshō* III.1). He is not saying that no time passes, but only that when the thought of the believing mind arises one does not take leave of oneself. This is the mark of a mind believing in 'other-power'. When self-power comes into play, we get caught up in the logic of relationships that pit the self against others; but in 'other-power' such relationships fall away, everything exists just as it is. In this state other-power is overflowing and there is no need to go anywhere else, no need for time to pass....

Pure Land Buddhism refers to the experience of the mind's believing in 'mind' as an experience one hears; Zen, as an experience one sees. In the direct intuition of faith one sees everything, and even when one hears one sees. This is what Pure Land speaks of as the experience of "hearing the Buddha's name," '*namu-Amida-Butsu*'.... It is not enough for the name to be written down; it has to be intoned and we have to hear ourselves intoning it. In Zen, the direct experience of our senses is called "seeing," as in "seeing into the nature of things." What Pure Land calls "hearing" and what Zen calls "seeing" are one and the same thing.... In such a state of mind there is neither self-power nor other-power. It is the one moment of the mind of oneness, and the mind of oneness of the one moment—defying all reason and testifying to the transcendent nature of faith.

To say that the mind of oneness sees into or calls to or listens to the mind of oneness makes no sense at all in ordinary logic, which is trapped in the relativity of self and other, constituting a duality that differentiates between one mind and the next. This contrasts with a singleness of thought in which "your minds

and the mind do not differ” (*Rinzairoku* 1.18), in which ‘trusting faith’ is “this mind that is the great compassionate mind, because this mind grows out of the transcendental wisdom of infinite light” (*Kyōgyōshinshō* III.2)... The way to the truth is direct, that one moment when faith is revealed, when we leap sideways across the gap.

This idea of leaping sideways across is a strange logic indeed.... The believing mind “leaps over and ignores in one thought—immediately, instantly—all differences of any sort and attains to the incomparably perfect supreme enlightenment” (*Kyōgyōshinshō* III.2)... Its logic is *prajñā* wisdom’s logic of affirmation-in-negation...; it always entails a departure and return, a circularity of being turned round and returning to oneself as believing mind. In Pure Land terminology, departure is symbolized by the ‘bodhisattva’s’ vow to attain the buddha mind, while return is symbolized in the bodhisattva’s “original vow” to return to this world to rescue all living beings. These two phases represent two minds linked together inseparably.... The ‘Tathāgata’ denies himself the bliss of personal enlightenment in order to become the power of the original vow, and this power becomes the believing mind of those who seek to return to their true self: the Tathāgata consummates the going to ‘*tathatā*’ and returning from *tathatā*. “The Tathāgata is not the Tathāgata; therefore the Tathāgata is the Tathāgata,” expresses this logic of affirmation-in-negation....

The logic of *prajñā* wisdom implies such a dynamic. It is not that the power of the “original vow” as such is directly the believing mind, or vice versa. Rather, the power of the original vow is consummated in the act of identification with the believing mind, even as the mind turns around to recognize the power of the original vow and become a believing mind for the first time. The circularity of the departure and return has to be portrayed dualistically, since it is in the fundamental nature of the human intellect to be dualistic. While it is portrayed as such, the duality cannot be let to stand as such. The two arise from the one and must return to the one; only then are they two. The two-ness cannot be simply ignored. The Tathāgata is the Tathāgata, and living beings are living beings; so, too, with the believing mind and power of the original vow.... This is how we are to understand the Buddhist formulas which affirm that the afflicted mind as such is the enlightened mind, and that ‘samsara’ as such is nirvāṇa.... The underlying logic in all of this, as in the case of the “leap sideways across,” is the logic of affirmation-in-negation that “grows out of the transcendental wisdom of Infinite Light.”

.....

The power of the original vow may seem to be goal-oriented, but in fact it is a goal without a goal. The bodhisattvas gird themselves with the solemn vow to save others, stockpile merit to share, make pilgrimages to other buddha lands, cultivate the bodhisattva practices, and pay homage to the other buddhas and

Tathāgatas everywhere; in that sense, the bodhisattvas do have a goal. Still, for Buddhism as a whole, whether Pure Land or Zen, samsara, just as it is, is held to be nirvāṇa. One's mind of oneness witnesses to the spontaneous generation of a point in time—that “instantly effective and perfect and completely inter-fusing” moment—at which the true mind begins to work in oneself. This is the affirmation-in-negation logic of other-power according to which “the power of the original vow is not the power of the original vow; therefore, it is called the power of original vow.” ‘Self-power’ sets itself goals and is not satisfied unless there is something outside to strive for. Whether it is the diamond-hard ‘*vajra*’ mind of self-power or the ‘bodhi-mind’ of self-power, it cannot avoid throwing up “self-obstructions and self-concealments” that hinder progress to the goal.... In contrast, other-power is the spontaneously arising, nondiscriminating order of things: “When it regards the elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and sky, it makes no discrimination between them.” The bodhisattvas “thus enter into the field of birth-and-death, into the thicket of the evil passions where... they display their miraculous deeds as if engaged in play” (*Kyōgyōshinshō* III.1).... The working of the original vow thus has a goal and does not have a goal. If this be the natural order of things, then clearly that logic of other-power belongs to the world of ‘expedient means’, and not to our own. In any case, we are forced to admit that there is something in our world we cannot quite figure out: the absolute nonduality of the mind of oneness in trusting faith.

[wsy]

HISAMATSU Shin'ichi 久松真一 (1889–1980)

Born into a Pure Land Buddhist family and raised in Gifu Prefecture, already as a child Hisamatsu intended to become a 'Pure Land' priest. As he came into contact with scientific knowledge and critical reasoning, however, he found his naïve beliefs shattered and decided to pursue the study of philosophy under Nishida Kitarō* at Kyoto University. In 1915, despairing of the limits of rational thought, Hisamatsu took Nishida's advice and began to practice Zen under Ikegami Shōzan at the Rinzai training monastery of Myōshin-ji in Kyoto. During his first intense retreat there, as he was to recount later in his autobiography, he experienced a breakthrough that was to influence the course of his life and thought.

Hisamatsu continued Zen practice as a layman while teaching at Kyoto University, then later at Hanazono University. Unlike other lay practitioners like D. T. Suzuki*, Nishitani Keiji*, Ueda Shizuteru*, and indeed Nishida himself, all of whom drew inspiration from the Pure Land traditions of their families as well as from Christianity and its mystical tradition, Hisamatsu positioned himself firmly within the Zen tradition. His aim was to carry Zen beyond the monastic walls and into the contemporary world. A profoundly religious thinker, tea master, calligrapher, and inspiring force behind a lay Zen movement, Hisamatsu was not a systematic philosopher in the western vein. As the organization of his collected works shows, his thought was centered on awakening in its philosophical, religious, and cultural aspects, and is largely based on his own experience. The following excerpt, drawn from his graduate thesis, attempts to ground the notion of "nothingness" in the scriptural tradition of Buddhism. → See also pages 1194–7.

[JMS]

ORIENTAL NOTHINGNESS

HISAMATSU Shin'ichi, 1946, 33, 36–42, 48–50, 54–6, 63–6
(65, 67–73, 80–2, 86–7, 95–7)

What I like to call oriental 'nothingness' is a nothingness peculiar to the Orient. It is, especially in contrast to western culture, the fundamental moment of "oriental" culture. I also consider it to be the core of Buddhism, and the essence of Zen. Further, it is the living experience of self-realization which constitutes the base of my own religion and philosophy....

Negative Delineation

The very same expression, "nothingness," can be taken in various senses.... These include the negation of being, a negative predication, an abstract

concept, an imagined or conjectured nothingness, and unconsciousness.... But what I wish to call oriental nothingness is different from all of these.

Oriental nothingness is not like the nothingness in the first sense of *the negation of being*, in which either some particular being alone “is not,” or the whole of being “is not”.... Such expressions as “the three worlds are without things” and “not a single thing” should not be misunderstood to simply mean “there is nothing”.... Through the centuries, falling into such a distorted understanding was strictly admonished by calling such an understanding “a literal negative understanding,” an “annihilating-nothing view,” or a “rigid-nothingness view.”

In the second chapter, entitled “Prajñā,” of his *Platform Sutra*, the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng (seventh century), declares:

The ‘mind’ in its dimensions is broad and great, like a void. It has no sides or limits; it is neither square nor round, neither large nor small. It is neither blue, yellow, red, nor white; it has neither upper nor lower; it is neither long nor short. It knows neither anger nor pleasure, neither right nor wrong, neither good nor evil. It is without beginning and without end. But good friends, do not, hearing me speak of ‘emptiness’, become attached to emptiness.

.....

Again, oriental nothingness is not nothing in the sense of *a negative predication*. Probably no one would consider the “not” or negation in “a desk is *not* a chair” to be oriental nothingness. But the “not” in “it is *not* this, it is *not* that,” or even “it is *not any thing at all*,” may seem to qualify as oriental nothingness. However, inasmuch as the predication “is not any thing at all” can be made of any subject—for example, “this desk is not any thing at all”—it does no more than assert that “it is not any thing at all apart from itself; it is just what it is.” This is not going beyond all predication absolutely....

In the case, however, of “God is not any *thing* at all,” this does not simply mean that “God is not any thing apart from God; God is God.” This rather has the meaning that “God is beyond all predicates”.... This resembles statements in Buddhism such as: “The ‘self-nature’ of the true ‘*tathatā*’ is finally and ultimately not any thing at all, that is, it is nothing”.... This nothing is no other than the nothing of Christianity when it refers to God as beyond all predication, that is, as nothing....

Oriental nothingness itself is also beyond delimitation and beyond predication. It can, therefore, be said that “oriental nothingness is not any thing within everything that is,” that is, that “oriental nothingness is *nothing*.” But oriental nothingness is not identical with this nothing of mere predicative negation or negative predication. If it were identical, there would be no reason especially to call it oriental.

Oriental nothingness, further, is not nonbeing or nothingness in the third

sense, that is, in the sense of *an abstract concept*.... For Parmenides, “being” is that which fills up space, and “nonbeing” is a void. For Hegel, the unity of “being and nonbeing” is “becoming.” With both Parmenides and Hegel this nonbeing is nonbeing as an abstract concept.... Yet oriental nothingness does not belong to the nonbeing of “being and nonbeing.” It is rather nothingness which goes beyond “being and nonbeing.”

In the twenty-first chapter of the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* it is said: “Buddha-nature¹ is not being and is not nonbeing.” In the second volume of the *Sata śāstra* it is stated: “Because being and nonbeing are both originally and fundamentally nothingness, in my true form the various presentations and representations proclaim that being and nonbeing are both in their source emptiness (*śūnyatā*)”.... Such statements have no other intention than to try to express the nothingness that transcends being and nonbeing.

Oriental nothingness is also not *imagined or conjectured nothingness*. We can imagine that the desk which is really here at present does not exist.... Thinking intently in this way, it can appear as if all things are not, that there is neither desk nor chair, neither floor nor house, neither earth nor heavens, neither body nor mind. For one intently thinking in this way there obtains one sort of the experience that “everything is ‘śūnya’....”

Oriental nothingness is not anything like a subjective, contemplative state. Seen from the perspective of oriental nothingness, just as the contemplated buddha is not a true buddha, so the contemplated “everything is *śūnya*” is not the true *śūnya*. Oriental nothingness is not the passive contemplated state, but is rather the active contemplating mind. It is not, however, simply active contemplation. It is, rather, subject-nothingness, in which active and passive are one, and in which the duality of mind and object is left behind....

Whether speaking of “mind” or of “seeing,” if they are externalized or objectified, they are no longer the true “mind” or true “seeing.” It must be said, as was said by layman Pang: “I only ask you to void that which is, but to take care not to reify or be captured by that voidness.”

Oriental nothingness is not, again, nothingness in the fifth sense of *unconsciousness*.... Such a nothingness is no more than our not being conscious of anything—not even of the nothingness.... Oriental nothingness, however, is not this kind of nothingness.... It is “perfectly lucid and clear,” is “thoroughly clear ever-present awareness,” that is, is that of which we are most clearly aware. Although we say “are clearly aware,” this is not an awareness in which nothingness is external or objective, different from the one who is aware. This is rather an awareness in which subject and object are one....

Whether we speak of oriental nothingness as “no-mind,” “no-consciousness,” the “great death itself,” or *nirvāṇa*¹, it is not the unconsciousness of sleep, fainting, or ordinary death.... There is no condition in which one is so clearly aware

as in that of “no-mind” or “no-consciousness,” and there is no time when life is so alive and so ready to burst as in the “great death itself.” Although Baizhang Huaihai said, “Do not remember anything at all,” and Huangbo said “subject and object are both forgotten,” this is not a blank loss of consciousness. On the contrary. This is rather supreme awareness in which there is not the slightest unawareness or unclarity.

Positive Delineation

Oriental nothingness... possesses a characteristic such as that expressed in the past by the phrase “not a single thing.” But it further possesses a characteristic such as has been expressed as the “void.” This characteristic I shall call its “void-like” nature. Why then is oriental nothingness expressed by this term? In order to make this clear, let us first consider the meanings which are embraced by the term “void.”

In his “Records Mirroring the Original Source,” Yongming quotes from the *Commentary on the Mahayana Treatise* to the effect that “void” has ten meanings. The first is the meaning of *no-obstruction*. This means that in and among the various things that have form, the void knows no obstruction. The second is the meaning of *omnipresence*. This means that there is no point not reached by void. The third is the meaning of *impartiality*. This means that the void is impartial, showing no instance of choosing. The fourth is the meaning of *broad and great*. This means that the void is broad and great, having no limits. The fifth is the meaning of *formless*. This means that the void is formless, going beyond ‘*rūpa*’ or forms. The sixth is the meaning of *purity*. This means that the void is pure, having no afflictions. The seventh is the meaning of *stability*. This means that the void is stable, that is, without coming to be or passing away. The eighth is the meaning of *voiding-being*. This means that the being of the void is spatially empty and is without dimensions. The ninth is the meaning of *voiding-voidness*. This means that the void is not attached to its voidness. The tenth is the meaning of *without obtaining*. This means that the void ... neither clings itself nor can be clung to.

.....

Oriental nothingness and the void do have similar characteristics.... But, of course, oriental nothingness is not the same as the void, which has neither awareness nor life. Oriental nothingness is the One who is “always clearly aware.” Therefore, it is called “mind,” “self,” or the “true mind”.

.....

Oriental nothingness is, thus, in no sense inanimate like the void. It is living. Not only is it living, it also possesses mind. Nor does it merely possess mind; it possesses self-consciousness.... And yet, although oriental nothingness is said

to be mind-like, it cannot be said to be exactly the same as what we ordinarily call mind.... For this mind is mind possessing all of the characteristics of the void: non-obstructiveness, omnipresence, impartiality, broadness and greatness, formlessness, purity, stability, the voiding of being, the voiding of voidness, unattainability, "one-alone"-ness, having neither internal nor external, and so on. Since what we ordinarily call mind does not possess these characteristics of a void, in order to distinguish the two, it has, from ancient times, been said that this "mind is like a void."

.....

It is said, in Christianity, that God created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) heaven and earth, plants, man, and all things.... It is precisely this creating out of nothing which can be called true creativity. In the God of Christianity we can find the perfect idea of creativity.... But such a being is not one which can be actually confirmed by us in a fact. Such a being, consequently, is either an idealization or an ideation of that human creativity which can actually be attested to by us, or else is no more than a being which simply has been hypothesized or is believed in.

.....

In Buddhism there is the expression, "All is created by alone-mind." This, however, is not merely an idealization or matter of faith, but is an actual certification by the "alone-mind." Kant says that the actual world we experience daily is not, as we commonly think, something which exists completely external to and independent of our mind, but is something which our mind has created.... What Kant speaks of as the "mind that creates all things," however, is so-called "consciousness-in-general" (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*). For Kant, the mind forms, according to the formal categories of "consciousness-in-general," the impressions which it has received from what he calls the "thing-in-itself".... In Buddhism, on the contrary, that which is reflected in the mirror is not something which comes from outside the mirror, but is something which is produced from within the mirror....

Since, however, a mirror which produces from within that which is reflected is not an actual possibility, this mind is not fully served by the analogy of a mirror. Buddhism frequently employs the analogy of water and waves in order to illustrate more adequately the creative nature of this mind which is not fully taken care of in the analogy of the mirror.

Waves are not something which come from outside the water and are reflected in the water. Waves are produced by the water but are never separated from the water. When they cease to be waves, they return to the water—their original source. Returning to the water, they do not leave the slightest trace in the water. Speaking from the side of the waves, they arise from the water and return to the water. Speaking from the side of the water, the waves are the move-

ment of the water. While the water in the wave is one with the wave and not two, the water does not come into being and disappear, increase or decrease, according to the coming into being and disappearing of the wave. Although the water as wave comes into being and disappears, the water as water does not come into being and disappear. Thus, even when changing into a thousand or ten thousand waves, the water as water is itself constant and unchanging. The mind of “all things are created by the mind alone” is like this water. The assertions of the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng, that “self-nature, in its origin constant and without commotion, produces the ten thousand things” and that “all things are never separated from self-nature,” as well as the statement in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*, “from the non-abiding origin is produced all things,” express just this creative feature of mind.

Oriental nothingness is this mind which is to be likened to the water as subject. The creative nature of oriental nothingness is to be illustrated by the relation between the water and the wave, in which the water is forever and in every way the subject. If one were to make a subject of the wave which is produced and disappears, this would be the ordinary self of man. It is in such an ordinary subject’s reverting back from wave to water—that is, returning to its source—and re-emerging as the true-subject or true-self that the characteristics of oriental nothingness must be sought and are to be found.

[RdM]

KARAKI Junzō 唐木順三 (1904–1980)

Karaki Junzō was active throughout the Shōwa period more as a critic than a philosopher professionally trained in western sources. He studied under Nishida Kitarō* at Kyoto University and remained indebted to the thinking of Kyoto School philosophers throughout his life. At the same time, the religious ideas of Dōgen's* Zen and Shinran's* 'Pure Land' teachings are also reflected in the development of his thought. Beginning with early works on modern and contemporary literary criticism, in later years he turned to medieval literature and to figures like the haiku poet, Bashō. Throughout his career, his abiding concern was with aesthetics and religious sensibility. In addition to a major work on the writing of contemporary history, he also published a critical appraisal of the work of Miki Kiyoshi*. His last book, published in the year of his death, was an attempt to address the social responsibilities of scientists in the present age.

Karaki's 1963 book, *Impermanence*, from which the following pages have been extracted, is an extended attempt to clarify the sense of the transiency of all things that he sees as defining the Japanese mentality from the Middle Ages on. Seeing the awareness of the fragility and uncertainty of existence, often associated with male warriors, as grounded in Buddhist ideas, Karaki went on to develop a highly regarded theory of Japanese aesthetic appreciation.

[MH]

METAPHYSICAL IMPERMANENCE

KARAKI Junzō 1963, 209–16

I should like to set down my thoughts on what most interests me in Dōgen's* account of impermanence. I shall begin with a close reading of this passage from the ninety-third fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*:

In a degenerate age there is almost no one with a genuine will to the truth. Nevertheless, applying the mind for a while to impermanence, we should not forget the transience of the world and the precariousness of human life. We need not be conscious that "I am thinking about the transiency of the world." Deliberately attaching weight to the 'dharma', we should think lightly of "my body" and "my life." For the sake of the dharma we should begrudge neither body nor life. (DŌGEN N.D., 241 [223])

I think I detect in this short passage, which on first reading might seem to be no more than conventional preaching about impermanence, something that is essentially different from former understandings of impermanence. As I read

the passage I was brought up short by the words, “We need not be conscious that ‘I am thinking about the transiency of the world.’” I did not sufficiently take in the meaning of this phrase, and I suspected that Dōgen must have inserted it at a later stage. It certainly seems very abrupt. Looking into the *Collected Commentaries on the Shōbōgenzō*,¹⁸ all I found was the following marginal note: “Not to know you are meditating on the world’s transience and impermanence means correcting the dharma.” To me this *correcting the dharma* seems unclear, if not evasive.

.....

The first thing to attend to in developing the ‘bodhisattva mind’, the mind set on the ‘Way’, is “insight into impermanence.” To be a real person whose mind is set on the Way, one must first reflect deeply on impermanence. Now notice the “for a while” in the injunction to “apply the mind for a while to impermanence.” In order for a worldly person, who seeks for what should not be sought, to become a renunciant who attains the Way, the first condition to be met is that one is convinced that the thing one was seeking is really something that should not be sought. From keeping impermanence in mind one recognizes that the world is transient and human life is uncertain. The “mind” referred to here is the mind of the “ego,” the mind of the subject. “Impermanence” is an objective reality, but “transiency” and “uncertainty” can be seen as reflecting the emotional consciousness of the subjective ego. As the marginal note referred to above says, transiency and impermanence are not the same in every respect. They are distinguished as follows: transience is what the subject emotively recognizes, impermanence is the reality of the object. That is the very reason for “applying the mind to impermanence.”

The next sentence refers to the ego, the mind of that self that thinks about transiency. It is commonly thought that one’s personal feeling is the subject that thinks of transiency and what is transient, but that is not the way things really are. “Mind” and “emotion” must first be cast aside and put away, and the ego, too, is something to be eliminated. We have earlier quoted the saying, “The first precaution for insight into impermanence is to put away the ego.” Since it is a “precaution” or “taking thought,” one first must use one’s mind “for a while” by meditating on impermanence. Through insight into impermanence, conversely and in return, it comes about that this mind, the ego-mind, is able to cast itself away. This is what is called the mind of the Way. It is not the mind of the ego. The mind of the Way can be called a mind that transcends the self.

Here we may say, exaggerating slightly, that the passage I quoted earlier dealing with the notion of transiency in court literature is criticized and rejected by

19. See ANDŌ Bun’ei and JINBO Nyoten, 1914.

Dōgen. When we talk of things coursing forward rapidly, fleetingly, that is one mode of being of the object. The gap between the tempo of this rapid fleetingness of the external world and the tempo of my psychology or emotion that does not readily go along with it is what constitutes the feeling of “transiency.” When, having this subjective feeling or emotion, we turn to assess and measure the speedy tempo of the forward-coursing outer world, then that exceedingly speedy movement is reflected in the sense of transiency that goes against it. Thus arises the awareness of a “fleeting life” “amid a fleeting world.” Again, when we attempt to forget this transiency there emerges what the *Tale of Genji* calls *sabi* or the pathos of transiency.

“Coursing forward” is basically a fact of the outer world; again, it is because of a momentum appearing in the outer world, spilling over from it, that the psychological, emotional, sentimental reality of “transiency” emerges. It is when the outer world is looked at once more from this sentimental basis that one gets ideas of a fleeting human life in the midst of a fleeting world...

We have already said that when this “feeling” of feminine court art is transferred to the masculine feeling of the military world it becomes the “sense of impermanence,” from which stems the grief of impermanence, the acute sense of impermanence. As we have also pointed out, the courtly sense of “transiency,” that is, the female emotion arising within a stagnant society, remains as a feeling. But in a period of wars and disturbances, with the many vicissitudes they give rise to, including the experience of living beings perishing right under one’s eyes, this feeling borrows the Buddhist sense of impermanence as an underpinning and in this form is transferred to the center of the medieval culture of impermanence.

The passage from Dōgen’s *Dōshin* can be seen as a critique and rejection of the above “transiency” and “sense of impermanence.” It shows that the fixed ego that contemplates the transience of the world has no substance in reality and no mind. Once again the “mind” of “for a while keep impermanence in mind” is rejected here. Just before the passage quoted it is explained that “we should not treat our own mind as foremost, but consider only what the Buddha expressed to be foremost.”

The following sentence tells us not to put mind first but to put the dharma first, and in following this dharma not to neglect our body or our life. Thus we see the order in which the mind of the Way should be developed. Its stages should be seen as depicted very precisely. The conclusion is that the dharma comes first and that we should put away the ego-mind.

But what is the dharma referring to here? To put it boldly and directly, the dharma is nothing other than impermanence itself. We may speak of impermanence-*in*-dharma. Thus, even though the text says, “Keep impermanence in mind,” the *impermanence* of impermanence-*in*-dharma is not an imperma-

nence kept by the mind. Impermanence as such embraces in itself both the self and the mind. It is not impermanence as an object of cognition. It may be called metaphysical impermanence.

In *Bendōwa* (A Talk on Pursuing the Way), the first fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*, the tenth question put to Dōgen by a disciple is to the following effect: body and mind are distinguished as two, and the body arises and passes away, whereas the mind is “abiding.” When the flesh decays, the mind does not die but enters an eternal world. Therefore, there is the theory that the first step in order to escape from the passions of ‘samsara’ is to believe that the soul is eternal; is this the true ‘buddha-dharma’?

Dōgen replies in the following way: Such a theory as the above is a heretical view, held by those who “are even more foolish than the person who grasps a tile or a pebble thinking it to be a golden treasure.” It is no more than the noise of a lunatic’s tongue, nothing but foolish confusion. This heretical false view separates the body and the spirit as two dimensions, divides the flesh and the soul, ascribing to the body the “phenomenon” of transformation and to the spirit or soul the “substance” of imperishable abiding. This heresy maintains that when the flesh dies “the spirit casts off the skin and is reborn on the other side; so even though it seems to die here it lives on there.” There is nothing more senseless than this. In Buddhist teaching “mind and body are one,” “substance and phenomenon are not two. One should not separate body and spirit, with arising-and-extinction on one side and abiding on the other. Even if there provisionally exists a mind that has penetrating insight into the phenomenal world of arising-and-extinction and of change, this mind in turn is “arising-and-extinction, with no abiding at all.” So to be separated from the passions of samsara it is not adequate to advance groundless theories upholding the eternity of mind.

Having given this reply, Dōgen goes a step further: “living-and-dying is just ‘nirvāṇa’¹. Nirvāṇa is never discussed outside of living-and-dying.” The meaning of the oft-cited dictum that samsara itself is nirvāṇa must here be carefully examined anew.

Already in the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*’s “verse on impermanence” we read, “All things are impermanent, this is the law of arising and extinction; when arising and extinction are extinguished, one attains the joy of peaceful extinction.” This verse, so familiar to Japanese ears, has been written about since ancient times. Here the “peaceful extinction” that comes from ending arising-and-extinction is identified with nirvāṇa, and the ending of arising-and-extinction is usually thought of as the end of time, the final limit of the process of arising-and-extinction; this again is identified with death as the final limit of life. Consequently “impermanence,” as, for example, in the proverbial “life of dew” or as in the expressions “impermanence overtakes one quickly” and “the speed of impermanence,” is immediately identified with the end of life, the idea of

death. With this is associated the idea of peaceful extinction or nirvāṇa coming after death. The 'Pure Land', the other shore, and paradise are spoken of in this connection. The statement, "Birth-and-death¹ is itself nirvāṇa" is the rejection of such common ideas. We should not think that the impermanence of birth-and-death is followed by the permanence of nirvāṇa. Rather, impermanence is nirvāṇa; birth-and-death is nirvāṇa.

The time of impermanence and change does not advance in a linear and continuous way toward a fixed point of arrival, toward a destination. The impermanence of arising-and-extinction, continually arising and continually passing away, is time in its naked form. Time is originally a purposeless, discontinuous, instantaneous arising-and-extinction, instantaneous arising of phenomena. We might say that the manifest shape of time is the infinite repetition of meaningless things. If we see that time is not a progress directed to a goal, then it does not advance in the direction of nothingness, death, and extinction. On the contrary, time is continually connected with nothingness. In the discontinuous chasm of no beginning and no end, the bottomless abyss of nothingness is yawning. The time of repetition is nothingness. This can indeed be called nihilism. Time is the endless repetition of meaningless things rooted in nothingness. Human life, all phenomena, the whole universe, since they exist nowhere but in time, are in the end nothing, meaningless, and impermanence is clearly shown to be such nothingness and meaninglessness. Impermanence is a cold fact, an actuality quite unrelated to emotions of wonder, poetic sentiment, and the like.

Since humans cannot face this cold nihilism, they create all kinds of lofty ideas. The idea that time is infinite repetition without beginning or end robs the point in time we call "the present" of all meaning and value. Without meaning, humans do not have the courage even to live. They adorn time in order to confer meaning, putting into effect various methods of creating meaning.

The first such adornment is the idea that "there is a beginning" in time. One searches for the "beginning" of "in the beginning was the *logos*." Thus the whole myth of the creation of the universe is set up with the story of Genesis and image of a divine lord of creation. This is a strategy for giving security to one's present self by linking it to remote ancestors.

The last section of Yoshida Kenkō's *Essays in Idleness* is quite interesting:

When I turned eight years old I asked my father, "What sort of thing is a Buddha?" My father said, "A buddha is what a man becomes." I asked then, "How does a man become a buddha?" My father replied, "By following the teachings of Buddha." "Then, who taught the Buddha to teach?" He again replied, "He followed the teachings of the buddha before him." I asked again, "What kind of buddha was the first buddha who began to teach?" At this my father laughed and answered, "I suppose he fell from the sky or else sprang up out of

the earth.” My father told other people, “He drove me into a corner, and I was stuck for an answer. But he was amused.”¹⁹

The compositional skill of the author of the *Essays in Idleness* is seen in the way the concluding reference to the amusement of the father’s friends ties up with the closing words of the work’s preface: “What a strange, demented feeling.” The final section is not just an amusing anecdote about the eight-year-old’s precocious talent. The passage deals with the quest for the “beginning,” which confers significance on the present. That conferral of significance allows one to be serene and to greet the folly of the world with a hollow laugh.

The second method of conferring significance on time is the theory that “there is an end.” The thought that time is progressing in the direction of a definite *telos* sets up a teleology or a “kingdom of ends.” That there is continuous progressive development in the direction of an ultimate goal encourages one to think optimistically of the present historical moment. That history is soon to reach completion in an ideal form and that all things are to be brought into harmony constitutes a grandiose drama. However, there is also another way of thinking that takes this direction of time in an eschatological way. Placing the ideal in the past, in the beginning, it sees history as originating thence but as progressing in the direction of corruption and decline. Then history is structured in terms of “paradise lost,” or a division into periods of true law, false law, end of the law (*mappō*), or the “last judgment.” Here, too, we have a grandiose drama, a plot-construction holding out the obscure promise of ascent to heaven at the eschaton, the possibility of the Pure Land.

A third strategy for conferring significance on time is so-called “creative achievement,” that is, culturalism or historicism. The creation of temples and pagodas, of culture and civilization, of historical progress, of human formation, is a way of artificially adorning the present. Humans, through believing in civilization and progress, are able to affirm time and life.

Dōgen repeatedly rejected the above conferral of adornment and significance on time. Time just as it is, in its nakedness, is to be faced squarely. Time, without beginning or end, is to be confronted without purpose or action. Without blinking we must face the reality of the time of instantaneous arising and ceasing, instantaneous production. This is a gate through which one has to pass. There is no Zen if one does not look clearly at this.

[JSO]

20. [Yoshida Kenkō (ca. 1283–1350) was a Buddhist monk whose two hundred and forty-three short *Essays in Idleness* were widely read through the Middle Ages. Cited from the English translation, YOSHIDA Kenkō N.D., 201.]

The Pure Land Tradition

Hōnen

Shinran

Kiyozawa Manshi

Soga Ryōjin

Yasuda Rijin

The Pure Land Tradition Overview

Like almost all forms of Japanese Buddhism, the Pure Land tradition was formulated in China in the sixth and seventh centuries, based on Indian scriptures that were interpreted according to indigenous Chinese thinking. The name “Pure Land” is used today to refer to either a line of Buddhist thinking or a cluster of Buddhist institutions. There are five or six major traditions within Japanese Buddhist thought, but Zen and Pure Land are given their own sections here because of their prominence in Japanese philosophical history since the thirteenth century. It should be noted that as a religion—and taken all together—Pure Land institutions in Japan in the early twenty-first century account for approximately sixty percent of the population. Yet, this form of Buddhism, which emphasizes faith, has not attracted the attention of western scholars who, at least until recently, have been more drawn to Buddhist traditions where faith is less explicit. Nevertheless, Pure Land Buddhist ideas and values have had a deep impact on Japanese thought from the very moment Buddhism arrived, and this has been no less true after western philosophy began to seriously impact intellectual discourse after the 1890s.

It is often somewhat difficult to separate philosophical argument from the assertion of traditional Buddhist values in premodern Pure Land Buddhist writings. But in their efforts to distinguish themselves as embodying the most authoritative understanding of Buddhism, Pure Land thinkers often took considerable time to explain their views, often under duress, and these writings are typically rich in expression and will be the basis of this overview. The founding myth and historical development of this tradition are not well known in the West, however, and so to understand how the core symbols and metaphors work, we must begin there. Like the Zen School, the Pure Land form of Buddhism was embedded within other religious orders until the Kamakura period (1185–1333). But in contrast with Zen, which began as a separate institution only after individuals journeyed to China to receive direct transmission from recognized masters there, the Pure Land School in Japan did not look to that kind of external authority to legitimate its conception. Although there were many

learned treatises written earlier, the pivotal person in the history of Pure Land thought in Japan is the monk Hōnen* (1133–1212), and the entries included here all begin with Hōnen and the line of thought he initiated. Living at a time of political upheaval, Hōnen proposed a religious paradigm considered so radical by some that it led to his forced exile from the capital and the persecution of his followers for centuries. But one of the churches that sprang from Shinran* (1173–1263), Hōnen's best-known disciple, grew so powerful by the fifteenth century that it was feared as a competing feudal fief of its own. From that point forward this was no longer a minority tradition within the Buddhist world.

Since the ideas of Hōnen that incited the most controversy resonated deeply with the Japanese psyche, to understand Pure Land's influence in Japan we need to begin with him. To do so, it may help to step back and consider how Buddhism worked as a system of ideas before it reached Japan. While the early teachings of Buddhism oft repeated the dictum that it followed a “middle path” of moderation rejecting the extremes of sensual indulgence on the one hand and asceticism for its own sake on the other, this Buddhist doctrine came to be used to justify its own monasticism while distancing itself from the rather extreme yogic forms of self-discipline sweeping India at that time. But in the absence of anything remotely like it in East Asia before Buddhism entered, this monastic tradition appeared austere in the extreme. Yet, the values of celibacy, poverty, vegetarianism, and living under strict precepts were readily accepted with the integration of Buddhist thinking as a whole because the core philosophical presumption—that greater forms of discipline would yield greater spiritual achievement—was already in place. It was this very presumption, however, that was called into question in seventh-century Chinese Buddhism, and this forms the basis of Pure Land thought in Hōnen and all those who followed in his philosophical footsteps.

The term “pure land” is a Chinese adaptation of an Indian Buddhist notion that the ground or *topos* of a buddha, or in fact any sacred being, is sanctified or “purified” by that buddha's presence. In Sanskrit the term is *buddha-kṣetra*, the “field” or “space” occupied by a buddha. In fact, all Buddhist practitioners can create a “sacred space” within their own ‘mind’ when they attain the most advanced forms of meditation; when they dwell in that state of mind, they are similarly “dwelling in a pure land.” Buddhism similarly speaks of “meditation heavens” that exist within the mind but are exceedingly difficult to access. Therefore, years of sophisticated mental training are needed, the monastery being the most conducive environment for such cultivation. But all buddhas have pure lands, and since buddhas are dedicated to liberating all living beings, the idea of *access* to a buddha by being reborn in his particular pure land is another important aspect of this concept. We also have a number of ‘Mahayana’ sutras that relate mythic biographies of specific buddhas. These include their

oaths or vows from their pre-buddha stage of practice, describing what such individuals hoped to accomplish should they succeed in attaining buddhahood. Since these narratives always end in success, they are in effect scriptural confirmation that those vows are in force now. Among them, the vows generated by the bodhisattva 'Dharmākara', who later became the Buddha Amida, are the basis of the so-called Pure Land School in Japan. Amida and his pure land are special because of various explicit statements in sutras that, in sum, state that Amida will bring all people to his personal pure land, even the worst of criminals, if they but believe in his pledge, commit themselves to turn over their karmic merit toward this goal of rebirth in his Pure Land, and engage in a simple ritual called '*nenbutsu*', invoking Amida's name to that end.

Hōnen shifted the paradigm to abandon the traditional Buddhist assumption that difficult practice leads to greater achievements, replacing it with the claim that easy practice leads to greater achievements. That is, although *nenbutsu* practice, either as a silent meditation on Amida Buddha's attributes, visualization of his pure land, or recitation of the short phrase '*namu-Amida-Buddha*' (I take refuge in Amida Buddha), had been practiced in Japan for at least three hundred years previously, it was primarily done to induce trance states and have visions, or to build up enough karmic merit after thousands of repetitions of the recited phrase to ensure a postmortem rebirth in Amida's Pure Land. In Hōnen's vision, however, the buddha is changed from a god in the role of a parent who promises to reward the good behavior of a child, to a committed mentor who is actively involved in the interior life of the practicing believer. One no longer needed any particularly difficult meditative practices to have access to Amida's Pure Land because Amida would take people there with as few as ten, or even only one, recitation of *nenbutsu* if it were heartfelt.

Hōnen's argument was this: if the attainment of the goal of 'nirvāṇa' or buddhahood is only achievable by those who can accomplish the most difficult of meditations, then for everyone living in Japan—one thousand years after the death of 'Shakyamuni' Buddha and at an impossible distance from India—the chances of success were very small. Moreover, looking around, how many buddhas does one see? Why would any buddha who is dedicated to saving all living beings create a religious system that only rewards the few? Is it not more plausible to understand the earlier paradigm as merely an 'expedient means' to bring everyone to the realization that seeking final liberation without the presence of a buddha has never been really viable, but was put in place so people would see the logic of choosing instead the avenue to the Pure Land of Amida Buddha? Hōnen was also fighting against another idea that had come to dominate religious thinking in his time. That was the belief that although transmigration was unavoidable, the individual's state of mind at the moment of death had far greater karmic impact than any other psychic event in one's lifetime. *Nenbutsu*

practice for many people was thus for the sole purpose of preparing themselves for that final moment.

Hōnen tactfully avoided the outright denial of the philosophical arguments based on the old paradigm, which permeated the scriptures and traditions of his own Tendai School. He remained a monk within that order his whole life and was famous for being a strict disciplinarian regarding the monastic precepts. But he did not discriminate between monastic and lay, men and women, high born and low born. Even outcastes were welcomed to his public gatherings. He preached and wrote that recitation of the *nenbutsu*, when performed with sincerity and faith, would result in everyone's reaching the Pure Land on an equal footing. Jumping over the major Japanese Pure Land thinkers who preceded him, like Genshin (942–1017) and Jippan (d. 1144), Hōnen legitimated the decidedly nonstandard hermeneutics of the Chinese cleric Shandao (613–681) so convincingly that all philosophical arguments influenced by Pure Land thought thereafter remain within the Shandao paradigm, much more so than within China itself. Shandao was a complex thinker, but, at the risk of oversimplification, we may say that he argued for universal access to the sacred as embodied in 'Amitābha's' Pure Land through recitation of the *nenbutsu*, even when it is performed in an unfocused, nonmeditative state of mind. Although Hōnen did not himself draw attention to this, Shinran was particularly taken with Shandao's discussion of the story of patricide by the prince Ajataśatru as described in the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* where, now as king, Ajataśatru is forgiven by Shakyamuni Buddha in recognition of both his contrition and his underlying 'buddha-nature', which cannot be destroyed by any evil act. For Shandao this is the bedrock of the "great wisdom and compassion" of buddhas, and Amitābha Buddha has skillfully given *all* humankind access to this through the practice of *nenbutsu*, which anyone can do.

Hōnen's first bold move was to affirm the doctrinal and historical imperative of Shandao's teacher Daochuo (562–645) that there is a Pure Land path with legitimacy equal to the traditional path for Buddhists (the "path to self-perfection"). Based on this exegetical precedent, Hōnen argued that the two schema of the Pure Land path and the self-perfection path define what Buddhism means to the individual, and as such are commensurate *in theory*, but the Pure Land path was the only true option available *in practice*. This was taken as a political challenge to the traditional schools of Buddhism, not only because it questioned their viability, but also because it posed a philosophical challenge to the assumption that the more difficult the practice, the greater the religious reward. Hōnen's assertion of the primacy of *nenbutsu* recitation was based on how easy it was to do, and we may infer a religious democratization at work in his argument that it allowed anyone access to the sacred. This move also proved another shock to the status quo that had found no need to rank different forms of prac-

tice. In sum, Hōnen argued that Amida Buddha had recommended rebirth in his Pure Land via *nenbutsu* as the best form of Buddhism for Japan, for the age, and for the actual spiritual potential of ninety-nine percent of the people.

Believers were always expected to comply with the Buddha's teachings. But in the post-Hōnen landscape of Pure Land thought in Japan, we find a shift in emphasis; the central concern became one's *response* to having been chosen by the Buddha. Shinran, the most famous among a core group of six or seven disciples closest to Hōnen, best clarified this point. Reflecting the post-Hōnen discourse of the thirteenth century, Shinran asked if *nenbutsu* practice based on 'self-power', what is doable within the limitations of the knowing self, is somehow different from *nenbutsu* practice based on 'other-power', the limitless compassion and wisdom of a buddha. The answer is obvious, but it only begged the question of *how* one can make one's *nenbutsu* practice an "other-power *nenbutsu*." And this problem led Shinran down a nontraditional path that nevertheless brought him to a very traditional Buddhist solution: the emptying of self as a gateway to truth and freedom.

After nine years struggling as a monk pursuing the "path to self-perfection," Shinran was stunned by Hōnen's doctrine. What Shinran had perceived as his own failed monastic career, in light of Hōnen's arguments, provided evidence that he was actually on the right path. Expressing his desire to leave the monastery completely and take a wife, Shinran was relieved to have Hōnen reassure him that such a decision had no impact on his spiritual future. Ironically it was the extraordinarily accepting nature of this religious paradigm that set Shinran on a course to clarify the truth of what he was actually capable of in his karmic situation, something he had found seriously wanting. In this way, Shinran came to argue that the key to unlocking the other-power *nenbutsu* within all of us is deep reflection on our limitations, on the fact that there is an "evil" dimension to everyone in the world. Here, in keeping with Buddhist tradition, "evil" represents suffering and the awareness of suffering. In Shinran, Amida Buddha's salvific activity is specifically directed to those with the greatest karmic troubles, though he argues that salvation itself is universal. Thus on the one hand, Shinran alludes to Pure Land Buddhism as a system for those who least understand their world and themselves, and on the other, he asks us to consider the implications of the limits of human understanding itself. There is thus a paradoxical "freedom that stems from seeing reality as it is" (*jinen hōni*) in Shinran that accompanies his disclaimer about what he is capable of understanding.

Shinran had a number of philosophically minded followers in the modern period who tried to make a bridge to his thought from the encounter with western thought. The following pages include a sampling of writings from some of the more influential among them, notably the Pure Land thinkers Kiyozawa Manshi*, Soga Ryōjin*, and Yasuda Rijin*, all of whom belonged to the Ōtani

branch of the Buddhist institution that takes Shinran as its founder. Kiyozawa was a promising student in the graduate program of western philosophy at Tokyo University in the 1880s when he was forcibly drafted by his church, the Ōtani branch of the head temple, Hongan-ji, to modernize its educational system, and became the first president of a newly formulated university, crafted out of the church's three-hundred-year-old seminaries. His essays on the value of objective inquiry influenced a generation of educational reformers. A devout Pure Land Buddhist and serious student of Hegel, Kiyozawa favored western terms like "infinity" and "salvation" to represent Buddhist truths, and the influential phrase "absolute other-power" is derived from the name of one of his essays. Kiyozawa famously challenged his peers to consider the implications of what they knew and how they knew it, insisting that if the truth is so transcendent that it cannot be confirmed, it is of little value. For Kiyozawa experience must be at the center of knowledge, even if that experience is hard to comprehend. He is remembered for the statement, "We do not believe in gods and buddhas because they exist; they exist because we believe in them."

Kiyozawa thus set in motion a demythologizing and anti-metaphysical effort that resonates with both existentialism and early Buddhism. We have included a provocative essay where he urges the pursuit of morality precisely because it cannot be accomplished; here Kiyozawa is applying Shinran's existential honesty to morals, leading to a Kierkegaard-like conclusion that moral failure is precisely when "other-power" truth can become visible. His student Soga expands Hōnen's argument about the inevitability of Pure Land Buddhism by positing that Shakyamuni Buddha is the invention of Amida Buddha, despite the fact that in the scriptures it is Shakyamuni who relates Amida's story. Although that effort appears more of a re-mythologizing than a de-mythologizing, elsewhere Soga argues that it is the humanity of Amida in evidence *before* he became a buddha that we share with him and that is most meaningful to us, not his divinity. In Yasuda, we move into postwar discourse, in which the ideas of Heidegger and Tillich are brought to bear on the context of the Pure Land doctrinal tradition. As seen in Kyoto School thinkers beginning with Nishida as well, Pure Land thought continues to be a wellspring for philosophical inquiry in Japan today.

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[MLB]

HÖNEN 法然 (1133–1212)

Often referred to as the founder of a movement scholars call “Kamakura Buddhism” and revered by the ‘Pure Land’ sect of Buddhism as its founder, Hōnen in fact spent his entire adult life as a traditional monk in the Tendai School, understanding his ideas to be consistent with that intellectual tradition. Hōnen was thoroughly familiar with the exoteric-esoteric mix of Tendai beliefs and practices, and while some have argued that this way of thinking was so pervasive that no one would have been able to conceptualize outside this paradigm, there is much to suggest that Hōnen did indeed offer his contemporaries something entirely new. At the very least we can point to the outrage Hōnen’s ideas provoked in many of the elite, both at court and in the major monasteries. Although Hōnen was repeatedly invited to court to lecture and ritually bestow precepts on high government officials including the chancellor, he and his disciples nevertheless suffered exile and persecution at the end of his life.

Hōnen boldly announced that the religious goal of achieving ‘buddhahood’ was no longer viable. Although this was a bleak assessment of the human condition compared with Buddhism’s traditional optimism, the capital was riveted by such existential honesty. Hōnen’s solution lay in an unswerving devotion to the ritual practice known as ‘*nenbutsu*’, where a buddha’s name is repeated in the phrase: ‘*namu-Amida-Butsu*’, or “I take refuge in ‘Amida’ Buddha.” His arguments take the form of affirming the unique authority of his chosen form of practice, though a note of exclusivity is always implied. But by successfully convincing others that the prevailing exoteric-esoteric complex of Buddhist thought could be set aside for a single-minded focus on one point of access to the sacred, Hōnen created a new paradigm for understanding humankind, society, and truth. With other objectives and different arguments, later Kamakura-period thinkers followed Hōnen’s precedent of confronting the question of human potential and offering a means of self-transformation that also implied world-transformation. The three selections here are from works composed sometime between 1199 and 1212.

[MLB]

THE PHILOSOPHY OF *NENBUTSU*

HÖNEN 1212A, 590–2

The Superior Value of Easy Practice

Hōnen’s advocacy of a new way of thinking about Buddhism was based on a hermeneutic of practice that developed along the principle that the universal is superior. This reflected a radically different approach to practice in that it explicitly favored what was easy over what was difficult. Using a relatively

minor Chinese exegetic precedent, Hōnen needed to assert both that the traditional approach to personal liberation was no longer viable, and that the power and authority in the practice of 'nenbutsu', especially oral nenbutsu, was the best alternative to traditional modes of practice.

The path to liberation from the cycle of 'birth-and-death' at the present time is none other than birth in the 'Pure Land' of 'Amida' Buddha. And the practice for birth in the Pure Land is none other than *nenbutsu*. Although in the wide sense there are many gates to the Buddhist path for leaving this distressing world, they can be divided by and large into two: the path to self-perfection and the path to the Pure Land.

We may first consider the path to self-perfection, the approach by which one seeks to cut off one's delusion and attain enlightenment. In this regard, there is a 'Mahayana' path to perfection and a 'Hinayana' path to perfection. Within the Mahayana itself there are two ways: the Buddha vehicle and the 'bodhisattva' vehicle. All together, we refer to these as the four vehicles. But none of us who lives in these times can endure the entire duration of these paths. That is why master Daochuo¹ said, "What we at this time call the path to self-perfection is difficult to realize in our age." For that reason, we will have nothing to say about the individual practices. It has been long since anyone heard the Buddha explain how to attain the path to perfection, and thus it is hard for us to understand. We are compelled, therefore, to accept the fact that it is a path that people like us cannot even imagine completing.

Instead, let us consider next the gate to the Pure Land, which means turning away from this Sahā world² to seek a quick birth in the land of bliss. Birth in this land pertains to the vows of Amida Buddha, which have no concern with how good or bad people may be. Rebirth in this realm depends on whether or not one accepts the authority of the Buddha's vow of universal acceptance. This is why Daochuo wrote, "There is only one gate; passing through it is a path one can follow." Thus people these days who desire to leave behind the realm of birth-and-death should abandon the path to perfection that is difficult to realize and look toward the Pure Land as easier to reach.

We may also remark on the distinction between the path to self-perfection and the path to the Pure Land as a difficult path in contrast to an easy one. It has been expressed this way, for example: "The way of difficult practice is like walking a steep path. The way of easy practice is like traveling an ocean route by boat." This difficult path should not be pursued by those with weak legs or failing vision. Simply by boarding the boat once, one can reach the other shore.

1. [Daochuo (d. 645), a Chinese Pure Land monk and second of the five Pure Land patriarchs, was held in special esteem by Hōnen.]

2. [The allusion is to our world with its troubles and afflictions.]

But these days we are such that our eyes of wisdom work improperly and our legs of practice are broken. In the end, it is clear that the steep way of the path to self-perfection, the way of difficult practice, will only frustrate our hopes.

[MLB]

THE HERMENEUTICS OF NENBUTSU

HÖNEN 1212B, 456–7; 1212A, 601–3

For Hōnen, practice is not based on faith; it is the basis for faith. His is therefore an argument about orthopraxis in the sense of a performative confirmation of an authoritative doctrine. It was precisely this method of analysis that presumed the higher value of singular notions of practice and belief that marks Hōnen's deep influence on medieval Japanese thinking. Reflecting the Buddhist tradition of pluralism, Hōnen's categories are not "correct and incorrect" but "primary and secondary." In the final selection, we see that "secondary" means unacceptable.

Next, consider how faith is established depending on practice. Although the practices relevant to birth in the land of bliss differ, they can all be contained within two categories: primary practices and secondary practices. Those which are considered primary or correct are the practices in close proximity to Amida Buddha. Secondary practice refers to miscellaneous practices distant from Amida Buddha.

First, let us consider the fact that there are five forms we regard as primary practices. One is the reading and recitation of scripture, which refers in this case to the reading of the three sutras of Pure Land Buddhism.³ Second is visualization, where one visualizes the physical forms and the Buddha that make the Pure Land what it is. Third is prostration, where one does prostrations before Amida Buddha. Fourth is recitation of the name, where one invokes the sacred name of Amida. Fifth is worship, where one praises and makes offerings to Amida Buddha. These five can then be broken down into two groups. One involves focusing one's mind on the sacred name of Amida, continuing this while walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, regardless of how much or little time has passed, and without a break. This is called the "authoritative practice" because it is derived from the vow of the Buddha himself. Those other practices outside of name-recitation, namely sutra study, image-worship, and so forth are categorized as "ancillary practices."

Next we shall consider what we regard as secondary practices. These include

3. [Larger *Sukhāvativyūha sūtra*, Smaller *Sukhāvativyūha sūtra*, and the *Guanwuliangshou jing*.]

everything outside the five forms of practice we regard as primary, in which we just delineated two subcategories: authoritative and ancillary. Practices considered secondary include reciting Mahayana sutras, committing oneself to the path by means of the 'bodhi-mind' aspiration, keeping the precepts, and encouraging charitable activities.

.....

'Self-power' refers to seeking birth by means of efforts applied that come from within yourself. 'Other-power' refers to relying only on the capacity of a buddha to effect spiritual transformation. That is why those who pursue the "rightly established" practice are called "specialized practitioners" and those who perform a miscellany of practices are called "nonspecific practitioners."

.....

There are five areas of gain or loss that can be identified in relation to these two approaches of primary and secondary practices. First is intimacy: the primary practices bring one toward Amida Buddha, but the secondary practices move one away. Second is proximity: the primary practices take place close to Amida Buddha, but the secondary practices take place far from the Buddha. Third is continuity: in the primary practices there is no break in the focus of one's thoughts, but in the secondary practices concentration is not continuous. Fourth is 'merit-transfer'; pursuing the primary practices, this becomes the 'karmic' act for Birth in the Pure Land even without turning over the merit such acts create for this purpose, but secondary practices are only the cause of Birth in the Pure Land when the merit they create is turned over for this purpose. Fifth is purity: the so-called primary practices are the acts that are pure in their devotion to birth in the Land of Bliss. The secondary practices are not like that, but are acts directed to other pure lands throughout the ten directions as well as to results in the world of men and gods. Therefore, we call believing in this way: "establishing faith on the basis of practice."

.....

Moreover, there are those who, though they know that even people who have committed sins will attain birth, continue to recite the *Lotus Sutra* repeatedly because it brings merit, never understanding why we are pained by this. This is most disgraceful. Some hold to the view that it would be something special to add certain performative activities to *nenbutsu*, because such practices will assist in attaining birth and will not do anything to prevent it. This calls for clarification. Do you think the Buddha would look favorably on something so wrong and encourage people to pursue it? However much they are advised to stop, ordinary people are drawn into the confusion of these times and pursue wrong practices, only to find that they lack the strength for it. Yet even then the Buddha's compassion is overflowing and he will not abandon them. Those people who do wrong things such as pursuing other forms of practices in addi-

tion to *nenbutsu* will not have the power to succeed. As for those who often read sutras and note that their wrong behavior is in line with what they find there, insisting that they do not suffer any ill effects because of their actions, no matter how many times you speak to them, nothing will change.

[MLB]

THE THREE MINDSETS

HÖNEN 1212B, 455, 457; 1212A, 600

Based on a theme mentioned in a sutra called “The Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life” and its Chinese exegetical precedents, Hōnen asserted that his followers needed to understand and maintain three attitudes or mindsets while practicing nenbutsu in order for it to be effective: sincerity, profundity, and commitment. Of these three, sincerity grows into a virtue characteristic of Japanese thought. Here again we see his intent to provide an argument that puts the ignorant before the wise, the humble before the adept.

The first mindset, that of utter sincerity, is an attitude that is true. With our bodies we make prostrations, with our mouths we invoke the sacred name, and with our minds we imagine the physical form of the Buddha. When one speaks of the mindset of sincerity, it presumes that one is repulsed by this defiled land and is directing oneself out of longing for the Pure Land.

If you pursue your practice of this mindset by appearing outwardly to be wise, moral, and diligent, while inwardly your mind is in a state that is foolish, immoral, and lazy, then even if you practice without a break for twenty-four hours day and night, you will not attain birth. If, on the other hand, you pursue your practice of this mindset by appearing outwardly to be foolish, immoral, and lazy, while inwardly you abide in thoughts that are wise, moral, and diligent, then even if you practice only *once* with only one *nenbutsu*, your practice will not be in vain and you will attain birth without fail. This is what is meant by the mindset of utter sincerity.

The second mindset, that of profundity, means to believe in a deep or profound way. There are two aspects to this. The first is to believe that you yourself are deeply flawed karmically, that you have been passing through the six realms of ‘samsara’ repeatedly from a beginningless past, and to accept the fact that you lack in yourself the conditions for birth. The second is to believe that though you are someone plagued by your karmic transgressions, there is no doubt in your own mind that you will definitely attain birth in the Pure Land through the strong connection you have with the power of Buddha’s vows.

There are two further aspects to this second aspect. The first concerns how faith is established according to whom one encounters, and the second has to

do with how faith is established according to one's practice. To have faith in people means that although there are many paths out of the cycle of birth-and-death, they can be broadly divided into two: the path to self-perfection and the path to the Pure Land....

The third is the mindset of commitment, in which one turns over all one's karmic merit for birth. It denotes a mind that is true, transferring all merit accrued from wholesome karmic roots planted in one's thought, speech, and action in this life and in past lives. This turning over is done in the hope of attaining birth into the land of bliss. This is known as "the mindset of commitment in which one turns over all their karmic merit."

.....

The most important thing is to have an attitude that is sincere, that deeply accepts the authority of the Buddha's vows, and that seeks birth. One's state of mind in this may be deep or shallow, but such differences will always be there. Anyone seeking birth, could they really be without these three mindsets?

When you consider these things, it may alienate you from the task at hand, but you will see how important all this is. And when you take it in and are ready to take whatever steps are necessary, you will find that it is really easy to do. For even those who do not consider in detail how they should take care of all this will be able to possess all three minds, while others who work hard to understand everything in a careful manner may end up deficient in one of them. It is precisely this fact that shows us how even the lowest person with the least understanding is reborn in the Pure Land, whereas even among the most impeccably holy monastics, there are those who, at their final moment, have a painful death and are not reborn in the Pure Land.

[MLB]

HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

HŌNEN 1212C, 527–8

Nenbutsu practices tied to belief in the myths of Pure Land Buddhism became rather widespread in the capital city of Kyoto from the tenth century. In part at least, this was because it provided a plausible answer to the doctrine of historical decline in Buddhism and society known as 'mappō' (final period of the dharma). To base nenbutsu practice on mappō implies that the number of people with the wisdom to understand the Buddhist teachings has grown small. While Hōnen alludes to this doctrine, part of his new paradigm is the assertion that the nenbutsu is not only for the weak-minded, and that the very construct of rebirth in the Pure Land through its practice should be seen as universal.

The practice of *nenbutsu* does not distinguish between those with and those without wisdom; the original vow that Amida Buddha pledged in the distant

past applies universally to all. There is no notion that the ignorant should practice *nenbutsu* and the wise should pursue other practices. *Nenbutsu* is for all sentient beings in all ten directions. I do not discriminate between the wise and the ignorant, between good people and bad, between those who uphold the precepts and those who do not, between nobility and commoners, or between men and women. Whether sentient beings live in a time when a buddha is present in the world, or in a time after a buddha has disappeared, and even should sentient beings be living after ten-thousand years of (*mappō*) when the three treasures⁴ have been lost, the *nenbutsu* remains a prayer for any age.

[MLB]

4. [The “three treasures” refer to the Buddha, the ‘dharma’ that he taught, and the *saṅgha* or community that transmits the teaching.]

SHINRAN 親鸞 (1173–1263)



The words and ideas of Shinran are probably more influential in Japan today than those of any other Buddhist thinker. Historically, he was the youngest of a small inner circle of disciples that formed around the 'Pure Land' Buddhist master Hōnen*. Hōnen had caused considerable controversy by asserting the superiority of a new religious model in which the traditional goal of achieving complete liberation was jettisoned in favor of achieving, through ritual and meditation, the intermediate step of rebirth in the land of a cosmic buddha called 'Amida'. In his writings, Shinran claimed strict fidelity to Hōnen's ideas

and spread that view among his followers after Hōnen's death. Within a century after Shinran's own death, his lineage had made him the greater authority and bearer of a new hermeneutic for interpreting Pure Land texts. This tradition continues today as 'Shin Buddhism' and is by far the largest religious denomination in Japan.

Compared with other leading Buddhist figures of his age, Shinran's achievements were modest and largely absent from nonsectarian sources. Born to aristocracy, Shinran entered the priesthood at the age of nine for reasons largely unknown. The most striking feature of his personal life was his public decision to marry. Although it was not uncommon for Buddhist prelates to keep women at the time, the practice was carried on covertly. It is said that Hōnen sanctioned his choice as an example of Buddha's acceptance of human limitations. Shinran was exiled from the capital together with Hōnen and other chief disciples in 1207. Even after the exile was lifted, Shinran remained for nearly thirty years among peasants in the provinces before returning to the capital of Kyoto for the rest of his life. Denied ecclesiastical rank, he seems to have pursued his writing in poverty, relying on donations from the communities of followers he founded while in exile.

Shinran's corpus consists of some longer pieces written in Chinese for a general scholarly audience, a number of shorter essays and hymns written in vernacular Japanese for the faithful, and an influential work written by one of Shinran's own disciples that quotes him extensively. One long, complex Chinese work stands out as the most systematic statement of his thought. It is known by its abbreviated title, *Kyōgyōshinshō* (Collection of Passages Expressing the True Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Realization). Imitating the style of many earlier Pure Land works, it is structured around quotations from sacred texts and the exegetical writings of Buddhist masters in India, China, Korea, and Japan. Overall, it reads like a scriptural defense of Hōnen against the charges of heresy leveled by the aristocracy and Buddhist establishment. Shinran's own explanations, while limited, help to clarify his

own views. For clues to shifts in Shinran's thinking, we also find evidence in his later writings, many of which were written in Japanese.

The *Tannishō* (A Record of Lament over Divergence), compiled by the disciple Yuien (1222–1289), some fifty years Shinran's junior, records discussions with him. Strictly speaking much of the text is hearsay, its purpose being to address discrepancies in the ranks of followers after Shinran's death. Organized in brief sections written in Japanese, the work was more accessible to nonscholarly readers than Shinran's other writings. The fact that it contains some of the clearest statements we have of Shinran's core ideas, combined with its status as a perennial best-seller in Japan today, is reason to override questions of authorship and include it here.

Among the groups that formed to carry on Shinran's tradition, the community of direct blood relations organized by Rennyo (1415–1499) spread quickly. By the sixteenth century, Rennyo's temple, called Hongan-ji, established itself religiously and politically as the most dominant religious institution in the nation. Indeed an important part of Shinran's religious legacy lies in the fact that since the thirteenth century Shin Buddhism has been led by a lay clergy, the only premodern example of its kind in the entire Buddhist world. Insofar as Shinran's era, the Kamakura period, marked a period during which uniquely Japanese forms of Buddhism first emerged, and given the fact that a married clergy has become normative in contemporary Japan for nearly all schools of Buddhism, there is a sense in which Shinran's self-description as “neither monk nor layman” can stand as a prototype for Japanese religion as a whole.

Philosophically, Shinran's most significant contributions were his anthropology, his critique of human reasoning and moralisms as self-serving rationalizations in disguise, his insistence that self-effort—however noble its goals—can never escape the working of the ego, and his striking account of a ‘trusting faith’ free of ego.

[MLB]

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

SHINRAN 1258A, 527–8, 529

For Shinran, human existence is permeated with ego and self-deception. We wish to be enlightened, but driven by negative impulses inherited from our past deeds (what he calls “karmic residue”), we cannot help but take pride in our own moral and spiritual practices, thereby feeding the ego further. The very aspiration to become a buddha is a disguised attempt to be “special” and to be so honored by others. Shinran, like most Mahayana Buddhists, is convinced that human nature is intrinsically good—how could there ever have been an enlightened being were it not so?—yet the human situation is permeated with negative karmic effects and to achieve enlightenment by our own efforts is not possible.

95. The external form that each person presents

Is of someone wise, good, and diligent.

But abundant in greed, anger, and falsehood,
Each is filled with deceit.

96. A dissolute nature is even harder to stop
Because that mind is like a snake or scorpion.
Since even the cultivation of good is mixed with poison,
That kind of practice is still called “false.”

.....

99. In a mind of snakes, scorpions, and deceit,
The ‘self-power’ cultivation of good will not succeed.
Without entrusting oneself to the ‘merit-transfer’ of the ‘Tathāgata’
One will end up shameless, unabashed.

.....

107. A transgression has no inherent form.
It is caused by delusions and inversions of reality.
Our ‘minds’ and natures were originally pure,
But in this world no one is genuine.

.....

115. Anyone who cannot write the Chinese characters for the words
“good” and “bad”
Has a genuine heart;
Whereas those who show off their knowledge of Chinese characters
Are grand examples of meaningless vanity.
116. Not knowing right from wrong nor judging false from true—
This is who I am.
And although I lack even small amounts of mercy or compassion,
I enjoy the fame of being regarded as someone’s teacher.

[MLB]

ENTRUSTING ONESELF TO AMIDA’S VOW

SHINRAN 1255, 577–8

What, then, is the solution to the degenerate human situation? Insofar as ordinary practice is something “I” do, and since that “I” is full of self-delusion, Shinran maintains that the only solution is to surrender all attempts to help oneself by one’s own power so that one can entrust oneself completely to the workings of ‘Amida’s’ vows. Those vows were expressly made to help people whose negative karmic residue prevents them from being able to help themselves. In the passage below, Shinran unpacks the meaning of the crucial eighteenth vow of Amida.

It is stated in the Buddha's eighteenth vow in the "Larger Sutra on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life:"

May I, upon attaining 'buddhahood', not obtain perfect awakening if, the living beings residing in every possible direction who aspire to be born in my land with sincerity, faith, and joy keep such aspiration in mind for as few as ten moments and yet not achieve rebirth there. Only those who have committed the five heinous crimes or maligned the true 'dharma' are excluded.

Regarding the phrase, "with sincerity, faith, and joy," the word "sincerity" designates what is true and real. Replete with the defilements, the mind of living beings is not true and real, it is not pure, because of their degenerate, false views of things. The words "faith and joy" refer to deeply believing, without self-deception, in the fact that the Buddha's original vows are true and real. It is because one believes without doubt that one has "faith and joy." This notion of sincerity, faith, and joy is none other than a sincerity, faith, and joy inherent in the Buddha's vow; it urges living beings in every possible direction to have faith and joy in that vow. This does not occur in the 'self-power' mindsets that dominate the thinking of ordinary people.

The phrase, "aspire to be born in my land," refers to wanting to be born in the Pure Land of Bliss with an 'other-power' sincerity, faith, and joy. The words, "as few as ten moments," expresses how the Buddha, urging recitation of the sacred name that represents the vow of the Tathāgata, tells living beings that the number of repetitions is not set. He also tells them that there is no specified occasion when the practice should be done. The pledge of the Buddha adds "as few as" so it can be there with everyone. In that this vow has been mentioned by the Tathāgata, we may respond in common, ordinary circumstances rather than wait for the end of our lives to recite the sacred name. What matters is that one deeply entrusts oneself to the sincerity, faith, and joy bespoken by the Tathāgata. When people attain this 'trusting faith' that is true and real, they enter into the light shining from the mind of the Buddha that is utterly inclusive. With that, they are understood to have confirmed their status as among those assured of birth in the Pure Land.

The phrase, "May I not obtain perfect awakening if... yet not achieve rebirth there" uses "yet not achieve rebirth there" to indicate one's not being born in the Pure Land, and "May I not obtain perfect awakening" is his pledge not to become a buddha should that happen. That is a teaching for those who obtain sincerity, faith, and joy, but yet face "not being born in my land." The core of this original vow is clearly explained in the *Essentials of Faith Alone*.⁵ In that work,

5. [A work composed by Seikaku (1167–1235), a disciple of Hōnen.]

he uses the term “faith alone” to mean an attitude devoted solely to the true and real faith and joy.

[MLB]

NENBUTSU: THE WILL OF NO-WILL

SHINRAN N.D., 777; 1258A, 523-4

Although ‘nenbutsu’ is the sine qua non for birth in the Pure Land, Shinran asserts that for it to be genuine, it can involve no will or intention. This empties not only the ego but also all categories, even morality. It suggests that the proper religious practice of nenbutsu is imbued with a transcendent power beyond us and any act we may do. Nonetheless, it is still an act in which we ourselves engage. In this regard, what guarantees birth in the Pure Land is not the saying of the words of the nenbutsu itself, but rather the nenbutsu as it arises out of the ego-surrendering mind of faith. The first passage below explains the sense in which nenbutsu is not Buddhist practice in the ordinary sense. The subsequent passage expresses the idea that if the person at all doubts the power of the vow and goes back to relying on some self-effort, then he or she will attain a lower quality of rebirth and final liberation will be more difficult to attain.

There are no acts of moral goodness that reach the power of *nenbutsu*.... And yet the Buddhist practitioner should understand that *nenbutsu* itself is neither religious practice nor a morally good act. It is not a form of practice because it is not done by the practitioner’s own design. And because it is not a moral deed created out of the practitioner’s own understanding, we also say it is not a morally good act. It springs entirely from the power of the *Other*, quite apart from the power that lies within oneself. That is why I say that for the practitioner *nenbutsu* is neither practice nor a morally good act.

65. All those who recite the sacred name in a self-power manner
Do not believe in the original vow of the Tathāgata.
Based on the depth of their doubt, their transgression
Threatens to bring them to a prison of seven jewels.

.....

74. Because people who believe deeply in morality
And cultivate the practice of good
Are good people with a mind of doubt,
Their rebirth is limited to a provisional Pure Land.

75. By not believing in the original vow of Amida,
People embrace doubt even as they are reborn in a provisional
Pure Land.
Their situation is like being inside the womb, awaiting birth.

[MLB]

THE NON-INSTRUMENTALITY OF PRACTICE

SHINRAN 1258B, 671–2

Because Shinran's radical stance toward one's approach to liberation is based on egoless agency, he has the difficult task of explaining what practice should be like for the believer. In this passage, we see an anti-instrumental conception echoing the view of the Platform Sutra in the Zen tradition. There the traditional Indian view of meditation as a means to an end is replaced by a Chinese paradigm of essence and function in the famous phrase, "meditation is the essence of 'wisdom'; wisdom is the function of meditation."

Regarding the issue you have mentioned, although people speak of the single thought of faith and the single thought of practice as if they are two separate things, in fact there is no practice separate from faith, nor is there a single thought-moment of faith separate from a single thought-moment of practice. The reason is that, when we speak of "practicing," what we mean is hearing the proclamation that one recitation of the "sacred name" of the original vow brings birth in the Pure Land, and then performing that same recitation once or perhaps ten times—that is what practice is. To hear the vow of the Buddha and to feel not even the slightest bit of doubt toward it—this is the single thought-moment of faith. So, though you may hear that faith and practice are two, by hearing of practice as a single recitation and not doubting, it is clear that there is no faith separate from practice. This is what I heard. And there is no practice separate from faith either. You need to grasp the fact that all this occurs in uttering the vow of Amida. Practice and faith are saying the vow.

[MLB]

NATURALNESS AS SACRED

SHINRAN 1258B, 663–4

Shinran combines two words from scripture, "jinen" and "hōni" to designate the idea of a "naturalness" or "spontaneity" in the non-instrumental practice described in the previous section. Such practice cannot be achieved by any design on the part of the practitioner. To express this idea, he often refers to the absence of judgment within the individual, meaning that no particular judgment, dispensation, or reckoning on the part of the individual is involved. In this we can see traces of both Daoism and the concept of 'buddha-nature' from the "Nirvāṇa sūtra" skillfully adapted to the rhetoric of Pure Land Buddhism.

The word *ji* means "of itself" rather than through any intentional action by the practitioner. It signifies being made so. *Nen* means "made in a certain way." What makes something in a certain way is not any activity on the part of the practitioner but the pledge of the Tathāgata, and that is why this is called *hōni*

or “the dharma as it is.” The use of the term “the dharma as it is” stems from the Tathāgata’s vow, which is why it signifies making something a certain way. Because of the pledge of the Tathāgata, *hōni* implies nothing intended by the practitioner; things are “made a certain way” by virtue of the dharma. Everything starts anew when there is no judgment or design by the person. This is the basis of how you should understand the phrase in reference to Amida Buddha’s vows, “making meaning of what has no meaning.”

“Natural” (*jinen*) means being enabled from the beginning. The pledge of Amida Buddha is, from the very beginning, designed to enable the practitioners to put their trust in the *nenbutsu*—‘*namu-Amida-Butsu*’—without any judgment, and yet to enable practitioners to judge that they will be received into the Pure Land. As such, the practitioner is not concerned about how good or bad he may be. This is the meaning of “natural” as I have been taught.

Amida Buddha’s vows are pledges to enable us to become unsurpassed buddhas. Unsurpassed buddhas are formless, and because they are formless their activities are termed “natural.” When a buddha takes on form, in that state the buddha does not represent unsurpassed ‘*nirvāṇa*’. It is in order to make known the formlessness of the unsurpassed buddha-state that the name Amida Buddha⁶ is expressly used, or so I have been taught. Amida Buddha makes known to us the full implications of “natural.” After one has grasped this principle, one should not make a fuss about it with others. If you constantly quarrel with others about this sense of naturalness, you will find yourself once again trying to make sense of “making meaning of what has no meaning.” This is what makes the Buddha’s wisdom inconceivable!

[MLB]

ATTAINING FAITH IS ATTAINING NIRVĀṆA

SHINRAN 1258B, 693–4, 680–1

A consequence of the principle of naturalness is that the mind of faith is no longer a means to a goal but a direct participation in the enlightened activity brought about by Amida’s vow. This brings us to one of the hallmarks of Shinran’s thought. He conflates the ultimate goals of Buddhism—defined as attaining buddhahood or nirvāṇa—with what are otherwise considered intermediate goals: rebirth in Amida’s Pure Land and even the faith itself that assures such rebirth. These assertions are decidedly outside the bounds of doctrinal orthodoxy in both Indian and Chinese Buddhism. Along with other major Buddhist thinkers of his time, Shinran’s ideas mark the turning point in intellectual history

6. [The name Amida is a contraction of two different names used for this buddha: Infinite Light and Infinite Life.]

when the Japanese began to rely on their own phenomenological schema. In the usual understanding, one seeks rebirth in the Pure Land because conditions in this world make it impossible to complete the path. Only after arriving in the Pure Land, with the ideal paradisaical conditions and the presence of a buddha to guide them, can people achieve perfect practice. Notice, too, the use of causative syntax in explaining Amida's vows, indicating how they enable ordinary people to achieve all this. In the original Indian version of the Amida myth, Dharmākara Bodhisattva is a human who through his own efforts attains buddhahood, thereby becoming Amida Buddha and achieving the vows he pledged to enact for the good of all living beings. In Shinran's version of the myth, the order is reversed, with Amida incarnating himself as Dharmākara in order to make these vows an 'expedient' means of bringing individuals to liberation.

When someone enters the Pure Land of peaceful bliss, at that moment they also realize the great nirvāṇa, the unsurpassed enlightenment of a buddha, and have passed into extinction as well. These three notions are all somewhat different but they all stem from a proper cause of awakening to buddhahood that is called the 'dharma-body', which itself is the result of Amida Buddha's oaths that occurred in the form of 'Dharmākara' Bodhisattva making his merit available to us. This is called "merit-transfer for going forth to the Pure Land." The oath that Dharmākara had made is called the "vow for birth in the Pure Land via *nenbutsu*." To believe in this vow for birth via *nenbutsu* with no trace of insincerity is called "wholehearted devotion"... And the arising of this true faith is made known to us through the consideration of the two honored ones, the buddhas 'Shakyamuni' and Amida.

.....

What you have stated in your inquiry is truly praiseworthy. Because those who have obtained the trusting faith have already achieved positions on the path that guarantees they will become buddhas, a sutra says that they are considered to be an equal to the tathāgatas. Although the disciple 'Maitreya' has not yet become a buddha, it is certain that he will be the next one. That is why he is referred to as "Maitreya Buddha." Thus is it said: it is definite that one who has attained true faith is the equal of a tathāgata.

[MLB]

WISDOM AS LIGHT

SHINRAN 1250, 630-1

Shinran argued above that Amida becomes Dharmākara, rather than vice versa. Yet we know that in the taking of the vow, Dharmākara becomes Amida. Therefore, Amida is the ground of the whole cosmic process of "naturalness" described above. As Shinran states below, this enlightened way of being extends even to the inanimate world of plants and the earth itself. This view

expresses his understanding of the Buddhist doctrine of nirvāṇa not as an inert, idealistic goal, but as a dynamic dimension of all reality. There are both cosmic and phenomenological aspects to this view, for nirvāṇa is at once true reality (as opposed to what we imagine reality to be) and also something that is manifest existentially within the individual in a form that one can recognize as either 'buddha-nature' or faith. This next essay serves to explain for Shinran how faith arises and in what religious understanding it is grounded.

Nirvāṇa has such an immeasurable number of names that I cannot mention all of them and will just note here a sampling. Nirvāṇa is called extinction, uncreated, calm bliss, perpetual bliss, reality, dharma-body, true nature of reality, 'suchness', oneness, and buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is none other than buddha, and this buddha pervades the very stuff of the universe itself. In other words, it is the heart of the entire ocean of life. Plants, trees, the very land itself, all become buddhas.

Since in the mind of all living beings there is a joyous faith in the vows of the dharma-body in its manifested form of Amida Buddha, we know buddha-nature to be this mind of trusting faith. The buddha-nature is the true nature of reality, and the true nature of reality is the buddha's dharma-body. Therefore, we speak of two dharma-bodies of "buddha," the dharma-body in itself as the nature of reality and the dharma body in manifested form. The dharma-body in itself as the nature of reality has neither form nor color; therefore, our minds cannot grasp what it is and words fall short in attempting to describe it. From this cosmic oneness, however, a form of expression emerged that is called "the dharma body in manifested form" and this took shape as the monk Dharmākara. In his practice he put forth forty-eight great vows of an inconceivable nature, expressing what he hoped to accomplish as a bodhisattva. Among them are the "original vow of light immeasurable" and the "universal vow of life immeasurable."

The Bodhisattva Vasubandhu gave him the name, "Tathāgata of Unimpeded Light Pervading the Ten Directions." Since he had fulfilled the karmic causes set out by these vows... we now speak of him as the Tathāgata Amida Buddha... And it is in this manifestation that we speak of him as the Buddha of Unimpeded Light in All Directions.... Thus you should understand that Amida Buddha is light and, as light, is the form that wisdom takes.

[MLB]

GOOD AND EVIL

SHINRAN N.D., 775-6, 785-6, 792-3, 782-4

When Shinran states that birth in the Pure Land is tantamount to nirvāṇa, he follows the Pure Land tradition in affirming that regardless of one's karmic record, Amida Buddha will assist anyone who genuinely aspires

to reach his land. Thus, one attains liberation as an “ordinary person,” without excelling in morality, meditation, or wisdom. This raised a host of problems, for liberation in the absence of moral perfection would seem to obviate the very doctrine of karma itself. In other forms of Mahayana Buddhism, buddhas and bodhisattvas could intervene to alter someone’s karmic record, but there was no tradition of salvation by grace. All solutions to this problem in Japan ultimately derive from Hōnen, but it was Shinran who asserted that spiritual ineptitude itself characterizes the nature of the human condition, and to act on any other assumption constitutes egocentric delusion. Here are four famous passages from the “Tannishō,” where Shinran may appear to be advocating an antinomian position, an accusation for which his followers suffered much criticism. In actuality, however, Shinran argues not for antinomianism but for a traditional emphasis on the meaning of suffering caused by karma, the first Buddhist truth. Yet he pushes the boundaries of Buddhist thought in his deconstruction of the practice → transformation → liberation paradigm, where his existential honesty seems eerily modern. In the final passage included here, Yuien, Shinran’s disciple, paraphrases Shinran’s words to repudiate the antinomian idea that because Amida’s compassion is directed toward those unable to do good, there is no need to even try to avoid evil.

3. Even a virtuous person can attain birth in the Pure Land, how much more readily someone plagued with bad karma. Despite this, people in this world may say: “Even someone with bad karma can attain birth in the Pure Land, how much more readily a good person.” At first sight, that perspective may seem plausible; but actually it is contrary to the core meaning of the other-power based on Amida’s original vow. The reason is that when people sow good karmic seeds by what they perceive to be their own self-power efforts, they are not putting their complete trust in the other-power and, as such, they are not in accord with the original vow. On the other hand, as soon as someone’s commitment to self-power practice is turned over, because that person truly trusts in the other-power, he or she attains birth in the True Land of Reward.

.....

Replete with the defilements that plague living beings, no matter what practice we pursue, it is simply impossible for us to free ourselves from ‘samsara’. The impetus for the Buddha to set forth his vows was his sadness at our plight. And since those vows were specifically created in order for individuals limited by bad karma to attain buddhahood, they are the true cause of birth in the Pure Land for karmically unfortunate people who put their trust in the other-power. Therefore Hōnen* said, “Since a virtuous person attains birth in the Pure Land, how much more readily a person plagued with bad karma.”

14. There are some who insist that we should believe that the heavy burden of past sins accumulated during eight billion ‘kalpas’ is wiped out by a single voicing of the *nenbutsu*.... Those who are convinced that each invocation of the *nenbutsu* erases the karmic effects of their sins are obsessed with trying to wipe

their karmic record clean and thereby attain birth in the Pure Land. If this were the way things worked, since every thought that we have throughout our lives binds us to samsara, birth in the Pure Land would only be possible by unceasing *nenbutsu* practice up to our very last moment.

However, as we are constrained by the effects of our past karma and have no idea what we may encounter or when we might suffer the agonies of a serious disease, we may end up dying while not dwelling in the proper state of mind for such practice, making proper *nenbutsu* recitation quite difficult to do. How then do we wipe out the effects of bad karma created during that interval? Unless the effects of bad behavior are effaced, is birth in the Pure Land unattainable?

In fact, if we put our trust in the all-embracing vows of Amida Buddha, then no matter what may befall us, no matter what sinful behavior we may do, no matter if we die without reciting *nenbutsu*, we shall still immediately attain birth in the Pure Land.... The desire to rid oneself of the karmic effect of past offenses is a product of the mind of self-power, and reflects the deep-seated intention of praying to gain the traditional ideal of equanimity and concentration during one's last moments. This is someone who does not have faith in the other-power.

Postscript. I am at a total loss when it comes to fathoming good and evil. The reason is that if I could understand what is considered good in the mind of a buddha, then I could claim to understand good, and if I could understand what is considered evil in the mind of a buddha, then I could claim to understand evil. But as an ordinary person beset with the defilements living in a world as transient as a burning house, everything I see is just a wide variety of lies and nonsense—there is no truth to any of it. The only thing genuine in my world is *nenbutsu*.

13. A good mind arises because of the continuing pressure of good karma from the past. And when one finds oneself considering whether to do something bad, that is also the effects of bad karmic behavior from the past. This is why the Master⁷ told us to understand that every transgression done, even something amounting to a speck of dust on the end of a strand of hair on a rabbit or sheep could not occur if there were no residue of karma from the past. On another occasion, he asked me if I trusted in what he told me, and when I responded affirmatively, he then said, “If that is true, then would you not act contrary to whatever I might say?” When I said cautiously that indeed I would accept anything he said, he responded by saying, “If that is so, then kill a thousand men. If you do that, then your rebirth in Amida's Land of Bliss is assured.” At that

7. [The reference is to Shinran.]

point, I said, “Despite what you have said, I do not think I have it within me to kill even one person.” He responded like this:

“Well then, why did you claim that you would not act contrary to whatever I said? This shows that you need to understand that if you only follow what your mind tells you, regardless of what the matter is, then if you were told to kill a thousand people in order to attain birth in the Pure Land, you would go ahead and kill them. But, if there were no karmic conditions in your makeup to follow through on such demands, you would not harm anyone. It is not that we do not kill people because our heart is good. By the same token, even though we may have no intention of harming anyone, we might end up killing a hundred or a thousand people.”

Thus it is not the case with birth in the Pure Land that a positive attitude means a positive outcome and a negative attitude means a negative outcome. What Shinran was saying is that this reflects a lack of understanding of how we are saved by the inconceivable nature of the original vow.

At that time there was a man with a perverse understanding of things who said that since the vow will save those who act in a vile or harmful manner, it makes sense that we should intentionally engage in harmful behavior as acts leading to birth in the Pure Land. When Shinran heard of this man’s reputation for stressing the value of various forms of bad behavior, he wrote in a letter, “Just because you have an antidote is no reason to drink poison.” He did this in order to put a stop to this kind of distorted attachment. And yet it is not the case that bad behavior will be an impediment to birth in Amida’s Pure Land.

[MLB]

HISTORY AND THE TRANSHISTORICAL

SHINRAN 1247, 160

Prior to Shinran’s time, namely, the thirteenth century, Pure Land Buddhism tied its claims of legitimacy to the theory of the historical decline of Buddhism itself, a doctrine found in many Mahayana sutras. Because Pure Land Buddhism declared the path to buddhahood to be impossible in one’s present lifetime, it proffered the intermediate goal of rebirth in Amida’s Pure Land where, under its ideal conditions, buddhahood becomes achievable. The scriptures themselves differed over how the decline of the religion would occur over time, but in Japan the prevailing view was that there would be three periods regarding the availability of the Buddha’s legacy after his death. The third or final period would be characterized by a hopelessness. In contrast to the traditional “path to self-perfection” leading to buddhahood, the Pure Land path was considered to be the most appropriate for this final period, which typically was calculated to have begun some two centuries before Shinran’s time and supposed

to last ten thousand years. Shinran, however, asserts that the Pure Land path is most appropriate for anyone at any time, thereby challenging the prevailing historical consciousness of his day.

The teachings of the path to self-perfection are for the period of the true dharma when the Buddha was in the world, but not for all other times during the periods of the semblance dharma, final dharma, and when the dharma disappears altogether. That age of the true dharma is already gone and those doctrines run counter to the abilities of people today. But the true lineage of the Pure Land teachings compassionately draws in all people who are mired in karmic difficulties regardless of whether they lived when the Buddha was alive, or during the periods of either the true dharma, 'semblance dharma', or final dharma.

[MLB]

KIYOZAWA Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903)

Kiyozawa Manshi, who lived and wrote in the last decades of the nineteenth century, left an impression on generations of philosophers after him, including Nishida Kitarō*. As one of the first generation studying western philosophy at Tokyo University, he published on questions and thinkers at the core of philosophy, writing at a time when the Japanese philosophical vocabulary had not yet been settled. At the same time he was a devoted practitioner of 'Pure Land' Buddhism, and cut short his graduate studies in philosophy to work for the Ōtani branch of the 'Shin' sect, which entrusted him with setting up the first modern Buddhist university in Japan. Kiyozawa lived through a civil war that ended the feudal system of the shōgun, only to see it give way to a new dictatorship of previously disaffected samurai who were staunchly anti-Buddhist. His most active period of writing reflects a time when the Buddhist community was struggling to regain its social legitimacy after decades of attenuation at the hands of the ruling oligarchy.

The passages in the first of the three selections below, written in quaint but intelligible English when Kiyozawa was thirty years old, are from the second chapter of a remarkably lucid attempt to forge a credible philosophy of religion at a time when there was no precedent in Japan. The second, written at age forty-one, the year of his death, is a thoroughgoing analysis of the meaning of ethics and morality from the perspective of Buddhist religious concerns. In it Kiyozawa ignores political pressure to use the authority of the Buddhist tradition to teach an increasingly nationalistic form of ethics "to strengthen the nation" against its perceived enemies. His insistence that the purpose of Buddhist priests is to lead people to religious truth in spite of worldly notions of ethics remains striking today. The final passage, composed a year earlier, shows him adopting his considerable study of Hegel to qualify the central Pure Land belief in 'other-power' as an "absolute."

[MLB]

OUTLINE OF A PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

KIYOZAWA Manshi 1893, 136–40

1. *Finite and infinite*. Finite and infinite have been two great items of thought from ancient times. Though their relation has not yet been clearly explained away, yet it is never denied that the items have inseparable relation with each other. Let us briefly try to enunciate this relation. Every thing is what it is by being distinguished from other things. *Omnis determinatio est negatio*. But distinction or negation is or implies limitation. Hence all things of the

universe are *finite*. But how is it with the entire universe? It must be *infinite*, for nothing exists out of the universe to limit it.

2. *Dependent and independent*. Every finite is finite because it has other finites besides it and is limited by it; thus, A is finite because it is limited by B and B is finite because it is limited by A. Thus every finite is *dependent* on the other for its finiteness. Hence all the finite are *dependent*. But the infinite, requiring none to limit it, is the *independent*.

.....

8. *Identity of the two terms*. Is the finite and the infinite of the same substance or not? If not, there must be a substance of the finite besides that of the infinite. This is contrary to the definition of the infinite; for, then, the infinite must be limited or finite. Hence they must be of the same substance. But the substance of a finite can not be identical with that of the infinite; nor the substance of a million or a billion finite even can be so. Only the substance of an infinite number of the finite can be identical with the substance of the infinite. Hence there must be an infinite number of the finite. Or, in mathematical expression: $A \times \infty = \infty$.

9. *Organic constitution*. The mode or structure in which the numberless finite forms the one body of the infinite is an *organic constitution*. Numberless units are none of them independent of, and indifferent to, each other, but are dependent on, and inseparably connected with, one another. Not only so, but by this very dependence and connection, every unit obtains its real existence and significance. This is most easily understood from the organization of our body; whereof every part, say a hand, is dependent on, and inseparably connected with, the rest of the body, and by this very dependence and connection it has its existence and significance.

10. *Mutuality of prince and subjects*. Such being the nature of organic constitutions, when a finite wants to keep up its life or character, it must take other finite as its organs to support itself. For instance, if finite A wishes to sustain its life, it must have B, C, D, etc., for its organs, and, if B wants to support its life, it must in turn have A, C, D, etc., for its organs. This holds good with any other finite. In other words, when we take up any finite as a prince (so to speak), all the other finite become his subjects and serve him; so that, whenever we take a set of a prince and his subjects, we get the universe or the infinite with it. The relation, in which every finite is a prince and all the other finite become his subjects, we denominate the *interdependence or mutuality of prince and subjects*. This is the deepest relation of things religiously considered. We may also call it *the relation of the owner and the property*, thereby meaning that, whenever a finite is regarded as the owner, all the other finite are his property. Applied to our own case, when any of us feels himself as the prince, all things (animate and inanimate) of the universe are his subjects; or when he knows himself as

the owner, all things are his possessions. That this is the real nature of things is the subject not only of the deep religious conviction, but also of the ordinary mode of thinking....

11. 'Self-power' and 'other-power' (or salvation). There are two different ways in which the finite looks on the infinite. The one way is to take the infinite as *potentiality* while the other is to regard it as *actuality*. This is simply in accordance with the necessity of our knowledge, whereby whenever we recognize a thing, we must either take it as potentiality (as seed) or regard it as actuality (as plant). Now if we take the infinite as a potentiality, it must be understood as an *undeveloped capacity*, while if we regard it as an actuality, it must be understood as a *developed reality*. It must exist *within* the finite, for it has not yet appeared as the infinite, while on the other hand, the actual reality must exist *without* the finite, for it has already manifested as the infinite. Referring this to the practical side of religion, we say that the unity of the finite and the infinite is attained either by the *development* of the *internal* capacity of the *finite* or by the assistance or *grace* of the external actual reality. The former is termed the *self-power gate* (or path) and the latter the *other-power* or *salvation gate*. The explanation of the denominations is as follows: the former is that in which the finite is required to use its own powers to develop its potential capacity, while the latter is that in which the finite, not using its own power, is led to unity by the other's actual power. These two gates are the most fundamental distinction in religion. Unless we pass through either of these gates, we can never enter the true state of religious life. Someone may say that there is no need of the two gates, because the infinite, existing both in and out of the finite, may help us to attain the infinite by the double influence of the potentiality and the actuality at the same time. The answer is that it is an impossibility, for it requires us to have the seed and the plant in one body at the same time.

MORALITY AND RELIGION

KIYOZAWA Manshi 1903, 148-58

Now, with regard to the issue of precisely what is good and what is bad, although all ordinary people feel this is perfectly obvious, looking at the research of scholars we find that things are in fact not at all clear. What is considered good in country A may be considered bad in country B, and the reverse may also be true. Moreover, what was considered good during a former age may be seen as bad at a later time within the same country. The converse also occurs. This being the situation, there are inevitable doubts about what is truly good and what is truly bad. When people speak of a morality or religion

that is relevant and practical, however, they have little interest in such debates or doubts. When practical morality or religion is the basis of one's concern, prevailing conceptions in other countries or in previous eras are simply not considered. The crucial point is now, directly before us—deciding what action we should take. At such moments nothing else matters. For most people, their approach is simple: in their heart of hearts what they feel is good is good, what they feel is bad is bad. Were it possible to always do what one thinks is good and never do what one thinks is bad, all systems of morality and religion would affirm this position.

On the other hand, if we address ourselves to the question of why morality and religion are so difficult to practice, we must first recognize that when individuals try honestly to base their actions on their perception of right and wrong, things do not turn out as they expect. In fact, the harder one strives, the more problematic the situation becomes. As understanding of the difficulty progresses, one becomes still more concerned, and this concern brings with it a variety of arguments on the subject of good and evil.... This ushers in new difficulties which in turn create a stronger stimulus to execution. Now, once again, with an even deeper zeal than before, the individual returns to the path of single-minded cultivation of practice. It is interesting that at this stage many people who are either well-grounded in scholarship or possess strong intellectual leanings will spend long periods of time, even decades, in intellectual debate. Among those with no academic training or relatively weak intellectual inclinations, however, there are many who easily succeed in breaking away from this maze of argument and investigation....

These notions of doing good and avoiding evil are basic ideas expressed in all teachings; but if we look into this one step further, we can say that, in fact, rather than calling these "teachings" they should be seen as natural desires. Even without relying on any discussion of teachings, we are naturally endowed with desires motivating us to do good and avoid doing bad. But if it were truly possible to act on these inclinations without difficulty, then even if we abandoned all inquiries into this issue, we should still be able to do what is morally correct. But things do not really work this way and, in fact, even when ethics are taught with extreme care, still no one can fully put into practice what one has been taught. To the practice of morality applies the saying: a three-year-old can speak of it but even an eighty-year-old cannot do it.

Although the perfect practice of both conventional truth in 'Shin' Buddhism and common, secular ethics or morality may be difficult, some degree of success is possible. If one gradually cultivates oneself, in fact, one can increasingly draw closer to perfection in practice.... But strictly speaking, on this point we must draw a distinction between conventional truth in Shin Buddhism and common morality. The general attitude toward common morality is that we really have

no other way to proceed: one way or another our moral progress must proceed on track. For, regardless of whether or not it is actually possible, we have no choice but to commit ourselves to carry out these ideals one step at a time. Even if one's resolve is firm, however, when it comes to the point of the actual implementation of the morally ideal act, one gradually falls into a state of anxiety. In the end, people either turn to religion or become hopelessly despondent about their own future....

In any case, for Shin Buddhism, conventional truth does not aim at the usual goal of competency in the implementation of its teachings such that we perform praiseworthy deeds; its efficacy lies elsewhere. Accordingly there is a great difference in the tenor of Shin conventional truth and that of common morality. Put in another way, it does not really matter whether one intends to do something splendid or something wretched; the goal of the conventional truth teaching in Shin lies elsewhere.

One may wonder, then, what the purpose of Shin conventional truth actually is. The answer is simply that it aims to lead the individual to the perception that it is difficult to carry it out. Although there may be differences between those who have attained faith as it relates to absolute truth and those who have not, in either case the aim of enabling someone to appreciate the *impossibility* of moral practice is identical.

By way of explaining the profound beauty of this, let us first turn to those who have not yet attained faith. Having perceived the difficulties in common moral practice, such people enter the religious path and thereby proceed down the road to the attainment of faith. At first glance, this may not seem like much, but in fact it is not a simple matter. For the single basic impediment blocking the entrance to other-power faith is the conviction that one is capable of practicing self-power discipline. Although there are many forms of disciplined practice based on self-power, the most ordinary pursuit is that of ethical or moral behavior. As long as someone thinks proper moral action is indeed possible, that person can never enter into other-power religion. Thus, to seriously try to put into practice the ideals of morality and ethics, only to recognize that in the end the results do not accord with what morality or ethics would dictate, is in fact an indispensable condition for becoming religious. In this case, the focus is the overcoming of the superstition that self-power is indispensable, but whether it be the Shin teaching of conventional truth, the morality and ethics common in society, other Buddhist ideals, or the attempt to do good in every action, it does not matter. The teachings of Shin conventional truth are the most favorable, however, because they are constructed in a way that directly opens the door to absolute truth.

There is also a contrary proof of this. When observing someone who looks upon the Shin Buddhist teaching of conventional truth as if it were no differ-

ent from common morality, we will see how that person is attached to their ability to do the right thing, as well as the anguish they face over questions like “Should I abide by this or not?” or “Can I do without this or not?” We will feel pity for the error of that person’s attachments, but we also delight in the fact that our own situation is peacefully resolved. Indeed, questions of responsibility or obligation such as “Should I...?” or “Can I...?” occupy a predominant share of the anguish in our lives; their influence is simply enormous. Though the Shin Buddhist form of conventional truth does contain elements of a command idiom expressed in terms of “Do this” and “Don’t do that,” generally speaking, however, in its core it does not approve of such exterior pressures... Even in cases where anguish is created from the use of such enjoining language, it is not comparable to the anguish experienced under the deluded thinking associated with common morality. In other words, when arbitrary notions of “You must do this” and “You must not do that” are added to the delusory abstractions of common morality wherein one is ordered to “Do this” and “Don’t do that,” the situation may escalate to where it seems a solemn command has come down from God or the Buddha saying, “You absolutely must do this,” or “It is strictly forbidden for you to do that.” People accordingly come to think that the crucial matter of their salvation will depend on their ability or inability to implement so-called proper moral behavior, consequently feeling “If I do not do this, I will not be saved,” or “If I do that I will not be saved.” When things reach this level, people feel extremely anguished regarding their capacity to behave appropriately. Whether or not one is able to implement the conventional truth as taught in other-power-based Shin Buddhism, however, has not the slightest relation to the most important issue of one’s salvation. Though there may be some anxiety over one’s ability to implement Buddhist ethics as called for in scripture, not only is this incomparable to the agony arising from the delusory abstractions of ordinary morality, but the natures of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist concerns in this area are completely different. One is like the agony of being tormented by demons, the other is like feeling shameful before the great compassion of the Buddha.

Given this situation, we know that outside of the issue of faith in the absolute truth, the Shin Buddhist teaching of conventional truth is not something that sets out to impose rules and regulations on human behavior. If it were offering regulations for our actions, we would expect its principles to be definite and precise. In fact, whether it be simply restrictions on behavior, duty to the laws of the state, or the five Confucian virtues of ‘humaneness’, ‘righteousness’, ‘propriety’, ‘wisdom’, and ‘sincerity’, in Shin Buddhism, such matters are decidedly vague.

There is no need to enumerate every instance of this in detail, just as there is no need to settle on what it means. It applies to whatever approach one takes:

it is therefore acceptable to see this as either imploring one to practice what is said to be good or urging one not to do what is said to be bad. In either case the individual will reach the point where he awakens to the fact that the perfect practice of either cannot be possible. This awakening is nothing less than the elation of faith in absolute truth. The conventional truth teaching is thus nothing less than the means to perceive absolute truth from its backside by means of faith. That is to say, as opposed to the positivity of absolute truth, conventional truth is appealing for its negativity. For that reason it is a great misconception to think that the conventional truth teaching exists in order to compel people to uphold standards of human behavior, or by extension to benefit society and the nation. If the conventional truth teaching were expounded as a basic duty to the laws of the state or the precepts of benevolence and humanity, as a matter of course it would be conducive to the performance of these duties to some degree. In fact such concerns are an appended phenomenon. Since there is a degree of efficacy in these secondary aspects, however, their esteem in society has resulted in the main point of the teaching being overlooked entirely. Despite the fact that the essential thrust of the doctrine is religious, it is its appended moral elements that seem to be valued most highly—a strange set of circumstances indeed!

In general, when one brings together the ideas of Buddhist conventional truth and morality, or Buddhist conventional truth and the nation, one should take care to explicate the qualifications of each. Looking first at how conventional truth and morality relate to one another, our primary need is to know what is meant by conventional truth. And if one looks into this, what becomes immediately apparent is that conventional truth stands alongside absolute truth in the doctrine of other-power Shin Buddhism. In other words, Buddhist conventional truth is a teaching of religion rather than a teaching of morality. It is not a humanist teaching but a Buddhist teaching. Seeing it in this way, it goes without saying that this so-called conventional truth is something to be explained by a religious person and that its goal must be to produce religious results.

Morality, on the other hand, is morality—it is not religion. It is a humanistic teaching, and has nothing to do with the way of buddhas. Hence it should be expounded by a specialist in morality with the goal of producing moral accomplishments. Although politicians do not avoid speaking about business matters, politicians are not merchants. Although the world of business is not unrelated to the growing of grain, merchants are not farmers. In that we differentiate between religion and morality, there is no need to confuse their domains. If one does not recognize the distinction between religion and morality, taking the stance that religion is just morality and morality is just religion, then any discussion of the relationship between Buddhist conventional truth and morality is pointless. Furthermore, from that perspective one would not be discussing morality in relation to conventional truth wherein conventional truth is itself

contradistinguished from absolute truth, for both Buddhist truths end up as teachings of morality.

The argument is made that while it may be acceptable to draw a distinction between religion and morality such that religious people preach religion and moralists preach morality, the preaching of religion itself has the effect of destroying morality and is therefore problematic. Though this may seem like a small irritation, there is really nothing that can be done about it. If morality is that weak, then its dissolution may not be such a bad thing. It is, after all, the duty of a religious person to teach religion. But one fulfills that duty for its religious effect, certainly not because one intends to do away with morality....

One wonders, however, how relevant such vague arguments are to the reality of our situation. Just what is the professionally religious person supposed to teach? Such a person is in no position to choose between someone who has killed another human being and someone who has not, or to be concerned over whether or not the person before one is a thief, or whether or not someone who wants to commit adultery should be allowed to do so. Speaking from the religious point of view, one has no choice but to stress that infinite compassion embodied in the Buddha does not alter its salvific intent based on whether or not someone has committed murder, theft, adultery, or any other sin.

How do specialists in morals hear this? Is this something that they feel will destroy morality, something that will vitiate humanist values? If there are people who assert such things without hesitation, they do so rashly. Anyone who clearly understands why religion and morality are distinguished would have to say this: "To not scold someone for having committed murder, theft, adultery, or lying is truly what religion is supposed to be." Nevertheless, from a humanistic, moral point of view, murder and theft are heinous crimes; licentiousness and falsehood must not be permitted. The people who commit these offenses are all transgressors against humanity and, in a moral sense, depraved individuals. It is thus without denigrating morality that we advocate that religionists should expound their teachings from a religious standpoint, and moralists should preach about their moral concerns. Standing separately, there should be not even a hint of any conflict of interest.

Consider the mind of someone who has murdered, stolen, had improper sex, or lied. If his moral concerns came before his religious concerns, he would repent and thereafter devote himself to a moral path. If he gave precedence to religion over morality, he would rush at once to a portal of religion. If he were someone who needed both religion and morality, then after repenting his sin, he would simultaneously commit himself to the paths of both. If he were someone who did not reflect upon either religion or morality, he would wander in the dark night of his crime just as he is. We can also use this model to understand those people who have not committed crimes like murder, theft, and so forth....

Issues such as these demand precision. The distinction between religion and morality should now be clear: namely, religious advocates uphold the religious dimension of life and moral advocates maintain the moral dimension of life. If each works to his full capacity, then each will contribute his own meritorious services to society and the nation.

[MLB]

ABSOLUTE OTHER-POWER

KIYOZAWA Manshi 1902, 110–13

1. The self is nothing other than what yields to the wondrous workings of absolute infinity, giving itself over, just as it is, to an existence that has fallen into the particular circumstances in which it finds itself; this is what the self is. It simply rides on the absolute infinity it yields to. Therefore, regarding the issue of life and death, there is no sense of despair. If there is indeed no despair over life and death, how could there be any over lesser issues? If one is banished, that can be accepted. If one goes to prison, one can submit to it. Slander, rejection, a flurry of insults—why should these things impinge on our thoughts? We should instead focus our attention on what has been allotted to us by absolute infinity and enjoy it, should we not?

2. All being, in all its many transformations throughout the universe, belongs to the wondrous workings of this single, great, inconceivable. This appears to us as the matter-of-fact, ordinary phenomena we are used to, toward which we never give even the slightest thought of reverence or worship. We have no understanding of it and no feelings about it at all. But even if we did have some slight sense or grasp of it, how could it not be disorienting?

The reflection of a color, the perfume of a scent, these do not come from any original power arising from within the colors and scents themselves. They can only be based on the power that puts things into motion in the single, great, inconceivable. This is not only true for colors and scents—what about us ourselves? Where we come from, where we are going to, there is nothing we can control one way or another with our own desires. And it is not merely that things do not go as we expect them to while we are alive or after we die. We have no autonomy either when it comes to the arising and disappearance of individual thoughts in the present. *We are held in the palm of absolute other-power.*

3. We must die but when we die it does not mean we are extinguished. Life—that is not all we are. Death is also who we are. We have life and death, side by side. But we do not have to be affected by life and death. We are a spiritual existence outside of life and death.

Yet life and death are not things we can determine by ourselves. Life and death occur entirely according to the wondrous workings of the inconceivable other-power; for this reason, we should not be elated or saddened by life or death. If this is so for life and death, how much more does it hold for other changes. Insofar as we are one among the immeasurable changes of the universe, we should only appreciate the wondrous effects of the infinite other-power.

4. Do not ask, do not search. What is it that is lacking in you? If you think something is lacking, it would probably be your faith.

What the 'Tathāgata' requires of you, you have already been endowed with. If you feel that what you have been endowed with is insufficient, it is all but certain you will never be satisfied with anything else you can gain.

If you suffer from feelings of insufficiency, you should probably deepen your training and study whatever is needed to settle into the commands of the Tathāgata. To seek them in someone else or something else is base and ugly, and an insult to the commands of the Tathāgata. But even if the Tathāgata would not really take offence, what of your suffering?

5. Infinite other-power, where is it? We see it within what we are born with; what we have naturally is a manifestation of infinite other-power. Respect this, esteem this, show gratitude for your debt to the Tathāgata.

Still, people do not look within themselves for what is sufficient, but chase after externals, following others in an effort to complete themselves. How troublesome. Chasing after something outside oneself is the origin of greed. Following after others is the source of resentment.

6. What would be a method for training oneself? It is said that one must engage in self-reflection, that one must perceive the great path. If you can perceive the great path, you will not feel any insufficiency in yourself. And if you feel no insufficiency in yourself, then you will not seek anything anywhere else. If you do not seek anything elsewhere, there will be no other to fight with. Satisfied in yourself, not seeking, not fighting, what under heaven could be stronger than this? Where could there be anything greater than this? It is when you first enter the world in this way that you will be able to express the great significance of your autonomous freedom.

In this way there will be no injury to the self from any thing or person external to it. To be apprehensive about possibly being injured is delusional, and one must eliminate such delusions.

7. Autonomous persons always position themselves on the edge of the cliff of life and death. Murder or starvation—one must always be prepared for such things.

If you are already prepared for murder or starvation, then when you have

food or clothing, you will make use of them. And when they have been used up, you will be comfortable with your impending death.

And if you have dependents like a wife and children, then their clothing and food come first. That is, whatever we have, we put ourselves aside and supply them first. What is left over should be used to take care of ourselves. But I must not worry about how they will be nourished if I die. If I have confidence in the great path of *absolute other-power*, that is enough. This great path cannot possibly abandon them. Somehow they will find a way to be taken care of. If in the end they do not succeed in this, it is because the great path has ordered their death and they must accept it. As Socrates said, “If I went to Thessaly and I were not here, heaven would employ compassion for people to see that they are taken care of. If I now depart for a distant land, how could they not be taken care of?”⁸

[MLB]

8. [The reference is to the end of Plato’s *Crito*. The actual text reads: “Do you fancy that if you are an inhabitant of Thessaly they will take care of them, and that if you are an inhabitant of the other world that they will not take care of them? Nay; but if they who call themselves are good for anything, they will—to be sure they will” (Benjamin JOWETT 1937, 1: 438).]

SOGA Ryōjin 曾我量深 (1875–1971)

Soga Ryōjin was one of the most innovative Buddhist thinkers of the twentieth century, but unlike some of the other philosophical minds of modern Japan, he focused on his own tradition of 'Shin Pure Land Buddhism' throughout his life. As a young student, he lived in a communal study center started by Kiyozawa Manshi*, and was one of the first graduate students in Shinshū University. In 1904 he joined the faculty, but the school was subsequently moved back to Kyoto and renamed Ōtani University. Thus began a long and tumultuous relationship with the University that led to his resignation or dismissal on ideological grounds three times before he was finally appointed president in 1961 at the age of eighty-six.

Soga's writing assumes a vast knowledge of Buddhist doctrine. He is often difficult to follow, not least because of his unique and not always clearly defined vocabulary. His still living legacy to Shin thought includes a critical stance toward a positivistic view of Buddhist history, an engagement in a kind of demythologizing of his own Pure Land tradition, influenced by studies of the historical Jesus movement and the work of Nonomura Naotarō (1870–1946), who was similarly purged from the faculty of Ryūkoku University for attempts to clarify and limit the role of mythical thinking. Soga's aim was to identify Amida Buddha as the religious dimension of the 'Yogācāra' notion of unconscious mind (*ālaya-vijñāna*) and to identify 'Dharmākara' Bodhisattva, the monk who through diligent practice became Amida Buddha, as the true savior of mankind and one with whom all aspirants can more readily identify. The selections that follow are all similarly centered on the theme of restoring religious symbols to their original meanings as the search for authentic human existence. Soga argues that objectifying the core images of religion and rationalizing their doctrinal relation to one another can be an impediment to this restoration. At the same time, Soga resists mere subjectivism, insisting on the objective reality of the object of religious belief. Written in a direct and sharp style, the passages show an attempt to challenge the interpretations of Pure Land orthodoxy from a philosophical point of view without dismissing the ultimate need for faith.

[MLB]

SHAKYAMUNI, SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE

SOGA Ryōjin 1938, 15–17, 20, 22; 1917A, 274–5

'Shakyamuni' Buddha was, of course, a unique and superior spiritual person, but insofar as he appears as a human being, his light cannot be limitless.... Once the world entered the period of the 'semblance dharma', the light of his personality waned and could no longer serve as an object that people could believe and trust. The Shakyamuni of 'Mahayana' Buddhism became a

doctrine, idealized and completely removed from history. From an ethical figure he came to display a trans-ethical face.... Shakyamuni became a being from the distant past and an idea that lay in a far-off future.... In the attempt to bring together this idealizing of his person and personalizing of the ideal, a view of the Buddha was built up in which the essential Shakyamuni was made to reside forever off on Vulture Peak, which then became the center of faith....

This Shakyamuni is no longer a truly historical person; he is an idealized shadow. The so-called ever-abiding Shakyamuni of Mahayana is nothing more than a ghost image of the subjectivity of his creators. Such an ideal produced by an arbitrary mind is in no way the ultimate saving power, the final haven.... Sincerity demands that we not take the ideal to be merely formal and subjective but must believe it to be at the same time real and objective. In other words, we cannot be satisfied with a perfection that is merely a subjective concept and not also an objective reality. Contrary to what those who follow the self-power path may think, Amida Buddha is not a product of arbitrary subjectivity; he is a transsubjective savior.

.....

At this point, dry, tasteless reason is powerless. We must directly enter the realm of mystery and believe in the reality of the 'Tathāgata' Amida as the true absolute and ultimate subject that transcends the individual subjectivity of all sentient beings. To be sure, within the realm of reason we cannot allow for the existence of a person beyond individual subjects. But neither can relative reason satisfy us. After all, the real realm of religion is faith, and faith can in no way exist apart from the mystery.... Why do I believe in mystery? Because the universe and the self are mysterious....

In the realm of knowledge the subject is only a subject and therefore requires objective reality apart from and independent of the subject. In the realm of faith, however, faith is both subject and absolute mystery, so that apart from this subjective faith there is no further need of an objective Tathāgata.

Present-day disciples of Nichiren* are saying that Shakyamuni is an actual historical person and all the other buddhas are merely idealizations of him. But only those who believe in buddhas coming from all directions can claim to believe in Shakyamuni Buddha. Is not my access to a historical person like Shakyamuni extremely indirect in comparison with the myriad buddhas who are more directly part of my experience?.... We must not confuse a teacher or master with a savior. Those who confuse the two fall into exclusivism as a matter of course....

It is a mistake to seek a universal savior of the world in one historical person. The achievements of such a person's existence and factual genealogy may be

certain, but what authority does this have over me as a subject? Christ-centered Christianity and Shakyamuni-centered Buddhism are slave ideas. We need to be passionate about the subject of humanity that gave birth to Shakyamuni and Christ.

Shinran clearly distinguishes his precursors in faith from the savior. The precursors are historical persons; the savior needs to be lord of a pure world of intelligibility. A historical person is a provisional appearance of the light, one suited to our needs, whereas the direct inner manifestation of reality lies in the subject of the intelligible world; it alone is immediately real.

This is the background of what appears in history. Historical persons are all shadows of ideals of the self, the fulfillment of idealized buddhas accommodated to the needs of living beings. This is especially true in the case of the founders of religions who take the form of a perfect fulfillment totally cut off from reality. They are our teachers and our fathers but not our saviors. The true savior has to be my actual self. For those of us who venerate them, historical persons like Nichiren, Shinran*, Shakyamuni, and Christ, are not actual human beings, but avatars of an ideal. It is rather the 'Dharmākara' Bodhisattva who is a real human being whose salvific merits are transferred to me, a true person whom I experience immediately. He is the true savior, who casts his light from eternity into the depths of my intelligible world. Shakyamuni is my teacher, my ideal self; Dharmākara Bodhisattva is who I am, my *real* self.

[JVB]

MONOTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM

SOGA Ryōjin 1900, 264–6; 1918, 239–41; 1917A, 269; 1917B, 447

On the one hand, the inanity and meaninglessness of conceiving of God as a personal reality apart from Jesus Christ serves as the rationale behind the emergence within Christianity of the doctrine of the Trinity. On the other hand, it shows that modern theism has absolutely no idea of the meaning of religion since it fails to grasp the profound meaning of Christianity's recognition of the mysterious God of the universe at work in the life of this man Jesus Christ. What can it mean, after all, that Christians consider God, the object of their faith, to be love and to be omnipresent?... Is it not idle fantasy to personify the universe? It may well be that, basically speaking, love cannot be explained without involving a principle of the universe, but trying to explain the universe by means of love is putting the cart before the horse.

Granted that the glory of the person of Christ and his spiritual activity need to be grounded in the universe, I cannot imagine that the universe itself is to be

exalted or consists of love and mercy. I certainly cannot conceive the universe as a mere mechanical thing; I believe that there is spirit in the universe. But there is no way I can believe that the universe has aims the way human beings do, and certainly not that it would make mercy its aim.

.....

The doctrine of the Trinity is an expression of longing for a share in the august life and infinite sympathy of Christ, which is then located within God. In the same way that those who lack the capacity for deliverance cannot feel the need for salvation, so, too, those who feel infinite gratitude toward the person of Christ already bear a spark of the divine spirit in their hearts. Thus, the God who is the object of faith in the man Christ is the very spirit and light of the self. Such an idea of God may not be equal to such persons' intuition, but even if they hold to the superstition of a personal God existing apart from the self, I cannot believe that such a vague and dreamlike idea would dominate the whole of one's activity. Aesthetic sense, and above all religious feelings, do not allow it. There may be aberrations in their thought, such as taking the unity of three persons as a merging of the three into one, but would these not be due rather to the fact that such believers have not yet come to a truly Christ-centered faith? The reason Christianity has come to have such great power is that it has recognized God in the self and in Christ; in other words, that it rejected the God of imagination and adopted the God of reality.

Similarly, the ground of Buddhist faith lies in the light itself that shines at the bottom of the human heart; it does not lie in a universal reality at the bottom of the universe. The idea itself is majestic but everything stops there. It is not ethically exalted or merciful or the object of my gratitude; it is neither the object of religious faith nor the direct cause of faith. The true ground must be a light that lies at the bottom of... the authentic aspiration of human life; only this can be the foundation of my true ideal. In that sense, Shakyamuni and I are one. No God or Buddha is superhuman, since that would limit the meaning of humanity, reduce it to sin, and deprive it of its spiritual nature.

In essence, polytheism and monotheism are one. In its very inability to embrace polytheism, monotheism affirms, I believe, that its essence is self-centered prayer, a mere mutation of polytheism. This is indeed the case. A look around at the global confusion caused by the present world war demonstrates that monotheism, as a self-power religion, is in fact polytheistic. The God of the Germans and the God of the British both allege to be the God of Jesus Christ, but the fact that they can be fighting with one another and all the while professing the same God is proof of their polytheism.

Their God is a supernatural God. They think of "nature" as actual reality and therefore try to posit God's reality above nature's. Their nature is material, and

hence their God amounts to no more than a passing breeze of fresh air, cut off from nature and from dealings with the natural dimension of human beings. In other words, divinity and naturalness oppose each other in the human being, making the contamination of real life with barbarism unavoidable. The 'Pure Land' Buddhist view of nature is basically different from theirs. First of all, we take nature to be the pure ideal, and as a result we do not consider the false life we actually live to be true nature. Nature, we believe, is grander and more exalted. I can recognize nature in the wild life of plants and animals, but this naturalness resides in their inner life. Nature does not consist in their outer form as it is accessible to reason, but in that which expresses itself in them. I do not believe in a supernatural God. When all is said and done, we cannot rise above nature. What the monotheists call nature is *actual nature* and their supernatural reality is *true nature*.

All of this may seem no more than quibbling over words: we may call nature actuality or claim that it is an ideal, but this makes no difference beyond the words we use. Still, people who do not understand what language is cannot really communicate with each other. Many people seem to see language as no more than an instrument for human convenience.... For my part, I see no way around the admission that the three ideas of God, nature, and reality form the basis for human reflection, and they are completely identical with one another. They are the ultimate ideal of human life. Human beings always and without ceasing pursue this great ideal.

Why then would one want to make God alone into a supernatural ideal, to make nature into a material actuality, and to take reality as a way of naming what the two have in common? We need to reflect calmly on how these three relate to actual human life. God and nature both stand for full and consummate objective reality. God being a person and nature being 'dharma', the two concepts are somewhat differently nuanced but their content is one and the same. Of itself, nature is God naked; nature is nature adorned with God. The same reality appears in the foreground (the context of our aspiration for deliverance) as nature, and in the background (the point of departure for helping others) as God. We might say that nature is the context of wisdom and God is the ground of mercy. The two differ in form according to the angle from which they are viewed—the one as transpersonal, the other as personal—but ultimately they are one and the same reality....

This brings us to the question of pantheism and monotheism. On the one hand, given the variety of desires to which the appearance of the divinity accommodates, God must be plural. On the other, when it comes to the basic reality of these appearances, the true God must be one. Even so, a single God whose self-assertion entails negating the multiplicity of gods remains one God among

many, a singularity relative to a plurality. Moreover both views are clearly representations bound to self-attachment. What distinguishes polytheism from monotheism is only the way their respective representations are bound to ego-centered views and desires—the one taking shape *a priori*, the other through *a posteriori* discrimination. In other words, it is a matter of simplicity and refinement, of shallowness and depth.

Nearly all religions need to reject and kill the many gods, in order to set up a single God.... This inclines us to the superficial conclusion that in order to establish the one Buddha 'Amida', we must reject the multitude of buddhas proceeding from all directions. But the object of Shinran's faith, the Tathāgata of unhindered light that shines everywhere and on everything, is a Buddha whose very life consists in bringing to life myriad buddhas everywhere, not a buddha who asserts his life by negating others. Here Shinran's religion distinguishes itself from other types of monotheism. The very life and self-affirmation of the one God of Christianity depends on negating and killing all other gods wherever they are to be found.

[JVB]

SELF AS BUDDHA

SOGA Ryōjin, 1901, 271, 273–5; 1914, 28; 1917C, 124; 1917D, 181–2

From the moment there is a self, there is doubt; doubt is the proof that the self exists.... Self-awareness is an ideal; there is no awakened human being in the world. An enlightened person would be one who has reached the goal.... Thus we must not confuse faith with awakening. Faith is reality; it is what establishes the self self-consciously. After faith there is still doubt, contradiction, and the incomprehensible.

There is no ego where no ego is sought for. I have often experienced self-forgetfulness in the face of nature. This is the basis of the gospel of naturalism. The universe is only an activity of causes and effects; it has no self-awareness, no personality.... The self is nothing but faith, illusion. For that reason I must only follow the 'Way' of the universe. Consciously I am in part within the law of causality and in part anxious to escape it. The very idea of the ego in some measure contradicts the law of causality, though I can never be totally autonomous and free of that law.... This is why I cannot be completely subjectivist. The unity of universe and ego is an ideal, not a given reality....

The universe gradually identifies itself with the ego. In fact, it applauds the enfolding of the self. The universe keeps it from self-destruction and sees that it

has eternal life. We can stop worrying and go on assured. Virtue is not solitary; it is sure to have a neighbor.

The people of the 'self-power' schools pride themselves exclusively on the subjective Tathāgata and negate the objective Tathāgata; the people of the 'other-power' school cling one-sidedly to an objective Tathāgata, and fall into despair. This is because they are not in touch with true personal life. I am neither a believer of the self-power school nor of the other-power school. I believe only that my own self does not exist apart from the person of the great bodhisattva vow who, throughout the infinite reaches of the cosmos, is my true self. The "I" that has been clinging to my ego forever and ever is not the true I. My true self is rather the one whom I have been rejecting forever and ever. Once I discovered this, subject and object changed places completely.

The Tathāgata does not call out, "You, common mortal of sin and 'samsara'." He shouts about himself: "I am the common mortal of samsara"... The one whom the Tathāgata addresses as "you" is not the common mortal of karmic evil but the bodhisattva whose enlightenment is achieved.... Here—wonder to behold—subject and object change places, the human and the dharma, the active and the passive, the individual and the environment turn into one another. This conversion of subject and object is truly the only wonder of human life.... We must first make the distinction of subject and object as clear as it can be, since confusing the two is a frightening thing and to be avoided at all costs. Only when the distinction is clear can we encounter the wondrous overturning of subject and object.

Only in the world of souls, which is truly one and truly many, do a true "you" and a true "I" exist. Only in the spiritual world of true accepting-without-rejecting is there an embrace from the heart that calls out "I" and "you."

In the world of the spirit, the only truly real and serious world... it is always the Tathāgata who calls and living beings everywhere who listen. Of themselves, living beings do not call; they hear in the recurrent call of the Tathāgata their own eternal cry.... Thus, the silence of living beings is a genuine inward manifestation of the great silence of the Tathāgata, just as Amida's vow is an outward expression of the desire of living beings for bliss.

[JVB]

YASUDA Rijin 安田理深 (1900–1982)

As a young man Yasuda developed a serious interest in Zen and then 'Shin Buddhist' thought. After the death of his mother, at age twenty Yasuda traveled to Kyoto, where he continued his study of both forms of Buddhism, in the end casting his lot with Shin Buddhism because of its commitment to the realization of the 'bodhisattva' path within lay life. With the help of Kaneko Daie, whose writings had left a strong impression on Yasuda, he entered a secondary program of studies at Ōtani University, where he attended lectures by Kaneko and by the person who became his closest teacher, Soga Ryōjin*. Both Kaneko and Soga became well known for their fresh interpretations of Shin teachings, viewing 'Amida' and the 'Pure Land' as reflective of states of mind rather than external realities. Kaneko was forced to resign from the university in 1928 and was ultimately removed from the registry of Shin priests. In 1930 Soga resigned under pressure.

After years of working as an independent scholar and teacher, Yasuda was ordained a Shin priest in 1943. Following the line of his teachers, Yasuda sought to place Shin Buddhism in the mainstream of 'Mahayana' thought, drawing especially on the 'emptiness' and 'Yogācāra' traditions. The following excerpt is taken from a 1960 lecture presented in Kyoto some months after Yasuda had an extended conversation with the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich. In this lengthy meditation on the invocation of the name, '*namu-Amida-Butsu*', Yasuda argues that humans live in a world constructed by consciousness through the process of naming, yet they fail to recognize its empty and mentally constructed nature. For Yasuda, like all names, *namu-Amida-Butsu* is a provisional name, but within the context of the Shin tradition, it is also a special name. It is the name that frees humans from the limits of ordinary consciousness and calls them back to their original identities as buddhas.

[PBW]

SELF-AWARENESS AND THE *NENBUTSU*

YASUDA Rijin 1960, 329–30, 337, 340–5

Within 'Mahayana' teachings, from the perspective of a purely religious standpoint, human beings are existences that are affirmed in an absolute way after passing through an absolute negation. If that is not the case, human beings cannot in fact become human beings. That understanding of the human being is the human being seen from the standpoint of religion. Human beings are existences that carry a great contradiction within them. To speak of human beings as existences of absolute contradiction is something that can be said on the basis of religious self-awareness; apart from religion, that probably can-

not be said. In Buddhism, that sort of deep, fundamental self-awareness is expressed through words like “faith” or “awakening.” In short, those words refer to the wisdom of nondiscrimination.

Whether we speak of common sense or philosophy or science, it is undeniable that all transmit a kind of ‘wisdom’, but the difference between them and religious wisdom lies in the idea of awakening. Awakening is not rational or objective understanding. Even if one speaks of it as truth, it refers to a truth to which one has awakened. Consciousness that is in conformity with the truth is called understanding. It is not the kind of truth that, once experienced, allows one to remain just as one was. Even though we may attain a scientific understanding of things, there is no need to cease being the type of human being we were because of that understanding. Indeed the fact that we are human beings is further reinforced. But as regards understanding to which one has become awakened, once that sort of understanding has been attained, one cannot return to the human being one was before. It represents a kind of truth that transforms human beings. That kind of truth is truth to which one has become awakened. The awakened human being is the ‘Tathāgata’. The human being, just as he or she is, is the Tathāgata. That sort of ‘wisdom’ is called the “wisdom of nondiscrimination.” When one thinks about this in relation to the problem of names I have been discussing, it takes on some interesting dimensions.

According to Asaṅga,⁹ when a ‘bodhisattva’ achieves the wisdom of nondiscrimination, that is, when people attain that understanding, sentient beings who existed as ordinary people are transformed into bodhisattvas. In that state, they abide among names among which no discrimination of objects is made. Here the concept of names and objects appears. In other words, Asaṅga describes the state of our having achieved the wisdom of nondiscrimination with the words, “they abide among names among which no discrimination of objects is made.” The word “abide” means “to abide with ease”; in other words, they abide with ease in the realm of names. The ordinary person abides in the realm of discrimination. When discrimination is negated, one becomes a bodhisattva. Asaṅga’s words are a response to the problem of where those bodhisattvas abide.

Perhaps it is hard to follow what I am saying when I use words like “bodhisattva” and “ordinary person.” Those who are deluded are ordinary people; those who are awakened are bodhisattvas. A bodhisattva is not an especially eminent person. A true human being who exists with a self-awareness of human existence—that is a bodhisattva. Human beings live but they also exist with an awareness of the fact that they are living. Dogs and cats live, but they are not

9. [Asaṅga (300–370), together with his half-brother Vasubandhu, is credited with having founded the ‘Yogācāra’ school of Mahayana Buddhism.]

aware of their existence. It is only human beings that, while they are alive, live with an awareness of their existence. Therefore, speaking from the perspective of existence, among all living things, the opportunity to have a self-awareness of existence exists only in the case of human beings. To live with an awareness of oneself—the being who lives in that fashion is called a bodhisattva. An ordinary person exists without a self.

.....

By coming into contact with its origin, consciousness becomes aware of itself. If it is not the case that consciousness can awaken from dreams, then no matter how humans may seek to gain awakening, they cannot become awakened. We can say that, even in dreams, not only can we become conscious of things as objects, but we can also be conscious of consciousness. That which can awaken us from such a consciousness is consciousness. Therefore, the self-awareness that is faith is the empty nature of the mind or the self-awareness that is consciousness returned to its source. If it is not that sort of consciousness, if one only vaguely refers to self-awareness, the sort of consciousness I am referring to is not made clear. The Zen master Dōgen* used the phrase, “To shine the light back on oneself.” Usually when we shine a light on something, we shine it in a forward direction. If we are only conscious of the things before us, human beings can never escape delusion. However, consciousness shines both forward and backward. It can shine light on the dream that arises from only shining one’s light forward. In that way it returns to the true nature of the mind.

.....

Consciousness is not only something that can reflect on itself; it is also something that can achieve awakening. In other words, that which can awaken from a dream is consciousness. If it is not that sort of self-awareness, one cannot indicate religious self-awareness. Reflective self-awareness is merely subjective self-awareness. That is, it is objectified as a subject and stands in contrast to the objective. As long as consciousness is objectified, it will not return to the self. Consciousness that does not return to the self is not at ease. The self-awareness that is faith—if we use the language of the *Awakening of Faith*—is a self-awareness similar to “the original awakened state.” The awakened state is the awareness of self-awareness, but it is also an awareness contrasted with illusion.

Names are incidental names. Even if it is the name of the Tathāgata, it is an incidental name. Although a name is just a name, the self-awareness that is just a name is not just a name. The awareness of religious self-awareness has two meanings. In other words, to be aware is not to know things. Although it has the meaning of the self-consciousness of knowing that one knows, at the same time, it also has the meaning of “to awaken” which is contrasted with delusion.

If the idea of self-awareness means no more than knowing that one knows something, it would be a limited concept. No matter how much one traces back

the subjective, it only remains a limited concept. It can only remain as cognition of the subjective. In that case, it is discrimination; one cannot achieve a mind at ease. It is the subjective self-awareness of the ego which is contrasted with the objective. It is still subjective. However, at the same time, awareness has the meaning of “to open one’s eyes.” It is not that which simply knows the self; it is that which is awakened. If it is that which can be known, it is no different than the ego. The self cannot be the self just as it is in its deluded state. The self is that which is awakened; it is self-awareness that is awakened. If it is not that, one cannot indicate the self-awareness that is faith.

.....

‘Amida’ is something without form; when something without form becomes a name, that which is without form calls to that which has form. No matter how much it may call, that does not mean that there is something that is calling. Rather, we receive the call at that place where there is no thing that calls. It is the voiceless voice. It is not that, having been called, I exist. Rather, I myself take form as the call. I am transformed as the call. It is not that the call exists outside of us and that we listen to it and are moved. I take form as the call.

The name of the original vow does not indicate a thing. It is a name that indicates a relationship. It indicates the relationship of I and Thou, not the existence of something. However, that relationship is not the relationship of one thing to another; it is the relationship between that which has form and that which does not. It indicates the relationship of time and eternity. The relationship is always mutual. It is not one-sided. To be called is to have heard, is to have responded. It is not that there is the call and then, later, one responds.

The call is something that exists only for those who have heard it. It does not exist for those who have not heard it. If we say that it exists for those who have not heard it, that kind of call would be an objective thing. Therefore, the call is at the same time a response to it. The relationship in this case is a mutual relationship. It is the name that indicates a relationship of call and response between that which has form and that which does not. If we express this idea using the unique language of the Chinese people, it would be “the mutuality of receptivity and response” between sentient beings and buddhas. In today’s language it would be a “mutual relationship.” When the existing mind of sentient beings is receptive, the ‘no-mind’ of the buddhas responds. It is not a relationship of one thing to another. It is a relationship of existence and nonexistence. Just as we call the totality of all things the “all-encompassing ‘dharma’” or the “all-pervading dharma,” this, too, is not an objective thing. Because making an object of it is prohibited, we call it empty. We may also call it ‘absolute nothingness’. In that way, that which indicates the mutual relationship of existence and nonexistence is that which we call the name. That which is without form, through the name, takes on a relationship with that which has form.

The name of Amida Buddha is not simply referring to Amida. As I explained earlier, the problem of sentient beings is being responded to. Through *namu-Amida-Butsu*, human beings are being responded to in a fundamental way. They are not responded to according to human ideas. This is something much deeper than humans merely reflecting on themselves. In other words, humans are responded to as Tathāgatas. But because of that, it is not that humans have become something other than humans. Rather, because of that, humans become humans for the first time. Therefore, *namu-Amida-Butsu* is the means whereby humans are caused to return to their origin. And it is also the term that indicates that return. That which causes the return refers to the words of the original vow, but that which has returned refers to the words of the mind of faith. In the sense that *namu-Amida-Butsu* brings about the mind at ease, it is dharma and it is also the person that gains the mind at ease.

When the Tathāgata becomes the name, that is, when we speak of saying the name, the fact that the word “reciting” is expressly added to the name of the original vow indicates that anyone can do it. It is the way by which anyone, anytime, anywhere can return to his or her origin. The word “to say” symbolizes the fact that anyone can do it. This is not just raising one’s voice. It symbolizes the fact that no effort is required. That it does not require our own effort is because it embodies the true effort that transcends our effort. That is because it is practice. Through the name, the Tathāgata is practicing.

Our attainment of the wisdom of nondiscrimination, or the attainment of the believing mind, or again the realization of the stage of nonretrogression, all exist as practice. The name is practice. That which we call the name is the name that is the practice of sentient beings. It is the name of the Buddha, but the name of the Buddha does not indicate the Buddha; rather, it is the name that is the practice of sentient beings. It is the name that causes the Tathāgata to reveal itself as sentient beings; in other words, it causes ‘thusness’ as non-thusness to return to thusness. It is that kind of practice. To attain ‘trusting faith’ or to realize birth in the Pure Land is for sentient beings to return to their original nature, and it is the name that causes that return. In that sense, the name of the Buddha is the name that causes sentient beings to become Buddhas; therefore, when we refer to the name of the original vow, it is the dharma, the ‘buddha-dharma’. The name of the Buddha is the buddha-dharma. The name of Amida Buddha is the buddha-dharma. In that sense, dharma is language that stands in contrast to human beings. To say that it is dharma is to say that it does not need human beings.

That the Tathāgata was made known in the form of the name expresses the fact that it is the Tathāgata on which we can rely and in which we can attain peace of mind. That is the name. If that which is without form were only without form, we could not rely on it nor could we be saved by it. When it becomes

the name, it is not that the Tathāgata exists in a personified form. It is not thought to be a personified existence; rather, it is dharma. To take refuge in *namu-Amida-Butsu* is to conform to the dharma. When the name is made into a thing, it becomes a *persona*; in other words, in that case we establish Amida Buddha as an objective absolute or as a personified existence that stands over against us as the other. If we regard Christianity as directed toward the other, then Buddhism is directed to the origin. The Tathāgata is the original nature of sentient beings, not the other that stands over against sentient beings. The other has form, but there is no form to original nature. That which does not require the power of the other is dharma. When there is no dharma, we have no choice but to set up the other. When there is dharma, in other words, when there is the name, there is no need to set up an other. This is the reason that it is said that one should rely on the dharma and not rely on an other.

In sum, what I wanted to say to you is that the name is originally a name, a provisional name. The name is just a name; however, it is the form of that which is not just a name; it is function and it is the practice that causes one to return to it. It is not that we negate provisional names and arrive at the true reality. Provisional names *are* the true reality. True reality, in the words of the Great Teacher Tanluan, is the '*dharmatā*'. This is not a *dharmatā* that negates means. It is a *dharmatā* that affirms means.

[PBW]

Confucian Traditions

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Confucian Traditions Overview

The standard translation of “philosophy” that emerged in the Meiji period (1868–1912) was a neologism fraught with ancient and modern Confucian nuances. Yet far more powerful than the new word *tetsugaku* for catapulting Confucianism to the forefront of Japanese philosophy was the impressive oeuvre produced by the first Japanese to hold a chair in philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University, Inoue Tetsujirō* (1855–1944), who authoritatively identified traditional Japanese *tetsugaku* with various schools of early-modern Japanese Confucianism. In his monumental trilogy, Inoue revealed that well before western philosophy had entered Japan, Confucian thinkers of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) were producing a prodigious body of philosophical literature. Inoue’s trilogy, which includes *The Philosophy of the Japanese Wang Yangming School* (1900), *The Philosophy of the Japanese Ancient Learning School* (1902), and *The Philosophy of the Japanese Zhu Xi School* (1905), described the development of the three major schools of Tokugawa Confucian philosophizing, the Zhu Xi School, the Wang Yangming School, and the so-called Ancient Learning or Kogaku School, interpreting their ideas in terms of western philosophical notions such as idealism, realism, materialism, utilitarianism, and epistemological objectivism and subjectivism. Inoue’s studies persuaded many Japanese and western scholars that Confucianism had been a vital expression of Japan’s regional philosophical traditions.

Inoue’s later work was on “national morality,” an amalgam of Confucianism, Shinto, and Buddhism. From the 1920s through World War II, Inoue’s formulations of Japan’s national morality increasingly exalted the nation, imperialism, the Way of the warrior (*bushidō*), and militarism. Inoue’s writings on national morality drew so strongly from Confucianism and were otherwise so full of ideological propaganda that in time his other claims about Confucianism as philosophy came to be suspect. As a result, contemporary Japanese philosophers rarely cite his works, and most contemporary Japanese departments of philosophy exclude Confucianism and other forms of traditional Japanese thought from the philosophical curriculum. In postwar Japan, Confucian

thought is still studied, but mostly by scholars of history, the humanities, literature, or cultural studies who view it as “thought,” intellectual history, or ideology. Denying that Confucianism is philosophy, however, need not result from a rejection of Inoue’s ideas on national morality. Scholars receptive to the notion that philosophy is more than western philosophy remain open to understandings of Japanese Confucianism as philosophical in nature, if not as philosophy in the western academic sense.

HISTORICAL SETTING

Chinese Confucian philosophy entered Japan well before the Tokugawa era (1600–1868). Between the third and fifth centuries, with the introduction of written Chinese, Confucian texts first appeared in the Japanese archipelago. Over time, Confucian notions decisively influenced a host of things, including imperial names, reign titles, and the earliest Japanese attempt at articulating a constitutional definition for their polity (see *Prelude*). Despite the political significance of Confucianism, it was relegated to a subordinate spiritual level by Buddhist thinkers whose more alluring system, accompanied by artists, sculptors, artisans, and architects, facilitated penetration and predominance in Japanese culture for a millennium. The primacy that Buddhism enjoyed early on reflected its prominence in China and East Asia in general from around the sixth to the tenth centuries. During the Song dynasty (960–1279), however, the development of new, post-Buddhist statements of Confucian philosophy (often referred to in the West as neo-Confucianism) challenged Buddhist dominance in philosophical thought by affirming the full reality of language and meaning, the self and the world, ethics and metaphysics, as well as beauty, truth, and pleasure. With the growth of neo-Confucianism, especially as systematized by Zhu Xi (1130–1200), Buddhism encountered a challenge that ultimately resulted in its subordination as intellectuals increasingly came to accept the new philosophical vision of a fully real world.

The Tokugawa was an ironic age of warrior rule by an elite armed with swords rarely used, an elite that rose to power through warfare and then proceeded to govern in a civil, philosophically sophisticated manner. Tokugawa rule brought two centuries of relative peace, thus providing cultural foundations for the golden age of Confucian philosophy in Japan. During this time, Confucian philosophers were frequently supported by members of the samurai elite, or were of warrior birth themselves. Yet even during this age of hereditary divisions between samurai, peasant farmers, artisans, and merchants—*de jure* divisions sanctioned by ancient Chinese legalist philosophy (not Confucianism, as is often asserted)—Confucian philosophers addressed the world from an all-

embracing, often *a priori* perspective meant not so much to omit or marginalize as to comprehend holistically.

The unfolding of Tokugawa Confucianism is often described much as Inoue outlined it in his trilogy, with the Zhu Xi and the Wang Yangming schools serving as early, largely servile expressions of Chinese philosophies from the Song and Ming dynasties. These schools were absorbed critically by the Ancient Learning School, a more distinctively Japanese expression of Confucianism. It included as its luminaries Yamaga Sokō* (1622–1685), Itō Jinsai* (1627–1705), and Ogyū Sorai* (1666–1728). Even Maruyama Masao* (1914–1996), the single most influential postwar interpreter of Tokugawa Confucianism and a critic of Inoue's views, followed Inoue's three-school interpretive schema in fashioning his otherwise very different account of Tokugawa Confucianism. Nevertheless, there is scant documentary ground for Inoue's triadic approach to Tokugawa Confucianism. Undoubtedly Zhu Xi's thought, primarily expressed in his *Commentaries on the Four Books* (the *Great Learning*, the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*), had a considerable impact on Tokugawa philosophizing. The ideas of Wang Yangming (1472–1529) were evident, but less compelling over time. From Zhu Xi's thought came any number of revisionist interpretations, some little more than superficial simplifications, others much more critical and insightful. The ideas of the Ancient Learning scholars were more of the latter variety, challenging Zhu Xi and his defenders with critical reformulations of neo-Confucian philosophy.

Striking here is that Confucians were critically discussing each other's ideas. While Sokō was rarely mentioned by later philosophers, he aggressively criticized Zhu Xi even as he fashioned his own, Zhu Xi-like system of Confucian philosophy. Jinsai also criticized Zhu Xi and many other Chinese thinkers, but he in turn was later lambasted by Sorai. These debates, which can be seen as signs of philosophical vitality, made the Tokugawa period comparable to the ancient Zhou dynasty in China (1046–221 BCE) when the hundred schools of philosophy contended with each other. But in the Tokugawa, it was not so much schools debating schools as it was individual philosophers taking on one another in a relatively free exchange of ideas, where the underlying assumption was that by means of such debate and discussion, truth could be established.

DOUBT AND SKEPTICISM

Tokugawa Confucianism was never monolithic, nor was it given to imposition of rigid orthodoxy. While an attempt at control of "heterodox" teachings (that is, non-Zhu Xi teachings) occurred in the late-Tokugawa, the 1790 Kansei "prohibition on heterodox learning" only applied to schools supported by the Tokugawa shōguns. The ban was ineffective in curbing debate

and discussion of a range of Confucian ideas at the many private academies throughout Japan. If anything, during the Tokugawa, Confucian philosophy found many different expressions, most of which emerged from ongoing dialogue, critique, questioning, reflection, and revision of earlier philosophical expressions.

Respect for doubt and questioning is well rooted in the thinking of Confucius. In the *Analects*, Confucius advocated asking questions about matters that prompt one to doubt and to pursue learning with a readiness to question and think for oneself (xvi.10, xix.6). Agreeing, virtually all later Confucians endorsed the value of questioning, doubt, and skepticism in the learning process. In Song times, Zhu Xi stated, for example, that “students must first of all know how to doubt. Without doubt,” Zhu insisted, “there will be no progress in learning.” Ming philosophers such as Wang Yangming and Luo Qinshun (1465–1547) equally recognized the value of doubt. Indeed, an essential thread binding Confucian philosophers together is their shared estimation of the positive role of doubt and skepticism for progress in learning.

In Tokugawa Japan, Hayashi Razan* (1583–1657) early on acknowledged the positive role doubt could play in learning. Razan surely realized his encouragement of doubt would lead some to develop objections to the philosophical vision that he articulated. With Yamaga Sokō, Itō Jinsai, Ogyū Sorai, and many others, the neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi, and to a certain extent, that of Razan as well, was questioned systematically and reformulated in light of the doubts raised. Other Tokugawa Confucians such as Kaibara Ekken* (1630–1714) were equally given to questions about Zhu Xi’s thought. In his *Record of Great Doubts*, however, Ekken affirmed his commitment to Zhu’s learning even as he expressed his serious doubts on a number of points. In the later Tokugawa, thinkers such as Andō Shōeki* (1703–1762), Miura Baien* (1723–1789), and Ninomiya Sontoku* (1787–1856) formulated systems grounded in part in their doubts about earlier statements of Confucian learning.

LANGUAGE, TRUTH, AND MEANING

According to virtually all Confucians, Buddhist philosophers tended to downplay the value of language as the foundation of philosophical truth. Such thinking derives from the analyses of the Indian philosopher, Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250), whose *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Essays on the Middle Way) sought to prove that all terms—including those related to causality, time, space, substance, action, empirical experience, feelings, the Buddha, the four noble truths, and nirvāṇa—were ‘empty’ (S. *sūnya*, J. ‘*kū*’), and so misleading if taken to be fixed designators for independently existing substances. While allowing for provisional meanings at the lower level of everyday practical truths,

Nāgārjuna's two-leveled theory of truth affirmed that at the ultimate level, there was no transcending this emptiness.

Later developments in Mahayana Buddhist philosophy in Japan endorsed this estimation of the limited philosophical value of ordinary language. Challenging the Buddhist view, Tokugawa Confucians argued that words, language, and meaning were not empty but rather the most real and effective conveyors of significant truth. Although the Confucian affirmation of the reality of language and meaning might seem pedestrian, it amounted to a revolutionary about-face in the history of Japanese philosophy, one providing for a paradigm shift away from unconventional approaches to language and meaning, as evident in the often absurd wordplay of Buddhist 'kōan', and toward a recognition of language and meaning as indispensable means for anyone aspiring to a philosophical understanding of things.

The Japanese Confucian philosophical concern for right language and meaning was rooted in the *Analects* of Confucius. In one passage (XIII.3), Confucius is asked by his disciple Zilu what he would undertake first if given responsibility for governing a state. Confucius' response was that he would "rectify names." After Zilu questioned how that could have anything to do with governing, Confucius explained that if names were not correct, then everything from rites, music, government, and the doings of people would drift toward anarchic disorder and eventual chaos. However, if a ruler's aim were to achieve a just order, he would need to begin with the right ordering of language. Confucius concluded by observing that the "prince" is therefore always concerned that his use of words be correct.

Japanese philosophers, in advancing this methodology, were decisively influenced by a late-Song text, *The Meanings of Confucian Terms* (1223), commonly attributed to Chen Beixi (1159–1223). Having entered Japan in the 1590s during Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea, Beixi's work influenced the philosophical methodology of many Tokugawa Confucians including Fujiwara Seika* (1561–1619), Hayashi Razan, Matsunaga Sekigo (1592–1657), Yamaga Sokō, Itō Jinsai, Ogyū Sorai, and Arai Hakuseki* (1657–1725). In Beixi's text, Japanese Confucians recognized a methodology that provided a formal structure for expressing their vision of the 'Way', and one that signified far more than simply defining words. Analysis of language and meaning was, as Confucius understood it, directly relevant to defining the philosophical foundations of a just and well-ordered polity.

ETHICS

Confucian polemics against Buddhism took many forms, but one of the most fundamental related to understandings of human nature, existence,

and the foundations of ethics. The historical Buddha, Siddhārtha Gautama, explained, in the first of the four noble truths defining the essential outlook of Buddhism, that ordinary, deluded human existence is characterized by anguish and unsatisfactoriness. As a result, much Buddhist thinking related to how sentient beings could escape from an eternity of reincarnation in 'samsara', or the worlds of existence dominated by passions, ignorance, attachment, and suffering. According to Gautama, the self that most accept to be real is nothing more than a delusion. In reality, there is no independently existing ego or self (*anātman*). Similarly, the ordinary world is thought to consist of stable things, but is utterly lacking in self-supporting substance and amounts to little more than a transient flux of phenomena. Once we are liberated from ignorance, desire, and hatred, karmic bonds no longer dictate our rebirth into samsara, and the cycle of 'birth-and-death' is extinguished once and for all with 'nirvāṇa'.

The Confucian position could not be more different. Rather than deny the ultimate reality of the human self, Confucians take human existence and human nature to be the most fundamental realities. While Confucians differ regarding human nature, with many affirming the view of Mencius (371–289 BCE) that human nature is good at birth, and others suggesting that it takes various forms, some good and others evil, none characterized human nature as an illusion, the source of suffering, or something to be gone beyond. Confucians readily acknowledged that the world of existence is not perfect, but insisted that it can and should be improved and brought to a higher state of perfection. Similarly, while the self might lose sight of the original goodness of human nature, Confucians claimed that the challenge facing humanity is to recover the original nature of the self and improve its ethical capacity for engagement with others rather than set one's sights on escaping into the purported bliss of nirvāṇa and complete existential extinction.

In defining the core dimensions of ethics, Confucianism invariably emphasizes the family as the center from which moral practice develops, with relations between parents and children, husband and wife, and elder and younger siblings serving as the most cardinal. In many respects, Confucian ethics projects family ethics onto the polity, with the ruler described as the parent of the people, and onto the cosmos, with heaven and earth similarly described as the parents of the myriad things of creation. Confucians found little good in Buddhist thinking about the family. After all, Gautama had left his wife and son to set out on his quest for the meaning of life. With later Buddhism, renunciation of the family served as a metaphorical, and in many respects real, way of expressing that one had become a Buddhist.

METAPHYSICS

Confucius' concern was first and foremost with teaching ethical behavior in this world, not with defining a metaphysic. In part, however, Confucius' reluctance to discuss metaphysical issues was due to general agreement among ancient philosophers about the nature of things: none denied that the world of everyday experience was real. Later, however, in the wake of Buddhist claims about the insubstantial, transient quality of the world of *samsara*, Confucians felt compelled to formulate a metaphysics explaining the nature of the cosmos.

Far from affirming emptiness and illusion, later Confucians explained the physical nature of reality in terms of "generative force" or '*ki*', and its rational, moral nature as 'principle'. While often analyzed separately, *ki* and principle were, in the minds of most Tokugawa Confucians, inseparable. Therefore, there could never be *ki* without principle, nor principle without *ki*. Nevertheless, some philosophers did emphasize one of the two notions more than the other, giving rise to schools named after the metaphysical notion that was more privileged. Zhu Xi and his later followers appeared, at least to their critics, to give greater priority to principle, despite the fact that they repeatedly affirmed that *ki* could never exist without principle. As a result, Zhu's teachings have often been called the "school of principle."

In Tokugawa Japan, many Confucians challenged the purported overemphasis on principle, and instead gave priority to *ki*. While this *ki*-centered metaphysics was apparent in the philosophy of Hayashi Razan, later Confucians like Kaibara Ekken and Itō Jinsai put still greater stress on the unified generative force that was the substance of everything. Other notions that were most closely associated with Zhu Xi's metaphysics, such as the 'supreme ultimate' and the "ultimate of nonbeing," were often viewed with profound skepticism by Japanese Confucian philosophers.

SPIRITUALITY

Despite Confucius' reluctance to discuss spiritual matters at length, Tokugawa Confucians did so regularly, challenging Buddhist claims regarding the self, reincarnation, the 'Pure Land', and hell. According to the Buddhists, unenlightened sentient beings are fated, by their ignorance and attachments, to unending reincarnation in this world, or one of multiple temporary heavens or hells. One popular form of Japanese Buddhism, the Pure Land School, emphasized the prospect of such a rebirth in the heavenly western paradise of 'Amida' Buddha as response to the belief that in this 'final stage of the dharma', people could not save themselves through their own efforts. Rather, the compassionate

assistance of Amida was needed to gain entry into the Pure Land. Confucians rarely sanctioned such accounts of the afterlife, and often ridiculed Buddhist claims regarding heaven and hell as patently absurd. Confucians did recognize a legitimate form of spirituality, but it was in relation to the family in what has been commonly called ancestor worship.

Confucians found no basis for belief in reincarnation, although they did allow that each individual possessed a dual spiritual dimension composed of “ghost” and “spirit.” Typically discussed together, these were naturalistically associated with *ki*. Confucians allowed that the ghostly aspect of a person returned to the earth upon death, while the spiritual aspect returned to heaven. For a while, ghost-spirit remained proximate to the living, and thus deserved recognition and respect from family members. People were responsible for revering their ancestors. Beyond that, Confucians did not sanction engaging in ceremonies that had no spiritual relation to individuals or their families.

EDUCATION

Confucians have always been enthusiastic advocates of education and ‘learning’. During the Tokugawa, they emerged as the most systematic philosophers of education in Japanese history. According to virtually all Confucians, education was the exclusive means to human self-realization. Education was typically explained as a process that begins, as with calligraphy, with one imitating a model, and then over time coming to a level of performative knowledge that allows one to express one’s mastery of the subject. Confucians also emphasized learning for women. Works such as *The Great Learning for Women*, attributed to Kaibara Ekken, although hardly progressive in the modern sense, did recognize that women should understand their roles within their family and society.

The Tokugawa Confucians sharply contrasted their enthusiastic advocacy of education with Buddhist tendencies. The latter, in highlighting the soteriological nature of the ideas as well as the exceptional mental powers required to understand them, did not fit the Confucian model of secular, scholarly education. Buddhists allowed that even the illiterate could achieve the highest levels of enlightenment through instantaneous, mind-to-mind transmission, citing the case of Huineng (638–713), an illiterate wood-cutter whose superlative comprehension resulted in his being acknowledged as the sixth patriarch of Zen Buddhism. While Tokugawa education often took place in Buddhist temples, prompting the reference to these classrooms as “temple schools,” Buddhist attitudes toward book-learning remained relatively low, with textbooks often disparaged as conveying little more than the dregs of learning.

The most notable legacy of Confucian philosophy in Japan resides in the

extent to which it contributed to a well-educated society, one viewing the socio-political world seriously. The secular orientation of Tokugawa Japan, beautifully evident in woodblock prints depicting the world of nature and often centered around Mt Fuji, are graphic reflections of the Confucian emphasis on the reality of the secular world. Another legacy of Confucianism consists in the Japanese view of language and meaning as real. These two legacies served Japan well following the appearance of newly industrialized western powers in the mid-nineteenth century. The material power of the West, manifest in its gunboats, could be fathomed and matched, Japanese understood, by the study of their words and their meanings. And when the theoretical and practical systems of western learning were translated into Japanese during the Meiji, the neologisms devised often drew, as with *tetsugaku* itself, on the lexicon of Confucian philosophy.

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FUJIWARA Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561–1619)

Aristocratic by birth and a Zen Buddhist by early education, Fujiwara Seika developed a passion for Chinese philosophy while a monk at the monastery of Shōkoku-ji in Kyoto. Seika eventually renounced Buddhism and served various daimyō and wealthy merchants of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In the process, he met several Korean prisoners of war brought in by Toyotomi Hideyoshi's troops returning from their attempts to conquer Ming dynasty China. With the instruction of these Koreans, and especially that of the scholar Kang Hang (1567–1618), Seika acquired a more secular understanding of Song and Ming neo-Confucian philosophy than would have been possible at Shōkoku-ji, or any Zen temple for that matter. Seika's grasp of neo-Confucianism nevertheless retained nuances of the kind of eclecticism, allowing for the unity of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto, which was being taught at late medieval Buddhist temples. Though he lectured many powerful daimyō, including the founder of the new samurai regime, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), Seika apparently preferred his intellectual and existential independence from samurai lords. His final years were spent in and around Kyoto, where he lived the simple life of a scholar intent on quiet study and self-cultivation.

Among the works attributed to Seika, *A Vernacular Account of Human Nature and Principle* was reprinted numerous times throughout the Tokugawa period. Most modern scholars doubt that Seika actually wrote the text, and indeed the earliest known edition dating from 1650 bears no author's name. Since the book was long considered his, however, portions of it are included here, as an example of popular Confucian philosophy, along with an opening excerpt from his *A Digest of the Great Learning* and a shorter piece entitled "Ship's Oath," which was written for a merchant patron of his.

[JAT]

CLEANSING THE MIND

FUJIWARA Seika 1630, 390–1

If you have any plans of your own in 'mind', no higher wisdom will emerge. We may compare this to a mirror. Things are dust. If the inside of the mirror is clean and bright, a speck of dust can be wiped away immediately so that you can see clearly. The clarity and brightness in this mirror is called the 'void'. Within it there is spirit or what we may also call supreme goodness. The *Doctrine of the Mean* speaks of it as an equilibrium before the stirring of feelings (1.4) and the *Analects* as an "all-pervading unity" (1v.15). Where there

is clean and limpid lucidity within the mirror, there also are void and spirit. If one devises ways to dispose of things, those devices themselves become things. It only takes a single speck of darkness or murkiness in the mind for all kinds of thoughts to appear. Without these thoughts, clear knowledge would be born naturally as void and spirit, and as a result one would in all things “hit what is right without effort” (*Mean* xx.18). Thinking about not having thoughts entails having thoughts. It is not that thoughts are to be despised, only that thoughts should come to the fore naturally. This is what is called the great working of the whole. To teach substance without function, or function without substance, is heterodox learning.... Moreover, those who think the aim is to make the mind an empty void and regard this empty void as simply a state of being without thoughts or concepts, are blind fools. The void does not mean that one cannot tell north from south or east from west. That would be no different from hammering a piece of iron into a flat disk and looking into it like a mirror. In form it might be the same as a mirror, but it would lack the brightness to reflect things.

[JWH]

HUMAN NATURE AND PRINCIPLE

FUJIWARA Seika 1650, 399–400, 405–9

The Way of Heaven

The Way of heaven is the master of heaven and earth. Due to its formlessness, the Way of heaven is imperceptible. Nevertheless, one sees the operations of the Way of heaven in the succession of the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter—without disorder, in the birth of people into the world, in the blossoming of flowers and trees, and in the growth of the five grains. All of these are the workings of the Way of heaven.

The human mind is also formless yet it is the master of the body. This mind extends throughout the body, without exception, even to our fingertips and the ends of each strand of hair. Although a division of the mind of heaven, the human mind functions as our minds. Originally, the human mind and heaven were one body. Heaven and earth's womb conceives all things in the world just as the ocean's womb conceives all fishes. Just as water pervades even the fishes' fins, so does the mind of heaven thoroughly pervade the human mind. Thus, when one thinks compassionately, that thought penetrates heaven; when one conceives of evil, that too penetrates heaven. For this reason, the refined person is cautious even when alone.

.....

The original mind of heaven responds fully and with compassion to all things

between heaven and earth. Therefore people should consider feeling compassion for others as essential.... Preserving the order of heaven's Way should be considered essential. One ought first provide for one's family and one's retainers, and then go on to govern the state and extend compassion to the whole world.

Confucian Virtues

These are the virtues that people should practice day and night, morning and evening. 'Humaneness' means treating others compassionately. 'Righteousness' means acting in accordance with the 'principles' of the myriad things, without being unreasonable. 'Propriety' means respecting your superiors, and graciously receiving subordinates. 'Wisdom' refers to one's compassionate understanding. While humaneness means treating others compassionately, humaneness does not involve unnecessary kindness or compassion. While it is a breach of etiquette to be stingy, going to excess is another breach. Compassionate understanding, or wisdom, refers to complying reasonably with principles. Trustworthiness refers to not being deceptive. If a person is humane but not trustworthy, or if a person is righteous, polite, and wise but not trustworthy, then his or her goodness is in vain. 'Sincerity' is the body of heaven. Thus humanity should make trustworthiness the marrow of its moral practice. If this is done, people will form one body with heaven.

The Sun Goddess

The sun goddess is the divine lord of Japan, yet the imperial palace is thatched with reeds and our emperor's food is unpolished rice. With neither an embellished residence nor sumptuous cuisine, the sun goddess is compassionate towards the myriad people of all-below-heaven.... Past emperors have repaid the people's hardships by taking hoes in hand and participating in the first plowing ceremonies....

Shinto considers honesty towards and compassion for the myriad people as its ultimate concerns. If those who stand above are honest, then the multitudes below will be honest as well. If rulers are avaricious, the people will follow their example. If rulers follow the Way of sincerity in their minds and hearts, the 'kami' will provide their protection even if they are not invoked. The Way of sincerity is the sincerity of heaven's own Way. Offering gold and silver to spirits and buddhas, and then praying for one's selfish wishes is the first practice of fools. If ordinary people, people with just a modicum of the mind of the Way, are not subject to injustice, they will not come close to being evil. Yet if people are mistreated and reduced to suffering from hunger and thirst, then even if one prays to the spirits, will their blessings be received? If, however, one is honest and is compassionate to people, then regardless of whether one prays to the

spirits, one will gain their protection. Things that violate the Way of heaven do not become right simply because one prays to the spirits about them.

Emperor Yao

Yao was the sage king of China's four hundred districts. Shun was also a sage and a 'Son of Heaven'.¹ Because Confucius promoted them, their Way is also known as the Confucian Way. Those who study that Way are called Confucian scholars.

Although Yao was the Son of Heaven and emperor over the four hundred districts of China, his home was only three feet off the ground, his ceilings were thatched with unkempt cut reeds, and his porch was not even. He would not change his clothes until they were badly worn. He never ate exotic foods, but insisted on a fare of rough vegetables. And he treated everyone and everything under heaven as if they were his own. Through such virtue, Yao became the just precedent of proper imperial rule for countless aeons. Thus people have admired Yao's and Shun's reigns.

This is not to say that the way of Yao and Shun is grounded on anything incredibly mysterious. 'Bright virtue', renewing the people, utmost goodness, sincerity, reverence, the 'five constant virtues' and the 'five relations' are the highest concerns and the supreme notions of their Way. When one follows it, rectifying a selfish mind and being compassionate with all people, everyone and everything under heaven lives long. If one wields power through sly and crafty expediency, destruction will follow in one or two generations. If such rule lasts for five or six generations, it will inevitably end with war. Rulers should be advised never to resort to these.... Like the Way of Yao and Shun, Japan's Shinto also considers the rectification of mind and compassion towards all as ultimate concerns. What China calls Confucianism Japan calls Shinto. The names may differ but the spirit is the same. After Emperor Jinmu and around the time of Emperor Kinmei,² Indian Buddhism came to Japan. People took in their incredible, mysterious teachings and came to believe them. As a result, Shinto declined.

Shakyamuni Buddha

'Shakyamuni' Buddha was an Indian. The Indians are not a kind-hearted people and their land is ungovernable. Shakyamuni was an ascetic for six years and practiced self-mortification for another six. For twelve years he

1. [Yao and Shun are two of the legendary sage kings who supposedly ruled in the twenty-fourth century BCE and were revered by Confucius for their virtue.]

2. [Two emperors of ancient Japan; Jinmu is thought to have lived from 600 to 585 BCE, and Kinmei from 539–571 CE.]

confined himself to Mt Dandoku where he formulated his plan for governing India and explaining the tenets of Buddhism. According to Shakyamuni, one begins by thinking that the mind really exists. In the second stage of realization, one perceives the mind to be 'empty', and finally one comes to understand that the mind neither exists nor does not exist. This is how he explained the truth about the 'middle way'.

Pure Land Buddhism's claims about heaven and hell are meant to soothe people's minds, drawing on Shakyamuni's acknowledgment that the mind actually exists. Zen Buddhism has recourse to his idea that the mind is empty to assert that the mind does not exist but is only a byproduct of the five forms of experience. Tendai Buddhism holds that Shakyamuni neither existed nor did not exist, basing itself on his doctrine of the middle path. That Shakyamuni came to be associated with so many teachings was due to attempts to relate his teachings to various people, to soothe people's minds, to govern the state, and to bring peace to the multitudes. Thus it is that many have come to appreciate his way of thinking.

These days, however, monks preach Buddhism in order to make a living and often end up confusing people. To keep their minds undefiled by selfish desires, the direct disciples of Tathāgata Shakyamuni, Ānanda and Kāśyapa, did not allow themselves any possessions. Everyday they went out begging for their daily food. Today's monks accumulate wealth and jewels, cover their temples with gold and silver, wear damask and brocade robes, and offer to pray for others in the afterlife. Such practices, which were not Shakyamuni's intent, badly mislead people. Furthermore, these practices are inconsistent with the spirit of Shinto. The world has been greatly disturbed by the ways of contemporary Buddhist monks.

Differences between the Confucian and Buddhist Ways

In all the scriptures of Shakyamuni Buddha, many passages assert that the mind really exists, and that there is a heaven and a hell. Yet there are also many passages which claim that the mind does not exist, and that there is neither a heaven nor a hell. Shakyamuni's own conclusion was that the mind does not exist. Had he believed in the existence of the mind, even if only in a provisional sense, he would not have claimed that mind does not exist. For the same reason he concluded that there is no afterlife. Reflect deeply on this so that you understand it well!

The Confucian Way holds that people receive their nature at birth from the nature of heaven, and that this nature of ours later returns to its heavenly origins. If one's mind is deceitful, if one harms others, if one is jealous of others, if one's mind is wicked, or if one indulges in luxury, then one receives heaven's censure. If one does not come to ruin personally, then one's descendants will. And after death one's mind will wander about, unable to return to heaven. For this reason one should

stand in awe of heaven, try to manifest bright virtue, make one's mind sincere, practice the five constant virtues and the five relationships, manifest compassion, and rejoice in the prospect that human nature will return to its heavenly homeland at death. Praying that you return to heaven will not get you there. [JAT]

THE NATURE OF TRADE

FUJIWARA Seika, N.D., 126-7 (39-40)

Basically, the purpose of trade is to bring a surplus in one area to a scarcity in another so as to bring profit both to others and to oneself. Trade does not mean harming others while bringing profit to oneself. Even a small profit that is shared by both parties is actually great, and a profit that may seem large but is not shared is in reality small. What is called profit is the happy result of duties that coincide. Thus it is said that the avaricious merchant gives only three, while the decent merchant gives five. Keep this in mind.

Compared with our country, other countries may differ in customs and language, but the heavenly endowed principle is always the same. Do not forget what is common, do not be suspicious of what is strange, and never lie or brag. Even if the foreigners are not aware of it, we should be. "Trust reaches even to pigs and fish, and trickery shows itself even to the seagulls." Heaven does not tolerate deception; you should not disgrace the manners of our country. If you meet humane or 'refined persons' in another country, respect them as you would your own father or teacher. Ask about the prohibitions and taboos of that country, and adapt to its customs.

Between the heavens that cover us and the earth that holds us up, all people are brothers and all things are common; all should be seen as one in their right to humane treatment. How much more does this apply to people from the same country and to people aboard the same ship! If there is trouble, sickness, cold, or hunger, then all should be helped equally; do not even think of trying to escape alone. [WJB]

HAYASHI Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657)



Hayashi Nobukatsu received training from an early age in Zen Buddhism at Kennin-ji in his native Kyoto, but soon turned his attention to neo-Confucian thought, which had been greatly enhanced by the arrival of numerous texts from Korea. He studied briefly with Fujiwara Seika*, who in turn recommended him to Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) as a capable scholar-retainer. In line with tradition, Ieyasu insisted that Nobukatsu present himself as a Buddhist monk. Although Nobukatsu had been devoted to the study and popularization of neo-Confucianism, he agreed to move permanently to Ieyasu's castle-town

in Edo, shave his head, wear Buddhist robes, and go by the Buddhist name of Dōshun. Through strong determination, tempered by a compromising temperament, Dōshun established a lineage of neo-Confucian thought for himself and his disciples by presiding over instruction at Shōheikō, a neo-Confucian academy sponsored by the Tokugawa 'shogunate'. To later historians, he came to be known by his "Confucian" name, Razan.

Razan's philosophical ideas are in large part a reformulation of the basics of the neo-Confucian philosophy of Zhu Xi, especially as articulated in Zhu's *Commentaries on the Four Books*. Equally important in Razan's understanding of neo-Confucian philosophy was a work from the late Song dynasty by Chen Beixi, *The Meanings of Neo-Confucian Terms*. The text had first entered Japan in the 1590s by way of a Korean edition. Its systematic, conceptual explication of neo-Confucianism made it both a useful primer for beginning students and a powerful tool for establishing an orthodox understanding of neo-Confucian thought. Razan's most extensive philosophical text, a commentary on Beixi's text, reveals the extent to which he was influenced by the conceptual, language-oriented approach.

While for the most part loyal to Zhu Xi's thought, Razan departs from it in significant ways. One of the most obvious is in his lack of interest in the notion of "the ultimate of nonbeing and yet the 'supreme ultimate'," which even Zhu Xi seems to have feared was too abstract and metaphysical for most students. Razan does not reject the formulation entirely, but clearly follows Beixi in relegating it to secondary status in his thought. Moreover, Razan had little use for the practice of "quiet-sitting," a neo-Confucian meditative regimen meant to facilitate understanding of the originally good human nature of humanity.

Otherwise, Razan's thinking is largely consonant with that of orthodox neo-Confucians. Thus he understands the world metaphysically as the product of 'principle' and generative force or 'ki'. Like Zhu Xi, Razan equivocates over the relationship

between the two, sometimes implying that principle exists prior to *ki*, but most frequently returning to his insistence that principle cannot exist without *ki*. The original goodness of human nature is associated with principle, while tendencies toward evil are more a reflection of *ki*. He argues that through study and learning, especially of neo-Confucian texts, people can fully realize the goodness of their natures and overcome any bad inclinations accruing from *ki*.

More than metaphysics, Razan emphasized neo-Confucian understandings of basic ethical notions like 'humaneness'. This virtue, which defines the essence of humanity, Razan understood as an expression of love and compassion. Although an advisor to several shōgun and the samurai ruling elite of his day, Razan emphasized courage more as an ethical virtue associated with doing what is right rather than as a virtue of the battlefield reflecting one's fearlessness in armed conflict. In this sense, his service to the Tokugawa contributed significantly toward the increasing cultural sophistication of a warrior regime.

[JAT]

A VERNACULAR GUIDE TO CONFUCIANISM

HAYASHI Razan 1659, 584-5; N.D., 151-78; 1629, 142-3

Language

The minds of the sages and the worthies are manifest in their words; their words are found in their writings. Unless one understands the meanings of their words, how can one comprehend their minds? Even they never considered abandoning exegetical learning and the writing of commentaries.... Without "orthodox interpretations," people tend to use "this" to explain "that," or offer contemporary examples to explicate ancient matters.... Yet unless one understands the meanings of words, the works of the Confucian sages and worthies will be very difficult to read. Unless one reads the works of the sages and worthies, their remarks will be difficult to understand. Unless one understands their remarks, then how can one realize in oneself the minds of the sages and worthies?

Although they can represent the human form, even artists cannot depict the mind. Nevertheless, books can exhaustively convey the mind. Indeed, writings record the mind which is otherwise so very difficult to portray.

One should read the classics horizontally! Read them vertically! Read them from the left and from the right! Comprehend their source! Analyze them and synthesize them until you thoroughly penetrate them from beginning until end. Ultimately, you will understand that everything in the sages' writings culminates in a unified grasp of 'principle'. When you realize a mystical unity with

the sages' writings, one in which the self and those texts are nondual, you will have read them well!

Doubt and Learning

The way of 'learning' begins with completely comprehending principle and thereby attaining 'wisdom'. What is consistent with principle is good; what violates principle is bad. Knowing well the difference between good and bad is comparable to knowing, with certainty, that by plunging into fire or water, we will injure ourselves: if we understand this, we will never take the plunge. Similarly, if we know, with genuine certainty, the difference between good and bad, then we will do what is good without any doubts, and quit what is bad without any misgivings. If we have doubts, we should clear them through inquiry. By overcoming any doubts that might remain, we proceed to a faithfulness that harbors no doubts.

For example, it is said that upon having minor doubts, we might attain minor enlightenment. But with major doubts, we should achieve great enlightenment. If we have any uncertainties about things, we should clarify them so that we understand them. Unless we aspire to learning, we will not have the strength to doubt as we should. Even while focusing our thoughts on fathoming principles completely, entertaining doubts is proof that we are making progress in learning. When doubts and misgivings are resolved, our minds naturally become clear and principles of the Way are unobscured. If we do not resolve these doubts but instead allow them to remain, throughout our lives we will never be able to differentiate right from wrong. Leaving doubts unresolved is simply like putting a living creature in a bag, or shutting up an active and busy animal in a sealed box. Then things will not be able to flow freely from our minds.

If today one principle is investigated, and tomorrow, one more principle is inquired into, soon we will be free of doubts. If we thoroughly penetrate one principle, myriad principles will be penetrated, even though we have not investigated matters on a grand scale. Within a single principle, we can gradually progress from one to ten others. When these are investigated so that we completely comprehend them internally and externally, as well as their beginning and ending, then our understanding spans myriad principles.

In this, we move from the outside inwards, from the exterior to the interior, from the beginning to the ending, from shallow ground to the deeper, and from rough outlines to more detailed particulars. When all our mind's principles are investigated, we will have thoroughly exhausted the limits of wisdom. Considered relative to practice, while there are many extremities, there is only one source. For this reason, we can penetrate myriad matters by understanding only one principle, and we can comprehend various affairs with just one 'mind'.

What we refer to as “principle” is indeed our minds. Apart from our minds, there are no principles. If we thoroughly investigate principles, we will have neither doubts nor misgivings

The Mind

The master of our physical form created by the intermingling of principle and ‘*ki*’ is called mind. Since this mind contains the original principles of the supreme ultimate, it is empty and open like heaven. Lacking both shape and sound, it consists simply of moral goodness, and is void of anything bad.

At first, when our mind is quiet and at peace, there is nothing bad in it. Then we can well distinguish between which thoughts accord with principle and which do not. Yet if we allow our thoughts to wander off, we will certainly end up conscious of our selfishness, and our mind will become mixed up, impairing our judgment. Moreover, our mind becomes all the more troubled and disordered in doing so... Thus, if our mind is confused, or our vision is disturbed by things, even counting pillars becomes difficult. How much more will this be true if we confront a major task and have to take action? If our mind is confused or incorrect or startled, errors will certainly occur. Therefore, we must quiet our mind of oneness as it considers matters. Because the affairs of all below heaven number in the hundreds of millions, it is difficult to determine anything if our mind is not composed. Thus if we seek to learn and understand widely things of the past and present, our mind of oneness will become even more confused and obscured by the myriad relationships among things.... If we study but do not think, we will be unclear because there will be no place within our mind to grasp what we have studied. Likewise if we think but never study, then our mind will not be at peace because it will be filled with numerous unresolved doubts. Therefore, if we exhaustively seek to understand principles and to make decisions clearly in our mind, we will neither be unclear nor in doubt over matters.

.....

Though good and bad issue from the mind, originally the mind is good. The ‘will of heaven’, ‘righteousness’ and principle, human nature, and the mind are all one. How then can the mind be called bad? At the same time, as thoughts arise, there is good and bad among them. The arising of thoughts should be referred to as the feelings, which are like the flow of water. But “the mind of the sage,” it is written, “is like still water”—quiet, level water....

While the mind is essentially one, its active, moving aspect is called “the mind of humanity,” and its righteous principles are called “the mind of the Way.” When cold, we think of warm clothing; when hungry, we think of food. Eyes long to see beauty; ears long to hear interesting sounds; noses long to smell

pleasant smells. All such desires are produced by “the mind of humanity.” This mind has many selfish tendencies, yet harbors few impartial tendencies....

When righteous principles prevail in the mind, although we may think of food and clothing, we might still be willing to endure hunger and cold and decline food and clothing. Similarly, when righteous principles prevail we will not look at bad sights, nor will we listen to what one should not hear. Nor will we violate propriety in longing for things. Nor will we seek unjust wealth and fame. Thus this aspect of the mind is referred to as “the mind of the Way.” While everyone originally possesses this aspect of the mind, because it is difficult to manifest fully, and is apt to remain hidden or obscured, it is said that “the mind of the Way is subtle.”

“Being refined” means discerning and manifesting “the mind of the Way” so that selfishness is not mixed in at all. “Being unified” means solely to preserve and correct the mind at all times. If, by being refined and unified, we can make “the mind of the Way” the master and make “the mind of man” follow it, then even precarious situations will become simple, subtleties will become manifest, and all matters will naturally accord with principle.

The Five Relationships

In ancient times as in the present, relations between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother, and friends—these ‘five relationships’ have existed between heaven and earth. Since these ways have continued unaltered, they are called “universal ways”.... To understand this well is wisdom; having within one’s mind the feelings necessary for these five is humaneness; and practicing them well is courage. These are all, in every respect of practice, one genuine truth. Yet unless they are carried out with ‘sincerity’, then wisdom will not be wisdom, ‘humaneness’ will not be humaneness, and courage will not be courage. Unless practiced with sincerity, these relationships will be alienated from human desires and contrary to principle.

Humaneness

Humaneness refers to loving things. If we love things as much as we think of ourselves, then our humaneness will surely be genuine and sincere, devoid of selfishness. Under any circumstances, upon seeing a child about to fall into a well, even those who did not know the child at all would pity him, feeling that they should try to pull him out. However, there are others with debauched, twisted minds who think that perhaps the child intentionally jumped into the water. Or that since the child is someone else’s, it should be left alone. Others, acting out of anger, would kill their own children along with the fallen child. Yet

if anyone is so self-centered and selfish, they will surely regret it. The feelings found deep in our hearts do not allow such selfishness. However, humaneness is completely a part of the minds of any and all people, under any circumstances. By enlarging this mind, we leave off completely selfishness, regrets, and bitterness. If we extend to others what we wish for ourselves, why would we feel bitter about anything?

Humaneness involves the production of things. Righteousness involves eliminating what is bad. In killing a rat, the killing is not humaneness; yet to refrain from killing the rat is not right either. Deliberations as to whether one should kill a thing or help it must address matters of humaneness and righteousness. If by killing, one eliminates evil, then there is humaneness in the righteous act of killing. If that is so, killing the rat is humane. Killing thieves to admonish others against doing evil expresses this same mind. To think that humaneness consists only of compassion is to think simply of “small humaneness.” To admonish one evil person and thus provide for the goodness of myriad others is “great humaneness.” Therefore, while humaneness is love, a person is not being humane in loving evil persons. Rather humaneness consists in loving what is good and detesting what is evil. If we proceed in this way, what selfishness will there be?

Righteousness

Righteousness is the ground of the mind of humanity in decision-making. Following the times and circumstances refers to doing what is appropriate. While human life is a precious thing, if our minds do not consent, we will not accept food and will die. Or, we will not accept clothing and die. When deciding whether to accept them and live or to refuse them and die, more than calculating that we will live by accepting these things, we should ask if it accords with principle that we decline them and meet death. When facing an army advancing, we can face certain death by courageously fighting, or we might escape by fleeing. Yet if we conclude that circumstances are gloomy and that it is our time to die, then we will decide that it is best to advance, fight, and die. These are all cases of righteousness.

It is also righteousness that leads us to correct an error within ourselves out of shame by quickly seeking to do good. Righteousness, too, resides in detesting, rejecting, and discarding the evil that is found in others. Serving our ruler loyally also involves righteousness. Differing with friends in matters of opinion is a matter of righteousness, too. When one's friends refuse to listen to reproaches even when they are given enthusiastically, righteousness involves calling on their associates to help right their wrongs. Once this sense of righteousness is extended to everyone below heaven, people will all do good and refrain from

evil. Subjects will respect their rulers, inferiors will revere their superiors, and the customs of the realm will naturally lack any evil.

Trustworthiness

The sinograph for trustworthiness combines those for person and speech. Thus to say something that is not trustworthy is not to act like a person. This suggests that trustworthiness is sincerity, that it refers to what is not false... Trustworthiness is truth, respect for things, and sincerity. As truth, trustworthiness entails being doubtless; as sincerity, it means one has no misgivings about things. "Lacking even a modicum of error or deviation" means that those who are trustworthy do not mix up what is being talked about. It means that when they speak, their words can be acted upon clearly. Such persons speak with sincerity in their mouths as well as in their minds: there is no discrepancy between what is said and what is thought. Those who are trustworthy thus keep their minds upright and honest. There is nothing twisted to be found in them. In their speech they are completely correct, setting aside anything that is contrary to the Way. They are diligent in their practice of the good. They stand with their two feet solidly on the ground...

Courage

Courage is the stoutheartedness that conforms to righteousness. To act immediately on what one perceives to be morally good is courage. Being hesitant, lazy, or unsure whether or not one should do something, even when one knows it is right, is not courage. Facing the enemy and fighting, even when one knows that death is certain, displays such a mind. Knowing there is nothing to fear, yet proceeding ahead into the dark of night full of fear is to be confused. Yet when one is doing what one should be doing, then one ought not to be afraid, regardless of the circumstances. While we know we are to be afraid of tigers and wolves, we tremble at the thought of wasps and bees getting in our clothes. While we are careful with treasures, we regret damaging old pots and kettles. However, unless we are cautious about everyday matters, we will not have courage when emergencies arise. If we constantly cultivate righteousness, leave off doubts and fears, and think only of doing what accords with the principles of the Way, our minds will be strengthened. Then we can be considered courageous.

Principle and Ki

Now even before heaven and earth opened up and after, principle has always been referred to as the supreme ultimate. When the supreme ultimate moves, it produces *yang*; when it is still, it produces *yin*. *Yin* and *yang* together

make up the “originating, unitary *ki*.” Once they have divided, they become two. When they have divided again, they become the five processes. The five processes are wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. These five processes branch off to form everything....

In *ki* purity and pollutants, good and bad, coexist. Due to its heterogeneous nature, when people receive *ki* and are formed by it, selfishness, excessive desires, and wickedness enter that form. An indication of this, for example, is that when the eyes see beautiful forms, the mind thinks of something bad. It is much the same when the mouth says something, or the hands and feet touch something. Always, selfishness and excessive desires arise from our physical form.

Since they are all formed out of it, every living, moving being is the work of *ki*. The mind is not originally bad. Yet if it were not made from *ki*, it would be unable to move or operate. Therefore, although the mind is the product of *ki*, when one does good, the mind knows what is good, and we act upon that knowledge. Or with what is bad, the mind recognizes it as bad, and we refrain from it. In both cases, these are acts of the mind. For example, restraining our desire to eat desirable food when it is improper to eat it comes from our mind’s control over our *ki*. Similarly, reminding ourselves that it is a crime to acquire even desirable wealth and riches to an unreasonable extent also comes from the mind’s control over *ki*. Thus it should be clear that while *ki* harbors both good and bad impulses, the mind is solely good, without an element of bad in it....

Principle alone can hardly produce activity. If combined with *ki* to form the mind, it is capable of motion and activity.... Filial behavior towards one’s parents is a principle of the mind. Anger with one’s parents, however, is an eruption of the partial and selfish tendencies of our blood and *ki*. Accordingly, we must understand the distinction between principle and *ki*.

While principle and *ki* are two, if there is *ki* then there is necessarily principle as well. If there is no *ki*, principle has no place to dwell. This is because principle has no form. Principle and *ki* are never separated. It is not that today there is *ki*, and tomorrow there will be principle. When they exist, they exist simultaneously. *Ki* is what capably moves principle, while principle is what checks disorder within *ki*. When we understand that the mind is formed from these two, we will have a means by which we can apparently use our minds to manage our *ki*.

Human Desires

Desires refer to our mind’s longings for things. There are two kinds of human desires: those that can be realized, and those that cannot. Desires to honor one’s parents and loyally to serve one’s ruler are of the sort that can be

realized fully. Desires to do good and refrain from evil, to act with humaneness and righteousness, to halt falsehood, are also desires which can be realized. These are the principles of the Way that should be desired. However, desiring wealth, honor, and long life even though one is not born with these is not to desire in accordance with principle. Since such things are determined from the start by the will of heaven, though one may strongly desire them they are nearly impossible to realize. For example, a short person's wish to become tall or an ill-featured person's desire for beauty are as likely to be realized as a thin person is likely to become suddenly fat. Desire though they may, it will not happen. Scheming for unattainable goals and harboring unrealistic desires are the deeds of evil men and fools. Such things lead one to long for impossibilities, to stoop to prejudiced acts, and to commit crimes. Eventually people destroy themselves doing so. This is because there are principles of the Way that deem certain desires improper.

The Great Void

The great 'void' is heaven. Because of its limitlessness and infinitude, it is called the great void. From it principle and *ki* emerge. Because this occurs naturally, it is also referred to as heaven. Heaven consists of the *ki* of *yin* and *yang*. It brings cold and heat, night and day, wind and rain. It creates human beings and myriad other things. Although heaven consists entirely of the principles of the Way, it is not separated from the *ki* of *yin* and *yang*, and therefore is called *ki*.

The transformation of *ki* is what we call the Way. Human nature refers to the uniting of the great void and *ki* that takes form in people from their birth. The human mind refers to this human nature endowed in moving, active human form. While there are these four names—the great void, the Way, human nature, and the human mind—the principles themselves are originally one.

Human Nature

If we only discuss the principles of the Way but do not mention *ki*, it is difficult to explain how we come to be endowed with the principles of the Way. If we only discuss *ki* without acknowledging the principles of the Way, we will not understand things with any clarity. Human nature, then, is principle and needs to be discussed in conjunction with *ki*. To separate the two is to fall into certain error.

Human nature is originally good. In reply to the question of where evil comes from, we should reply that human nature, like water, is clear. When it is mixed with something clean, it remains clear; but when it is mixed with some-

thing foul or polluted, it becomes filthy. Mix it with mud and mire and it, too, becomes muddy.

Ki is what penetrates human nature. *Ki* is sometimes clear but sometimes dirty, sometimes bright but sometimes dull, sometimes thick but sometimes thin, sometimes open but sometimes blocked. Since these kinds of *ki* are unchanging, when a thing receives *ki* and takes shape, it becomes a certain kind of thing. Therefore, while human nature is fundamentally good, depending on what kind of *ki* it receives, it can be concealed by form, isolated by selfish desires, and lost within the mind....

Because there are many kinds of inequalities in this disposition of *ki*, there are sages, worthies, wise men, and princes. These people all receive the clearest, brightest *ki*. There are also ordinary men, bad men, and stupid men. They all receive foul, disturbed *ki*. There are also men of righteous principle who are trustworthy but also foolish. They have received a disposition of *ki* which is foul yet thick. There are also persons who, though wise and intelligent, are frightening and cannot be trusted. They have received a clear yet rough disposition of *ki*. Because things are like this, there are few good men, while fools are plentiful; the morally refined are rare, though common fellows are many.

However, by studying and learning, one can reform the bad in one's disposition of *ki*, and change it to good. While the disposition of *ki* with which one is born, one's 'temperament', is surely fixed, one should not abandon it, leaving it as it is. Rather if one studies, even the foul parts will become clear just as water returns to its original nature. Likewise people, through study, can transform dullness into brightness, ignorance into wisdom, weakness into strength, and even bad into good.... People of the highest category can associate with bad people without becoming bad themselves. Rather, their influence makes bad people good. People of the lowest category are born into such ignorance and darkness that even a worthy man's influence does not alter their wickedness. Instead, they despise worthies and detest morally refined persons. Since they become increasingly bad, they eventually meet destruction. Thus those who behave badly are incredibly ignorant people. Those born with an average human nature become good when they associate with worthies, but become bad when influenced by common people. Accordingly their natures can move to either goodness or wickedness. For example, when close to vermilion, they would become red; when close to black, they would become black. Thus they should carefully choose those with whom they associate.

Bright Virtue

'Bright virtue' refers to our original mind. We receive it naturally from heaven, and are endowed with in it our bodies. The mind is formless,

colorless, voiceless, and soundless. However, as the mind contemplates whether there is original nothingness, we realize that there are things that originally exist. Although we speak of the eyes and ears when we see or hear something, the mind is actually the basis of seeing and hearing. Although sensations such as cold, heat, pain, and irritation may be said to have form, the mind is the basis of our awareness of these sensations. Much the same is true of smelling with the nose, speaking with the mouth, and moving things with the hands and feet.

The example of a bright mirror may clarify this. Because a mirror is originally empty, lacking anything, when reflecting the five colors, the mirror clearly reflects and illuminates reds and blues. When confronted by them, mirrors accurately reflect females as females; males as males; old and young, the beautiful and ugly, hiding nothing. When things withdraw and mirrors no longer receive their forms, they return to their former state of apparent emptiness. Man's original mind is comparable to this. Just as a mirror reflects all forms, so is humanity's mind of oneness endowed with the principles of all things that it encounters.

Everything born between heaven and earth arises from *yin* and *yang* and the five processes. Due to the inequalities in *ki*, there are grasses and trees, birds and beasts, and human beings. Grasses and trees are created topsy-turvy, with their roots serving as their heads and their branches serving as their extremities. Birds and beasts are born with their heads on a horizontal plane and walk with their bodies parallel to the ground. Because human beings receive *ki* in its most complete form, their round heads are modeled after heaven, their square feet after the earth, and their two eyes after the sun and moon. The crown of a person's head is patterned after the North Pole and the five organs and five fingers are modeled after the five processes of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.

Of all living creatures, none is more esteemed than the human. Accordingly, within people's minds, the principles of the myriad things are endowed; the *ki* of heaven and earth is the *ki* of humanity; and the mind of heaven and earth is the mind of humanity. Invariably the principles of the Way and the mind of humanity are a unity, without change. Illuminating this mind in thought, speech, and action so that it is never darkened is called "manifesting bright virtue."

However, immersing oneself in profit and desires and being selfish with things obscures our bright virtue. If we wish to manifest bright virtue, we must limit our desires, forego selfishness, and follow the principles of the Way. Even though it may be darkened, bright virtue is never obliterated from the original mind. For example, although the *ki* of heaven may worsen with clouds and mists so that we cannot see the light of the sun and moon, when heaven clears a little, the light of the sun and moon will again be visible. Similarly the bright virtue of humanity, possessed by each and every person from the start, is inde-

structible. Whether bright virtue is manifested or obscured rests solely with each person; it is not the fault of bright virtue....

Manifesting our bright virtue with the wish that other people are instructed and enlightened by it is referred to as “loving the people.” We are renewed by washing away the foulness and dirt of selfish human desires that have long sullied us, which is why bright virtue is said to “renew people.” Just as we wash off the body’s dirt, so must we cleanse our selfish human desires today, and then again tomorrow. As with washing our faces, by cleansing our minds of selfish human desires every day, we renew our minds. Then what was not within our minds from the start will no longer obscure them. We must each strive to illuminate those who have yet to understand their bright virtue so that they, too, can manifest it. For example, someone who is asleep will wake up when they hear their name called because they have had that name since birth. Similarly, if one teaches “bright virtue” to a person who, drowned in material desires, has lost touch with bright virtue, they will manifest it so that what was once obscure becomes enlightened, what was once filthy becomes cleansed, and what was once old becomes renewed. This is what it means to “love people.”

Manifesting bright virtue involves controlling one’s self. Loving the people involves governing them.... Although all below heaven is vast and human relations are numerous, nothing is more important than controlling the self and governing the people. The process of loving the people involves leading others to ‘filial piety’ by being filial to one’s parents, leading others to their public duties by being conscientious to one’s ruler, and leading others to doing good by personally doing good.

“The highest good” refers to both manifesting bright virtue and loving the people so that matters are naturally settled in accordance with principle. Since each and every principle conveys the perfection of goodness, without the slightest bit of evil in them, principle is referred to as “the highest good.” Principles of the Way and goodness form a unity. Although we may think that we are doing sufficient filial service to our parents, if greater filial piety is possible, we should strive to embody it. While we may think we are sufficiently loyal to our ruler, if greater loyalty is possible, we should strive to realize it in fulfilling our public duty. The same is true regarding humaneness, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. When faced with a choice of minor, insignificant, shallow displays of humaneness and righteousness as opposed to major, serious, profound ones that follow the principles of the Way perfectly, “abiding in the highest good” entails rejecting the former in favor of the latter. Of the myriad matters of daily practicality, whether great or trivial, there are none in which the principles of the Way are absent. In dressing, eating, speaking, behaving, standing, sitting, day and night, morning and evening, all matters harbor these principles of the Way. “Abiding in the highest good” refers to fully attaining these principles.

Bright virtue is the basis of illuminating our minds and of controlling ourselves. Loving people refers to teaching and leading others towards goodness after one has personally manifested one's bright virtue. "People" here refers to everyone, not just to the peasant farmers.

Wisdom

Wisdom refers to understanding the principles of things. Genuinely sincere wisdom certainly refers to being genuinely and sincerely fond of doing what is good, just as one is fond of beautiful things. It also refers to genuinely and sincerely detesting and refraining from doing evil just as one abhors filthy, squalid things. Because life and death are major events in human existence, all things existing below heaven having life of every sort should value their existence. Nevertheless, that all living things must one day die is a principle that has been fixed since ancient times. Since any fool understands this, none cries over or laments the fact that some day he will die. If one can extend this mind to one's understanding of the myriad things, then one should have no doubts.

Wisdom refers to being intelligent, bright, profound, and sensible. It means being perceptive regarding empirical matters so that one perfectly discerns the good and evil aspects of everything. Thus when one's understanding and insight are penetrating, no principles will be obscure. Wisdom refers to understanding and practicing well... the ways of humaneness, righteousness, and propriety. Unless one is wise, how will one possibly understand the ways of humaneness, righteousness, and propriety? By means of wisdom, one can understand the Way of humaneness and righteousness and discern clearly the difference between right and wrong, good and bad. Mencius therefore remarked, "The mind of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom" (*Mencius* 2A.6). "Right" here refers to perceiving the goodness of a thing and considering it as correct. "Wrong" here refers to evil.

.....

Confucius remarked, "A wise person is not confused by matters" (*Analects* IX.29). The mind's ability to understand the difference between right and wrong clearly, knowing that this is right while that is wrong, is just like a mirror's ability to discern beauty and ugliness. Thus it is not confused by things. If the mirror is clear, it well reflects a person's form and countenance. Similarly, by means of bright wisdom, one illuminates the reality of things. Thus, "what conforms to principle is not disturbed, and so one is not obstructed in attaining matters." When one is not at all misled by selfish human desires, one's wisdom becomes clear.

The *Analects* states, "One who is wise is fond of water" (VI.23). This remark suggests that one who is wise governs the world by spreading his wisdom and

compassion just as though it were an unceasing flow of water. Understanding water's goodness, the wise man is fond of it. The same passage also observes, "One who is wise is active," which suggests that one who is wise thoroughly and clearly realizes the principles of all things. Such persons are quick-witted and impartial. They respond actively and quickly to changes. Thus they are said to be "active."

[JAT]

NAKAE Tōju 中江藤樹 (1608–1648)

Though born in a peasant village in Ōmi province, Nakae Tōju was adopted by his grandfather, a samurai living on the island of Shikoku, where Tōju was trained in Confucian thought for service to the local daimyō. He has the distinction of being the first major Japanese proponent of the mind-centered, intuitive philosophy of Wang Yangming (1472–1529). Unlike Yangming's more secular epistemology advocating the exercise of "innate ethical knowledge," Tōju affirmed along more spiritual lines that our ability to know what is good and act on that knowledge is due to "the divine light of heaven," one of his glosses for the idea of an inborn ethic.

The most distinctive feature of Tōju's mature philosophy, as set forth in his *Dialogue with an Old Man*, is its emphasis on 'filial piety' which, unlike the majority of Tokugawa Confucians, he valued even more highly than loyalty towards one's lord and ruler. As a concrete expression of his conviction, for which he has become legendary, at age twenty-six Tōju relinquished his stipend and left his service as a samurai retainer in order to return to his home village and look after his mother. Tōju's filial piety is well documented and has become the stuff of substantial legend.

Tōju's philosophy integrates a providential spiritual power similar to the ancient Chinese deity, Shangdi, the Lord on High, with the neo-Confucian metaphysical notion of the great void. Moreover, he sees this as the creative source of all things and the common bond uniting all things in a cosmological unity, presiding over all things, and responding to them with ethical force. Again, unlike most early modern Confucians, Tōju emphasized the importance of Confucian 'learning' for women, noting that their physical and mental well-being was crucial to that of the family. While not an outspoken critic of Buddhism, Tōju is well known for his essay criticizing Hayashi Razan*, who claimed to be a true neo-Confucian while taking the tonsure and wearing Buddhist robes as a condition for service to the ruling powers.

[JAT]

FILIAL PIETY

NAKAE Tōju N.D., 215–7 (374–5)

'Filial piety' is the root of humanity. If it is obliterated from one's mind and heart, one's life will be like that of uprooted grasses or trees. If one does not die, it is only good luck that enables one to escape from it— and that is all. Now our innate knowledge provides humanity with good earth that is gentle for our bodies and so enables us to establish our lives. Once we depart from this good earth, we will encounter only suffering and hardship. Our bodies and the

world around us will all seem like an illusion or an empty dream. Anyone who abhors such suffering and tries to flee these illusions and dreams by searching elsewhere is simply beclouded.

Filial piety is what distinguishes humanity from the birds and beasts. For this reason, when people are not filial, heaven will repay them with the six ultimate punishments. In ancient times a man without filial piety was said to turn into a man with a dog's head, making clear that he was then just one of the birds and beasts. We should thus be cautious and take heed!

Orphans might seem to have no parents to look after. Yet it should be said that one's own virtuous nature is the heavenly true nature inherited from one's father and mother. Cultivating our nature is the reason that we take care of our parents. Revering our nature is the reason why we revere our parents. That is the essential marrow of filial piety in a larger sense. There is no need to discuss whether or not one is crawling around waiting on one's parents.

.....

Filial piety is the highest virtue and the essential Way of the three powers.³ It alone gives life to heaven, earth, humanity, and the myriad things. Thus those who pursue learning need study only this. Where is filial piety? It is in us, in our persons! Apart from our personhood, there is no filial piety. Apart from filial piety, there is no person who can practice the Way that illuminates the four seas and penetrates spiritual brightness.

[TR]

GUARDING THE TREASURE OF HUMANITY

NAKAE Tōju 1640, 61–2, 219–21; N.D., 137–8; 1640, 125–7

The Greatest Spiritual Treasure

Within all our human bodies, there is a spiritual treasure to which nothing else under heaven can compare. It is known as the highest virtue and the essential Way. Our most important task in life is to use this treasure, keeping it in our mind and hearts, and practicing it with our bodies. This treasure pervades the Way of heaven above and its luminosity shines over the four seas below. Therefore, if we use this treasure and extend it to the 'five relationships', our practice of the five relationships will be in every respect harmonious and without hatred. If we use it when serving the luminous spirits, then the luminous spirits will accept our offerings. If we use it when ruling all below heaven,

3. [Heaven, earth, and humanity.]

all below heaven will be at peace. If we use it when ruling our state, our states will be in good order. If we use it when regulating our families, our families will be well regulated. If we practice with our bodies, then our bodies will be in order. If we preserve it within our 'mind', the mind will become luminous. If we extend it outward, it will spread beyond heaven and earth. If we draw it inward, it will nest in the secret spots of our mind and hearts. It is truly a wonderful and supreme spiritual treasure.

Therefore, if this treasure is well protected, the 'Son of Heaven' will long preside over the bounty within the four seas; the various lords will long see their realms prosper, the great officials will see their families flourish, samurai will earn a good reputation and rise in their standing, and the common people will accumulate wealth and grain. Everyone will enjoy the pleasures appropriate to their stations.

If this treasure is discarded, the Way of humanity will collapse. Not only will the Way of humanity collapse, the Way of heaven and earth will also collapse. Not only will the Way of heaven and earth collapse, even the spiritual transformation of the great void will not function. The great void, the three powers, the universe of time and space, ghosts and spirits, creative transformations, and all that is life and death are entirely embraced by this treasure. Seeking this treasure through study is called the learning of the Confucian scholars. One who realizes and maintains this treasure in the midst of life is called a sage....

Reliance on the Sovereign Lord Above

While a person's birth seems to be the result of the doings of their father and mother, it is not a person's father and mother who produce this. Actually a person is brought into being by the transforming and nourishing powers of the spirits of heaven and earth according to the decree given them by the sovereign 'Lord Above' of the great 'void'.... Because the spirits of heaven and earth are the father and mother of the myriad things, the sovereign Lord Above of the great void is the ultimate ancestor of all humanity. If we consider things from the perspective of this spiritual truth, then the sages and worthies, 'Shakyamuni' and Bodhidharma, Confucians and Buddhists, we and other people—all in the world who possess human form—are the descendants of the sovereign Lord on High and the spirits of heaven and earth.

Moreover, since the Confucian Way is nothing other than the spiritual Way of the sovereign Lord Above and the spirits of heaven and earth, if a person in human form slanders and disobeys the Way of Confucianism, that is the same as slandering the Way of his own ancestors and parents and disobeying their commands.... To stand in awe of and revere the decrees of our great first ancestor, the sovereign Lord Above, and our great parents, the spirits of heaven

and earth, and to accept and practice their spiritual Way with deep reverence is called filial piety, which in turn is called the supreme virtue and most essential Way.

Filial piety is also called the Confucian Way, and teaching it is referred to as the teaching of the Confucians. Studying filial piety is referred to as Confucian learning. When one has learned this well so that one preserves filial piety within one's mind and heart and practices it with one's body, then one is called a Confucian.

Only the sovereign Lord Above can be deemed the ultimate of nonbeing and yet the 'supreme ultimate'. It is utmost sincerity and utmost spirit. The two 'ki', and the five *ki* are its only form.⁴ The principles of the ultimate of nonbeing are its only mind. Its greatness leaves nothing external, yet its minuteness is such that it can harbor nothing within. Its principle and its *ki* are naturally so and without rest. Through their mysterious union, they produce and reproduce. Their reproductive activity has neither beginning nor end; it is without temporality. The sovereign Lord Above alone is thus the father and mother of the myriad things. Through portioning its form, it gives life to all things that have form; through portioning its mind, it decrees the natures of the myriad things. When its form is portioned out, differences result, yet when its mind is portioned out, they remain the same.

The Warrior

A person born with the natural capacities of a great general might master the military arts and realize martial achievements even without training in the learning of the mind. But because he lacks virtue, he will become bewitched by the power of his talents and will surely become fond of killing people. His behavior will be immoral and so utterly lacking in righteousness that his poisonous deeds will cause much suffering and grief among the myriad people. In the end he will invite heaven's punishment, which will surely destroy his life and mean the destruction of his state. Proof of this is in both China and our dynastic realm. Rarely have men with the natural capacities of a great general, but no virtue, not met with an awful fate. Rarely have their descendants prospered. Students should read the histories of Japan and China and reflect on this.

The fundamental purpose of the military arts is to ensure the peace and tranquility of the state, preserve the longevity of the armed forces, and bring the blessings of peace to the myriad people. If instead the myriad people

4. [The two *ki* are *ying* and *yang*; the five *ki* refer to the five processes of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.]

become the target of their poison, warriors' lives will be lost and the state will be destroyed, so that their mastery of military arts and achievement of martial renown ultimately will be nothing but a useless waste.... If a person really wants to study the military arts, should not they study the military arts of the man of humaneness against which there are no enemies under heaven?

Although it is inappropriate not to be brave and courageous on the field of battle or when engaging a military force, during peaceful, uneventful times such displays are useless. In peaceful and uneventful times, being obsessed with displays of bravery and courage for the sake of preparing oneself for battle is to be obsessed with an ignorant and useless pursuit. For example, to be obsessed with military strategy is just like wearing a full suit of samurai armor even during times that are not removed from peace.... Those fond of displaying grim fearlessness and killing people are not preparing themselves for military action, but rather they are obstructing military action. In particular, those fond of displaying grim fearlessness will inevitably develop an extremely combative mind that disregards other people with contempt. Inevitably such people will get into fights that end in their dying like dogs. They will shamefully cause grief to their parents and even steal the fiefs of their masters. Even if they fight bravely, they are no different from a dog with a strong bite. Any samurai with a mind should dread such shame.

[JAT]

LEARNING

NAKAE Tōju N.D., 573

There are many kinds of 'learning', but the learning that teaches control of the mind is the true learning. This true learning should be the first and foremost concern for all below heaven, and the first and foremost duty for all humanity. The reason is that it is by way of this true learning that we manifest our bright virtue, which is the first and foremost treasure of all below heaven. It is not that gold, silver, and jewels are not treasured, but they cannot cut the root of suffering in people's minds-and-hearts and so make possible constant happiness. Thus those things are not the greatest treasures of all below heaven.

When 'bright virtue' shines forth, the eight kinds of human suffering will cease and our minds-and-hearts will be filled with constant happiness. Each and every one of our thoughts will be as they should be. The extremes of wealth and rank, poverty and lowliness, prosperity and adversity will be unable to rob us of our enjoyment of life. Moreover, the multitudes of humanity will love and respect us, the Way of heaven will assist us, and bright spirits will protect us so

that heavenly calamities and earthly disasters will not harm us, and thunder and earthquake will not injure us. Storms may destroy houses, but they will leave us uninjured. Conflagrations will not be able to burn us nor floods to drown us. Evil demons will fear us and the demonic plagues will not sicken us. The evil and malicious spirits will not come near.... Even swords and arms will be of no use against us.... In this world we will experience incomparable happiness in life; in the future, we will surely be born in heaven. Because of the boundless merits and blessings such as these, illuminating bright virtue is called the greatest treasure among all below heaven. While it is found in everyone, high or low, old or young, male or female, within the inexhaustible treasure-house of their minds, those who do not know how to seek it simply go about searching for treasure in external things, only to sink into a sea of suffering.

... ..

Someone said: "Learning does not seem to be the business of women."

Tôju replied: "Even though learning that includes composing Chinese poetry and reciting Japanese poetry does not seem to be the business of women, there are many women who do so and they are not condemned for it. Because control of the mind should be a first concern of women, it would be a great mistake to say that it is not appropriate for them and other such things. The reason for this is that the external *ki* of women is rooted in *yin*, and so by their *ki* women are apt to be excitable, petty, narrow, and temperamental. As they live confined to their homes day in and day out, theirs is a very private life and their vision is limited. Therefore, among women compassionate and honest minds-and-hearts are rare indeed. That is why Buddhism says that women are profoundly sinful and have difficulty in achieving 'buddhahood'. Thus, it would not be right for women not to pursue the learning of the mind and heart. If a wife's mind is healthy, filial, obedient, compassionate, and honest, then her parents and children, brothers and sisters, and, in fact, every member of her family will be at peace and the entire household in perfect order, so that even lowly servants benefit from her gracious bounty. That kind of family will enjoy abundant happiness and its children and grandchildren will also prosper as a result....

"In ancient times when a girl reached ten years of age, she was turned over to a female instructor in order to learn the virtues of womanhood. Because that practice has been discontinued, these days learning for women simply means being able to read. Because people do not discern that learning consists in controlling the mind, they now wonder whether or not learning should be the business of women. This principle must be well understood. We must be careful to make sure that women are taught well so that our families are not torn asunder like meat being ripped from the bones."

[JAT]

YAMAZAKI Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1618–1682)

Yamazaki Ansai was both the most faithful and virtually unquestioning exponent of Zhu Xi's neo-Confucian philosophy in Tokugawa Japan as well as a later pioneer of a syncretistic religious-philosophical system affirming the fundamental unity of neo-Confucianism and Shinto. Compared to the perfection of Zhu Xi's work, other forms of neo-Confucianism seemed to him incomplete, shallow, or distorted. These criticisms, reiterated by his disciples, carried over to thinkers like Hayashi Razan* who drew on authors critical of Zhu Xi.

More than metaphysical theories, Ansai's school focused on the notion of "reverence" as the key to self-cultivation and engagement with the world. Citing a passage from the *Book of Changes*, which he took to be one of the most important Chinese philosophical texts, he argued that reverence, coupled with the practice of quiet sitting, fostered inner perfection, while 'righteousness' aided in squaring one's relations with the external world. The critiques launched by later Confucian scholars against an overemphasis on reverence were often targeted, if indirectly, at Ansai's ideas.

Ansai's arguments for Shinto and neo-Confucianism as expressions of a universal unifying principle were one way of naturalizing neo-Confucianism in Japan. At the same time, they diverge from efforts of other orthodox neo-Confucians to demythify Japan's past, tending rather to an eclectic and often strained remythification. Disputes over the validity of Ansai's brand of Shinto led him to break with two of his most brilliant disciples, Satō Naokata* and Asami Keisai*. Nevertheless, with Ansai's demise, his followers tended to identify themselves either as advocates of Ansai's Shinto or as orthodox exponents of Zhu Xi neo-Confucianism.

[JAT]

REVERENCE AND EDUCATION

YAMAZAKI Ansai N.D.-B 90 (87–8); 1650, 1–2 (251–2)

"By means of 'reverence' we straighten ourselves within; by means of righteousness we square things without." The significance of these words cannot be exhausted by even a lifetime of application. Master Zhu was certainly not exaggerating at all in saying this. In the *Analects* of Confucius, when it says "the 'refined person' cultivates himself with reverent care," this simply means that by means of reverence we straighten ourselves within. Further in the *Analects* we read, "To put others at ease by cultivating oneself and thus to put all men at ease" (xiv.45), which is the same as "squaring things without by means of righteousness."

"The virtue of 'sincerity' is not merely for perfecting oneself alone; it also is

for perfecting things around us. Perfection of self is 'humaneness'; perfection of things is knowledge. These are virtues that manifest our nature; this is the 'Way' that joins the inner and the outer"... The one word "reverence" refers to the practice that constitutes the beginning and the end of Confucian learning. It has been passed down for a very long time. The passing down of the method of the mind by the sages generation after generation since the beginning of heaven and earth consists of nothing more than this reverence....

[TR]

The philosopher Zhu... was conspicuously endowed with intellectual leadership.... For the guidance of his students he established these regulations, but they could not gain wide acceptance in his own time because of opposition from vile quarters....

It would seem to me that the aim of education, elementary and advanced, is to clarify human moral relationships. In the elementary program of education the various human relationships are made clear, the essence of this education in human relationships being reverence for the person (oneself and others). The "investigation of things" in advanced studies simply carries to its ultimate conclusion what has already been learned from elementary instruction....

Zhu Xi's school regulations list the five human relationships as the curriculum, following an order of presentation that complements the curriculum of advanced education. Studying, questioning things, deliberating, and discriminating: these four correspond to the "investigation of things" and "extension of knowledge" in advanced education. The regulation dealing with conscientious action goes with the "cultivation of one's person." From the emperor to the common people, the cultivation of one's person is essential, including both "making the intentions sincere" and "rectifying the mind." The "managing of affairs" and "social intercourse" refer to "regulating the family," "governing the state," and "establishing peace." These regulations thus contain everything....

But so far they have gone almost unnoticed among the items of Zhu's collected works, scarcely attracting any attention from scholars in Japan. I have taken the liberty, however, of bringing them out into the light of day by mounting and hanging them in my studio for constant reference and reflection.

[WTB]

THE THREE PLEASURES

HARA Nensai, 1816, 122-3 (90-1)

The lord of Aizu asked Yamazaki Ansaï if he enjoyed any pleasures of his own. Ansaï replied, "Your vassal enjoys three pleasures. Between heaven

and earth there are innumerable living creatures, but I am among those who alone possess spiritual consciousness. That is one source of pleasure. Between heaven and earth, peace and war come in defiance of all calculation. Fortunately, however, I was born in a time when peaceful arts were flourishing. Thus I am able to enjoy reading books, studying the Way, and keeping the company of the ancient sages and philosophers as if they were in the same room with me. That is another treasure.”

The lord then said, “Two pleasures you have already told me about; I would like to hear about the third one.” Ansai replied, “That is the greatest one, though it is difficult to express, since Your Highness may not take it as intended but instead consider it an affront.” The lord said, “Ignorant and incapable though I am, I am still the devoted disciple of my teacher. I am always thirsty for his loyal advice and hungry for his undisguised opinions. I cannot see any reason why this time you should stop halfway.”

Ansai then declared, “Since you go to such lengths, I cannot hold back, even though it may bring death and disgrace. My third and greatest pleasure is that I was low born, not into the family of an aristocrat.” “May I ask you the reason why?” the lord insisted. “If I am not mistaken, aristocrats of the present day, born as they are deep inside a palace and brought up in the hands of women, are lacking in scholarship and wanting in skill, given over to a life of pleasure and indulgence, sexual or otherwise. Their vassals cater to their whims, applaud whatever they applaud, and decry whatever they decry. Thus is spoiled and dissipated the true nature they are born with. Compare them with those who are lowborn and poor, who are brought up from childhood in the school of hardship. They learn to handle practical affairs as they grow up, and with the guidance of teachers or the assistance of friends, their intellect and judgment steadily improve. That is the reason why I consider my low and poor birth the greatest of all my pleasures.” The lord was taken aback but said with a sigh, “Indeed it is as you say.”

[TR]

SHINTO

YAMAZAKI Ansai 1675, 284–6 (234, 237); 1671, 272–4;
N.D.-A, 265 (228–9), 207–12; (88–9)

In Japan at the time of the opening of the country, Izanagi and Izanami followed the divination teachings of the heavenly gods, obeyed *yin* and *yang*, and thus correctly established the beginnings of ethical teachings. In the universe there is only one principle: either '*kami*' or sages come forth depending

on whether it concerns the country where the sun rises, or the country where the sun sets. The ways are, however, naturally and mysteriously the same....

In Japan worship of the gods of heaven and earth created the name Ameno-minakanushi.⁵ Izanagi and Izanami succeeded him and erected the “pillar in the center of the country,” walked around it, had intercourse, and produced children. Amaterasu Ōmikami, their child, shone over the whole universe and, as the sun, hangs in the center of the sky. She received dominion over heaven. However, throughout the whole universe there is only one principle. Thus, even without forcing it, Shinto and Confucianism match perfectly. What a wondrous mystery!

The Source of Shinto

The source of Shinto lies in earth and metal. This tradition is already present in the *Nihongi*.⁷ In the “Age of the *Kami*” chapters there are sections that speak only about heaven and others that speak only about humanity. There are passages that speak of heaven in terms of humanity and others that speak of humanity in terms of heaven. In this manner, the way of the single unity of heaven and humanity is made clear.

.....

I heard the following: between heaven and earth the virtue of earth is gathered and occupies the position of the center. The four seasons follow each other through this virtue; all things originate in it.... Our country’s superiority lies in its abundance of earth and metal and the long continuation of the direct bloodline of gods and emperors since the time of creation. This is due to the basic intention of Amaterasu’s decree, and the protection and guidance of the gods.

[HO]

Heavenly matters are for the present emperor. As for the pacification of things, the fact that order is established by means of the sword is the same for the shōgun of today as it was for Susanoo and Ōanamuchi⁶ in ancient times. This is the way it has been in Japan since the age of the gods.

[JAT]

Studying Shinto

There is one important matter to be learned by those beginning to study Shinto. If students read the chapters on the divine age without first learning this, they will not readily understand the chapters’ true significance, but if they have had the proper instruction, they can understand everything in these

5. [One of the first *kami*, whose name means “Ruler of the Center of the Country.”]

6. [Susanoo was the storm god and Ōanamuchi his grandson.]

chapters without further inquiry. This is the key to Shinto, which explains it from beginning to end. This you certainly must know.

I am not sure whether you have heard about it yet, but this is the teaching on earth and metal.... Do you recall that in the divine age text, earth is represented as five? "Izanagi cut the fire god Kagu-tsuchi into five," it says. You may not see what that really means, but it indicates the conversion of earth into five.

Earth comes into being only from fire, but fire is 'mind', and in mind dwells *kami*. This is not discussed in ordinary instruction, and it is only because of my desire to make you understand it thoroughly that I am revealing this to you....

As for earth, it does not produce anything if it is scattered and dissipated. Only where earth is compacted are things produced.... If there were no earth, nothing would be produced; but even when there is earth, without restraint, the metal power would not be produced. Restraint is something in people's mind. Just as nothing is produced when the earth is scattered and dissipated, so if man becomes dissipated and loose, the metal power cannot be produced. The metal power is actually nothing other than our attitude in the presence of *kami*. There is something stern and forbidding about the metal power. When this power reaches the limit of its endurance, we must expect that even men may be killed. So unyielding is it that it allows for no compromise or forgiveness....

That is the principle of earth's begetting metal. But do not confuse it with the Chinese theory that fire produces earth and earth produces metal. Whatever the Confucian texts say does not matter. What I have told you about is the way of the divine age, but it is also something that goes on right before your eyes. The sun goddess, you see, was female, but when the storm god got out of hand, she put on warlike attire and took up a sword. Even Izanagi and Izanami ruled the land by using the spade and sword. From earliest times Japan has been under the rule of the metal power. And that is why I have been telling you that Japan is the land of the metal power. Remember that without tightening, the metal power would not come into being, and tightening is a thing of the mind.

[TR]

KUMAZAWA Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619–1691)

A major Japanese advocate of the neo-Confucian philosophy of Wang Yangming, Kumazawa Banzan gravitated from the metaphysical toward more practical, sociopolitical, and economic applications of that intuitive, mind-centered system. Rather than the doctrinal innovations, often very spiritual in nature, advanced by his teacher, Nakae Tōju*, Banzan's major works, *Questions and Answers on the Great Learning* and *Japanese Writings on Accumulating Righteousness*, spell out his conviction that a true philosophy is one that can be applied to the real and pressing issues of the day. Banzan took his philosophical commitment to practical political concerns seriously and continued to speak out even when it was clear that those in power were not interested. In 1657 he resigned his post as a scholar-retainer, apparently fearing that association with him would place his lord, Ikeda Mitsumasa, in peril. Thereafter Banzan felt pressured to move from place to place, most of the while remaining under official surveillance lest his ideas cause unrest. In the end he was placed under house-arrest and remained so until his death.

Along with works on political economy and his harsh critiques of Buddhism and Christianity, Banzan authored a very positive commentary on the eleventh-century literary masterpiece, *Tale of Genji*, a work typically criticized by early modern Confucian scholars as an account of aristocratic decadence and immorality. He also exhibited a concern for the natural environment.

[JAT]

VIEWS ON THE GREAT WAY

KUMAZAWA Banzan 1672, 341, 399, 401–2 (398, 399; 402–4)

Someone asked: “What is the true meaning of the great ‘Way’?”

Banzan replied: “The true meaning of the great Way consists of not taking control of everything under heaven by resorting to even one immoral act or killing even one innocent person. It consists of holding fast to the ‘bright virtue’ that detests immorality and is ashamed of evil. It refers to the method of the mind by which we cultivate this bright virtue, illuminating it daily so it is not impaired by human desires. This is also the true meaning of the method of the ‘mind’.

“The *Analects* state, ‘The ‘refined person’ is cautious with words’ (xiii.3). Words spoken without action are vacuous. This is what the refined person would be ashamed of. ‘Humaneness’ is real principle. The humane person thus reflects on the mutual relationship of his words and deeds so that there is no vacuousness about him.”

Principle and Ki

When people discuss principle, 'ki' is omitted. When they discuss *ki*, principle is omitted. While principle and *ki* are never separated, discussions of them often omit one or the other. It is only when we discuss the Way that neither is omitted. The Way is the name referring to the one body of principle and *ki*. When discussing its greatness, we refer to emptiness and void. When discussing its minuteness, we mention how it is concealed and subtle. When discussing its mysterious operation, we refer to ghosts and spirits. The hierarchy of heaven and earth, the brightness of the sun and the moon, the progression of the four seasons, and the birth of the myriad things all issue forth from the Way. Yet its reality is quiet and unmoving, without sound and without smell....

Thus the Way is the great source of all below heaven. While the Way can be described as natural and inexhaustible, the eternal nature of *yin* and *yang* alternating, the warmth and cold of the sun and moon, and day and night transforming, all manifest the Way as the principle of the ultimate of nonbeing and yet the 'supreme ultimate'....

The Way embodies things without omitting anything. The unmoving nature of the Way is not comparable, however, to things with form that do not move. The Way is perfectly spiritual and perfectly moving, yet also unmanifest and without selfish desires.

[MR]

<p style="text-align: center;">BUDDHIST AND DAOIST IDEAS</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">KUMAZAWA Banzan 1672, 260, 368–9 (400); 1686A, 76 (130)</p>
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A colleague asked: "Are 'emptiness' and 'nothingness' heterodoxies, while sagely learning is concerned only with what is real?"

Banzan replied: "Emptiness is indeed reality. Things with form and color are not constant, and things that are not constant are not genuinely real. Things that have neither form nor color are constant, and things that are constant are said to be real. Heterodox learning does not exhaustively comprehend nothingness, but sagely learning does. Heaven above has neither sound nor smell, but it is supreme...."

A colleague asked: "... You said that the Daoists and Buddhists have not completely comprehended void and nothingness, and yet they discuss void and nothingness in detail as their Way. Sagely learning does not take void and nothingness as subjects of study. Why is this?"

Banzan replied: "Our minds are indeed the great void. Our minds are indeed without sound, smell, form, and color. The myriad things are born from noth-

ingness. In sagely learning, void and nothingness exist when we have no mind. That is the very utmost of void and nothingness. But Daoists and Buddhists have something in mind by void and nothingness. For that very reason, theirs is not true void or nothingness. Using their minds, they refer to void and nothingness. Thus, their learning discusses them in detail. However, they have their motives for this.

“Master Wang Yangming observed that ‘even a sage could not add one bit of reality to the void spoken of by the Daoist seekers of immortality. However, the seekers of immortality discuss void for the sake of cultivating longevity. A sage could not add one bit of true being to the Buddhists’ discussions of nothingness. However, the Buddhists discuss nothingness for the sake of escaping from the sea of suffering inherent in life and death.’ Gaozi’s⁷ discussion of an ‘unmoving mind’ is similar. For him, the effort is directed to not moving the mind. But the original substance of the mind is from the start unmoving. When a person does something that is contrary to righteousness, movement naturally occurs.”

[MR]

The harms inflicted on the realm by the Buddhists of the present are very great. The attitude and conduct of the rice wholesalers are to crave for a typhoon when the rice is in bud and flowering. In summer, they rejoice in expectation of a drought. Their purposes are to inflict pain and suffering on the people of the realm, to cause them to starve to death and so to get the profit for themselves. People like these are the disciples of the Ikkō and Nichiren sects, and when they go to a temple, they are told, with no attempt made to enliven their evil hearts, that through the efficacy of the invocation of the supposedly sacred name, Amida Buddha, despite their evil desires they will still attain buddhahood. When they go to a Nichiren temple, they are told that even those who slandered the *Lotus Sutra* will attain buddhahood. The reason is that even slandering means having heard the name of the *Lotus Sutra*. Still more they are told that even if only with one voice, when they invoke the title of the sutra, *Lotus Sutra of the Marvelous Law*, even an evil man who has killed lord or parent will, without doubt achieve buddhahood. There can be no greater demons in the world than they. To call them silt and chaff is flattery.

Zen has an even worse aspect than this. One understands that in the Zen of former days, unless one had the incipient springs of enlightenment, monks would have nothing to do with you. But the Zen of the present deludes even those who are not deluded. Provided only that one has attained enlightenment,

7. [Gaozi (420–350 BCE) was a contemporary of Mencius, known mainly from the section of the *Mencius* devoted to him (6A).].

they say, it does not matter what you do. When the minds of eminent men of great estate have thus become confused, they are overwhelmed by debauchery, take extravagance to the limit, impoverish the peasantry, cause suffering to the samurai, forget their civil and military occupations, and possess none of the attitudes and actions appropriate to rulers of men. This is a sign of the destruction of the state.

[IJM]

THE VIRTUES OF GOVERNANCE

KUMAZAWA Banzan 1672, 213-4, 238-9, 262 (403-4, 408)
1686B 238-9 (379-83)

Knowledge is principle. These days when people mention exploring principle they are talking about books, lectures on writings, and in some cases debates that issue in empty discourse. But that is not exploring principle directly in relation to things.... Among the most important principles below heaven are those that have to do with regulating families, governing states, and bringing peace to all below heaven. For each and every one of these principles, there is the knowledge and ability that is bestowed by heaven. Rulers should scrutinize the abilities of their officials and assign them tasks accordingly. Officials should exhaust what they have received from heaven... The affairs of the realm below heaven are many and their principles are inexhaustible.... One person cannot completely fathom them. If we combine our strengths and plan together, we can use the knowledge of all below heaven to enable us to exhaust the affairs of all below heaven.

.....

While working and resting, humanity also follows the naturalness of the principles of heaven. 'Not-doing' means not imposing one's selfish mind on things. When rulers respect time, place, and rank, and engage in nothing unnatural, then the realm below heaven and the states within it will be peaceful and pure. This is what it means to rule through taking no action.

.....

When the early kings succeeded one another in advancing the will of heaven and established ultimate standards, did they make sincerity their foundation? Did they make diligence their foundation? Did they follow nature? Did they make it a priority to create rules for government? They simply made sincerity their foundation. With sincerity as a foundation, they were able to respond to nature. In following the times, they were able to do work and create rules for government. Sincerity is established to control excesses. Responding to nature without artifice is the beginning of law.

[RM]

Someone asked: “Should rulers launch a great undertaking to develop our wealth?”

Banzan responded: “Humane rule cannot be extended over everything under heaven without first developing our wealth. In recent times there have been many people with no one to turn to: that is, with no one to depend upon, no place to go for help, and no work by which to support their parents, wives, and children. The governments of humane rulers attended first to the needs of such persons with no one to turn to. Today the worst off of these people are the masterless samurai. There are innumerable cases of their starving to death during the frequent famines.... When samurai and farmers are hard up, merchants and artisans will also be poor, and all below heaven will be reduced to indigence.... Yet it would be quite easy to relieve the situation if a government of humane rule were instituted”

Someone asked: “What is that kind of government?”

Banzan replied: “It has to do with wealth. What the world calls wealth is one person’s gain and another person’s loss, gratifying to the possessor, but displeasing to others. If the rulers of states are rich the people of their states resent it, and if the great ruler is rich all below heaven will be envious. But this simply refers to having petty wealth.

“There is a great Way of sharing the wealth that one has. If the rulers of states have wealth, their states will be happy, and if the great ruler has such wealth, all below heaven will be happy. This is truly great wealth. Their descendants would enjoy every felicity, and their good reputation would be passed on for as long as heaven and earth last.

“During the more than five hundred years since the establishment of samurai rule, there have been many shōgun naturally fitted for the task, but I deeply regret that they seem never to have heard these words about the Great Way of sharing wealth. And just as a good carpenter cannot build a house without following proper rules, so even an eminent ruler cannot govern all below heaven forever unless he follows the methods of the sage kings.”

Someone asked: “The methods of the sage kings are recorded in the Chinese Classics. Why cannot rulers naturally fitted for the task implement them?”

Banzan replied: “Their methods integrated considerations of time, place, and standing to produce the highest good for all. It is hard to record them on paper. Great rulers and those rulers who have inherited rule of a state are not known for having the innate knowledge of a sage. Thus it is difficult for them alone to realize the highest good for all. Those of low birth who understand changing circumstances and human feelings, and who are learned, truly resolute, and exceptionally talented can understand the methods of the early kings. Only such men of knowledge should be employed as the teachers of true kings.”

[GMF]

THE TALE OF GENJI

KUMAZAWA Banzan N.D., 420-1 (128-9)

Now the royal way of Japan has endured for a long time because it has not lost rites, music, and letters and has not fallen into vulgar practices. Things that are excessively hard and strong do not last long; those that are generous and soft are long enduring. Things, like teeth, that are hard but drop out quickly or, like the tongue, that are soft but last to the end, embody the principle of all things. The warrior houses take the power of the realm for a while through the awesomeness of their invincible strength, but like teeth falling out, they do not last long. True kings rest in softness and compliance but do not lose their rank. But if they are soft and have no virtue, respect by others for them is weak....

What can perpetuate what has become extinct and afford the sight of the rituals, music, and letters of olden times is preserved in this tale alone. Therefore, the first thing to which one should pay attention in this tale is the fine style of remote ages. Rituals were correct and peaceable; the style of music was harmonious and elegant; and men and women alike were courtly. They constantly played court music, and their attitude was not degraded.

Next, the descriptions of human feelings in the book are detailed. When a person is ignorant of human feelings, he frequently loses the harmony of the human relationships. When they are violated, the state lacks regulation, and the home is not ordered. For this reason, the *Book of Odes* preserves the debauched airs in order to inculcate familiarity with human feelings, both good and evil. Were the state to consist wholly of superior men, administration and punishments would not have a function. Since the way of administration exists simply in order to teach ordinary people, it is impossible unless one knows human feeling and historical change. In these circumstances, this tale also contains exhaustive accounts of human feelings in various contexts and good descriptions of the way in which times continue to change. With poems and prose, the temperaments of the characters are described as though the author were drawing their portraits. This again is the great marvel of this tale's grasp of human feelings.

[IJM]

YAMAGA Sokō 山鹿素行 (1622–1685)



Although born the son of a *rōnin* in Aizu-Wakamatsu, Yamaga Sokō became the first major neo-Confucian scholar to mature from the new intellectual milieu crystallizing in Edo, the shōgun's capital. When Sokō was five years old, his father, Yamaga Sadamochi, moved to the capital and established himself as a samurai-physician. After beginning his study of Chinese literature at age six, Sokō later received instruction in neo-Confucianism from Hayashi Razan*. He also studied martial arts, Japanese literature, and Shinto thought with some of the leading figures in Edo of the time. During his twenties, Sokō emerged as a samurai philosopher with voluminous writings combining motifs from the martial arts, Shinto, and neo-Confucianism. He earned considerable fame for a fifty-part work published in 1642, *Anthology of Martial Strategies*.

In 1652, Sokō, then thirty, became a retainer of the daimyō of Akō domain, Asano Naganao (1610–1672). While he did reside there briefly in order to assist in the layout of Akō castle, Sokō spent most of his eight years of service in Edo, where he held lectures for his lord in connection with Asano's service to the shōgun in Edo. During this period Sokō authored a succession of works addressing samurai concerns, including *Elementary Learning in Martial Teachings*, *Essential Records of Samurai Teachings*, and *Collected Works of Samurai Teachings*.

In 1660, Sokō resigned his service to Asano for reasons that are not clear. It is known, however, that Sokō literally dreamed of serving the Tokugawa directly, so it is possible that he saw his post with a minor daimyō as an obstacle to his rise to service to the Tokugawa 'shogunate'. In 1662, at age forty, Sokō announced his disillusionment with the impracticality of Zhu Xi's neo-Confucianism and proclaimed, much as Zhu Xi himself had done, his return to the classical texts of Confucianism. While this move is often taken as evidence that Sokō was no longer a neo-Confucian, it should be recalled that Zhu Xi's commentaries on the *Analects* and *Mencius* were at the heart of Zhu's own professed return to ancient Confucianism. In this sense, Sokō's philosophizing continued very much in a neo-Confucian vein.

Essential Records of the Sagely Teachings (1665) is undoubtedly his most famous work, not least of all because its publication drove him into exile in Akō for nearly a decade. Then senior counselor to the shōgun, Hoshina Masayuki (1611–1672), apparently orchestrated the charges against this "outrageous book" and its allegedly impudent dismissal of Zhu Xi's learning. As a disciple of Yamazaki Ansai,* who was known as the leading advocate of fidelity to Zhu Xi, Masayuki considered Sokō a philosophical disgrace to neo-Confucianism. While there are no doubt deviations

from the views of Zhu Xi in Sokō's book, it was surely the bombastic preface, in which he suggested that Song and Ming thinkers (including Zhu Xi) had criminally misled the world, that most offended Masayuki. What is more, Confucians viewed the genre of the philosophical dictionary in which Sokō chose to write as a philosophical technique for correcting the political order. Thus Sokō perhaps conveyed the impression that he was assuming responsibility for a rectification of philosophical terms in preparation for a correct reordering of the political realm. Such hubris simply could not be tolerated.

During his years of exile in Akō, Sokō authored an important text, *The True Reality of the Central Kingdom*, arguing that Japan, not China, was the true "central kingdom" because of its unbroken, divine imperial line. Following his pardon in 1675 and his return to Edo, Sokō devoted his final years to an examination of the nature of metaphysical change. The result, *Exploring the Origins of Change and Our Springs to Action*, was his final philosophical treatise, one that he continued to revise until his death in 1685.

[JAT]

THE ESSENCE OF THE SAGES

YAMAGA Sokō 1665A, 8–19, 21–7

The sages lived in distant antiquity. Over time, the subtle meanings of their teachings have become obscure.... But even two millennia after Confucius, our teacher Yamaga appeared... to revive the essentials of the sagely and moral learning. We, his disciples, have edited his remarks. Presenting them to him, we suggested, "Your sayings should be revered, but they must be kept secret. They ought not be propagated because they run counter to the ideas of various Han, Tang, Song, and Ming Confucian scholars. Contemporary thinkers whose doctrines differ from yours will surely condemn them."

Our teacher replied, "Ah, what good is it to bother with those small-minded pedants! The 'Way' is the Way of the entire world. One must not hide it in one's bosom but rather proclaim it far and wide so that it will be practiced forever and ever. If my ideas influence just one person, they will be of benefit to the whole world. If 'refined persons' are willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of realizing 'humaneness', why should my teachings be kept secret? The greatest crime in the world is to mislead others in aiming to explain the moral Way. Scholars of the Han and Tang, as well as those of the Song and Ming dynasties belonging to the school of 'principle', strove eloquently to resolve the conundrums of the moral Way. But the harder they tried, the deeper were the doubts that people had. Those scholars forced the sages, whom they ought to have looked up to with the very highest degree of awe and respect, to sit in mud and grimy ash.

The classics of the sages are brilliantly clear. There is no need to belabor them with wordy, heavy commentaries. Admittedly I lack broad knowledge and am unskilled in rhetoric... But if I stay my voice, the foul and filthy claims of those scholars may never be cleared away... What is more, if I circulate my thoughts, others will be able to agree, criticize, or debate them. Should my mistakes be corrected through such open discussion, debate, and criticism, then the Way will have profited greatly...

Perfection in knowledge is attained when one's understanding penetrates everything. Diligence in action is action pursued energetically. What distresses me is an eloquent Confucian lecturer who is morally deficient in practice. The sagely Way is not something for which individuals should selfishly hope. If practiced by one person but not everyone, it is not the Way. My sole purpose in life is to articulate the sagely teachings in the hope that a future refined person can bring them to fruition in the world."

Yielding to Master Yamaga's wishes, we his disciples therefore respectfully present his *Essential Records of the Sagely Teachings* for public consideration.

Sagehood

A sage is one whose knowledge is perfect and whose mind is so correct that there is nothing between heaven and earth that he does not understand. A sage's behavior is earnest but in harmony with the order of things. In dealings with others a sage is natural and easy, but also centered in ritual propriety. In governing the state and bringing peace to the world a sage ensures that everything is in its proper order. In explaining sagacity, one need not speak of physical appearance, elaborate the Way of the sages, or even understand their functions. One need only recognize that a sage is one who, in the world of daily practicality, perfectly understands and fully follows rituals without excess or deficiency.

In antiquity rulers taught their people the mean and governed them by it. In later ages, rulers gave up teaching the mean and appointed teachers to instruct the people in their stead. Such was the government of a degenerate age.

Perfecting knowledge involves the 'investigation of all things'... By completely investigating things so that there is nothing that is not fully explored, knowledge is perfected to such a degree that nothing is not understood. Sages are those who let nothing pass without exhaustive examination, and as a result there is nothing they encounter that they do not fully understand...

'Learning' consists simply of studying the ancient teachings, extending one's knowledge about them, and applying that knowledge to daily matters. When knowledge is perfected, one's 'temperament' will be transformed. Establishing a sense of purpose for one's life is integral to learning. Unless one establishes a

sense of purpose, one's actions will simply be "for the sake of impressing others" (*Analects* XIV.24)....

Learning requires questioning, and questioning demands scrutiny. One learns nothing new without questioning. Practical proficiency is also integral to the sagely learning; thus, as Confucius said, one "studies and in time becomes proficient" (1.1). The sagely learning requires thought: without thinking, knowledge can never be perfected and attempts at learning will remain muddled. The school of mind and the school of 'principle' were infatuated with the mind and obsessed by human nature. Such excesses clouded their learning. They also became mired in details when reading books, only further diminishing their learning. Excesses and deficiencies such as these cloud learning.

Learning requires standards. If your purpose in life is not correct, then it does not matter what you read—you will remain unenlightened. While searching for the Way and its principles, perplexities will continue. Though energetically engaged, you will remain cramped in action. Although praised as a refined person, you will not understand things clearly....

People are not born with perfect knowledge, which is why teachers have been charged to aid their learning. In doing so, they must recognize the sages as teachers. For the longest time, however, there were none to teach the teachings of the sages, only assistants who helped people to memorize words and phrases.

If the Way permeates everything between heaven and earth, and if human beings and all things in the world possess its principles by nature, then anyone who is worthy in word and deed can serve as a teacher. Why must one have only one teacher? Heaven and earth are also teachers. Things and events can also be our teachers.

Cultivating the self involves respectfully choosing, esteeming, and serving one's teachers. Unless one esteems the teacher's Way, one's learning will not be solid. Among teachers there are those who are revered and those who are taken more lightly. There are also technical instructors of diverse, particular skills. But those who teach the sagely learning deserve a profound respect no less than that due to one's ruler and father. The ancients viewed their teachers with this kind of respect.

Teachers reveal the beginnings of things, while friends give help concerning personal matters. Each has its benefits.

Reading Books

Books convey enduring wisdom, ancient as well as modern. One should put one's effort into reading them. Indeed, one must read as energetically as one pursues daily, practical affairs, because education depends largely on the

reading of books. Education impedes daily practicality only if one does nothing other than read books, neglecting to practice the Way as well.

If one reads books with the purpose of learning, one will gain great benefits. But to read books thinking that learning stops there is to idle one's time with useless playthings and lose sight of one's purpose in life.

The books one should read relate the teachings of the sages, which are plain and simple. To read and savor them, to reflect and comment on them, or to extend them by practicing their principles, is sufficient to find them verified. Other books may be clever, informative, and reliable. Some of their passages should be learned and some of their teachings and activities might be useful. But when scrutinized from beginning to end, they are seen to be incomplete. They are only aids for broadening one's capabilities and knowledge. It is unnecessary to explain these points again.

The learning of 'ordinary people' emphasizes memorization and extensive factual knowledge in its approach to reading books. But devoted readers must refrain from darting about and scanning rather than reading. It is best to savor the minutiae of commentaries while taking the sagely pronouncements of the sages' learning as one's foundations. This is the way one should directly comprehend teachings.

Poetry and Prose

"Poetry expresses one's aspirations." When one harbors aspirations, language spontaneously emerges communicating them. Ancient verses have an elegance that is natural and appropriate to them. Some odes express aspirations through remonstrance and satire, some through critical discussions of 'righteousness'. Others speak of beautiful landscapes. Some poems admonish, while others extol contemporary government or the virtues of rulers and ministers. The six kinds of ancient poetry overflowed with such themes. Poetry students of later ages, however, have strained to express their unique, subjective thoughts with fine, eloquent words. Yet their verses ended as vacuous lies. Thus latter-day poets have become the world's worst idlers and hedonists.

Poets often make the mistake of thinking that they must use the language of the Confucian classics, discuss the moral Way and its virtues, humaneness, and righteousness, and encompass all ethical teachings. Prose refers to the discursive language used in writing books. The Confucian sages and worthies could not help but articulate their thoughts in prose. Later writers had only eloquence and insinuating faces. In unsubstantial matters, they searched for curiosities from which to create fictions.... They may have been premier prose stylists, but their learning was perverse. Their prose was too refined and unsubstantial.

The Way

Because the Way refers to the course that one should follow in daily activity, it specifically signifies those rational and ethical principles that a person ought to follow. Heaven surrounds all things; earth supports them; and human beings and animals dwell among them. Each realm has its own Way from which it cannot differ.

The Way is practical. Unless it can be followed every day, it is not the Way. The sagely Way is the Way of humanity; thus it consists of what everyone should follow in their daily activity regardless of time and place. If it were artificial or contrived so that only one person could follow it but others could not, or so that the ancients could follow it but moderns could not, then it would not be the moral Way of humanity, nor would the *Doctrine of the Mean* have said that it “follows human nature” (1.1).

As a concept the notion of the moral Way arose from the word for a road that people follow. In traveling, people must follow roads. For example, wagons and carriages cross the great highways linking the imperial capital with every direction. Because these highways facilitate the flow of people and commodities, everyone wants to use them. Back alleys, while convenient for locals, are narrow, cramped, and difficult to navigate; nevertheless they are occasionally pleasing. Confucius’ moral Way is a great thoroughfare, while heterodox ways are mere alleys. The latter provide trifling pleasures, but no real peace or security. Although great thoroughfares lack scenic attractions, myriad alleys flow into them. Therefore one can never really leave them.

Principle, Virtue, Humaneness

Principle refers to rational order. Everything has a rational order. If that order is thrown into confusion, then matters of precedence and hierarchy will never be right. One errs greatly in viewing human nature and heaven as principle. A natural and rational order pervades heaven, earth, people, and physical things. Ritual ‘propriety’ embodies that order.

Virtue is acquired. As knowledge is brought to perfection, one comes to embody it. To practice virtue is to acquire it in the mind and embodying it in behavior. When virtue is practiced impartially, one comprehends heaven and earth without confusion. Such all-penetrating virtue is called “heavenly virtue” or ‘bright virtue’. If one’s achievements are weak and shallow like thin ice, one cannot be called virtuous.

Humaneness makes people truly human. One becomes humane by “overcoming selfishness and returning to propriety” (*Analects* XII.1). Just as heaven and earth come into being through origination, the world stands on humaneness. Humaneness... is the highest of the sagely Confucian teachings.

Han and Tang scholars explained humaneness as love. That characterization, however, is insufficient. Song Confucians saw humaneness as human nature, but that exaggerates its meaning.... Han and Tang scholars did minor harm, but the damage done by the Song and Ming Confucians was an outrage. In explaining humaneness Confucius was much more specific than the later Han, Tang, and Song academics ever were.

In terms of righteousness, humaneness refers to love as opposed to hatred. Yet humaneness and righteousness cannot be totally dissected: one practices humaneness by relying on righteousness, and one completes righteousness by relying on humaneness. Human feelings, on the other hand, deal only with love and hatred as natural feelings. It takes humaneness and righteousness to regulate them to the circumstances of life.... Everyone has feelings, but only by practicing the Confucian Way can they be properly regulated.

Ghosts and Spirits

Ghosts and spirits are mysterious and profound, omnipresent entities. The spiritual energies of *yin* and *yang* are traces of ghosts and spirits, as are the all-penetrating, creative currents of heaven, earth, humanity, and things. Ghosts are associated with *yin*, and spirits with *yang*.

.....

Ghosts and spirits pervade everything, even mysterious, profound spaces. Although we can neither perceive nor hear them, they abide in the same 'ki' as do humans. Thus, their existence cannot be doubted.

The heavenly components of the human spirit belong to *yang*, and spirits are their spiritual forces. The earthly components of the human spirit belong to *yin*, and ghosts are their spiritual forces. Human beings and animals are incarnations of *yin* and *yang*. The essential spiritual forces of *yin* and *yang* are the earthly and heavenly components of the soul.

As human beings and animals embody form, ghosts and spirits appear in them. The refined *ki* of ghosts and spirits informs all things. When humans and animals no longer embody physical form, their ghosts and spirits circulate, producing aberrations in the creative work of the universe. It is the wandering of the heavenly components of the soul that produces these aberrations.

Yin and Yang

Yin and *yang* fill all space in heaven and earth, effecting the creative activities of the universe. As the complementary forces that ceaselessly grow and disintegrate, come and go, expand and contract, produce and reproduce, *yin* and *yang* are the whole substance of heaven, earth, humanity, and things.

Yang is light and so it rises; *yin* is heavy and therefore descends. *Yang* is *ki*,

and *yin* provides form. Yet *ki* and form are inseparable. *Yin* and *yang* are also mutually related: one cannot cleave from the other, nor can one function apart from the other. Therefore, neither *yin* nor *yang* assumes a fixed position as they jointly preside over creation.

Of the phenomena that *yin* and *yang* inform, fire and water are the most salient: they mutually oppose and rely on one another as their activities pervade the universe. Of the myriad creations of *yin* and *yang*, they are the greatest.

The five elements provide *yin* and *yang* with form, and are the active agents of creation within heaven and earth. *Yin* and *yang* are *ki*, while the five elements provide the form of *ki*. The five elements are not fabricated; they exist naturally. Water and fire are the master elements. Although they are phenomena, fire and water are basically formless. Through mutual opposition and interaction, their creative powers exhaust myriad transformations.

Within the five elements there are cycles of production, action, and mutual succession. Amidst heaven, earth, man, and the physical world, the five elements ceaselessly overcome one another, rely on each other, and then produce one another. Their cycles of creation, circulation, and succession are inexhaustible.

Heaven and Earth

Heaven and earth are the greatest forms manifested by *yin* and *yang*. Because they exist naturally and necessarily, heaven and earth are never artificial. They are eternal, without beginning or end. Their dimensions cannot be measured; no instrument can calculate their reach. One can only acknowledge that the flowing currents of *yin* and *yang* produced heaven and earth, the sun and moon, and the human and physical worlds.

Ki ascends infinitely and thus forms heaven. Descending and congealing, it becomes earth. The truly inevitable nature of these ascents and descents is the most conspicuous characteristic of *yin* and *yang*.

Heaven and earth produce and reproduce ceaselessly. Their creative energy is inexhaustible.... When finished with one thing, heaven and earth initiate another in a process of creation without beginning or end. The virtues of heaven and earth are the most magnificent, just, and correct; in those virtues one can see the ethical sentiments of heaven and earth.

Of the myriad manifestations of *yin* and *yang*, heaven and earth are the greatest, but the sun and moon are the most essential. Suspended above all creation, the sun and moon illuminate every phenomenon so that the myriad things of heaven and earth attain their proper lot. The sun and moon penetrate every transformation within heaven and earth; thus do they participate in the activities of heaven and earth.

Human Nature

When principle and *ki* mysteriously combine, there is ceaseless production and reproduction. Human nature is the part of us that can experience and understand. Everything that is produced and reproduced, including human beings and things of the world, is subject to the 'will of heaven'....

The mysterious activities of human nature take place through the interaction of principle and *ki*. Everywhere that there are phenomena, there, too, is nature. Things are produced of necessity, and whenever they are produced, so are their natures. Feelings and ideas are part of that nature. Where ideas are found, the moral Way must prevail as well. And if the moral Way prevails, so will ethical teachings.

.....

Although the natural endowments of humanity and the world share a single source, the intermingling of principle and *ki*, surpluses and deficiencies naturally appear, as do differences in the mysterious responses and experiences of those natures. Thus while human beings receive essentially the same natures from heaven and earth, differences in people appear even among barbarian tribes, not to mention the birds and beasts, and countless other creatures.

One should not speak of human nature as good or evil.... Believing human nature to be originally good, later scholars established practices for cultivating their innate goodness. Such errors confused students all the more. Because later scholars liked to claim that human nature is good, the schools of mind and principle eventually appeared. Yet as Confucius observed, the human natures with which people are endowed are similar; it is through the behavior flowing from their temperaments that they differ.

One who cultivates the moral Way, following the nature that is in accordance with the will of heaven, is a sage, a refined person. Those who indulge their temperament and submit to their feelings, are vulgar and barbarian. Human nature depends on instruction and practice. Those who pursue an originally good nature without following the teachings of the Confucian sages fall into heterodoxy.

The sage Confucius did not distinguish the nature that heaven decreed from the nature of the individual temperament. Dichotomizing them, one ends up severing heaven from humanity and principle from *ki*. Human nature emerges from the interaction of principle and *ki*; this is as true for heaven and earth as it is for human beings and everything else in the world. Scholars have made the mistake of ignoring temperament in their discussion of human nature. Caught up in finer and finer distinctions, their remarks are of no benefit to sagely Confucian learning. Claims like these misconstrue human nature:

1. human nature is what human beings are born with;

2. human nature is evil;
3. human nature is a mixture of good and evil;
4. human nature is neither good nor evil;
5. human nature is function; and
6. human nature is principle.

Explaining human nature does not require wordy accounts.

Mind, Ideas, and Feelings

Although human nature fills the physical body, it cannot be identified with any physical aspect. Human nature has its ground in the heart within our breasts, which is the center of the entire body and first among five organs. As the site of one's spiritual intelligence and the ground of human nature and feelings, the 'mind' is also the master of the body.

Mind is associated with the element of fire. It produces and reproduces ceaselessly. Because the mind never rests, its active processes stream forth continually. When speaking of human nature and feelings, the ancients signified the mind as well, and when they referred to the mind, they also meant human nature.

Distinguishing between consciousness as mind and principle as human nature is the result of a desire to dichotomize the two. This mistaken tendency derives from the view that human nature is originally good. On the contrary, however, the sagely classics speak of "the mind of the human and the mind of the Way" and of "correcting the mind," indicating that the human mind is possessed of both consciousness and principles.

Ideas are emanations of human nature that have yet to take visible form. As they acquire form, they become feelings. Subtle and unapparent emanations are ideas; they are simply the inclinations of the mind. Human nature and the mind are substance, while ideas and feelings are function.

One's sense of compassion, shame, deference, and right and wrong are human feelings. In their emergence and contact with the world, feelings are nothing other than *yin* and *yang* and the five elements. By means of the moral virtues of humaneness, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, the sage Confucius ensured that human feelings could be duly expressed.

Purpose refers to the intended direction of the mind, that is to say, it refers to the fixed inclinations of our ideas and feelings. Purpose necessarily follows the *ki* of a person. Thought refers to what can be discerned within our ideas and feelings. Unless followed to term, thought becomes incoherent.... Nevertheless, the sage Confucius did not dissect notions like human nature and the mind, ideas and feelings, purpose and *ki*, or thought and deliberation. Such analyses

were the clever dichotomies of later scholars. How could the Confucian Way have become so fragmented?

The Birth of Humanity and the World

Through the intermingling of principle and *ki* countless things are produced. When their source is *yang* they become male; when *yin*, female. In the production of things, there is neither first nor last in relation to heaven, earth, and the myriad things that make up the world. If pressured, I would have to say that heaven and earth appeared first and that humanity and the world followed later.

As principle and *ki* mysteriously intermingle, excesses, and deficiencies are always present. This is why innumerable kinds of beings arise. Among them, the human person alone is fully endowed with *yin* and *yang* and the five elements, but even humans vary in the excesses or deficiencies of their endowments. Thus some people are born wise and others fools. Nevertheless, that some people become refined persons while others achieve no higher status than that of ordinary people is simply due to the fact that the former study and learn Confucius' teachings.

Human beings are endowed with correct *ki*; animals and other things in the world, with distorted *ki*. Correct *ki* is a sign of correct principle; distorted *ki*, a sign of thick *ki*.

The Supreme Ultimate

The 'supreme ultimate'... cannot be traced prior to its manifestation. The supreme ultimate is also called the final ultimate since, through the mysterious joining of principle and *ki*, it lacks nothing of all the majestic changes and transformations that occur in the world, or even of the stars above that shine in full luminosity. As the images harbored within the supreme ultimate become manifest, heaven and earth come forth in all their magnificence; the four seasons begin to change, extending their influence everywhere; the sun and moon illumine things; clouds move, rains fall, and countless things crystallize.

When principle and *ki* mysteriously join, the supreme ultimate necessarily permeates the most faint and subtle of things. For all of heaven and earth, humanity and the world at large, there is only one supreme ultimate. In all things, the sage Confucius sought only the supreme ultimate. All things between heaven and earth follow rules and entail numerous principles. Hence, even before things emerge, the supreme ultimate is in possession of their forms and numbers.... Therefore, when Confucius discussed change, he did so in terms of the supreme ultimate.

.....

Neither the Way of heaven and earth nor the teachings of the sage Confucius involve many words. Nor do they consist of abstruse explanations or affected behavior. They can be conveyed simply with natural principles: with a single remark, one can exhaustively express them. Without realizing it, people use them daily. Past and present generations have followed the sagely Confucian Way without it being diminished. By tampering with its spirit, identifying it with human nature and the mind, one ends up at a great distance from the way Confucius set out.

[JAT]

Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627–1705)



Itō Jinsai's family moved to Kyoto, the ancient imperial capital, towards the end of the sixteenth century, just before Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) was to consolidate the samurai rule of Japan as the new shōgun, and inaugurate the Tokugawa period (1600–1868). Ieyasu based his samurai regime in Edo (later Tokyo), the capital of his 'shogunate'. Within a century Edo had become the cultural center of Japan, increasingly eclipsing Kyoto in the intellectual, artistic, and cultural arenas. During Jinsai's life, however, Kyoto retained its status as the center of traditional culture, if not political power.

Although Jinsai's family was not part of "old" Kyoto, it had established itself in the vicinity of the imperial palace, which made it possible to secure connections with important elements of the aristocracy. It is not entirely clear what profession the Itō family had been a part of, but they have often been described as involved in the lumber industry because they lived in a part of Kyoto where lumber merchants were numerous. In any event, the Itō were apparently of fairly comfortable circumstances by the time of Jinsai's birth, making it possible for him to pursue the study of Confucian philosophy, despite his family's wish that he undertake a career as a physician. In an age when most who studied Confucian philosophy were either Buddhists or of samurai birth, Jinsai's background as a townsman set him apart.

Like many educated Japanese of his day, Jinsai began his studies with neo-Confucian texts, most specifically primers aimed at instilling the ideas of the Song philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200). Later Jinsai would explore Daoism and Buddhism, only to become frustrated with what he saw as their lack of practicality. Ultimately he developed his own vision of Confucian thought, one that emphasized the primacy of two classical Confucian texts, the *Analects* and *Mencius*, over the writings of Zhu Xi. Although the resulting system of philosophical thought was more the product of Jinsai's own original reformulation of Confucian and neo-Confucian thinking, he never claimed to be doing anything other than returning to the ideas of Confucius and Mencius. Nevertheless, what we may well characterize as Jinsai's conceptually ordered revision of neo-Confucian philosophy stands as one of the most systematic and original expressions of philosophical thought to emerge from the Tokugawa period. Insofar as his philosophical masterwork, *The Meanings of Terms in the Analects and Mencius*, sought to systematize the meanings of philosophical terms, it can be viewed as an expression of Confucian political philosophy grounded in right language. After all, Confucius had affirmed that if given the administrative authority over a state, that his first initiative would be the "rectification of terms," reasoning

that if language is not correctly defined and used, social and political chaos will result. Jinsai's philosophy is based, ontologically, on an affirmation of a monistic metaphysics of generative force ('*ki*'), as many of the following extracts reveal.

[JAT]

A LEXICON OF PHILOSOPHICAL TERMS

ITŌ Jinsai 1705, 14-19, 22, 24-32, 39-40, 42-3, 45-9, 53, 56, 58, 63-7, 69-70, 73-5, 80-1, 83-5, 111-12 (71-9, 85-6, 88, 91, 95-6, 98-103, 117, 122, 127, 129-35, 141, 147, 149-50, 163-5, 167-9, 173-5, 182-5, 194, 203-5, 253)

The Way of Heaven

The 'Way' refers to a road or pathway: something that people follow in coming and going... '*Ki*' pervades heaven and earth, sometimes as *yin*, sometimes as *yang*. These two aspects of *ki* fill things and empty them, promoting both growth and decay; they actively come and go, responding ceaselessly to all things. As the whole substance of heaven's Way and the activating force of nature, *yin* and *yang* produce myriad transformations and countless beings.

.....

The reality of heaven's Way is unitary. The fluid activities refer to the ceaseless alternation of *yin* with *yang*; its complementary activities refer to everything from heaven to earth: sun and moon, mountains and rivers, water and fire, brightness and darkness of day and night, the succession of hot and cold—all of which complement one another. The Way of heaven is thus called complementary, but always within the context of the active aspect, never apart from it.

.....

Someone asked: "What justifies the claim that only *ki* exists between heaven and earth? One should not speak vacuously about such matters."

I responded, "I will make my point, if you will allow, by way of an analogy. A box-maker makes a box by joining pieces of wood. When a lid is added, however, *ki* mysteriously fills the box. White mold might then be spontaneously produced, and termites may be born. Such is nature's principle. Heaven and earth are a gigantic box, with *yin* and *yang* acting as its *ki*. The myriad things are its white mold and termites. *Ki* is not generated from anything, nor does it come from anywhere. Wherever enclosures exist, *ki* exists.... Obviously 'principle' did not exist first and then *ki* come later. Principle is simply the rationale existing within *ki*.

"The myriad things are rooted in the five elements,⁸ which in turn are

8. [The "five elements" alluded to here are water, wood, earth, metal, and fire.]

grounded in *yin* and *yang*. If we further seek the origins of *yin* and *yang*, we cannot but return to the notion of principle. That is the conclusion at which common sense inevitably arrives”...

The *Book of Changes* states, “The great virtue of heaven and earth is life-giving productivity” (11.9). This suggests that ceaseless reproduction is the Way of heaven and earth. The Way of heaven and earth consists of life, not death; thus it encompasses integration, but never disintegration. Death ultimately puts an end to life and disintegration extinguishes integration. As the Way of heaven and earth solely manifests itself through life-giving creation, even though one’s ancestors might have passed away, their spiritual essence has still been transmitted to their descendants. The latter in turn transmit some of the same to their progeny. Thus, spiritual essence is produced and reproduced ceaselessly. It is never exhausted, and therefore attains immortality. The same is true of the myriad living things. Does not, then, the Way of heaven and earth consist solely in life-giving creation, but not death? One may, in ordinary language, say that living things die, and that integrated entities disintegrate. But that does not mean that life-giving creativity, which is the Way of heaven, ever really dies, or that animated integration truly disintegrates. This is because life and death are utterly opposed to one another....

Someone observed: “*Ki* certainly exists when one is talking about the universe after the separation of heaven and earth. But before that happens, principle alone exists...”

I replied: “Your claims are mere fantasy. Who witnessed what existed prior to heaven and earth, or what happened at their beginning? Are there any accounts? If there were a person born prior to heaven and earth’s opening, one who lived for billions and trillions of years, who actually witnessed what existed and communicated that experience to the world, then I would allow that their story was true. But there is no such person. Evidently, such talk about heaven and earth’s opening is utterly absurd.

.....

“What spans the four directions, and is above and below, is called space; the continuum from antiquity to the present is known as time. By comprehending the infinity of the six directions, we realize that time is inexhaustible. We further realize that the heaven and earth existing today is the heaven and earth that has existed for myriad aeons and still exists. How could there have been either a beginning or end? Why must we imagine that heaven and earth open and close? Discussions about the infinity of space and time such as this one can destroy illusions that have misled people for millennia. These matters may be discussed with wise men, but we should not broach them with foolish people.”

Someone observed: “We should not claim that there was a beginning and end, or an opening and closing of heaven and earth. But neither should we

contend that there was neither a beginning nor an ending, neither an opening nor a closing, of heaven and earth.”

I replied: “If we should not say heaven and earth had a beginning and ending or an opening and closing, then we certainly should not claim that there was neither a beginning and ending, nor an opening and closing. Even the sage Confucius did not claim knowledge about such ultimate matters. Why would mere scholars do so? We should thus ‘let these matters be as they are and refrain from discussing them. See them as mysteries.’”

.....

The Way of heaven is morally good. The *Book of Changes* thus states, “the originating force consists of the growth of goodness” (III.1). Between heaven and earth and throughout the four directions, this goodness engulfs all, filling and penetrating everything so that nothing is internal or external to it. In moral goodness, one follows the natural order. In wrong behavior, one opposes it. Wrongness, insofar as it exists in the world, involves actions like transplanting a mountain plant in a marsh, or relocating fish on top of a mountain or hill. Under such circumstances, neither the plant nor the fish could follow their natures for so much as a single day.

The inability of people to perpetrate moral wrongness for an entire day reveals the essential goodness of heaven’s Way. Perfect goodness exists when there is goodness wherever one goes. Pure wrongness reigns when wrong deeds become omnipresent. Goodness builds on goodness so that the blessings of goodness are incalculable. With wrong deed upon wrong, the world soon returns to chaos, and the resulting calamities become unfathomable. Heaven’s Way must therefore be respected.

Fate

Confucius always spoke of good and bad fortune, blessings and calamities, life and death, existence and nonexistence and other such circumstances as matters of fate or mandate. Whether we have good fortune or bad, blessings or calamities, whether we live or die, whether we exist or not, and whether we encounter happiness or unhappiness in life, these are all matters that unfold naturally. Ultimately we can do nothing about them. They are thus called fate. They are referred to as “fate” because they must be accepted and cannot be refused. This gloss also implies that these matters are determined and cannot be escaped.

.....

What does it mean to “understand fate”? It means being at peace, and that means simply having no doubts. Understanding fate cannot be elucidated in terms of particular sounds, forms, smells, or tastes, and yet it involves an under-

standing that is both entirely real and utterly exhaustive. When one is peaceful and at ease with fate, when one can calmly face it without doubts or second thoughts, then one is at peace, and then one truly understands fate. Confucius thus remarked, “I have been praying for a long while” (*Analects* VII.35). One cannot explain fate simply by means of empirical knowledge.

.....

Neo-Confucians esteem ‘learning’ because they think that by extending knowledge and honoring their moral virtue they can positively transform the quality of their *ki*. Yet if they are right about the immutability of the ‘will of heaven’, then matters of wisdom and ignorance, worthiness and unworthiness, wealth and poverty, long life and brief life, are determined entirely at birth. Neither learning nor self-cultivation will change them. This implies that Confucius worked in vain in formulating his teachings. The views of the neo-Confucians on this issue reflect little thought.

The Way

The Way is the path that people should follow in daily ethical conduct. It does not exist simply because it is taught. Nor does it exist simply because it corrects human tendencies. Rather it exists naturally. Throughout the four directions and eight corners of the world everyone understands the moral relationships naturally existing between rulers and ministers, fathers and sons, husbands and wives, elder and younger brothers, and friends. Everyone also understands the ways of parental love, duty, distinctions, order, and fidelity. For myriad generations this has been and will be true. Therefore these are called the Way. The comment in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, “People cannot depart from the Way for an instant” (1.2), refers to the very universality of the Way.

The same is not true of the ways of Buddhism and Daoism. When those ways are honored, they exist; when they are abandoned, they vanish.

.....

The Buddha believed that ‘emptiness’ was the way. Laozi saw it as the ‘void’. The Buddha thought that mountains, rivers, and continents were all illusions. Laozi claimed that everything was born from ‘nothingness’ (*Laozi* 40). Now for countless ages heaven and earth have sustained life, the sun and moon have illuminated the world, the seasons have succeeded one another, mountains have stood and rivers flowed, and birds, beasts, fish, insects, trees, and grasses have lived as they do even now. For countless generations life forms given to change have been changing shapes.... So how can Buddhists and Daoists claim that everything is empty and void? Their views crystallized after they abandoned study and indulged in speculative wisdom. Buddhists and Daoists retired to mountain forests, sat silently, cleansed their minds, and achieved a perspective

on things. But their so-called principles no more exist in this world than they do outside of it.

Fathers and sons love each other; husbands and wives love each other; among friends, there is camaraderie. Not only is this true of humanity, the same applies to many animals. These relationships exist even among bamboo plants, trees, and other forms of life that are not sentient. Among them are distinctions between males and females, parents and children. How much more so must these distinctions be present in human beings endowed with the four beginnings, moral knowledge, and moral capacities. Not only do 'refined persons' have such relationships; roadside beggars have them as well....

The sagely Confucian Way thus violates nothing inherent in the common people, nothing established during the three dynasties, nothing created between heaven and earth, and nothing pertaining to ghosts and spirits. The sagely Confucian Way does not violate grasses, trees, insects, fish, grains of sand, pebbles, nor even scum and waste. One can seek Buddhist and Daoist teachings in heaven and earth, the sun and moon, mountains and rivers, grasses and trees, humans and beasts, but nothing corroborates them. We therefore know that those principles do not truly exist

Principle

Someone asked: "Why did Confucius discuss heaven and humanity in terms of the Way, but physical things in terms of principle?"

I replied: "The notion of the Way is a living word capable of describing the reproductive and transformative mysteries of living things. Principle, in contrast, is a dead word.... It can neither convey nor capture the mysteries that heaven and earth produce through productive and transformative life....

"Laozi, however, described the Way as emptiness and nothingness. He believed heaven and earth were lifeless entities (*Laozi* 6). Whereas Confucius spoke of 'heaven's Way', Laozi discoursed on 'heaven's principles' (19), reflecting very different perspectives. The Confucian Way also differs significantly from those of the Buddhists and Daoists, and we must take care not to let their ideas slip into our vocabulary as if the terms meant the same thing.

.....

"As a living word, the Way signifies organisms that are active and alive. Principles are inanimate terms, denoting things that exist but are not alive. Because the sage Confucius saw the Way as real and substantial, his explanations of its principles were extremely lively. Laozi envisioned the Way as emptiness and as a result his interpretations of its principles were rather moribund. Confucius regularly discussed heaven's Way and the will of heaven but never the principle of heaven. He explained the Way of humanity and human nature, but never the

principle of humanity. Zhuangzi's view of the Way invariably relied on principle. We must conclude, therefore, that neo-Confucians followed Laozi in making principle their main concern."

Humaneness, Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom

'Humaneness', 'righteousness', 'propriety', and 'wisdom' are all concepts pertaining to the Way and virtue. They are not human nature. One speaks of the Way and virtue in universal terms, not as something specific to individuals. Human nature refers only to the individual human self, not everything in the world. Such is the distinction between human nature and the Way and virtue.

.....

Confucians should see humaneness as their essence, treating it as if it were their daily sustenance. Whether coming or going, standing or sitting, Confucians must be humane in everything they do. Why, then, did Confucius often address the moral significance of humaneness, but not its relationship to love? Love forms the substance of a humane person's mind. The mind of the human person is thus tolerant, impartial, joyous, and without anxieties; it contains within itself a multitude of virtues. This is why whenever Confucius was asked about humaneness he referred to the humane mind.

.....

Confucians differ from Buddhists and Daoists in emphasizing righteousness. The sage Confucius differed from neo-Confucians in focusing his teachings on humaneness. Why is this? Buddhists see compassion as 'dharma', while they view 'nirvāṇa' as the Way. They gradually abandoned righteousness, considering it a minor way. Buddhists do not understand that righteousness is the great path of the world. Abandoning righteousness is tantamount to leaving a good and proper road to travel among thorns and bushes. That certainly will get one nowhere.

The virtues emphasized by neo-Confucians are shallow and constraining; their distinctions are overwrought and their essential *ki* or 'temperament' lacks breadth, tolerance, and wholeness. They view humaneness abstractly, as if it were unimportant. They seem not to realize that they have fallen into a bitter, heartless teaching. That is why they differ from the sages.

The Mind

The 'mind' is the faculty with which people think and plan. Originally it was neither esteemed nor despised. After all, every sentient being has a mind.

.....

Buddhists and the various heterodox philosophers, however, discussed the mind to no end. That was because they did not realize that virtues should be esteemed far more than the mind. Instead they recklessly vented their misguided fabrications. Their teachings differ from those of Confucius and Mencius as much as heaven differs from earth....

Everyone is endowed with a moral mind at birth, just as rivers have water and vegetation has roots. Everything the mind touches comes alive. The more the mind produces, the more it appears inexhaustible; the more it functions, the more it seems limitless. Such is the mind's original substance. Is there anything more real than this?

Those who claim that the mind is empty are no more than lackeys of the Buddhists and Daoists... who make purity their foundation and absence of desire their way. By perfecting those qualities, the mind is supposed to become blank like a bright mirror and deep like still water. When every remnant of contamination is gone, the mind is said to be pure and clean. The same process of mental purification also severs the mind from its feelings of compassion and sense of righteousness, utterly destroying the ethical basis of humanity. Though one's mind may be pure, the relations between ruler and minister, parent and child, husband and wife, elder and younger brothers, and friend and friend are viewed as useless and superfluous. Buddhist and Daoist views of the mind are as incompatible with the Way of the Confucian sages as water and fire.

Grasses and trees are living entities; flowing water is an energetic, moving substance. Even a sprout can reach to the clouds if properly cultivated and kept from hindrances. Even the water of a tiny stream can flow into the great ocean if allowed to advance unrestricted. So it is with the human mind: if properly cultivated and not damaged, it can form a triad with heaven and earth....

Human Nature

Human nature is innate: everyone is endowed with it at birth. Nothing can be added to or taken from it... Plums, for example, are naturally tart and persimmons sweet. Some medicines naturally warm us up while others cool us down. In asserting that "human nature is good," Mencius meant that despite numerous inequalities in physical attributes, all people recognize good as good and evil as evil. That is true, Mencius believed, regardless of the historical epoch and regardless of whether people are fools or sages. Mencius did not mean that the goodness of human nature exists apart from the disposition of a person's *ki*.

.....

Human nature is uneven and unequal; strengths and weaknesses merge in it. Hence Confucius' statement, "People share a similar human nature but in prac-

tice they diverge” (*Analects* xvii.2). Mencius added that, despite this imbalance of strengths and weaknesses, human nature still tends towards goodness, just as water flows downward, however pure or turbid, sweet or salty. Confucius’ remark about a similar human nature and Mencius’ claim about its goodness both refer to the moral flow of human nature towards goodness, and yet they still refer to the disposition of *ki*.

.....

Laozi said that everything is created from nothingness (*Laozi* 40). Daoists, therefore claimed that human nature was originally tranquil but that as it took on form it became agitated with desires, overcome by emotions, and assaulted by all sorts of evils. His way thus stressed obliterating desires (19) and returning to one’s original nature. The Confucian Way did not, at least originally. Confucianism differs from Daoism as much as life differs from death and water from fire. The two diverge at their very roots....

Human Feelings

Human feelings are the desires of human nature; they are what activate people.... If compassion, shame, deference, and right and wrong do not belong to the mind, where do they belong? If one calls them feelings rather than parts of the mind, then what is mind? One might as well abandon the notion altogether and speak only of human feelings.

Loyalty and Trustworthiness

Loyalty consists in planning and doing things for other people as we would for ourselves, neglecting nothing. Trustworthiness involves neither embellishing nor detracting from the truth when speaking with others. When something exists, we should admit it. If nothing exists, we should own up to that as well.... This is what it means to be trustworthy....

Taken together, loyalty and trustworthiness point to simplicity unadorned and unembellished....

Loyalty and trustworthiness are basic to Confucian learning. From start to finish, attaining completion in learning requires loyalty and trustworthiness in one’s behavior. Why? Because sincerity is the root of learning. One who is insincere attains nothing. Without loyalty and trustworthiness, no matter how much one’s understanding of rites and literature is in accordance with the mean, no matter how competent one’s mastery of the ceremonies, one’s appearance and emotions will harbor deception and falsehood....

Neo-Confucians felt that making loyalty and trustworthiness one’s masters was not a sufficiently difficult and challenging method of ethical practice. They therefore taught other standards. They never realized that the Way is not dif-

difficult to comprehend. The difficulty consists in achieving utter sincerity in one's actions. Had they realized that, they would have made loyalty and trustworthiness their master.

Empathy

People are very clear about their own likes and dislikes but often vague about those of others. They thus become alienated from one another... Either they detest one another or they behave recklessly. Others become insensitive even to the suffering of old friends and family members....

But if we regard people's likes and dislikes, their status and occupation, with empathy, their minds and persons will seem like our own. When we take another's situation into account, thinking and judging as they do, we can see how their misdeeds flow from circumstances not easily avoided or difficult to bear. We also understand that misdeeds should not be judged severely and with disgust.... We should never deal with people cruelly or heartlessly. We should rush to those in dire need and lend a hand when they are in distress as if there were no other choice. The greatness of this virtue of empathy is incalculable.

.....

It never dawned on the neo-Confucians that loyalty and empathy were fundamental Confucian teachings. The Confucian Way did not originally distinguish the self from society, and neither should Confucian teachings today. If not for loyalty in self-exertion and empathy in treating others, there is no way to unite harmoniously with others. Loyalty and empathy are the greatest and most essential teachings for those hoping to practice the Way and complete their virtue. To the loyal and empathetic mind, every practice undertaken brings harmony with everyone and everything....

Sincerity

'Sincerity' means truth without the slightest tinge of emptiness, falsehood, artifice, or embellishment... Sincerity is the quintessence of the way. Confucianism thus reveres sincerity. Every word and phrase of the sagely literature encourages people to exert themselves in being sincere. Indeed, sincerity is the foundation of humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, 'filial piety', brotherly deference, loyalty, and trustworthiness. Without it there would be no humaneness or righteousness or propriety or wisdom....

Sincerity is the Way of the sage. The Buddha taught emptiness and Laozi discoursed on the void, but the Way of the sage Confucius is nothing if not the true principles of reality.... A great chasm of incommensurability yawns between reality and the void. Nevertheless, scholars today consider principles such as the "void spirit," "void and tranquillity," "void and centrality" to be sources of

learning, not realizing that those notions came from Laozi. Why is it that some have taken “void” as their name and others have referred to libraries as “void”? When something is wrong in its roots, the errors spread through the branches and leaves. I cannot begin to count the mistakes that have issued from allowing heterodox notions into the sage’s teachings. Students must carefully attend to every word and phrase, discern them, scrutinize them, and by doing so, come to proper conclusions concerning their meanings.

Learning

Learning progresses from imitation to realization. In imitating a model one comes to understand it. The ancient word for “learning” today means “imitation.”...

The role of imitation in learning can be compared to the study of writing. One begins by following a primer showing one how to handle a brush and write characters. Only after sustained study of the characters does one come to comprehend the subtleties of the ancients’ art of calligraphy. Neither imitation nor realization alone exhaustively characterizes the learning process....

Learning is thus an awesome endeavor. The Buddhists extol human nature, not realizing that the Way and moral virtues should be revered more. Confucius himself esteemed the Way and moral virtues above all else. He discussed “preserving the mind” and “cultivating nature” merely in order to enhance his teachings about the Way and virtues.

The Way of humaneness, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom fills everything between heaven and earth, penetrating past and present as an indestructible and ultimate moral principle....

Counteracting it makes one cruel and heartless. Righteousness means discriminating, selecting, and discerning the distinctions among things, so that one’s decisions are clear and do not lead to confusion. Its absence only produces greed and shamelessness.... Distinguishing clearly between right and wrong and having no doubts about good and evil is wisdom. Not to do so produces a foolish, unenlightened person.

.....

Thus nothing is more esteemed than the moral efficacy of learning; nothing is more beneficial. Not only can learning enable persons to realize their human nature, it helps them realize the individual natures of everyone and everything. Learning assists in the transforming processes of heaven and earth; it stands with heaven and earth in the order of things. Some may try to abandon learning and just follow their human nature, but such as these will never realize the unique natures of other people and things. They cannot assist heaven and earth

in their transformations and are not even likely to complete their own human nature....

Refined Persons and Ordinary People

Distinctions between 'refined persons' and 'ordinary people' have to do with differences in status and in human virtue. Originally, however, these terms reflected a social order that distinguished rulers and their ministers from peasants and farmers.... The idea was that rulers were supposed to have such a perfect temperament and such magnificent intelligence that they were deemed moral models for the world. Those actually possessing comparable virtue came to be called refined persons, even though they were not rulers. This was out of respect for their actual virtue. Trifling, vulgar, deceitful people with temperaments like the thin-spirited masses came to be known as the commoners, even if they were actually of high social standing. People called them commoners to express contempt for them....

Ghosts and Spirits

The term "ghosts and spirits" refers to the spirits of heaven and earth, of mountains, rivers, and ancestral temples, as well as to the five deities.⁹ Spiritual beings capable of causing people good fortune or bad fortune are also called ghosts or spirits....

The sage kings of the three dynasties¹⁰ did not lead their people by means of their own brilliance. Instead they took pleasure in what pleased their people; they believed what their people believed; and they thought what their people thought. If their people worshipped ghosts and spirits, so did the sage kings. If their people believed in divination, so did they. As Confucius says, the sage kings simply followed what was considered "proper practice by the people" (*Analects* xv.25). The rule of the sage kings was thus not entirely free of harmful indulgence. Confucius, however, emphasized teaching people how to behave. He sought to clarify the Way, to illuminate righteousness, and to free people from moral doubts about what one ought to do....

Confucius explained, "Wisdom consists of seeing one's moral duty as fundamental. It also involves revering and yet keeping a distance from ghosts and spirits." The *Analects* adds that "the Master did not speak of curiosities, strange forces, calamities, or the spirits" (VII.21, III.12)... Passages like these show a pro-

9. [The five deities referred to the spirits of the outer door, the inner door, the walkway, the hearth, and the center of the room.]

10. [The legends about these sage kings who ruled China from the third millennium BCE by the strength of their moral example date back to the *Book of History*.]

found dissatisfaction with the lack of sufficient effort to practice the Way and reflect a concern that people might be led astray by things they are not given to know about ghosts and spirits....

Those who do what is right have no need of divination. Those who follow divination, however, will sooner or later abandon righteousness! If it is right to go somewhere, but divination declares that it is disadvantageous, which way should one follow?... If it is right that one lives, then one should live. If it is right that one die, then one should die. These are matters that one must decide for oneself. How can divination decide them?

Heterodoxies

When the Way and virtue flourish, debate subsides. When the Way and virtue decline, arguments abound. As discussion flourishes, the Way and virtue grow more distant. Increases in rhetoric thus mark the pinnacle of a degenerate age. With the heights of polemics, one reaches the very limits of Zen Buddhism! Nothing is more unrelated to morality, more distant from daily life, and more lacking in benefits to the state and society than Zen.

Yet Confucians mistakenly believed they could conquer Zen with debate. If the Confucian Way and its moral virtues prevail, Zen will naturally retreat and submit. But if Confucians verbally try to overcome Zen without diligently practicing the Confucian Way and its virtues, both parties will end up injured, as in hand-to-hand combat. Such a strategy is vulgar....

[JAT]

KAIBARA Ekken 貝原益軒 (1630–1714)



Kaibara Ekken, a prominent Japanese neo-Confucian scholar, who has been called the “Aristotle of Japan” because of his study of natural history, was born on the island of Kyushu. Until the age of fourteen he had a strong interest in Buddhism, but under the guidance of his older brother, Sonsai, he turned to Confucianism and began to read Zhu Xi at an early age. Following in the footsteps of his father, who was a physician to the local ‘daimyō’, Ekken pursued the study of medicine as a young man and maintained a lifelong interest in matters of health.

At age twenty-eight he moved to Kyoto where he spent the next seven years. During that time, Ekken came into contact with the leading Confucian scholars of the day, something he maintained throughout his travels in later life. On returning to Kyushu he lectured the Kuroda daimyō and tutored his heir, as well as compiling a genealogy of the Kuroda family, producing a topography of the Chikuzen region, and composing a seminal work on botany entitled *Plants of Japan*.

One of Ekken’s abiding interests was to make Confucianism accessible to a wide public. To this end he wrote popular treatises on educating families, women, and children. A work attributed to Ekken but probably not from his hand, *The Great Learning for Women*, remained in general circulation through the middle of the twentieth century. In addition to publishing the first Japanese commentary on Zhu Xi’s *Reflections on Things at Hand*, he prepared simplified versions of other works by Zhu Xi for ordinary Japanese. Even as he tried to popularize Confucian ideas, Ekken sought to clarify some of the more philosophical arguments regarding the relationship of ‘principle’ (*ri*) to generative force (*‘ki’*). His devotion to Zhu Xi did not prevent him from taking serious issue with what he perceived as the latter’s dualism.

In particular, Ekken argued that the dynamic quality of Confucianism had been diluted by Song and Ming thinkers who ended up lost in abstractions. This is reflected in his most important philosophical work, the *Record of Great Doubts*, written near the end of his life. In articulating his disagreements with Zhu Xi, Ekken hoped to revive the vitalism and naturalism that he felt was central to the tradition. He was concerned to highlight the vital generative force (*ki*) that suffuses all of reality. In this way he hoped to avoid what he felt was the relatively stronger tendency of Daoism and Buddhism to withdraw from the world and to transform self-cultivation into a kind of quietism. For Ekken, engagement in the world was of utmost importance and “practical learning” was held to contribute to the well-being of the society. Thus he had a broad interest in such subjects as botany and

agriculture, mathematics and taxonomy. All of this reflected his pursuit of principle within things so as to be useful to society. At the same time, his naturalist vitalism had a profoundly religious tone to it as he drew on the notion of heaven and earth as “great parents” to whom humans owe reverence and respect as the source of life. We are obligated to give back a cosmic filial piety to nature in caring for it and not to treat it wantonly. Ekken drew here on the ideal of filial piety as ‘humaneness’ through which humans formed an identity with all things.

The *Record of Great Doubts* excerpted below illustrates the complex process of continuity and change that are part of Confucian traditions. It illustrates the intricate adaptation of a tradition through affirmation and dissent. Confucianism was not simply reaffirmed uncritically by scholars from one generation to the next. Ekken’s careful reading of texts and tradition illustrates the appeal of Confucianism in different times, places, and circumstances across East Asia. In carefully constructed arguments he champions the need for doubt if one is to progress intellectually. His aim is not to overturn Zhu Xi, who equally extolled the value of doubt and questioning for those engaged in learning, but rather to assert that a vitalistic cosmology is essential for Confucian traditions to have a broader and more lasting effect in Japan—a position that continues to resonate down to our own day.

[MET]

GREAT DOUBTS

KAIBARA Ekken 1714, 154–68 (95–133)

Bias, Discernment, Selection

People are not sages and, even if they are wise, they often have biases. In both scholarship and disposition certainly they may have discernment or they may be impeded in their understanding. Therefore, they will have strong points and weak points. What is understood will definitely become clear, but what is blocked definitely stagnates. Consequently, in reading books, even those of wise people, we must be discriminating in our selection. If we are biased and credulous, and without any doubts, probably we cannot avoid falling into the errors resulting from obstinacy and confusion. When scholars question the thought of the earlier Confucians they should believe what is trustworthy and doubt what is suspicious. If they are impartial and not prejudiced in their selections they can do scholarly work well. Scholars of later ages frequently followed the fashionable school of the day and thus are often guilty of narrowness and obstinacy.

.....

Even though the ancient sage kings were remarkable scholars, it was inevitable that they would have biases and errors. Students ought to pick and choose

carefully in reading their works. In my opinion, there are wise people who claim certain ideas to be the 'Way' even though the sages did not mention them. These are the implied meanings of the explanations of the sages which have continued from past to present. However, teachings different from the essential doctrines of the sages ought to be considered heterodox. Therefore, even though they are the words of wise people, we ought to be selective and investigate them if there are some which are not the same as the sages' teachings.

.....

In general, debating the truth and falsity of scholarship with people is the same as admonishing others. Those who criticize others rashly want to promote their own ideas and humiliate others. Such methods are used by petty individuals who persistently try to outdo other people, thinking they are right and acting in an indiscreet, proud manner. This is not the Way of the true person that involves sincerity and sympathy. Although there may be some truth in their opinions, if a person is belligerent the listener won't be persuaded. Those who lead people skillfully place priority on intentions. Since their manner of speaking is tolerant and not aggressive, while their expression is suggestive and composed, and their meaning is clear, the listener will be convinced and will heed their words. This is an effective way of giving sincere advice.

When one is discussing differences of opinion with others there is no need to be vehemently antagonistic. When we are calm and suggestive and when we are sincere and moderate in speech, people will indeed be moved. In my opinion, if people are not honest, the Way will be obscured. However, one should not forcefully disparage others for their faults. We should only hope for truth to prevail. We should not argue, desiring that our own opinions dominate others. Moreover, if our words are indiscreet, and we try to win and out-perform others, we won't convince them. On the contrary, we may cause antagonism. As Confucius said, "To speak with those who cannot be spoken to is to waste one's words" (*Analects* xv.7)....

Mencius was a Confucian of great achievement because he faithfully followed the Way of Confucius without straying. Among the teachings of the Song scholars, those that follow the teachings of Confucius and Mencius faithfully, having the same source and penetrating to a similar truth, truly illuminate the Way, and thus we should rely on them. However, frequently discussions occur which propose a different argument not based on the teachings of Confucius and Mencius and which do not have the same source or school of thought. Even if they are the words of wise people, we should not accept them.

.....

The Song scholars frequently adhered to what they heard and inclined toward what they liked. They did not take the orthodox teachings of Confucius and Mencius as their basis. Rather, they established their own school of thought

freely and became caught in rigid doctrines. This deepened into a veiled obstinacy. Because of this, their teachings are frequently at variance with those of Confucius and Mencius.

If scholars do not insist on their own teachings and if they think with an open mind, they will probably realize my words are not intended to be boastful, reckless remarks. However, those who adhere to dogmatic teachings of biased people become completely fixated. If we do not wash away old opinions and arrive at new ones, we will not change bad habits, and it is certain that we will lapse into confusion throughout our lives.

Learning from What is Close at Hand

Confucius considered 'filial piety', obedience, loyalty and 'sincerity' as fundamental, and he regarded 'learning' as involving both study and practice. His approach is straightforward, like a great pathway. Even for foolish people it is easy to grasp and to practice. If we gradually make an earnest effort and investigate thoroughly the import of this approach, we will exert ourselves to the utmost and eventually master the details. This means we learn from things close at hand and progress to higher levels.

Song Confucian scholars, however, felt it was urgent to make it their first priority to pursue the truth by understanding the 'supreme ultimate' and the 'nonfinite', to pursue practice by quiet sitting and purifying the heart, and to pursue scholarship by detailed analysis. Being both lofty and abstract, trivial and impractical, this learning of the Song Confucians came to be regarded as difficult to understand and to put into practice. Yet Song Confucian scholars took these useless and unimportant issues as their first priority.

It is different from the teachings established by the sages which saw filial piety, obedience, love, 'reverence', learning, practice, loyalty, and sincerity as primary. Those teachings established by the Song Confucians were too abstract and detailed; hence, they were difficult to learn, to practice, and to embrace. People of later ages who studied those teachings thus were handicapped by the painstaking efforts to comprehend them and became bogged down.

Generally, we should consult with people who are intelligent, broad-minded, and impartial on the doubts recorded here. We should not argue with people who are obstinate, unintelligent, inferior scholars, or prejudiced. As it is said, "To speak with those who cannot be spoken to is to waste one's words" (*Analects* xv.7).

When we read ancient texts extensively, if we believe in them blindly, it is because we are misled. When we doubt indiscriminately because things are unclear we become conceited. Believing what we think we should believe and doubting what we think we should doubt is the action of a wise person and is a superior way of learning. People who are intelligent do exactly this but inferior

scholars and foolish people cannot. In my opinion, since human beings are generally not sages, no one is without faults. Even in the scholarship of former worthies, there are some points which do not correlate with Confucius and Mencius and their words are frequently contrary to the words of the sages. This is why we must choose carefully....

Human Nature

Claiming that human nature is all the same refers to the goodness of human nature. Although there are differences of tall and short, fat and thin, wise and foolish in endowment, everyone receives a mind and heart that is capable of compassion, shame, modesty, and the discernment of right and wrong. When human beings are born each has his or her own heavenly endowed, original nature, and in this respect we say, "Human nature is good." In the past and at present human nature is not so different and consequently we say that "human nature is the same."

All people, in the past and at present, have only one nature. It is not necessary to divide the nature of heaven and earth from one's physical nature. Is not the nature of heaven and earth embodied in one's physical nature? If one's physical nature is separate, how can one receive heavenly nature? Is not even one's physical nature derived from heaven and earth? Then one's physical nature is nothing but the nature of heaven and earth. We cannot divide the two. Confucius and Mencius never spoke of two natures. The indivisibility of physical nature and heaven and earth is self-evident....

When we discuss the origin of human nature, it is uniformly good. This is the common root. When we speak of branches the good begins to subdivide endlessly.... Since what each receives is different, we should not mistake it as one's own. The fact that the universe is not uniform reflects the actual state of affairs of the universe. This is the reason that many variations of human nature exist.

One's human nature is received at birth. The destiny one receives from heaven is inherently good; it is without evil. It has a common origin. Indeed, individual human nature actually exists as an embodiment of the good that is one's heavenly destiny. Yet when one originally receives 'ki' we would expect that there would be inconsistencies of purity and impurity, or thickness and thinness. After one receives *ki*, a person attains an individual, fixed nature. Therefore, the human nature of wise or foolish people is not the same from the beginning.

Differences with the Song Confucians

In explaining the classics, it is permissible to have small differences in interpretation if that does not affect the Way. Since the Song Confucians' explanations of 'principle' and *ki*, of the non-infinite, of the Way and concrete

things, or of human nature and the Way, all are the foundation of moral principles, it is essential that there not be even small divergences from the words of the sages. If there are even slight differences in these areas, even though the concepts underlie the established doctrines of the earlier teachers, we should not accept them merely to indulge in flattery and servility. We should identify the differences by comparing them with the words of the sages. For when the doctrines are not correct the Way does not become clear.

Zhu Xi said, “If people take the attitude that they do not rely on only one school and are not partial to only one theory they will get a hodgepodge of knowledge even though they may be erudite.” If I consider these words of Zhu Xi, I cannot help but doubt them. Why do I doubt them? If we can depend directly on the sages as the seventy principal disciples of Confucius did, it will be all right to have more than one school and more than one theory.

However, even though the Cheng brothers¹¹ and Zhu Xi were highly intelligent men, when we think of devotion to the highest good, impartiality and lack of prejudice, I am afraid they were not the same as the sages. If people rely on only one explanation or incline toward one type of learning, inevitably they won't be able to comprehend with a broad perspective or open inquiry. Instead they will suffer from a wisdom obstructed by prejudiced and limited information. Prejudiced people, through flattery and servility, create factions and attack others for their personal gain. Such are my doubts and I am unable to resolve them.

Later scholars should not have contempt for the worthies of the past and they should not thoughtlessly slander those who went before. Rather, they ought to show discretion. However, even the ancients were not without some faults. In distinguishing between right and wrong one should not be swayed by undue deference. Even if they are intelligent, those who come forward with their ideas may first offer ideas that are still not complete or detailed. A good example is that the ideas of the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi differ somewhat from those of the sages. When later people discuss earlier people, even if they have only ordinary talents, they can still reflect on things from a different perspective. This is the advantage of those who come later in criticizing what went before. Thus, even criticisms by later people should not be completely disregarded.

We later scholars certainly cannot be compared with intelligent scholars of earlier times with regard to the loftiness and depth, or the greatness and smallness, or the breadth and narrowness of our learning. Naturally we should have a deep reverence toward the earlier Confucians. However, later worthies also

11. [Cheng Yi (1033–1107) and Cheng Hao (1032–1085) were influential philosophers whose ideas were taken up later by Zhu Xi and expanded to lay the foundations of “neo-Confucian thought.”]

differ from the earlier sages in impartiality and bias. Accordingly, even in the teachings of earlier Confucians, we should accept things that are in agreement with the words of the sages and we should believe what we think we should believe and doubt what we think we should doubt. In short, it is important to be selective.

From of old the changes in the spirit of the times continually move toward complexity and ostentation. This is the reason why the present frivolous age has lost sight of what is essential. The condition of the world of past and present cannot help but produce this result. Accordingly, in the ways of government and the arts of learning we have an imperative duty to return to essentials and to avoid minute details. It is not necessary to emulate all the movements and transformations of the world.

Confucius was born in the declining period of the Zhou dynasty.¹² Public opinion of that age regarded excessively cultivated people as “refined” and simple people as “ordinary.” Confucius wished to follow the ancients; he rejected ostentation and sought a return to simplicity. The age of Confucius was still close to an ancient, simple period, but a more worldly outlook had already developed by his day. Even more frivolous later ages lost simplicity and the spirit of the times degenerated daily toward excess. From the period of the Qin and the Han,¹³ times gradually changed and the world became increasingly complicated. Scholars living in today’s world should place priority on simplicity but should also gradually adapt to their age. If one rejects contemporary customs, there is no way to live in the world....

Celebrated scholars appeared but eagerly followed the current of the times. They could not change old customs and seek what was essential. Consequently, the path of later scholarship should be directed towards a change from minute details to essentials and from trivia to holistic integration by making people aware of this and changing old ways of scholarship. In my opinion there must be a suitable Way for each age. Confucius followed the ancient sages, and scholars should do likewise. This is only my idea, but how do other scholars of today feel?...

Surely the Way of the sages is fair and impartial. The sages hold fast to virtue so as to extend its influence widely. In their actions they are skillful. Worthies who rank below the sages, although they are intelligent, probably do not possess virtue completely. The learning of the Song Confucians is genuine but still it does not match that of the sages. They cannot avoid having prejudicial personal viewpoints. Accordingly, frequently teachings have appeared that are different

12. [1027–221 BCE.]

13. [Qin dynasty, 1644–1911; Han dynasty, 206 BCE–220 CE.]

from the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. These include the following, which are the reasons for my own doubts:

1. taking the nonfinite as the basis of the supreme ultimate;
2. seeing principle and *ki* as two separate things;
3. dividing the nature of heaven and earth and the human physical nature;
4. regarding *yin* and *yang* as not being the Way but as being concrete things below those that have form;
5. considering that which constitutes *yin* and *yang* to be the Way;
6. seeing *ki* and the physical body as having life and death;
7. regarding principle and nature as having no life and death;
8. regarding quiet sitting as a method of daily practice and regarding “holding to tranquility” as a discipline for establishing the highest moral standard for human beings; and
9. seeing the theories of Confucius and Mencius concerning nature as distinguished by their emphasis on physical nature and the nature of heaven and earth, respectively.

Reading Texts

The way to read texts is to seek understanding by inquiring, by removing self-centered opinions, and by relying on the opinions of the sages and worthies. We should not add unneeded, useless words. If we follow these principles, eventually we will comprehend the true meaning of the sages. We should not forcefully promote our own egocentric opinions, nor should we be stubborn, contentious, or careless. If we tend in these directions even slightly, we will not be able to follow the thinking of the sages and worthies. Even earlier Confucians could not escape mistakes. If scholars have doubts with regard to earlier Confucians, they should not simply believe blindly. An ancient saying notes, “People think that whatever they learn is clearly correct.” However, even superior people are not without failings. The Song Confucians believed in the diagram of the supreme ultimate and in “An Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate,” and they had biases. Having strong opinions and being zealous in learning, they revealed their biases. In perceiving a person’s faults we come to know their ‘humaneness’.

Later scholars, of course, should show respect toward earlier Confucians. However, the path of learning is open to all. When we make a judgment of right or wrong, we should base it on our own sound and impartial assessment. Why do scholars since the Song tend to make it a practice to flatter the earlier Confucians? How can their learning not be tainted?

Scholars who cling to prejudiced opinions, even though they have doubts regarding the Song Confucians, flatter them and conform to their ideas. Consequently they spend their whole lives not realizing this. If there are people who

harbor even slight doubts, they are frowned upon. They are regarded as biased and heretical and they are consistently slandered. This is reprehensible and reflects a mistaken obstinacy.

The teaching of the sages is simple and direct; it does not have the defect of invoking strained or overly complicated interpretations. Later scholarship tends to be too fragmented; it does not have wholeness and balance. Thus, true scholars cannot bear all the details. To like simplicity and to dislike detail is a common human feeling. The scholarship of later generations is fragmented; consequently, it is contrary to common human feeling. It is natural that ordinary people dislike that kind of scholarship. When the sages taught, they inspired students to make progress untiringly. When later Confucians taught, things were exactly the opposite.

When the petty person with few talents teaches, he has his self-assurance and he never doubts himself. Not distinguishing between the truths and falsehoods of such persons, many people believe them and do not doubt them. Their teaching is not designed to inspire people with wisdom and virtue; it is merely a clever act.

If scholars do not follow the classics yet believe in latter-day biased opinions, then how can they realize their mistakes and examine the root of the Great Way?

The Metaphysical and the Physical

In my view, “physical form” means having concrete substance. “What is above” means heaven. “What is below” means the earth. “What is above form” means the generative forces (*ki*) of *yin* and *yang*; “what is above form” is without shape and exists in heaven. It is above the physical forms and the concrete objects of “the myriad things.” That is why it is called “above form.” “Configuration” means the refined aspects of forms, and they issue from above. The *ki* of *yin* and *yang* are above and its manifestation we call “becoming configurations.” The two *ki* (*yin* and *yang*) in heaven operate and interact, and we call this the Way. What is called “physical forms below” refers to the concreteness of hardness and softness of all things that are in the earth. Physical forms are the concrete substances of shapes and they remain below. By possessing shape and substance, things are formed. We call them concrete objects.

Heaven exists above, earth exists below. Thus they are designated “upper” and “lower.” The Way of heaven is formless and has the configurations [patterns] of *yin* and *yang*. Thus it is said, “In heaven patterns are formed.” The way of earth, having physical forms, has concrete substance. As a result it is said, “In earth physical forms are created.” Hence, in heaven there are no physical forms while on earth there are physical forms. Doesn’t the expression, “In heaven configura-

tions are formed,” refer to the *yin* and *yang*? In heaven the *yin* and *yang* have neither form nor substance. However, the configurations are revealed due to the movement and transformation of the two *ki* of *yin* and *yang*.... *Yin* and *yang* flow and this causes growth in all things. This is the Way of heaven.

The Way of heaven is only *yin* and *yang*. There is nothing outside of *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* alternate endlessly. We call this flow the Way. Does not the phrase, “In earth physical forms are created,” refer to the myriad things? The “myriad things” indicates mountains, rivers, the great earth, human beings, and living things, namely, all that has shape and exists below.... That which is “below form” indicates that which has physical shape and is on the earth. Mountains, rivers, the great earth, human beings, and living things are all concrete things. We call things which have physical substance concrete things. *Yin* and *yang* have no substance, so we cannot call them concrete things.

The Supreme Ultimate

In the “Appended Judgments” of the *Book of Changes* it is stated “In the changes there is the supreme ultimate and it generates two forms.”... In my view, the supreme ultimate is the name applicable to the *ki* in the state of chaos existing before *yin* and *yang* separated and the myriad things emerged. Nonetheless, it has the highest principle and so it is called the supreme ultimate. All the myriad things of heaven and earth are based on this. We do not speak of ‘nothingness’, we say “existence.” In other words, this implies that: “in the changes the supreme ultimate exists.” “The nonfinite and the supreme ultimate” is an expression from Buddhism and Daoism. Clearly it implies that “existence arises from nothingness.” The *Laozi* says, “All things in the world come from being. And being comes from nonbeing” (40).

To regard nothingness as the origin and fundamental spirit of all things is a Buddhist and Daoist idea. To regard existence as the origin and essence of all things is the teaching of the sages. Hence the explanations concerning existence and nonexistence are the dividing line between the Way of the sages and other paths. We must elucidate this carefully. If we wish to discuss the supreme ultimate we should not explain the character of “nothingness” as prior. The supreme ultimate is formless; even a foolish person like myself understands that. Therefore, on the question whether people would misunderstand the supreme ultimate as a thing, we need not worry about it. Moreover, we should not regard the sinograph for “ultimate” to mean “form.”

Returning the World to Humaneness

“If for one day a person can subdue himself and return to ‘propriety’, all under heaven, the world will return to humaneness” (*Analects* XII.1). One day

means for a sustained period. It refers to an ongoing period of moral practice. It does not mean it will be accomplished in one day. “Disciplining oneself and returning to propriety” is an extremely difficult thing. Sustained effort toward that must be made over a long period of time. How can one expect that it can be done in one day? The word “return” is the same as in Mencius, “The people return to humaneness” (4A.9). It means returning and settling in a certain place. If one disciplines oneself and returns to propriety, the ill effects of selfish desires and the separation between oneself and one’s environment disappear. Although the world is vast and people and things are numerous, the capacity of our heart extends to every place and forms one body with all things. If we abide within the circumference of a humane heart, love will be felt everywhere.

For example, it is like the human body. If one is not sick and the circulation of the *ki* and the blood is good, it flows throughout our entire body and becomes part of ourselves. This is returning to humaneness. If the *ki* and the blood circulate incompletely, the hands and feet will become paralyzed and the skin will lose its sensitivity. Each part will seem no longer attached to oneself even though it is one’s own body. In medical books this state of insensitivity is called a lack of humaneness.... Humaneness is regarding heaven and earth and all things as one body, it means that there is nothing that is alien to oneself....

In my view the realization of humaneness cannot occur in one day. The words of the sages are reliable and differ from the hyperbolic claims of the Buddhists and Daoists who teach incoherent stories that lack common sense. In general, since there are actualities under heaven, inevitably there are principles. If a ruler can discipline himself and return to humaneness just for one day, all people would praise him for his humaneness. But this is not attainable and, therefore, there is no such principle. Moreover, saying that there will be an immediate result in one day is boasting and contrasts markedly with the modest self-reflection of the sages.

[MET]

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

KAIBARA Ekken 1710, 605–11

Of all the countless living creatures that have received the blessings of heaven and earth, none is more esteemed than humanity, for human beings are the most spiritual of all things. Therefore, being born a human brings a happiness that cannot be replicated.

But we are often foolish and ignorant of the Way of humanity. We lose the ‘mind’ that we received from heaven and earth at birth. We stop practicing the

Way that humanity ought to practice, perplexed by the Way that we should not practice. From dusk until dawn we thus cause misery for our minds. Moreover, it is only our selfish minds that grow deeper. We feel less sympathy for other people. Thinking shallowly, we do not realize the misery of other people. Even in serving our fathers and mothers, our minds are not in tune. In all relations with humanity, we lose the Way, treating vainly the esteemed human form with which we were born. To live like the birds and beasts and rot away along with grasses and trees is to forfeit the original intent of life. It is worth pausing to reflect on the words...: “The human form is rarely obtained. We must not pass our days vainly.” Therefore people should study the Way of the sages from childhood on. We should practice the humaneness that we received in our minds from heaven and earth upon our birth to be happy ourselves and to bring happiness to others by practicing humaneness...

Within the minds of all people there is a *ki* of supreme harmony that we receive from heaven and earth. This is the principle with which people are born. Much as grasses and trees grow without cease, the springs of action always thrive within our minds as a moderating, pleasing force that is never cut off. Giving this a name, we call it happiness. Because it is the living principle of the human mind, it is at the same time the principle of humaneness.

People are not the only ones who enjoy this happiness: birds, beasts, grasses, and plants also share in it. Grasses and trees grow luxuriantly; flowers bloom and bear fruit, birds chirp and twitter about; beasts frolic and play about; kites fly up to the heavens; fish dive down into the depths. All of them find happiness. Still, in spite of being human, many people lose this happiness without knowing it, falling short of even the birds and beasts.

This happiness is originally in the mind. We must not search for it externally. The five organs—our ears, eyes, mouths, noses, and touch—make contact with external things and so cause our eyes to see form, our ears to hear voices, our mouths to taste food, our noses to smell scents, and our bodies to move about. If we can live by quieting the activities of these five and reducing our selfish desires, then we will never want for happiness in all our comings and goings. The reason is that our happiness will not be based on external things.... That said, without nourishment from external things like food, drink, clothing, and shelter, our original *ki* will not be sustained: we will end up starving or freezing to death....

Not only that, the great works that fill heaven and earth, day and night before our very eyes, the shining luminosity of the sun and moon, the orderly progression of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, the surrounding beauties of the landscape, the trails of cloud and smoke, the transformations of day and night, the majesty of mountains, the flow of rivers, the stir of the wind, the moisture of rain and dew, the purity of snow, the array of flowers, the luxuriances of grasses,

the rich growth of trees and forests, the variety of life in birds, beasts, insects, and fish—if we cherish and prize all the countless things that fill the mind to overflowing, our happiness will know no bounds.

.....

Thinking only of one's own happiness while causing suffering for others is what heaven detests; therefore, people must practice self-control regarding these. Sharing happiness with other people is the principle which pleases heaven. That is genuine happiness. Therefore, people should follow the Way of heaven, practice the Way of humanity, pursue happiness for themselves and stir the pursuit in others. To do this, people must always do what is good and distance themselves from evil. For people to proceed in this Way they will need make no special efforts: it will simply be a matter of studying the Way of the sage and understanding its principles.

Being hostile towards others; being angry; being haughty and boastful; criticizing others for small mistakes or failings; taking issue with people's words; and becoming angry over the rudeness of others—these reveal how small in measure a person is. In every instance, people behave in this way because they have lost their sense of being happy....

Those whose minds are clear, who understand well the principles of the world, and who have a feeling for things, take as their foundation a realization of the happiness that lies within all of us. Such people delight in the operation of the Way of *yin* and *yang*, heaven and earth, evident in the succession of the four seasons; their ears and eyes take pleasure in every one of the sights and sounds of the countless things that dwell between heaven and earth. Because their minds are so delighted, they experience happiness without measure....

The pleasures of the vulgar world might continue on, but they quickly cause suffering to our bodies. For example, we might eat and drink things that taste good at the time we desire them. At first they bring pleasure, but soon sickness appears and causes suffering for the body. All pleasures of the vulgar world perplex the mind and violate the body, causing suffering for humanity. The happiness of the refined person does not perplex the mind; it nourishes it. Contemplating outer things, the refined person loves the moon and flowers, enjoys looking at mountains, and singing poems with the wind, without being envious of the birds. Because this happiness is so light, it can be enjoyed throughout the day without injuring the body. It does not prompt the slander of people or the anger of the spirits.

Such happiness is easily realized by the poor and lowly, and brings no calamities later. Those with wealth and status, living a life of luxury and idleness, are ignorant of this happiness. The poor and lowly do not fail in this regard, but with determination can realize such happiness.

The refined person knows how to be satisfied without being greedy. Though

poor in body, such a one is rich in mind. As the ancient saying goes, “One who knows how much is enough has wealth of mind.” ‘Ordinary people’, though rich in person, are poor in mind. Their greed is too great ever to be satisfied. For this reason, people should appreciate their happiness without worrying about poverty and low station, without longing for wealth and status. The elderly should come by and by to desire less and to accept their poor and lowly state, knowing how much is enough....

If we understand these principles, we will be happy with ourselves and will not long for outer things. Despite poverty and low station, suffering and hardships, we will always be happy, whatever the time and whatever the place. When sitting, we will be happy to sit; when standing, happy to stand; whatever we do—going, reclining, eating, drinking, looking, listening, speaking—we will always be happy. Happiness originates in the mind and is manifest in the body...

Human life has limits. It is difficult to lengthen or extend it. We must cherish it and pursue happiness in the days and nights allotted to our limited lives. We err engaging in useless activities, even if only briefly. We must not go to excess in vain pursuits that bring no enjoyment. It is the fool who forsakes happiness for anxiety, suffering, anger, and sadness. If people do nothing, they fail to reach happiness, and the days and months of their lives pass in vain. Let them live for a thousand years, their lives would not have made a difference.

[JAT]

SATŌ Naokata 佐藤直方 (1650–1719)

Satō Naokata was one of the most orthodox advocates of Zhu Xi's neo-Confucian philosophy in the early eighteenth century. Born in southwestern Japan, he studied neo-Confucianism with Yamazaki Ansai* in Kyoto, at a time when the latter was still a fervent exponent of orthodox Zhu Xi learning. When Ansai later developed his synthesis of Shinto and neo-Confucianism, Naokata broke with him. Indeed, Naokata emerged thereafter as one of the harshest and most sarcastic critics of Shinto and its chauvinistic hyperbole about the superiority of Japan vis-à-vis all other countries. Instead of worshiping his native land, he emphasized his sense of reverence for the more universalistic principles of Zhu Xi's philosophy. At one point Naokata even referred to the 'supreme ultimate' as his ruler, clearly finding in that notion a transcendent locus for loyalty that well surpassed family, lord, and country. Naokata is also known as the most consistent advocate of the practice of quiet sitting, which is often compared to Zen meditation. It had emerged as a practice in China during the Song dynasty, and was endorsed by Zhu Xi as a means of intuiting one's original nature and its intimate identity with the ethical and metaphysical principles of the cosmos.

Politically, Naokata was an advocate of Mencius' view that evil rulers could and should be rightly removed. Yet unlike many other samurai philosophers of his day, who praised the forty-six *rōnin* for taking murderous revenge on the man they saw as their deceased lord's enemy, Naokata unequivocally recognized the ultimate authority of the law, condemning both the *rōnin* and their lord as foolish cowards for acting outside the law. In more general terms Naokata criticized the conceits of the samurai, denouncing writings that extolled their presumed loyalty, and dismissing *bushidō* or the "Way of the warrior."

[JAT]

QUIET SITTING

SATŌ Naokata 1717, 465–7, 469–70

Activity and quiescence are natural springs of the Way of heaven. Since activity is controlled by grounding oneself in quiescence, the latter must be cultivated by students. The sages and worthies of antiquity had good reason to formulate their approaches to learning for children and for adults, with their teachings on abiding in reverent seriousness and investigating 'principle'. In despising activity and seeking only quiescence, Daoists and Buddhists have never been able to expound the wholeness of the Way of heaven. Because vulgar Confucians never realized that they should ground themselves in quiescence,

they ended up teaching useless, absurd activities. How can they be deemed true scholars?

What Cheng-Zhu scholars¹⁴ call quiet sitting is the technique for preserving the 'mind' and the ground for accumulating virtue. If unable to exert strength in this technique, how can anyone hoping to study the learning of the sages achieve anything? But if one is obsessed with quiet sitting, one will unfortunately lapse into Zen meditation in search of '*samādhi*'. Therefore, we follow precisely Master Zhu's brilliant instructions. If students truly exert their strength in this, they will surely be deemed excellent.

.....

Quiet sitting is the practice for preserving our original minds and nourishing our good natures. People who do not understand the basic intent of the Cheng-Zhu teachings sometimes lapse into '*zazen*' and heterodoxy. Nevertheless, it is a major error to skip even one day of the practice. When you have nothing else to do, quiet sitting is an appropriate practice. With quiet sitting, idle and scattered thoughts cease as the mind achieves a calm purity and peaceful brilliance and the physical disposition is naturally transformed....

Quiet sitting cannot be mastered in a morning or an evening. Unless one devotes months and years to it, becoming truly proficient in it, one will never have fully experienced it. Selfishness can be expelled through investigating principle, but it is difficult to transform the physical disposition simply by means of that alone. However, one can utterly transform it through the preservation and nourishment of quiet sitting.... Ceaselessly investigating principle, even when focused on the words of the sages and worthies, might leave one's thoughts scattered. On the other hand, the quiescence of the mind achieved through quiet sitting provides one with the highest form of clarity.... Conversely, one whose nature is not quiet cannot pursue learning.

.....

If for one day people can eliminate one or two sentences of idle chatter, and scale back their idle intercourse with others, that would improve things. If one is surrounded entirely by noise from the marketplace, how will one ever be able to read books? If one can make one's days free of concerns and have sufficient provisions, then one should spend half of each day in quiet sitting, and the other half in reading books. If one can do that for one or two years, why would one ever worry about not making progress?...

Through quiet seriousness, we can immerse ourselves in cultivation of the centrality of the unmanifest emotions, pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy. Through

14. [The reference is to scholars in the tradition of the Cheng brothers, Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao, and Zhu Xi.]

active reverent-seriousness, we can scrutinize the harmony of the emotions as regulated according to the mean. This should be considered the essence of 'learning'.

[JAT]

CRITICAL THINKING

SATŌ Naokata N.D., 507–8, 512–14 (423–6, 428–9); 1716, 86–7, 121, 126 (421–2, 426, 428–9); 1706, 558–9; 1686, 44–5 (40)

Scholars use discussion and debate as a means of correcting errors. A person who resents those who correct him is not a scholar... Those who aspire to the sages and worthies exult in the criticism they receive from others. Those who dread the criticisms of others are cowards. Those who in every instance correct their oversights and seek to do so should be called exemplars of practical learning...

.....

Considerations of character should not enter into discussions of the rightness or wrongness of the method of learning or principles of the Way. If what a person says corresponds to those principles, then even if he is wicked, it should be deemed good. If what a person says diverges from them, then even if he be a good person, it should be deemed evil.

.....

Scholars who depend on the example of their teachers will not be trusted by others. However you look at it, a person has to stand on their own. Therefore, establishing one's purpose in life is of primary concern in learning.

The effort applied to the latent and manifest states of mind should never be interrupted. Those who are in a daze have lost their minds. No matter how well mannered such persons are, if their minds are not alive, they are of no use. Contemporary scholars of what is called practical learning do not understand this, and hence, do not understand the method of the mind...

'Reverence' is essential; it is the basis of sagely learning. If one does not proceed from reverence, there will be interruptions in humanity. There will be selfish desires. Courage will be lacking. Knowledge will be superficial and rootless. I am speaking here of honoring the virtuous nature and carrying on study and inquiry.

.....

There is nothing so purposeless as to be without a sense of sympathy. ... So, too, is this true with learning. One may read innumerable books, but if one reads them without a sense of sympathy, they will be of little benefit. To think

that learning is the way of humanity and to think that it suffices simply to know 'humaneness', 'righteousness', 'propriety', and 'wisdom' is to consider them only theoretically. To have one's mind-and-heart utterly set on something, that is sympathy.

[MR]

If scholars do not believe in their own principles, they have no foundation. It is all well and good to believe in the sages, but it is not as good as believing in one's own principles.... Followers of Shinto believe in the '*kami*' and hold fast to them, losing their footing. For people, there is something more noble than the self and that is heavenly principle. Nothing can match its nobleness. Besides one's mind, there is nothing powerful enough to rely on.

I cannot consent to the view that the correct Way consists in the idea that the descendants of the person who first took over the realm at the beginning of heaven and earth should continue to rule forever. The person who becomes the lord of the realm ought to be a person of virtue. The establishment of the correct pedigree of the 'Son of Heaven' in Japan becomes the upright thing according to the customs of the country. It is not something done on the basis of virtue, nor is it the "light of the age of the gods." It is just that people have followed the custom. It does not reflect an awareness of the righteousness of revering the ruler.

.....

Within the universe, there is only one principle. There is no room for two Ways. If Confucianism is correct, then Shinto is heterodox. If Shinto is correct, then Confucianism is heterodox. Those who follow what is correct will leave behind the heterodox, while those who follow what is heterodox will separate themselves from what is correct. How could there be a principle permitting one to follow what is correct and what is heterodox? I do not comprehend the meaning of the mixed faith of my teacher.

[BDS]

Wang Yangming

When Wang Yangming speaks of the unity of knowledge and action, he includes knowledge in action. That is a Daoist and Buddhist view. For knowledge and action are naturally distinct, though their principles are one. This is manifest in the doctrine of the Cheng-Zhu School. It is precisely because knowledge and action are two that we speak of unifying them. If they were one from the start, we would not use the word "unify"...

At the core of Wang Yangming's thought is the extension of innate knowledge. In his view, book learning is believed to be useless. Why even consider morality and discuss right and wrong? All people are endowed with innate

knowledge, and learning is carried out by means of this innate knowledge. To believe that innate knowledge renders unnecessary the pursuit of learning and the plumbing of principle is like believing that mirrors are always clear, and that even if they are not, they should not be polished. How absurd this is! Those who are misled by this are foolish.

Everyone knows that a cloudy mirror that remains unpolished is useless. There is no mistake about this. This is why we speak of 'bright virtue'. If scholars do not plumb principle, will their minds become clear? Polishing cloudy mirrors then is natural. To say that one has studied the sages and worthies when one does not understand this is insufferable. If what one knows is not clear, then one will not be able to act. Thus I do not doubt that Zhu Xi's accounts of investigating things and plumbing principle will always enjoy the respect of scholars throughout the world....

Only in the sages and worthies is the original innate knowledge unsullied. If what is sullied remains unpolished, scholars have no choice but to rely on methodical effort, for, unlike the sages, they cannot realize the innate criteria for judgment. This is because knowing things clearly is being able to weigh things and conform to moral principle. If one believes, as do the adherents of the Wang Yangming School, that because there is innate knowledge, there is no need for exercising judgment, then the Four Books and Six Classics will be useless.

[MR]

CHAUVINISM AND FALSE LOYALTY

SATŌ Naokata 1706, 564-6 (97-8); 1705, 580-1 (449-51)

Master Naokata said: "... If one takes the 'supreme ultimate' as one's ruler and understands all countries to be its vassals, then... there will be no need to praise and favor excessively one over the other..."

Someone remarked: "... From ancient times Japan has been called the land of the *kami*, and it is a superb country that surpasses all other countries."

Master Naokata replied: "What sorts of countries are China, India, and Europe? Who is to determine that only Japan is the land of the *kami* and that it is an especially wonderful place? Do the gods referred to in the term "land of the *kami*" not exist in other countries as well?..."

"Now further, the statement by the proponents of Shinto that Japan is the Middle Kingdom and that it surpasses all other countries is difficult to understand. The concept of the Middle Kingdom is something fixed since ancient times according to geography. Of course, in the Middle Kingdom the Way is clear and the customs are good, and in barbarian countries the customs are

inferior. Nevertheless, fundamentally, the meaning of the concepts is fixed on the basis of geography and not on the basis of the goodness or badness of the customs.

“According to the ancient records of Japan, in our country the emperors married women of the same surname to take as their empresses, and everyone in the populace followed this practice. In addition, in some cases people even took their own sisters as their consorts, thereby violating the way of husband and wife taught by the sages. Also, in many cases a minister murdered his ruler and put his younger brother or son in his place. Those whose fathers or older brothers had been killed acceded to the throne of the Son of Heaven on the instructions of the minister who had done the killing, without feeling any shame in the matter and without any idea of taking revenge. When a ruler-vassal relationship exists, and the vassal kills the father or older brother and then makes his son or younger brother the ruler, it is difficult to say that the country is superior to all other countries and the righteousness between lord and retainer is correct.

“Now it is said that Japan has the splendid tradition of one family’s ruling the realm continuously and not transferring the right to rule to any other family. But for a brother or cousin of the legitimate heir to become the Son of Heaven by getting rid of the legitimate heir is even worse than for a person of another family to get rid of the legitimate heir. Even though the family line has not changed since Emperor Jinmu,¹⁵ the cases of murder, rebellion, and usurpation of the throne are too many to count.”

[BDS]

The Forty-Six Rōnin

The ethical principles informing the ‘shogunate’s’ verdict are clear. The forty-six men were allowed to commit ‘*seppuku*’ rather than be put to death by decapitation. The forty-six men should consider themselves fortunate that the shogunate decided to give them a compassionate sentence. Despite this, the common people chimed in, praising the forty-six men as loyal retainers and righteous samurai....

The forty-six men indeed made an egregious error when they deemed Lord Kira to be their deceased lord’s enemy and invoked the line from the *Book of Rites* that “one should not live under the same heaven with the murderer of one’s lord or father” (1.1.v.2, 2.1.II.24). Lord Kira was not their enemy, although he might have been if he had actually attacked Lord Asano. Lord Asano was

15. [The legendary first emperor of Japan, believed to have been a direct descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu.]

sentenced to death because he was a criminal who violated the great law of the land and defied the authorities.

Moreover, if we consider the matter in terms of the dedicated spirit appropriate to a samurai, then if Lord Asano's rancor against Lord Kira was irrepressible, he should have waited until his ceremonial duties were completed and then found a more appropriate place to attack Lord Kira. To attack Lord Kira during the great ceremony hosting the imperial emissaries was a reckless, unmanly, and cowardly way of acting. Lord Kira was standing and chatting with Kajikawa Yosobē when Asano approached him from behind, suddenly drew his short sword, and slashed him even as he attempted to flee. Lord Kira was not fatally wounded, and Kajikawa apprehended Lord Asano before he could finish his task. Lord Asano's lack of courage and skill was indeed laughable in the extreme. That he was sentenced to death and his domains confiscated was indeed in accordance with the ethical principles proper to such matters....

Rather than regretting their master's crime, the forty-six men defied the shogunate's verdict, armed themselves, and used passwords, secret signals, and military strategy to murder Lord Kira. Thus, they, too, committed a capital crime.

Nevertheless, obsessed with their master's anger toward Lord Kira, their muddled minds became totally set on taking revenge. If later they had reflected on the nature of their crime, a violation of the shōgun's law, and committed suicide at the temple of Sengaku-ji, their intentions would have merited sympathy despite the wrongness of their deed. Instead they reported their deed to the inspector general and waited for a verdict from the shogunate. In both the letter they presented explaining their deed and in their first remarks to the inspector general, the men declared that they respected the authorities. But was not such behavior part of a scheme meant to win them praise? Having committed a capital crime and blatantly having disobeyed the authorities, there was no need for them to report anything, nor was there any need to wait for a verdict. These were not the acts of men who had readied themselves for death.... Their attack was the product of calculation and conspiracy; it did not arise from any real sense of loyalty to their lord or from any feelings of commiseration with their lord in his misfortune.

[BDS, JAT]

ASAMI Keisai 浅見綱斎 (1652–1711)

Born in Ōmi Province, Asami Keisai was trained first as a physician and later studied with Yamazaki Ansai* in nearby Kyoto, where he was to spend the remainder of his life teaching his version of Ansai's "orthodox" reading of Zhu Xi's neo-Confucianism. Differences in interpretation eventually led Ansai to break with Keisai and Satō Naokata*, who, though his best pupils, were not on good terms with one another. Naokata, for example, had little respect for Shinto, while Keisai was closer to Ansai in insisting on its obvious importance for all Japanese. He is even reported to have suggested that Japanese scholars who turned their backs on Shinto were no better than "sons of foreigners." In the same vein, while Naokata thought that emphasis on blind loyalty and samurai self-sacrifice was crude, Keisai's most famous writing was his *Testament on Quiet Dedication*, a work extolling the supreme importance of loyalty, even self-sacrificing loyalty, to one's lord.

Unlike Naokata who cautiously acknowledged the Mencian position that evil rulers might be legitimately removed, Keisai agreed with the majority of early modern neo-Confucian scholars in contending that there had never been, and could never be, an evil ruler, a position he developed in his *Records on Fidelity in Imprisonment*. When there was evil within the polity, he argued, those serving the ruler should ask how they themselves might have been responsible for it through insufficient service to their ruler. Finally, Keisai differed with Naokata's condemnation of the forty-six *rōnin*, praising them as supreme exemplars of samurai loyalty and duty.

[JAT]

REVERENCE TO RULERS AND TRADITION

ASAMI Keisai 1718, 676; 1695, 130; 1794, 580–1 (18)

In the realm below heaven there has been no such thing as a bad ruler or a bad father. Thinking that there are such rulers and fathers plants the seed of beheading them even as they sleep. Is this not terrifying? Whatever they might do, you should not pass judgment about right or wrong in regard to either one's ruler or one's father. Apart from exhausting ourselves in service to them, we have nothing more to do. What you might call evil is due to our not having exhausted ourselves in service to him.

'Reverence' is at the root of the very existence of heaven and earth, the ongoing flow of the four seasons, the engendering and sustaining of the myriad things, it goes on forever unceasingly and unendingly, like the flow of water or the soaring height of the mountains. Even if there is no mind to say how great it

is, without losing its own way of being, without becoming dispersed, not like looking at a dead person, but something living; this is reverence.

If there is someone who raises a rebellion against the 'Son of Heaven', one ought to rally to the support of the Son of Heaven without waiting for orders. If someone has the idea that the shōgun should oust the Son of Heaven, one ought to do everything possible to dissuade him. Even if there is a suggestion of overthrowing the shōgun from the Son of Heaven, one should not go along with it. Why? Because the 'shogunate' has committed no crime. Since it is thanks to this sort of samurai line that we enjoy peace now, I think the shogunate is important....

[BDS]

IN PRAISE OF SHINTO

ASAMI Keisai N.D.-A, 630 (41); N.D.-B, 2.26, 3.9, 1.32 (38-9)

The reason the gods of our country are said to be different from the gods of China is that everyone is muddled in their thinking.... The term "heavenly emperors and earthly emperors" existed in ancient China as well.... Because the country of China is well endowed with people and resources and has a large territory, sages arose in rapid succession, establishing the teaching of moral principles and the way of humanity on the basis of the natural 'Way' of heaven and earth. Therefore, the Way of ancestral spirits, humanity, and the gods was also made correct and clear so that it did not degenerate into the strange and heterodox. But the Shinto of Japan degenerated into the mystical and mysterious, becoming a shallow and base form of learning.

The advocates of Shinto of today say that the "reverence" of China should be practiced, while the "reverence" of Japan should be more exalted because it is the original substance of the 'Way'.... To say such illiterate things is ridiculous.... Even though there is nothing as superb as the way of the ancestral spirits and gods... since principle is one, there can be no such thing as doctrinal amalgamation.... The advocates of Shinto of today only speak about what sectarian transmission they have received, but they do not look into the one unchanging principle. This is a shameful thing.

It is because of the events of the ancient age of the gods that it is called the "age of the gods." Zhu Xi also spoke of the sagely gods of ancient times when heaven and man were not far separated. Before the Way of humanity had been opened up, things were in their natural state. Thus it was called the age of the gods.... Things were gradually transformed through the development of culture, but this development accorded with the nature of that age....

The virtue of gentle straightforwardness taught by Shinto is a good thing. Yet if there is no examination of true and false, heterodox and orthodox, but just an exaltation of the absence of evil in the heart and of a dear temperament, even if there may be no defilement in the heart, actually one is able to know nothing at all.

[BDS]

UNIVERSAL WAY, JAPANESE WAY

ASAMI Keisai, 1698, 634 (45); 1858, 643 (42); 1701, 368–70

The Way of heaven and earth is not something that one distinguishes as belonging to Japan or China as one compares tea bowls and medicine containers.

The Way of the sages should be revered. To revere it by doing things such as pretentiously receiving the Confucian classics—this is what is called heresy. Having been born in Japan in this time of great peace, we are able to live peacefully through the grace of our rulers and nourish our lives. To be partial toward a foreign country is a great heresy. Even now, if Confucius and Zhu Xi were to attack Japan on the orders of an alien government, we should be the first to march forward and blow off their heads with our cannons.... This precisely is what is called the great righteous duty between lord and vassal... Worldly Confucians read books and in their hearts become aliens.... People imitate the people of alien countries because they do not know the true Way.

[BDS]

The terms “Middle Kingdom” and “barbarian” have been used in Confucian writings for a long time. For that reason, ever since Confucian books came to be widely studied in our country, those who read these books call China the “Middle Kingdom” and call our country “barbarian.” In extreme cases, some people lament the fact that they were born in a “barbarian” land. How disgraceful! It is a sad day when people who read Confucian books lose the correct way of reading, failing to understand the true significance of norms and status distinctions and the real meaning of supreme duty.

Heaven envelops the earth, and there is no place on earth not covered by heaven. Accordingly each country’s territory and customs constitute a realm below heaven in its own right, with no distinction of noble and base in comparison with other countries.... Thus, for a person born in this country to refer to our country by the contemptuous name “barbarian,” feeling that because our country is somehow lacking in virtue it must be ranked below China, forgetting that heaven also exists above our own country, and failing to see that the Way

also is flourishing in our own country and that our country can also serve as the standard for other countries, is to turn one's back on one's supreme duty as would a person who scorned his own father. How much more so in our country where the legitimate succession has continued without break since the beginning of heaven and earth, and because the great bond between lord and vassal has remained unchanged for myriad generations.

This is the greatest of the three bonds. Is this not something that no other country has achieved? What is more, our country has a tradition of martial valor and manliness, and a sense of honor and integrity that are rooted in our very nature. These are the points on which our country is superior.... Sagely leaders have appeared several times and ruled our country well, so that the overall level of morality and ritual propriety in our country is not inferior to that of any other country....

The Way taught in the Confucian books is the Way of heaven and earth. What we study and develop is also the Way of heaven and earth. Because there is no distinction in the Way between subject and object, between here and there, if we study this Way on the basis of the books that reveal the Way, this Way is the Way of our heaven and earth. For example, fire is hot and water is cool, crows are black and herons are white, parents deserve our love, and lords are difficult to abandon. These things are true regardless of whether we speak from the point of view of China, of Japan, or of India. In such things, there is no basis for saying that there is a special Way for our own country.

If in reading Confucian works we say, "It is the Way of China! The Way of China!" and mistakenly feel that we should surrender to them, customs and all, without reserve, we do so out of failure to perceive the true principles of heaven and earth and out of narrow-mindedness.

[BDS]

THE FORTY-SIX RŌNIN

ASAMI Keisai, 1706, 690-3 (453, 455, 457)

If we ask what established legal principle was applicable here, it was the law stipulating that both parties in an altercation be punished equally. If we grant that Lord Asano's offense was the disturbance he created during the great ceremony, still it was not unprovoked. Rather it resulted entirely from Lord Kira's self-serving intentions. If Lord Asano had been held responsible as one party in the altercation, then Lord Kira should have been held responsible as the other party. But Lord Asano alone was sentenced to die for disrupting a state ceremony, while the other party, Lord Kira, was not punished at all.

There is no question that in the final analysis, Lord Asano died on account of Lord Kira. Therefore, had Lord Asano's retainers not killed Lord Kira, completing the work begun by their master's sword, their supreme duty would never have been fulfilled. Their revenge simply involved a lord's retainers killing his adversary in fulfillment of the lord's intention to kill his adversary himself. It is clear that the forty-six men showed not an iota of enmity toward, nor any thought of rebellion against, the shogunate....

Some foolish people are confused by the allegation that the vendetta was carried out in defiance of the shōgun's pardon of Lord Kira. However, as I said before, there is no principle stating that a son should not take revenge on his father's murderer just because the murderer has been pardoned by the authorities. Such revenge does not amount to defying the authorities. Because the person seeking vengeance thinks of nothing but the enemy of his father, it does seem in retrospect that he acted in defiance of the authorities. But it is really the same as Mencius' statement that if the blind father of the sage emperor Shun... killed a man, Shun would have fled the empire carrying his father on his back. He would not have done this with any intention of defying the authorities.... For rulers and parents, the same principles apply. It is in this that we find the pinnacle of loyalty and 'filial piety'.

When we disregard our public responsibilities because of a private grudge, we cannot escape punishment for the crime. But as long as the act is committed with no trace of disrespect toward the authorities, then it is the same, no matter what the occasion. Even the letters and last testaments of the forty-six men had no hint of ill will toward the shogunate. On the contrary, their attitude was moderate and reasonable in the extreme, demonstrating an acute awareness of the rules of ritual decorum.... They never tried to defy the shogunate or to create a civil disturbance.

.....

Yet even in the case of a vendetta against the killer of one's father, depending on the nature of the adversary and the situation, a major civil disturbance is sometimes created, although this is certainly not intended. To think only of the need to avoid such disturbances in deference to the authorities, and to act in such a way that the enemy escapes, is to put one's lord or father in second place. What is more, the forty-six planned their vendetta in such a way that the neighboring residences were not disturbed in the slightest, and even inside Lord Kira's residence, they avoided killing those who remained outside the fray. After accomplishing their task, they even took care not to start any accidental fires as they left Lord Kira's mansion....

Generally speaking, when analyzing a major incident like this one, it is best to minimize minor infractions while trying to comprehend sympathetically the basic intention underlying them so that we avoid impugning the loyalty

and righteousness of the parties involved... In the writings left behind by the forty-six men, their unswerving dedication to the memory of their lord is clear beyond a shadow of doubt, and no amount of effort to find fault with their motivation can stand up to scrutiny.

[BDS, JAT]

ARAI Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725)

Arai Hakuseki, a contemporary and rival of Ogyū Sorai*, served the Tokugawa 'shogunate' in the capacity of a Confucian scholar for a number of years. During this period he attempted to persuade the shōgun Ienobu to take the title, "King of Japan," at least in the diplomatic arena, as a reflection of his real political standing in both name and substance. Like so many of Hakuseki's social, political, and economic proposals, his terminological and ceremonial re-conceptualization of the shogunate had no lasting effect.

When the Italian priest Giovanni Battista Sidotti arrived in Japan to revive Christian missionary activities, he was sent to Hakuseki to be interviewed on behalf of the government. This, together with Hakuseki's talks with representatives of the Dutch East Asia Company, provided him with considerable knowledge of Christianity and western customs, as reflected in his *Writings on the West* composed during the decade from 1715 to 1725. In it we see that Hakuseki rejected Christianity because it was too fundamentally antithetical to the ethical hierarchy of Tokugawa Japan to be tolerated.

Among his other writings, Hakuseki is known for *Told Round a Brushwood Fire*, said to be the first Japanese autobiography, and *Lessons from History*, a didactic narrative of Japanese history from Heian times to the present. Another work from Hakuseki's later years, his *Essay on Ghosts and Spirits*, expounds in detail a largely orthodox neo-Confucian understanding of spiritual phenomena and matters related to religious practice. Drawing heavily on Hayashi Razan*, Hakuseki interprets ghosts and spirits in terms of the 'ki'-based metaphysics of neo-Confucianism. His rationalistic and realistic approach to practical and philosophical issues is also evident in his discussion of era names, where he argues against the traditional belief that the choice of era names affects the fortunes of the regime using them.

[JAT]

ERA NAMES

ARAI Hakuseki 1716, 127–9 (191–2)

Social disturbances and untimely deaths are sometimes due to the 'will of heaven' and sometimes to human agency. How could good or bad fortune depend on the ideographs in an era name?...

If we were to make a detailed investigation of the events of the successive eras since we began to use era names in Japan and designate this or that as having been inauspicious, every ideograph would prove to have been inauspicious. The reason is that in both China and Japan, the change of an era name

has practically always been owing to natural disasters of celestial or terrestrial origin, floods, droughts, plagues, and the like. Thus in the course of time every single sinograph that has been used in era names has become associated with misfortune.

If we worry about misfortune proceeding from an era name, it would be far better if we had none at all, as was the case in ancient times when there were no era names. There was no period when social disturbances and untimely deaths were unknown. When I met the Italian and the Dutch, I made detailed inquiry about current affairs in foreign countries. I discovered that no more than two or three countries employed era names. All the rest, instead of employing era names, counted so many thousands, hundreds, and tens of years since the creation of the world. Nevertheless, about twenty years ago, upon the death of one of their paramount rulers, many of the countries of Western Europe have been plunged into turmoil over the question of his successor. I was told that large numbers had died in battle in the winter of the previous year and that spring. What inauspicious influence was responsible for these misfortunes? Thus, even though they had no era names, because heaven ceased to favor them and their own conduct was lacking in virtue, it seems they could not escape destruction.

[JAT]

AGAINST CHRISTIANITY

ARAI Hakuseki 1725, 780–1

According to Christian teaching, the Heavenly Ruler created heaven and created earth and should be regarded as the Great Lord and Great Father who created the myriad things of the world. Thus, even though I have a father, I should not love him, and even though I have a lord, I should not revere him. Yet that is a denial of 'filial piety' and loyalty.

Moreover, they say that this Great Lord and Great Father cannot be served without devoting the whole of one's love and reverence. But the *Book of Rites* reserves the rites of serving Shangdi, the Lord on High, for the 'Son of Heaven'; the various lords and those ranking below would not dare to offer sacrifices to heaven. Such provisions were made so that there would be no upheavals by the lowly against the exalted. Subjects are to view their sovereign as heaven; children are to view their father as heaven; wives are to view their husbands as heaven. In this way, subjects who serve their sovereign with loyalty, sons who serve their fathers with filial piety, and wives who serve their husbands with propriety also serve heaven. Absent the constancy of these three relationships, there is no way of serving heaven.

If besides my lord there is a Great Lord whom I should serve, and if besides my father there is a Great Father whom I should serve, and if this one should be more revered than my own lord and my own father, then not only are there two sacred persons within my family and two lords in the land, but I must scorn my lord and father and consider nothing greater than the Great Lord. Even if Christian teaching does not go as far as to scorn our fathers and lords, the nature of that sect is so despicable and outrageous that it would not have to think twice about killing our rulers and fathers.

[JAT]

GHOSTS AND SPIRITS

ARAI Hakuseki 1710, 1–3

Matters related to ghosts and spirits are truly difficult to talk about. Not only are they difficult to talk about, they are also difficult to comprehend. Not only are they difficult to comprehend, they are even more difficult to believe. The difficulty in believing in ghosts and spirits results from their being difficult to know. However, once we can believe in them, we can more easily comprehend discussions about them. And as we better understand them, we can believe in them more fully. Yet unless we understand them well, how can we possibly discuss them? It must be said then that ghosts and spirits are truly difficult to explain.

In the past, Zigong¹⁶ asked, “Are the dead aware of things or not?” The master replied, “I fear that if I say that the dead are aware of things, then filial sons and obedient grandsons will harm life for the sake of sending off the deceased. Yet I also fear that if we say that the dead have no awareness of things, unfilial sons might not bother to bury their parents. However, whether or not the deceased are aware should not be a pressing matter for us now. Later, we will naturally come to understand this.” Listening to Confucius’ response, we should understand the reason why it is difficult to believe fully in ghosts and spirits.

Confucius also responded to Zilu¹⁷ by stating, “If we have not yet realized how to serve people, why should we be concerned about serving ghosts? If we do not yet understand the living, why should we seek to understand the dead?” (XI.12). This should reveal the difficulty in understanding ghosts and spirits.

16. [Zigong (520?–? BCE) was one of the close disciples of Confucius, famous not only for his eloquence but also for honoring his master for six years after his death. The exchange is recorded in the Han-dynasty classic collection, *Garden of Stories* XVIII.]

17. [Zilu (543–481 BCE), another of the close disciples, is remembered for his fondness for the sword as well as his courage and simplicity.]

However, after grasping how to serve humanity, we should be able to serve ghosts well. And, after understanding how to live among humanity, we should be able to understand the dead. That was precisely what Confucius meant to convey in his teaching. In response to Fanxu¹⁸, Confucius said, “If we encourage people to work for ‘righteousness’ and revere ghosts and spirits even while keeping a distance from them, then we will be called wise” (*School Sayings of Confucius* VI.22). Reflecting on this from various angles, we see that serving humanity has to do with encouraging people to work for righteousness, and that the proper way to serve ghosts is to revere them while keeping our distance....

The *Book of Rites* records, “Rites nourish the living, send off the deceased, and serve ghosts and spirits.” It further states, “Rites and music belong to the realm of brightness, while ghosts and spirits to that of mysteriousness” (VII.4.6, XVII.1.19). While brightness and mysteriousness seem like two different things, their differences truly merge into one. Without understanding the one, there is no understanding the other....

We may begin with the classic writings on rites, juxtaposing the remaining words of the ancient sages and worthies with the correct interpretations of Confucians of later generations so that at the very least we will be able to discern the meanings of the terms. This is no simple task, but unless we attend to accounts of ghosts and spirits, they will seem all the more obscure. Unless we make the effort to get to the bottom of these terms, how can we ever hope to attain an understanding of them?...

To begin with, in the *Rites of the Zhou*, heaven is referred to as spirit, the earth as earth-spirit, and humanity as ghosts. While these names differ, since ‘sincerity’ embraces the two spiritual ‘ki’ of *yin* and *yang* and penetrates them, they may be referred to as ghosts and spirits.

Although we speak of the two *ki* of *yin* and *yang*, fundamentally there is only one generative force (called the unitary original *ki* of expansion and contraction, coming and going). When this *ki* expands, it is called *yang* (as with spring and summer). When it returns and contracts, it is called *yin* (as with fall and winter). *Yang* includes both expansion and contraction. (The coming of *yang* is expansion. This is the *yang* of *yang*. The return of *yang* is contraction. This is the *yin* of *yang*.) Within *yin*, there is also contraction. (The coming of *yin* is expansion. This is the *yang* of *yin*. The return of *yin* is contraction. This is the *yin* of *yin*.) The spontaneous activities of this contraction and expansion, coming and going, have been called the “spontaneous activities of the two *ki*”... But ghosts and spirits should not be referred to as *yin* and *yang*. Rather it is to the

18. [A disciple whom Confucius rebukes in the *Analects* (XIII.4) for his pretentiousness.]

spontaneous mysteriousness of their contraction and expansion that the terms ghosts and spirits are to be applied.

Now ghosts are the spiritual forces of *yin*, while spirits are the spiritual forces of *yang* (*Commentary on the Rites*). But if these later accounts are set alongside the ancient texts linking heaven to spirits, earth to earth-spirits, and humanity to ghosts, the *ki* of heaven is constantly expanding. Hence the purity and clarity of *ki* is also referred to as spirit. These are things such as the sun, moon, stars, and constellations. Moreover, transformations that we cannot fathom yet which we attribute to heaven are referred to as spirits. Things such as earth, the soaring mountains, the flowing rivers, and the growth of grasses and trees, and the manifest traces that are tied to them and so attributed to earth are referred to as the earth-spirits. The sinograph used to write “earth-spirits” in ancient times had the meaning of “to disclose or show.” The term thus carries the nuance of something manifest or revealed....

What is associated with humanity is referred to as ghosts. Matters related to ghosts tend to be returning (the word “ghosts” and the word “return” being homonyms). When people die, their ethereal spirit necessarily returns to heaven, while their earthly soul necessarily returns to earth. Because the ethereal soul and earthly soul “return” to heaven and earth, they are referred to as “ghosts.”

Within the rites that the early kings systematized for the sake of governing the realm below heaven, there had to be those providing for sacrifices to heaven’s spirits, earth’s spirits, and the ghosts of humanity. There were sacrifices to the sun and moon, the stars and constellations, heat and cold, flood and drought, mountains and forests, rivers and valleys, and hills and mounds that produced abundant clouds, winds, and rain.

They also established great shrines for the sake of the masses, royal shrines for their own sacrifices, and forms of worship for the spirits of the land and its harvests. Seven sacrifices were also established for the deity of human destiny, the deity of the halls, the deity of the castle gates, the deity of roads and pathways, the all-seeing deity, the deities of corpses, and the deity of the hearth. In the spring, the imperial sacrifices were held. In the autumn, the first fruits were offered to the ancestors.

The various lords of the realm were not allowed to worship heaven. They were only allowed to make sacrifices to the mountains and rivers within their domains. The various lords established shrines of the realm for the sake of the common people, and shrines of the lords for themselves. The five temples and five sacrifices were also established.

The great officers established three altars and three sacrifices; an officer of the first grade established two altars and two sacrifices; the common people were

not allowed to establish altars. They simply worshiped their ancestors in their inner chambers, establishing their sacrifices there.

For the most part, the sacrifices allowed by the early kings were regulated and managed so that they accorded with the status and standing of each group that participated in them. Because the Son of Heaven formed the central position between heaven and earth as master of heaven and earth, he naturally was assigned responsibility, in his honorable person as the one man, for the *ki* of heaven and earth. Accordingly, he exhausted to the utmost his sincerity and 'reverence' so that this generative force of heaven and earth assigned to him became greatly concentrated in his person and the hundred spirits naturally received his efforts. And because the various lords, as masters of their domains, were entrusted with the *ki* of the famous mountains and great rivers of their domains, the spirits naturally responded to them as a matter of principle. As the great officers are the masters of their families, the deities of the five sacrifices responded to their sacrifices.

Moreover, we find rituals providing for things such as the three years of mourning observed from the Son of Heaven down to commoners. This is because regardless of differences between high and low rank, everyone possesses the same mind producing feelings of filial piety for their parents. For this reason, when it comes to worshipping ancestors, ordinary samurai and commoners begin seven generations back and count down to the present, only stopping with sacrifices to their own parents. Furthermore, after someone has died and their heavenly spirit and earthly spirit have returned respectively to heaven and earth, their relatives will sacrifice to them, imploring them to come back. Without such principles, the ancient sage kings would not have been able to systematize these rites.

[JAT]

OGYŪ Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728)



Ogyū Sorai formulated one of the most politically oriented, authoritarian statements of Confucian philosophy to emerge from Japan. While claiming to do little more than offer a systematic exposition of the meanings of philosophical terms in the Six Classics, texts that he purportedly took as an absolute standard for all sociopolitical discourse, he in fact set forth a philosophical vision that would be highly useful to a ruling elite eager to have its policies accepted by all as sacred. At every turn, we see Sorai extolling the “early kings” of ancient China as sages who formulated a ‘Way’ that later generations should follow as far as possible without deviation. In so doing, rulers of later ages, though not themselves sages, would set an example for all people within their realm. This would supposedly enable them to contribute to the peace and prosperity of all, as well as to the full realization of their own individual virtues.

The practical nature of Sorai’s thought has led some interpreters to cast him as a utilitarian philosopher whose intent was to promote, in effect, the greatest happiness for the greatest number. There are also Hobbesian elements in Sorai’s system, especially insofar as it asserts the authority of the ruler while subordinating the people to roles defined for them within a system otherwise largely orchestrated by the ruler. In relation to the broader picture of Confucian philosophy in East Asia, Sorai is frequently compared to Xunzi, the ancient Chinese philosopher known for his assertion that human nature is evil. Although Sorai never made such a bold claim himself, he opposed the orthodox neo-Confucian position that human nature is good, favoring instead the more ethically ambiguous position that human nature is changeable so that people can do either good or evil.

Also, like Xunzi, Sorai denied that heaven was knowable. In contrast to the orthodox neo-Confucian position, he mocked the notion that a thorough examination and understanding of ‘principle’ could lead to knowledge of all the principles in the cosmos, including heaven. At the same time, his insistence on the utterly transcendent and incomprehensible nature of heaven implied that heaven must be revered absolutely and also that ghosts and spirits should be respected and worshiped. Once again, such practices had been formulated by the early kings and for that very reason, must be followed without question.

There is a strong anti-intellectual element in Sorai’s philosophy, especially in regard to those who are ruled. Rather than emphasize the importance of reading books, philosophical discussion, and the spread of knowledge for all, Sorai claimed that people did not need to understand the Way in order to follow it in their daily

activities. Basing himself on a remark in the *Analects*, Sorai held that people are better advised to learn by doing rather than through the pursuit of more abstract, conceptual, and discursive approaches.

It seems clear that the political nature of Sorai's philosophy reflects his years in service to Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu (1658–1714), the favorite of the shōgun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646–1709), though most of his characteristic ideas were only systematized later. While a part of Tsunayoshi's philosophical circle, Sorai remained a fairly orthodox neo-Confucian philosopher, subscribing by and large to the ideas of Zhu Xi. Later he had the opportunity to advise the eighth shōgun, Tokugawa Yoshimune (1684–1751), and to give practical expression to many of his own more philosophical ideas in a work written for Yoshimune, *Political Discourses*. This work, however, most conspicuously stands as a practical expression of Sorai's philosophical masterworks, *Distinguishing the Way* and *Distinguishing Names*, which also date from his later years and were published only well after his death.

[JAT]

THE WAY AND THE NAMES

OGYŪ Sorai 1737A, 32, 34–42, 47–9, 52, 55–7, 69, 77–9, 85–6, 89–92, 95–8, 100–1, 105, 107, 110–11, 115–16, 118, (171–6, 180–1, 186–9, 200–6, 210–11, 214, 235, 250–3, 263–4, 270, 272, 274, 281–4, 287–90, 295–6, 299–300, 305, 307, 315, 319); 1737B, 12–13, 15–17, 19–22, 24–5, 29 (140, 146–6, 148, 152–5, 157, 159, 161–2)

Language

Since the birth of humanity, wherever there are things, there are names. From the outset some of these names have been coined by ordinary people, but these were only names given to things with form. When it came to things without form, ordinary people could not discern them and hence the sages established names for them. Thereafter, even ordinary people could perceive and comprehend them. This process was called “teaching by names.”

Because names preserve teachings, a ‘refined person’ is cautious in using them. Since ‘principle’ pervades everything, how can we ever hope to grasp the things that the sages established if we opt for our personal ideas? No one has ever been able to realize the Way of the sages while misunderstanding the relationship between names and things.... Therefore, those who wish to seek the Way of the sages must search for it in the *Six Classics*.¹⁹ Then the things that the sages created will be correctly understood.

19. [The *Six Classics*, considered the oldest Chinese literary sources, include the *Book of History*, *Book of Odes*, *Book of Changes*, *Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Book of Rites*, and *Book of Music*.]

The Way

The 'Way' is a comprehensive name. It refers to everything that the early kings established, especially the rites, music, penal laws, and administrative institutions. The Way embraces and designates them all. There is not something called "the Way" apart from their rites, music, penal laws, and administrative institutions.

.....

The Way of the early kings consists in what the early kings formulated. It is not the natural way of heaven and earth. Now, the early kings received the 'will of heaven' and implemented royal government over the realm below heaven due to their virtues of intelligence, clarity, and wisdom. Their minds were focused entirely on their duty to bring peace to the realm below heaven. Thus they exhausted the strength of their minds and the ultimate skill of their wisdom in formulating this Way and having all people below heaven and later generations follow this Way and practice it. How could this Way possibly have been a natural product of heaven and earth?

.....

Although individuals should rely on their virtues, they must harmoniously follow the early kings' Way of bringing peace to the realm below heaven. None should dare to differ from it. And if the ruler can naturally open up people's knowledge and cultivate their talents in order to complete their virtues, then petty people will naturally move toward goodness and distance themselves from evil in order to complete their vulgar customs. Thus there is a mutual flow and course between the Way and heaven and earth. Along with humanity and things, the Way mutually lives and grows, enabling them ultimate breadth and greatness, without exhaustion, and that is all....

Generally, the Way of the early kings seems vague and distant. It is something that ordinary people cannot fathom. For this reason Confucius remarked, "People can be made to follow it, but they cannot be made to comprehend it" (*Analects* VIII.9).

.....

The early kings followed the minds of all people to love, nourish, support, and perfect one another. The early kings also followed people's ability to work together and undertake tasks cooperatively. They founded their Way so that the realm and posterity could follow it.... Moreover, how could they ever have meant that all people attempt to fathom the Way? Why would they ever have forced people to try to comprehend and practice what, for ordinary people, was so difficult to fathom and practice? The intention of the early kings was simply to pacify the people

.....

Nevertheless, there have been alterations and changes in the Way in accordance with the times. For this reason, sages of a particular generation have made adjustments and set them forth as the Way, and rulers and ministers of the same generation have followed those alterations and put them into practice. This does not mean that the Way of an earlier generation necessarily possessed insufficiencies and so required reform. Nor does this mean that the Way of an earlier generation was perfection, but was later renovated simply to enhance the realm's perception of it. Nor should periodic alterations be deemed inferior to the perfect Way that has been followed for myriad ages and acclaimed utmost perfection. That changes have been made only signifies that the sages of a particular age had foresight into centuries ahead and through changes maintained and stabilized things, preventing a lapse into decline and thereby preserving the realm. If such changes did not issue from the wisdom of the sages, then the intent for them cannot be fathomed.

Virtue

Virtue refers to what each person attains by following the Way. Whether we attain things from our human nature or due to our learning depends entirely on differences in our human natures. Each person differs in his or her human nature and therefore virtues differ from one person to the next.

.....

The differences in human nature can be compared to the differences among types of grasses and trees. Even the excellent teachings founded by the sages cannot be forced on everyone and everything. For this reason, each person must follow what is proximate to their human nature and cultivate that in order to complete their individual virtues.

Humaneness

Of the Confucian teachings, 'humaneness' is the greatest. Why? Because humaneness bolsters the Way of the early kings and gives it substance.... Human nature tends towards mutual kinship, love, livelihood, completion, assistance, nourishment, protection, and help.... When we combine all these attributes of humaneness, we refer to them as the Way.... Accordingly, the Way of humanity should not be discussed in terms of one person alone, but instead must be discussed in terms of trillions of people unified together.

Scrutinizing the present realm below heaven, who can stand alone, unrelated to society? Samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants all mutually assist one another and so are able to eat. If they did not, they could not subsist. Even robbers and thieves must group together in bands in order to survive.

Humaneness refers to the virtue that provides for the prosperity of everyone and the peace and stability of the people. It is the great virtue of the sages.

.....

The Way of the sages aims essentially at providing for the peace and stability of all people—only that. However many laudable virtues it includes, they all serve to enhance and perfect humaneness. Human nature does differ from person to person. Regardless of an individual's knowledge or ignorance, worthiness or worthlessness, all share the same 'mind' to mutually love, nourish, assist, and perfect one another. People are also alike in their capacity to work together and undertake tasks cooperatively. Thus, for government, we depend on a ruler; for nourishment, we depend on the people. Farmers, artisans, and merchants all make a living for themselves by relying upon each other. One cannot forsake society and live alone in a deserted land: it is simply human nature that makes it so.

Song Confucians emphasized the mind. When their discussions of humaneness as love are coupled with their emphasis on the mind, then even 'Shakyamuni' Buddha appears to be humane. Because they never consider humaneness as the virtue of providing peace and stability for people, they do not address what I am calling humaneness.... Teacher Jinsai claimed, "Humaneness is the virtue of compassion and love that penetrates and fills everything, near and far, internal and external, without exception."... He did not associate humaneness with the early kings but did attribute it to everyone else. Not realizing that humaneness culminates in providing peace and stability for people, Jinsai defined it in terms of compassion and love. For this reason, his insidious views entail judging Shakyamuni Buddha to have been a humane individual. How can this be?

Sages

The sages received their virtues of intelligence, brilliance, insight, and wisdom, from heaven. How could these virtues be acquired through studying? How could anyone fathom the unfathomable spiritual mysteries of the sages' virtues?

.....

Later Confucians advanced the farfetched idea that everyone should seek to become sages. In the process they discussed the virtues of the sages in detail, desiring that their analyses serve as models for students hoping to become sages. Later Confucians thus described the mind of the sage as totally embodying the principles of heaven, with *yin* and *yang* harmonizing the virtues of human nature without partiality or prejudice. With their astute methods of mind control, later Confucians tried to regulate themselves with sagely wisdom,

happily hoping to fathom the unfathomable. They even tried to force people to study what could never be learned. Their attempts to establish and control perfect virtue eventually led them, necessarily, to rank the virtues of the ancient sages as superior or inferior

The Rites

The early kings realized that language was a relatively insufficient medium with which to instruct people. For that reason, they founded rites and music as a means of teaching them. Likewise, they realized that government and penal laws were insufficient means of providing for the peace and stability of the people. Therefore, they founded rites and music to transform them. Pervading heaven and earth, the substance of the rites reaches minute, subtle areas, giving everything its standard, and providing systematic order to irregularities. There is no aspect of the rites that the Way does not penetrate. Refined persons study them, while the common people follow them. The method of studying the rites begins with practice to the point of proficiency, and culminates in a silent comprehension. Attaining this, there is nothing that a person does not understand. How could language possibly mediate such a level of understanding?

By following the rites, people are transformed. Once transformed, they follow the rules of the 'Lord above' unconsciously and unknowingly. How could there possibly be anything that is not good if the rites are thoroughly followed? How could government and penal law ever match the efficacy of the rites?

When people use words, there is understanding. When words are not used, there is none. Rites and music are not spoken, so how can they be more effective than language in instructing people? They can be, due to their capacity for transforming people.

By practicing rites to the point of proficiency, people become immersed in them and thus transformed in mental purpose and bodily substance, even though they might not understand the rites. Yet in the end, what is not understood? When their understanding is acquired through language, people believe that meaning resides in the words themselves. They do not reflect about anything else. Indeed, the harm of using language in teaching is that it causes people not to think about anything other than words.

Rites and music are not based on words. Unless we think about them, they are not understood. Thus people should study the rites extensively. When that is done and their interrelationships have been diligently grasped, a natural understanding of them develops. While the teachings of rites and music should be silently comprehended, some people can fathom them, but others cannot.

Ritual Principles

Since the early kings systematized the rites in the light of the multitude of differences and distinctions they contain, scholars have continued to pass on the underlying ideas which are referred to as “the ritual principles of the rites.”... When the early kings systematized ritual principles, there was truly no higher authority to which they might have appealed. They could only choose courses of action from their own minds. That they could do so is precisely why they were deemed sages. Among the refined persons of later ages who studied the Way of the early kings to complete their virtues, how could there not have been a few points on which they used their personal opinions to decide matters? But this is not something that ordinary people are capable of doing because they lack the necessary tools.

Reverence

Now, the Way of the early kings made ‘reverence’ for heaven its basis; the early kings served the Way of heaven by practicing this Way. When people serve the Way of the early kings, they participate in the undertakings of heaven. People only recognize heaven, and their own parents, as their foundations.

The ruler is the heir of the early kings and the representative of heaven. The ruler, therefore, must be revered. The people are the reason that heaven has ordered us to govern them. For that reason, they, too, should be revered. A person’s body is a branch of their parents: consequently it should also be revered. This is so because the Way of the early kings makes reverence for heaven its foundation.

The Mean

The ‘mean’ refers to what is neither excessive nor deficient... The principles of all below heaven attain their utmost when there is neither too much nor too little. Therefore everyone, regardless of whether they are wise or foolish, seeks the mean. Such it has been ever since the birth of humanity. But people differ in their natures and their perceptions. People’s perspectives also differ, introducing even greater variety into the way they perceive. Without a mean, the world became disorderly. The early kings therefore established the mean as the ultimate standard and had all people follow it in their actions.

The mean is something that only sages can fathom: the masses cannot comprehend it. Everything that the sages founded—rites, music, virtues, ritual principles, and various regulations and administrative institutions—manifests the mean, and hence also the ultimate standard. This does not mean that the early kings formulated the mean as an expression of their personal views. Nor

did they set it up as a collection of pure and subtle principles of what was “neither partial nor biased, neither too much nor too little,” so that they could force everyone under heaven to succumb to what were their own preferences and scholars to search for its subtle principles. The early kings formulated the mean, thinking only of their aim of providing peace and stability for the world. Therefore they set it up as an ultimate standard for everyone in the world to practice, and succeeded in bringing unity without disorder. Hence the formulation of the early kings is not so lofty that people cannot practice it with effort. The wise can easily stoop to reach it, while the foolish have to stretch and reach it.... By enabling all people under heaven to follow in harmony the Way and its virtues, the vulgar customs of the people were perfected. This is harmony.

.....

The mean is a virtue of human nature. The ‘temperament’ with which human beings are endowed sets them off from the limitations of birds and beasts. Despite differences among the wise and the ignorant, the wise and the foolish, all people have a mind set on living and growing, on aiding and cultivating the things of life together. All people possess the talent to collaborate and work in concert with one another. By following the customs, people can alter themselves, just as something that is centered can move right, left, forward, or backward. This is why it is called the mean.

Heaven, The Lord, Ghosts, and Spirits

Heaven does not need to be explained: everyone knows what it is. Yet in gazing at the blue sky and pondering its depth and distance, we realize that it cannot be fathomed. The sun, moon, and stars are suspended from it; wind, rain, cold, and heat move through it. Myriad things receive their destinies from heaven, the most sacred ancestor of the hundred spirits. As the most revered spiritual force, heaven cannot be compared to anything, nor can anything transcend or surpass it. For this reason, since ancient times sage emperors and enlightened kings have made heaven their model in governing all below it. In doing so, they have served the Way of heaven in governing and instructing the people. Thus the Way of the sages as recorded in the *Six Classics* includes nothing that does not involve revering heaven. Revering heaven is the first ritual principle of the school of the sages. Once students have comprehended this principle, the Way of the sages may be explained to them.

Scholars of later generations gave free rein to their personal wisdom, delightfully employing it. Haughty and conceited, they would not follow the teachings of the early kings and Confucius. In discussing heaven they relied on their own opinions. Consequently we have their explanation: “Heaven is rational principle.” Their learning makes “rational principle” its first ritual principle; their

thinking is that rational principle alone is sufficient to exhaust the Way of the sages. Viewed from their perspective the claim “heaven is rational principle” might be seen as expressing the utmost respect for heaven. However, because their understanding of principle was based on their personal opinions, they even claimed, “I understand heaven.” Is that not exceptionally irreverent?

.....

Heaven is not akin to humanity, just as humanity is not akin to the birds and beasts. For this reason, if humans tried to scrutinize the minds of birds and beasts, what could we possibly gain? Nevertheless, we cannot deny that birds and beasts have a mind. Alas! How could the mind of humans possibly resemble that of heaven? Heaven cannot be fathomed....

Discussions of ghosts and spirits have been muddled to no end simply due to debates over whether or not there are any. Now, the names “ghosts” and “spirits” were ones that the sages formulated. How could anyone doubt them? Those who claim that there are no ghosts do not believe in the sages. They might explain that they do not believe because they cannot see them. But if inability to see something is adequate grounds for doubting it, why would one only doubt that there are ghosts? Heaven and the will of heaven are much the same. For this reason, students should make faith in the sages their foundation. If we lack faith in the sages and use our personal opinions, then there is simply nothing that we would not do.

The Buddhists, with their notions of various heavens, hungry ghosts, hells, and heavenly halls, muddled spiritual matters. People thereafter became contemptuous of heaven, ghosts, and spirits. For this reason, debates arose over whether there were, or were not, ghosts and spirits. Song Confucians saw that the sages were perfectly reverent toward heaven, yet they secretly likened that reverence to Buddhist notions of ‘dharma-body’ and ‘Tathāgata’ by discussing it in terms of the principles of heaven. Moreover, they smugly neglected ghosts and spirits, as before. Teacher Jinsai insisted that people should distance themselves from ghosts and spirits, wishing to discard them altogether. Such mistakes resulted entirely from their not fully understanding the rites of the early kings....

Human Nature

If we aspire to the Way and then hear that human nature is good, we will exert ourselves all the more. However, if we hear that human nature is bad, then we will use our strength to correct ourselves. On the other hand, if we do not set our will on the Way and then hear that human nature is bad, we will abandon any efforts towards goodness and do nothing. Or if we hear that human nature is good, then we will trust to that and make no efforts. Therefore,

more than theoretical discussions of human nature, Confucius valued 'learning' through practice.

The notion that people can "transform their temperament" was one that the Song Confucians formulated.... This notion is not a part of the Way of the early kings and Confucius. When the ancient commentaries refer to "transform," they mean to "transform practices."

....

Moreover, our temperament is the human nature that heaven has decreed for us. Our desire to use human strength to overcome heaven and deny our human nature certainly cannot be realized in relation to them. Trying to force people to do what they cannot do will eventually lead them to resent heaven and begrudge their parents. The Way of the sages is certainly not like that. This should indeed be obvious since Confucius taught each of his disciples to rely on their talents and bring them to completion.

Human nature refers to the temperament with which a person is born.... At conception, people are already endowed with a certain disposition of their 'ki'.... Yet human nature is easily modified.... By practicing goodness, one becomes good. By practicing evil one becomes evil. The sages, therefore, followed human nature in founding their teachings, enabling humanity to learn by means of practice, which thus leads to the completion of human virtues. The strong, weak, light, heavy, slow, quick, active, and calm all follow the differences of their natures. Only ignorant persons do not modify themselves in the least.... Because the disposition of one's *ki* cannot be changed, not everyone can reach the level of the sage.

.....

Mencius' claim that human nature is good, and Xunzi's²⁰ view that human nature is evil, were made in order to establish a school of thought. Each recognized one aspect and ignored another.... If we believe in the Way of the early kings, then when we are told that human nature is good, we will strive all the more; and if we are told that human nature is bad, we will strive all the more. But if we do not believe in the Way of the early kings, upon hearing that human nature is good, we will do with it what we want; while upon hearing that human nature is evil, we will fall in despair.

For these reasons, while Mencius and Xunzi engaged in a useless debate, the sages never discussed human nature. Mencius and Xunzi were obsessed with the desire to use rhetoric and analogies to persuade those who did not believe their words to become believers. Not only were they unable to convert others to

20. [Xunzi (310–237 BCE) is notable for arguing against Mencius' view of the innate goodness of human nature.]

their views, they also initiated debates that have confounded people for millennia. Who can measure the harm their rhetoric has wrought? Even today some scholars still cannot bring themselves to seek the Way in the teachings of the early kings but make debate their primary concern. This is regrettable indeed.

Human Feelings

Human feelings, or states of mind such as pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy arise without depending on thoughts or calculations. Each varies according to differences in people's human nature.... In general, mind is distinguished from feelings because it thinks and calculates, while feelings do not. When the seven states of mind²¹ are unmediated by human nature, they are expressions of the mind; when mediated by human nature, they are feelings. All human nature is endowed with desires. If mediated by thought and calculation, only some of these desires may be tolerated by that nature; if not, all desires are allowed to appear as if they issued from human nature itself. Therefore the mind can regulate and refine some desires, but the feelings in themselves have no regulative or refining capacity. This explains the differences between the mind and the feelings....

All human nature is endowed with desires, but what people desire differs according to the natural disposition.... When we follow our desires, we experience pleasure, joy, and love. When we oppose our desires, we experience anger, hatred, sorrow, and fear. Thus what each person's human nature desires is manifest in their feelings towards things.

The Mind

The mind is the master of the person. Doing good resides with the mind; doing evil also resides with the mind. For this reason, how could studying the early kings' Way to complete one's virtues not involve relying on the mind? The mind's relationship to the person is comparable to a state having a ruler: if the ruler does not rule, the state cannot be governed. Therefore, refined persons labor with their minds, while 'ordinary people' labor physically. Superiors and inferiors each follow their lots in their activities. When a state has a ruler, it is governed; without a ruler, anarchy results. A person is much the same: when the mind is preserved, the person is refined; when lost, confusion ensues.

.....

Clinging to the mind does not help us to keep it. Why? Because the mind cannot be split into two. Now, those who seek to hold on to the mind think they

21. [Sorai is referring to a medical text that lists the seven states of mind as pleasure, anger, grief, thought, sadness, surprise, and fear.]

can cling to the mind with the mind.... How could such a situation be sustained for long?...

But when controlled with rites, the mind is naturally correct, without requiring any further governing. Thus, of all the methods of mind control in the realm below heaven, there is no method for governing the mind that is more esteemed than that of the early kings. Later Confucians only realized that the mind should be revered. They never fathomed what it means to follow the early kings' Way. Instead they recklessly contrived various mental techniques seeking to preserve the mind. Their errors were enormous.

Rational Principle

Principle is without form and is, therefore, without standards. To consider the mean as the principle that ought to be, however, simply permits people to have their own perspectives on things. Perspectives differ from person to person. Each and every person will use his own mind and then conclude that his thoughts express the mean, or that they convey the principles that ought to be. This is simply how things are, and that is all. People in the north see entirely what is in the south. Where are the standards?

Rational principles are what all affairs and things naturally have. In using our minds to figure matters, some courses of action we envision as what we must and should do, and others as what we necessarily should not do. Such calculations are called rational principles. Whoever wants to do good indeed will see the rational principles for what they should do and will do it. Whoever wants to do evil also will see the rational principles for what they should do and will do it. In either case, our minds see what should be done and does it. Thus rational principles offer no fixed standards....

There is nowhere that rational principles do not penetrate... Yet what people perceive of rational principles differs according to their human natures. People all see what they want to see, and do not see what they do not want to see. For this reason, there are differences in perception of rational principles. Therefore, if we do not plumb all rational principles, we will be unable to grasp the unity of things. Yet how can anyone possibly plumb all rational principles below heaven?

Only the sages were capable of exhausting our human natures. Able to exhaust the human natures of people and able to exhaust the natures of things, the sages matched their virtues with those of heaven and earth. For these reasons, only the sages had the ability to exhaust all rational principles and they found the ultimate standards.

Ki

Ki is a notion that the ancients never mentioned.... The juxtaposition of rational principle and *ki* was something that began with the Song Confucians. In their opinion, what are called the transformations of *yin* and *yang*, and “the passage of what has gone, and the continuation of what comes,” are *ki*. That which remains through the ages unchanged in relation to the passage of what has gone, and the continuation of what comes, is principle. The Song Confucians thus considered *ki* as what is born and perishes and rational principle as that which is neither born nor perishes. Their views are like Laozi’s notion of the essential and the coarse, and the Buddhists’ view of form and ‘emptiness’....

A person who can silently comprehend matters penetrates the essential and coarse, root and branch, with unity. Why then should one discuss matters in terms of rational principle and *ki*? Moreover such explanations surely lead to the claim that heaven and earth are accumulations of *ki* and that the sun and moon, soil and rocks, human beings and animals, grasses and trees, are all *ki*, too. But *ki* is not something the ancients discussed. Simply put, notions such as Master Jinsai’s “unitary *ki* composing all between heaven and earth” do not convey the idea of the sages’ reverence for heaven. Therefore, refined persons would not dare broach them.

Yin and Yang

The notions *yin* and *yang* were established by the sages who wrote the *Book of Changes* to represent the Way of heaven. They are what is referred to as “ultimate standards.” Scholars take *yin* and *yang* as standards, and through them examine the flowing activities of heaven’s Way and the natural spontaneity of the myriad things. By means of *yin* and *yang*, some will come close to comprehending those matters. However, this is not true regarding human affairs. Why? Because the sages did not establish *yin* and *yang* to convey the Way of humanity. Later generations explained *yin* and *yang* in expansive terms, ultimately applying them to the Way of humanity. They were mistaken.

.....

Now between heaven and earth there are countless physical objects, none of which is made up of anything other than the five elements of water, fire, wood, metal, and earth. There are also countless animals, none of them composed of anything other than these five: feathers, long hair, short hair, scales, and shells. Tone, color, fragrance, and taste comprise an incalculable variety. The sages symbolized this by assigning five categories to each of them, thus allowing people to distinguish them one from another. Days and months are also countless, but once the sages founded the calendrical system of celestial stems and branches, later generations were first able to name them in relation to one another. The

number of things in the world cannot be exhausted to the utmost degree. The sages established the numerals, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten, and thereupon later generations were first able to count them.

Education

In teaching, the prerogative to teach rests with us teachers. Why? Because that is the way of rulers and teachers. For that reason, those who teach well will necessarily present their pedagogical arts to their students, proceeding at a leisurely pace over time, changing what their students hear and see so that eventually their minds and thoughts are changed as well. As a result, the student will not have to wait for our—that is, the teacher’s—words, but instead will naturally attain an understanding of matters. If some still do not understand, one hint might be added to enlighten them broadly so that their perplexities dissolve like ice, even before the hint has been completely given. Therefore, the teacher should not have to belabor things, and yet students will come to a profound comprehension of them. Why? This is so because even before the teacher speaks, the thoughts of the student should be more than halfway there.... Confucius said that he did not seek to enlighten those who were not eager, and that he did not explain things to people who did not want to discuss them. Why should he have done otherwise?...

Now, those who seek to overcome others with words have never gained the true submission of anyone. Those who teach can provide for those who have faith in them about matters. The people governed by the early kings had faith in the early kings. Confucians have faith in Confucius. For those reasons, their teachings were able to penetrate them. Mencius sought to cause people who did not believe him to follow his words and believe in him.... But that is not the way to teach people.

The claim, “what is called learning means emulation,” originated when the pronunciation of the sinograph for “emulation” was altered to sound like that for “learning.” But emulation is only one part of learning. How can learning be directly equated with emulation? Such an interpretation of the meanings of these words would only be acceptable if there had been no method of instruction provided by the early kings. Yet to do this anyway is to abandon the early kings’ method of instruction and pursue what one pleases in giving partial exegeses of words’ meanings. This indeed should be enough to make their errors, derived from a lack of learning, all the more evident.

The Way of learning makes faith in the sages primary. Now, the knowledge of the sages was immense; their humaneness, perfect; and their thinking, deep and profound. The methods that they founded for educating humanity and the arts

they established for governing a state all preserve elements that seem distant from, rather than proximate to, the feelings of humanity.

Later Confucians delighted in displaying their personal wisdom. They did not consider the sages profound and suggested that ancient methods were not suited to the problems of the contemporary world. Consequently, they established distinct teachings... that were no more than products of their personal wisdom and shallow insight. Most particularly, they did not fathom that the Way is a unity, that makes no distinction between ancient times and the present. If the teachings of the sages are not suited to today's problems, then they are not really the teachings of the sages. Only if students follow the teachings of the sages single-mindedly, persevere in their practice, and are transformed by them, will they see that these teachings, which have spanned countless generations, contain something that cannot be changed.

Poetry

As in the prefaces to the *Book of Odes*, the ancients once explained the poems using their own ideas. They described the circumstances of the poems, thereby making their significance naturally evident. Why would they presume to offer commentaries and exegeses? However, the poems originally had no fixed meanings. Why need we preserve the claims of the prefaces and thereby create the façade of a set of unchanging explanations of the poems?

Generally, the poems of the *Book of Odes* discuss matters extending from the halls of the court palace above down to the winding streets below, and then into the domains of the various lords of the realm. The noble and despised, men and women, worthies and fools, the beautiful and ugly—who is not present in the *Book of Odes*? The transformations of the ages, the customs of the rustics, the passions of humanity, and the circumstances of things are all evident in them. The lyrics are pleasant, soft, and full of human feelings. When the lyrics are chanted, they easily move the sentiments of others. In every case, the poems deal with odds and ends so that naturally they do not give rise to stiff, haughty minds. Thus, refined persons can understand petty sorts, husbands can understand wives, courtiers can understand common people, and an age of abundance can understand one of decadence. Such as these are in the *Odes*.

Moreover, the meanings of the poems are not essential models for behavior. Both the beautiful and the deplorable can be gotten from them. Readers can draw solely on the ideas of the poems, extending and amplifying them, or using them for analogies and comparisons, without ever exhausting their nuances, and that is all. For that reason, it was from the *Book of Odes* that the ancients drew what they needed to open up wisdom, to govern successfully, to speak well, and to respond spontaneously when part of a mission to neighboring

realms. The *Book of History* offers correct language, while the *Book of Odes* offers subtle expressions. The *History* establishes what is great, while the *Odes* does not leave out even minute matters. Much as the sun and moon alternate to provide light, and as *yin* and *yang* complement each other in activities, therefore we can speak of these two classics as a unity and refer to them as repositories of ritual principles.

[JAT]

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

OGYŪ Sorai 1727, 456–7, 462–4 (76–7, 81–3)

Transforming One's Nature

You indicated that you are extremely worried about what you regard as your unusually unpleasant temperament. It is true that acknowledging your faults is a good thing, but seeing yourself in this way is not very healthy. One's inborn nature is endowed by heaven and produced by one's own father and mother. The idea of transforming one's innate nature is an empty Song Confucian theory, and forcing people to be what they are not is most unreasonable.... The inborn nature, no matter what one does to it, resists transformation: a grain of rice is forever a grain of rice; a bean is forever a bean. Simply nourishing one's innate nature and developing it as it was at birth are the essence of education. It is like fertilizing rice or bean plants so they produce as their heavenly natures dictate. The husk is not of any use—and no matter what one does to it, it will never be of any use. Thus a grain of rice is useful to the world as a grain of rice, and a bean is useful as a bean. But a grain of rice will never become a bean; nor will a bean ever become a grain of rice. If, following Song Confucian theory, one transformed one's innate nature and achieved that "indeterminate and harmonious state," is this not like a grain of rice or a bean wanting to be something else?....

The sages were endowed by Heaven with intelligence and wisdom, and their brilliance matched that of the gods. How can one speak of achieving this by human effort? As no one—from antiquity onward—has succeeded in becoming a sage, the fallaciousness of this Song Confucian theory should be obvious. Nowhere in the sages' teachings is one told "to become a sage." If one follows the sages' teachings, one will instead become a refined person. The Song Confucians accept, and even mimic, the Buddhists' injunction to become a buddha by means of the Way of the Buddha. In Song Confucian theory, sages are those who have completely purified their desires and have become one with heavenly principle, yet those in this state are hardly sages. Conjuring up sages in this

way is like painting thunder and ancestral spirits. A young girl who thinks that the unseen phenomena that she imagines and paints truly exist—that thunder is the beating of giant drums and that ancestral spirits wear tiger-skin undergarments—is not far from those who, following Song Confucian theory, invent conceptions of sages....

Divination

Although the phenomenon called “divination” occurs in the sages’ writings, you admit that you find it hard to accept. This is typical of those who embrace the philosophy of principle. You are skeptical because you have accepted these narrow views. It is because of the idea that theory explains everything that you do not accept divination.

Scapulimancy and divination by milfoil stalks²² appear to be “ways of fortune telling,” by which I mean ways of dispelling doubts. The divination that women and children prefer nowadays is simply a means of knowing whether the future holds good or bad fortune, whether it is lucky or not. Yet knowing today that you will die tomorrow is of no value. Ancient scapulimancy and milfoil divination were not at all like this. If, for example, there were a fork in the road and uncertainty about whether one should go to the left or to the right and if the principle governing the situation were unclear and deliberation did not help, one would consult ancestral and heavenly spirits by using scapulimancy and milfoil divination. When there was nothing of concern, there were no prognostications about whether the year would bring good or bad fortune. This is “fortune telling.”

.....

Generally speaking, there are limits to human knowledge and power in regard to the affairs of the world. Because heaven and earth, like human beings, are active phenomena, the interaction of human beings with heaven and earth and with one another can change endlessly, and there is no predicting what will happen. When fools discover that one or two things went as they thought they would, they believe they were able to do this by means of their own intellectual power. This is not the case at all, however. They accomplished what they did with the help of heaven and earth, ancestral and heavenly spirits. In situations beyond human knowledge and power, the refined person, knowing heaven’s will, remains calm and works at what he is to carry out and, as a result, naturally gains the help of heaven and earth and ancestral and heavenly spirits. Fools,

22. [Scapulimancy in ancient China involved the use of special “oracle bones” (mainly turtle shells and the shoulder blades of oxen). Fifty milfoil (or yarrow) stalks, one of which was set aside, were passed from one hand to the other in a complicated procedure to generate a hexagram from the *Book of Changes* in response to a specific question put to the diviner.]

in contrast, discover little by means of their own knowledge, and the result is doubt, distraction, and a diminishing will to work. Accordingly, their projects crumble and are never realized.

The disadvantage of the philosophy of principle is that all its practitioners are small-minded and, like crabs digging holes, see everything solely in terms of themselves.... Worse yet, they believe that even the will of heaven, which is beyond the ken and power of humans, can be reached with principle. Owing to your having studied the Song Confucians' philosophy of principle, you do not understand the idea of using the sages' methods of divination by scapulimancy and milfoil stalks. When your scholarly attainments grow and as you become a person of broad capacity, your doubts will be dispelled.

[SHY]

ISHIDA Baigan 石田梅岩 (1685–1744)

Ishida Baigan was a clerk at a dry-goods shop in Kyoto who dedicated himself to book learning early in the morning and late at night while his fellow-workers were sleeping. In 1729 he quit his job and began to give free lectures to the public on selected Japanese and Chinese classics, taking care to use terms that could be easily understood by the merchants and artisans of his own milieu. Baigan's message, which came to be called '*Shingaku*' or the "Learning of the Mind," centered on the critical importance of understanding one's own true nature. According to Baigan, the Way, which he identified with the Confucian morality of the 'five relations', could be realized in the family and in society only if individuals successfully pursued this inner knowledge. Although the principal inspiration for this teaching was the Song neo-Confucian masters' interpretation of 'learning' as personal cultivation, Baigan drew heavily on Zen Buddhism, especially in the contemplative practice he advocated, as well as on native Japanese religious traditions and strains of Daoist thought. In fact, he practiced a kind of comparative philosophy, regularly juggling the multiple intellectual and religious traditions of his time.

The excerpts below are drawn from records of his conversations with various students and critics. In the first passage, Baigan interprets the classical "wisdom of the sages" as a spontaneous, natural awareness in which the mind is unrestricted by self-centered impulses and able to identify completely with the particular form that one encounters in any given moment. This theory of the "mind that depends on form" had important ethical implications: when one knows the true nature, one's mind is directly constituted by other beings and thus naturally gives precedence to their needs over one's own. In the second excerpt, challenged by a nativist interlocutor to address the apparent contradiction between Confucian and Shinto traditions of religious worship, Baigan reinterprets classical Confucian texts and their neo-Confucian commentaries to reaffirm the importance of revering the Japanese gods.

[JAS]

KNOWLEDGE INNATE AND LEARNED

ISHIDA Baigan 1739, 113–5 (300–2)

A student noted: "The sage is born with knowledge. It is not the sort of knowledge that someone like you could have. How is it that you nevertheless discriminate easily between the wisdom of a sage and self-centered, individual knowledge?"

Master Baigan replied: "Even you can easily distinguish between black and white. Distinguishing between the wisdom of the sages and self-centered

knowledge is similar. When Yu regulated the waters,²³ it was simply a matter of his knowing that one place was high and another was low; there was nothing unusual about it. Because self-centered knowledge combines with all kinds of willful notions, it is not natural knowledge; it differs from the wisdom of the sages. To render the wisdom of the sages in familiar terms, Master Cheng said, ‘The people of today use a bridle to control a horse. But they do not use it to restrain an ox. All people know that bridles were created by human beings, but they do not know that bridles came into being because of horses. The sage’s moral instruction is also like this.’ It was only after the sage observed horses that he created bridles and used them on horses. He did not know about horses from birth, from when he was in his mother’s womb. He took exactly what he saw in front of him as his ‘mind’. This is the superior quality of a sage’s wisdom. In his ability to reflect the things he encounters without any distortion he resembles a bright mirror or still water.

“In the beginning, the minds of human beings were no different from those of the sages; but people’s minds became obscured by the seven emotions, and they began to believe that the wisdom of the sages was something unusual, outside themselves. Hence they grew ignorant and began to have various sorts of doubts. Originally, one could directly apprehend the forms of things as one’s mind. For example, if one scratches oneself while asleep, one is unconsciously assisting one’s body: one’s body directly becomes one’s mind. Also, when mosquito larvae are in water, they do not bite people; but once they change into mosquitoes, they suddenly bite people. This is due to the mind that depends on form. Let us direct our attention to birds and animals as well. Frogs naturally fear snakes. Parent frogs instruct baby frogs: ‘Snakes will take you and eat you. They are fearful creatures!’ and the baby frogs learn and practice and gradually come to transmit this fear. Frogs fear snakes because they are born in the form of frogs: their forms directly constitute their minds.

“To cite another familiar example, when summer begins, fleas appear near people’s bodies. In this case, too, flea parents probably teach their offspring: ‘Make your way through life by biting people! When a person’s hand moves, you should pay attention and jump away quickly—if you don’t, you will lose your life!’ And when fleas jump away, it is not something learned but in each case is what they do because of their forms. Mencius said, ‘Our body and our complexion are given to us by heaven. Only a sage can bring his body to complete fulfillment’ (*Mencius* 38). To bring one’s body to complete fulfillment means to carry out exactly the Way of the five human relationships. Those who cannot

23. [Yu, the legendary founder of the first Chinese dynasty in the twenty-first century BCE, is credited with engineering the drainage of water from a great flood and making the world once again inhabitable.]

carry out the Way, thereby bringing their bodies to complete fulfillment, are small persons.

“Animals and birds do not have self-centered minds. Rather, they bring their bodies to complete fulfillment. These all are natural principles, and the sage understands them. The *‘Nihon shoki’* states: ‘The god Ōanamuchi and the god Sukunahikona combined their powers, came to an agreement, and created the world under heaven. For the sake of the lovely people and the animals, they also established the methods for curing diseases. Moreover, in order to drive away the calamities of birds, animals, and insects, they established rules for preventive incantations. Through these methods and rules, the entire populace has enjoyed the gods’ protection until today.’ The Way is the same, no matter where. In China the *Book of History* says that Fuxi raised sacrificial animals and kept them in his storehouse. In fact, because human beings and animals belong to different categories, both birds and animals fear human beings and will not approach them. The sages and gods do not have self-centered minds, so they observed the birds’ and animals’ fear and regarded it as constituting their own minds.... They made into their own minds what they encountered and became familiar with the inborn characters of all animals. They accustomed the animals to human beings and thus domesticated many of them.”

[JAS]

GODS AND SPIRITS

ISHIDA Baigan 1739, 45–8

Someone asked: “There are differences between our country’s Way of the gods and China’s Confucian Way. Master Kong advised Fan Chi that ‘to revere the spirits and gods while keeping them at a distance may be called ‘wisdom’ (*Analects* VI.24). Our country’s Way of the gods is not like this. How is it that the teachings of China and Japan differ in this regard even though the word ‘god’ is the same in both countries?”

Master Baigan replied: “How do you view the gods of our country?”

The questioner said: “Approaching the gods of our country by becoming familiar and intimate with them is essential. Keeping them at a distance is a lack of respect. Thus, when one desires and hopes for something, one offers the god a written petition. When one’s wish is fulfilled, in accordance with the petition, one builds a *‘torii’* or restores the shrine. In this way the gods grant people’s wishes. However, the sage’s statement, ‘Revere the gods while keeping them at a distance’ is utterly different. If we consider the matter from this perspective, one who favors the Confucian Way may well be a sinner who is violating our country’s way of the gods.”

Master Baigan replied: “The sage’s statement, ‘Revere the gods while keeping them at a distance’ does not mean this. Master Cheng said that ‘in worshipping the outside gods, place priority on ‘reverence’.²⁴ One therefore keeps one’s distance from impure desires that do not conform with the Way, and in worshipping the ancestors, one places priority on ‘filial piety’. Confucius’ statement does not mean ‘keep the gods at a distance’ at all. Indeed, the words ‘revere the gods while keeping them at a distance’ has been seriously misunderstood. Master Zhu commented that ‘the gods do not accept impropriety.’²⁵ Thus, to approach them with an improper request is a lack of reverence. Confucius did not state that one should keep reverence at a distance. Following what you have said, do you think it is reverence if one offers up a written petition to the gods of our country and, once it comes to fulfilment, builds a *torii* or carries out shrine restoration in accordance with one’s pledge in the petition?”

The questioner said: “Yes.”

The Master said: “In that case, suppose someone here now said: ‘I would like your neighbor’s daughter to marry my son. Act as a go-between for me. I’ll give you compensation.’ Could you serve as the go-between without regard for the shame you would bring on yourself?”

The questioner said: “That would be a condescending way to treat a person. If one is swayed by money, how can one serve as a go-between?”

The Master said: “Then you have a sense of shame and do not tolerate personal dishonor. Imagine if one communicated a request about something to a person of high rank. How could one possibly tell that person, ‘If you accomplish this matter for me, I will advance this much money to you?’”

The questioner said: “It would be akin to holding the dignitary in contempt. Why would one ever say something like that?”

The Master replied: “Suppose, then, one were to propose in one’s prayer to the undefiled god an immoral matter that cannot even be conveyed to a person of high rank, saying ‘If you do as I desire, I will offer you the *torii* and the shrine repairs.’ Wouldn’t it be a pitiful god who is tempted by a *torii* and shrine restoration? If one nevertheless offers up an improper thing and defiles the god, in the end one may well receive divine punishment. That is a fearful thing. There is even a hymn that states: ‘As long as your heart conforms with the Way of truth, the gods will protect you, even if you don’t pray to them.’ Zilu asked whether he could offer a prayer for Confucius’ recovery from illness. The Master replied, ‘I have been praying for a long time’ (*Analects* VII.35). When Confucius said

24. [“Outside gods” means gods of nature and tutelary gods. Baigan is citing a comment on *Analects* III.12 attributed to one of the Cheng brothers by Zhu Xi.]

25. [Zhu Xi, commentary on *Analects* III.6.]

'praying' he meant conforming with the Way of truth. As long as you are one with the truth, what is the point of praying? What can it mean to say Confucius' statement contradicts the Way of the gods of our land?

"All of the sage's books are intended to dissolve this kind of ignorance. If one is led astray by books, it is better not to have any books. You should realize that from ancient times the Confucian Way has served as an aid to our land of the gods. Would the gods of our country cause people to have a predilection for improper, immoral bribery? We call them 'gods' because they are the source of purity and pristineness.

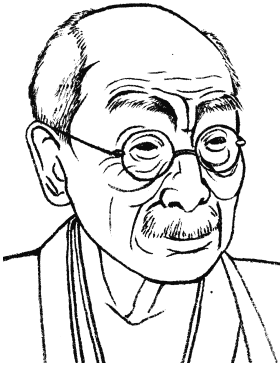
"All those who place their faith in the gods do so in order to purify their hearts. Even so, morning and night people pay obeisance at the shrine while harboring all kinds of improper and immoral wishes, and employ various kinds of bribes in their prayers to the gods. Those who slight the gods' purity by means of their own defilements are the real sinners and should receive divine punishment. Confucius said: 'If you commit sins against heaven, you will have nowhere to turn in your prayer' (*Analects* III.13). The sage meant that everything one desires that is not the 'will of heaven' is a sin. Desires mostly arise from self-indulgence. If you indulge yourself, it is bad for others. To make others suffer is a great sin. If you become a sinner, how can you be one with the heart of the gods?

"The absence of inequity among people is itself god. Even if some people's wishes are evil, if only others' good wishes are granted, it is unfair treatment. To use an analogy for a wish being granted or not granted, it is like a father bequeathing his position as head of the family to a son. The son does not need to request this. If the heir's conduct is good, he will receive the patrimony; if his conduct is debauched, he will not be able to receive it. In this respect the outcome is the same, regardless of whether it is the fulfilment of the son's wish or not.

"You should realize that our destiny depends on our personal conduct. The heart of god is like a mirror. How in the world can it contain any unfairness? Yet if a person's wish is fulfilled, it is said to be because the god accepted the request. When other people hear about it, they say the request was granted because so-and-so offered such-and-such to the god. When that sort of thing is bandied about, ultimately the gods are turned into bribe-takers. Is it not a sad thing to worship in an impure manner? This happens because people do not understand the will of heaven."

[JAS]

ANDŌ Shōeki 安藤昌益 (1703–1762)



Arguably one of the most systematic and profound metaphysical theorists of the early modern period, Andō Shōeki was virtually unknown as a philosopher in his own day. He had no more than two dozen disciples and his voluminous writings were only recognized after their discovery in the late nineteenth century. Even today, Shōeki's ideas remain relatively unknown among western scholars, though he is widely acknowledged as the author of one of the most penetrating and imaginative critiques of Confucian, Buddhist, Daoist, and Shinto thought to appear in early modern Japanese history, as well as a visionary metaphysician who elaborated one of the more complex and dynamic versions of an ontological system based on 'ki'.

Shōeki's obscurity as a philosopher resulted partly from the fact that he was also a practicing physician in the rural castle-town of Hachinohe located in remote northeastern Japan (present-day Aomori prefecture). He was born in Niida (Akita prefecture) and returned there to spend his final years. Not once did Shōeki travel to either Edo or Kyoto to expound his philosophical vision before the intellectual luminaries of his day. Therefore, that his ideas should have produced no school and few followers is hardly to be wondered at.

Shōeki's main work, *The Way of Natural Spontaneity and Living Truth*, which he worked on until the year of his death, is a sharp and often amusing critique of the major Buddhist, Confucian, and Shinto philosophical systems of the day. In it he also lambasts the ruling samurai elite, and indeed all those who presume to set themselves up above the rest. He counters his perception of the world about him with a utopian vision wherein all of humanity, men and women, live in a state of free and easy equality, at ease with each other, with the world of birds, beasts, insects, fishes, grasses, trees, and in harmony with the cosmic processes of natural spontaneity.

In this respect, Shōeki's thought echoes in important ways the ancient Daoist philosophies recorded in the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*. This is true not only of his vision of a harmonious world, but applies in particular to his attacks on Confucian ideas which are countered at every turn with ideas from the Daoist classics. Even so, in acknowledging the Daoist critiques of the Confucian sages, Shōeki is careful not to identify with the former. In the end, he insists, Laozi and Zhuangzi aimed to set themselves up as supreme masters, thus ending up no better than the sages they set out to discredit. This is fully in line with Shōeki's stated claim to deconstruct the schools and their presumptions, and not establish one of his own.

Affronting and iconoclastic as Shōeki's ideas were, they fell on deaf ears. No doubt the deeply felt, anti-authoritarian sentiments of those chafing under the oppressive rule of a samurai elite given to Confucian philosophizing are offered an eloquent voice in his writings, but the literati who read them were apparently unimpressed. In spite of this, Shōeki's works provide clear evidence that there was Daoist-style opposition to the status quo in Tokugawa Japan, which only lends to their charm for readers today.

The excerpts that follow open with examples of Shōeki's use of a genre pioneered by the *Zhuangzi*: a dialogue among animals, which is intended to soften the blow of his criticisms and lighten the impact of the serious statements being made. This is followed by an autobiographical passage describing how Shōeki arrived at the 'Way' of natural spontaneity and true living. In this passage Shōeki has himself take part as the voice of the Master. Finally, a brief selection is made from the "Great Introduction," the final portion of Shōeki's masterwork to be completed.

[JAT]

LIVING NATURE'S TRUTH

ANDŌ Shōeki 1762, 6: 93-4, 107, 145-6 (143-4, 149, 170)

On Confucianism and Buddhism

The Dog replied: "We dogs are born of the 'ki' of the pots and pans of human homes. We eat leftover scraps of human food and uneaten rice. We help our masters by barking at suspicious shadows and thieves. We do not cultivate but greedily devour our masters' leftovers because we are born dominated by the sideways *ki*. Since this is the role provided us by heaven's truth, it is not our failing. But many in the world of law are our imitators: the Confucian scholars and sages from generation to generation, age to age, including... Confucius, Mencius, and the scholars of the Tang, Song, and Ming, the many Zen patriarchs and Buddhist scholar-monks through the ages since the time of 'Shakyamuni', the Daoists Laozi and Zhuangzi, ... and in Japan, Prince Shōtoku and generations of scholars on up to Hayashi Razan* and Ogyū Sorai*. All of them appropriate the fruits of the labors of the many, produced in accord with heaven's 'Way', without doing any cultivating themselves. They greedily devour the leftovers of the many, yet they know nothing of the subtle Way of mutual natures. They were born of unbalanced *ki*, and they gather the suspicious shadows of their unbalanced feelings and unbalanced thoughts into books. They create words and writings as tools to take heaven's Way into their own hands.... None of the countless passages in books tells of the Way of heaven's truth; each is nothing more than arbitrary and willful falsehood.

“Compared to the subtle Way of the living truth—which through its own activity, in advancing and retreating phases, produces the eight *ki* that in turn, in their mutual natures and through the circulation of the upward, downward, and sideways *ki*, produce heaven and earth, humanity, and all things, each completely provided with the subtle Way—the teachings that are regarded as the basics of all learning, that is, divination, astrology, the five constant practices, the ‘five constant virtues’, and the Buddhist doctrines... are nothing more than the products of minds misled by unbalanced intellects. They are no more than shadows of the subtle living truth that unfolds in marvelous fashion. The teachings of Confucianism, the sermons of the Buddha, the writings of Laozi and Zhuangzi, the medical treatises, the Shinto texts, and in addition all poetry and literature are nothing more than the yapping of a dog at an insubstantial shadow...”

“There is also the popular saying, ‘Monks and samurai are scavenging dogs. Shakyamuni is the ancestor of all monks, and the samurai are the descendants of the Confucian ruler and the sages.’ This expression means that the sages, Shakyamuni, and dogs are all completely alike. How true this is indeed! We dogs do not cultivate, but live off others’ food. The sages do not cultivate, but greedily devour the right cultivation of others. The Buddha did not cultivate, but greedily devoured the offerings of others. With their teachings, their lectures and sermons, they howl at the shadow of the true and subtle Way. We dogs, too, yap at shadows. Thus it is that we are not the tiniest bit different in heart, in mind, in behavior, or in effects.”

.....

The Fox said, ... “These humans, who are of the upward *ki* by nature, have given themselves to the sideways *ki*; in other words, these people have changed into foxes!... Because people are deluded by the influence of the sideways *ki* they grow extremely wary, and their emotions and their intellects are crazed. Their delusions take myriad forms. There are the teachings of Confucianism, from divination, astrology, the zodiac, the five elements, the five virtues, and the four social classes to the teaching of the gap between the human mind and heart and the mind and heart committed to the Way, which is the impartial way to be taken. There are the myriad Buddhist teachings, from the ‘buddha-mind’, the mind of sentient beings, the unborn and the undying, the five periods, and the right teachings, to realizing enlightenment.... There are the Daoist teachings of attaining immortality and the action of nonaction. There are the instructions of the military leaders, their strategies and battle methods. There are the teachings of the doctors, the twelve meridians and medicines created in ignorance of the true flow of the vital *ki*. There are the Shinto teachings of the seven generations of heavenly deities and five generations of earthly deities.... All of these writings and all of this scholarship make heaven’s Way a private affair; they are delusions

of the sideways *ki*. Their pursuit leads to birth in the four realms as a fox. So it is that I am the most learned one of the world of beasts, and all scholars of the world of law are my students.”

.....

The Ant said, “Among the human beings of the world of law there was one who from birth was fond of bending at the waist.²⁶ He stole the right cultivation of others and, without cultivating himself, greedily devoured it. All his life he wandered from kingdom to kingdom, seeking a stipend. When a would-be patron stopped him and offered him a stipend, he stayed his course; when there was no stipend, he moved on to another kingdom. In the end he was never to receive a lasting stipend and he retreated into his own home, where he composed many works that were expressions of his sideways mind, and he consigned them to posterity. All of his words are unbalanced and deluded, but they resulted in the widespread practice in later ages of ‘humaneness’ and ‘righteousness’, rewards and punishment, which in turn were the source of unending thievery and revolt. So it is that I am the Confucius of the world of creatures, and the Confucius of the world of law was an army ant.”

[YT]

A SYMPOSIUM ON CHANGING THE WORLD

ANDŌ Shōeki 1762, 1: 178–80, 187, 190, 210, 217–18, 245, 254, 267–70, 280–2, 289–90, 294 (198–9, 201–2, 209–12, 223, 228, 233–40, 245–7)

A Master's Awakening to Truth

“The Master belongs to the Fujiwara clan and is a one-hundred-and-forty-third-generation descendant of Amenokoyane no mikoto.²⁷ He lives in the province of Dewa in our nation of Japan, in a castle town in that province’s northern section. From his birth through his childhood and youth, he followed no teacher and studied no classics. With the abilities provided him naturally from birth he realized the truth—that is, that the self-acting living truth acts spontaneously, advancing and retreating to produce the mutual natures of the eight *ki*. Those *ki*, circulating in either upward, downward, or sideways directions, produce heaven and earth and the central realm of heaven and earth, the land. All of creation is the perfect manifestation of the living truth.

“He also clearly apprehended, by observing his own face, that the subtle

26. [The allusion is to Confucius.]

27. [The Shinto ‘*kami*’ in charge of festivals and a mythical ancestor of the Fujiwara clan.]

operation of the living truth based on the mutual natures of the eight *ki* with which his own body was equipped contained within itself the same order as was manifest in heaven and earth. In other words, he realized that both heaven and earth and the human body manifested the same activity of the one living truth. Thus he came to the conclusion that the proper way of human behavior is to be in accord with the right cultivation of heaven's truth. He apprehended that the right cultivation by which the living truth produced all things was essentially identical to the right cultivation by which human beings—male and female, who are together the very vital spirit of grain themselves—produce grain and subsist on grain. Both are the activity of the one living truth. This is the one and only way for human beings to live.

“None of the ancient classics, not those written by the sages, by Shakyamuni, by Laozi, by the doctors, by the Shinto priests, indeed, none of the writings in the world reveal the subtle operation of the mutual natures of the living truth in heaven and earth. Therefore, we must know: they are all the products of an unbalanced preoccupation with purity and that the doctrines they profess are born of delusion resulting from an unbalanced emphasis on purity.

“Now, then, if all writings are born from an unbalanced and deluded intellect, they can contain nothing that even resembles truth. The master realized that, rather, they were nothing more than tools for abusing the right cultivation of heaven's Way. For that reason, the master refuses to associate himself with even one phrase or word of the classics. The writings of the ancients made people mistake the Way; to right that wrong, the master borrows the erroneous medium of writing to reveal the Way. He does not regard words highly. With the error-fraught medium of writing he eliminates error and reveals the subtle Way of the living truth, in which all existence is replete mutual natures.”

.....

The Master says: “The mutual natures of wood and metal manifest in flowering and bearing fruit are the living truth's way of producing all things. Those who fail to apprehend this, and declare that the progression from spring to autumn is a tale of rewards and punishments, have been great assassins of humanity down through the ages. To be so deluded by an unbalanced intellect is a terrible thing.”

.....

The Master says: “Those who fail to realize that the human mind is a single entity, subtly endowed with mental and emotional capacities working together, and instead claim that all is nothing but mind; or who postulate two minds—a 'buddha-mind' and a mind of sentient beings, or an unborn mind and an undying mind; or who speak of the direct realization of one's mind—all such thinkers and their ideas are the deluded products of unbalanced intellects. All the teachings in the Buddhist scriptures are such delusions.

“Those who fail to grasp that the sun and the moon work together as one divinity, and instead create their own myths concerning gods born in pairs, male and female, are being greatly deluded by a very lopsided intellect.”

On Government

Chūkō asks: “Are government and revolt products of the law or of the ways?”

The Master replies: “In the Way of the living truth there is neither government nor revolt. Self-serving laws are their source. If no one desires to govern the nation, there will be no revolt and no need to take recourse to arms.”

Eitaku comments: “... After the establishment of self-serving laws, the practices of government and revolt against government arose. Since government is the root of revolt, when the rulers governed the nation, revolt broke out among the governed. In response to revolt among the governed, the rulers, too, resorted to violence. ‘Government’ is nothing more than another word for robbing society. This is why there is no end to revolts against governments.

.....

“Those who do not cultivate but greedily consume, whether they are rulers or ruled, are all idlers. They are like lice that live as parasites on the nation. But if you despise them your heart will be consumed by anger, and you will neglect your own work. For that reason, you must not despise them. When you properly carry out your own duties you are sure not to violate the Way of heaven, and you yourself will be a representation of heaven’s truth.”

Heaven and Earth

Seikō comments: “Heaven and earth are the perfect manifestation of the living truth. They are one in substance, advancing and retreating, retreating and advancing in their mutual natures. Therefore, they are not separate. The myriad of things that exist are the self-cultivation of the living truth. They are born from its unceasing advancing and retreating... natures, which accounts for their endless variety. They cannot be reduced to one thing. Men and women are a microcosm of heaven and earth. Heaven and earth are not separate, and man and woman together are inherently one human being. Therefore, the great multitude of human beings are one human being. Since they are all one, there are no superiors and inferiors among them. The lack of superiors and inferiors among human beings derives from the unity of heaven and earth. Since heaven and earth is one existence with mutual natures, how can one or the other be superior or inferior? There is no superior or inferior anywhere.

.....

“Human beings are fundamentally microcosms of heaven and earth. They

are the perfect manifestations of the subtle Way of the spontaneous activity of the living truth advancing and retreating in their mutual natures. Thus, there is nothing among all the multitude of things in heaven and earth that human beings cannot know of.”

Shakyamuni

Shinpu comments: “... Shakyamuni left his household and established the teachings of Buddhism which consist of the five precepts and other fabrications.²⁸... Although Shakyamuni established these rules himself, by abandoning the parents and the wife and child that he was meant to provide for, he became a great murderer. By greedily consuming food that he did not cultivate, he became a great thief. By violating the young monks and temple pages, he became a great fornicator. By spending his life teaching using ‘expedient means’ and greedily devouring offerings, he became a great liar. Ignorant of the subtle Way of mutual natures inherent in him, he grew intoxicated by his own unbalanced delusions and thus became a great drunkard. He violated the very precepts he himself established, and in Buddhism this is identified as the great sin of ‘violating the precepts without shame.’”

The Way to Restore Harmony

Men and women are a microcosm of heaven and earth: man, who encompasses, contains woman within him; and woman, who is encompassed, contains man within her. The nature of man is woman, and that of woman, man. They oppose each other and rely on each other in a contradictory relationship. Consciousness and psyche, spirit and soul, sentiment and intellect, recall and memory, have mutual natures, as do the eight emotional faculties and states. Together they circulate ceaselessly in the upward, sideways, and downward directions as human beings cultivate grain and weave cloth throughout their lives. This is the right cultivation of the living truth among human beings. Heaven and earth are one substance. Neither is ruler or ruled; they have mutual natures and one is not separate from the other. Human beings, men and women, are also one. Neither is ruler or ruled, they have mutual natures, and one is not separate from the other. Human beings are all meant to practice right cultivation, and all are meant to share the same activities and feelings. This is what the world of people who live in accord with the operations of the natural, spontaneous, and living truth would be like. In that world there would be no thieving or revolt, delusion or strife, for a world where people live in accord with the Way of the living truth would be one of peace.

28. [The precepts against killing, theft, adultery, lying, and intoxication.]

But the sages appeared in the world. They did not cultivate the land, but were idle and greedily devoured the fruits of the right cultivation of heaven and humanity. They established self-serving laws and forcefully extracted taxes from the multitudes. They lived in palaces and many-storied mansions, where they subsisted on rare delicacies. They wore gorgeous silk brocade, damask, gauze, and embroidered robes and were served by beautiful waiting women. They devoted themselves to pleasures and lost themselves in profitless amusements. The extent of the extravagance of their lives is beyond description.

The sages then went on to establish the distinction between ruler and ruled, the ruler above and the ruled below. They established the five ethical principles, the four classes of subjects, and other laws, with a system of rewards and punishments to guarantee the laws' enforcement. In their great pride and arrogance they placed themselves above all, and those below them envied them. They also initiated the custom of using gold and silver as currency, thus raising those who possessed large quantities of the precious metals to lofty positions and driving those with only a little, or without any at all, of those metals to low estate.

.....

If there were a ruler of human society who was a just person, someone who understood the subtle Way of the living truth and he sought to improve human behavior, even this world of law we live in could become a world of living truth where all engage in right cultivation. But since there are no just persons among the rulers of human society, there is nothing to be done. But for those who reject this world of thievery and revolt, there is a way... to attain natural spontaneity and living truth.

The method is to use wrongs to eliminate wrongs. The method is to use the mistaken distinction between ruler and ruled to eliminate the distinction between ruler and ruled. Let me illuminate the method with the example of the relationship between heaven and earth. There is no ultimate division between heaven and earth or between man and woman; but when the sages instituted the world of law, they taught that heaven is lofty and admirable, and that earth is low and despicable. They taught likewise that man is lofty and admirable, and woman lowly and despicable. But lofty or lowly, admired or despised, they are essentially one in substance. If a similar relationship were set up between those who rule and those who are ruled, our world would come to resemble and approach the world of the natural spontaneity and living truth.

The reason rulers require a large retinue of retainers is that they are afraid of revolt among the people. Rulers must therefore begin by abandoning the practice of keeping so many retainers and rather devote their energies to ensuring that revolts do not occur in the first place.

.....

The 'will of heaven' for those who rule is that they exhaust every means pos-

sible to prevent revolts from arising. To each person a suitable amount of land should be given to cultivate. Such is the Way of heaven's truth that all must follow.

Writing, books, and scholarship are the root of consuming greedily without cultivating, of misappropriating the nation, the world, and heaven and earth. Thus, first and foremost, these activities should be prohibited. Let the scholars be given land to cultivate. If they refuse to cultivate and continue idling away their time in worthless pastimes, they should be taken into custody by their respective clans and refused food. When they know the pains of hunger, they will come to their senses, and then they can be given land to cultivate. When they realize that human beings cannot live unless they cultivate grain, they will begin at last to cultivate their own fields....

The system of rewards and punishments must be abolished immediately. Of course, if rulers were to cultivate their own fields and refrain from exploiting those over whom they rule, there would be no offenders in the first place. Without offenders, what use is there for rewards and punishments? These things are nothing more than an evil system originated by the sages, a great wrong that has cast its influence over all later ages. Rewards and punishments must be completely abolished.

Temple monks should be prohibited from teaching Buddhist doctrine. They should be given fields and made to cultivate them. The truth must be explained to them as follows: "Right cultivation is the subtle Way of heaven's truth. What you call attaining 'buddhahood' is actually another name for the attainment of heaven's truth. When you engage in right cultivation, you are a living buddha."

.....

If rulers should fail to cultivate the land, greedily consume, and begin to live a life of luxury and splendor, they are taking the Way of heaven into their own hands. Then the ruled, envying them, will begin to steal the possessions of others. This is how revolt begins. When rulers clearly apprehend this and abandon all extravagance and luxury and pleasure, the ruled will cease to envy them and their lusts will disappear of their own accord. This is because the rulers have cut thievery at the roots. The branches and leaves of brigandage among the people naturally wither, and desire and thievery come to an end among high and low alike. Revolt is so far from arising that even the word loses its currency.

.....

Sages who set themselves up as rulers and consume greedily without themselves cultivating the soil are guilty of taking the Way of heaven into their own hands. This is the root of all thievery, and produces among the ruled the leaves and branches of endless brigandage. Rulers may execute evildoers, but if they fail to cut off brigandage at the roots, the ranks of the evildoers will never be emptied.... When the ruler tries to apprehend the brigands in one place, they

flee to another place and set to thieving. Whatever method rulers adopt to exterminate them, there will always be brigands as long as the thievery of the ruler, which is the root, is not severed....

[YT]

A METAPHYSICS OF MUTUAL NATURES

ANDŌ Shōeki 1762, 1: 63–76, 86–7, 104–5 (253–9, 264–5, 273)

The Subtle Way

“Nature” is the name of the subtle Way of what is called the “subtle Way of mutual natures.” What are mutual natures? They are the living truth, without beginning or end, of the natural spontaneity in which the world works, advancing and retreating to greater or lesser degree, creating the four processes: lesser advancing wood, greater advancing fire, lesser retreating metal, and greater advancing water. These, in turn, naturally advancing and retreating, produce the eight *ki* as mutual natures. The element wood controls inception and its nature is water. Water controls termination, and its nature is wood. Because of this interrelationship, wood is not only inception, and water is not only termination. They are without beginning or end. Fire controls the beginning of movement and its nature is cessation. Metal controls cessation and its nature is the beginning of movement.... Such is the subtle Way. It is mutual natures that make this process subtle. The Way is the interaction between things in relation to their mutual natures. This is the spontaneous action of the living truth of earth, untaught and unlearned, neither increasing nor decreasing spontaneous nature. Therefore we call it the spontaneous nature.

The Living Truth

As for living truth, the earth is located on the central axis of heaven and earth. Earth and living truth dwell in the central palace of heaven. Living truth is alive, without beginning or end, always active, never knowing either ceasing or perishing. The dwelling of the living truth of earth never leaves nor is anything ever added to it, and its spontaneous action does not halt for even the briefest moment. That is why the living truth is so much alive. By its unceasing advance it produces wood and fire as advancing *ki*, whose natures are metal and water as the retreating *ki*. In this way it produces heaven. By its unceasing retreat, it produces metal and water as the retreating *ki*, whose natures are wood and fire as advancing *ki*. In this way it produces earth. In the central region of heaven and earth is the embodiment of the living truth of earth. The condensed

essence of the advancing *ki* is the sun, which contains within itself the moon and is the spirit of heaven. The condensed essence of the retreating *ki* is the moon, which contains within itself the sun and is the spirit of the earth. The sun and the moon have mutual natures and day and night have mutual natures. Through the metal *ki*, which is endowed with the eight *ki* as mutual natures, the living truth produces the eight planets and the stars of the eight directions. It is in harmony with the sun and the moon, it revolves through and, descending, it moves earth. Containing the eight *ki* as mutual natures, the advancing *ki* unfolds as the four corners, and the retreating *ki* as the four cardinal directions. They in turn unfold as the four seasons and the eight periods. Truth rises to heaven and then descends from heaven and is in harmony with the central land, and by determining the circulations of the upward, sideways, and downward directions of itself, it produces and reproduces all grain, male and female, the four types of creatures, and all grasses and trees. This is the direct cultivation of the living truth without beginning or end.

Therefore, heaven and earth, the stars, the sun, the planets, the moon, and the eight planets and the stars of the eight directions produced by the upward, sideways, and downward circulation of heaven and earth are the complete embodiment of the living truth of earth. The living truth acts spontaneously, creating heaven and earth, and makes heaven and earth into the four parts of its body, the four limbs, the full and empty internal organs, the intellect, emotions, and action. The living truth produces heaven by circulating upward, the sea by circulating sideways, and the central land by circulating downward. When the living truth goes around this circuit, then it produces all vegetation by circulating downward, male and female by circulating upward, the four types of creatures by circulating sideways, and all vegetation by circulating downward. In this way the living truth produces all things and does not cease its direct cultivation. Thus each and every person and thing are an embodiment of the living truth. This is called “the Way of the operation.”

The eight *ki* in their relationship of mutual natures are natural spontaneity, and the living truth is the spontaneous action neither living as two separate entities nor remaining as one. The way of the operation is the production and reproduction by the living truth of people and things. On down to the most minute of all facts and reasons in heaven and earth, people and things, their speech and silence, movement and cessation, all are nothing else but the Way of the living truth functioning spontaneously and of its own. Hence the name of my work: *The Way of Natural Spontaneity and Living Truth*.

Whenever I look at the hearth or oven in a home, I see ash as earth, which is the embodiment of the living truth; there wood, fire, metal, and water act spontaneously, advancing and retreating as mutual natures, becoming the eight *ki*, which then circulate upward, sideways, and downward, achieving their subtle

function. The firewood corresponding with the advancing wood and the boiling water with the advancing water are mutual natures.

.....

The hearth is also endowed with the action of the living truth *ki* of the four seasons and the eight periods as mutual natures, that is, the subtle action of the year in heaven and earth.... Thus the hearth is equipped with the subtle way unfolding as one year through the eight periods as mutual natures....

What is the purpose of all this? So that human beings may cook grains and beans for food. Even if there are many differences among countries and households throughout the world, the subtle functions of the eight *ki* as mutual natures produced by the four elements in the hearth are universal. Since all human beings gain sustenance through that universal hearth, there is no other way to labor than to grow grains and cook them over the hearth. That the activity of the great multitudes of people can be reduced to the activity of a single person is also evidenced by the example of the hearth. When men and women were first born in the world, who taught them the subtle function of the hearth? From whom did they learn it? There was not a single person who knew it. How clearly this shows that the hearth is entirely the working of the living truth!

.....

This way of human existence is the same as the movements of heaven and earth, and the stars, the sun, the planets, and the moon are the circulation of the eight *ki* advancing and retreating as mutual natures. In the same fashion, the movements of the eight planets are the eight *ki* as mutual natures, the movements of the stars of the eight directions are also the eight *ki* as mutual natures, and the movement of the eight directions of the earth are the eight *ki* as mutual natures. Likewise, the four kinds of creatures are transformations of the eight *ki*, advancing and retreating as mutual natures. The activities of the four branches and the four leaves of vegetation are also the eight *ki* as mutual natures.

Thus all heaven and earth, human beings, all things, minds, [emotions,] and bodily functions are only the eight *ki* as mutual natures and ultimately all the operation of the living truth. The proof of this is in the human home. In the hearth, the eight *ki* of heaven and earth reveal the subtle way of mutual natures. In human beings, in the face, the eight *ki* of heaven and earth reveal the subtle way of mutual natures. So it is that I have been able to know entirely, from observing activities of the hearth and the human face, that the spontaneously doing heaven and earth, human beings, and all things are the subtle way of the eight *ki* as mutual natures, wherein even opposite attributes such as brightness and darkness are one, which the spontaneous action of the living truth produces.

I do not say this based on mere speculation of my own, nor because I have been so instructed by some teacher. Since this truth is completely absent from

the thousands of volumes written by sages of old like Shakyamuni, Laozi, Zhuangzi, and Prince Shōtoku, I could not have learned it by studying them. I have always been able to apprehend this truth in its totality by looking at the hearth, by observing the human face, and by seeing what was there to see in the hearth of my home and in my own face. Since what I saw was put there by nature, I came to see that there could not be anyone in all the many lands of the world who could truly doubt or deny my discovery.

Written Characters and Books

Written characters are no more than arbitrary and capricious constructions contrived by the ruling sages of old to make books and scholarship, which they then use to set themselves higher than others and, on the pretext of teaching those below them, to establish self-serving laws. This enabled them to eat their fill of the food of others without having to work themselves, to expropriate nature's law of living by cultivation. Claiming to pacify the realm, they, in fact, planted the seeds of thievery and strife that have marked our world ever since. Clearly characters and books and scholarship are merely ways to take the law of nature into one's own hands. Those who fabricated characters and scholarship were ignorant of the fact that the way of the living truth is apparent in the hearth and in the human face. Those who employ characters and study with books are the great foes of heaven's truth. This is the reason I refuse scholarship based on characters and books.

A certain person questioned me: "You say that characters and books are tools to steal the Way of heaven for oneself... and yet this book you are writing is made up of characters? Why do you use these thieving implements?"

To this I replied: "To build a house one must use wedges.²⁹ When a house falls into disrepair and needs to be reconstructed, the wedges are pulled out and the house dismantled. If they cannot be pulled out, new wedges are used to drive out the old. This book that I am writing now is such a new wedge. To right the wrongs of the authors of the ancient books, to pull out their erroneous characters, I must write with characters myself. My only purpose is to destroy the ancient books that are the roots of thievery and strife and ensure that from here on the world of the living truth will be peaceful and forever free of thievery and strife. With an error I drive out an error and reveal the way of the truth. It takes a thief to point out a thief. To destroy the mistaken writings and books that are the roots of thievery, we must use those very characters and books that are the root of thievery. Only then can we truly destroy them. It is only as a provisional device that I use characters.

29. [Wedges were used in traditional Japanese construction to tighten mortise joints.]

Laozi and Zhuangzi

A certain person asked me: “When you say that heaven and earth are a single body, and man and women one person, that there is no dualism between ruler and ruled, noble and humble, good and evil, you seem to be slandering the sages and Shakyamuni in your self-conceit. Is this not so?”

As far as slandering the sages is concerned, Laozi did that long before me. Laozi said, “When the great Way has perished, then there is talk of humaneness and righteousness” (18). This was his way of criticizing the sages. Zhuangzi... called the sages great thieves. That is a serious slander indeed. Though Laozi and Zhuangzi were alike in attacking the sages, they were like the sages they attacked in that they ate greedily without cultivating themselves and took heaven’s Way into their own hands. To criticize the sages while failing to see that they were cut of the same cloth shows how greatly deluded Laozi and Zhuangzi were and how unbalanced their knowledge was.

My claim that heaven and earth form a single body and that man and woman are one person is based on the subtle way of mutual natures that marks spontaneously active living truth. To say there is no dualism between ruler and ruled is not intended to slander the sages but only to make that truth manifest. The sages established the self-serving laws of a dualism between ruler and ruled because, lacking balance in their understanding, they were ignorant of the Way of the truth of mutual natures. Why should my remarks be deemed slander?

My questioner foamed at the mouth and walked away.

[YT]

TOMINAGA Nakamoto 富永仲基 (1715–1746)

Tominaga Nakamoto was born and raised in Osaka, the son of a soy merchant who was one of the founders of the Kaitokudō academy, a center of neo-Confucian philosophizing for merchants and townspeople. Though he passed away at age thirty-one after a lengthy illness, Nakamoto authored two important works, *Emerging from Meditation* (1745) and *The Writings of an Old Man* (1746). The former attempts a kind of historical deconstruction of the Buddhist tradition in Asia, while the latter outlines Nakamoto's critiques of Shinto, Buddhist, and Confucian traditions. A third work, since lost, entitled *An Explanation of Errors*, critically analyzed Confucian traditions in East Asian history. Due to the iconoclastic nature of this work, Nakamoto is said to have been expelled from the Kaitokudō. In early modern Japanese history, Nakamoto stands alongside Andō Shōeki as one of the most comprehensive cultural critics of the three major religious-philosophical traditions. In a broader context he has been compared to Voltaire and the writers of the European Enlightenment.

Simply stated, Nakamoto viewed the claims of the various traditions as rhetorical fabrications meant to enable one tradition to absorb others. Ultimately, however, for all of his sophisticated historical analyses of doctrine and tradition, Nakamoto saw the three traditions quite simply as conveying a core message that in profound ways transcended them all—"the 'Way' of truth," as he called it—in affirming the importance of moral behavior in the world of the here and now. In the preface to the passage that follows, Nakamoto presents his text as a transcription of a discussion he had with an unnamed old man, a device clearly intended to underscore the independence of this all-embracing Way of truth.

[JAT]

THE WRITINGS OF AN OLD MAN

TOMINAGA Nakamoto 1746, 547–59 (195, 198–200, 204, 206–10)

In the present-day world, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto are regarded as the three teachings representing the three different countries, India, China, and Japan, respectively. Some people think that those teachings must converge at the end; others criticize each other disputing over what is right and wrong. However, the 'Way' which should be called the Way of all ways is a different one, and none of the ways of the three teachings is actually in accordance with the Way of truth. In any event, Buddhism is the way of India, Confucianism is the way of China, and since they are of other countries, they are not the way of Japan. Shinto is the way of Japan, but since it emerged from another

historical time, it cannot be the way of the present-day world. The Way must be in principle the Way in whatever time in whatever country, but it is essential for the Way of all ways to be practiced. The impracticable ways cannot be considered as the Way of truth. And it is impossible to practice the ways of the three teachings in present-day Japan.

.....

What is the way that should be followed as the Way of truth in present-day Japan? We should simply strive in all matters for what is ordinary; should be of upright heart and right conduct in our everyday activities; should speak quietly and behave with restraint; and those who have parents should serve them well.

If you have a master, you must be devoted to him. If you have children, you must teach them well. If you have retainers, you must govern them well. If you have a husband, you must follow him well. If you have a wife, you must lead her well. If you have an elder brother, you must respect him well. If you have a younger brother, you must have compassion for him. As for the aged, you must hold them dear; as for the young, you must care for them. Do not forget your ancestors; do not neglect the intimate atmosphere of your home. In your dealings with people, be perfectly sincere.

Forbid yourself vile pleasures and have esteem for superior people. Do not despise the foolish. In general, put yourself in other people's place and do not do anything bad to them. Do not be biting and sharp; do not misinterpret people's intentions or be obstinate; do not be forceful and impatient. If you are angry, be so within reason, and if you are happy, do not lose control of your feelings. Do not be excessive in your pleasures, or abandoned in your grief.

Whether you have enough or not, consider your lot as good fortune and be content with it. What you should not take, do not take even if it is just a trifle. If something must be given up, don't begrudge it, even if it means losing high office in your country. Clothing and food, good or bad, let them be according to your status, do not be extravagant, or miserly, do not steal, or deceive others, do not lose self-control by drinking, do not kill a person who means no harm, be prudent about your nourishment. Do not eat what is bad, do not eat much. If you have time, learn the arts which are beneficial for yourself and be eager to become wise.

To write in today's script, to speak today's language, to eat today's foods, to wear today's clothes, to use today's utensils, to live in today's houses, to follow today's customs, to respect today's rules, to mingle with today's people, not to do the various bad things, but to do what is good—that is the Way of truth, that is the Way that is practicable in present-day Japan....

Now this Way of truth has not come from India; it has not been transmitted from China; it is not something initiated in the age of the 'kami' that we should learn today. It has not come from heaven; has not risen from the earth; it is

concerned only with people here. If you behave according to it, other people will be happy, you yourself will feel at ease, and things will always be easy to manage without difficulties. On the other hand, if you do not behave according to it, people will hate you, you yourself will feel ill at ease, and whatever you do, difficulties and obstructions will just increase. Therefore, it will not do not to behave according to it. All this comes from what is normal for people; it is not something worked out artificially for temporary application. Thus all human beings who are born in the present world, including even those who are learning the three teachings, would not manage to live through even one single day without this Way of truth....

Tominaga admits that the original teachings of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto, which he understands to have consisted of ethical precepts, were largely consistent with the Way of truth. However, he adds that as traditions have emerged, representatives of them have tried to go beyond the others, often by making claims that were distortions or misunderstandings of the original teachings. After analyzing the Buddhist tradition from Shakyamuni through Zen, Tominaga turns to a historical analysis of Confucianism and Shinto.

Confucius revered... and expounded the Way of true kings, but tried in his day to get beyond the widespread worship of the sage kings.... Not realizing this, the Song Confucians considered all these teachings consistent. Recently Itō Jinsai* claimed that only Mencius had received the vital transmission from Confucius and all the other teachings were false. Then Ogyū Sorai* said that the way of Confucius came directly after from the Way of the ancient kings, but that... Mencius and others had departed from it and were thoroughly mistaken.

.....

As for Shinto, it was invented during medieval times when scholars claimed that it went back as far as the age of the *kami* and gave it the name of the Way of Japan, thus trying to go beyond Confucianism and Buddhism.... These are all fictions deliberately created by people of later times. Shinto could not have existed in an ancient age of the *kami*. What appeared first as Shinto teachings was dual Shinto, a mixture in a convenient proportion with elements of Buddhism and Confucianism. Next came the theory of 'Shinto incarnations of the Buddha' advanced by Buddhists of the time who were envious of the advance of Shinto and used it as a subterfuge to integrate all of Shinto into Buddhism. Thereafter appeared unitarian Yoshida Shinto, which, separate from Confucianism and Buddhism, expounded only a pure Shinto. All these three have their origins in the medieval age. Kingly Shinto appeared recently, teaching that there is no such particular way of *kami*, but only the Way of the kings does not differ from it. There is also a kind of Shinto which professes Shinto publicly and yet actually identifies itself with Confucianism. None of these teachings is from the

age of the *kami*; each of them has been worked out artificially with a certain pretence and with the purpose of getting ahead of other schools.

.....

So the three teachings all have their penchants. One should realize this clearly and not be led astray. The penchant of Buddhism is for magic, for which people nowadays use the world sorcery. Indian people are fond of it. In proclaiming a way and teaching people, they will not believe and follow unless they are led with an admixture of magic. For this reason 'Shakyamuni' was good at sorcery. It was in order to learn it that he went to the mountains for six years and practiced austerities. Many of the sutras mention supernatural transformations, supernatural knowledge, and supernatural powers, all of which are a kind of magic. Other examples were when the Buddha illuminated three thousand worlds in the light of the ray from his forehead, or stretched out his tongue so widely and so far that it reached the heavens of Brahman, or again when Vimalakīrti produced eighty-four thousand lion thrones within his chamber, or when the goddess turned Śāriputra into a woman. These things were all done by magic. Still other examples included the teaching of the various mysteries of the round of 'birth-and-death' and of action and retribution, the stories of former lives of the Buddha and his disciples, the marvels of the Buddha and various other wonderful teachings. All of these were clever devices to get people to believe. This was the way of guiding people in India, but it is not necessary for Japan.

The penchant of Confucianism is for high-flown language, which we nowadays call eloquence. China is a country that likes this. Thus, if one is proclaiming a way to guide people, they will not believe and follow unless language is cleverly used. This can be seen, for example, with the explanation of the word "rites," which originally referred to the ceremonies of coming of age, marriage, mourning, and veneration, but was extended to... the universe when rites were said to be the 'principle' of heaven and earth. It was the same with the word "music," which at first just meant the amusement of playing bells and drums, but then was said to mean not just the playing of bells and drums but the harmony of heaven and earth. It was the same again with the word "sage," which at first just referred to wise persons but then was extended to mean the highest level of humanity, capable of effecting supernatural transformations.

Now Confucius emphasized 'humaneness'.... Mencius expounded the four principles and the goodness of human nature. Xunzi expounded the wickedness of human nature. The *Book of Filial Piety* taught 'filial piety'. The *Great Learning* taught where value should be placed. The *Book of Changes* expounded the two principles of the universe. All of these were simple matters. Yet they were set forth with mountainous rhetoric and cleverness to fascinate people and make them follow. China's high-flown language, just like India's magic, is not necessary for Japan.

As to the penchant of Shinto, it is for mysteriousness, esoteric and secret transmission, and the bad habit of simply concealing things. Secrecy is the root of lying and stealing. Thus while magic is interesting to see and high-flown language is pleasant to hear, and so more or less forgivable, secrecy is much worse. Long ago, when people were honest, some secrecy may have been helpful in teaching and guiding them, but in these latter times when the number of people lying and stealing has increased, it is outrageous for people teaching Shinto to give perverse protection to such evils. Even in such mundane matters as Nō plays and tea ceremony, people all copy this secrecy, inventing certificates of initiation, even charging fees and making a business of it. This is surely deplorable. When asked why they established such regulations concerning secret instructions, they say it is because it is too difficult to pass things on to those whose ability has not matured. Although this argument may sound plausible, we should realize that all ways which are kept hidden, difficult to transmit, and passed on for a fixed price, are not the Way of truth.

[KaS]

WORDS AFTER MEDITATION

TOMINAGA Nakamoto 1745, 83, 125, 135–6 (81, 131, 123, 144–5)

The appearance of divisions among the various teachings came about because they all first arose by trying to go beyond the others.... After all, that good should be done and that evil should not be done, that good actions bring justice and evil actions bring injustice, is the natural law of heaven and earth. This did not originally wait for the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism.

Language

Language has three conditions. All words are conditioned by type, by period, and by the person, and this may be known as “language has three conditions.” To explain all language in terms of these three conditions is my standpoint in scholarship. At any rate, looking at it in this light, I have not yet found any way of ‘dharma’ in the whole world, or any language, which cannot be approached and interpreted in this way. This is why I say that three conditions and five types are the basis of the creation of language.

Human Nature

Why do we say that these things have little real sense? Well, it is like the teaching on human nature among the Confucians.... Gaozi said, “Human nature is without good and without lack of good.” Mencius said, “Human nature

is good.” Xunzi said, “Human nature is evil.” Yangzhu said, “In human nature good and evil are mixed.” Han Fei³⁰ said, “Human nature has three aspects.”... With these views the teachings on human nature and its good or evil were worked out. Yet the reality is that these are so many empty words. Why? If it is natural for the body to perform the good, then what need is there to choose between good and evil in human nature? And if it is natural for the ‘mind’ not to do evil, what need is there to judge the ‘emptiness’ or existence of the nature of things? All the vain, mutual disputation about these teachings is quite useless. Hence I say that in reality there is little real sense in them.

The real teaching of Confucius was that we are close by human nature, but far apart in practice. The question of good and evil in human nature did not yet exist at that time. Not to do evil but to work at the good, purifying one’s intention, is the teaching of all the buddhas, and this was the real teaching of Shakyamuni. The question of the ‘emptiness’ of existence did not yet exist at that time.

[MP]

30. [Yangzhu (370–319 BCE) presented a position of ethical egoism opposed to Confucian thought. Han Fei (280–232) was an aristocrat and proponent of a legalistic philosophy.]

TESHIMA Toan 手島堵庵 (1718–1786)

Born into a prosperous merchant family of Kyoto, Teshima Toan became a follower of Ishida Baigan* in early adulthood and eventually inherited the leadership of the 'Shingaku' movement as a whole. After Toan began teaching in 1760 he initiated a regular program of lectures on key Confucian texts and Japanese literary classics. In addition, he published several moral tracts in the Japanese vernacular, some of which were targeted specifically at women and children. Baigan's successor also established the practice of traveling lectures, which ultimately led to the popularization of Shingaku ethical ideas throughout both rural and urban Japan.

For the most part, Teshima Toan taught ordinary working people who had little time for book learning, and endeavored to accommodate the diverse religious and intellectual perspectives current in popular discourse of the time. His main teaching, "knowing one's original mind," was essentially a reformulation of Ishida Baigan's emphasis on understanding one's true nature through contemplative practice and moral discipline. This project had been inspired in large part by Mencius' notion of rediscovering the inborn goodness universal to all human beings, but Toan's interpretation, perhaps even more than that of his teacher Baigan, was also shaped by the Zen Buddhist ideal of the enlightened mind that is free of rationalizations and discriminations.

The notion of acting spontaneously, without self-centered deliberation, may be found in the works of such Tokugawa-period Zen masters as Takuan Sōhō*, Suzuki Shōsan*, and Shidō Bunan*; but judging from Teshima Toan's writings it was the Zen preacher Bankei Yōtaku* to whom his formulation was most indebted. The Shingaku teacher (referred to as Master Tōkaku) argues in the following passage that once we let go of the selfish impulse to rationalize and intellectualize, we will rediscover the innate purity and morality of the human heart—whether we call it the "unborn buddha-mind," as did Bankei, or the 'bright virtue', as did the neo-Confucian masters.

[JAS]

AGAINST RATIONALIZING

TESHIMA Toan 1771, 21–6

Someone asked: "The other day I read something called 'Bankei's* Dharma Talks' (also called 'Explanations of the Dharma in the Japanese Language'). As it seems quite the same as what you teach, I feel thankful for it. I think I should read it earnestly, over and over, but if it differs from your teaching, I'm not sure it's good for me to read. Please explain to us in a simple

manner, as Bankei does, so that we can understand clearly, if you think it is bad for us to read, in what way it is bad, or if it is the same, in what way it is the same.”

Master Tōkaku said: “That is a reasonable question. I see that you are a country fellow. If Bankei’s way of speaking is easy for you to understand, since it is best that you understand whatever I say, I’ll speak to you using his language. Please listen well.

“Because Bankei was an extremely perceptive man, his teaching does not differ in the least with what I am saying; it is the same thing. Moreover, when Bankei first determined to find the truth, he had doubts about ‘bright virtue’ and troubled over it; but when he was twenty-six years old, he understood it for the first time. In other words, he realized that ‘unborn’ is another name for bright virtue. A person’s true ‘mind’ is a miraculously empty thing. As there is no way to describe it, it is said to be bright and is given the name ‘bright virtue.’ ‘Empty’ indicates that the true mind is unborn, and ‘miraculous’ that it is wondrously clear. Being unborn, it contains nothing unsettled. Whether in seeing, hearing, moving, or knowing—everything is brought to completion without giving rise to a single thought. Hence, it is amazingly and wonderfully clear, or as we say, ‘miraculously clear.’

“And since this unborn is what I usually refer to as ‘not rationalizing,’ Bankei’s sermons do not differ from my teaching. Were I to speak of the word unborn, however, some would not be familiar with it, so I simply tell them to learn how to be free of rationalizations.”

He went on: “Bankei always told others directly to be in the unborn, but I tell them first to know the realm that is free of rationalization. It is a question of being concerned with how to guide people. Because Bankei himself struggled so much, he pitied others, and said that as long as people were indeed free of rationalizations, that would be ideal. But nowadays there are unlikely to be many people who can receive this directly. So I let them suffer a bit and, as a start, let them know about the realm of no-rationalization. You, too, ask this kind of question and feel grateful for the truth in Bankei’s sermons because you listened to what I have to say and recognized the bright virtue that is free of rationalization.

“This is not something I thought up myself. It is all due to our former teacher,³¹ who left us this precious gift; let us be thankful and never forget our debt to him. Ungrateful people are worse than animals, are they not? Once people have known the realm of seeing, hearing, and moving without rationalizing, it is extremely beneficial for them to read Bankei’s popular sermons over

31. [The allusion is to Ishida Baigan*.]

and over again. But for those who have never once known the state of no rationalization, reading the sermons will serve no purpose.

“The way of the sages was simply to know the bright virtue that is beyond rationalization, and to let the body act in accordance with one’s bright virtue, nothing more. Originally people saw, heard, and moved without rationalizing and there was nothing wanting. When there is no rationalizing, there is no self. Please show me people who have a self even when they are free of rationalizations! There are no such people. If there is no self, there is no selfishness. That’s why we also give this the name ‘humaneness’. Where there is no self, there is no evil. Thus we also refer to this as ‘natural goodness.’ Yet if this natural goodness is in the least bit self-conscious, then that rationalization is not the original good of one’s innate goodness. For example, when people initially have good health, they do not think it is pleasant or unpleasant, or anything else; this is original goodness. When an originally healthy person falls ill for the first time, and then completely recovers and becomes well, this is like the goodness of an ordinary person. When the evil of illness emerges, the good of recovery from that illness is a secondary good; it is not the good of natural goodness.

“Therefore, to learn the ‘Way’ means nothing other than not violating this bright virtue. When the *Great Learning* warns against ‘self-deception’ (VI.1), it means that whenever people do petty things, rationalizing is invariably the cause of their self-indulgence. Therefore, insofar as rationalizing goes against the true mind, whenever any rationalization arises, at that moment one must very carefully discriminate and not lapse into rationalizing. Bankei warned that if one indulged the self, one would turn the unborn ‘buddha-mind’ that one received from one’s parents at birth into a hungry ghost, an animal or a fighting demon. The ‘unborn buddha-mind’ signifies bright virtue; ‘indulging the self’ signifies rationalizing.

“What Bankei calls hungry ghosts, animals, and fighting demons are what we refer to as human desire, a term for the way in which rationalizing leads one in the direction of self-indulgence. No sooner does one indulge in the selfishness of human desire than bright virtue is denied, so that inside one’s breast one feels ashamed and suffers. This is called hell. This hell is a general term for every sort of agony, but the largest pits in hell are occupied by the hungry ghosts, the beasts, and the fighting demons.

“Here, too, Bankei’s teaching is by and large the same as our own. No one, neither the elderly, nor those in the prime of life, nor the multitude of young people, can escape from the three vices of lust, greed, and the desire for fame. Thus even Confucius said: ‘Make sure you do not lapse into any of these three vices. The young are restless and wayward; all three vices are of grave concern, but firmly warn them against sexual desire. Those in the prime of their vigor must be firmly warned not to contend with others in the pursuit of fame. And

the elderly are weak, so firmly admonish them about greed' (*Analects* XVI.7). Lust is the foolishness of those who are like animals, anger is the burning contentiousness of fighting demons, and insatiable avarice is the character of greedy, hungry ghosts. There is no suffering other than these. Are not these teachings the same?"

The questioner asked further, "Although you say that we should not rationalize, if we were to deal with things without rationalizing, who knows what kind of wrong things we might do! Is it good to become free of rationalizations in spite of this?"

Master Tōkaku replied, "That is a good question. I don't mean that in general one mustn't think about anything. Thinking and rationalizing are very different things. As people are living beings it is impossible for them not to think, even for an instant. To give an analogy, the true mind is like the five extremities of the body. Does the body, whether the neck or the arms and legs, remain even an instant without moving? Thought is the same as the movement of the body; it is what functions as the movement of the mind. When it operates in accord with the true mind, it is a good thing and doesn't offer the slightest harm to the true mind. Rationalization is the distortion of this thought. Since ancient times there has not been even one person who said that rationalization is wrong. For the first time I am teaching that all rationalization is wrong, so that anyone will be able to grasp this easily.

"Let me explain why all rationalization is wrong. Please listen well. To begin with, let me see any one of you do something wrong right here and now, without rationalizing at all! Well, can you? Rationalization is cunning. Without at least a little cunning, surely one cannot do evil. Isn't that true?..."

"Please try to realize this point further, based on your own experience. In the morning when you open your eyes in bed and wake up just as you are, even though there is nothing at all in your mind, a wicked rationalization arises: 'This morning it's cold; last night I stayed up late.' This encourages your self-indulgence and holds you back in bed. Then again, because the true mind is honest and would not be satisfied if you did sleep, its thoughts are good and it says, 'That kind of rationalization is no good.' And when you try to get up, the rationalization once more stops you like this, telling you that your body can't go on, or some such excuse. But, the light of the true mind is powerful, so you rebuke the rationalization and try again to get up. The moment of this struggle is when you are liable to be misled. To be sure, when people of this world experience a good rationalization, that is a thought of the true mind. When an evil rationalization comes, you return to the initial good thought of the true mind, so that thought feels like a rationalization, too, but it is not. It is the light of the true mind, the work of goodness.

"This is not something we say arbitrarily. As the ancient sage Confucius said,

‘A man called Chi Wen-tzu, in dealing with all matters thought three times, and settled the matter according to his third judgment. This is wrong. One may think twice and decide the matter according to the second judgment’ (*Analects* v.19). This, then, is the distinction between rationalizing and thinking. As is commonly known, all things come to completion without rationalization; consultation is not necessary. Rationalizing is consulting with oneself within one’s own breast. The beginning of the very first consultation is always a rationalization; the second rationalization is always the work of the true mind. That is why Confucius said it was all right for Chi Wen-tzu to think only twice. Mencius, too, said that ‘the role of the mind is to think,’ and that because people are endowed with the capacity of a thinking mind they do not violate the true mind (*Mencius* 6A.15). This is because thinking sorts out evil rationalizations.

“Furthermore, what the Buddhists call ‘right thinking’ is the same. What they call having thought in every case is worldly desire and thus rationalization. No thought also refers to right thinking. ‘No thought’ does not mean having no thoughts. If one had no thoughts, there would be no reason to use the term. It is just that in right thinking one is not aware of any thoughts and this is why it is called ‘no thought.’ If one were aware of it as ‘no thought,’ how could it be ‘no thought’? Isn’t this so?”

[JAS]

MIURA Baien 三浦梅園 (1723–1789)

Miura Baien lived in the small village of Tominaga (present-day Oita prefecture) on the island of Kyushu, where he taught and developed his philosophical ideas. In the meantime, he maintained contacts with neo-Confucian scholars, one of whom was his good friend the astronomer Asada Gōryū (1734–1799), who independently discovered the relationship of the length of a planet's orbit to its distance from the sun. Baien's major writings comprise a work on ethics called *Daring Words*, an exposition of his own metaphysics, *Deep Words*, and a companion volume, *Additional Words*.

Baien wrote no less than twenty-three versions of *Deep Words* over twenty-six years. Unlike his other works, many passages of the final version of *Deep Words* are intelligible only in the context of the overall metaphysical system he strove to lay out, embracing the entire complex world around him in harmony with scientific discoveries. *Yin-yang* theory was to be replaced by a unique and intricate system of opposing pairs which he called 'jōri'. Because this required a specialized vocabulary, Baien used *jōri* to generate hundreds of technical terms arranged in pairs of sinographs. Each member of a pair takes a precise meaning from the opposing member. When one member is paired with a different sinograph, its meaning changes accordingly. Each sinograph retains a trace of its normal usage throughout. For example, two of Baien's pairs are "whole and side" and "whole and part." The meanings of "part" and "side," and therefore the meanings of "whole," differ precisely. "Whole and side" is one of several pairs clarified below by the image of the brocade robe: one might say that one side is a world of trees, birds, and rocks and the other a world of sub-atomic particles. Yet they are two sides of one world.

The following selections include a letter to one colleague and another to Asada. It is followed by extracts from the prefatory "Examples" to *Deep Words*, and the dense opening and later passages of its "Core Text."

[RDM]

ERRORS IN OLD YIN-YANG THEORIES

MIURA Baien 1776, 748–9

I enjoyed talking with you the other day. I have not yet completed my explanation of *yin* and *yang*, so I take up my brush to refine it with some further remarks.

The items *yin* and *yang* are first seen in the *Book of Changes*. However, their sense there was sometimes the 'Way', sometimes the Forms, and sometimes the Lines. Although the work is an account of divination, to look at heaven and

earth through that text is like scratching an itching foot without taking off one's sandal... Because I have borrowed them to convey a different meaning I write the sinographs differently. This study has a long history and the number of persons involved has not been few. However, when we looked at heaven and earth it is as though we were gazing across the ocean. It seemed as though we were gazing across the ocean because we did not understand *yin* and *yang*.

In looking at heaven and earth, there are two things to avoid. We must avoid looking at other things in terms of ourselves. And we must avoid adhering to what we have been told when there are no signs of its truth. Although I cannot be compared with the ancients, I will not bow to them, because I understand *yin* and *yang*...

The number of heaven and earth is simply one. We meet it as one and one. The numbers from three onwards, even numbers and odd numbers, and ten taken as one again to make hundreds, thousands, myriads, hundred thousands, and so on, are not functions of nature. We expected to find in nature items that are not functions of nature. Three talents, four masters, five elements, six 'ki', nine mystic markings, ten mystic diagrams, that was all wisdom of the blind...

If the ancients were to have turned their doctrine on its head, so that left was *yang* and right was *yin*, man was *yin* and woman was *yang*, white was *yin* and red was *yang*, and if then we did not follow our own judgment, it would have taxed us to the extreme to sort out the confusion...

"One and one" is the name for "*yin* and *yang*" before they have names. *Yin* and *yang* are one and one once they have names. *Ki* and object are one and one. One and one are called "*yin* and *yang*," and *ki* and object are called "heaven and earth." Those who do not understand that one and one, which are "hollow," divide from *ki* and object, which are "substantial," do not see the relation between them. That is because they do not understand clearly what 'jōri' is.

When a person sets aside that which dwells in his self alone and pays attention to that which resides elsewhere, when he sets aside what the ancients have said, and when he follows the correct signs, only then can we begin to speak together.

[RDM]

THE COMPLEXITY OF NATURAL PHENOMENA

MIURA Baien 1785, 752

If people look at heaven and earth without opening the bounds of man, if they remain fixed within it prizing their own wisdom and intelligence, they will view creation from a human point of view. Fallacies will arise from

their speculations, the grit in their eyes will blind them. Although it is proper for people to be anxious about the sufferings of the world, they will never attain wisdom if they view creation as human....

In setting up the standards for thought and reason by which we are to understand heaven and earth, there is *jōri*, and that is all. The state of *jōri* is that one endows two, and two possess one. Two is one and one, one and one is one. The key to knowing this is called “seeing unity in opposites, discarding habits of mind, and following the correct signs.”

.....

I am shortsighted. My measurements are clumsy. When I observed celestial phenomena in my youth I had not abandoned the old teachings.... At the beginning of this spring, I reread several of the passages you recommended. I spent several days unrolling volumes. At last I understood your meaning....

With an instrument you made yourself you discovered black spots moving on the surface of the sun. You discovered the intricate details of the jagged surface of the moon. You learned about the phases of Venus, the movements of the satellites of Saturn and Jupiter, and the orbits of the planets around the sun. You have observed lunar eclipses, and found out about a large continent at the South Pole. And apart from all these, you have studied the line of the ecliptic....

Although I cannot understand all your methods you have given me a great handbook for the study of *jōri*.

[RDM]

DEEP WORDS

MIURA Baien 1775, 2-4, 20-1, 32-4 (78-81, 115-16, 118, 121, 123, 127)

On Terminology

The Way is study without partiality, thought without prejudice. Thus we shall attain understanding. I know there are things beyond my reach. But should I lay down my bow because I am a poor marksman? Thus, those who desire to read this book can read freely, upstream against the current, following the current downwards, taking something from the left, something from the right, pulling this from the center or that from the margin. It is just as one can turn a wheel from any point the hand touches it.

If there is some order in this book, the “Core Text” is the union. Dynamic flux is active, chaotic content is object. Man opens the boundaries of the small, and challenges the strength of heaven. If we should desire to see heaven and earth with farsightedness, we need only to look at heaven in order to comprehend heaven, and to look at man in order to comprehend man. Writings and

diagrams are all superfluous, they are no more than nets and snares set up to catch fish and rabbits.

Therefore, those who read my words must look at nature and accept them where they accord with nature. When they look at nature and see my errors, they must reject my words, for what am I?

.....

If I take A: then B, C, and D all come in association with A; if I take B: then A, C, and D all come in association with B. From C and D we move on to E and F, G, and H, and so on. Hence when we are within the realm of motive power, heaven and earth are also motive power, when we are within the realm of body, heaven and earth are both body.

.....

When I use the word *ki*, there are the kinds: *ki* and object; *ki* and body; *ki* and shape; *ki* and matter; *ki* and image; *ki* and heaven; *ki* and mind; *ki* and color; and so on. When I use “spirit” there are the kinds: spirit and heaven; spirit and essence; spirit and object; spirit and soul; spirit and phantom; spirit and man; spirit and sagacity; and so on. When I use “heaven,” there are the kinds: heaven and earth; heaven and spirit; heaven and object; heaven and man; heaven and destiny; and so on.

.....

The volumes of *Deep Words* give an account of just what I see.

Yin and Yang

Object has nature and nature is endowed with object. Nature and object merge without seams. Thus they are one whole. Nature pairs with body, object pairs with *ki*. Nature and object stand distinct, this is *jōri*. Thus they are two sides. Nature is nature alongside object, object is object alongside nature. Therefore, one is one and one, and one and one is one. *Ki* is heaven, object is earth. Nature is endowed by one, and bodies are divested from one. This endowment by one and divestment as two, corresponds to the warp from the aspect of division, and to the woof from the aspect of the contrast of one *ki* and one object.

By parting, two stand distinct; by combining, two merge into one. If one were simply one there would be neither separation nor combination, and if two were simply two, there would be no division or contrast. One and two are not simply one and two. Stability entails severality and being entails wholeness. By division, one is parted; by contrast, two are combined. Division is the warp, contrast is the woof. Warp and woof are parted spontaneously by *jōri*.

.....

As an illustration, take a piece of brocade. The raw side consists of warp

threads and woof threads, scarlet threads and green threads, but on the finished side are flowers, grass, and fabulous birds. The spirit of these comes from the imagination of a clever woman.

Although the brocade is essentially warp threads and woof threads, when a spirit works on them to form objects, each warp thread is separate from the woof threads, yet each warp thread combines with a woof thread. Their combination yields leaping dragons and dancing phoenixes. They may leap and dance, but if the threads are separated, warp spontaneously aligns with warp, and woof aligns with woof. And so one piece of brocade has a nature that is endowed with two bodies, the raw side and the finished side, a clever seamstress brings spirit to it, objects are fixed to it by silk threads, and an incomprehensible human art attains the mystery of heaven's creation.

Now, the great object becomes *ki* and object. Warp threads pass through it and woof threads fill it up, the fine is concealed, the coarse is manifest. The passage of the warp threads makes the hours wherein spirit produces events. The filling up of the woof threads makes the places wherein objects have the bodies of objects.

Heaven and Earth

The warp passes through as hours. It brings what is to come and destroys what has gone. This is the path on which spirit journeys. Hereby heaven forms time. The woof fills up as places. It supports things that ride and contains things that dwell. This is the earth on which objects stand stable. Hereby earth forms space.

Space has the power of containing objects, and time has the power of being the passage of spirit. In other words, space and time are invisible and concealed, and have the power of containing spirit and object. Object has the power of dwelling in space and spirit has the power of passing through time. In other words, spirit and object are visible and manifest, and dwell in space and time.

The invisible and the concealed eject the object that is earth, the visible and manifest eject the *ki* that makes heaven.

Spirit is necessarily active, and objects are necessarily stable, the warp necessarily passes through, and the woof necessarily fills up....

Dynamic flux involves motive power, chaotic content makes body stable; heaven fixes and spirit changes, heaven moves and earth is stationary.

However, in the merged one, nature is endowed with bodies as one and one. In other words, these bodies are one *ki*, whose states are fine and concealed, and one object, whose states are coarse and manifest. They align with one another, oppose one another, swallow one another and eject one another. Standing distinct they have *jōri*; merged, their seams are concealed.

The all pervading spreads out as the places within which objects dwell. They are supported by a center, they dwell in what we call the “outside.” The “center” is so minute it does not have an inside, but it supports heaven and earth effortlessly. The “outside” is vast and limitless, it contains heaven and earth and nothing is too large for it.

The perpetual ongoing pulls the hours, within which periods succeed one another. When it accords with a period the present is revealed. The two borders of the present are concealed. The present is within an instant, but it manifests every event and every object without exception. The present does not hold any of these events or objects, its two sides extend infinitely before and after. Spirit travels that route, heaven dwells in that house.

.....

The hollowness and substantiality of heaven and earth, the *yin* and *yang* of water and fire, the hour and place of time and space, the turning and holding of moving and stopping, combine in this way as pairs, forming one great heaven and earth.

.....

That which moves is spirit, which changes. That which is stationary is heaven, which is fixed. Earth is also stationary and fixed, but this earth is not our rough globe. Heaven moves and changes, but this heaven is not our sky.

.....

To talk of matter in terms of *ki*, matter is substantial, and *ki* is hollow. To talk of *ki* in terms of matter, *ki* is fine and matter is coarse. That which is fine in terms of *ki*, is hollow in terms of matter; that which is coarse in terms of *ki* is substantial in terms of matter.

.....

Whether black or white will win a game of Go depends upon the board. So which objects will *ki* and body give rise to, which events will heaven and spirit give rise to? These are things we do not know.

[RDM]

NINOMIYA Sontoku 二宮尊徳 (1787–1856)

Ninomiya Sontoku was born into a dysfunctional family, but through dedicated hard work, a fascination with learning, and a survival-driven devotion to self-help, he was able to attain high office, an impressive following, and a legacy in modern Japan that few if any Tokugawa thinkers of any philosophical stripe would ever begin to approximate.

Sontoku was not a Confucian as such. Rather, he described his philosophy as a mixture of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto, one comparable to a medicinal potion with the right and proper amounts of each of the teachings. Despite the eclecticism evident in his thinking, Confucian themes, of his own distinctive stamp, are unmistakable. Far removed from those who cited ancient Confucian texts with precision, Sontoku often recalled what he considered the gist of the texts, and then gave that his very own unique interpretation. In this way, Sontoku served as a transitional figure in the evolution of Confucianism in Japan, away from its study in the often closed quarters of local academies and into the countryside, among the peasant folk, where understandings of the ideas were more important than exact fidelity to any tradition of textual commentary.

One of Sontoku's favorite Confucian texts was the *Great Learning*. With its message of rectification of the world through cultivation of the mind, person, family, state, and world, the text addressed critical concerns of peasant leaders seeking to improve their lot in life and that of their neighbors. Sontoku is most famous for his emphasis on the importance of a sense of personal indebtedness to the sociopolitical order. His emphasis on selfless "repaying virtue" meshed nicely with the needs of the imperial government. Yet Sontoku's thought has remained popular even in the postwar period due to its seminal emphasis on self-improvement for the sake of one's community and for humanity at large.

[JAT]

THE GOOD LIFE

NINOMIYA Sontoku 1893, 123, 141, 146–7, 133, 183

The Way of Humanity

The 'Way' of humanity is like a waterwheel. As it revolves, one half goes with the stream, the other half against it. If you put it all under the water, or raise it all out of the water, it cannot continue to turn. Buddhist monks, who are supposed to be wise and knowledgeable, separate themselves from the world and discard all of their desires. They are like the waterwheel that is lifted out of the water. 'Ordinary people', who lack knowledge of duty and who are

moved only by their selfish desires, are like the wheel sunk in the water. Neither of these is a useful element of society. Therefore the Way of humanity esteems the 'mean'.

Learning

The Old Man³² said, "Learning¹ values practical application. Even if one were to read ten thousand volumes, it would be useless if there were no practical application. The *Analects* (iv.1) state, 'If one chooses to reside in a place where 'humaneness' does not dwell, how can one be called wise?' [iv.1].

.....

"Unless we study the unwritten classics, we will not be able to perceive the true 'principles' of heaven and earth. When reading the unwritten classics, we should use our physical eyes to read them over, and then close our physical eyes. When we have done this, our mind's eyes will open and be able to read the unwritten texts. Even the obscure and minute principles will not be impossible to perceive. This is because the physical eye has limits, but the eye of the mind has none.

.....

"There are many books that teach truth, but each has its own peculiar trend. There is no complete teaching. Buddha and Confucius were human, and their sacred writings are human. Therefore, I look at the unwritten book of nature and compare their teachings with it. If they are not contradictory, I accept them. My opinion is always right. While the sun gives light, so long shall my teaching prevail without mistake."

Good and Evil

The Old Man said: "Discussing good and evil is very difficult. If we discuss their origins, we find that there is none for good, nor is there one for evil.... They have their origins as things formed from the selfish inclinations of humanity. They are things associated with the way of humans. Therefore, if there were no people, there would be neither good nor evil. Once people exist, good and evil subsequently exist.

"Thus, people consider it good for overgrown fields to be opened up to cultivation, and they deem it bad that good fields are allowed to become wild and overgrown. However, boars and deer consider reclamation efforts to be evil, and wild, overgrown fields to be good. According to the laws of the world, thieves are considered evil, but then among thieves, thieves are viewed as good while those who try to capture them are considered evil. Accordingly, it is not easy to

32. [The appellation refers to Ninomiya.]

discern a principle by which we can decide what sort of things are good, and what kind of things are evil.

“This point can be grasped more easily if we consider what is far and what is near. The principles informing distinctions between far and near and good and evil are the same. For example, suppose that we made two markers, one onto which we write ‘far’ and the other onto which we write ‘close’. But as we pass these two markers, we soon understand that the distance or proximity of the markers in relation to another person has to do with where the two markers are established and where the person is standing, not what is written on them. I have a jingle that goes, ‘When you look far enough, there is neither far nor near, there is simply the place where I dwell!’ We do not understand it when the jingle suggests that there is neither good nor evil, because of our personal concerns. However, when ‘far’ and ‘near’ do not pertain to us personally, then we understand very well that they do not exist apart from us.

“In construction, we might want things to be straight or curved, but if we look too closely, we cannot see either. However, if we stand back too far, our eyes cannot discern things. Much the same is suggested in an old proverb that states, ‘Distant mountains seem to have no trees, and the distant oceans seem to have no waves.’ We are persuaded of this when we have no personal interests in whether we are ‘far’ or ‘near.’

“However, when we decide in advance that ‘far’ and ‘near’ are to be understood in relation to where we are, then far and near do exist. If there is no fixed location from which to judge, then by necessity there can be neither far nor near. If someone says that Osaka is distant, then that person must be from the Kantō area. If someone says that the Kantō is distant, then that person must be from the Kansai area. The very same is true with good fortune and misfortune, good luck and bad luck, right and wrong, success and failure.”

[JAT]

BUDDHISM, DAOISM, AND CONFUCIANISM

NINOMIYA Sontoku 1893, 183, 231, 138, 125, 233, 196, 205–6, 198, 232–3

Someone asked, “Do heaven and hell really exist?”

The Old Man replied: “Although Buddhists say that they do exist, it is impossible to reveal them to people. Although Confucians say that they do not exist, they have not gone to see if that is indeed the case. Whether we say that they exist or that they do not exist, we are simply engaging in empty discussions. Nevertheless, it would be contrary to the principles of the Way for there not to be any sort of reward or punishment that either follows our demise or precedes

our birth into the world. For Confucians to say that heaven and hell do not exist is comparable to a denial of the three worlds of the past, present, and future. Buddhists affirm the three worlds. Although one does not discuss the three worlds, and the other affirms them, the three worlds must exist. Thus we should not say that heaven and hell do not exist. Even about things that cannot be seen we should not go so far as to say that they do not exist. Even if we acknowledge that heaven and hell exist, it is certainly not consistent with the principles of the Way that, as the Pure Land faith claims, those who recite the name of the Buddha go to heaven and those who do not recite it go to hell. Nor is it consistent with the principles of the Way that, as the *Lotus Sutra* faith claims, those who recite the *Lotus Sutra* ascend to heaven, while those who do not, sink to hell. Nor is it consistent with the principles of the Way that those who give a great deal of money to a temple go to heaven while those who do not, go to hell. There can be no doubt that originally, hell was considered a place where people who did evil went after they died, and that heaven was the place where those who did good deeds went after their death. So, heaven and hell were things meant to encourage goodness and to discourage evil deeds. Is it not clear that these were not meant to be matters of religious belief or disbelief? People should not be confused or in doubt about this.”

.....

The Old Man said: “Although Buddhists claim that this world is a temporary dwelling place while the world to come is the important one, what do they make of the fact that in the here and now, rulers and parents exist, as do wives and children. Even if they leave their families and abandon the world, even if they abandon their relations with their rulers and parents, and discard their ties to their wives and children, what do they make of the fact that we exist in this physical body? As we are in physical form, if we do not have food and clothing we cannot endure for long. If we do not have a boat, we cannot cross the rivers or seas of this world. Thus, Saigyō’s poem states, ‘Abandoning everything, I considered my physical form to be nothing, but it was precisely on days when snow fell that I was cold.’ This conveys the true pathos of it all.”

.....

The Old Man said: “In this world, there is only one path in the true great Way. There are those who call themselves adherents of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism, but those are simply names for the passage ways through which those people all enter equally into the great Way. Some call themselves followers of Tendai, some of ‘Shingon’, some of the Lotus School, and some of Zen, but those are simply names of the small paths that lead them equally into the gateway of the great Way.”

.....

The Old Man said: “I have long pondered what it is that Shinto considers

as its Way, as well as the strong and weak points of it. I have also reflected on what Confucians deem to be their teachings, and the strong and weak points in them. And I have pondered what the Buddhists declare as their faith, including its strong and weak points. After reflecting on these, I realized that each has its strong and weak points.... To explain the gist of it, Shinto conveys the way of founding a realm; Confucianism explains the way of governing a realm; and Buddhism instructs us in the way of controlling our minds. Accordingly, I do not overly revere the lofty, nor do I unduly despise the lowly and familiar. Rather I take only the proper points of each of the three ways. The right essentials are those that can be practiced in the world of humanity. By choosing the essentials that are practical and discarding the ones that are impractical, I am able to establish a teaching for the world of humanity that is transcended by none. I call this teaching of repaying virtue. Somewhat facetiously, I call my teaching the round pill that combines the right essences of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. The powers of this pill are so enormous that they cannot be enumerated. For this reason, if this pill is administered to a state, the diseases of the realm will be cured. If administered to a family, the sicknesses of the family will be cured....”

Someone asked about the proportions of the essences of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. The Old Man replied: “One half is Shinto, while Confucianism and Buddhism contribute a quarter each.” Someone nearby then drew a diagram of the pill and asked if it looked like his drawing. The Old Man laughed and said, “There is no such medicine in the world that looks like what you have drawn. When I mentioned that the pill was round, I meant that it well combines and harmonizes the ingredients so that one does not know what the pill actually contains. If it were not like this, when you placed it in your mouth it would sting your tongue, and when it entered your stomach, it would upset it. When making such a pill as this it is essential that the ingredients are combined and harmonized so that no one notices them.

.....

“There are tens of thousands of volumes of literature on Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Even if you were to study it and retreat deep into the mountains to practice Zen meditation, you would find, even as you approached the very highest point of their Way that there can be no other Way than that which seeks to save the world and benefit everyone in it. Even if someone said that there was another way, that would have to be deemed a heterodox way. The right Way is necessarily the one which benefits everyone living in the world. Even if you engage in scholarly learning and study the Way, if they do not bring you to this realization then they are like running vines that grow expansively but meaninglessly, providing no benefits to the people of this world. Things that provide no benefits to the human world should not be revered. While they

might spread widely, they harm the world in the process. Years later, a sage ruler will come forth and even without burning such useless books like these, will discard them much as fields of weeds are brought under cultivation so that the Way that provides usefulness for all is expanded in no time and somehow or another the books that provide no benefit to humanity are ignored as people simply do not engage in actions that benefit neither themselves nor others. Time passes as swiftly as a flying arrow. We say that a person might live to be sixty years old, but considering that some of that time is spent in childhood and old age, some in sickness and in recuperating from accidents, the days that we have to make a difference are few. Therefore, we should not engage in useless activities.”

.....

The Old Man said: “Buddhist discussions of the Way of enlightenment are interesting but they do harm to the Way of humanity. They do so because... they expose the roots of human life. The Way of enlightenment can be compared to the roots of grasses. If these roots are exposed one by one so that they are above ground, then they will all wither and dry up. Much the same is apparent in humanity where the principles are similar.

“Confucianism does not discuss the roots of grasses. It has decided that it is best not to examine the roots of plants. Because things have roots, they can become living, growing entities. For this reason, the roots are important. Nourishment is also important, just as teachings are to humanity. We see the green branches of pine trees and the beautiful blossoms of the cherry trees because those trees have roots in the soil. The lotus blossoms flower with elegance because their roots are situated in water. The magnificent storehouses of the pawnshop owners are the result of the owners taking in things that the many poor people have pawned to them. The grandeur of the lord’s castle is made possible by the many people over whom he rules.

“But if you cut the roots of the pine trees, very soon after the green needles would begin to weaken. In two to three days, the branches and needles will wither. When people are driven to exhaustion, the ruler will also be exhausted. If the people are enriched, the ruler will also be enriched. This should be very clear. These principles of the Way should not be doubted in the least.

.....

“Confucianism teaches cyclical change. Buddhism teaches transmigration. And to escape the transmigration... they teach ‘nirvāṇa’, the peaceful kingdom. Confucius teaches us to obey the ‘will of heaven’, and in serving the Way of heaven, to hope for a life of peace atop Mt Tai.³³ My teaching is different; it is

33. [One of the five sacred mountains in China, located in central Shandong Province.]

intended to enrich the poor, and give prosperity to those who need it. By leaving off the teachings of cyclical change and transmigration, we bring about the Way wherein humanity lives in a land of wealth and prosperity. Fruit trees naturally bear well one year and then rest, but my idea is to prune and nurture them so they will bear well every year.

.....

“Daoism and Buddhism are lofty and sublime, like the towering peaks of Nikkō and Hakone. While very sublime, they are of very little use to the people. Nikkō and Hakone are very high mountains. The scenery is very beautiful and the water very pure; they offer little that is useful in providing for human life. My teaching is like the plain and the village. It is humble, with no magnificent scenery to look down upon; no clouds or water to admire, but various kinds of grain are produced which are the foundation of the country’s wealth and prosperity. The wisdom of Buddhism is as pure as the sands of the seashore, but my teaching is as mud, out of which the beautiful lotus comes. The sublimity of the castle of the feudal lord and the prosperity of his city markets are based on the wealth and prosperity of his villages. Thus the utmost Way is within reach, is humble, and is not lofty speculation....”

[JAT]

Shinto and Native Studies

Kamo no Mabuchi

Motoori Norinaga

Fujitani Mitsue

Hirata Atsutane

Ōkuni Takamasa

Orikuchi Shinobu

Ueda Kenji

Shinto and Native Studies Overview

Four elements of ancient Japanese culture formed the basis for a series of philosophical reflections and analyses that culminated in the eighteenth century with a movement called Native Studies. The first was *'kami'* worship, the ritual reverence shown to awe-inspiring loci of spiritual presence, whether celestial deities, natural phenomena, ghosts or spirits, or even human artifacts associated with a person of great charisma. The term “Shinto” or “*kami no michi*” means literally the “Way of the *kami*.” The second element was the valorization of the ancient Japanese language in the writing and appreciation of *'waka'* poetry. The third element was the early mytho-historical chronicles of the Japanese court (*'Kojiki'*, 712, and *'Nihon shoki'*, 720) and the fourth, the Japanese imperial lineage. This set of topics coalesced into an ever-shifting but continuous discourse since at least the thirteenth century, when court nobles focused on developing their cultural capital as compensation for their loss of political power to the 'shogunate.' As a part of that endeavor, they pioneered a new set of teachings and practices that revolved around ancient court themes, especially *waka*, the *kami*, and the nature of emperorship. The starting point of this theorizing was almost invariably *waka*. Written in painstakingly purist language that reputedly prohibited the use of any words or linguistic constructions originating in China, it came to represent the essence of “Japan” in an environment that had been dominated by continental culture. The notion was that in the sounds of the ancient Japanese words lay a spiritual or aesthetic power that merged the 'mind' or heart (*kokoro*) of the poet with both the world and audience. This spiritual power came to be called *'kotodama'* and it served later as a key term extolling the near magical value of the supposedly “original” Japanese language.

Since classical times, the court had imprinted its seal of ownership on *waka* by compiling official imperial poetry collections. The most famous of these, the *Kokinwakashū* of 905, stated that *waka* were a creation of the *kami* themselves, and that their origins go back to the “age of the *kami*,” when Izanagi and Izanami first opened up the world. Medieval traditions used *waka* and their ancient

Japanese origins to argue that the Japanese language and land were sacred in a manner that other languages and lands were not.

Until the seventeenth century, this discourse was predominantly Buddhist in its terminology and its logic. For example, the words of *waka* were identified with Buddhist mantras and the justification for their power was based in a theory much like that in Kūkai's* essay on "Voice, Word, Reality." Similarly, the Japanese islands were identified with Buddhist mandalas, and the emperor with 'Dainichi', the Great Sun Buddha who embodies the 'dharma'. The composition of *waka* at the court was linked to the emperor-led worship of Japanese *kami*, and these practices were collectively given new, enhanced significance, as ways of activating the Buddhist essence of Japan as the "original land of Dainichi," the sacred territory where the dharma was manifest in pure form. One practice derived from this ideology was the offering to *kami* shrines of *waka* written on richly decorated scrolls.

In the eighteenth century two main factors led to the transformation of this medieval discourse into Native Studies. First, in the previous century, there was a dramatic turn against Buddhism, especially against the mixing of Buddhism with other traditions, now criticized as an adulterated "syncretism." Confucians led this offensive, but their example was soon followed by scholars of Shinto and *waka* specialists. As the Buddhist premises behind medieval nativism were undermined, the need arose to reconstruct the notion of "Japan" on an entirely new foundation. The Native Studies writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries worked to fill this void.

Social factors also contributed to the rise of Native Studies as a new philosophical school. Among them was the emergence of an urbanized class of commoners with the leisure to engage in cultural pursuits, and the appearance of tutors and private schools to meet their educational needs. The court's former monopoly on *waka* expertise eroded with the growing number of study groups, consisting largely of townspeople interested in learning the art of composing *waka*. In the Edo period, Native Studies competed with already established private academies that taught the writing of Chinese poetry and prose.

Such competition for students and prestige served to sharpen the differences between those who engaged in Chinese studies and those who pursued Japanese studies. Yet on a fundamental level, discussions within both fields proceeded along similar lines. Both professed to an almost religious sensitivity to the word. Scholars of the Chinese tradition, such as the hugely influential Ogyū Sorai* (1666–1728), regarded ancient Chinese as the language of the ancient 'Way', superior to all others. By analyzing the terms of that language, he argued, one could trace the workings of the Way in its original purity, and by using such language in one's own compositions, one would be able to identify with that Way and put it into practice even in our age. Kamo no Mabuchi* (1697–1769),

a generation later, felt much the same about the language of the oldest Japanese *waka*, recorded in the *Kojiki*, the *Nihon shoki*, and in Japan's oldest poetry collection, the eighteenth-century 'Man'yōshū'. In Mabuchi's eyes, these poems reflected the 'sincerity' or "genuineness" (*makoto*) of the ancient Japanese. He argued that those who wrote their own poetry in the archaic, "pure" language of ancient *waka* would be able to restore that same virtue in their own hearts. Mabuchi also developed another point using a distinction from Sorai's work: that of the "naturally present" as opposed to the "created." Sorai had stressed that the Way constituted a concrete system of institutions "created" by the sage kings of ancient China, rather than some "naturally present" principle inherent in the human mind. Mabuchi turned this argument on its head by identifying the "natural" with the divine and the sincere, and opposing it to the "created," which he rejected as human (and therefore inferior to the divine), artificial, and conceited. Mabuchi then reapplied this distinction to stress the superiority of antiquity over the present, and to Japan over China. In his essay on *The Meaning of our Country* (1765), Mabuchi contrasted the natural and flexible "round" Way of Japan (contained within its *waka* tradition) with the humanly fabricated, "square" or principled Way of China, and thus transformed the practice of reading and writing poetry into a matter of the greatest national importance.

Mabuchi's student, Motoori Norinaga* (1730–1801), likewise began his studies with an early interest in *waka* and classical Japanese literature. In due course, however, Norinaga shifted his focus away from poetry to the prose of the *Kojiki*, Japan's oldest court chronicle. This work gave an account of events in the age of the *kami*, culminating in the establishment of the imperial dynasty. The account itself was written in an idiosyncratic, sometimes, opaque orthography, but it contained the earliest examples of Japanese language in written form. A devout follower of Shinto, Norinaga believed the text to have ensconced within it the oral narrative of creation in the original language of the gods. Therefore, he applied the philological methods developed by the likes of Sorai and Mabuchi to trying to unearth the deepest and oldest layer of the text, seeking to make sense of its inscrutable narrative without recourse to the metaphorical readings that had dominated earlier commentaries. In one respect, Norinaga read the *Kojiki* in much the same way as Sorai had read the Chinese classics: as a miraculous revelation of a higher truth that could not be fully understood by human rationality, but nevertheless must be accepted with unquestioning sincerity.

The truth that Norinaga discovered in *Kojiki* revealed a world populated by powerful *kami*, whose will no one can oppose. The foremost among these *kami* is the benevolent Amaterasu, the sun goddess who granted rule everlasting to her descendants, the imperial dynasty. The emperor represents the superior power of this generous deity on earth, and the sincere loyalty of the Japanese people to the dynasty both proves and ensures the status of their land as the

most blessed nation on this earth. Norinaga believed that the *Kojiki's* almost unintelligible writing system assured that scribes through the centuries would not have been able to alter its words to suit their own purposes. Therefore, he reasoned, its Japanese creation narrative is the only true one remaining in the world. To him, this implied that both the *kami* and the emperor have universal status: Japan is the “original land” where the sun itself was born, where its spirit is enshrined, and where its descendants rule. Therefore, the emperor is a universal monarch whose divine rule in Japan benefits all peoples.

In *The Spirit of Rectification* (1771) Norinaga presented the conclusions of his painstaking analysis of the *Kojiki*. Because of its radical nature, the text caused a stir among intellectuals of all denominations and provoked many reactions. One of the critics was a Confucian of Sorai's school, Ichikawa Tazumaro (1740–1795), who wrote a response that became the object of a detailed critique by Norinaga (*Arrowroot*, 1780). Tazumaro disagreed fundamentally with Norinaga about the status of the *Kojiki*, and argued that this work was not a divine revelation but a product of the age in which it was written, designed to suit the stratagems of the emperors of that time. Norinaga rejected this view as a “heresy,” and argued that *Kojiki* contains a divine transmission that once existed also in other lands, but was utterly destroyed there by the sages of ancient China as they rewrote the creation narrative to suit their own purposes. When Tazumaro pointed out obvious inconsistencies in *Kojiki's* plot, Norinaga reminded him of the fact that “the acts of the *kami* lie not in the realm of ordinary logic,” and chastised him for sullyng the sincere belief of the ancient Japanese with his Chinese cleverness. Norinaga maintained that it was a “Chinese mentality” that would seek to have events fit the human standard of intelligibility, even if it meant distorting the miraculous nature of the events as they had actually occurred. It was, he said, precisely that sort of distortion that the idiosyncratic writing system had prevented. Furthermore, he countered Tazumaro's claim that it was the Way of the sages that brought civilization to Japan by pointing out that China has a long history of chaos, while Japan has been ruled by an unbroken dynasty since the age of the *kami*; this, Norinaga claimed, is because Japan “is the home of the sun goddess,” a land “where the emperors are her children” and where “the hearts and minds of all of the people, from high to low, are superior to all other countries.” Works in which Native Studies scholars cross the boundaries of their discipline and discuss their basic stance with outsiders were rare. *Kuzubana* illustrates why this was so by displaying the unbridgeable gap between academic fields that rendered all discussion fruitless.

The Confucians were not the only ones who had trouble accepting Norinaga's arguments; other Native Studies scholars were also among his opponents. Perhaps the most radical of these was Fujitani Mitsue* (1768–1823). Born as the son of one of the country's leading *waka* scholars, Mitsue developed a theory

of language that consistently probed for “inner” meanings that hide below the surface. He criticized Norinaga for reading the *Kojiki* in a literal manner, ignoring the figurative nature of the language in that sacred work. Mitsue also rejected Norinaga’s approach to the *Kojiki* as a work of factual history. Instead, he proposed that this mysterious text served as an example of manipulating the “spirit of words” (*kotodama*) through the use of indirect language and poetry. Norinaga had dealt with supernatural events recorded in the *Kojiki* by ascribing to them a special “divine logic” that could not be rationally fathomed but had to be accepted with sincere faith; Mitsue, on the other hand, saw the “extraordinarily strange” events described in the *Kojiki* as a deliberate strategy used by its ancient authors to signal that this text should *not* be read as a straightforward historical record, but rather as a demonstration of the art of the indirect language. This art, Mitsue argued, had been invented by Emperor Jinmu as a way to establish divine rule in Japan, and the *Kojiki* was the product of his legacy. Rule by indirect language had worked until Chinese learning, with its insistence on literal, direct language, had undermined the “Japanese Way” and damaged its capacity to create harmony by releasing the “spirit of words.” Norinaga’s approach to the *Kojiki* as literal history, Mitsue argued, was, in fact, a legacy of that Chinese approach to language, and shared in its failure to look beyond the surface of the words. Mitsue believed that Norinaga deserved honor for rediscovering the true nature of the *Kojiki* as divine revelation, but thought his reading was misguided from start to finish. In sum, Norinaga and Mitsue agreed that the *Kojiki* was a revelatory text and that it must be protected from nonnative, “Chinese” distortions. They disagreed, however, on the nature of the distortion to be avoided. For Norinaga, it was applying human reason as the sole criterion for truth, thereby eliminating the miraculous in the *events*. For Mitsue, it was the linguistic literalism that would destroy the magical power of the ancient *words* themselves as used by the gods.

Mitsue did not gain a large following, and his work is introduced here more for its philosophical interest than for its influence. That is not the case with the slightly younger Hirata Atsutane* (1776–1843). Where Norinaga had had hundreds of students, Atsutane’s numbered in the thousands, and many of his disciples won positions of influence in the mid-nineteenth century.

Like Norinaga but unlike Mitsue, Atsutane was a historian rather than a poet. He regarded the ancient chronicles as sacred depositories of the Japanese Way and interpreted them as literal, factual truths. Yet Atsutane’s approach to that Way differed from Norinaga’s in many respects. Norinaga had been determined to recreate the world of the *Kojiki* without referring to any teachings or concepts external to that text. This meant, for example, that people must accept as a fact of life that they are subject to the acts of both good and evil *kami* as well as to their unfathomable will. It also meant that upon death, people could expect no

better fate than being transported to a dark and filthy place of suffering called 'yomi', irrespective of the good and evil that they may have committed during their lifetime.

Atsutane saw himself as Norinaga's heir and sought to strengthen his master's findings by drawing on new kinds of sources. In contrast to Norinaga, Atsutane made a point of searching out evidence from other, non-Japanese traditions that could be used to confirm the truth of the "ancient Way." This included not only Chinese works of all descriptions but also translations of western books that entered the country through the Dutch trading post of Dejima in increasing quantities. Norinaga had discarded all knowledge that was not confirmed by the *Kojiki* as irrelevant musings by humans of limited intelligence. Atsutane, however, felt the need to demonstrate that the *Kojiki's* account tallied with the observations of western science. Atsutane was not the first to attempt this; in fact, his *True Pillar of the Soul* drew on the writings of another student of Norinaga, Hattori Nakatsune (1757–1824), whose work Norinaga had included in his *Kojiki* commentary. Nakatsune had used his knowledge of western astronomy to propose a new interpretation of the cosmogony as it is described in the *Kojiki*. When Atsutane wrote *The True Pillar* in 1812, he did so in support of Nakatsune after Norinaga's heir, Motoori Ōhira (1765–1833), had criticized and rejected Nakatsune's theories in 1811. Atsutane updated Nakatsune's findings by exchanging his geocentric model with a heliocentric one. Also, he adduced further foreign sources that Nakatsune would never have considered. A striking example of this is his reference to the biblical tale of Noah's ark, which he quoted to prove that Japan, where no such flood occurred, was indeed the highest point in the world, closest to heaven. This instance is a perfect illustration of Atsutane's strategy of incorporating foreign ideas and materials by claiming that they had their ultimate source in Japan's divine transmission.

The True Pillar contained yet another surprise: Atsutane used this work to unleash a spirited attack against Norinaga's (and Nakatsune's) theories on the afterlife. He rejected Norinaga's view, based on the *Kojiki*, that the spirits of the dead disappear to the dark land of *yomi*. Instead, he turned to an obscure passage in the *Nihon shoki* (disparaged by Norinaga as a product of the Chinese spirit) to present a radically different theory. According to one variant recorded in that work, lordship over the world is divided between two *kami*: The grandson of heaven, Ninigi, is said to preside over "visible matters," while the *kami* of the land, Ōkuninushi, directs the "hidden matters." Atsutane made the most out of this isolated passage by positing the parallel existence of two worlds, one visible and one hidden. Far from being exiled to *yomi*, he argued, the dead dwell among us in this hidden realm, from where they follow our lives with benevolent interest. It is interesting to note that Atsutane wrote this work while mourning the untimely death of his wife, Orise.

The afterlife, the nature of the soul, and the hidden realm of the spirits were to remain central topics in Atsutane's work and strongly influenced some strands of later Native Studies and Shinto thought. Sensing the existence of that realm just beyond the façade of everyday life, Atsutane used all means to gain knowledge about it, not only through the texts of Japanese antiquity, but also through contemporary mediums who claimed to have visited the hidden world of the spirits and returned from there to the land of the living. Atsutane, then, widened the scope of Native Studies from the narrow study of ancient texts to a much broader practice that engaged not only poets and scholars, but people from all walks of life. His teachings, typically referred to as the "ancient Way" rather than Native Studies, were to have a considerable influence on the numerous Shinto sects that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century.

One of Atsutane's disciples who attained a position of considerable influence was Ōkuni Takamasa* (1792–1871). Unlike the other Native Studies writers introduced so far, Takamasa was of the samurai class and spent his career teaching fellow samurai. Moreover, he lived through one of the most transformative periods of Japanese history: the last years of the Tokugawa shogunate and the Meiji restoration. Takamasa established himself as a Native Studies writer and educator in the turbulent aftermath of the opening of the country to more foreign traders in 1853. For these reasons, Takamasa saw it as a matter of great urgency that Native Studies be made relevant to the political situation of his own time. Native Studies (Takamasa preferred the term *hongaku*, the "original teaching") was to become the prime weapon for defending Japan's independence in its confrontation with the West, and it had to be refined and upgraded to accomplish that aim.

This was why, for example, Takamasa took inspiration from the Dutch legal scholar Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) in drawing up the outlines of a Native Studies–based version of international law (under which Japan's emperor would be revered as the "universal king" of the entire globe). Also, there was a need to strengthen the scientific basis of Native Studies so that it would withstand scrutiny even by westerners. The ultimate goal that Takamasa set for Japan's "original teaching" was not to drive out the barbarians, as many of his contemporaries advocated, but to spread the Japanese Way among them and thus secure Japan's position as the original land also in a new, global age.

Most urgent of all, however, was the need to spread the "original teaching" among the Japanese populace so as to prevent the spread of Christianity. To achieve this goal, Takamasa sought actively to create a popular religious practice derived from his own understanding of the ancient Way. The "way of easy practice" that he propagated in *Humble Comments on the Divine Principle* (1861) was designed with this aim in mind. In the early Meiji years, the new government adopted Takamasa's vision of Japan as a Shinto state, and there was even

a short-lived attempt to set up a Shinto mission. It soon became clear, however, that such a policy only served to alienate Japanese Buddhists, while western Christians were enraged about Japan's prohibition of Christianity. Moreover, it proved impossible to find consensus among Native Studies and Shinto thinkers on even the most fundamental issues of Shinto theology. By the late 1870s both Native Studies and Shinto were in acute danger of becoming irrelevant, while Japan staked all its efforts on rapid modernization along western lines. Shinto found another chance to make itself relevant only after the transformation of Japan into a colonial power and the perceived threat of socialism in the early twentieth century. Furthermore, Shinto underwent another transformation as it became the official ideology of the imperial state. This so-called "State Shinto" was considered "not a religion," but an ideology binding the Japanese in a common divine ancestry going back to the creation of the world. It mandated reverence for the emperor as the link between the divine and the political, and a call to defend the land of Japan as sacred. Thus, various forms of ritualized emperor reverence drew on Shinto sources but were formed in a politically potent form of civil religion.

The final two texts in this section are from a different age and a radically different context. What they have in common is that they represent modern reflections on the legacy of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Native Studies and on the Shinto teachings that this movement formulated. Writing in 1943, the Shinto scholar Orikuchi Shinobu* (1887–1953) harked back to the Native Studies of men like Norinaga and Atsutane as an inspiration to foster a "faith-driven passion" for Japan that might yet produce miracles. Two years later, in 1945, Japan's defeat was a fact, and Orikuchi felt all the more strongly that the Japanese had been found lacking in "religious fervor." He argued passionately for the modernization of Shinto into an "organized religion," and he looked towards the great men of the Native Studies movement for inspiration in drawing up a Shinto theology. Other Shinto leaders proved skeptical about this idea, and as matters turned out, postwar Shinto chose to adhere to the pre-war position that Shinto is not a religion. Their reason to reject Orikuchi's vision of a truly religious Shinto was that it called for Shinto to unite all Japanese in a shared, national practice, regardless of their religious beliefs. Formulating religious teachings of the kind that Orikuchi envisioned not only brought with it the danger of the kind of theological bickering that had occurred even in the last months of the war, but also jeopardized his own higher goal of including Japanese of all faiths in the practice of Shinto. For the same reason, the attempts by Ueda Kenji* (1927–2003) to construe a truly modern Shinto theology—making Shinto truly a religion for the world and not just a state ideology or national morality—have not found general acceptance within the Shinto world,

although his writings are quite widely read by Shinto priests, and on occasion are even taught at Japan's two Shinto universities.

Native Studies was premised on the canonization of a small body of ancient texts that was ascribed absolute authority, overriding human logic. Universalistic teachings of foreign origin were rejected, while “revealed truths” found in the canonized texts were given universal status. At the same time, there were also important differences between writers of different periods. Perhaps the most striking point of contention concerns the status of language and its relation to reality. Even if one grants that the *Kojiki* is a revealed text emerging from the creative power behind both the spirit of words and the birth of the world, the issue remains of how to read those sacred words in the text. Are they to be taken literally as recounting the act of creation in a historical way? Or, are they to be taken figuratively as an indirect form of divine discourse having inherently magical qualities? Norinaga—and somewhat less unequivocally, Atsutane—were examples of the former, while Mabuchi, Mitsue, and Takamasa, each in their different ways, represented the latter. Their “magical” take on language was inherited by the many Shinto sects that drew on Native Studies ideas, while prewar state orthodoxy, whose principal heir today is shrine-centered Shinto, preferred the historical, “scientific” approach of Norinaga and Atsutane.

Native Studies represents an important resource both for its political thought and for its hermeneutical debates.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

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[MLT]

KAMO no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵 (1697–1769)

Born in Hamamatsu to a family with ancestral connections to Shinto, Kamo no Mabuchi's early education took place in local scholarly circles that combined Shinto studies with the study of 'waka' poetry. In 1728 Mabuchi enrolled as a student of the famous Shinto scholar Kada no Azumamaro (1669–1736), later moving to Kyoto to be closer to his teacher. After Azumamaro's death, Mabuchi moved to Edo to work with his nephew Kada no Arimaro (1706–1751), a scholar of Japanese studies in the employ of Tayasu Munetake, second son of the shōgun Tokugawa Yoshimune. In 1742 Mabuchi was invited to join a debate between Arimaro and Munetake on the nature and function of *waka*. Impressed by Mabuchi's performance, Munetake hired him four years later as a replacement for Arimaro, a post he held for fourteen years. During this time he wrote commentaries on such texts as the *Man'yōshū*, *The Tale of Genji*, and *Tales of Ise* and produced scholarly works on the ancient Japanese language. He was also an active *waka* poet himself, noted for his revival of the *Man'yōshū* style and long-neglected poetic forms. After retiring from his post with Munetake, he taught in his private academy while continuing to produce various commentaries in addition to a series of more philosophical essays seeking to connect ancient Japanese language and literature to an ideology of Japanese cultural purity.

The most significant of these essays, excerpted here, was composed in response to a treatise by one of Ogyū Sorai's* students who had propounded a philosophy of the Way as a creation of the ancient Chinese sage kings, arguing that prior to the importation of Confucianism Japan lacked norms for governing society. Mabuchi counters this idea by proclaiming the existence of a native "Japanese Way" and asserting that ancient Japan was a society free of duplicity and governed in harmony with the rhythms of nature, all of which was later corrupted by the rationalistic mindset of foreign value systems.

[PF]

THE MEANING OF OUR COUNTRY

KAMO no Mabuchi 1765, 7–10, 12–13, 17, 20–4; (239,
243–5, 247–9, 252–3, 256–9)

A certain person said to me, "I have no interest in such trivial matters as poetry (*uta*). What interests me is the Way of China, which seeks to bring order to the world." I just laughed and did not bother responding. Later, I encountered him again. "When I was explaining the principles of all things, you just laughed," he said. "There must be some reason for your reaction." "What you speak of must be the Confucianism of China," I replied. "That is a human

creation that arbitrarily makes the 'heart' of heaven and earth into something very small." He then grew very angry and said, "How can you call this great 'Way' small?"

.....

When one hears a little about this Way, it does not seem worthy of discussion, but because it explains things theoretically and in great detail, people readily listen and feel they understand. What is most important is that the land be governed well, and that people revere preservation of the succession from one generation to the next. Even if people say that there is such-and-such a 'principle', in the actual world, although people may appear to be the same, their hearts differ. Therefore, one should realize that although on the surface they may appear to follow the Way, in their hearts they do not. When Confucianism was transmitted to this country it was explained that in China this principle was used to govern properly, but this was all just a lie. I would like to send those who are still deluded about this to China and show them what it is like. They would be as shocked as Urashima Tarō when he returned to his home village.¹

This country was originally governed well in accordance with the heart of heaven and earth, without such petty theorizing, but when these teachings that seemed plausible were suddenly introduced, they spread widely because people of antiquity, being straightforward, naively took them to be true. From ancient times things had generally flourished reign after reign, but following the introduction of Confucianism, in the reign of Emperor Tenmu, a great disturbance occurred. Subsequently at the Nara court, caps, robes, furniture, and other things were changed to the Chinese style. While on the surface everything became elegant, there came to be many people with wicked hearts. Since Confucianism leads people to have crafty hearts, they made the ruler excessively lofty so that people would revere him, and thus people came to have a servile mentality.

Later such things even came to pass as the awesome emperor being banished to an island. All these things happened after the introduction of Confucianism. Some people say that Buddhism is bad, but it simply makes people's hearts stupid, and the ruler will not flourish if the people's hearts are not stupid. Therefore, Buddhism is not so harmful.

Just as a path emerges naturally in rough mountains and wild fields, so, too, in this country the Way of the age of the *kami* spread naturally. And naturally the flourishing of the Way appropriate to the country led as well to the emperors flourishing more and more. It is unquestionably Confucianism that has not only

1. [An ancient Japanese folktale about a fisherman who pursues the daughter of the Sea God to her watery palace, only to return home three years later and discover that in the meantime hundreds of years have passed.]

brought about disorder in China, but has also done the same in this country. How foolish to fail to understand the essence of things and look only at the surface, and as a consequence to value Confucianism alone and consider it a tool for governing the realm.

Poetry is something that expresses the human heart. Although it may seem to be something of no use that we could just as well do without, when one understands poetry, one will also naturally understand the causes of peace and disorder. Indeed, it must have been for this reason that even Confucius did not discard the *Odes*, but made it first among the books. To try to define things unequivocally in terms of principle is to treat them as dead objects. It is the things that occur naturally, in accordance with heaven and earth, that are alive and active. Although it is not bad to have a general knowledge of things, people tend to go to extremes with this. Having gained knowledge, it is best to discard it. Although poetry may express wicked and immoral desires, this does not cause the heart to become disordered; instead, the heart is made gentle and opened up to all things.

Writing and Meaning

The same person went on, “This country, though, has no writing of its own. Instead, we use Chinese characters and through these are able to know about everything.” My response was that first of all, it goes without saying that China is a troublesome and poorly governed country. To give a specific example, there are the characters in the form of pictures. When we look at the characters that someone has put forth as just the ones necessary for ordinary use, they amount to some 38,000. To describe a single flower, for example, one needs to use different characters for blooming, scattering, pistil, plant, stem, and more than ten other things. Moreover, there are characters that are used in the name of a specific country or place, or for a particular type of plant, but are used nowhere else. Could people remember so many characters even if they tried? Sometimes people make mistakes with characters, and sometimes the characters change over time, leading to disputes over their usage; they are burdensome and useless.

In India, though, using fifty characters, they have written and passed down over five thousand volumes of Buddhist texts. Just knowing fifty characters, it is possible to know and transmit a limitless number of words from both past and present. Moreover, it is not only a matter of the characters; the fifty sounds are the voice of heaven and earth, so what they contain within them is natural. In the same way, there seem to have been some kind of characters in our imperial land as well, but after the introduction of Chinese characters, this original writing sunk wrongly into obscurity, and now only the ancient words remain.

Although these words are not the same as the fifty sounds of India, they are based on the same principle in that fifty sounds suffice to express all things.... Without needing to resort to characters, one can easily express both the good and the bad, and there is nothing troublesome. In Holland they have twenty-five characters, in this country there are fifty, and, in general, characters are like this in all countries. Only China concocted a cumbersome system, so things are disorderly there and everything is troublesome.

Although Chinese characters came to be used in our country, in ancient times they only borrowed the characters' sounds and used these to represent the words of our own country. After a while they also mixed in the meanings of the characters, but they still used only the Japanese readings and were not overly concerned with the Chinese meanings.... In this way, the words were the masters and the characters were the servants, so people used characters as they saw fit. Later, though, it was as if the words, which had been the masters, lost their position and were replaced by the characters that had been the servants. Such a development shows the influence of the wicked Chinese custom of lowly people becoming the ruler, so it is unspeakably foolish not to recognize how despicable this development was and to think only that Chinese characters are something splendid....

The Ancient Way of Our Imperial Land

The learning of China is from the beginning something created by humans on the basis of their own hearts, so it is fabricated with sharp, square angles and is easy to grasp. The Ancient Way of our Imperial Land is round and smooth in accordance with heaven and earth, and it cannot easily be described exhaustively with the meanings and words of humans, so it is difficult for people of later times to understand it. People may therefore wonder whether the Ancient Way has not been completely extinguished, but so long as heaven and earth do not perish, neither will this Way. It is just that things have come to be as they are on account of that easy-to-grasp Chinese Way. When we consider the duration of heaven and earth, though, five hundred or a thousand years is not even a blink of an eye. The Ancient Way is not something that pays respect to the narrow-minded things that people say.

Everything that exists naturally in accordance with heaven and earth is round, beginning with the sun and moon. To make a comparison to dew on a blade of grass, when dew forms on a sharp-cornered blade, it conforms to the blade's shape, but when it is placed on a flat surface, it returns to its original roundness. With government as well, it is by being based on this roundness that good government comes about. That being rigid and judgmental leads to bad government can be seen from the history of China. Since roundness is the

heart of heaven and earth, at the appropriate time, things should be returned to their original state. Hastily trying to deal with things on the basis of a vulgar and narrow human heart will only result instead in disorder....

You should especially look at how our Imperial Land is founded on this Way. The merit of appearing simple is that those below, observing the simplicity of those above, are filled with awe and, seeking to follow this example, come to live simply. Living simply, they have few desires; having few desires, they have few worries, and having few worries, they are at peace. To make a display of status is bad. Those people who, seeing the palace and the clothes, the adornments of the court ladies and the fine robes of the courtiers, think this is truly noble and feel genuine reverence, and most likely would not cause any trouble even were there no such display of exalted status.

.....

It goes without saying that ever since the Way of the Buddha was transmitted to Japan, it has made people extremely wicked. The true heart of Buddhism is surely not like this, but, pulled along by their own desires, people who practice Buddhism use it as a mask to speak endless falsehoods. What is more, they speak only about humans as having sin. All living things are the same, but has there been a buddha who preached to the birds and beasts?

Most people believe in karmic retribution. It is bothersome to give examples from the past to disprove this, and when people hear these they still remain doubtful, so let me give an example from the present. There is surely no sin that should bring greater retribution than that of murder. In the period preceding our own, though, there was great disorder, and for many years everyone went to battle and killed people. Those who did not kill anyone at all then are now commoners. Those who killed a few are the samurai and retainers of the shōgun today. Those who killed a few more became 'daimyō'. Those who killed even more became lords of entire provinces. Finally, the one who killed without end became the most exalted person in the land and prospered for generations. Where is the karmic retribution in this? One should realize that killing a human is the same as killing an insect.

.....

A certain person said, "What I see today is that those who study the military arts are hoping for war and want to become commander of the army. Those who are skilled in the Way of the warrior think it would be good were the world to become disordered, so that they could go into battle and kill any opponent who faced them, no matter how strong. This kind of attitude endangers the peaceful government of the land." I disagreed, saying that he did not understand the human heart, and told him to think about this by looking into his own heart. Born into a time of peace, when there is nothing much going on, we become bored with peace. In times like these, people wonder if this is all there

is. Reflecting upon the deeds of their ancestors, they become convinced that if only they had the opportunity, they would rise to the top. Seeing no chance for this in their own time, they pass their lives doing what they can. Although they imagine various possibilities, they simply have to follow along with the trend of the times. People who learn the Way of the warrior are like this; they may hope for the world to become disordered, but this does not make it become so. One or two people may seek to act on their desires, but since it is difficult to get by without going along with the current state of the world, there is nothing they can do, and they end up concealing their plans. People's hearts are all like this; when those above wield authority with martial valor, people will follow for some time, even if this does not come from the heart. Is it not good, then, to learn the Way of the warrior and pass it down to one's descendants, for use in an emergency?...

People generally do not feel deeply about things when there is no promise of gain. Because of this, the Way of the Buddha draws people in by telling them that if they recite such and such, they will become wealthy and will be saved in this life and the next. People are therefore all devoted to Buddhism. The Way of the warrior likewise does not achieve any effect simply by teaching that this is wicked and that is bad. However reasonable people may find this, unless there is some promise of return, such teachings will not penetrate to the depths of their hearts and draw them in....

A certain person said, "What you say makes sense, but that is something of the distant past. In the present day, customs have greatly changed, and people's hearts have become wicked, so how could we ever return to the past? Instead, we should follow along with the times and make the best of things. Things of the past are useless now." Everyone thinks this to be true, I responded, yet... It shows a poor grasp of these matters to think that things cannot improve. The world moves according to the heart of the one person who is at the top. Even in a battle where people's lives are in peril, it depends on the heart of the general; if it is straightforward, they will not begrudge their own lives. In all things, one should look back to the straightforwardness of the original heart.

[PF]

MOTOORI Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801)



Motoori Norinaga, the preeminent scholar of the early modern nativist movement known as *Kokugaku*, was born to a cotton wholesaler in the town of Matsusaka. In 1852, he went to Kyoto to study medicine, where he also enrolled in the school of the Confucian scholar Hori Keizan (1689–1757). Through the course of his studies, which included native poetic and prose traditions, Norinaga was informed by two hermeneutical approaches. The first was that of Ogyū Sorai*, who advocated a return to the study of the original, primary texts of Chinese Confucianism in order to ascertain the “true facts” of the “Way of the

sages” through the analysis of word meaning in context. The second was the philology of the Japanese language by Keichū (1640–1701), a Buddhist priest who wrote a ground-breaking commentary on the *Man'yōshū*. On completion of medical studies in 1757, Norinaga returned to Matsusaka where he established a medical practice.

Norinaga’s long and prolific scholarly career was devoted to elucidation of the spiritual heritage of the Japanese people. He also made lasting contributions to poetics (“Personal Views on Poetry,” 1763), the interpretation of literature (“Essentials of the *Tale of Genji*,” 1763), and the analysis of the history and structure of the Japanese language. His major achievement, however, was his *Commentary on the 'Kojiki'*, a forty-four-volume work composed between 1764 and 1798.

The earliest extant texts of Japan were two mytho-historical chronicles, the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*, 712), and the *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720). The *Nihon shoki*, written entirely in classical Chinese, was the first of six official court-sponsored chronologies modeled on the official histories of China. The *Kojiki*, on the other hand, held no official status and with the exception of deity names and poems written in sinographs used phonetically, was composed largely in hybrid classical Chinese. Norinaga argued that the *Kojiki*, while cloaked in the veneer of Chinese, was in fact the *Ur-text* of an ancient oral transmission of the true origins of Japan, communicated from the deities to their descendants, the ruling emperors of Japan. In his commentary, Norinaga reconstructed a native reading for the entire text in *Yamato kotoba*, an older form of Japanese unadulterated by Chinese borrowing, and probed the meaning of the text.

Under the dominant neo-Confucian ideology of the seventeenth century, scholarly attention to the “age of the *kami*” chapters in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* was devoted to elucidating the ways in which the facts recorded therein conformed to the neo-Confucian universalist claims of ‘principles’ common to all peoples. Norinaga maintained that this so-called universalism was simply a concept rooted

in Chinese epistemology. In his view, the concept of the “Way of heaven,” under which principle, the moral force inherent in all things, rewarded those of virtue by allowing them to rise to power as rulers to serve as models of principled behavior for the ruled, was simply an artificial construct created to legitimate particular forms of governance. Norinaga claimed that in ancient Japan, order was naturally maintained through unquestioned faith in the deities of creation, and in their descendants, the imperial rulers of Japan.

The selections that follow open with a passage from Norinaga’s *The Spirit of Rectification*, which contained the essence of his thought on the “ancient Way of Japan.” The next excerpt shows Norinaga engaged in debate with Ichikawa Tazumaro (1740–1795), a Confucian of the Sorai School who was the first to offer a Confucian critique of Norinaga’s work in an 1870 work entitled *Exorcising Evil*. Norinaga countered that same year with the essay “Arrowroot,” in which he takes up the criticisms one by one and offers counter-arguments. → See also pages 1174–5.

[AW]

THE WAY OF JAPAN

MOTOORI Norinaga 1771, 50–2, 54, 57, 62; 28–32, 35, 40

In ancient times there was no discussion of a ‘Way’.... The word meant merely a route that led to some place. Apart from this, there was no other “way” in antiquity.

Speaking of “the Way of so-and-so” to refer to an ideal state or particular teaching is the custom of a foreign country.

.....

The Way referred to created and established laws. Thus, in China, the Way is nothing but a device to seize another country and a strategy to protect one’s own country from being overtaken. To steal a country, all one must do is take everything into consideration, strive hard, and perform all manner of good deeds in order to win the hearts of its people. This is why the sages were made to appear as supremely virtuous and their Way as serene and perfect. But they went against their own Way to overthrow sovereigns and take over their countries. This makes them the vilest of men and everything they say a lie. Is it perhaps because evil minds created their Way in order to deceive people that followers revere and obey them only superficially? In truth, no one observes the Way. Their Way never helped the country except to spread its name widely. Eventually the Way of the sages fell into disuse and turned into a topic for use-less babble by the Confucians, who criticize everyone but themselves.

.....

What is their Way? They set up cumbersome precepts such as ‘humaneness’,

'righteousness', courtesy, humility, 'filial piety', brotherhood, loyalty, and 'sincerity' in such a way as to rule people by force and with severity. The Confucians criticize the law of later years as contrary to the Way of the ancient kings. But wasn't the Way of the ancient kings also the law of ancient times? They even created divination in the *Book of Changes*, making it appear very profound and believing that they had mastered the principles of the universe. This, too, was a deceit aimed at attracting the attention of the people and ruling over them.

The principles of heaven and earth are all the designs of the '*kami*', and as such are thoroughly divine and mysterious. If our limited intellect cannot understand them, how could anyone succeed in mastering them? It is foolish to pay attention to them.... Following the Chinese manner, one may speak of a highest, supreme Way, but it was precisely because this Way existed that there was no word for it. No one talked about the Way, but it was there. What a difference between arguing about it pompously and not arguing about it at all. "Not arguing" means not discussing matters pretentiously and not making assertions in the Chinese manner.

The 'will of heaven' is a contrived concept that the ancient sages of China thought up to justify the crime of overthrowing a lord and stealing his land.

.....

What is their Way? It is not something that arises spontaneously and of itself. Be aware of this and do not confuse the Way with the Daoist views of Laozi, Zhuangzi, and others in China.

.....

The important thing is to do what one is supposed to do in line with one's position in society, and to lead one's life in peace.... If you insist on searching for the Way, first cleanse yourself of the filth of Chinese learning, hold fast to the pure Japanese spirit, and study the ancient books thoroughly. Then it will become clear naturally that there is no Way that a person should learn and perform. To understand this is precisely to observe the Way of the *kami*. And then it will be clear that even to discuss the question this far is already to deviate from the essence of the Way.

[SN]

IN DEFENSE OF THE JAPANESE WAY

MOTOORI Norinaga 1780, 123–32, 140–7

A certain individual has written the work *Exorcising Evil* in which he critiques my explication of the Way. While it may appear, to take a broad view of the essence of this work, that he has some affinity for the study of Japan, he

is a Confucian. As he has for some years valued only the Way of the sages of China, it is through the lens of that same Chinese sensibility that he seeks to judge the ancient past of Japan. His stance is thus quite different from the intent and meaning of my discussion. His work is one born from great anger at seeing the ways in which I have spoken ill of the sages of China. Scholars of our world have sipped the poisoned wine of the Chinese classics for some thousand years, abandoning themselves to the sweetness of those words without any of them realizing how drunk and confused they are. When it happens that someone comes to his senses through the august spirit of the Deity of Rectification and begins to denounce this state of affairs, he is met with a barrage of crazed denial and the insistence that there is no intoxication involved. I cannot bear the sadness of seeing even those who desire even a modicum of sobriety being forced to drink still more of this poisoned wine and driven into greater drunkenness and confusion. And so I bring you this arrowroot—savor it and come to your senses!

In *Exorcising Evil*, it is said that I regard the concept of nature expounded by Laozi and Zhuangzi to be good, concluding that it is no wonder I severely criticize the sages.

From these words one can well imagine how perverse this critic is. He believes that those who critique the sages must be followers of Laozi and Zhuangzi. He reasons that because Laozi and Zhuangzi do not think well of these theories, what else can I myself do but judge the sages to be bad? To assume that simply because one happens to reason along the same line as others, one must surely think as their followers do, may be likened to a fire breaking out in a village in the middle of the night and a group of men gambling nearby rushing to the scene to put it out. When the townspeople hear of it, they join the effort to stop the fire. Now should some of the neighboring villagers see this and conclude that these townspeople must also be gamblers simply because they pitched in to help, they would exhibit this same sort of reasoning. The Way of the sages is the fire; Laozi and Zhuangzi are the gamblers; my work, *The Divine Spirits of Naobi*, is one of the townspeople; and the words of this critic are like the thoughts of the neighboring villagers. Laozi and Zhuangzi's gambling may be evil, but putting out the fire is an act of goodness. It is nothing less than a gross error in reasoning to assume that one who comes to the rescue in a similar fashion must be a member of their gang.

All has been handed down by word of mouth....

In comparing the spoken word with the written word, we see that each mode has its strengths and weaknesses, so that it is difficult to determine which of them is superior. From today's perspective, anyone would conclude that the written word is far superior simply because a great deal has to be memorized

if one relies only on the spoken word to convey things. If we could return to the mindset of the ancient past, however, when oral transmission was the only method available, we would not have the sense that something was lacking due to the availability of writing.

This is true not only of writing, but of a whole host of goods and other things. New things appear in the course of time and we value the convenience that was not there for us before. Once these new things are at hand, we get so used to them that we cannot but conclude that it must have been very inconvenient for those who lived at a time when they were not around. But the fact is, their lack was not felt. In the case of writing, we have Chinese characters, *katakana*, and *hiragana*² in the imperial land, and were one of them to be missing we might well have cause to find it inconvenient. And yet in China, which has neither *katakana* nor *hiragana*, people do not find it a disadvantage to be without them. To transmit an important message to a distant place, one relies on written communication, anticipating that errors could creep into a verbal communiqué. Here the written word has a clear advantage. In contrast, there are matters for which a written account could prove obscure. In such cases, one sends a messenger to convey the details orally, and all is understood quite well. Is this not the merit of the spoken word? Even the Chinese have said that writing does not exhaust all there is to be said.

Taking this into consideration, we can conclude that facts of the past transmitted to us orally preserve their detailed nuances, whereas our reliance on writing means that something is unavoidably lost. Thus we can see that each method has its strengths and weaknesses, but our critic lists only the defects of oral transmission and none of its positive aspects. In similar fashion, he points only to the merits of written communication, with no mention of its weaknesses. Is this not biased? He states that in oral transmission only what is not true remains, but this is a defect shared by written transmission. If one records falsehoods in writing, then the truth is lost. If one communicates the truth through word of mouth, how can the truth not be preserved? On the one hand, his assertion that there are errors in oral transmission is certainly true. The advantage of writing is that, once something has been recorded, it can remain as is for thousands of years, since writing is permanent. On the other hand, the mentality of those in the age when writing did not exist was different, and for that reason, oral transmission in such times differed greatly from the verbal transmission of those who live in a world with writing: there was nothing uncertain about it. One can grasp this by observing the way an illiterate per-

2. [The *katakana* and *hiragana* are parallel syllabic systems used to write Japanese phonetically and provide grammatical inflections.]

son today is able to memorize things that those who are literate simply cannot because of their reliance on committing a multitude of facts to writing. Above all, it has been handed down from of old that the imperial realm is a land where the spirit of the spoken word aids and blesses the nation. Indeed, therein lies the mystery of our language, superior to that of all other countries.

The events of ancient times are secret affairs made to conform to the stratagems of later emperors.

The phrase “made to conform to the stratagems” is an odd locution, and it is hard to understand what is meant. However, if we probe the critic’s intent, the passage implies that the events that took place in those ages when writing did not exist, prior to Emperor Ōjin, have all been fabricated to suit the will of subsequent emperors and do not reflect the facts. He is a fine one to disgorge such heresy even as he enjoys the good fortune of having the light of ‘Amaterasu’ Ōmikami before his very eyes! On what basis can he possibly claim this to be one of those things from ancient times that has disappeared because there was no writing? Now he reasons that since there is no certain account of events in China that occurred before the advent of writing, but only a haphazard of occurrences, such must be the case in Japan as well. This is a lopsided way of reasoning, amounting to a one-rule-fits-all approach that uses an incorrect measurement as a standard in trying to ascertain the correct one.

This mindset is not limited to the current issue under consideration. Confucians, in fact, fail in all matters to comprehend the true state of affairs in Japan, preferring to regard the distortions of China as correct. Such allegiance reflects the madness of minds plagued by the poisoned wine of the Chinese classics. Well then, have a taste of arrowroot, sober up, come out of your stupor, and listen. The reason that everything that took place after the splitting of heaven and earth prior to the beginning of all things has been so accurately transmitted in Japan is due to the fact that Japan, as the land of the deity Amaterasu, was superior to all other countries, and that the hearts of her people were pure and the cleverness of writing was nonexistent. Therefore, Japan had the advantage of transmission through the marvelous ‘spirit of words’. As foreign lands lay outside the realm of the *kami*, the powers of reason available to them could not possibly measure up to those of Japan. Hence their accounts of ancient times are incorrect.

Now, while matters of ancient times were not transmitted elsewhere as accurately as they were in Japan, each country nonetheless had its own transmissions, as did China. It is only that these were termed fiction by half-witted sages appearing on the scene who, with their limited wisdom, set out to lay down some arbitrary explanation of the beginning of heaven and earth and of everything that occurred thereafter. These sages regarded the ancient transmis-

sions as useless and so did not take them up. This was regarded as wise, and the result was that the ancient transmissions simply disappeared. Among these sages was the rather clever Duke of Zhou, who was fond of making use of his mental capabilities to determine the order of things. The people of the country held his work in high regard, with the result that his views soon became the law of the land. By the time of the Zhou Dynasty, the transmissions from ancient times had all but vanished. When such rare traces do surface from time to time, it is downright deplorable that they continue to be regarded as fiction, with no one to take them into consideration. How distorted, indeed, must the account of things be when transmissions from antiquity are not adopted, and things are established according to the predilections of certain individuals. As the present critic finds only these sages to be of value, he favors this deplorable practice, and it is to this that his efforts to slander the correct transmissions of Japan must be attributed. While it is to be expected that the people of China, knowing nothing of the correct transmissions, find the practice of the sages well and good, how can a person in this country who learns of the correct transmissions continue to be deceived by such deplorable practice? If you still persist in your intoxication, sip a bit of arrowroot.

Now, our critic would have it that the reason we have succeeded in accounting for the events of antiquity under the reigns of later emperors is because we have learned the Way of the sages in studying the Chinese classics over three centuries from the reign of Emperor Ōjin to the reign of Emperor Tenmu.³ If it were the case, as it is said to be, that we were able to establish the facts of antiquity because we had succeeded in mastering the Way of the sages of China, then our transmissions would indeed be cleverly composed in a fashion similar to that of Prince Toneri's *'Nihon shoki'*, wherein words, meanings, and events all follow the Chinese style. In fact, they differ completely from the Chinese style. It is only because they are given the status of fiction from the perspective of the Way of the sages that they have not been seriously considered. This itself is evidence that, for the most part, accounts of the divine age do not rely on the texts of China and are not fictive constructions. Even now, relics from the divine age, such as the divine mirror, entrusted by Amaterasu Ōmikami to her grandson and enshrined in Isuzu no Miya,⁴ and the divine sword Kusanagi, enshrined in Atsuta Shrine, are still to be found throughout the land. Furthermore, the imperial tombs of Emperor Jinmu and emperors of subsequent reigns are to be found in the Kinai provinces, and numerous relics of the divine age are preserved in the imperial court. In addition, the Nakatomi, Inbe, and Ōtomo clans

3. [Roughly 270–686]

4. [The Grand Shrines of Ise.]

have continued to transmit to each successive generation the duties performed in the divine age. These are all clear evidence of the truth of events from the divine age. As the relics and practices found in various provinces, along with the descendants of the various houses are not things that were created overnight, it is difficult to equate the age of our country with that of other countries in which such evidence is weak, and in which the descendants of the illustrious families and the laws of the various districts change from generation to generation, leaving no trace behind. Our critic, however, has applied his perverted wit to claim that ancient events have simply been constructed to correspond to these existing relics, practices, and descendants. As these relics, practices, and descendants do exist, there can be no doubt that there were ancient matters pertaining to them. Moreover, if the truth of these matters had not been transmitted, and if we are to assume that the accounting of them was something created at a later time, then the accounts would have been created in line with the Chinese style, as explained above. That did not happen, and thus it should be apparent that the theory of our critic is so much prattle aimed at refuting the Way of the *kami*.

The meaning of the name Amaterasu corresponds to that of "sun."

This view is also voiced by adherents of Shinto who cannot escape the modern Confucian interpretation, and represents another instance of the adherence to Chinese assignments. It is an error based on the model of the confused notion that in China, ancestors dwell in the heavens. There was no such distorting fabrication in Japanese antiquity.

If you insist that the sun deity is the sun itself..., before her birth it must have been continuous night... In that case, it is patent that the sun must have resided in the heavens at the beginning of heaven and earth.

His use of the expression "if you insist" is most unwarranted. Although it is clearly and beyond all doubt seen in the *Kojiki* and in the *Shoki* that the sun deity is in fact the sun, our critic insists that this is not the case. The sun goddess, however, illuminates every quarter of the world and her origin lies in Japan. Even now, her imperial descendants, the rulers of Japan, preside over the four seas. He poses the question as to whether it had not been eternal night prior to her coming into existence, just as the world that had been plunged into darkness while she hid herself away in the heavenly rock cave.⁵ This is something only a child would notice and wonder about. One can only think it juvenile of him to point to this as something important and bring it up for

5. [The reference here is to the incident in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* in which the sun deity secluded herself in a stone cave causing the "middle world" to fall dark. In order to entice her out, the other deities offered various kinds of entertainment.]

debate. Just such instances rather help us realize that the events of the divine age are true and not mere fabrications. If this were something that had been created by a later emperor, would he have created something so vivid as to be beyond belief?

Consider carefully the following. The acts of the deities lie not in the realm of ordinary logic, in a form easily discernible to humans. No matter how clever one may be, there are limits to a person's intelligence. The human mind is a small thing, such that events beyond its ken cannot be fathomed. The reason the acts of the *kami* sound far-fetched and seem unreal, despite their truth, is that they occur in a place that is quite beyond the limits of human understanding, with the result that people hearing of these acts find them far removed from the working of the human mind and hence difficult to comprehend and believe. The accounts of China, in contrast, while false, are formulated within the limits of human understanding and closely follow the reasoning of the human mind. This makes them easy to comprehend and believe. The Chinese people believe that the wisdom of the sages encompasses all principles of the universe. With this clever model, they apply their limited intelligence to force interpretations of even those things that defy understanding. When they arrive at some matter which their principles cannot explain, they simply choose not to believe it and judge it to be unprincipled. To dismiss certain matters in such fashion may sound impressive, but in fact it merely reveals how very meager is their intelligence.

We have strayed from the example introduced by our critic, but on close inspection, any doubt in the matter may be left to resolve itself of its own accord. To begin with, recall that when Izanagi no mikoto went to the land of 'yomi', he had to light a fire because it was dark; this was not necessary in the visible land of human beings. The land of *yomi* was dark, just as it is assumed to be; and the visible land, assumed to be bright, was indeed bright. Now since this took place prior to the birth of the sun goddess, it is difficult to determine why the visible land was bright. In the *Nihon shoki sanso*⁶ and elsewhere, there is a reference to the notion that the bodies of humans at the beginning of the '*kalpa*' of creation were suffused with illuminating light, but this is a Buddhist theory. In accounts of the divine age one also finds mention of *kami* that shone like fireflies. These are wicked deities, however, and do not apply generally. As there are no other accounts of bodies possessed of light, we cannot determine where such illumination initiated. One may only conclude that the light derived from some principle unknown to humans.

6. [The *Nihon shoki sanso*, which dates from the early fifteenth century, is representative of medieval scholarly commentaries on the *Nihon shoki*.]

We may now address the question of how it came about that eternal night ensued when the sun goddess concealed herself in the heavenly rock cave. Because it was ordained that, with her birth, the sun goddess would illuminate the space between heaven and earth, we know that without her divine brilliance there could be no light. By the same token, we cannot identify a principled explanation for the fact that after the descent of the offspring of the sun goddess from heaven, the travel between heaven and earth ceased for eternity. There are many other wondrous and mysterious events from the divine age that merit explication as well. None in ancient times used their wits to elucidate the principles governing the acts of the *kami*. In later times, however, under the influence of the practice of the Chinese, the preference for cleverness passed as wisdom, when in fact it was foolishness. This is because people assume that the mysterious and wondrous events from the divine age differ from those of the human age, when in fact there is indeed much in the latter that is strange and miraculous as well. We live in the midst of many such things in our present reality, but have become used to their sight and sound and so do not find them strange. Just consider the existence of the heaven and earth. Does the earth hang in the sky, or does it rest upon some object? Either way, it is a wonder. If the earth rests on something else, then what is it that supports the object beneath it? Such principles are hard to determine.

There are various theories regarding this in China, and all of them are mysterious. One of these theories... maintains that the earth is a sphere wrapped in heaven and suspended in the sky. From the perspective of ordinary logic this may seem to be so, but even if we suppose that the heaven is filled with air, without some explanation of why the land and the seas remain suspended in the sky without moving, this theory, too, is simply miraculous. It seems equally reasonable to suppose that heaven is merely air and has no form. But if this were so, then beyond the earth all would be air and we would have to consider whether or not there is a limit to it. If there is no limit, then it is impossible to determine where the center is and if there is a periphery. We cannot determine what holds the earth in place, since logic dictates that unless it is in the center, it cannot be stable. If, on the other hand, we assume that the air is bounded, then how is it that a locus comes to be determined around which the air congeals like a cannon ball? What causes it to congeal?

In any event, all of this is miraculous. It is pure folly to call the events from the divine age into question as miraculous and unfounded at the same time as we continue to live within this strange domain of heaven and earth without finding anything strange at all in its wondrous aspects. Consider, as well, the human body. Is it not strange that we see things with our eyes, hear things with our ears, say things with our mouths, walk with our feet, and perform a host of acts with our hands? Are not the flight of birds and insects, the flowers and fruit

of plants, a wonder as well? The strangest phenomena of all are the transformations of inanimate objects into animate creatures, and the taking on of human form by foxes and badgers. In short, the universe itself and all its creatures are miraculous, and the principles of the purported sages cannot meet the challenge of providing an exhaustive account of it. We have no choice, then, but to conclude that human intelligence is a small thing and has its limits. We also must realize that the acts of the *kami* are infinite in their mystery. How comical it is to observe these sages explaining away those phenomena that fall within the domains of their limited intelligence, concluding that they have exhausted all of the principles of the universe, then believing in them with reverent awe?

As for the highly mysterious question of the origin of the universe, we cannot identify any explanation other than to attribute it to a wondrous act of the *kami*. Here, too, the Chinese have their explanations, using the concepts of *yin* and *yang*. If we cannot know what underlies these principles, however, we are forced to reckon them mysteries as well. If the universe has neither beginning nor end, how then are we to explain the existence of things? If our critic carefully considers the matters described above, the doubts he presents would be dispelled straightaway. If not, then understanding may be reached with everyday examples. Rats and weasels see things in the dark as if it were daylight. By what light source is this accomplished? There are also birds that see well at night but are not adept at seeing in the daylight. Are such phenomena not difficult to explain by ordinary logic? Our critic finds fault with the light of the divine age as entirely without principle. One is forced to conclude that the light of the everyday creatures is likewise without principle. Just as there are things among the lowly birds and animals that are beyond our reason, so, too, must the origin of the universe lie with the acts of the *kami*.

One must especially question why the stars are not mentioned in the chapters on the “age of the kami”...

While Kagasewo, deity of the stars, is mentioned in the second chapter on the “age of the *kami*” in the *Shoki*, why is it that the stars are not discussed? We may interpret this objection as directed to the question of why the origin of the star deity is not addressed. To pose this question, however, is to be consumed with the same Chinese sensibilities mentioned earlier. It is in foreign lands that the stars, along with the sun and moon, are termed “the three lights” and regarded as awe-inspiring. Such, however, was not the case in ancient Japan. The stars are not be equated with the sun and the moon. Although many of them are visible in the heavens, they are phenomena akin to clouds and fog, and as such do not merit the transmission of an account of their origins. As evidence of this fact, simply consider the name of this deity, which is simply Kagasewo and lacks the honorific title of *mikoto* normally accorded to deities. This is true of

other stars as well, which should instruct us as to their insignificance. There are theories that interpret deities such as Amenominakanushi as stars, but these are nothing more than idiosyncratic gestures to Chinese mentality, errant and ungrounded.

The minimal account of the stars continues even into the chapters in the ages of humans, when prior to the introduction of texts from other lands, there is no reference made to stars, not to mention any worship or other reverent attention to them. The emperor's worship of his birth star on New Year's day dates from a slightly later period, as do the March third and September third Torch Festivals for the sun and the north star. In times of austerity, ritual veneration of the north star was prohibited for imperial princes and princesses in provinces along the route from Kyoto and the capital provinces to Ise and Ōmi. In the fifteenth year of Enryaku,⁷ such ceremonies were forbidden altogether, and with good reason. For our critic nonetheless to consider the stars on a par with the sun and the moon amounts to nothing more than a slavish imitation of the Chinese mentality. Moreover, the fact that the origin of the stars is not mentioned should be regarded as a sign of the truth of the accounts transmitted from the divine age. If things were otherwise and the accounts of matters of antiquity fabrications of a later emperor who, having learned the Way of the sages of China, adopted their mentality, then surely he would have treated the sun, the moon, and the stars equally and provided an account of the origins of the star god in the same way that the origins of the sun and the moon are accounted for as they were in China and along the same lines as our biased critic. That such an account is not given is due to the fact that these are pure transmissions from antiquity, unadulterated by the Chinese mentality.

Those who pursue studies... make claims to the effect that things differ from matters in other lands.

Finally, one sees the statement that I aim to situate Japan outside heaven and earth. While it is difficult to understand what is meant here, if we carefully examine the words in context, we find that he is referring to the fact that Amaterasu Ōmikami is the sun, and was born in Japan. This is what is under dispute. The essential facts of the matter are so clearly seen in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* that one can have no doubt whatsoever, yet our critic ingenuously proposes it as if it were some new theory. In all respects, the eyes of this critic are clouded by the noxious wine of the Chinese mentality and blinded to the essence of the ancient texts of Japan. This confusion is not limited to our critic, however. Theologians of the modern age are all intoxicated with this poisoned

7. [786.]

wine, each questioning the fact that Amaterasu Ōmikami, as the sun, was born in Japan. All such theories are oblivious of the central purport of the ancient texts. By no means do I adopt an idiosyncratic theory that ignores the ancient transmissions. Indeed, the reason Amaterasu Ōmikami holds that name is because she *is* the sun, and there is no need to expound in great detail in regard to the fact that she was born in Japan.

Foreign countries lack this true account of things, and simply do not know how the sun and the moon originated. Although there are rare instances of vestigial ancient transmissions, such as the account of the left and the right eyes of Pangu⁸ becoming the sun and the moon, the people of China are disposed to value only sophistry, with the result that such theories are derided as falsehoods and not pursued. Instead, they rely on their own hypotheses, and attribute the origins to the energies of *yin* and *yang*. In the legend of Pangu's eyes, it would seem that the account of the origins of the sun deity and the moon deity coming into existence when Izanagi no mikoto washed his eyes had been transmitted in a distorted form to foreign lands, there to be preserved at least in part. This account is superior to the aforementioned hypothetical theories. Whereas our critic proclaims that those who pursue learning must open their minds to the far corners of the universe and reject self-interest, his own mind is rather narrowly confined to the borders of China, leaving no room for consideration of anything beyond. As a result, he takes only the opinions of the Chinese as a model and, having determined that everything else is worthless, has no understanding of the thought of Japan.

Leaving aside for the moment the question of which explanation is better or worse, let us factor out the perspective of China in relation to that of Japan. Seen from China, the Japanese view is wrong; seen from Japan, the Chinese view is wrong. Yet our critic advocates only the viewpoint of China and tries to force the ancient matters of Japan into that framework. Is this not idiosyncratic bias? One might claim that, insofar as the universe is a single entity, there can be no division into Chinese and Japanese perspectives, so that factoring out viewpoints in this manner is itself indicative of a narrow and arbitrary point of view. For our critic to esteem only the Chinese point of view and to call into doubt the antiquity of Japan is already to create such a division, with the balance tilted in favor of China. To conclude that one's own mind is sufficient to cover the entire universe is no different from a drunk who does not realize he is intoxicated but persists in claiming that he is sober.

Furthermore, in his estimation of the sages, our critic has turned his back on

8. [Pangu is a Chinese mythical creator who emerged from a primordial egg, separating *yin* and *yang*, heaven and earth, with the rest of his body dispersing into the material and life forms of our world.]

the Confucian principle of reverence for the domestic and contempt for the foreign. If there were no such distinctions, would it not be proper for each country to value its own perspectives, given that all countries have their own traditions and views to which they adhere? All the more so for Japan, which is superior to all other countries and maintains correct transmissions from antiquity, and whose Way is that of the great *kami* who illuminates all lands. What sort of illogical perversion is it, then, to abandon this tradition and with no reason champion the viewpoint of another country, even going so far as to maintain that the ancient transmissions of one's own land are fabrications?

Our critic claims that my statements are incoherent and confused. By this he means that it is inconsistent to maintain that all countries receive the munificence of the sun goddess, and yet to claim that the country of the sun goddess is not present in foreign lands. What I meant was merely that the sun goddess was not born in foreign lands. I do not mean that the sun does not illuminate these lands. It is normal use of language to simply refer to one's land of birth as one's "country"; likewise, people speak of returning to their native land as returning to their "country," and of natives as "countrymen," and so forth. It is in this sense that I use the term. It is ridiculous of him to maintain that I view the heavenly sun as something different from the sun that shines over foreign lands. What is so unusual about the claim that the sun goddess was born in this country and illuminates all lands? To conclude that I am claiming otherwise reflects the mindset of one who, steeped in nothing but the theories of China, encounters for the first time the statement that the sun goddess was born in Japan, and finds the concept exceedingly odd. This is like someone so fixed on the idea of iron as something hard as stone that he is absolutely dumbfounded on seeing a metallurgist melting it down. While his point that the heavenly *kami* bestow their blessings far and wide is a valid one, still, Japan is the land of the origin of Amaterasu and, as the country where her ancestors have held dominion, is superior to all other countries and beyond comparison in this regard.

.....

In the chaos of antiquity, there was no distinction between the ruler and the ruled....

If the state of affairs were as our critic claims it is, then, given the chaotic nature of things, subjects would be free to make anyone their lord, to smite their ruler, and take over the country. If we regard the reigns of King Jie of Xia and King Zhou of Shang⁹ as times of chaos, then in effect we are deliberately covering up the immoralities of the sages. As King Jie and King Zhou were indeed tyrants,

9. [The allusions are to ancient Chinese kingdoms in the third and second millennia BCE.]

one can certainly stake this claim. But the acts of Cheng Tang and King Wu, who determined that the reigns of King Jie and King Zhou represented the world of chaos in which there was no distinction between ruler and ruled, and thus overthrew these lords, were themselves acts of chaos. One commits an act of tyranny because there is no distinction between ruler and ruled, and by overthrowing one's lord, founds a kingdom—how are people to believe in such a claim? Yet, such is the 'heart' of the Chinese people that they respect such wicked and notorious robbers. It is all beyond comprehension. If in fact there had been no wish to usurp the throne, there were relatives among the Yin family of King Zhou, such as Jizi, who could have been put forward and established as ruler. As these usurpers did nothing of the kind, however, it is quite clear that they were happy to render the kingdom their own, and follow the principles of chaos.

Cheng Tang and King Wu are thus the sons of the heavenly kami....

The expression “child of the heavenly *kami*” is to be used in reference to the emperor with utmost respect. By no means is it to be used otherwise. To employ it in this way, to casually refer to the usurper of a foreign land, is a horrendous confusion of names.

After the subjugation of the rebellious, the Way of the ruler and the ruled will once again be established.

If this theory were correct, it would mean that until the overthrow of King Zhou, neither King Wen nor King Wu had any knowledge of the Way of the ruler and the ruled, and in fact it would seem that they gained knowledge of the Way of the ruler and the ruled only after the overthrow. To claim that until seizing the country of one's lord, one did not suffer from the lack of a sense of the ruler and the ruled, and then to suddenly attempt to implement the Way of the ruler and the ruled upon usurpation of the throne—is this not a clever act designed to prevent one's subjects from usurping the throne from oneself? From around the mid-Zhou dynasty, however, there were many traitorous vassals, of whom King Wu was only the first. Thus, while the Way of the sages seems to have much of value on the surface, beneath it is fraught with harm....

The Emperor was grateful for the gift of the Way of the sages.... It would seem that there were difficulties with the Ezo¹⁰ in the remote past of Japan.

This section in particular shows no respect at all for Japan. Defying all logic, our critic compares the reigns of previous emperors to an isle of savages, and

10. [The term “Ezo” is meant to refer generically to aboriginal peoples in the north of the Japanese archipelago.]

shows his contempt in regarding them as the equivalent of birds and animals, which is pure heresy.

From the outset the Ezo were a people distinct from the Japanese. The difference survives into the present, as evidenced in such things as their abundant beards, and it is clear that they differ in mindset and behavior as well. Until mid-antiquity, there were many Ezo to be found in the provinces of Mutsu and Dewa, living alongside Japanese people. They have long been familiar with the customs of this country, and indeed, among them there are those who have been profoundly instructed in these manners. Nonetheless, the fact that the Ezo are difficult to transform is often attested to in the annals of history, and this is due to the fact that from the start they are a distinct people. To compare the reigns of previous emperors to the Ezo without taking all of these factors into consideration is nothing more than speculative nonsense. Even our critic's beloved China is, from the perspective of Japan, a land in which there is no lineage by which one may distinguish the high and the low; without the Way of the ruler and the ruled, it is a land close to the realm of birds and animals. Fortunately, Japan, as the home of the sun goddess, is a land where the emperors are her children, and for this reason the hearts and minds of all of the people, from high to low, are superior to those of other countries.

Furthermore, inasmuch as Japan has been a land naturally furnished with the ways of the ruler and the ruled, of parents and children, and all other ways, there is no need to emphasize this particular way and instruct the people in it. How, then, could Japan have been waiting for the Way of the sages to arrive from a foreign land? Foreign lands are not the home of the sun goddess, and this is why the people in such lands, following the ways of evil deities, are improper in all respects and difficult to pacify. This is why they take the trouble to create terms for things and instruct others as to their meaning, much as a village having no thieves finds no need to protect its people from thievery, while a village with thieves cannot get by without protection. China and such countries are like a village with many thieves, and thus engage in constructing elaborate preventive measures. Indeed, as is often the case, the more exacting the preventive measures, the greater the likelihood that thieves will cultivate their ingenuity, sharpen their talents, and steal even more. Such is the Way of the sages, which appears on the surface to have value but is, in fact, harmful, as we have seen.

Only the Way of the sages excels in managing other countries....

As the sages are themselves thieves by nature, stealing from people and knowing well those techniques, it is to be expected that they are also the masters of the techniques of prevention.

The Way articulated by the ruler Tokugawa Ieyasu¹¹ is the Way of the sages....

In this section, the attempt is made to subsume the emperors of the ages, along with Tokugawa Ieyasu, under the preferred fold of the Way of the sages, going so far as to paint them as supporters. In a particularly devious discussion, our critic quotes from the exhortations of Ieyasu to the literary and military arts, and to loyalty and filial piety, as evidence in point. To ground his argument he notes that it was the sages of China who coined the terms “loyalty,” “filial piety,” “propriety,” and “duty.” In matter of fact, however, these were concepts long extant in Japan, known and practiced by its people. Because there was no need to instruct and enlighten them in this regard, neither was there a need to give them names. In China, the reason the sages contrived to construct these terms was that the acts of the people were rife with thievery. In their obsession with terms, the Confucians were most foolish to conclude that without a name, such acts could not exist.

Let us consider matters of the human heart. Whereas in China there are many terms, such as “will,” “passion,” and “desire,” in Japan we have spoken merely in terms of *'kokoro'* and lacked all such terms. Nonetheless, will, passion, and desire existed. If we follow the reasoning of our critic, would this not mean that will, passion, and desire could not have existed among the people of Japan prior to the arrival of the Chinese classics? Similarly, when Ieyasu speaks of “the military and literary arts,” and “loyalty and filial piety,” he is simply referring to worldly customs, and has merely borrowed the sinographs of China to express them. In fact, these are all ways that are native to Japan, and Japan is not unique in having borrowed none of it from the way of China. In other countries, as well, such concepts are abundant, though they are known by different names. In India, *bhakti* is loyalty, *putradharma* is filial piety, *vinaya* is propriety, and *ārjava* is rectitude. Recognizing that other countries also have such words, to conceive of the origin of these concepts as the sole province of the Way of the sages is exceedingly foolish.

In the same vein, our critic’s claim that to censure the sages is a sinful violation of the spirit of the ancient emperors and Tokugawa Ieyasu sounds reasonable at first. But nowhere in the imperial edicts of the ages or the regulations of Ieyasu does it state that it is a sin to criticize the sages. Therefore, where is the crime in finding fault with Confucianism or Buddhism? If it is a sin to speak ill of the sages, then the Confucians are guilty many times over for their censure of Buddhism. Our emperors throughout the ages, as well as the great shōgun, have revered Buddhism, and in this matter are without equal in Confucianism.

11. [Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) founded the Tokugawa ‘shogunate’ that was to last until the Meiji Restoration of 1868.]

Indeed, one even now hears the decree that it is unlawful to censure Buddhism. If these are sins, then how great must be our critic's sin in disparaging the ancient past of Japan as an isle of savages, no better than birds and animals. Considering the fact that the Way of the sages, after many years, was applied to our imperial court, it would not be in the spirit of that Way to regard it as mistaken, and this is as I have explained at the end of *The Spirit of Rectification*.

For example, suppose that there is a close retainer secretly plotting to assassinate his lord, who suspects nothing of the sort but simply regards him as a loyal retainer. Meantime, there is a low-ranking retainer who knows of the murderous intent of the trusted retainer, but due to the law prohibiting him from approaching the lord, cannot inform him of the plan. At the moment the lord's very life is in danger, the wretched underling cannot bear to watch. In desperation, he violates the law and approaches the lord, rescuing his life. In such a case, the wretched retainer is neither a loyal subject, nor a disloyal subject. The analogy here is that the murderous retainer represents the Way of other countries and the lord the totality of the ancient Way. The inability of the lowly retainer to approach the lord may be regarded as a disservice to the lord. Still, the proscription against deliberation from below is part of our ancient Way. To be obliged to break that law and save the life of one's lord is the function of *The Spirit of Rectification*. Violation of the law is a serious matter, but it is only one part of the Way. The life of the lord who is saved symbolizes the Way in its entirety. If the entire Way were to be destroyed, there would be no need to preserve any part of it. Similarly, inasmuch as all persons would be in violation of the Way, how could one possibly evaluate the relative seriousness of one wretched retainer's unlawfulness? Here one must acknowledge that even in the Way of China, so beloved by our critic, there are parallel violations of certain precepts, such as the concept of "right" that comes into play when a man extends his hand to the wife of his elder brother to save her from drowning.

.....

The kami view the acts of human beings and assign their fortune....

By this, one is not to understand that the acts of people are the acts of the *kami*, as Confucians would have it. If, as is the case here, the deities assign good fortune to those who perform acts of virtue, and misfortune to those who commit acts of evil, it only stands to reason that these are the actions of a righteous deity. If so, then why does our critic state that it is the evil deities who bestow misfortune? Why does he not explain that it is the evil deities who assign misfortune to those committing evil deeds? Otherwise, when misfortune befalls virtuous people, it would be the province of evil deities. If this is in fact his intended purport, it should clearly be articulated to avoid misunderstanding.

There are many points of disagreement with our critic concerning his views

on the acts of evil deities, and they will be elaborated in what follows. He states that, in the Way of heaven, good fortune awaits the virtuous, and calamity awaits the licentious. The essence of this statement is something that even a totally illiterate child could understand as perfectly reasonable. It may correspond well to principle, but not to matters of fact. It is impossible to count the number of instances past to present in which the virtuous have met with misfortune and the licentious with blessings. The theories of the Way of heaven and the 'will of heaven' are hard put to account for this. The Chinese people, in fact, know nothing of the acts of evil deities. In their attempt to forcibly establish the Way of heaven and the will of heaven, Confucians proceed to gloss over the fact that these concepts of righteousness and evil, calamity and blessings, do not accord with reason, thereby deceiving everyone. In the end, there is no clarity to the matter. When they should be called to account for the fact that all is pure fiction, they are steadfast in their refusal to do so.

Among followers of the Way of the Buddha, those who regard this as karma are viewed as heretics....

Here we have to do with a theory that falsely regards as correct a certain misguided Buddhist school of thought. But since this pertains to Buddhism, it lies beyond the scope of this discussion.

This is a distorted view maintaining that demons do not exist.... If the chapters on the "age of the kami"....

It is difficult to discern our critic's intent in this passage. I assume that his point is that if the chapters on the "age of the *kami*" were texts from a foreign country, they would certainly have been cast aside and not adopted. In that case, he seems to be asserting that in the effort to establish by any means a native transmission from antiquity, people spoke as if *kami* existed, even though they did not believe it in their innermost hearts to be a fact. If that is indeed his purport, there is much to say in response.

To begin with, the antiquity of our country is not a clever human construct. It is the true transmission of antiquity, and if one considers the events both present and past of Japan and China, one finds, in the final tally, that there is little to differentiate them. All things in this world are the result of the acts of the deities, good and evil, and of this there can be no doubt. That the righteous thrive and the wicked suffer calamity is due to the acts of righteous deities. Conversely, that the evil thrive and the righteous suffer is due to the acts of evil deities. According to the transmissions of Japan, as we have seen, it is because of the existence of righteous and evil deities that the blessings and misfortunes of all peoples of the world are not in accord with the principles of reason. When this is so is

eminently clear, where is there room for doubt? Certainly, the Japanese people do not doubt the existence of the *kami*.

The theory of the will of heaven, on the other hand, is a construct created through a clever application of logic on the part of the Chinese Confucians. It sounds fine in principle, but things in this world are simply not in accord with it. I recognize that this theory of the will of heaven is a fabrication of the sages and do not believe in it. The sages may have a great reservoir of intellect, but even so it is not without its limits, with the result that they simply do not comprehend that there are acts of evil deities in this world. In their decision to trust everything to the principles of logic, they have fashioned a theory of the will of heaven that entails numerous inconsistencies. If the sages had understood that the acts of evil deities do in fact exist, and had constructed their theory of the will of heaven accordingly, there would be no discrepancy with events in this world. In that case, what reason would there be to discard it and refuse to believe it, even if it be a foreign construct? The foreign origin of the text is not the reason for my disbelief. Rather, it is because it is an arbitrary tract that does not correspond to reality. Our critic subsumes the essence of the ancient transmissions of Japan under the mantle of the Chinese theory of the will of heaven and bases his interpretation accordingly. He, thus, fails to understand the essence of my arguments, and is often mistaken.

Heaven is a living entity, and with that in mind....

This, too, is a Chinese concept. Heaven is dead—it has no 'mind' and performs no acts. All that may appear to us as mind and action is in fact the minds and actions of the *kami*. By way of illustration, heaven corresponds to things, and deities to the people who use those things. It is only when people use them for some purpose that things assume a function. Things do not act on their own accord to perform their own functions. The Chinese are ignorant of the acts of the *kami*, and for this reason mistakenly ascribe a mind to heaven, going so far as to call it divine. This is all a delusion.

.....

Should he suit the will of heaven, even a lowly man may rise to become the lord of the realm....

To deceive the people by usurping the country of one's lord by force, and then proclaim that one is in accord with the mind of heaven, is the way of injustice borne of the Chinese sages' wicked wisdom. In the imperial country of Japan, no matter how many ages may pass, the lord remains the lord and the subject remains the subject, their positions unchanging in accord with a divine message coeval with heaven and earth. For one who has the good fortune to be born in this auspicious land of Japan, what drunken delusion can it be to celebrate and

revere the twisted evil customs of a foreign land that does not observe the Way of the ruler and the ruled?

The acts of antiquity are pure in spirit, and nothing more need be said....

“Purity of spirit” refers to the heart one is given at birth through the divine spirit of the *musubi*¹² deities. In this pure heart are wisdom and foolishness, skill and ineptitude, good and bad—a variety of qualities. Just as not all humans are alike, so, too, the *kami* of the divine age conducted themselves for good and for ill, each according to the purity of their hearts. It is a mistake for our critic to maintain that acts of wisdom and skill are not acts of a pure heart. Having studied the matters of foreign lands, when I speak in terms of the people of this world having lost their pure hearts, I refer to the fact that there are some who believe in Buddhism and others in Confucianism. They find it acceptable to interpret everything accordingly. These practices have been passed on to those without learning, with the result that they no longer possess the spirit they were endowed with at birth. They are like one who indulges in Buddhism, abandoning parents, wife, and children; or like one deluded by the Way of Confucianism who comes to despise his lord. Whether for good or for ill, once one changes the heart one has from birth, one has lost its purity.

[AW]

12. [The term is generally used to refer to *kami* with generative powers.]

FUJITANI Mitsue 富士谷御杖 (1768–1823)

Fujitani Mitsue, or Narimoto as he was also known, was born into a prominent family of intellectuals in Kyoto. His father, Fujitani Nariakira was an erudite and imaginative scholar who authored several works analyzing Japanese poetic language in the light of new grammatical categories of his own device. His uncle, Minagawa Kien, was a well-known Confucian scholar who also had a strong interest in linguistic theory. The Fujitani family served as hereditary retainers of the Yanagawa domain, a position that provided them with a comfortable living. As a youth, Mitsue was schooled in the most important cultural practices of his day, studying the orthodox tradition of 'waka' composition, Confucianism, and *haikai* poetry. In his late teens, through the study of the '*Kojiki*' and '*Nihon shoki*', he came under the influence of an intellectual movement that was to become Native Studies or *Kokugaku*.

Mitsue's interest in classical texts brought him to the writings of Motoori Norinaga*, whom he would later describe as one who "illuminated the ancient age of our country and grasped the meaning of the ancient words." This admiration notwithstanding, Mitsue was critical of the assumptions that underlay Norinaga's groundbreaking exegesis of the *Kojiki*. He faulted Norinaga for regarding the *Kojiki* as a record of actual events, for his understanding of how language had functioned in the ancient period, and for his insistence that the readers of this work must adopt a position of unquestioning belief towards everything contained in it. In the selections below from the opening chapter of his own work, *Illuminating the Kojiki*, Mitsue outlines his understanding of the *Kojiki* by critically referencing Norinaga's work. Central to his discussion is the concept of '*kotodama*' as it appears in ancient poetry. Mitsue used *kotodama* to refer to the special ability of figurative language and poetry to make communication possible between complex individuals, who had to contend with their own desires and the social constraints accompanying all interpersonal encounters. In the ancient period, Mitsue insisted, the communicative power of *kotodama* was known to all, and figurative language and poetry were used routinely to ease all kinds of social relationships, most notably that between ruler and subject. He attributed the disorder and tensions of his own time to the loss of this crucial cultural knowledge.

Illuminating the Kojiki was never completed, but the extant sections of the work reveal Mitsue's attempt to read the *Kojiki* in light of his conception of *kotodama* by moving from the surface narrative to the "real" meaning expressed through a complex web of metaphors. Mitsue deployed the same strategy in his writings on other early Japanese works of poetry and prose, including the '*Man'yōshū*' and the *One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets*.

Mitsue died at age fifty-six, disgraced and impoverished, having been dismissed from service to the Yanagawa domain. His works were largely ignored in the modern

period until the 1980s when, as a result of the “cultural turn,” there was renewed interest in his theories on language and subjectivity. → See also pages 1178–9.

[SLB]

ILLUMINATING THE *KOJIKI*

FUJITANI Mitsue 1808, 37–43, 46

Among those who have heretofore examined the divine texts, there is no one who did not think that they tell of the origins of the imperial court. Since... these scholars did not yet think in terms of ‘*kotodama*’, they were indignant that our great land has nothing like the sutras, and so they made additions and embellishments using the texts of Confucianism and Buddhism. Although they made a show of deciphering the texts based upon some forced logic, their theories were arbitrary, with no basis in fact. Some were like the sutras; others, like histories—and there were things that could be trusted and things that could not. For this reason, in each generation the divine texts competed with Confucianism and Buddhism, and so people, based upon their personal view, said, “those passages are significant, while this is trivial.” Because the divine texts did not seem to have any worth as an ethical teaching, they were overwhelmed by the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism.

However, Motoori Norinaga* of Matsusaka in Ise Province recently realized that the *Kojiki* is superior to the *Nihon shoki*, and he discussed the mistakes of that Prince.¹³ Indeed, when one reads his discussion, it is clear that, as Norinaga stated, there are many places in the *Kojiki* that are recorded completely in the words of our country. I am indebted to this master, because now without much difficulty I recognize the veracity of the *Kojiki*. Comparing the various texts, you grasp the truth that the writing style of the *Kojiki* is different from that of the chapters on the “age of the *kami*.” The Prince compiled all the various texts and tried to grasp the truth and wrote with the intention of producing a work that resembled a Chinese text. However, because Shinto scholars up to this time had all read only the “age of the *kami*” chapters of the *Nihon shoki*, there was no one who recognized the veracity of the *Kojiki*. But now in this age, the light that has appeared is the greatest blessing in a thousand years for our country....

Norinaga has illuminated the ancient age of our country and grasped the meaning of the ancient words, so I do not claim the honor of supplementing what he left undone or diminishing his excesses. But since he did not realize that the language of our country was defined by *kotodama* (which you must

13. [The allusion is to Toneri Shinnō (675–735), editor of the *Nihon shoki*.]

understand based on the extended explanation that follows) as its principle, he just thought that the language of our country was defined by its elegance. (This was the theory of Kamo no Mabuchi*, the teacher of Norinaga. Norinaga understood it this way, too, and passed this understanding on.) Because of this, in relation to the divine texts, too, he looked only at the surface of words and insisted that the lack of hidden meaning was the way of our country, and since he reasoned based upon his own misapprehension, he thought that the divine texts told only of the origin of the emperor and were not a teaching. (The conviction that there was nothing hidden was only because he did not look for evidence and only wanted to explain away the forced interpretations, vying with Shinto scholars of the various schools that preceded him.)

Ethical teachings are only found originally in countries where the customs are bad, so why should there be a teaching in our superior country?

What you see in the divine texts is that the beginning of the imperial line is very mysterious. He who is the descendent of this line is so august and awe-inspiring that you must understand that you should just follow his will and whatever intelligence you possess is useless.

This is the main point of the *Kojikiden* and also the aim of writing the work called *The Spirit of Rectification*.

In general terms this seems reasonable, and thus recently there are many people who believe it. If you really were to discard your intelligence, perhaps it would not be an obstacle in this world, but if you consider the origin of this notion, it is that no matter how much you look at the divine texts and how much you think about them, there are many mysterious things. If you try to make sense of these things, then from beginning to end, they do not mesh with human affairs, and so it seems futile to inquire after such difficult matters. As a result, people think that one should not delve into divine matters and that the divine texts were written only to record the awesome affairs of the imperial ancestral deities and to make known the majesty of their descendent to every generation. Within the *Kojikiden*, to inquire deeply with any sense of doubt is regarded as evidence of the “Chinese mind.”¹⁴ If that is the case, is acting as though you have no questions evidence of the “Japanese mind”? How confusing this is! (However, if you really put your heart into it, there are some places where you will come close to glimpsing the *kotodama*. For this reason, it is a real shame to just stop at the surface of the text.)

14. [A term used by Norinaga to criticize those who attempted to interpret the ancient Japanese texts using the concepts and categories of Confucianism in particular. Norinaga argued that as the Japanese people began to use sinographs they also began to conceptualize the natural world and human relationships by means of these “alien” terms.]

While those people who believe in this theory of Norinaga's were born into the world with a docile nature, and thus they do not think it possible to know anything of divine matters, those like Narimoto, who are difficult and obstinate and do not take things on faith, cannot accept Norinaga's theory. Generally, when I look at the people of the world, it seems there are few of the docile people who can believe this and many obstinate people like Narimoto who cannot. These docile people may as well not bother to look at the divine texts. As for the obstinate ones who cannot accept this theory, will they accept it if we try and force them? Should those who still do not accept this theory, despite being urged to do so, be despised?

Although one can keep insisting that the number of those who are obstinate like Narimoto has increased since the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism were introduced, in heaven and earth, if there is day, then there is night; if there is man, then there this is woman; if there are saints and sages, then there are tigers and wolves. How then could it be that in ancient times in our country there were only good people? Even within the divine texts, there is the case of the hare that tricked the crocodiles and Ninigi's doubts that Sakuyahime could become pregnant after only one night. In the Jinmu chapter, what about people like Nagasunehiko, the Ukashi brothers, and the Shiki warriors?¹⁵ This is like knowing white without knowing black.

It is difficult to accept the theory that, because the people of our country are of good character, there was no need for an ethical teaching, when no one has yet attempted to understand this incomparable teaching. It is absurd to recklessly decide that there is no teaching. And to say that even if there is an ethical teaching, it is unnecessary, is in fact just like throwing it away. To conclude that there isn't a teaching and that it is unnecessary, isn't that just like saying a poor man has no need for rice and gold? And if you say that to pursue the strange passages within the divine texts is the result of the Chinese mind and therefore you do not interrogate them, how can you reproach those who do pursue them? You may agree that it is right not to interpret the text, but you will see that there are places where Norinaga did in fact rely upon forced reasoning to make sense of things. If you examine those passages, you will see that in causal and temporal terms, events do not make sense and that things are very confusing from the perspective of human affairs. Thus they seem difficult to understand. But if such

15. [The story refers to a white hare who tricked crocodiles into lining up to form a bridge so that he could cross from one island to another (*Kojiki* 1.22). Ninigi, the so-called "divine descendent" of the sun deity 'Amaterasu', doubted the pregnant Sakuyahime's claim that he was the father of her unborn child because they had spent only one night together. According to the *Nihon shoki*, Nagasunehiko, the Ukashi brothers, and the Shiki warriors battled with Jinmu as he journeyed eastward from Kyushu to Yamato.]

difficulty is the reason, why do we find that in other difficult passages he does not adhere to this principle? The reason there was no rule at work in his annotations is that he was concerned with the words (*koto*) and not with the spirit (*tama*). In those places that are difficult to understand, the difficulty is purposeful. Although the entire text was written based upon *kotodama*, there are some places where the spirit is distant from the beautiful words of the surface text.

Now, if you interpret as Narimoto has done and consider the relation between events and if you compare heaven and earth, humans and deities using *kotodama*, then this text, which relates so many strange things, will contain not even a single passage that is mysterious. However, if you do not pursue these points because you think that to do so would be the Chinese mind at work, you are, in fact, simply not exerting yourself fully. This is so even for the master Norinaga. Surely there is no one who is not bewildered by this text. Narimoto, too, wondered about this for many years, and only when he had the good fortune to recognize the way of *kotodama* did he know that, even if the surface words are as strange as can be, what is beneath simply reveals the course of ordinary human feelings and worldly affairs.

It has been said that to pursue profound 'principle' is the Chinese mind, but this is unclear. The *kotodama* of our great land is not something that tries to convey principles skillfully. It is something that seeks to not distort the *kami*. Since it is a technique whose aim is to allow insight into the human 'heart', how can trying to understand this be called the Chinese mind? From the beginning the thing called *kotodama* had nothing to do with intelligence or stupidity, good fortune or bad luck. It was, in fact, a commonplace thing that naturally everyone knew.

Thus, even though the master spoke so much about the customs of our country, if you consider this from the perspective of the true Japanese spirit, his theory, in fact, belongs to the Chinese mind. Why? Because the divine texts do not try to explain things by means of the human but are careful to explain things by means of the *kami*. Since all things on the surface are produced from the movement of what is internal, if you want to understand what is moving, then you must not rely upon what is external but penetrate to the heart of things. It is our country's custom to be truly concerned with what arises from the heart of things. Therefore, to rely solely upon the elegant exterior is just like the Chinese custom of being concerned solely with surface appearances. But if you just revere the unembellished surface and say that in language it is elegance that is important, then how can the style of the language of the ritual prayers be praised? And if this is the case, should the surface that is embellished be revered? If what is simple is to be revered, then how can we praise what is embellished?

In the *Kojikiden*, if you examine the one place where *kotodama* is taken up, it

seems that it is understood as a term for embellished language. (Elegance and embellishment should not be confused. Elegance does not mean embellishment. It is word that refers to the opposite of “provincial.” In colloquial terms, this is what people speak of as “refined” and “vulgar.” Therefore, what I call our country’s custom is to not speak directly about any matter but to awaken the heart indirectly. It is this lack of severity that is elegant. To speak directly as one thinks or to embellish the surface—how could this be called elegant? This is something to think carefully about.)... In language there is always a mysterious spirit, and it is clear that this aids my thinking and makes it flourish. In our country, the absence of rules about rites and teachings about ‘benevolence’ and ‘righteousness’ is because there is something superior to these things, because each and every surface appearance is the product of a divine spirit. What Norinaga considered the Japanese mind can in fact be said to be the Chinese mind. You will know the custom of our country if you examine closely a single part of the divine texts.

When master Norinaga examined the *Kojiki*, his discussion of the meaning of words was very precise, but this is not a true examination of this text. His true intent was to correct the mistakes of previous Shinto scholars and to compete with Buddhism and Confucianism. If he had devoted his time not to these battles but to examining this text, then surely this great master would have discovered *kotodama*. What a shame! That I criticize the theories of this master in this way may seem to suggest that I have forgotten my debt to the one who taught me the veracity of the *Kojiki*, but the various theories of the earlier Shinto scholars are not even worth discussing. Because the theories of this master are accepted by many docile people in recent years, I think I must correct his mistakes so that at long last, as this master intended, the light of the *Kojiki* can illuminate the world.

To look at the words and not interrogate the spirit is to kill the divine texts. What value is there in killing them? What should be killed, should be killed, but if you regard the divine texts as a record of actual events then there is nothing as strange as them. Therefore, arbitrarily treating them as histories is like setting them on fire and then trying to extinguish the fire. Since the people of our country are so superior to those of others lands, how could they then not also have a teaching that is superior to those of other lands? Without a doubt, the teaching is about the thing called *kotodama*. The way the texts are written is extraordinarily strange so that they would not be regarded as records of true events. After the way of *kotodama* was lost to later generations, no one recognized the strangeness of this language. How absurd it is to make one excuse or another in order to continue to claim that the divine texts are histories. In the age in which the divine texts were made, since everyone knew the way of *kotodama*, no one could imagine a time in which they would be regarded as histories.

.....

Norinaga says repeatedly that one should not use the way of humans to make sense of events in the age of the *kami*. But what is this thing called a *kami*? What is this thing called a human? Is it that something within the human body later becomes divine? However, if we say simply that what is external is called “human” and what is internal is called *kami*, must we not first clarify what is meant by *kami*? This is a problem not only for this master but equally so for the schools of Shinto scholarship of every generation. When they speak of the “divine,” then they always understand this to mean the affairs of the *kami* of heaven and earth. However, it is most naive to think that the *kami* of heaven and earth are within the human body.

.....

As for the chapters on the “age of the *kami*” and the “age of humans,” everyone just says that the first deals with the age of *kami* and the second with that of human beings, but understanding these ages has not been pursued with an attitude of skepticism. Even the Shinto Schools of each generation have carelessly overlooked this issue. In our great land, since there was nothing like writing in ancient periods, in order to extend the teaching to the world, shrines were established in every province and the heavenly and earthly *kami* were worshipped within them. People were instructed by using the technique of entrusting meaning to things.

As for how I am able to say this, consider that the forms of worship used in shrines today is the same as that used during the incident of the stone cave. Moreover, in the divine texts our great land is referred to as “the eight islands” because the human body has eight orifices, so the land of Japan is aligned with the human body. This was the reason shrines were established in every province: because people did not grasp that the deities were within them, so the teaching was conveyed by establishing these places. This was simply an alternative to texts. From the perspective of this age, an age in which we write at will with the sinographs we borrowed from Chinese texts, this seems very unwieldy, but isn’t it the same technique to entrust meaning to writing or to entrust it to shrines?

[SLB]

ON KOTODAMA

FUJITANI Mitsue 1808, 51–6

As a child, I, Narimoto, learned how to compose poetry in accordance with my father’s wish, but when I was twenty I lost my father, and so I took the book he wrote and left behind, *On Particles and Auxiliary Verbs*, as

my teacher and just spent my time composing poetry. But during this period, it occurred to me one day that if composing poetry is just a pleasant pastime, then no matter how good I am, it has no benefit for me or anyone else, and if it is a beneficial activity then I must strive harder at it. And as I was devoting myself solely to poetry, the thought occurred to me that in ancient times since there were no teachers of poetry composition as in later ages, there could not have been so many fussy rules....

To put it simply, “words” are things that kill *kami*. For example, if in order to demonstrate to someone that you are strong, you were to say, “am I not strong?,” the idea that “it is *I* who am the strong one!” would not thereby disappear from the other’s heart. Therefore, if you want someone to think from their heart that you are strong, it is better to show it, as the phrases, “following the Way of the *kami*, people do not lift up words” and “having a divine nature, this is a land where people do not raise up words” both suggest.... However, when someone says, “am I not strong?,” then if the other person replies, “indeed, you are,” everyone will think that’s the end of it, but even if one replies like this, is this, in fact, a reply from the innermost heart? In one’s heart of hearts one is surely thinking, “how am I in any way his inferior?” And as for the reply, one can question, “does that person really think in this way or is this a lie?” For some it will be a lie. Therefore, the inner heart of a person should not be questioned.

For this reason, if you try using very direct words, they will not be able to penetrate to the inner heart. This is why in our country we rely upon the ‘*ki*’ of *kami*. (When we use figurative language, there is *kami*. This is *kotodama*.) As for what is meant by “divine,” it refers to the most superior and mysterious way to use words among all the various uses and the way that can penetrate to the inner heart of another person. And when the inner heart is penetrated, then do not words become useless? Therefore, in regard to all things, one should rely solely on the Way of the *kami*, but depending on the matter at hand, there are times when it is difficult to just leave things to the *kami*. (The phrase “do not raise up words” does not mean to refrain from speaking. It means that because you know that the mysterious use of *kami* is superior to the use of words, you regard words, in comparison, as trifling things and so you refrain from using them. You should not confuse this with Laozi’s statement that “many words are not as good as a few words, and few words are not as good as no words at all.”)

As the section of the *Kojiki* on the seven generations of *kami* that follow the appearance of heaven and earth explains in detail, the heart and body of human beings are controlled by reason and desire, and since we, as human beings, cannot but follow reason and desire, it is very difficult to submit to the *kami*. Moreover, we are constrained by the context of our encounter, so that it is never just a matter of a single person alone. Therefore, you must give up direct

words for “inverted words,” that is, the various forms of figurative language. Figurative language includes both metaphorical language and poetry. For those times when metaphor does not suffice, our great land has the way of composing poetry. Therefore, figurative language is the thing between speaking and not speaking. When you are about to say what you think, instead you say what you do not think. When you think, “this concerns that,” in fact it does not. This is the essence of figurative language.

So if we think that in general terms there are three things—direct language, metaphor, and poetry—then direct language and metaphor are opposites, and poetry is one step beyond metaphor. Figurative language takes direct words as its spirit and makes words. And based upon those words, the other person can understand and know what I am thinking. This is what was meant by the poem that spoke of “to flourish with the help of *kotodama*.” When what we think remains active outside of words, that is *kotodama*. And when something has become *kotodama*, it no longer has anything to do with good and evil, so, for example, even if your position is reasonable, if it is not something the other person will acknowledge, then it will evoke no response and have no effect.

It is the same with prose. If you take what you are thinking and revise it by just using figurative language, then it will become the words of *kami*. When just using metaphor is not sufficient, it is not that there is as a separate thing the way of poetry. Rather, when there is a substantial distance between oneself and another, it is difficult to just rely on metaphor, and then you will know that it is time for poetry. In the ancient poems, we find references to “the land” such as “the land that flourishes,” “the land that is helped,” the upright land,” and “the land that does not raise up words.” All of these phrases show that this is the custom of our divine land. In the chapter of the Emperor Sujin, in the passage where Ōhiko no mikoto arrives in the land of Kōshi and a young girl stood at Herazaka and sang, we read:

Ōhiko no mikoto thought this strange and, turning his horse around, asked the young girl; “What are these words that you have said?”

Then the young girl replied, “I did not say anything. I was merely singing a song.”

Then she suddenly disappeared, no one knows where. (*Kojiki* LXVII.14–17).

In other words, when I cannot take just what I am thinking and use either direct language or metaphor but also I cannot refrain from speaking, then of necessity I compose a poem. You must understand this situation. In that chapter of Emperor Sujin, it is said, “I did not say anything. I was merely singing a song.” This is evidence that clarifies the distinction between direct language, metaphor, and the composition of poetry. In later generations, there has been no one who has clarified the distinction between direct language, metaphor, and poetry, and

so everyone thought that poems that were composed about human affairs such as joy, sorrow and pain, separation, love, and travel merely used direct language, while those on flowers, birds, the wind, the moon, and other natural things were simply composed about those things. And if they were composed using direct language that would indeed be the case, but then what is the way of poetry? So it is important to distinguish carefully between the composition of poetry and direct language.

It is difficult to know how long the way of *kotodama* continued before it was lost, but in the chapter on Emperor Suinin, there is the phrase “to speak as you think.” This is direct language and refers to words that lack *tama* or spirit. These words are found in the section that describes the time when Emperor Keikō was still young and states that “he did not speak true words until his long beard reached his chest.” “True words” refers to words in which there is *tama*, what I am now calling figurative language. (The phrase “true words” can also be found in several places in the *Man'yōshū*.) This is evidence that in this time everyone knew the distinction between direct language and figurative language and revered figurative language. As for the period after this time, in a poem by Okura... there is the phrase “people of today, by seeing things that happen, hearing of the facts, know this story well,” so it clear that still at this time everyone of this age understood the way of *kotodama* and had seen signs of its flourishing. But if we examine the Suijin chapter, the poem by Okura, and other evidence, it seems that from this point those who knew of *kotodama* gradually became fewer. Even in the age when the way of *kotodama* had not completely disappeared, it seems that sometimes people made a mistake and used direct language, but in the ancient period, there was no poem or prose that did not take the way of *kotodama* as its foundation, so how could it be that ancient people purposefully made such a mistake?

In every case, even in poems that seem to be composed just as the poet thought, what was thought did not appear on the surface. Rather, according to the practice of the ancient period, desire was displaced in every poem. Even in the later ages, you can find instances in which a distinction was made between direct language, metaphor, and poetry, and it seems that the way of *kotodama* was realized spontaneously, so it is not good to generalize about later ages. However, after Chinese learning began to flourish, it seems that this way was almost completely hidden. And for this reason composing on flowers, birds, the wind, and the moon for no particular reason, and on themes that had no relation with what one really thought, all came to be viewed as simply fabrications. For this reason, in reading the ancient poems, if you think about real life and facts then there are many things that seem to go against reason. This is because people of old took *tama* as the most important thing and words as merely a means, and since they did not compose about a thing or an event, they were not overly

concerned about such issues. If I consider their feelings, then as I said before, if what they wanted to communicate was something the other person would not accept even if it were spoken of, they composed about the nonexistent moon or flowers. Even if the aid of *kotodama* was not forthcoming, still they clearly decided to compose in this way, thinking that it was the best thing to do. They decided to do this because they always placed importance not on the surface but on what was inside. Even if the other person was not able to accept what he had heard, those who composed poetry took pleasure in it because they did not doubt that this was the means to rectify the Way of the *kami*.

[SLB]

DISTINGUISHING *KAMI* FROM HUMANS

FUJITANI Mitsue 1808, 67–76

Since the Shinto scholars of every age have all failed to adequately distinguish between *kami* and ordinary people, until the present day the principle of the divine text has not been made known in the world again. Generally, in our great land, teachings are not made by referencing humans but instead referencing the *kami*. It is for this reason that it is essential to distinguish between *kami* and humans. First, “human” is the name for those who have *kami* within their body. What is called *kami* is that which is housed within the human body. Therefore, even if it seems that *kami* are the main concern, you must understand that this is a teaching necessary for human beings. As for what kind of thing these *kami* within the body are, people always have both desire and reason. That which controls desire is called *kami*. That which controls reason is called “human.” (Heaven and earth are the parents of reason and desire, and the heart and body of people receive and preserve these two natures. I explain this in detail in the section on the emergence of heaven and earth.) Reason and desire follow heaven and earth, so that reason is naturally noble and desire is naturally base, with the result that people have to revere reason and despise desire. Therefore, all people think seriously about how to control all of their desires and how to develop their reason to the full. (This is the state referred to as “chaos.”) However, even in the midst of this, there are few people who manage to exert themselves, and reason is very often overcome by desire. For this reason, those who do not strive to control desire are called foolish, while those who diligently strive are called wise. In fact, whether one is noble or mean, whether one’s knowledge is great or small, it is difficult for anyone who has relations with others to escape this struggle. This is what is called the way of humans. However, what always troubles those who study are the *kami*, who tug at their words and acts, arouse their selfish indulgent hearts, and thereby

control them. (There are two kinds of scholarship: that which is concerned with controlling what is outside the body and that which is concerned with controlling what is inside the body. I explain this in detail in the section on “chaos.”) It is because we are controlled by *kami* that the teachings of all the different schools have taken form. But when the *kami* are aroused, then no matter how much you seem to be following the teaching of some school, in the end they are something whose nature cannot be changed and thus they are beyond the strength of humans to control. Because *kami* partake of the heavy, turbid nature of the earth, they are not just private aspects of an individual.

But is there then nothing that can be done about them? If you can somehow devote yourself to the way of *kotodama*, then it will have a miraculous effect, and so our teaching is concerned only with fulfilling the Way of the *kami*. Therefore, we should simply follow the Way of the *kami*. To be concerned about good and evil in relation to superficial human affairs and to try and overcome the *kami* within you is like trying to control the trunk by means of the branches, and what is the point of that?

Originally, what is called Shinto was the name given to the way of uncontrollable thoughts that departed from reason.... However, Norinaga in his work called *The Spirit of Rectification* inserted his own note, stating, “To follow the Way of the *kami* means that the way of ruling the realm is in accordance with the way things have been done since the age of the *kami* without even the slightest addition of selfish intentions. And when rule occurs in this generous way, the Way of the *kami* occurs naturally and nothing more is necessary; this is what ‘to possess in oneself’ means.” So, as for the phrase “in accordance with the way things have been done since the age of the *kami*,” Norinaga says that this means to follow what was done by the august ancestral deities. Since the acts of the *kami* are beyond the comprehension of ordinary humans, the fact that the emperor’s rule is based on this principle is something that is of no use to ordinary people, and so it seems that the way of humanity is just to submit to the will of the emperor. However, even in the case of ordinary people, each according to his rank has a family occupation and members of his household, and always there are various kinds of differences that arise. Although one should not become passionate about such things, it is as natural as wind blowing, rain falling, an earthquake, or thunder....

As I said before, whether one is noble or mean, these gracious words refer to how to deal with these extraordinary occasions using the divine power of *kotodama*, and so it is difficult for me to accept the words of that master Norinaga. If I were to turn his own words on him, I would say that he seems to be running away from the mysteriousness of the surface language of the divine texts by stating that the acts of the *kami* have meaning only for the emperor. In response, I say that since the *kotodama* of the divine texts is something that

is difficult to speak about openly, it can only be explained in broad terms. But since there is a founder of this teaching, we can try and understand his use of *kotodama*. And if *kotodama* does bring good fortune, then it is difficult to conclude that we should not try and understand it. In the ancient period, every person understood it very well, and so there was no need to explain. But in the present it is hidden, and now people have come to be concerned only about the surface with the result that they cannot understand it.

Is not the theory of this master Norinaga a regrettable thing? He steadfastly refused to clarify what is called *kami* and appears to believe that it was because the imperial ancestors are to be revered that they were called *kami*. Considering this view, it seems to me that that earlier Shinto scholars simply considered humans and *kami* as the same thing, but even though they thought of them as the same, they still said that people could not understand the mysterious ways of the *kami*. Even though they treated them as the same thing, they also made them distant from one another and thus obscured the distinction between humans and *kami*. That distinction is simply that when the acts of human beings depart from reason, this is because of the *kami*. Therefore, the phrase *kamunagara* means to follow the Way of the *kami* and to possess in oneself the Way of the *kami*” does not mean what master Norinaga stated. First, the term *kamunagara* means that although on the surface humans and *kami* seem to be different things, originally the mysterious workings of the *kami* of heaven and earth and the divine *ki* of humans were the same. Therefore, all people, whether they are noble or mean, contain within their bodies *kami* that are the same as the *kami* of heaven and earth. Is there, then, any mysterious act they cannot perform? When people outwardly use their mouth, tongue, arms, and legs, there is a limit to their strength, and thus the term “human” is used. But when human beings make use of figurative language, their surface thoughts have a power surpassing the power of the mouth, tongue, arms, and legs. This is what is called *kami*, and this is what the entirety of the divine texts are concerned with explaining. In order to make this point, it is written that “*kamunagara* means to follow the Way of the *kami* and to possess in oneself the Way of the *kami*.” There is nothing unclear about this.

Originally, the Way of the *kami*, as I explained before, referred to the way that departs from reason. It refers to something that is different from reason, which is concerned with right and wrong. Therefore, when you do not follow this way, then even something that should happen may not be realized. Thus, the aim of the divine texts is to reveal why one should rely upon this Way... Shinto is not the name of a teaching. It refers to the Way of the *kami* that is the opposite of the way of humans. Therefore, the teaching that is referred to as “Shinto” is mistaken. The teaching of how to follow the Way of the *kami* was lost to later generations, and everyone came to understand Shinto as worshipping at

shrines, tying sleeve-cords, ringing bells, chanting the words of the great purification, and performing purifications. In fact, the idea that *kami* were things to think of only while in a shrine is really ridiculous. As I have said before, shrines were established to promote the teaching that the way of *kami* must have priority over the way of humans, but rather than using letters, the form of things was used to convey this. The purpose of worshipping at shrines is so that we do not forget that the way of humans is secondary. Shrines were not built so that you could tell the *kami* what you want and then by doing nothing have that desire fulfilled.

Although prayer may result in the aid of the *kami*, if you want to entreat the *kami* to manifest themselves within you, is there not a shorter path than prayer? The sleeve-cords and bells are all the means to make you awaken to the teaching, so what is important is the meaning that they carry. Don't you understand that the point of these trivial things is to make you understand the Way of our country and detest the flourishing of Buddhism and Confucianism? It is really an easy thing to grasp. Usually, human strength is something that, if exerted, will become stronger, but even if you do this, it cannot last very long. This is because you make the way of *kami* something secondary. When you follow the Way of the *kami*, if you have the strength of ten men, it will become the strength of a thousand. Even if your own strength is something that fills the world under heaven, it is limited and will not last until the end of time. But the strength that you have when you rely upon the *kami* is without limit. Therefore, leading the heart along the Way of the *kami* is like using a boat or a cart. You can easily move an amount of goods that you would not be able to handle no matter how much strength you used....

Everyone thinks that to follow the good and evil of the *kami* is a dangerous thing, but the fact that this is not dangerous is beyond ordinary understanding. The reason it is not dangerous is that, although earth is inferior to heaven, it gives rise to all the myriad things, and there is nothing that does not take the earth as its mother, so nobility and meanness are two sides of the same thing. Since it is clear that the mean aspect of things is something productive, the control of the chaos of human desire must not destroy the mother that produces wonderful things. Therefore, since human desire is the mother that produces even things such as 'filial piety', obedience, loyalty, and fidelity, if only human desire is allowed to exist, then without any kind of instruction, filial piety, obedience, loyalty, and fidelity will emerge spontaneously. For this reason, in our divine texts, there is not a single teaching about such things as filial piety, obedience, loyalty, and fidelity. The texts are solely concerned with teaching about that which is their mother.

However, when I have fulfilled my desire, others may not accept it. For this reason, the teaching of the first two chapters of the divine texts is concerned

solely with explaining the technique for fulfilling the desire of others. And since the desire of ordinary people is limitless, everyone deals with others using this technique, but they just use it without thinking very deeply. But because this desire, after all, is limitless, the second chapter was written in addition to the first chapter. This was so that we could really understand the truth of the teaching by knowing from the facts the miraculous things it produced. (Someone asked, “What if, in order to fulfill human desire, you must go against the laws of the government like a thief or a gambler? Should you even then fulfill desire? If you do, then in the end you might lose your life. Even if things are not so extreme, should you indulge in drink and sex and become dissipated and lazy...?” If you just fulfill the *ki* of the *kami* then you will not have to engage in extreme acts. Moreover, this miraculous thing will happen naturally. Read my explanation of the first and second chapters and you will understand the danger of ordinary emotion.)

For this reason, the Way of the *kami* that is described in the phrase above, “to follow the Way of the *kami*,” refers to the way of making the other person leave reason behind, and the Way of the *kami* that appears in the subsequent phrase “to possess the Way of the *kami* within oneself” refers to you yourself leaving reason behind.... The strength of one person, no matter how august, has a limit. But the strength of following the Way of the *kami* is of a completely different nature. Based upon this, our great land has something that is different from the doctrines of other places. Therefore, if you compare Emperor Jinmu with Yao and Shun, he will seem very ordinary. However, since the custom of China is not the custom of following the Way of the *kami*, the Chinese recorded the traces of single individuals.... In contrast, the divine acts of Emperor Jinmu cannot be found in the places where they should have been written. The reason for this, as I said before, is that the emperor’s rule over the world is a secret matter and therefore a taboo topic, so his behavior while alive, every bit of it, is a divine act like those of the first and middle chapters of the *Kojiki*, and therefore not a single event appears on the surface. Even though it seems that from the time of Jinmu the *Kojiki* is a history, this section, too, is different from the method of writing used in the chronicles of China. For the reigns of Suizei, Annei, Itoku, and Kōshō, nothing is recorded but the site of their palace and the names of their sons. This is indeed something to be revered. All of the manifest wonderful things are the spontaneous products of the concealed *kami*, but since their acts are not seen, it is not recorded in that way....

However, now no one knows that the purpose of worshipping at a shrine is to follow the Way of the *kami*. In fact, to keep worshipping at a shrine while putting the way of humanity first makes no sense. Since the *kami* of heaven and earth and the *kami* of humans are the same, if you follow the Way of the *kami*, miraculous things will happen. This is not the case with Confucianism and

Buddhism, which are just concerned with self-cultivation. But if you consider the origins of Confucianism and Buddhism, you will know that this was not always the case.... And as for Buddhism, the theories of the Buddhist scholars of the various schools of later periods are different from 'Shakyamuni's' methods. Therefore, conversely, one can say that neither Confucianism nor Buddhism has been transmitted to the current age.

As for our divine texts, because they take "following" as the most important thing, from the beginning their teaching did not compete with the teachings of Buddhism and Confucianism. If the surface was Confucian, so be it. If the surface was Buddhist, so be it. If someone follows the Way of the *kami*, then even if he prefers to study Confucianism or Buddhism, these would then just become the same as the Way of the *kami*.

No matter whether a person's rank is noble or mean or one's occupation great or small, if he does not seek to escape chaos, then he will not be able to achieve his desire. No matter if he tries to achieve it, he will have difficulty. The value of the formation of heaven and earth can be understood when you test it in relation to real events. In ancient times and in the present, if you observe those who have established a business for their family, this happy result is because they have fulfilled the aim of the divine texts, not because of ordinary human efforts. In the present age, too, there are quite a few people who, having injured their hearts with worldly wisdom, on their own have come to understand this....

Clearly, *kami* are not something that can be entrusted to the external body, and so the message of the divine texts is that whether one is noble or mean, great or small, one should revere the *kami* within the body. If you ask whether human beings are something different from the *kami* portrayed in the texts, the answer is "no." It is just that people act directly and *kami* make use of figurative language. Recently, as those who transmit this teaching have made others aware of the divine power of the *kami*, I have even seen many instances where it has had an effect upon animals. Whether one addresses the grass, trees, birds, and beasts, or human beings, if you want them to understand the distinction between reason and its opposite, if you rely upon the surface of language to instruct them, then how could they understand? You must understand that the mysterious power of the *kami* extends far and wide.

Without a doubt, it is the humans who rely on what is revealed, while it is *kami* that rely upon what is hidden. Men and women, low and high, if they act upon the divine power of the *kami*, then will they not be *kami*? Because *kami* are the same thing as humans and it is only how they function that is different, you must understand why it has been difficult to differentiate between them.

[SLB]

HIRATA Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843)



Hirata Atsutane, one of the most influential religious and political figures of the first half of the nineteenth century, was active in establishing what would later come to be known as restoration Shinto. Born the fourth son of a samurai retainer, he later moved to Edo, where he was adopted by Hirata Tōbei, the head of a small academy that propagated the teachings of Yamaga Sokō*, an advocate of ancient Confucian learning. He styled himself a student of Motoori Norinaga*, whose academy he entered three years after the latter's death. Thus began his involvement in the movement for Native Studies that had begun

in the seventeenth century. The movement's initial focus on Japanese poetry of the Nara and Heian periods was later widened to include ancient histories, religious literature, and fiction. The scholars of this movement extolled the emperor and court system as well as the ethical and aesthetic values of these early periods, contrasting an ideal vision of the past with a later culture they deemed inferior because of its contamination by foreign influences, in particular Chinese thought, Buddhism, and western culture. Not surprisingly, Atsutane and his disciples became increasingly political and nationalistic. He drew from ancient mythological sources and supernatural informants to add weight to his claims for the supreme political authority of the Japanese emperor both within and outside of the islands of Japan. He used similar sources and arguments to assert the racial superiority of the Japanese people over all other races, claiming that only the Japanese people possessed divine souls on par with those of the gods of Japan.

Atsutane's influence went beyond Native Studies and is still in evidence today. His work can be seen as a forerunner of Japanese folklore studies, often focusing on one of its topics, namely the description and explanation of the unique essence of the Japanese race. Orikuchi Shinobu*, the great folklorist and Shinto scholar from Kokugakuin University, proclaimed himself to be in search of a new Native Studies, and eagerly attested to admiring and being influenced by Atsutane. Orikuchi further claimed that although his predecessor, the renowned ethnologist Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), did not recognize such close ties to Atsutane, Yanagita nonetheless was walking in the same footsteps as Atsutane. Atsutane is also known to have had an impact on the rise of new religions that took place in Japan during his lifetime. In particular, his insistence on retaining and attempting to reinvigorate native Japanese spirit beliefs and rituals in the face of pressure to modernize and rationalize religious thought and practice made him a hero and patriarchal figure to later Japanese spiritualists. Perhaps the most controversial of those figures who looked up to Atsutane

as a seminal fountain of modern spiritualism was Deguchi Onisaburō (1871–1948) founder of the Ōmotokyō religion at the end of the nineteenth century.

The “true pillar” referred to in the passage excerpted here refers to an honorific classifier for Japanese deities or *kami*. In the passage Atsutane departs from the teachings of his teacher Motoori Norinaga by aiming to dispel the widespread notion that the ancient traditions of Japan condemn all the dead equally to an eternity of impurity and unhappiness. In response, Atsutane crystallizes a new theory of the soul for Shinto doctrine, one that recognizes it as separate from the body and by nature divine and immortal. Therefore, assuming one lives one’s life in accord with the way of the *kami*, life after death would be pleasant and pain-free. This interpretation led to a new phase of Shinto political ideology wherein serving or dying in service for the emperor, for example, would guarantee a *kami* status for one’s soul after death. A second aspect of the passage below is that it draws on imported eastern and western ideas, such as the Great Flood, in service of a Japanese nativist ideology. As Native Studies developed in the ensuing two centuries, the tendency to draw on modern western ideas in an attempt to universalize Shinto doctrine became increasingly visible.

[WNH]

THE TRUE PILLAR OF THE SOUL

HIRATA Atsutane 1813, 93, 138–9, 155–7, 158–88

One who pursues ancient learning must first and foremost have a firm commitment to the true spirit of Japan. Without this firm commitment one can never understand the true Way. My venerable Master Norinaga* has explained this in great detail. This teaching is as unshakable as a solemn pillar rooted deep in the bedrock. However, in order to deepen and expand that commitment to the spirit of Japan there is nothing more essential than knowing the destination and the resting place of the soul after death.

Acquiring certainty concerning the destination of the soul requires in-depth consideration of, first of all, the genesis of heaven, earth, and ‘*yomi*’, as well as their present material forms. This requires a complete comprehension of the power of the *kami* who blessed us with that heaven, earth, and *yomi*. Next, we should fully understand that Japan is the original land, first among all countries and all things. Finally, speaking with the utmost reverence, we must also understand that our noble emperor is the great Lord of all lands, and from these premises we will surely come to comprehend the destination of the soul.

.....

According to the ancient traditions ‘Amaterasu’ and her spouse Musubi no *kami* commanded their son to take charge of the earth and sent emissar-

ies down in advance to talk with Okuninushi, who was then ruling the land. Okuninushi made an agreement wherein he handed over the affairs of the visible world to Amaterasu's son, giving him also a great spear to pacify the land. In exchange Okuninushi received recognition of his governance of the hidden realm of the earth and also had a great shrine built for him, partly in order to pacify and satisfy his children and the other earth *kami* who might oppose the takeover. Amaterasu's emissaries returned to heaven to report success and afterward Amaterasu's son was replaced by her grandson, Ninigi, who was then invested with the imperial regalia in preparation for his descent, accompanied by attendants, via the rainbow bridge to a mountain peak on the earth from which time he was to start his reign.

.....

In ancient China in the time of Yao there was terrible flooding. The *Documents of the Elders* and the *Records of the Grand Historian* both say, "The heavens overflowed with water that covered the mountains and the hills." Also they say, "people below were all subdued by the water." This tragic situation was said to have continued for a duration of approximately thirty years. During this same time period the lands to the far west were also flooded so that the people all drowned except for No-a-ku, and one or two others who survived by climbing tall peaks. After the floodwaters receded, their descendents multiplied and ended up populating the various lands of the West. This tradition can be seen in the "Yao Period" chapter in the Chinese *Brief Notes on the Nature of Things*. The time of the flood in the foreign lands matches up to the end of the age of the *kami* and there is no suggestion of anything like that occurring in Japan.

With this evidence we must conclude that the placement level of Japan is both high and reverential, and that of China and the lands to the west both low and base. Among them China is a little closer to Japan, which resulted in less flooding so that the race was not on the brink of extinction. Accordingly, in reading the records of ancient Korea, there is no mention of this flood since Korea is much closer to Japan than China and was therefore unaffected by the flood. Surely this is an objective and impartial argument that places Japan at the top of the world.

.....

Now, just as we have analyzed heaven, earth, and *yomi*, so should we consider in depth the sublime and wondrous make-up of the hidden realm. As was explained earlier about heaven, in the beginning it came into existence with the emergence of the shoot¹⁶ whose essence was pure and luminescent, and

16. [The reference is to the '*Kojiki*', which in its account of the cosmogony speaks of a "thing that sprouted up like a reed-shoot when the earth, young and like unto floating oil, drifted about medusa-like (1.2)."]

possessed the unsurpassed elegance which defines the character of a land that would produce the five heavenly *kami*, Izanagi and Izanami, Amaterasu, and the eight million auspicious *kami* that reside there. In the rare event that an unruly and inauspicious *kami* were to appear in heaven it would be summarily banished to the nether regions.

On the other end, *yomi* serves as the foundation, which is made of a thick mud that should be understood as the most firmly congealed substance there is. Along with that, as Master Norinaga explained, it is the land where many evils dwell. This would be the land housing the violent and unruly *kami*; most likely, this was the original account.

The substance of earth is different from both the luminescence of heaven and the dark heavy mud of the nether regions. It is a solid substance existing as something between them. It is a combination of the remnants of the luminescent matter of the shoot and the remnants of the hardened lower muddy matter. It would be right to conclude, then, that it shares both the auspicious quality of heaven and the wicked quality of the nether region.

That being the situation, after the division into three distinct parts was completed we see many instances when the *kami* went back and forth between heaven and earth. However, as for earth and *yomi*, after Okuninushi's excursions back and forth, the fact is that *kami* do not make that trip, certainly not while in living form, nor is there an ancient account of the soul going there. Izanagi recognized the extreme evil in that land and put an end to any possible passage between these two lands, which was a solemn and august act.

In spite of this, it is tragic that people both past and present spread the account that souls return to *yomi*. This is a complete untruth that would mean Izanagi did not recognize *yomi* to be prohibitively wicked, and did not grace us all with his divine decision to restrict passage. Furthermore, it is extremely regrettable that support of this wrongheaded belief also causes people to disregard the sublime teaching that asserts Okuninushi's rule over the hidden realm.

Actually, when you delve into the reason for this mistaken belief, you see that it comes about due to the confusion caused by writing the word *yomi* with the sinographs "yellow springs" instead of the characters "night view." The first instance of this is from the chronicle of Emperor Kōtoku, when Lord Soga no Kurayamada was about to commit suicide. "Now that I have been accused by Musashi and fear execution, seeing the yellow springs of *yomi* so near I treasure loyalty all the more." The intent of Kurayamada's words was to explain that even after he died his loyalty would continue to grow, while the chronicler attempted to write in a typical Chinese literary fashion, so it ends up as we see it now. Indisputably, the words are meant to explain that the content of his 'heart' after death would display an ever-increasing loyalty. However, the meaning given the

passage by the chronicler is that the soul goes to *yomi* after death and then seeks ever more for loyalty, and this is not the Japanese meaning.

The ensuing generations did not concern themselves with discovering the true meaning and instead gradually came to accept this way of understanding *yomi*. Even in the *Man'yōshū* it is written, "I hate having bold men fight for me and would rather wait in the yellow springs of *yomi* for the one I should have met in life, and then secretly and in great sorrow she killed herself." The poem has the soul departing for the *yomi* "yellow springs" rather than the "night view" *yomi*, which shows that it is recited with the Chinese literary idea of the land of yellow springs in mind, completely betraying the ancient Japanese tradition of the land of the night view. The errors are compiled further when notions of Buddhist underworlds get mixed in. In another example from the *Man'yōshū* it is written, "Since he is so young and does not know the Way, would you please carry him along to his destination, O servant of the nether regions?" This expresses tacit agreement with the idea of servants of the underworld that appears in Buddhist literature.

With traditions so jumbled up it is no wonder people today are confused. Even my revered Master Norinaga was deceived when he commented on the previous poems on death, saying, "All *kami* and men, both good and evil, go to the yellow springs of *yomi* when they die," which is a mistake of insufficient deliberation. Therefore, although it is amazing how all those who now pursue ancient studies agree with these sentiments, it is understandable seeing that they always go along with everything my revered Master Norinaga ever taught.

As I said earlier, the soul returning to *yomi* is a story adopted from foreign lands and there is no trace of this account in Japan's ancient period. However, people who disagree raise as a counterexample the account of Izanami's departure to *yomi* in the period before earth and *yomi* were divided. After Izanami gave birth to fire, she was ashamed to show her husband her appearance and decided they should not see each other again and so left his dwelling, and while still in bodily form, that is, still alive, she went to *yomi*. Since the account is clear that it was not just the soul of Izanami that went to *yomi*, how could this be the definitive example for why all souls of humans on earth return to *yomi*?

Izanagi was in so much grief longing to see Izanami after she departed that he followed her down to the netherworld, but upon seeing the foul impurity of that polluted land he lost his resolve to join her there and ran back frantically, coming out at the Yomotsuhirasaka Pass where they made their parting vows. Izanami had told him twice not to look at her, but he did not listen, so she pursued him bitterly and vowed that everyday she would cause the death of one thousand people in his land. Izanagi responded with his own vow to construct one thousand five hundred parturition huts every day. This process was put into effect by the miraculous power in those parting vows.

In the end Izanami calmed down and said in parting, “You and I have already given birth to the land; what more is there for us to create? I have settled here and shall remain here.” She declared further that from then on, “You, my husband, will rule the upper regions and I will rule the lower regions.” And with this decision and pronouncement she became the great *kami* of the underworld, forever to reign over that land. For his part, Izanagi entered into a firm resolve to never allow undesirable and unruly entities to enter his land, and blocked off all passage between the two lands by erecting a barrier to *yomi*. He also put in place *kami* of protection, Kunado no *kami* and Chigaeshi no *ōkami*, to staunchly guard the barrier.

The two *kami* vowed that one would rule the upper regions and that the other would rule the lower regions. After that, Amaterasu, whose noble soul was born when Izanagi realized that he had become polluted by his contact with that other land and so purified his body of that pollution, came to rule the heavenly sun. Likewise, Susanoo, whose birth is connected to Izanami, went to reside in his mother’s land. Then, after contact between the two lands ended, because earth was a land surpassed in purity only by heaven, the sun *kami* and Musubi no *kami* issued a royal command that their grandson Ninigi would descend from heaven to rule over it. Since there was no longer a problem of mixing purity and pollution, and furthermore, all the inhabitants born into this world possess souls given them by Izanagi and dread the polluted state of that other land, how could it be possible that the souls of the humans in this land could return to that other land? Such an account is nonexistent, and no material evidence can be seen of this thing occurring.

The account that all human souls return to *yomi* not only lacks any basis in fact from the age of the *kami*, but also is suspect when we consider what we know to be true about birth and death. First of all, even though a father and a mother produce a human, the origin of life is the awe-inspiring, wondrously divine soul produced by Musubi no *kami*. The human being is a combination of the four types of material elements: wind, fire, water, and earth blessed with a soul to give it mind and spirit. Judging from the visible human remains after death that reduce to water and earth, the divine soul must depart with the wind and the fire. This is due to a natural association of wind and fire with heaven, as well as a natural association of earth and water with the earth. It would follow from this natural association that the human soul likewise does not return to *yomi*. The soul, being a gift from Musubi no *kami*, must then return to heaven. Even though this is completely logical, it cannot be proven factually nor is it seen in ancient traditions. However, at death when the soul separates from the bodily remains, those remains become the utmost polluted and impure elements because of their association with *yomi* and will pollute any fire that consumes them. It follows, then, that the soul when separated becomes purer,

but since fire pollution must be strictly avoided it cannot benefit from rituals being held for it. When we realistically consider the facts, since the soul makes a clear distinction between purity and impurity, scorning and avoiding the latter, how could it possibly return to *yomi* or have originated there or in any other defiled location?

There would be no sense in avoiding the use of a polluted fire to invite in a soul that came from *yomi*. A polluted fire from this land would not be anymore polluted than any fire they have in that land. Furthermore, there is the account that says once you have eaten in that other land you cannot return to this land, the prime example being Izanami who wanted to return but could not. It is also, then, probably not likely that even using miraculous supernatural practices and techniques one can have communion and provide ritual offerings for any *kami* from *yomi*.

It is impossible to find anywhere in the ancient writings any passage that says that the souls of the dead go to *yomi*. However, it can be discerned clearly from the inner meaning of ancient accounts, as well as from consideration of rational facts and reality, that when the accounts speak of the destination of souls they say souls reside eternally within this land. One poem from the *Man'yōshū* states, "When you perform offerings for the souls on the eighty winding backroads, you will most likely encounter them." However, for humans in the revealed world, what is difficult to determine is exactly where those souls are. The reason for this is that according to the royal directive handed down by the ancestral *kami* of heaven in the ancient age of the *kami*, souls take refuge in the dark realm governed by Okuninushi, who secrets himself in the eighty recesses and corners.

This dark realm is not in one particular location in the revealed world. Instead, it is everywhere within the revealed world. This hidden darkness is not separated by distance from the revealed world. The Chinese also speak of a hidden darkness or a dark realm in this manner. The actions of humans are clearly visible from the dark realm, but it is not possible to see the hidden darkness from the revealed world. For example, if you had one lamp with a white paper shade and another with a black shade and hung them at a certain distance from each other, from the dark side you could see the light side well, but from the light side you could not see the dark side. Thinking of it in this manner should also inspire a certain awe and respect for it.

When people die and take refuge in the dark realm, it is very difficult to find out just where to make offerings to meet them, invisible as they are along the eighty winding back roads. However, careful study of the age of the *kami* facilitates the understanding of the invisible presence of those *kami*, who from the age of the *kami* have been invisible to people of the revealed world but are present even now in their living bodies in their various shrines. Therefore, if

we consider the human situation in a similar light then we can reach a better understanding of it.

At first the great *kami* enshrined in Tatta no Tachinu appeared only in the account where Izanagi created life with his breath, and until he was first recognized and worshiped in Emperor Sujin's time there were neither shrines nor rituals for him. Similarly, there is the great *kami* of Suminoe. At first this *kami*, too, only appeared in the Izanagi account where Izanagi created life while in the water performing a purification ritual at Awagihara, and until the time of Empress Jingū, who received a divine oracle prompting her to dedicate a shrine in a certain location, there were no shrines and no rituals for this *kami* either.

Here we see that the *kami* of these two locations, who were born in the far distant past age of the *kami*, only appeared to humans in the age of humans. The *kami* of Suminoe, who is called the *kami* dwelling in the bottom of the water at Tachibana no Odo, is clearly present in that place just as he was when he was born from that water purification. Also, even though they were unsure for a time where to put the *kami* of wind, it turned out for both of these *kami* that in those different times, places of enshrinement were determined and, needless to say, after moving the *kami* in and dedicating the shrine, the *kami* have been present there in their living bodies to this very day. This is not just true for those two *kami*, but for all *kami* from the age of the *kami*, wherever they happen to be enshrined. There should be no dispute that, even though their form is invisible to humans, they exist as long as heaven and earth. Actually, they do on occasion reveal themselves to humans in the performance of divine acts.

Even though people exist in visible form while they are in the world, when they die they retreat to the hidden darkness and their souls become *kami*. What people should know before anything else is that in the ordinary course of events, whether one was noble or common, good or evil, strong or weak, the unsurpassed essence inside contains merit in no way inferior to the miraculous essence of the *kami* from the age of the *kami*. Okuninushi is also hidden in that realm, and his purpose is to care for the souls there and keep families together and happy, just as they were in the visible world.

So then if souls do not travel to *yomi*, where should they be put to be afforded this care? *Kami* who have shrines erected for them and receive worship therein occupy those shrines, or else they stay in the general vicinity of their graves. Even in those cases, they remain there for the never-ending lifespan of heaven and earth just like the *kami* who eternally inhabit their various shrines.

One example of burial and eternal rest is the case of Yamato Takeru's¹⁷ august

17. [Yamato Takeru is a legendary prince said to have lived in the second century CE. The tales of his bravery and tragic end are recorded in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*.]

passing. After first being interred in the plain of Nobo at Ise, he transformed into a white bird, which flew away only to settle at Shiki in Kawachi, where they also built a special mound for him in which he is said to rest. After this occurrence, new measures were implemented at ancient tombs intended to keep the souls fixed in one place. It is clear that these were undertaken because of the Yamato Takeru incident in which he was first interred in the plain of Nobo, only to have his soul fly off to a different place, presenting the need for another memorial plot.

From that age forward a gravesite was intended to hide the remains and also provide an abode for the soul after death. After death my soul, like anyone else's, will separate from the bodily remains and stay eternally in that vicinity. From ancient times to the present, in China and Japan there are countless examples of the human soul manifesting itself in miraculous activity outside of the grave.

People both past and present have continually concerned themselves with how to put the soul at rest after death. In every country it has been debated time and again. Then there are the ordinary Japanese people, who, unaware of our ancient traditions, make up all manner of things. On a surface level the stories might sound reasonable, but since their theories are devoid of basic facts, it ends up being excruciatingly frustrating attempting to make them delve deeper and consider the actual facts in detail.

Among Master Norinaga's verses concerning accounts from India is one that says, "The one called Shaka,¹⁸ the great liar, deceived others by heaping lies upon lies." This is quite true. The Buddhist master Shaka started out by taking bits and pieces of our ancient traditions and using them as seeds in his deceptive teachings. Moreover, the Buddhist masters who came later, like snakes winding around one's legs, kept adding more and more lies, layer upon layer of seductive enticements aimed at easing our emotional anxieties. Soothing here, comforting there, uncovering one thing while covering another, it is reminiscent of the old adage that speaks of "the difficulty of trying to catch a slippery eel using a gourd." What is extremely regrettable is that the Chinese and the Japanese, both the noble and the base, the talented and the untalented, were all taken in by these deceptive stories.

Included among the deceived were those ferocious warriors, thought to be as fierce as demons, who feared lies that told them they would go to hell, and so took on defiled Buddhist-style names. Each time I read old stories about this stupidity, unconsciously my hair stands on end, my fists clench, and I am filled with bitter resentment. On top of this, those who pursue ancient learning today

18. ['Shakyamuni' Buddha, the "sage of the Shakya clan."]

make a show of touting the spirit of Japan and speaking of the Buddhist teachings as if they were so much manure, but are they being authentic?

Master Norinaga stated, “Everyone is preoccupied with the desire to know the source of life and what occurs after death.” Similarly, he also said, “It is the true condition of the human heart to wonder what will become of it when it dies.” This is a feeling that no human can avoid and, due to circumstances that have people failing to examine mistaken accounts that do not agree with the facts, the first thing that comes to the minds of one hundred out of one hundred people on this topic on any given occasion is the story of the soul’s return to the disgusting and polluted land of *yomi*.

How I pity those people who while in the prime of youth boldly allow Buddhist teachings to slip out of their mouths, and even the aged or the sick who generally chant the name of a Buddha as their health fails, for I find this to be a perilous state of affairs. (Speaking of this, those people today who call themselves practitioners of Shinto have a composure of spirit that is, in comparison, quite courageous. Those people who propagate a corrupted form of Shinto readily control their emotions by trusting in a Shinto mixed with *yin* and *yang*, the five phases, and also Buddhist theories. They have a fundamental confidence in it and assuredly assert a rebirth in the younger palace of the sun, so that there are many Shinto followers who bravely and unswervingly keep this in mind as they are facing death. In contrast to that example, it pains me to the extreme to say that we students of ancient learning are probably weak in this regard and inferior to them when it comes to having such composure when facing death.)

How pitiful are those people who never question why we would go to such a defiled land as *yomi*. I wish they would stop holding that story in such high regard. As I said earlier, one cannot find one example of a traditional account nor any factual evidence that says all human souls go to that land. Master Norinaga also jumped to that false conclusion. Although the venerable old master said that the soul goes there, his own soul did not. I know where his soul rests and there he resides in peace and tranquility. He attends the learned colleagues who passed away before him. He composes verse and writes essays. The mistaken ideas that he let slip in the past are reexamined. Anyone whose spirit deeply seeks the Way can receive divine instruction from him and be illuminated on these points. Of this truth one can be certain and without doubt, as if seen by one’s very eyes.

So, if one asks where Master Norinaga’s soul is located, it rests on Mt Yamamuro. Even though he did not previously correct his mistaken idea that the human soul goes to *yomi*, he did ponder the idea that from ancient times onward graves were constructed in order to house the soul. Before his own grave was constructed he wrote, “One thousand years at home in Yamamuro,

gazing at flowers untouched by the wind.” Also he composed, “Understanding the lamentable condition of this transient body, I can now seek out my home for the next thousand generations.”

The clear message of these verses is that the future location of his soul is actually there in that resting place. Moreover, he himself determined in advance, while still alive, that this beautiful mountain would be the place where he would rest for eternity. Therefore, there should be no further room for doubt that Mt Yamamuro is where he rests. Consider the purity of the august mind that composed, “When people inquire about the spirit of Japan, tell them of the mountain cherry blossoms fragrant in the morning sun.” Why would that venerable master, whose august mind’s purity resembled the mountain cherry blossom, have to return to the foul land of *yomi*?

Incidentally, most people who study ancient learning have only a partial understanding of the spirit of Japan. Those with a partial understanding of the spirit of Japan also have only a partial understanding of the Chinese mind. Yet even a Chinese person with a pure spirit can also possess the true spirit of Japan. Thus, as it says in one of the Master Norinaga’s poems, “Although called a sage and rightfully included in that company, Confucius was a good man.” Even though he was Chinese he possessed the spirit of Japan. Even this Chinese man would be ashamed of those Japanese with only a partial knowledge of the spirit of Japan. What I say here I have often recorded in many other works praising his name and his many laudable accomplishments.

Now then, after my body dies, the destination of my soul has already been determined. As for where that is: “My remains may lie somewhere in the earth, but my soul will go to the master’s place.” I also invited my wife along; in fact, she preceded me there this year. My soul will fly there immediately and attend the master and accept the instruction in poetry that I have neglected in this lifetime. In spring I will enjoy viewing the mountain cherry blossoms the master had planted, in summer the verdant mountain, in the fall the maples and the moon, and in winter the tranquility of the snows—in eternal attendance of the master. Whenever the Master Norinaga wishes to offer his blessings to the future students of ancient learning, I, as the lowest of his disciples, having no need to trouble any of my brother disciples, can receive his words and pass them on. Those noisy, corrupt ranks of people who seek to spread Chinese theories or Buddhist teachings or any other evil paths will be made to obey and fall underfoot as I push my way in from the outside. Also on the rare chance that a challenge to this august land should arise in the form of barbarian foreigners bringing pain to the august spirit of the master, I will personally withdraw from his presence to face them. After taking my leave I will tie up my sleeves using the grass of Mt Yamamuro. And then, holding a great spear in my right hand and a bow in my left hand, with a thousand-arrow quiver on my back and

an eight-span sword hanging from my waist, I will take to the sky to join the assembled army of *kami*.

If the noble *kami* should question why I, who am too ignoble to assemble, would attempt to do so, I would appeal to them asking why they would scorn me who is a noble descendant of *kami*, and like Sotan,¹⁹ who would not be excluded, I would dare them to join the ranks of the divine army, serving in the vanguard. Hearing the orders blown down on the divine wind from the palace of the wind, sounding the battle cry, “Hurrah, let us show these stubborn barbarians the bitter taste of our fury!” we will rush into the ranks of the fierce army of brigands as numerous as swarms of ants. They are overrun and swept away as we brandish our great swords and drive them out using our sharply forged blades. We take possession of their dog and pig souls, tormenting them body and soul; we take heads and scatter them, leaving them fully and deservedly slaughtered and punished. Upon my return to Mt Yamamuro, I will respectfully report the victory to Master Norinaga. If things were to turn out this way there would be no greater contentment for me. This is the dream I keep constantly in my heart. If others would come to appreciate this grand vision of mine then the hearts and minds of all of them would become prouder, bolder, and stronger.

However, contrary to my hope, minds are effeminate and cowardly. In all things our progress has been slow and tentative. And so it is with the destination of the soul, we are so weak that we have even come to believe, as Confucians teach, that souls scatter at the time of death. As I have noted earlier, they say the valiant souls join the ranks of valiant souls and the wicked ones assemble into the ranks of the wicked. Also I wonder what others think of the belief in *kami* of evil, such as the *kami* of plagues, the *kami* of smallpox, and the *kami* of strangulation, all unheard of in ancient times. The idea behind them is that the spirits of evil *kami* produced certain diseases that resulted in death, and the wicked spirits of these dead had no homes and wandered aimlessly, having died in this unfortunate way. Embittered by the circumstance of their deaths and having no final destination for their souls these beings desire to make themselves known to others as the demons they are.

These ideas say that everyone whose mind is not at peace will then turn into some kind of demon. When Kusunoki Masashige was wounded and dying at Minatogawa, he said to his younger brother Masasue, “They say that one’s final thought before dying determines whether rebirth will be good or bad; what then should I think of?” Masasue smiled broadly and replied, “You should die

19. [Sone no Yoshitada, a tenth-century poet who was poorly regarded in his lifetime and whose aggressive manner had him expelled from the court.]

intent on being reborn as the same person you are, that is, one dedicated to serving the imperial court.” With a look reflecting ultimate satisfaction with his life, Masashige said, “That is just what I am thinking. Well then, farewell, may my wish come true in the next life!” and so saying they slew each other. It is pleasing to hear this sentiment coming from warriors.

There is an old tradition that says the trickster demons known today as *tengu*, whose appearances have been numerous, are those people who were extremely arrogant or else filled with so much painful bitterness when they died that they transformed into this kind of thing. Although others will dismiss this entirely as lies told by Buddhist priests, I, myself, have long thought these accounts to be credible. If so, then would it not follow that a person who was courageous and pure of heart and worked tirelessly for the sake of the world should after death become one of the glorious *kami*?

In the venerable master’s *Kojikiden* there is this poem that Yamato Takeru recited when he was about to ascend to heaven. “By the maiden’s bed I left my sword, alas, that sword.” By that poem the master wrote, “Being ill and on the verge of death it is still impossible for him to put this sword out of his mind. Even in this situation his mind’s focus shows how his courageous spirit could not be shaken. We should appreciate this poem because it helps us understand that the prince’s mind will be focused on that sword for eternity. Especially those who would be warriors should keep this forever in their minds. When they are on the verge of death, they should not entertain unnecessary and useless Confucian and Buddhist ideas; they should reflect deeply on this poem and preserve what sustained the prince’s courage when his world ended and he ascended to heaven.” This instruction is most welcome.

Therefore, given these examples that show the destinations of the souls to be many and varied, it should be impossible to assert that all souls return to *yomi*, and the venerable master’s theory that says, “When human die, their souls, be they good or evil, all go to the land of *yomi*,” is most certainly a sincerely mistaken teaching.

In sum, contemporary practitioners of ancient learning, for the most part, depend solely on the theories pronounced by my teacher, the venerable Master Norinaga. Furthermore, they have not closely analyzed theories from foreign lands, so when it comes to those theories they have never heard of, they become surprised and confused, or even enchanted and enthralled by the many points of convergence among them. In some cases, those who are not drawn in narrow their vision to an extreme. Out of respect for our master, but also similar to an old woman’s reverence for the Buddha, they truly think he must be revered and well studied as the one and only great man of learning, as deep as the many-layered tides of the ocean. Thus his pronouncement on the soul’s lack of divinity results in a sad and lamentable outcome. It is rare that I act so boldly and argue

in this manner against other teachings, but the ones I have just set forth are not well known and those I am arguing against are just half-baked. Yet, speaking out as vociferously as I am, I fear I may appear overly excited and frantic, even to my supporters.

[WNH]

ŌKUNI Takamasa 大國隆正 (1792–1871)



Ōkuni Takamasa was born into a samurai family in the Tsuwano domain compound of Edo. At age fourteen he joined the school of Hirata Atsutane* as one of the first disciples and at the same time he received a formal education in Confucian studies at the Shōheigaku shogunal academy. A visit to Nagasaki in 1818 piqued his interest in western studies. He went on to establish himself in Edo as a calligrapher and as a scholar of "ancient matters," focusing on the study of the age of the *'kami'* in the spirit of Atsutane. Shortly after being appointed to an administrative post in the Tsuwano domain, Takamasa ran into trouble and

was forced to relinquish his samurai status in 1828. Thereafter he moved to Osaka and by 1834 had begun to attract a modest circle of disciples about him. For the rest of his life Takamasa led a nomadic existence, never staying in the same place for more than a few years. A breakthrough came in 1837, when the 'daimyō' of the Ono domain in Harima allowed him to found a new school to instruct retainers in the Japanese Way. The establishment of a domain school that focused not on the orthodox Confucianism sanctioned by the 'shogunate' but on Native Studies was epoch-making. In the ensuing years, Takamasa was invited to teach the same subject in the domain school of Himeji. In an extraordinary move, his samurai status was restored and he was called back to his old domain by the daimyō, Kamei Koremi (1825–1885), who charged him with overhauling the curriculum at the domain school.

The tumultuous series of events that marked the end of the feudal period and led up to the Meiji restoration was upsetting for Takamasa and helped shape his thinking. Unlike earlier Native Studies writers who had defined themselves in opposition to Confucianism and Buddhism, Takamasa strived to transform Native Studies into a bulwark against the West and indeed to convert the West to Japan's "original teaching." Beginning in 1853, he turned out a steady stream of writings giving an increasingly religious character to the teachings he had inherited from Atsutane. The text excerpted here, dating from 1861, is a clear illustration both of Takamasa's interest in constructing a Japanese teaching that could meet the challenge of western learning, and of his determination to broaden the appeal of Native Studies from an elitist intellectual construct to a national religion for all. Behind it lay his awareness of the threat of Christianity, a religion that he partly admired, but also feared for its potential of undermining the loyalty of the Japanese towards the emperor.

Things came to a head near the end of Takamasa's life as the local daimyō came to play a central role in drawing up the ideology of the Meiji restoration. Under the

influence of Takamasa's teachings the coup of 1868 was presented to the world as a radical "return to the age of Emperor Jinmu," rather than as a more modest reform along the lines of the Kenmu restoration of 1333. Takamasa's vision of Shinto as a new national creed loomed behind the early religious policies of the new Meiji regime, including the resurrection of the ancient Council of *Kami* Affairs as well as the radical and destructive separation of Shinto shrines from Buddhist temples. Takamasa himself served briefly as an advisor on Shinto matters in that same year, but was too old and frail to play an active role; he retired after only two months of service. His legacy was carried further by one of his Tsuwano disciples, Fukuba Bisei (1831–1907), who proceeded to give form to the new state's ceremonies in Takamasa's spirit.

[MLT]

THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE

ŌKUNI Takamasa 1861, 100–102, 104–117, 120–3

The "original teaching" can be found in the introduction to the *Kojiki*, which was written and submitted to the throne by Ō no Ason Yasumaro, and deals with our "age of the *kami*." It is no easy task to learn to know it. Buddhists distinguish between the "Way of saintly practice" and the "Way of easy practice." If we follow their example, we can say that the "Way of saintly practice" in the original teaching is to read and interpret every word and every sinograph of the account on the age of the *kami* without fail and to understand its meaning. Even with a training of three or five years, a person without the right talents would not be able to gain a true understanding of it; this is not a teaching that is easy to grasp. Therefore, I will try to take out the essence from the understanding I have attained and set up a Way of easy practice for the original teaching that is accessible to everybody, so that all can be led towards this teaching. My first goal is to lead the people of Japan, who speak the same language; after this, I will also make the people of countries where other languages are spoken follow this teaching.

The Way of easy practice in Buddhism is based on the teaching that those who recite the phrases '*namu-Amida-Butsu*' or '*namu-myōhō-reengekō*' will escape misfortune in this world, and that their souls will, after death, reach a good place where they will experience the highest bliss. Following this example, we should say that those who recite the words *To ho kami emi tame*²⁰ will cleanse

20. [These "heavenly words of prayer" are first mentioned in a formula of great purification dating from the fifty-volume *Regulations and Laws of the Engi Era* (927). Takamasa rejected the straightforward meaning—"Distant *kami*, smile upon me"—and associated the five words

away all misfortune, and that after death their souls will ascend to the plain of high heaven. However, if that were all, the correct way to contain the body and control the mind would not become known. When it comes to the easy practice of Shinto, I, Ōkuni Takamasa, have thought deeply about the meaning of the word *naka* (middle) in the name of the first deity of the cosmogony of the *Kojiki*, Amenominakanushi, based on the original meaning of the fifty syllables. Its original meaning can be explained by means of two phrases: “adhering to the origin” and “helping each other.” To have an upright mind in these matters is the basis of Shinto. The essence of the original teaching is, therefore, “uprightness in adhering to the origin” and “uprightness in helping each other.”

There are different kinds of “uprightness in adhering to the origin”: uprightness towards one’s lord, uprightness towards one’s parents, uprightness towards one’s brothers and sisters, a wife’s uprightness towards her husband, and (in relation to children) a husband’s uprightness towards his children. These must be understood as the quintessence of “uprightness in adhering to the origin.” When town-dwellers respect their town’s magistrates, villagers the magistrates of their village, performers and artisans their masters, and collateral families the main branch of their house lineage, this is also “uprightness in adhering to the origin.”

The highest ambition of all among the different kinds of “uprightness in adhering to the origin” is for those who are born in our land of Japan to adhere to the ancient facts concerning the age of the *kami*, handed down as the ancestral lineage of our emperor, and to preserve this land for all time. If all the people of Japan embrace this ambition, we will never be defeated even if we are attacked by foreign countries. This must be the first practical principle of our coastal defense.

“Uprightness in adhering to the origin” is the warp; “uprightness in helping each other” is the woof. As a human being in the world, I am “helped” by others and others depend on my help. “Uprightness in helping each other” is called ‘humaneness’ in Confucianism, ‘compassion’ in Buddhism, and in the teaching of the West they refer to it as “friendship and love.” It is in “uprightness in adhering to the origin” that our Shinto is superior.

The superiority of Shinto in this respect is demonstrated by the fact that the imperial lineage has ruled our land without interruption for millions of generations. The Confucian notion that a virtuous ruler overthrows an evil one is wrong in its treatment of one’s lord and master; the Buddhist notion of leaving one’s household is wrong in its treatment of one’s parents; and in the western

with earth, sun, *kami*, human beings, and things, arranging them in a cosmic diagram to represent the ultimate origin of all existence.]

way, the manner in which wives behave is incorrect in some respects. Even so, there are loyal ministers, filial sons, and chaste wives also in China, India, and the West. When we see that these virtues are praised by the people of these lands, we understand that our Shinto is the most correct of all teachings, and that this Way is universally valid throughout the world.

Every person has his own occupation. To have an occupation is to engage in the act of both “helping others” and “being helped by others,” according to the laws of the Way of “adhering to the origin.”

.....

Those who lack uprightness in their occupations will not see their households flourish, and those who waste their time by pursuing amusements and pleasures and who are indolent in their occupation will find it difficult to keep their household afloat. The indolent cannot sustain their immediate affairs, and those who are driven by greed and engage in acts that are of no help to others, will find that their children and grandchildren will fail to prosper. But the households of those who in their occupation endeavor to heed the good of others, both those above and those below, without cheating or lying, and who strive for uprightness in their work, will be favored by the gods and thrive even if they do not engage in any special hidden charity.

The gods detest those who display a façade of charity but in secret concoct plans that harm others in order to obtain some private gain.

There is much evidence, both old and new, to show that after death, the souls of men enter the spirit world and become spirits. Confucians, however, do not accept this and maintain that the soul dissipates. The Buddhists offer a variety of theories on the afterlife, talking about heaven and hell, the six realms of transmigration and the four kinds of gestation, and of karmic causes across the three sections of time (past, present, and future). I, Takamasa, distance myself from the two ways of Confucianism and Buddhism; neither do I rely on the theories of the West. When one considers this matter based on the facts, it is clear there are many real cases of reincarnation. One cannot dismiss all the tales about people who have fallen into the realms of beasts or hungry spirits as mere fiction, and both hell and heaven must exist in the spirit world. The divine principle allows us to explain these matters in a manner that distances itself from Buddhism. When Buddhism first arrived, the notions of heaven and hell did not exist, either in China or in Japan. Such places must have come into being in the spirit world after the arrival of Buddhism. We must explain the spirit world from such a broad point of view.

The place that is called the “plain of high heaven” in our ancient tradition is the original source of the spirit world and the realm of the gods of utmost

righteousness and goodness. It is the place where life originates. It is located in the center of the sun that rises every morning, and it is the place where the gods of utmost 'righteousness' and goodness gather. The Confucians call it "supreme heaven," the Buddhists "the hall of heaven," and the teaching of the West also refers to it as "heaven." However, these words are mere secondary reflections, while the "plain of high heaven" in our ancient tradition is the truth. It is similar to paradise, but it is not paradise; it is a divine realm that is superior to paradise or the 'Pure Land'. It is the dwelling place of the deity who governs life. It is a place that connects with the world of man on earth and that offers help to all.

There is also a filthy and foul spirit world that is called the "netherworld." It resembles hell but it is not hell. It is the place where death arises. It is a spirit world that is located within the earth. The spirit of the earth, Izanagi no mikoto, manifested itself as a man and used its own body as a model to create the human world. After mankind had greatly increased, it brought the seeds of the countless things that are of use to mankind down from the plain of high heaven. Now, it has once more ascended to the plain of high heaven, from where it governs over life in the human world. Another spirit of the earth, Izanami no mikoto, manifested itself in the form of a woman and used its own body as a model to create the human world. It received the seeds of the countless things in its own body and gave birth to them. In the end, it returned to the spirit world within the earth. Now, it governs over death in the human world.

When Izanagi returned to the plain of high heaven and Izanami to the netherworld, they vowed an oath of creation and transformation. Because of this, life is to this day rooted in the sun. Life is generated daily by the light of the sun from the upper side of the leaves of plants and trees, in the amount of 1,500. Death is rooted in the earth, and it arises every night from the nether side of the leaves of plants and trees, destroying 1,000 of the 1,500 lives that were created the previous day. This ration pervades everywhere, so that 500 lives remain every day.

The scientists of the West have made measurements of this, and they refer to it as "one part oxygen and two parts nitrogen." This is a sloppy theory. How could the world endure if there were so much nitrogen? The truth must be, as revealed in our ancient tradition, that there is more life-giving oxygen than there is nitrogen. Because the nitrogen destroys two thirds of the oxygen, one third of the oxygen remains. While the two parts of nitrogen destroy two thirds of the oxygen, the remaining one part of oxygen that remains gives life to countless things.

When we consider this matter, we understand that while our ancient tradition is a living principle, the science of the West is a theory unfit for living use. Moreover, the term "creation and transformation" used by Chinese scientists

refers to this same principle, but it is a slipshod theory, much less subtle than the ancient tradition of our country. “Creation” corresponds to the wondrous workings of Izanagi no mikoto, and “transformation” to those of Izanami no mikoto. These matters belong to the advanced Way of Shinto’s “saintly practice,” and there is no need to talk about them in the Shinto of easy practice. However, there may be those who think that this is “too simple,” or who mistakenly believe that the theories of China and the West are supremely subtle, and thus I have briefly touched upon these things to show that the theories of our divine principle are subtle and correct, that they are true theories superior to those developed in other countries....

Utmost righteousness and goodness describes those who have attained “uprightness in adhering to the origin” and “helping each other.” The souls of those who upheld such uprightness were already attracted to the plain of high heaven while they were still human beings. Therefore, they will ascend to the plain of high heaven after they have shed their bodies. There they will receive orders from the heavenly deities and once more return to the earth, where they will dwell in shrines and give help to the human world. You must know that this is a natural and obvious truth. This is the fate of good people. The souls of extremely good people will become extremely good deities, as is demonstrated by the outstanding beneficence of the deity Tenman Daijizaiten.²¹

All things have two sides, front and back. Day is the front, night the back; man is the front, woman the back; good is the front, evil the back. At the back of “uprightness in adhering to the origin” there is “selfishness that violates the origin.”

At the back of “uprightness in helping each other” we find the evil of “harming others.” Such people are attracted to the death-exuding netherworld already while they still are human beings, so how could their souls be able to ascend to the plain of high heaven, that place of righteousness and goodness? Their souls will enter the netherworld, where they will be used by the Great Deity of the netherworld as demons of sickness and death. They will assist in the work of “killing 1,000 people,” and they will try to seduce others and pull them down to the netherworld. In ancient language, they are called “those who come raging from the land below.”

The scientists of China and the West talk only of the visible world that is the “front”; they do not discuss the visible world and the spirit world as a pair. The Buddhists regard the visible world as impermanent and speak only of the

21. [The deified spirit of Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), a famous poet who lost his high position at the court and died in exile. He was believed to have returned to the capital as an avenging spirit, and was posthumously restored to his former office. In the Edo period, this figure was worshipped widely as a god of poetry and learning.]

spirit world of the future, and thus they are no less biased. The true principle of our Shinto, which speaks of both the visible world and the spirit world and discusses the connection between the sun and the earth in subtle detail, is not biased in that way. Those who argue that “there was no science and no Way in ancient Japan” recognize only the science of other countries, and they are unaware of the higher source of truth that is our ancient tradition.

.....

The human soul dwells in the brain. It is attracted by the sun and it follows the course of the sun around the sky. This is proved by the fact that we rise in the morning and stand up. When the sun goes down, we lay our heads on the ground and sleep; this is evidence for the fact that we follow the sun which at that time is underneath the earth. Within that sun is the plain of high heaven of utmost righteousness and goodness. Thus we know that the human soul is attracted to utmost righteousness and goodness.

In contrast, the human body is attracted to the earth. This is proved by the fact that our left leg is stuck to the earth when we raise the right and vice versa; we are unable to detach ourselves from the earth. Within the earth is the filthy, foul netherworld. When we combine these two facts, we understand that the soul that uses the body is correct, while the soul that is used by the body is filthy and foul. A soul that uses the body is a soul that has not lost its “uprightness in adhering to the origin” and “helping each other.” A soul that is used by the body is a soul of “selfishness that violates the origin” and of “harming others.” It goes without saying that the soul that is attracted to the sun will in the end reach the divine realm within the sun, while the soul that is attracted to the earth will end up entering the earth.

All those who make an effort to live according to our Shinto, whether they follow the saintly practice or the easy practice, must keep to the two kinds of uprightness. They must give due attention to the shrine in their dwelling place, revere ‘Amaterasu’ Ōmikami who is the lord of the sun’s divine realm, intone the divine words *To ho kami emi tame*, cleanse away the impurity of the ‘heart’ that is attracted to the earth, and rejoice that they are born in this imperial land.

Those who wish to study Shinto’s saintly practice must know the letters of China. One can learn much about both India and the West by knowing Chinese. It is also useful for learning about concepts of morality. Uprightness towards one’s parents is called “filial piety”; uprightness towards one’s lord is called “loyalty”; and uprightness towards one’s husband is called “chastity.” These are the foremost among the kinds of uprightness in adhering to the origin. Those who possess uprightness in adhering to the origin and strive for uprightness in helping each other are called “humane,” while those who possess uprightness in helping each other and strive for uprightness in adhering to the

origin are called “righteous.” The *Doctrine of the Mean* is a book of rites; it is less useful when it comes to the Way. The sinographs in its title is a good fit for our ancient word *naka*, “the middle.” The sinographs are all Chinese words. There is a difference between ancient words, dialects, and vulgar words, but these sinographs are words the Chinese use all the time. Terms such as ‘benevolence’, righteousness, filial piety, and brotherly love were not invented by Confucius. All Confucius did was to give a clear explanation of the old names and words of that country.

These concepts change over time. In texts from the Zhou dynasty, such as the “four books and five classics,” one can find the compound “loyalty and ‘sincerity,’” but not “loyalty and filial piety.” The compound “loyalty and filial piety” originated in the chapter on loyalty and filial piety in the *Hanfeizi*,²² and was used copiously first by Confucians of the Han. These might be foreign matters, but those who follow saintly Shinto must be aware of them. In all things, the Japanese words and the meanings of sinographs are to be kept separate; only then can one compare them and decide whether they fit or not. If one fails to recognize this, one will sometimes misunderstand the meaning of a sinograph because of the Japanese word; more often, one will misunderstand the Japanese word because of the sinograph. Be aware of this.

We must also use Buddhist words such as “afflictions,” “enlightenment,” “true ‘suchness,’” “the perfect circle,” “causes and conditions,” and “cause and effect.” From western learning, we must adopt words such as “nitrogen,” “oxygen,” “attraction force,” “weight force,” and “pressure force.” We must make the truth about heaven and earth apparent and establish the great Way by basing ourselves on our ancient tradition and our ancient words, while avoiding one-sidedness; then we must make it known widely to the people in the world and guide them.

A certain scholar of western learning said:

The Way of the Buddha as it is practiced in this land of Japan today is a very narrow teaching. Protestantism as it is practiced widely in the western regions today is a very broad teaching. Among those who have only a superficial knowledge of these things, there are some who believe that it is the same as the teaching of the Christians. However, those Christians are regarded as a heresy also in the West. Protestantism does not set out to deceive people by evil magic. The Chinese say that it is a teaching based on benevolence and righteousness. Its benevolence is apparent from the fact that Protestants build orphanages, where they take care of the children of the poor who cannot feed their own offspring, returning them to their parents when they have grown up. They build hospitals where they receive and treat patients, without taking

22. [A work written by Han Fei (280–233 BCE), a minister of the Qin.]

a payment for their expenses. The costs are covered both by the king and by believers of that Way. Recently, they have begun to build madhouses, where they collect the mad. They cure those who can be cured and keep those who cannot, feeding them as long as they live. In addition, they take pity on widows, orphans, and cripples and provide well for them.

Confucians may discuss humaneness, but they look towards the pure and the elevated; therefore, they are poor and unable to extend benevolence to others. Even if there are Confucians who happen to be rich, they are not concerned with these things. The Buddhists talk about “compassion as the source of merit,” and occasionally set free fish and fowl or give alms to beggars; but these are merely small gestures and of little real use. They merely collect donations for their temples and make sure their monks can live in comfort. So much for “humaneness.”

What about righteousness? In the West, countries with different languages stand together and help each other in case of a national crisis. Because all western teachings are based on “friendship and love,” people help other people and countries help other countries. This is why they regard countries that refuse friendly trade, such as Japan and China until recently, as countries that contravene the ‘will of heaven’, and this is why they attack them in heaven’s name. But they do not go to war without good reason. When a country with a different language is ruled with cruelty and its people are no longer able to endure the venom of evil government, they eliminate the king of that country, select a person with the correct bloodline of that country’s original kings and let him succeed to that country’s throne. They do not expropriate that country without reason. That is why that teaching has to be called more correct and grand than Confucianism or Buddhism. If we are to govern this country of Japan by adopting the way of these foreign countries, we should follow the superior teaching of Protestantism and discard worthless Confucianism and Buddhism.

These days, ‘Dutch Studies’ are widely practiced, and many are stunned by the subtleness of western astronomy, geography, calendrical science, medicine, ballistics, military science, physics, and mathematics. Some of these must have arisen from Catholicism, but for the most part, they are products of Protestantism. The “heavenly Lord” of Catholicism is like ‘Amida’ in Buddhism, while the “Jesus” of Protestantism may be compared to ‘Shakyamuni’. The difference between Catholicism and Protestantism is similar to that between the Pure Land sect and the Nichiren sect in Buddhism. Catholicism was handed down by a man called Peter and spread by him; Protestantism was restored by a man called Luther, who recovered the truth about the “heavenly Lord” and “Jesus” and established the correct teaching. Among the countries with which trade is now allowed, America, England, and Holland rely largely on Protestantism, while France has many followers of Catholicism. Russia reveres a branch of Catholicism called the Greek teaching. Turkey follows the teach-

ing of Muhammad. Also in China, schools of Protestantism have now been established, and many follow this teaching.

However, the shortsighted scholars of Japan are ignorant of all this. They follow the narrow-minded teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism, or they boast of that extremely boorish Shinto as “the Way of our country.” They should all be brushed aside.

I have heard that you have learned the basics of western learning from Yoshio Gonnosuke²³; why then are you trying to build up that lowly Shinto? You must be taking recourse to Shinto because the ban on Christianity has not yet been lifted, leaving you no other choice. I am certain that once this ban is lifted, you too will enter this Way. I wish to know your true intentions.

I have replied to this query and reiterate its contents here:

I begin by addressing your description of Shinto as extremely boorish. The Shinto of the past is indeed a most boorish affair. The Shinto of the past has four branches: two mandalas, united, Confucian, and ancient learning. The Shinto of two mandalas combines Shinto with the Diamond and Womb mandalas of ‘Shingon’ Buddhism. United Shinto posits the unity of heaven and man, and is weak in its academic learning. Confucian Shinto... is a form of Shinto that regards the ancient facts from the age of the *kami* as convoluted allusions. The Shinto of ancient learning does see these facts as direct statements of truth, but even this school does not give any attention to the divine principle. The Shinto that I advocate is based on this divine principle. It is a Shinto that corrects human morality and that brings out the truth about astronomy, geography, and the countless things. The Shinto I advocate is not the same as the Shinto of the past.

Protestantism is a teaching that will cause great harm to our Japan, and the authorities should absolutely not allow it to enter the country. Even if it were allowed, it would be a heresy that cannot be trusted as a means to enlighten the lowly. Ever since the days of my childhood, I have loathed this teaching and worked tirelessly to stop it. Let me open my heart and reveal my real intentions to you. I will begin by discussing the two Ways of Confucianism and Buddhism, and then move on to the western teaching.

In the ancient age of our Japan, there was no one who thought of the ancient tradition of the age of the *kami*, handed down in the form of the ancestral lineage of our emperor, as a convoluted account. All accepted it without any doubts, as a direct statement of truth. Beyond this, there was no such thing as a “way” or a teaching. Thus, this ancient tradition functioned as the Way and the teaching, and all the people of Japan obeyed and revered it. However, as everyone knows, in middle antiquity the two teachings of Confucianism and

23. [Yoshio Gonnosuke (1785–1831) was a key figure in preparing a Dutch, English, and Chinese dictionary that was influential in shaping modern Japanese.]

Buddhism were sent to Japan as a tribute by the three Korean kingdoms. The emperor and ministers of that age believed them to be of benefit for the realm and adopted them. Since that time and until this day, those two teachings have been practiced widely. As they were widely practiced, more and more people were taken in by them, and many came to make light of Shinto. Even so, the court continued to make Shinto its basis, and it has not adopted Confucianism or Buddhism as its great Way. Let me give you proof of this.

In Confucianism, the great Way is summed up in the peaceful abdication of Yao to Shun and the defeat of Tang by Wu. Therefore, the kings of China change their lineage name from time to time, as one dynasty takes over the reign from its predecessor. Our Japan is different. It is based on an eternal divine will, and no imperial heir has ever borne a lineage name or handed over the throne to the son of a minister. Thus Confucianism has not been adopted as the great Way. You must realize that it is our own Shinto that has served as the great Way. Buddhism, too, has not been adopted as the great Way; this is proven by the fact that monks and nuns were not allowed to approach the palace during Shinto rituals. Therefore, Confucianism and Buddhism were used to complement the great Way, not to ground it.

As you know very well, after Nāgārjuna no great sage has appeared in India, where Buddhism originated; hence, it has fallen into decline. In China, too, no great sages have appeared since the wise men of the 'Tendai' School. After Buddhism had crossed to Japan, there have been many sages: Saichō*, Kūkai*, Hōnen*, Nichiren*, Eisai, Rennyo, and so forth. The places where they founded their schools are known as head temples. Most of these head temples are in the capital, and they have contributed to the prosperity of that city. If the monks of the branch temples all observe the teaching and the precepts left by Shakyamuni, this will not lead to monetary circulation. The monks who rise up to positions at those head temples all boast of their temples' high status and indulge in luxury; the merchants and the brothels reap the benefits of this. That money all contributes to monetary circulation in our land.

Protestantism has produced many sages besides Peter and Luther, and it has been spread by them; its head temples and its branch temples are all in the western regions. In Arabia, there are the ancient sites of Muhammad. Those who follow his teaching do not hesitate to travel a thousand miles. They board ships and make annual pilgrimages in great numbers to offer incense and do worship. This will suffice to show that sects whose head temples and branch temples are in foreign lands are not beneficial to our country. They will transfer the wealth of our country to foreign lands, and in the end lead to our country's decline. If some country in those regions raises an army to attack us, we will not be in a position to resist. In Satsuma the Ikkō monks²⁴ have

24. [Ikkō (literally, single-minded) refers to a militant sect of True Pure Land monks who sparked peasant revolts in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.]

been banned. This ban is all the more strict because this is a good teaching; precisely because it inspires profound faith, it must be feared.

In Japan, we must always first revere Shinto, the ancient tradition of our land; after that we must use all good things from China, India, the West, and anywhere else, even in small matters, as supports for elucidating the divine principle of Shinto. We must never mistake the root for the branch.

.....

The easy practice of Shinto entails basing oneself on “loyalty, filial piety, and chastity,” being diligent in one’s occupation, and having the uprightness of benevolence and righteousness. Furthermore, one must revere the gods and deepen one’s resolve to be loyal to one’s country. Those who aspire to the saintly practice of Shinto must also adhere to this, just like those who follow the easy practice.

Here, one must be aware of the differences between primal matter and secondary matter, primal *ki* and secondary *ki*, primal spirit and secondary spirit. This is the great foundation of Japanese science. It is a true principle that is unknown to both Chinese and western scholars. Primal matter is the “oil-like substance” that originated when heaven and earth first developed. It survives to this day in solidified form as the seed of living beings, the seeds of plants, and the primal juices of metals and stones. Secondary matter is the food of living beings, the excretions and juices of plants and trees, and the watery soil produced by metals and stones.

In the human body, primal *ki* refers to the navel; secondary *ki* is the breath. Few people are aware of this, so let me explain.

When a human being is in the womb, *ki* reaches it through the umbilical cord. Also after birth, one must protect one’s navel as the site of one’s primal *ki*. When one breathes with one’s navel, one’s courage will grow strong and one will enjoy a long life. In China, there is the way of immortals. This way regards the technique of breathing with one’s navel as the secret of longevity.

.....

The primal spirit in the human body is in the brain; in heaven, it is the soul that illuminates all. Seen from heaven, the human body looks like this: ☉. This is the same as the old sinographs for “sun”; it is similar to the perfect circle of Buddhism and the ‘supreme ultimate’ in China. This is the source of the uprightness of “adhering to the origin” and of “helping each other.”

The secondary spirit is language. All teaching is manifested in language. Thanks to language, even evil minds come to be attracted to the plain of high heaven of utmost righteousness and goodness. Language is also what seduces the human mind to commit evil. Therefore, language is important. It is the secondary spirit of language that leads one to the plain of high heaven or turns one into an inhabitant of the netherworld; therefore, one must respect it.

PRIMAL MATER	—————	SECONDARY MATTER
the human body		rice <i>Japan</i> fish meat (wild; beef) <i>foreign countries</i>
PRIMAL KI	—————	SECONDARY KI
navel		breath
PRIMAL SPIRIT	—————	SECONDARY SPIRIT
adhering to the spirit; helping each other		language teaching deceit

Those who wish to follow the saintly practice of Shinto must study this closely. Also those who adhere to the easy practice must know about this principle.

The way is inherently present in the native language of every country. This is why Shakyamuni realized the Buddha way by contemplating the letters *a* and *o*, and this is why Confucius established the way by explaining the meaning of the characters “benevolence” and “righteousness.” The character for “middle” rhymes with “east”; it is no coincidence that Japan is to the east of China.

The greatest cause for joy at being born in Japan is the system of fifty sounds, beginning with *a-i-u-e-o*. This system exists in no other land or language. It is a gift from the heavenly deities to our country Japan. Therefore, we must penetrate the meaning of every line and every sound. We must know the rules for putting these sounds together and begin our reasoning from that knowledge.

[MLT]

ORIKUCHI Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887–1953)

Accomplished as a neo-nativist folklorist, Shinto theologian, scholar of classical literature, and *tanka* poet (writing under the name Shaku Chōkū), Orikuchi Shinobu was born in the rural surroundings of Osaka. He moved to Tokyo for study at Kokugakuin University where he graduated in 1910 with a major in Japanese literature. Twelve years later he became a full professor, lecturing on Shinto with a focus on its nature as a religion, and from 1928 he also lectured at what would become Keiō University.

It was an encounter with Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962) at a study group organized by Nitobe Inazō (1862–1933) that inspired Orikuchi's lifelong interest in folklore studies. He began to work under Yanagita in 1913 and the two collaborated closely during the 1930s. Of the two, Orikuchi was the more traditional, in that, like Kamo no Mabuchi* nearly two centuries earlier in the nativist tradition, Orikuchi sought the essence of a contemporary Japanese psyche in ancient literature, and especially in the poetry of the *Man'yōshū*. Orikuchi's magnum opus is a three-volume study of the early history of Japan entitled *Studies of Ancient Times*.

As the following passages show, Orikuchi's understanding of Shinto owed much to Hirata Atsutane*, with whom he shared the sense that Shinto theology was the centerpiece of the nativist Japanese tradition and its lineage of "great men." Like many Japanese scholars with a passionate interest in the imagined roots of their Japaneseness, Orikuchi struggled to find a place for Shinto during the last years of his life, which coincided with the immediate aftermath of Japan's 1945 defeat in the Pacific War. His sense of urgency is reflected in his insistence that only a recovery of belief in the *kami* can bring about an orderly and beautiful life for Japanese society.

[PEN]

THE GOAL OF NATIVE STUDIES

ORIKUCHI Shinobu 1943, 312–19

The object of Native Studies is taken to be the study of the classics. The classics are, indeed, the place to begin, but they are not its true purpose...

Within the lineage of Native Studies there is a famous Buddhist priest known as Keichū (1640–1701), but the "four great figures," the historical paragons, are Kada no Azumamaro (1669–1736), Kamo no Mabuchi*, Motoori Norinaga*, and Hirata Atsutane*. Keichū is not included in the ranks, but strictly in terms of learning, he should definitely be included, and one might even say that he is the man who started Native Studies.... If, however, Kokugakuin University

is taken as a living example of Native Studies, Keichū is excluded. What makes this university different from other places is that it includes a Shinto shrine just inside its gates, the Kokugaku Shrine. The reason for Keichū's exclusion from the great figures is not simply the narrow-minded disdain of many Shinto priests for a Buddhist priest. I am thankful for Keichū's scholarship, but it is just that—mere knowledge. Keichū was a great man, and one with a love of Japan, but this is only natural for a Japanese. Without it, he would not have been the superior person he was.... In Keichū's age, '*waka*' were the subject of study. The central aim was to facilitate the complete and correct interpretation of literature from ancient times, including *waka*, and Keichū greatly advanced its study.... As a priest, he was trained in Indian philology—that is, in Sanskrit—and his scholarly approach was exceptionally rigorous. This influenced his successors, and helped both philology and Japanese linguistics flourish....

In order to study old Japanese matters, it is necessary to know those things and ceremonies transmitted from ancient times. Even to perform a festival, knowledge of ceremonies is essential. To investigate these matters is to have an opportunity to reflect on ancient matters.... At first, Native Studies expanded from the study of writings from the Heian, Nara, and even earlier periods, to the composition of verse and study of linguistics, and from there in the direction of antiquities, ceremonies, politics, and economics. Native Studies even entered into politics and economics, considering how it could benefit the world when ancient politics differ so much from contemporary politics. Since the ideal is for politics and economics to serve the people, moral sentiment, rather than the kinds of ideals to be found in later ages, were taken as fundamental. In this regard, if scholars of Natives Studies did not directly imitate the Chinese Confucians, they were similar to them.... Thus, scholars of Native Studies came to believe that only Japanese ethics and morality could save Japan.

In this sense the same moral goals can be seen in the methodology and scholarship of the four great figures mentioned earlier. Among their contemporaries with some faint trace of what Native Studies is about, one finds their moral sentiments diluted. If one wants to know whether Keichū qualifies as a scholar of Native Studies, therefore, we should examine whether his Japanese moral sentiments are profound or shallow, and whether they are fundamental to his researches or not, for the more Native Studies advances, the deeper it enters into the study of Japan's ancient morality. There is no Japanese Native Studies without this. That said, moral sentiments in ordinary times differ from what we see in times marked by extraordinary events. For example, those of you in preparatory schools may think of doing research on Japanese literature, or Japanese history or Japanese morality, or studying philosophy, ethics, history, and literature when you enter university, but this does not constitute Native Studies. After studying such things we need to construct our own personal scholarship

and exert ourselves in that direction. If one suddenly declares that one only wants to do history or literature or ethics, this narrow goal will never bring one to the heart of the matter.

.....

What we must not forget is that Native Studies is always borne by a certain passion. Knowledge is borne by passion, and ours must be a knowledge of ancient times borne by the passion that comes from a Japanese perspective on ethics and morality. What we call the “ancient times” extends beyond the Heian and Kamakura periods to include the early modern or Edo period. In this way we learn the basis of our spirit.

As the world quieted down and our zeal abated, the goals of Native Studies were also silenced. Its goal and subject matter is Shinto, and one might say that the purpose of Native Studies is the study of Shinto. But in an age like our own, when the faith of the Japanese is in question and Native Studies has been reduced to moral custom, when the people are hard pressed and a crisis can arise at any moment, what is Native Studies to do? In a word, we need to ground ourselves on faith. It seems to me Native Studies falls into three areas:

1. Static, intellectual scholarship.
2. As necessary as the intellectual side is, scholarship driven by passion, that is, scholarship with action.

The ultimate goal is faith. In other words, a Native Studies that is intellectually static is insufficient and needs a dynamic element. Scholarship requires passion. It must be faith-driven.

3. And, finally, scholarship that is active and practical.

Native Studies is what one gets when one adds passion to knowledge. In other words, we now must act in a manner inspired by ethical sentiments. One always has to act to some extent, but never more than when the moment for action has come.

.....

From ancient times whenever Japan has been deadlocked, something needed to be done to break through the impasse. Something spiritual—in today’s language, a miracle—appears. A number of such miracles come to mind. In fact, within the last year we have witnessed something remarkable as a result of which faith was reawakened for the first time in the depth of our hearts. One cannot call this normal. It is not just that we are awestruck by something awesome or grateful for something we should be thankful for. There are times when our efforts produce expected results and times when they do not. And again there are times when the results are unforeseen and may properly be called

miraculous. Japanese history is a story of miracles that have uplifted its people. The reason the people of Japan have survived and continued to grow is that whenever something had brought them to a standstill, they found strength in their hearts through faith. Faith is the most important thing for us now. When Native Studies scholars look at this faith, which differs from how religionists see faith, they discover the true meaning of things and are able to express it.

In this way, the groundbreaking scholarship of so many Native Studies pioneers that we have carried on will serve its purpose in times of crisis like the present and will bring a solution to unresolved matters in society. You yourselves must know from the start that the moral life of Japan entails such profound faith and that this faith works miracles. It guides the nation to bring such a miracle to birth and it does so in the present emergency in which things are so far out of the ordinary.

[PEN]

SHINTO'S REBIRTH AS A RELIGION

ORIKUCHI Shinobu 1949, 461, 463, 467–72

It was the summer of 1945. I had not even considered that the wretched reality of the war's end was approaching—day by day, hour by hour. One day I was astounded by a kind of revelation. This is what I heard. “Isn't the effort expended by these young Americans in fact like that of their crusading forebears who struggled passionately to restore Jerusalem?” This could only give us pause to reflect quietly that if this were indeed the case, what chance was there of our winning the war?

Our own passions may have been quiet, but they boiled no less intensely at the time. And yet we were so hopelessly troubled by doubts over whether there were as many young people in Japan with religious fervor.

.....

Up until now Shinto's transformation into an organized religion has been considered a terrible thing, since treating it as a religion would mean forfeiting its moral aspects. Given the exceedingly strong ties of Shinto to morality, it was felt that even a single step away from those ties would spell the collapse of morality. Shinto was not to be seen as a religion. To think of it as such would make it the same as sect Shinto. Its protectors, basing Shinto morality on a strange kind of purism, thus fiercely rejected the idea of Shinto's moving in the direction of a religion.

In recent experience (before we ourselves were born, of course) a cloud passed over just prior to and following the Meiji Restoration that became what

we know as “sectarian Shinto.” The reason it rose to prominence at that time, it seems to me, is because the purist moral perspective I just spoke of could not stand in its way. Once this mistaken purism had receded, the seeds of a free Shinto began to germinate.

At this very time there arose mainstream leaders, enlightened proponents who had received a proper upbringing and began to promote Shinto as a religion, making it possible for any number of Shinto doctrinal currents to appear. Alas, before the situation could unfold, the effects of the Meiji Restoration began to fall into place piece by piece. Fortunate, or apparently fortunate, conditions prevailed thereafter, but the result was that once again the mood prevailed that to make Shinto into a religion was morally unacceptable, an obstacle to Shinto purism. In this way, Japanese Shinto would develop as something other than a religion.

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Fervor alone is not enough to make a religion appear. For a religion, nothing is more important than the emergence of enlightened persons. Unless a person appears with a genuine feeling for the ‘*kami*’, no matter how many scriptures are at hand or what kind of theological systems might be fashioned, it will all be pointless. Regardless of how long and devoted our waiting, there is no guarantee that this kind of person will come forward in such circumstances. Nonetheless, I believe that if we keep ourselves in a state of preparation, among the hundreds or thousands or ten thousands—or whatever number it takes—of zealous aspirants who come forth, eventually there will be one who has a sense of the *kami*, and from then on this kind of religion will materialize.

Not only that. I am thinking of late that an enlightened person may perhaps emerge from among the ranks of the highly cultured to promote the Shinto religion. In this regard we have to turn our attention, with profound reflection and strong feelings, wholeheartedly and from our very marrow, to the arrival of the bearer of this revelation. To put it bluntly, it comes to whether there exists, among the many Shinto believers, a prophet answering to the will of the supreme deity.

We need the fortitude to await that moment. Our attitude must be one of religious conviction and a grasp of the profound will of the *kami*. The question is whether we will stay ready until the moment comes. What kind of *kami* do we seek? What kind of *kami* have we been awaiting? We must persist in these doubts to the end to maintain the requisite resolve.

In the last stages of the war, a strange thing happened. It was almost farcical, but it is still good to recall it. There was a dispute between Shinto thinkers and officials about who is higher, the solar deity Amaterasu Ōkami or the first deity Amenominakanushi no kami. There were even those who sought a solution as if it actually were—or at least approached—a public matter. At the time we felt

tremendous anger. What are we to do in order to settle questions regarding our knowledge of the *kami*? What reason can there be to solve matters of religion in this way? To see the *kami* so grossly defiled was a cause of deep regret and drove one to tears of indignation. It is for such things that the *kami* turned their backs on us.

But now, as I look back at the situation with a cooler mind, I believe we can see reflected there the religious presence of the *kami* that will be appearing in Japan. Might one not see in all that confusion over Amaterasu Ōkami and Amenominakanushi no kami a faint hint of something divine mixed in with a kind of religious character? Nowadays I have come to think that it comes down to this: even if Japanese faith contains any number of elements from other countries, there is something particular about it for Japan and for the world, something altogether free from religion.

This is faith in Takamimusubi and Kamimusubi, the so-called *musubi kami*. The sinograph assigned to *mu* means “produce” and that for *subi*, “spirit,” thus yielding the combined meaning of “giving birth to soul.” This is not belief in the *kami* themselves, but in the soul that bursts forth from within the body with the power to live, or rather in the fact that when the soul enters into inanimate matter it grows slowly along with the matter it infuses. Matter expands and the soul develops together with it. Among all things, the most perfect are the *kami*, followed by human beings. In ancient times people believed that the most remarkable and powerful manifestation of incomplete material was the land of the Japanese archipelago. This belief is reflected in the oldest myths of Japan, the stories of the creation of Ōyashima (Japan), and the birth of the *kami*....

In other words, I take Shinto theology’s point of departure to be belief in *kami* who possess the kind of power that can both confer a soul on matter and generate life in the relationship between body and soul. This easily leads to the mistaken idea among certain families—an idea that goes back to ancient Japan—that the *musubi kami* are their ancestors. Along this same line there are old texts that identify them with the ancestors of the imperial court. Among the various *kami* mentioned as imperial ancestors or ancestral founders, Takamimusubi and Kamimusubi are often named. If one stops to think about it, no human *kami* is capable of implanting a soul. As understandable as this may be, it is logically flawed.

Even up to today, Japanese people are prone to identify those *kami* with whom they have the deepest spiritual relationship as their own ancestors. This same way of thinking gives us numerous examples in the past of non-ancestral *kami* being made into ancestors. Neither Takamimusubi no kami nor Kamimusubi no kami are human ancestors of the Japanese. A person’s soul was understood to be the *kami* that nurtures life and grounds the growth of the body. To avoid misunderstanding Shinto theology then, the first thing we need to do is to stop

thinking of the *kami* of religion as if they were ancestors. This in turn leads to a distinctive view of ethics whose relationship with religion is shallow. On this thorny point, I think it is only fitting that we begin by separating these great *kami* from our human lineage, and start to think of them as religious deities independent of and outside of our own genealogies. It is because of these *kami* that our minds and bodies have developed into what they are. Over and above our faith, this land in which we live, the mountains and rivers and flora we see about us, have all come to be and to grow because they have been endowed with their own soul that sustains them as what they are. I believe we need a fresh perspective on these questions in order to regard human beings, animals, the land and its bounty correctly, that is, as things brought to life.

In other words, our first imperative must be to revitalize our knowledge. Shinto doctrine has to restore Takamimusubi no kami and Kamimusubi no kami to the very center of the creed. The groundwork for this is already well in place, owing to lengthy preparations by Shinto theology. All that is lacking on our part is the passion to realize the transformation of Shinto into a religion. What remains is to await the great appearance of religious figures to complete the task. In order for us to restore basic order to this world and give it good form, we need to plead once again for the resurrection of those *kami* who have been buried for so long. We have to recover in our hearts belief in the *kami*. Unless we do this, I fear that we will never be able to realize an orderly and beautiful life in Japanese society.

[PEN]

UEDA Kenji 上田賢治 (1927–2003)

Four years after completing a master's degree in religious studies at the Shinto-affiliated Kokugakuin University in Tokyo with a thesis on the psychology of religion, Ueda Kenji moved to Harvard University to study with Paul Tillich. He returned to his alma mater in 1960 and took a position teaching Shinto theology. In 1973 he accepted a post as visiting lecturer for eighteen months at the University of Bonn. In 1982 he was awarded his doctorate from Kokugakuin University and was appointed director of its Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics. He retired after a four-year term as president. Under Tillich's guidance Ueda came to realize the importance of theology for religious faith and determined to apply what he had learned to Shinto. Bucking the strong postwar trends, both popular and academic, to define Shinto in terms of its ritual components, he proposed a "Shinto theology" to complement traditional notions of faith and behavior. If Shinto is to remain close to daily life in a progressively secularized society, he argued, a critical clarification of its teachings was essential. Only then could Shinto leaders and educators present their religion in a conscious "confession" of faith and at the same time face the challenge of living in a multi-religious society and maintaining one's own religious identity. In the passages that follow we see him struggling to affirm a Shinto position towards questions at the heart of the Christian theological reflection of his day.

[JS]

SIN IN SHINTO

UEDA Kenji 1986, 140–1

For Shinto, sin includes not only the evil deeds that people do but all sorts of evil. Behind Shinto's way of thinking there lies a belief that evil is caused both by humans and by evil spirits. Moreover, the exercise of this belief implies that Shinto sees something in being human that leads to the *kami*. In other words, when human beings are in their original state, they can be seen as morally indifferent. In affirming a life-power—even though at times it functions destructively—Shinto is able to recognize a power that leads to creativity and to accept that power as such. Hence, the underlying assumption in the Shinto view on evil is not originally aimed at defining specific acts or clusters of acts as evil, let alone declaring human nature itself to be evil and hence in need of salvation by a transcendent God. On the contrary, the creative power that dwells in the life-power of people is seen as something good. It therefore belongs to a value-laden attitude of a belief that reckons sin to be a secondary, negative condition having to do with the stagnation, discharge, and loss of that life-power. Hence,

although consciousness of sin is emphasized in Shinto, we must not forget that it consists not so much of self-condemnation as of questioning one's responsibility towards the life-power that we possess.

The belief that sin is removed entirely through "purification" removes all doubt about the nature of Shinto's view of evil. It implies the removal of negative feelings of self-condemnation and the praise of positive feelings. The concept of evil in Christianity and the concept of evil passions in Buddhism are useful for explaining the real sinful acts people commit, but they run the risk of fostering negative feelings of self-condemnation. Shinto's position, in contrast, may be thought of as promoting and accepting a more positive integration of the human personality. In this regard Shinto resembles the therapeutic approach of the Rogerian School to orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis.

Of course, this does not mean that there are no problems left. For example, the claim that sinful human acts are pathological expressions resulting from negative self-condemnation reduces evil to a symptom of psychological malaise, opening the way to lack of responsibility towards evil and irresponsible judgments. The belief that all sin is caused by the gods also runs that risk.

In general, there can hardly be any doubt that sin casts a shadow over the life-power and that this is the result of a negative self-condemnation or consciousness of sin. Before the ego can complete the establishment of a self-identity that generates values, that is, when it is still in a state of indifference towards good and evil, self-condemnation is imposed upon it by parents who already have a negative consciousness of sin. This relationship corresponds symbolically to the Shinto belief in evil spirits. To be responsible for one's own sins is therefore nothing other than an awakening of the self to the creativity of life-power and an evaluative appropriation that participates in creative action by making decisions. Does it not follow that belief in evil spirits itself symbolizes a power of self-negation needed for the growth of individual life-power?

[JS]

SHINTO'S VIEW OF THE HUMAN

UEDA Kenji 1991, 217-19

Shinto is a faith that acknowledges the possibility of spiritual communication between nature and human beings. This is expressed in the tradition that both nature and human beings are brought to birth as blood-relatives by the ancestral *kami* of the country. It is further manifested in the way Shinto rituals protect the natural environment as far as possible and are performed so as to avoid the conspicuous use of artificial means. Therefore, from the perspec-

tive of Shinto belief, nature is in no sense merely a “thing” totally different from human beings. It follows as a matter of course that Shinto believers love nature, fear and respect its power, esteem its value, and adopt an attitude of gratefulness towards it. All of this has an important place in Shinto’s ideal of the human.

Secondly, for the Shinto faith, ancestors do not simply die. A parent is not seen directly as a *kami* but only becomes an object of worship as an ancestral spirit. This fosters the idea that our life is a life as children of the *kami* and that as such we can eventually detect in it the will of the gods. The ancestral *kami* who gave birth to the land and shaped it have blessed it, so that the life of all those who live in it flourish in peace. Thus, as children of human beings, all humans receive the blessing of life from the gods. They are thankful for having inherited life from their ancestors and see it as their duty to make that life more fruitful and become more aware of what life is. This is their participation in history and it is their task to engage in the positive fulfillment of life-power. Shinto refers to this as “bearing the divine.” The idea of what a human being should be, therefore, has to be formed with feelings of respect for and gratefulness towards the *kami*, ancestors, and parents, in a spirit that takes pleasure in work and considers it a matter of basic participation in history to hand down this way of life to one’s descendants.

The above image of the person assumes a faith in spiritual beings. This does not mean that these spiritual beings are concrete entities that can be examined as objects of natural science. It is better to understand them as a “working” responsive to our minds and hearts.

Furthermore, Shinto does not consider human beings as anything that can be physically or psychologically isolated. All beings, and above all humans, receive their life in historical and social relatedness. Indeed, this is what makes them human. Within the community of the family, the locale, or the nation, or even of the wider world, priority is given to the vital development and growth of the totality of communities, in the belief that doing so corresponds to the existential value and meaning of the individual. Responsibility and service to the community may be said to be rooted in our humanity as children of the *kami*. This is the basic source of human joy. Naturally, such a belief in no way presupposes the suppression or neglect of individual “rights.” By looking at the functions of the *kami* as reflected in the genealogy of the gods, we get a deeper understanding of the nature of our belief in the myriad divinities. Ideally speaking, the promotion of individuality is not to be separated from the development of life as a whole. In this context, the ideal of cultivation of one’s individual personality very much belongs to the Shinto view on human beings.

Finally we should have a look at the importance given in Shinto to the ritual tradition and how this affects human formation. I mentioned earlier how human beings and nature are both considered to be children born of the ancestral *kami*

as part of the divine act of giving birth to the land. To put this objectively, Shinto is a faith that seeks the essence of existence in life-power. Humanity is thus positively acknowledged and accepted in its given form. This does not imply human beings as such are considered good, since life-power itself does not always work to promote the growth of oneself and others. At times life-power tends rather to harm or even destroy itself. When humans as individuals are psychologically mature, self-restraint can control to some extent this destructive tendency. Even here the continuation of this restraining power all but obliges us to give priority to the underlying value-orientation at the basis of the human personality and to acknowledge the existence of a mental energy whose values are continually replenished. Generally speaking we can call such power a “belief” (in an ongoing and active power) that is based on “faith” (a decision based on the existence of values). In Shinto this is considered “a spiritual grace of the *kami*.” To put it in other words, this mental energy with its value orientation is transmitted through participation in festivals and rituals, whose strict preservation of form guarantees its vitality.

[JS]

SHINTO AND BIOETHICS

UEDA Kenji 1991, 225–7, 230–3

It is thought that the Japanese first learned the idea of “nature” from Daoism. In the Confucian scriptures, which were the earliest to be transmitted to our country, the Chinese term for “nature” is nowhere to be found. In the *‘Kojiki’*, Japan’s oldest sacred book, it is mentioned once and in the *‘Nihongi’* nine times. In each case, the two sinographs for “nature” are read to mean “of itself” (*onozukara*). In the *Tale of Genji* these sinographs are given a different, Buddhist reading (*jinen*).

Meanwhile, the principal divine beings mentioned in the Japanese myths are all *kami* of “becoming” who are spoken of as representing the vital essence of the natural world as something given. This tradition consistently teaches us that the Japanese did not originally have anything like the western idea of “matter.” Everything was spiritual. Of course, there were distinctions between spirits strong and weak, high and low, but the forces of nature were never considered to be governed by lifeless principles of causality alone. Respect for “becoming of itself” followed as a matter of course.

Natural science does not assume the existence of a soul in order to understand the “world of existence.” Its world is cold and functions like a chain of causes. In Shinto, too, existence is viewed in terms of its functions or “work-

ings,” but due to the strong spiritual quality of the work of divine and human beings, there is no need to consider the various functions of existence as basically negative. This is so provided, of course, they do not contravene life’s way of being “of itself.”

The workings of this “of itself” quality of life can function as a plus or a minus. For example, the desires of people can be positive insofar as they strengthen and deepen the power of life. On the other hand, they can also move in a destructive direction. Obviously this latter is to be avoided as far as possible, but in the real world it is almost impossible for there to be growth without some element of destruction. Insofar as the choice is up to us, our only norm is whether the results of our choices produce a better outcome or not. Needless to say, the results produced by the natural sciences—and in particular, the life sciences—are value-neutral. In other words, they are indifferent, and in this sense can be said to have the quality of something that happens “of itself.” But when it comes to using those results to alter the state of reality, even if some individuals receive a temporary benefit, from the viewpoint of life itself it is not immediately evident what is of benefit and what not. This is the problem that concerns us.

In the Edo period many scholars of Native Studies were healers practicing Chinese or Japanese medicine. With the arrival and success of Dutch medicine, their field of activity was taken out from under them. Prior to the progress of western medicine, this history was all but completely ignored, but I think it worthwhile today to reflect on the matter.

Practitioners of Chinese and Japanese medicine at the time looked on western medicine as a cold, one-sided pursuit of rational and technical supremacy. In its dissecting of corpses and knowledge of how bodies were constructed, western medicine was of decisive importance in grasping the cause of diseases, relieving it of all doubt concerning the validity of its prescriptions. At the same time, insofar as humans are beings with a soul and a body as a functioning, organic whole, they saw the goal of medicine to lie in the treatment of the human being as a totality. Today, when the technical skill and the knowledge of western medicine have become common sense, it is hard to revive that sort of traditional medicine without incurring the charge of anachronism. Yet how often has western medicine, based as it is on the primacy of the laws of nature, been criticized for sacrificing the life of countless laboratory animals, not to mention treating so many human beings as “things.” And how can we forget the deep attachment that so many still feel towards Chinese medicine?

The Basic Attitude of Shinto

It was noted earlier that Shinto is a faith that believes in the continuing existence of the soul. It endorses and accepts from the beginning the limit-

edness and relativity of life in this world. Hence the ideal of “a life worth living” is not something that can be realized in individual human beings. It has to be pursued by serving the will to life (or what Shinto calls “bearing the divine”) of the world of existence (whose individual manifestations Shinto treats as *kami* or spirits). In gratitude for the goodness of nature and the social community, and without forfeiting one’s harmony with them, a life worth living is to be sought by sharing in the effort to increase and develop life. It is each one’s lot and responsibility to transmit this task to the next generation.

At any rate, human life is limited. Perfect satisfaction is beyond our reach. The joy of living can be achieved to some extent by pursuing or sharing in the pursuit of the meaning and the responsibility of life, in the reality of having received the gift of life, and the capacity for work. It is only natural that one feels regret, at times painfully so. But this may be seen as the will of the gods and the natural state of a world that becomes “of itself.” The heart of the matter is whether or not we are aware of our responsibility for our own existence. As this awareness depends on divine blessing it must also be a task we ourselves take up as children of the *kami*.

Birth and Aging

While we receive our bodies from our parents, the belief that the soul is granted by the *kami* has been central to Shinto. The idea of the *kami* need not be taken as fixed but can be understood variously as referring to divine spirits of growth, of one’s birthplace, and so forth. Further, the question of when the soul is infused remains open to discussion. It is not seen as something unchangeable from the moment of conception but as an entity that grows with the times and changes in accord with an individual’s role in society.

Up until the age of seven, the soul is treated as immature, and customs giving these souls separate treatment were long continued even after Buddhist funerals became widespread. Sooner or later the body will decay, but the belief that the soul is a gift from the *kami* naturally leads to the idea that the souls of little children are returned to the land of the *kami*. It is easy to see how such a belief could arise when the rate of infant mortality was high. This belief had also its reverse side in that it was used to rationalize the lamentable folk custom of infanticide known as “weeding out.” It was virtually a given that barbarians and others associated with “earthly sin” were treated in the prayers of great purification as physically abnormal. This way of thinking increased the possibility of killing infants, which has been a serious problem from ancient times and continues on into the present with the problem of abortion.

The image of Hiruko, the Leach Child who appears in the foundation myth of Japan, as well as the images of barbarians and white-skinned persons alluded to

in the prayers of great purification as physically deformed, carry over into modern times with such things as the Eugenic Protection Act or similar attempts at genetic manipulation. From the viewpoint of Shinto faith, which seeks to foster the formation and evolution of life, these are matters that need direct attention. Belief in the sacredness of this “of itself” quality of the individual is far removed from any form of genetic manipulation based on the pretext of enhancing human nature and its potential. Although for the moment there is no scientific verification to back it up, the idea that even physical abnormality can be seen as a sign of “election by the *kami*” cannot be dismissed out of hand.

At the same time, from a Shinto perspective there is no reason to reject artificial insemination in principle. Rather than simply call it an offense against natural law, under certain conditions it can be seen to fall in the line with the “of itself” quality of nature and to work towards that end. The main obstacles have to do rather with conditions imposed by society. In point of historical fact, the weight given to succession along blood lines did not limit it to direct lines of descent. In popular society, cases of the husband being adopted into the wife’s family are not at all rare. Faced with changing social conditions, the Japanese have always shown themselves flexible. The main thing has been the celebration of blessings received from the ancestors through festivals that foster and fulfill the meaning of life for oneself and one’s forebears.

On the question of aging, we may point, for example, to the legends of Takenouchi no Sukune²⁵ where old age is made an object of reverence as a crystallization of wisdom. Similarly, when the *kami* manifest themselves, they often do so in the figure of an old man. Also, in the legal code of patrimonial rule, the elderly were protected. Folktales of old women being abandoned to die presuppose special economic conditions and ought not be taken as a general rule. Even in such dire circumstances, it should be possible to think in terms of death with dignity.

Obviously, there are different ways of coping with today’s aging society, especially where dementia comes into play. Responses change according to the kind and extent of the disability, the family situation, and so forth, but cultural tradition and upbringing dictate that taking care of the elderly at home should be the rule. A sense of community responsibility requires that we make it a matter of urgency to see to the increase of social facilities. There is also room for further study in psychiatry and preventive medicine on how best to promote general education on the question.

[JS]

25. [The legend of Takenouchi no Sukune, a counselor to emperors in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, appears in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*.]

Modern Academic Philosophy

Beginnings, Definitions, Disputations

Nishi Amane

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Inoue Enryō

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Beginnings, Definitions, Disputations Overview

Modern Academic Philosophy in Japan began with disputations about the meaning and scope of the very term *philosophy*. The word and the discipline it designated entered Japan in the mid-nineteenth century as part of an enormous influx of knowledge and technology as the country opened its borders more widely to the West and the rest of the world, after more than two hundred years of relative isolation. The upheaval in social and political institutions led to the collapse of the government and the eventual rise of an imperial power with global reach. Japan's intellectual traditions were likewise challenged by their encounter with foreign thought, epitomized in the very notion of philosophy. The nature and novelty of this concept evoked a good deal of confusion and even consternation in the early Meiji Period (1868–1912).

Indeed, if wonder or perplexity itself counts as an origin of philosophical thinking, as the Greeks suggested, then the perplexity over the meaning and scope of *philosophia* can be said to originate modern philosophy in Japan. Whether or not philosophy was a discipline restricted to European traditions or might be applied to traditional Japanese and Asian thinking was a subject of an intense if scattered debate. Scholars argued about whether thinkers in Japan's past had achieved anything like philosophy and whether the Japanese who professed the discipline in that day were truly philosophers.

Comparing philosophers like Descartes, Kant, and the Utilitarians to Confucian, Buddhist, and Native Studies thinkers, as well as to the work of the Meiji translators and professors themselves, critics saw in the latter only a blurred reflection of the former, pure philosophy. Other scholars argued that philosophy did indeed have counterparts and even precedents in the traditions of China and Japan. (Remarkably, however, there was relatively little dispute about the existence of "Indian philosophy.")

The efforts to settle the scope and nature of philosophy also dealt with problems of translation and gave rise to a new, more or less standard terminology, including the word for philosophy itself. In fact, the question of philosophy in Japan and the East was inseparable from questions about translation. The

debate about the meaning and scope of philosophy is instructive a century and a half later as professional philosophers continue to examine the origins and scope of their discipline.

THE CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Introduction of Western Philosophy into Japan

Japan's first contact with western philosophical thought came by way of Catholic missionaries in the mid-sixteenth century. They taught Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas in seminaries and appealed to proofs for the existence of God in disputations held with Buddhists. Their efforts came to an abrupt halt in 1614 when the Tokugawa government prohibited Christianity and then, in 1633, closed Japan's borders to Roman Catholic European countries. In the period when the secluded nation permitted only Dutch traders on the tiny island of Dejima off the coast of Nagasaki, the samurai scholar of 'Dutch Studies', Takano Chōei (1804–1850), published what was probably Japan's first systematic introduction to the history of Greek and European philosophy, a survey later titled "The Theories of Western Masters." His work is notable both for the terms it used to convey philosophical disciplines and for the connections it made to Japanese and Chinese intellectual traditions. Relying mainly on Dutch-language sources, he encountered the word *wijsgeer*, philosopher, which he rendered with a general Confucian term, *gakushi*, or learned master. Chōei's chronological survey of thinkers from Thales to Christian Wolff skips the Middle Ages, jumping from the Greeks and Romans to Copernicus, often groups the names into schools or lineages of teachers and pupils, and uses traditional neo-Confucian terms to explain the doctrines of philosophers like Plato:

Plato connects the human spirit, as a "rarefied, undarkened spirit," to the spirit of heaven. When mixed with earthly matter, however, it becomes something defiled, ignorant, and impure. This is similar to the condition of the 'mind' in Zhu Xi's theory. I would consider it a doctrine of being and 'nothingness', with formless spirit as nothingness and earth that has form as being.

Mentioning but one or two contributions of each thinker, Chōei shows a clear interest in the experimental methods of natural philosophy, the "actual measurements" of physical phenomena that allowed philosophy to progress through the ages. "Present day learning was established by Newton, Leibniz, and Locke, who had many successors but none surpassing Christian Wolff." Chōei makes no mention of Kant or philosophers after him, but names several Dutch and English natural philosophers and mathematicians of the early eighteenth century, today considered minor figures in the history of science. "Basing their work

on actual measurements, without the least bit of groundless argument, they continually advanced clearer and more certain theories.” His “outline of the rise and fall, merits and demerits of philosophers during the 5,840 years since the creation of the western world” concludes with an explanation of the five main disciplines of philosophy. Today we would call them logic, moral and political philosophy, natural philosophy or science, mathematics, and finally metaphysics (including ontology, psychology, cosmology, and theology). To explain the words left untranslated in Dutch, Chōei called on Confucian categories, adopting a term from Zhu Xi for natural, scientific philosophy, and coining an altogether new term for logic, *chirigigaku*, the discipline “whose rules are established in accordance with the natural working of things to show how to tell the true from the false, what is real from what is not, and so determine the truth and falsity of various theories and arguments” (TAKANO Chōei 1835, 205, 209–10).

The Emergence of Philosophy as a Distinct Concept

It was Nishi Amane* (1829–1897) who introduced the term *philosophia* to Japan and, after several attempts in the early 1870s, established its translation as ‘*tetsugaku*’, a neologism composed of two sinographs that became standard for philosophy in China and Korea as well. Nishi began by reading the few sources available to him from Dutch Studies, and then was sent by the Tokugawa government to Leiden in the Netherlands, to absorb as much as he could of western disciplines like constitutional law, economics, and political and social thought. The year before, in 1861, in an epilogue to a book by Tsuda Mamichi, his fellow traveler to Leiden, he had glossed the transliterated term with *ki-tetsugaku*. The sinographs may have been taken from a Confucian term (*shi-kiken* in Japanese reading) for “the ‘refined person’ who aspires to wisdom,” in the eleventh century Confucian work *Tongshu* (“The All-Embracing Book”) by Zhou Dunyi.¹ But the term *ki-tetsugaku* may also have been a modification of *kikyū tetsuchi*, roughly meant to render *philosophia* as the “search (*kikyū*) for wisdom (*tetsuchi*).” It should not escape our notice that the sinograph for *ki* is the same as that used in a now archaic word for Greece. Nishi said that *kikengaku*, study in search of wisdom, would also do as a translation, and abbreviated this to *kengaku*, but finally settled on *tetsugaku* in 1874 (NISHI Amane 1874A). This solution echoes older Confucian words such as *tetsujin* or sage, and *tetsuri* or roughly what is meant by the phrase “philosophy of life.” In fact, the sinograph for *tetsu* appears as early as the *Book of History*, one of the six Confucian classics, where it is used to describe the emperor Shun as “wise” and

1. Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073) was a Song philosopher whose thought was a prototype of the neo-Confucian philosophy of Zhu Xi.

to be praised by all Confucians as a sage ruler. The sinograph for *gaku*, meaning to study or to learn, likewise has ancient roots. It appears in the opening passage of the *Analects* of Confucius and later on when, in a rare moment of immodesty, Confucius proclaims his unmatched “love of learning” (v.28). The word *tetsugaku* was thus a neologism that resonated deeply with Confucian ‘learning’.

The struggle to translate philosophical terms came to be a defining feature of these early years. Do Nishi’s attempts indicate that he saw some counterpart to the western discipline, at least in Chinese traditions, or some way to explain this discipline in Chinese terms? Instead of rendering the term in sinographs, he could, after all, have left it untranslated in phonetic transcription. It would seem Nishi wanted both to stress the difference of philosophy and at the same time relate it to traditional Confucian learning. In an essay from 1870 he writes that “the ‘Way’ of Confucius and Mencius is practically the same as philosophy in the West” (NISHI Amane 1870, 305). Yet around the same time he voices a different opinion, as recorded by his student Nagami Yutaka:

My explanations so far have proceeded from Japan to China and then to the West, but when it comes to philosophy we must begin with the West. In our country there is little that can be called philosophy. In this regard, China is no match for the West, either. (NISHI Amane 1871, 181)

Before he left for studies in the Netherlands, Nishi had already expressed the view that “the explanations of the principles of human nature and life in the study of *philosophia* surpass even those of Song Confucianism” (NISHI 1862, 8). Eventually he would acknowledge profound parallels between Chinese Confucian thought and western philosophy, although he continued to advocate a clear distinction:

The word comes from the meaning of the English *philosophy*, the French *philosophie*, and from the Greek for “the one who loves,” *philo*, and “wisdom” *sophos* [sic]. Therefore we call philosophy the field of study of one who loves wisdom.... This is also the meaning of the expression “the refined person who aspires to wisdom” that Zhou Dunyi used.... In later usage philosophy refers especially to the study that discusses principles. *Rigaku* or *riron*, “the study of principles” or “discourse on principles,” may be more direct translations, but so as not to confuse philosophy with Song Dynasty Confucian schools we shall translate it as *tetsugaku* and distinguish it from the Confucianism of the East. (NISHI Amane 1873, 31)

For another decade or so Nishi’s translation met resistance from Japanese intellectuals such as Nishimura Shigeki, Nakae Chōmin*, and Miyake Setsurei, all of whom, like Nishi, were nurtured in Confucian studies. Until the establish-

ment of Tokyo University and its Department of *Tetsugaku*, the term *rigaku* was also used to translate *philosophia*.

In his comprehensive sketch of the history of philosophy, Nishi noted a turn, common to both Greek and early Chinese thought, from what he called—using English terms—the “objective contemplation” of the universe and all its wondrous things, to the “subjective contemplation” of the mind and soul:

So far, then, we have given an outline of the major currents of the European philosophy.... We find philosophy germinating in the very beginnings of human civilization, from the time of Yao and Shun in the East and Thales of Greece in the West, considered the founder. In the beginning philosophy did not extend to discourse on the principles of human nature. It began with objective contemplation: people looking to the heavens to observe what appeared there, then turning back to the earth to observe laws there. They looked up to the lord of the universe, glorified the magnificence and beauty of all things, and developed an objective way of seeing.

Pursuing this method as far as they could until they were unable to take their understanding any further, they turned back and developed a way of seeing based on human nature, a subjective contemplation that saw through objects to the self or subject that knows them, to the mind that directs the self, and to the human nature that directs the mind. This was a matter of course, like a law of nature. Today, for example, the knowledge of a child shows signs of developing from day to day. If that knowledge does not expand and grow by seeing and hearing things, it follows as a matter of course that the child will not be able to reflect on or think about itself. It is the same with the development of Confucian studies and philosophy. Since the time of Yao and Shun, objective contemplation based on observation produced one way of seeing things, but with Confucius a great change occurred and thought turned to an explanation of becoming humane and wise. Similarly, from Thales to the Sophists the principal matter was the observation of patterns in the heavens, but with Socrates all that changed when he endeavored to proceed from the soul. (NISHI Amane 1873, 38–9)

Nishi developed his understanding of philosophy from examining its history in the West. What he found in all of this to be of most benefit for Japan, however, was garnered primarily from John Stuart Mill’s inductive logic and Auguste Comte’s positivistic system, subjects on which he had attended lectures in Leiden, the Netherlands, in the early 1860s. The practical significance of inductive logic as opposed to speculative metaphysics, and the progressive classification of thought leading to science, greatly impressed Nishi, although, unlike Comte, he retained the view that philosophy was the queen of the sciences:

The definition of philosophy in English states that “philosophy is the science of sciences,” foremost of all the sciences. (NISHI Amane 1871, 146)

In what was no doubt a criticism of the Zhu Xi School's idealistic tendencies, Nishi also stressed the need for the sciences to be applied:

Science is preeminently what achieves truth, and once achieved, it is essential that truth be made a practical art and put to use.... Since it is difficult to apply science directly, we need to study, investigate, and acquire various techniques to make it into an art.... Inventing the telegraph from the principle of magnetism, or the windmill from the principle of wind, or making other such machines work, all show how truth is achieved in the practical arts and put to use. Whatever the issue, it is essential that we seek truth on the level of the sciences and attempt to apply it in technologies. Then science will at last become "available, profitable, applicable" as English has it, and truth will be verified. Truth will be made manifest, that is, the truth achieved in the sciences will become manifest at the level of the practical arts. (NISHI Amane 1871, 63–4)

Nishi later clarifies that philosophy provides a view of the unity that underlies the particular sciences:

Accordingly, to explain the fields of study we must, of course, distinguish between the theoretical and the practical, where the practical primarily establishes the laws based on the principles of the mind and does not concern itself with explaining physical principles. The theoretical, on the other hand, must take the principles of matter into account. But the explanation must not conflate principles of matter and principles of mind....

If the human being is also something material in the natural world then we must take into account physical principles and especially occidental natural history. Natural history deals with the rational grounds for the mineral, plant, and animal realms, including the human. It is divided into several branches such as geography and paleontology that reflect on the beginnings of this earth. The field that studies humans and animals includes anthropology or, as I translate it, "the study of human nature." It starts with comparative anatomy and includes biology, psychology, ethnology, theology, as well as the study of the good and the beautiful. We must also distinguish the synthesizing arts and fields of study like history and take them into account in addition to studies that treat of physical principles.

We may inquire about principles of the mind in the research of all these fields. Taking into account all these matters, the discipline that inquires into the principles of mind and elucidates the ways of nature and the ways of human beings, at the same time as it establishes the methodology of the different fields of study, is *philosophy*, translated as *tetsugaku*.

Since ancient times philosophy has been a matter of debate in the West as well, and if I now try to coordinate the various academic disciplines under the heading "all teachings return to the one," then this, too, may be called a kind of philosophy. If one looks only at the details, one usually ends up believing in a single school of learning and considering the others mistaken. To group all the

sciences together and elucidate their essence as one and the same, requires a very wide perspective. Philosophy must therefore discuss the principles of matter and mind together without conflating the two. (NISHI Amane 1874A, 288–9)

At the same time, Nishi was critical of the western emphasis on objectivity. In *The Foundations of Physiology and Psychology*, he suggests that the Japanese and Chinese have forgotten approaches like the inductive method of J. S. Mill, but can relearn them from western philosophy. The West, meantime, has succumbed to “objective contemplation” and might have to relearn the primacy of the need to know oneself, one’s soul. Philosophy should return to incorporate “subjective contemplation” and begin anew with the study of mind.

The Western Analytic Approach and the Eastern Holistic Way

The notion that eastern thought was more likely to proceed from internal reflection than from objective observation was echoed by Nishimura Shigeki (1828–1902), Nishi’s fellow advocate of the ‘Enlightenment’ movement and cofounder of the progressive Meiji Six Society seeking to modernize Japan:

Eastern learning has by and large sought the mind internally, while western learning has mainly sought it externally. Seeking within is exemplified in teachings like the Zen School’s “directly pointing to one’s mind, seeing one’s true nature and becoming buddha” or Wang Yangming’s “reaching innate knowledge.” Seeking externally is exemplified by looking for the basis of mind in physiology, or studying it by examining mental phenomena. Those who seek mind internally view it holistically, by way of synthesis; their shortcoming is that they lack precision. Those who seek mind externally view it by way of analysis; their shortcoming is that they give in to nitpicking. When scholars today generally follow the western way of study, for the most part they seek mind from the outside, that is, they view it by the analytic method. Even though this method far exceeds that of the East in precision of analysis, because it lacks a holistic grasp of mind and a way to train it, there are many who have studied ten years or more and still do not know what mind is. (NISHIMURA Shigeki 1899, 23)

Nishimura’s text has two significant implications for defining philosophy in Japan. First, the author finds it necessary to use a new language, reflective of western philosophical terms, to describe eastern as well as western thought. By his day many philosophical terms had translations that were to become standard, such as the words for “analysis,” “synthesis,” and “phenomenon.” At the same time many of his terms were so unusual that he felt it necessary to highlight neologisms, imported words, and particularly significant ideas. One term stands out for its bridging effect. Nishimura uses the classical word *‘kokoro’* to bridge “East” and “West” and equivocally signify both a classical Sino-Japanese

array of concepts as well as western categories like *mind*, *soul*, and *spirit*, or *esprit* and *Gemüt*. Inoue Tetsujirō's* *Philosophical Dictionary* of 1912 lists *mind* as a synonym of *subject* as opposed to *object*. In general, the introduction of the foreign discipline into Japan changed the way that Japan's past was defined.

Secondly, Nishimura's contrast implies that the two approaches, eastern and western, are complementary. The western penchant for analysis achieves precision, but at the expense of fragmenting self-knowledge; the eastern predilection for synthesis achieves a more holistic view, but lacks definition. Most notably, the East provides a way to train the mind, not merely to study it. Could the two approaches be combined to form a new direction in philosophy? If Nishimura considered the future development of philosophy open to a symbiosis of western and eastern achievements, however, his definition of philosophy precluded its extension back in time to cover traditional Japanese thought. In 1887 he defined philosophy as "an investigation of the truths of the universe from the ground up, which has no use for founders or scriptures or anything like 'expedient means'" (cited in FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 1975, 67). The question of the philosophical nature of Confucianism and Buddhism is a subject to which we shall return.

A Dialogue to Define Philosophy

Just how unusual philosophy was during this period can be gauged by the preface to *An Evening of Philosophical Conversation*, written in 1886 by Pure Land priest and reformer Inoue Enryō* (1858–1919). Enryō begins his essay with an imaginary and humorous conversation in which several interlocutors surmise the meaning of *tetsugaku*, the term that had since become standard for "philosophy":

Once when I was taking a steamboat ride there were five or six other passengers sitting next to me. The conversation turned to *tetsugaku*. One of them said, "This *tetsugaku* is a new kind of discipline that has come from the West, but just what sort of discipline is it?" Another said, "I've heard that *tetsugaku* is the discipline that investigates principles." The third said that the study that investigates principles is physics, not *tetsugaku*. "It seems to me that if the *tetsu* of *tetsugaku* is that of *kentetsu*, a wise man, then *tetsugaku* is the study of the *shōken*, sages like Confucius and Mencius." The fourth said, "*Tetsugaku* is not anything shallow like the study of Confucius and Mencius. Once I read Inoue Tetsujirō's *A New Theory of Ethics*, and was astonished at how lofty *tetsugaku* is. The fifth said, "Recently Nishi Amane became known as a *tetsugakusha*. I once read a book he translated on the mind and so I came to understand *tetsugaku* as psychology."

The sixth said, "I heard that the Buddhist scholar Rev. Hara Tanzan has become a professor in the department of *tetsugaku* at a university, so looking

at it this way Buddhism and *tetsugaku* must be synonymous. The seventh said, “Since all of your explanations differ, we cannot yet know just what *tetsugaku* is. The first smiled and said, “Well then, that’s what *tetsugaku* is: whatever we cannot know!” Everyone laughed and said that’s right.

Hearing all this I, too, had to laugh. “Actually, the reason you all have different views like these is that you don’t know what *tetsugaku* is. Generally speaking, there are two sorts of things in the universe: things that have form and things that do not. The sun, moon, stars, earth, rocks, plants, birds and beasts, fish and insects are all things that have form. Sensations, thoughts, society, gods, buddhas, and so forth are all things without form. The experimental study of things with form is called physical science, and the study that investigates what is without form is *tetsugaku*. This is one point of difference between the two studies. There are also those who call physical science that which experimentally treats of individual parts, and *tetsugaku* that which expounds on the whole. Or those who say that *rigaku* is an experimental study while *tetsugaku* is the study of ideas. That is, *rigaku* is the study having to do with material things, and *tetsugaku* is the study having to do with the formless matters of the mind. There are, however, several disciplines that have to do with matters of the mind: psychology, logic, ethics, and pure *tetsugaku*. People are more or less familiar with psychology, logic, and so forth, but when it comes to pure *tetsugaku* people haven’t the slightest idea of what it is. In short, pure *tetsugaku*, as the study of the pure principles of *tetsugaku*, must be called the study that inquires into the axioms of truth and the foundation of the disciplines.

The objective of pure *tetsugaku* is to provide an interpretation and explanation of various problems that have arisen, such as what the substantial reality of the mind or of matter is, what their fundamental source is, or what relationship obtains between mind and matter. I would like to indicate to people who know nothing of *tetsugaku* the problems of pure *tetsugaku* and their interpretations, and that is how I came to write the following “evening of conversation on *tetsugaku*.” The first part discusses the relationship between mind and matter, and points to the question of what forms the world; the second part discusses the substantiality of God and points to the question of whence matter and mind arise; and the third part discusses the nature of truth and deals with the question of what grounds the various sciences. I will be happy beyond measure if those who one evening read this conversation are able to catch a glimpse of pure *tetsugaku*. (INOUE Enryō 1886, 33–4)

This preface, written in a now archaic style reminiscent of a traditional Confucian lesson, makes use of some Confucian terms to hint at what philosophy is. Yet in order to express more fully the meaning of *tetsugaku*, Inoue not only took the liberty of inventing new words but was also able to appeal to other newly imported or translated terms. In 1886 it remained to be seen which words would become standard translations of western terms. The whole array of compounds,

their components, and their word-order, was a mass of floating signifiers. The term meaning the “substantiality” (of God), for example, is today used for Kant’s *noumenon*, but in Enryō’s day was not a conventional word. Yet even if precise denotations remained elusive, any reader with a basic knowledge of sinographs would easily be able to gather some sense from these neologisms, just as an English reader would be able to make something of a term like “sophology,” had that been used to translate *tetsugaku* back again into English. On the other hand, the now standard terms translated here as “experimental” and “psychology” should be heard with a nineteenth-century English ear.

Some examples of words that would have been new to the Japanese, or would have signified new concepts, are Enryō’s terms for logic, ethics, truth, axioms, and “mind and matter.” The distinction between *tetsugaku* and *rigaku*, the term used here to mean the natural sciences, as well as the underlying distinction between things that have form and things that don’t, can be traced at least to Fukuzawa Yukichi’s* *Encouragement of Learning*—or even to Aristotle’s *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, although that would obscure the Buddhist origination of the distinction made by these Japanese. The division must ultimately be seen as an attempt to render the imported disciplines intelligible by appealing to distinctions familiar to readers. Enryō took terms and methods established in one cultural context and tried to convey and implement them in another. His *Conversation* teaches us that defining philosophy in Japan was a creative endeavor requiring more than a straightforward translation of terms.

Despite his appreciation of the distinctiveness of western philosophy, Enryō insisted that Buddhism was best understood as a kind of philosophy precisely where it intersects with “religion”—another concept novel to Japan. He wrote extensively on the scope of philosophy and its difference from science, and on Buddhist philosophy, in works like *Buddhism as a Vital Theory*, *Mahayana Philosophy*, *Indian Philosophy*, and *The Philosophy of Religion*. His set of three introductions—*The Philosophy of the True Pure Land School*, *The Philosophy of the Zen School*, and *The Philosophy of the Nichiren School*—do not call Shinran*, Nichiren*, or Dōgen* *philosophers*, but they explicitly relate some teachings of these founders of Japanese Buddhist sects to the “pure philosophy” of western vintage. All in all, it is clear that Enryō saw himself as creating philosophy in his country, as well as conveying a western heritage and re-interpreting Asian traditions. He founded the first institute of philosophy in Japan, the Hall of Philosophy, the predecessor of Tōyō University.

The Mirage of Philosophy in the East

To embellish new western categories with a sprinkling of traditional terms was not enough for Miyake Setsurei (1860–1945), a critic not only of the

overzealous westernizing of Meiji Japan but of casually claiming equivalencies between practices in the two great traditions, East and West. In his 1909 work *The Universe*, he attempted to synthesize eastern and western thought, but not before he proclaimed a vast difference between them. His *Philosophical Trifles* of 1889 puts it this way:

We may set eastern philosophy side by side with western philosophy, but those who have made a practice of doing so have yet to provide a theoretical justification, and stopped short at commenting on particular ideas and terms of the old masters. Those who have begun to speak of “eastern philosophy” and to try explaining it are coffee-house dilettantes fond of rehashing the stale doctrines of the ancients. Whatever it is they are doing, it is not eastern philosophy.

There follows a long diatribe against Confucians, Daoists, and Buddhists.

One cannot see the blemishes on one’s face without looking in the mirror. We need to turn western philosophy around so that it can shed light on the face of eastern philosophy. Western philosophy is not without its defects, but it has succeeded in thinking through the relationship between the prior and the subsequent, and has produced lengthy treatises to organize its explanations and interpretations in a consistent manner. In this regard it can serve to rectify eastern philosophy, which has become entrenched in its vocabulary and fallen into the bad habit of severing the antecedent from the consequent. Alas, eastern philosophy has long been dusty and unkempt, its hair matted and its face dirty. Is it not time for it to take this mirror in hand, change its clothes, and put on a bright smile to captivate its onlookers far and wide? (MIYAKE Setsurei 1889, 151)

Miyake seems to heap scorn not so much on the substance of “eastern philosophy” as on the practices associated with it: thoughtless philology and exegesis of what we call the classics of the East. He persists in using the term “philosophy” (*tetsugaku*) to refer to these texts, and describes the core of “Chinese philosophy” as feeling, that of “Indian philosophy” as intention or will, and that of “European philosophy” as knowledge or wisdom. But he also insists on identifying western philosophy with logical and causal investigations. This identification will prove crucial.

“No Such Thing as Philosophy in Japan”

The tendency to find philosophy lacking in Japanese intellectual traditions culminated in the famous exclamation of Nakae Chōmin* (1847–1901) in the last year of his life: there is no such thing as philosophy in Japan. This inveterate advocate of liberal democracy, materialism, and atheism had studied

philosophy in France in the early 1870s and was impressed with the creative and theoretical, even impractical, force of the European discipline, unprecedented—or so he thought—in traditional Japanese thought and hardly achieved by contemporary Japanese professors:

From ancient times to the present, philosophy has been absent in Japan. Motoori Norinaga*, Hirata Atsutane*, and their ilk were nothing more than antiquarians excavating old imperial tombs and chasing after ancient words; they remained in the dark when it came to the ways of nature and life. The likes of Itō Jinsai* and Ogyū Sorai* found new meaning in old scriptures, but in the end were only scholastics. There were Buddhists who succeeded in putting new life into the sūtras and creating new temples and sects, but ultimately did not leave the domain of religion. This was not philosophy pure and simple. Although in our day a certain Katō Hiroyuki and Inoue Tetsujirō profess themselves “philosophers,” and even arouse public approval, they themselves study and import the doctrines of occidentals just as they were, leaving the enjoyment of those exotic fruits for themselves alone, hardly enough to merit the name “philosopher.” The benefits of philosophy are not necessarily evident to the eyes and ears of everyone. The ups and downs of trade, the movements of financial markets, and the changing fortunes of commerce and industry may seem to bear no relation to philosophy.... Philosophy may not always be necessary, but the fact is that without it, a people will lack profound insight into what they are doing and cannot avoid superficiality. (NAKAE Chōmin 1901, 155–6)

For us today, the irony of Chōmin’s criticism is threefold. First, his lambasting of the antiquated efforts of Native Studies, neo-Confucianism, and Buddhism is expressed in a traditional and now archaic style. Secondly, Chōmin is considered much less a philosopher than the Katō and Inoue he denigrates. And thirdly, the importation of philosophy in his day was indeed related to commercial exchange. To capture the quaint flavor of Chōmin’s language we would have to render it into Victorian English, but even then we would not be able to find near equivalents for the archaic expressions and categories he employs. He writes, for example, of the principles of heaven and earth and life to signify what we call the laws of nature. On the other hand, his statement implies three distinctive features of “philosophy pure and simple”: it is the result of original translation, not a matter of importing doctrines as they are; it transcends practicality; and it gives our life and actions their true meaning. He also insisted that true philosophy was divorced from religious belief. If not explicitly atheistic, his convictions would be contradicted a decade later by the work of the first widely acclaimed modern philosopher in Japan, Nishida Kitarō.*

Chōmin’s fellow champion of liberalism, individualism, and democracy,

Tanaka Kiichi (alias Ōdō, 1867–1932), was of a different opinion when it came to the question of philosophy in Japan:

It may at first glance seem that Japan has only carried on the philosophical traditions imported from China and India. Yet these countries, just like Japan, for over a millennium have had to make efforts for practical and aesthetic reasons to modify and transform mythologies, histories, customs, and systems of government formed in completely different lands. Can we not infer from this fact alone that Japan already had its own philosophical thought which quite naturally differs from that in China and India? (TANAKA Kiichi 1901, 1012)

Convinced of the close connection between culture and thought, Tanaka set out to discern the national character of Japanese philosophy. He shared with Chōmin a disdain for those compatriots who absorbed western thought without subjecting it to criticism. Tanaka had studied with George Herbert Mead and John Dewey at the University of Chicago between 1893 and 1897, and after returning to Japan he adapted Dewey's political views to criticize the oppressive structures of authority of his homeland and to advocate individual freedoms even more forcefully than Dewey had. Outside the academy, however, Chōmin's verdict on the lack of philosophy in Japan went unchallenged until the appearance of Nishida Kitarō's *An Inquiry into the Good* in 1911.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE ACADEMY

Philosophy as a formal academic discipline in Japan was born with the university system itself in 1877, thanks to the same Katō Hiroyuki (1836–1916) whom Chōmin was later to deride. Katō helped organize various educational institutes into Tokyo University in 1877 and began a tradition of hiring foreign professors to give lectures in ethics, political philosophy, logic, and evolutionary theory. Even Japanese professors such as Toyama Masakazu (1848–1900) often used English-language texts and attempted to teach in English. The study of philosophy coincided with the study of foreign languages, principally English and German; learning to philosophize meant learning a foreign idiom. Concepts that would have been unfamiliar to the ear of young Japanese students appear in the definitions offered by two of the first professors of philosophy in Japan, the Germans Ludwig Busse (1862–1907) and Raphael von Koeber (1848–1923). Using the English language, Busse defined philosophy as

the universal science which investigates the ultimate data and laws of Reality and gives... a comprehensive and satisfactory view of the Essence and Significance of all Reality. (Ludwig BUSSE 1892, 21)

Koerber, also writing in English, emphasized the Greek inheritance of *logos*:

One of these faculties, by which man distinguishes himself from animals, is the reason, the logical thinking, which is the source of language, science, and philosophy... reason is everywhere.... Reason (Logos) produced and rules the world. It is the first and the last principle, ...the universal wisdom (*sofia*, *Weisheit*) and our particular (individual) wisdom is nothing but to recognize the universal wisdom. (R. G. VON KOEBER 1895, 1, 4, 5)

Koerber taught German, Greek, and Latin as well as Kant, Hegel, and the history of philosophy and of Christianity to the future novelist Natsume Sōseki and to many who would come to represent Japanese philosophy: Nishida, Kuwaki Gen'yoku, Hatano Seiichi*, Tanabe Hajime*, and Watsuji Tetsurō*. The transmission of ideas, however, was for the most part a one-way street, Europe to Japan. The exception was the effort of the first professor of philosophy, the American, Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), who, along with Okakura Tenshin (1862–1913), was responsible for helping persuade the Japanese to preserve their traditional arts and culture and for spreading knowledge of Japan abroad.

For Katō Hiroyuki, on the other hand, the study of Japanese intellectual traditions meant prolonging an obsolete and repressive political system. He himself championed materialism, naturalism, and Herbert Spencer's social Darwinism as the progressive philosophies that Japan needed. In an essay that attempts to explain the mind as a result of biological evolution, Katō wrote:

The view of our critics, to put it simply, is that the struggle for survival is the most essential condition for evolutionary theory, and that to account finally for this struggle requires, first of all, a studied return to the primal origins, to some kind of great dynamism or cosmic will rising up out of the ultimately static reality of the universe. Since evolutionists have completely ignored all questions of this sort, their theories cannot possibly be counted as philosophy. Naturalists like me, however, think that there is no credible evidence at all for such a static universe. Likewise, we see the idea of a great will at work behind the universe as mere conjecture, a strange, mystical, supernatural phantom cooked up in the imagination. The universe is nothing of the sort. Rather, it is the progressive unfolding of a unity of matter and energy in an absolutely natural and causal manner. We must, therefore, conclude that if the phenomena of the universe are not studied primarily from evolutionary principles, there is simply no way to reach the truth. In short, in the future philosophy must be evolutionist. (KATŌ HIROYUKI 1910, 41)

The target of Katō's attack was a lecture by Inoue Tetsujirō (1855–1944), another object of Chōmin's scorn. In this essay we find Katō examining Inoue's claims one by one, subjecting them to criticism and countering them with claims he presents as scientifically superior. Though he may not meet the stan-

dards of analytic philosophy today, Katō represents an early Japanese version of the effort to “naturalize” the domain of philosophy, that is, to treat its problems as solvable, if at all, through empirical investigation alone.

Inoue Tetsujirō had studied philosophy at Tokyo University under Fenollosa and then in Germany from 1884 to 1890, when he became Japan’s first native chairholder in philosophy. A student of Confucianism from early childhood, he was not prone to limit philosophy to the West, however, and compiled a *History of Eastern Philosophy* as early as 1881. His philosophical dictionary published the same year, and again with revisions in 1912, was the first of its kind in Japan and set the standard for translations of western terms. The term for *philosophy* itself, *tetsugaku*, was formally recognized when Tokyo Imperial University authorized various departments and chairs under that heading, including ones for “Indian Philosophy” and “Chinese Philosophy.” One of Inoue’s most important contributions was a pioneering series of historical studies of premodern Japanese philosophy, published in three volumes as *The Philosophy of the Japanese Wang Yangming School* (1900), *The Philosophy of the Japanese Ancient Learning School* (1902), and *The Philosophy of the Japanese Zhu Xi School* (1905).

None of these works articulated a clear sense of why Inoue thought these Confucian schools counted as philosophy. He did, however, attempt an original synthesis of his own, distinguishing philosophy from the other sciences by its comprehensive scope and specialized method, and defining it as a discipline that connects logical truth with peace of mind. He outlined its subfields, practical and theoretical, and insisted on the crucial role of pure or theoretical philosophy in formulating a “worldview,” as reflected in the selection from his writings later in this section. Beyond his purely academic interests, Inoue wrote influential tracts for the public on the ‘*kokutai*’ and “national morality,” and was partially responsible for the invention of ‘*bushidō*’ or the “Way of the Warrior.”² The prewar construction of a national ideology, as well as the establishment of academic philosophy in Japan, owe much to Inoue Tetsujirō’s influence.

By the time Kuwaki Gen’yoku (1874–1946) succeeded Inoue in the First Chair of Philosophy, the discipline was being described in explicitly western categories. Using English terms Kuwaki defined philosophy formally as the *generalized, methodical or systematic, and rational study of fundamental principles*, the principles that are *universal, ultimate, and unifying*. As for its subject matter:

Philosophy is the progressive study of fundamental principles concerning nature, human life, and the knowledge of the actual and the ideal—or, calling the first two simply *reality*, the study of the fundamental principles of reality and knowledge. (KUWAKI Gen’yoku 1900, 202)

2. See the section on “Samurai Thought.”

No attempt is made here to incorporate indigenous categories or traditional learning. Kuwaki's inspiration came from the rigorous analysis he found in Descartes and Kant and the speculative depth he found in Hegel. He strove to be an accurate transmitter and interpreter of the western philosophical idiom, not the creator of an original set of ideas, and this preoccupation set the tone for the first stage of academic philosophy in Japan.

"Pure philosophy," as it was called, meant exclusively western philosophy. The Department of Philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University taught its history primarily, emphasizing "De-Kan-Sho": Descartes, Kant, and Schopenhauer. Inoue Tetsujirō's efforts to legitimize traditional East Asian and Japanese thought as genuine philosophy were not to prevail. There was no chair or section for Japanese philosophical thought, and even the chairs for Indian Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy were shifted to their own departments. Since the early 1920s, the study of "Japanese thought" has been left to other departments, such as Ethics or Religion. (As of 2010, there is but one chair in all Japan devoted to Japanese philosophy, and that is at the University of Kyoto.) The first academic journal devoted to the field, *Tetsugakkai zasshi* (*Journal of the Association of Philosophy*, later simply *Journal of Philosophy*), launched in 1887, also reflected a gradual limitation of the term. The Journal began by publishing articles not only on western philosophy but on Asian thought, aesthetics, and ethics as well, but by 1912 it had limited its content to "pure (that is, western) philosophy." Tokyo University professors like Kuwaki eventually advocated an even narrower limitation of pure philosophy to speculative German philosophy. When it came to more recent Anglo-American currents like pragmatism, Kuwaki took an expressly purist position. In a 1905 debate with Tanaka Kiichi he rejected pragmatism as "a pseudo-philosophy propounded by scholars who engage in philosophy as some sort of *divertissement*" (KUWAKI Gen'yoku 1906, 24).

Although Tanaka and his students continued to advance pragmatism at the private Waseda University, Kuwaki's opinion won the day, and academic philosophy at both Tokyo and Kyoto Imperial universities came to emphasize speculative German thought to the near exclusion of utilitarianism, pragmatism, and other Anglo-American philosophy.

On the periphery of academic philosophy at the turn of the century, the social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer along with versions of Nietzsche's philosophy exerted an influence on Japanese writers and literary critics far more extensive than the "De-Kan-Sho" of the university professors. Takayama Chogyū's essay "On the Aesthetic Life" in 1901 sparked a vigorous two-year debate in literary journals on his Nietzsche-inspired individualism and pursuit of basic human drives. The debate prompted Kuwaki to write a book on Nietzsche's life and works, including a critique of his ethics. While the philosophers were still

enamored with their western paragons, several of them published books summarizing Nietzsche's thought—Watsuji Tetsurō in 1913 and Abe Jirō* in 1919.

Nishitani Keiji* was perhaps the first Japanese philosopher to address in a novel way the problem of nihilism that Nietzsche had foreseen. In fact, it was not until Nishitani's teacher, Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), succeeded Kuwaki in the chair for philosophy at Kyoto University in 1914, and inspired what later became known as the Kyoto School, that academic philosophy in Japan began anew to draw upon Asian as well as European thought.

[JCM]

CHINESE AND KOREAN DISPUTES

The sinographs pronounced *tetsugaku* in Japanese were taken over in China and Korea as well, but once again not without some lively disputation. In China several other attempts had been made to translate the western term *philosophy*. In the early 1600s at the end of the Ming Period, the Jesuit Giulio Aleni used five sinographs to render *philosophia* phonetically, followed by Confucian terms that identified it as a “branch of learning about ‘principle’.” Writers in the Qing Period used a term meaning “wisdom studies” and interpreted philosophy as the same sort of study as the Confucian ‘investigation of all things’ and “the study of human nature and principle.” Against this background the sinographs for the Japanese term *tetsugaku* entered China, although exactly when is not certain. Huang Zunxian's *National Magazine of Japan* in 1887 mentions the term as part of the curriculum of Tokyo University. The person who presented *zhexue*—the Chinese pronunciation of the characters read *tetsugaku* in Japanese—as conceptual thought, rather than merely the name of an academic course of study, was Liang Qichao (1873–1929), an advocate of constitutional monarchy and a leader in a failed attempt to reform the government in 1898. In 1901, while in exile in Japan, he presented his fellow political reformer Kang Youwei (1858–1927) as “the philosopher Kang.” His 1903 work *The Doctrine of Kant, the Greatest Savant of the Modern Age*, a comparison of the philosophy of Kant and Buddhism, introduced the term *zhexue* to the world of Chinese thought. His *Philosophy of Laozi* again used *zhexue* to present classical Daoist thought.

The whole idea of *zhexue* met some strong resistance, however, particularly in debates concerning the creation of a modern educational system in China. In 1902, Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909) urged the Emperor to exclude *zhexue* or western philosophy. He argued not only that was it vacuous and useless but also that it misled people and subverted national morals and public order. Zhang considered *zhexue* incompatible with traditional Chinese learning.

Wang Guowei (1877–1927) argued to the contrary that *zhexue*, insofar as it was a search for truth, did not contradict the learning found in China. An amazingly versatile scholar and poet, Wang had studied natural sciences in Tokyo and later immersed himself in German idealism. Claiming that philosophy was fundamental to education in that it sought the true, the good, and the beautiful, he strongly advocated its inclusion in the educational system. Here Wang followed the interpretation of philosophy advanced by Kuwaki Gen'yoku, whose *Introduction to Philosophy* Wang translated in 1902. Different from the situation in Japan, however, was the idea that in China philosophy need not be “purified” by the western discipline. “Philosophy” had always been framed in distinction from “Chinese philosophy.” The problem was how to think of “Chinese philosophy” after western philosophy had been taken in.

The first answer was that of Hu Shih (1891–1962) in his 1919 work, *An Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy*. Hu Shih was a pragmatist who had studied with John Dewey at Columbia University, and his inauguration of the practice of philosophy forms a stark contrast with the situation in Japan. For Hu, doing philosophy in China meant studying the works of western philosophers to create one's own philosophy, basing oneself on western sources but incorporating eastern thought. By writing its history, scholars could rank “Chinese philosophy” on a par with western philosophy. This newly introduced historical perspective relativized the philosophy of the West. Thus a legitimation of philosophy in China came about by composing the history of Chinese philosophy, culminating in Feng Youlan's comprehensive *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, published in two volumes in 1934.

Roughly parallel to the Kyoto School in Japan, Chinese thinkers struggled to create a speculative philosophy that would be original. The school known as “New-Confucianism” attempted to refine Confucianism and Buddhism by making them philosophical. Along with Feng Youlan (1895–1990) who, like Hu Shih, had studied with Dewey, the first generation included Liang Shumin (1893–1988), whose *Eastern and Western Culture and Philosophy* (1921) endeavored to reinterpret Confucian traditions in the light of western philosophy, and Xiong Shili (1885–1968) whose *A New Treatise on Consciousness Only* of 1932 did the same with Buddhism. The second generation included two students of Xiong: Tang Junyi (1909–1978) whose *Development of the Humanistic Spirit in China* subjected the very category of humanism to critique; and Mou Zongsan (1909–1995), whose New Confucianism attempted to rectify Kant's philosophy by way of Confucian and Tiantai Buddhist teachings. In *The Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy*, Mou presented his views on whether there is such a thing as Chinese philosophy:

From ancient times there has been no word like *philosophy* in China.... If

one pairs the original Greek word only with western philosophy, one could say that fundamentally there is no Chinese philosophy.... Similarly, if one speaks of religion according to the standards of Christianity, Chinese Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism would have nothing to say. If one speaks of philosophy, there has been no western-style philosophy in China.... So what is philosophy? Philosophy is a reflection on and rational explanation of all activities relating to human nature. China has thousands of years of cultural history and, of course, a long history of activity and creativity related to human nature, as well as a history of reflection and explanation, of reason and conceptualization. How could there be no philosophy?

In a statement reminiscent of Nishi Amane and Nishimura Shigeki, Mou goes on to contrast the main thrust of Chinese philosophy with the philosophy of the West:

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 most prominent of the three, gives it a particular definition as “inner morality,” that is, as moral subjectivity. 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 Zongsan 1963, 1–6)

Korea borrowed the term that translated *philosophia* from Japan in the early twentieth century when Korea was colonized by the Japanese government. The introduction of this discipline, therefore, was linked to the political situation of the country. During Japanese colonial rule in the 1920s and 1930s, Korean scholars believed they should master disciplines like philosophy in order to understand what had subjected Korea to colonialism. At the same time, they were aware of the meaning that philosophy had for academia around the world, as an inquiry into the foundations of reality and the nature and scope of the sciences.

In his *History of the Reception of Western Thought in Korea* (2003), Lee Kwang-Lae (1946–), professor of Gangneung University, argued that Korean philosophers have borne a burden of patriotism that he called the “Atlas complex.” Like Atlas, who in ancient Greek mythology bowed under the weight of the entire world he was condemned to carry, many Korean philosophers of the first generation felt they were destined to carry the weight of Korea’s political reality that related primarily to Japanese colonial rule. They saw philosophy as a critical way to perceive the Korean situation in a wider perspective and finally to cope with it.

It was Park Chong-Hong (1903–1976) who adopted the term *ch’örhak*, the Korean rendering of the sinographs pronounced *tetsugaku* in Japanese. Park

initiated the reception of western philosophy and was responsible for the rise of modern Korean philosophy in the western sense of the word. His book *General Logic*, based on traditional Aristotelian concepts, was the first of its kind in the history of Korean thought. He introduced the philosophy of Kant, Hegel, Rickert, Cohen, Hartmann, Heidegger, Jaspers, Cassirer, Russell, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Ayer, and several others. Although his primary contribution was the assimilation of western philosophy, he also nurtured a keen interest in many areas of Korean culture and published articles on traditional Korean neo-Confucianism, Buddhism, and *silhak* or “practical Learning.” Park commonly, though not exclusively, employed the term *sasang* to deal with traditional Korean “thought,” but set the tone for the use of the word *ch’örhak* to refer to both eastern-style and western-style philosophy. Over the past century, however, there have been at least a few cases where Korean philosophers questioned the appropriateness of the term. Two examples may serve to indicate how the general sense of Korean philosophy has changed during this time.

One argument was put forth by Lee Kwan-Yong (1891–1933), the first Korean to receive a doctorate in philosophy from a western university, the University of Zurich. As a scholar from a colonized nation, he attempted to replace *ch’örhak* with *wönhak*, meaning roughly the “science of essences.” In a brief 1923 article entitled “Philosophy as Essential Science,” published in the pages of *New Life* (a journal that went defunct after its first issue), Lee wrote:

Philosophy is the archetype of general science and of original science that satisfies the intellectual instinct innate in all humans. I dare to claim that in this sense, *ch’örhak* may be defined as *wönhak*.

Citing Thales, Anaximander, Pythagoras, Heraklitus, Plato, and others, he argued that philosophy from its beginnings had studied the eternal essences of things and the final nature of the universe. Lee did not criticize what other philosophers understood by the term *ch’örhak*; he wanted only to be more faithful to what he perceived as the original meaning of philosophy. Although Korean philosophers did not adopt Lee’s suggestion to replace *ch’örhak* with *wönhak*, his understanding of philosophy as essential or original science represents the intellectual milieu of his day. Lee’s understanding of philosophy may have been a faithful representation of Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, but he did not seem seriously to consider eastern traditions as a way to solve problems facing Korean people.

A more recent challenge to the Japanese translation of the term *philosophia* comes from Paek Chong-Hyon (1950–), a professor of Seoul National University belonging to the third generation of Korean philosophers. He admits that the word *ch’örhak* itself has long been in use, making another Korean word for *philosophy* unnecessary. He does, however, want to expand the range of the

meaning of the Japanese-derived term, invented as it was from Nishi Amane's attempted translations, one of which was *kitetsugaku* or the study of the quest for wisdom. In his *German Philosophy and Korean Philosophy in the 20th Century* (2000), Paek refers back to Chinese classics such as the *Analects* of Confucius, and proposes that the term *ch'ŏrhak* should be understood to mean the science of philosophers. He considers the philosopher as second only to the "sage," Confucius himself, and followed by seventy-two "wise men" in the Confucian tradition. In his view, a philosopher is the one who struggles to reach the perfect 'Way' but does not attain it. The term *ch'ŏrhak* would include not only "general" or "fundamental" science as opposed to the individual sciences, but also the Learning of the Way (*Daoxue*) and neo-Confucian Rationalism (*Lixue*).

Nearly eighty years separate these two examples. Lee Kwan-Yong favored the study of western philosophy, which was introduced at the same time as the individual sciences. This beginning represented the spirit and demand of the times. Under western imperialism and Japanese colonialism, Lee did not expect positive contributions from eastern philosophical traditions. On the other hand, he saw western thought as the basis of the power that made imperialism possible. Paek, in contrast, has lived in the era of an independent Republic of Korea with its remarkable economic growth, dynamic democracy, and high degree of national pride. He has incorporated Asian philosophical traditions, especially the Confucian Learning of the Way and rationalism, although he seems to treat Daoism and Buddhism less seriously. Most contemporary Korean philosophers no longer quarrel with the origin of the term *ch'ŏrhak*. They search for answers to the pressing epistemic, aesthetic, moral, political, economical, and environmental issues that face Korean people, and consult the philosophical traditions of both East and West.

Aside from disputations about terminology and the provenance of philosophy, thinkers in China, Korea, and Japan in the early twentieth century, began to seek recognition as original philosophers and in this period more often than not grappled with problems using German speculative philosophy as their model.

[NT, HWS]

“JAPAN'S FIRST PHILOSOPHER”

For Nakae Chōmin, if not for Inoue Tetsujirō, what counted as truly philosophical thinking was innovative and not imitative, systematic and not eclectic or fragmentary, metaphysical and not practical or political (despite Nishi Amane's insistence on its applicability). For some critics, moreover, to count as Japanese philosophy its Japanese flavor had to be conspicuous. Under

these measures several commentators have declared Nishida's *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911) the first true work of Japanese philosophy—in contrast to the work of earlier philosophy professors in Japan and of the scholastics of Japanese intellectual traditions. Takahashi Satomi* (1886–1964), a philosopher in his own right, commented:

Are there any “philosophical” works by our countrymen worth speaking of as *independent, philosophical works*? What would it mean to be philosophical? Before *An Inquiry into the Good* became public, I would have been at a loss to answer. . . . Something makes this work *really seem philosophical* in comparison to others. There have been respectable works like Hatano Seiichi's *Study of Spinoza*, and valuable works on various branches of philosophy, but in pure philosophy, as far as I know, scarcely any thinking so far has been richly original. . . . Is this not the first and only philosophical work in post-Meiji Japan? I am convinced it is. (TAKAHASHI Satomi 1912, 153–4)

Takahashi was not able structurally to define Nishida's “originality,” nor was Funayama Shin'ichi, the great historian of Meiji philosophy, when he wrote in 1959, “With Nishida's *Inquiry into the Good*, Japan's philosophy moved from the stage of the Enlighteners to a stage of originality. . . . But Nishida was ultimately a metaphysician” (FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 1959, 59–60). Funayama did imply, however, that since metaphysics—whatever that might be—was something entirely new to Japanese traditional thought, Nishida's philosophy was novel. Nishida's disciple Shimomura Toratarō (1902–1995) later attempted to define Nishida's innovation in historical terms. The following passage highlights some particularly noteworthy descriptions.

Japanese thinkers came to know of “philosophy” and “science” in the European sense only after the opening of Japan in the last half of the 19th century. Japan has long had its Buddhist, Confucian and Shinto thinkers, and there was even something philosophical in the best of them, and something scientific to the extent that they did not contain elements of magic and superstition; but Buddhism and Confucianism themselves were neither “philosophy” nor “science.” It is surely only since Meiji that one has referred to “philosophy” in distinction from religion and morality. And surely even if there was philosophy before this, it was only in fragmentary form. The Meiji era is called the era of Enlightenment, but it is an enlightenment that proceeded from and opposed western thought. The Japanese had an extremely active interest in the philosophy and science of the West as well as its political, economic, and military systems. The Meiji Era that spanned half a century (1868–1912), however, stopped at the study of western philosophy; in particular there were scarcely any original thinkers who exhibited *a Japanese character*. In general, there were nothing but eclectics who superficially and crudely blended western philosophy and eastern thought. Around the end of this era, at the beginning

of this century, the groundwork for an *original, systematic* philosophy became visible for the first time. The most exemplary and, to this day, influential philosopher is Nishida Kitarō....

A time came when philosophers began to systematize *their own* thought by way of western methods of thinking. The very first fruit of these endeavors, the exemplary one with the most distinctive *individuality*, was Nishida Kitarō's *An Inquiry into the Good*.... Japanese philosophy in those days was a matter of being sensitive to and reacting to contemporaneous European philosophy, and of swiftly importing it. Pragmatism, neo-Kantianism, Bergson, and eventually phenomenology were current. Ever since then the Japanese philosophical world in general has developed in direct linkage to the contemporaneous western academic world. The leading Japanese thinkers have for the most part taken up the problems of western philosophers and formed their own thought by confronting them critically. Hence it would appear that philosophy in Japan does not differ from western philosophy, that an independent development and formulation of problems is hardly to be seen. A philosophy that has grasped the rigorous methods and concepts of western philosophy and yet possessed a *distinctive eastern or Japanese originality* has been an extremely novel development. Nishida became a model in this regard. (SHIMOMURA Toratarō 1977, 197–8, 201)

More recent and critical appraisals continue to refer to Nishida as the first Japanese philosopher. Nakamura Yūjirō, for example, writes:

One had to wait for Nishida for a work that could disprove Chōmin's judgment that there was no philosophy in Japan.... Nishida's work is *the first* to deserve the name of philosophy. (NAKAMURA Yūjirō 1983, 15–16)

Nishida's Definition of Philosophy

Whether Nishida can rightly be called Japan's first philosopher remains a matter of dispute. What is clear is that in his own work he had mastered the European philosophical idiom. In a dictionary entry he defines philosophy in distinction from religion:

Philosophy is science, that is, unified conceptual knowledge, and thereby differs from art or religion. To be sure, there are those who, like Bergson, say that philosophy is intuitive knowledge, but intuition as such cannot be called philosophy. Even if its contents can derive from intuition, philosophy finds its *raison d'être* when intuition takes the form of conceptual knowledge. But what sort of science is philosophy? What does philosophy study? Philosophy is originally conceived of as the most fundamental science, the science of sciences. But this way of speaking must be taken in a strict sense, for every field of study has fundamental concepts that give rise to it. The fundamental notion of geometry, for example, is space; that of physics is material phenomena.

There can be no geometry without the concept of space, but the geometry that presupposes space cannot reflect on space itself or clarify it from a more fundamental standpoint. In contrast, philosophy reflects on the basic concepts of the particular sciences in general and constructs from them one system of knowledge. That is what distinguishes philosophy from the particular sciences. Thus the objects investigated by philosophy are things very near at hand like space, time, matter, and mind.

Although philosophy reflects on and unifies the basic notions of the particular sciences, its object of study is not simply the fundamental concepts of reality. Basic normative notions such as truth, goodness, and beauty must, of course, enter into philosophical study. Philosophy not only clarifies basic notions of reality; it must also elucidate the ideals of human life, the “ought” itself. Philosophy is not simply a worldview; it is a view of human life. If, as present-day neo-Kantians claim, the “ought” is more basic than the “is,” then philosophy is the study of values (*Wertlehre*). Thus, philosophy may be called the ultimate unity of knowledge, the unity of the fundamental concepts relating to existence or to the “ought,” that is to say, the science of the highest principles of human life in the universe. (NISHIDA Kitarō 1923, 667–8)

At this stage of his career, Nishida champions the ideal of philosophy as first and universal science, in language obviously echoing Fichte’s view of philosophy as *Wissenschaftslehre*, and Hermann Cohen’s definition of philosophy as “the theory of the principles of science and therewith of all culture.” The philosophical idiom in Japan had thus moved through three phases. When Nishi Amane began his work, the idiom was primarily alien. Japanese terms signified western terms which often implied a whole array of concepts invisible to the translators. The search for counterparts to what the western terms ultimately signified was still in its infancy. In the next phase, a new idiom began to be employed. A Japanese term might signify above all a set of concepts similar to a western array, and with a roughly similar usage. This was a kind of move “back to the concepts themselves,” exemplified in Nishi’s own explanation of *ri* or ‘principle’. Finally, philosophers like Nishida, Tanabe Hajime, Watsuji Tetsurō, and later Nishitani Keiji expanded the idiom by exploiting latent echoes and ambiguities in terms that could refer to traditionally western or eastern concepts such as—to use the English translations—*being-nothingness* in Nishida and Nishitani and *human being* in Watsuji. The work of the translation of ideas continues today, with philosophers like Ōmori Shōzō* infusing technical philosophy of language with insights won from ancient Japanese notions like *‘kotodama’*, the spirit of words, or Sakabe Megumi* writing about slippages of meaning and the “danger of falling into a semantic vacuum under the ideological halo of the authority of newly imported western modes of thought.”

PHILOSOPHY OR RELIGION?

The translation of ideas brought about a transformation not only of the Japanese language and the very concept of philosophy, Japanese intellectual traditions also came to be understood in new terms. The effort to relate Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto to European categories like philosophy and religion led to their virtual redefinition, but not without some perplexity over the meaning of words.

Like the category *philosophy*, the meaning of *religion*, too, was a source of confusion in the early Meiji Period. Although the translations of *religion* and its cognates were not neologisms, they did use old terms in new ways. To try to unravel the confusion we may point out three strands in the understanding of this category. Braided together, they do more to complicate the idea of religion than to form it into a coherent concept.

First, religion was conceived along Protestant lines as a matter of personal faith and practice. In 1874 the influential translator of western categories, Nishi Amane, explained that religious beliefs were held within one's heart and were a matter of personal preference. Religious faith began where knowledge left off. He argued that religion should be left alone by public government and law as long as it does not harm society or involve itself in temporal power (NISHI Amane 1874B, 186–7, 189).

Secondly, in the view of many intellectuals who sought to modernize Japan or to align its traditions with scientific thinking, insofar as religion is a matter of faith that exceeds rationality, it verges on the irrational and pure superstition. Despite Nishi Amane's position on religious tolerance, he did little to conceal his own contempt for native folk Shinto as "belief in foxes and badgers." Intellectuals who otherwise fiercely opposed one another, the materialist Katō Hiroyuki and the Buddhist Inoue Enryō, for example, shared a distaste for unscientific superstition and irrational religious belief. The bone of contention was whether such belief defined the heart of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto.

Thirdly, scholars understood religion to mean a set of socially shared beliefs or doctrines. Among several different words used in the 1870s to render *religion*, the term that won out as the preferred translation, *shūkyō*, literally meant the core teachings of a sect and thus tended to de-emphasize ritualistic elements.

For both scholars and government officials, the question became how Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism should be understood vis-à-vis the categories of philosophy and religion. The classification of Shinto is a complex story with a relatively simple conclusion for purposes of this essay. On the one hand, some philosophers like Inoue Enryō and Inoue Tetsujirō did write of Shinto as one of Japan's philosophical traditions, but for the most part Shinto thought and Native Studies in general escaped scrutiny as a candidate for philosophy in Japan. On

the other hand, the state's promotion of Shinto as an official national ideology from the 1890s at times resisted its classification as a religion, one among many others—until 1940, when the cabinet of Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro declared that State Shinto was the *only* religion. The traditions known as Buddhism and Confucianism were a different story, and decades of discussion were devoted to their philosophical and religious nature.

Representative of the first disputations are the comments of Nishimura Shigeki and Torio Koyata (1847–1905). When Nishimura defined philosophy in contrast to Confucianism and Buddhism, as mentioned earlier in this Overview, he remarked that these two traditions

emphasize knowledge and practice together (or rather, they weigh in on the side of practice). They revere their founders as persons who taught us both to order our own personal lives and to function as members of society. In putting particular stress on devotion to the sutras and valuing the performance of expedient means, Buddhism oversteps the bounds of reason to preach about hell and paradise. Philosophy, in contrast, is an investigation of the truths of the universe from the ground up and as such it has no use for founders or scriptures or anything like expedient means. (cited in FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 1975, 67)

Philosophy did not rely on argument by authority. The next year, 1888, Torio attempted to refute Nishimura's exclusion:

Are not Confucianism and Buddhism inquiries into the truth of the universe? Is not the basis of knowledge and practice also the basis of what we call "truth?" Is not truth the aim of teaching people to order their own lives, and does this not depend on belief in that truth? Do not reverence for founders and devotion to scriptures depend on belief in this truth?... Therefore, the philosophies of the Confucian and Buddhist ways share not only the same origins but also the same goal, and there is no reason this cannot be called the philosophy of the East. (cited in FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 1975, 68)

Torio's rebuttal, rhetorical as it is, highlights the kind of thought to which philosophy was being contrasted. A lay disciple of the Rinzai Zen abbot Imakita Kōsen* (1816–1892), Torio took the Buddhist name Tokuan and defended the position that Buddhism itself represented a kind of philosophical thought that proved its relevance for the modern age.

Inoue Enryō and Kiyozawa Manshi* were Buddhist reformers who gave more extensive arguments on why Buddhism should count as philosophy—to be sure, a kind of philosophy that intersects with religion. Their motivation was as much a concern to demonstrate Buddhism's rational character and compatibility with science as it was an interest to explain Buddhist theories. Their common opponents were materialists like Nakae Chōmin and Katō Hiroyuki.

In countering Katō's evolutionist materialism with an evolutionary idealism adapted from Hegel, they shared with Katō a commitment to some form of evolutionary theory, a notion of philosophy as systematic, rational discourse, and a view that Buddhism counted as religion. Unlike Katō, the two Buddhists held the notion of religion in high regard, and Kiyozawa insisted at first on its relation to morality, a connection that Confucians also made. In the final years of his life, Kiyozawa abandoned the idea of a rational religion and stressed a religion of faith, independent of philosophy and ethics.

Scholars of Confucianism likewise debated how this tradition related to imported western categories. To classify Confucianism as philosophy might mean forcing it into a western theoretical frame and forfeiting its practical bent. To call it a religion would tie it to one or more of the three predominant understandings of that concept in late nineteenth century Japan. The core of Confucianism was for many a set of teachings, but hardly a matter of personal faith bereft of ritualism, and by no means a lapse into irrationality and superstition.

Besides philosophy and religion a third possibility appeared as a way to classify Confucianism in indigenous terms that related to imported western categories as well: Confucianism as ethics or, more precisely, as *dōtoku*, the way of virtue or public morality. But this possibility, too, was not without its problems. If Confucianism was thought of as a set of ethical principles, as an ethic belonging to the public realm, it could lend itself to being co-opted by the state and imposed as a matter of national obligation. For some scholars, its religious core would be ignored. Hattori Unokichi (1867–1939) addressed this problem in a fairly nuanced way, distinguishing ethnic Confucianism from the “Teaching of Confucius” accessible to the entire world.

Thought before Confucius had many religious elements. After Confucius established his teaching, it became more theoretical and ethical, its religious character diminished.... Primitive Confucianism was quite religious, but Confucius turned it into an ethical teaching—yet the teaching of Confucius is neither limited to the realm of mundane human matters nor ignorant of what is beyond them.... The fundamental belief of Confucius is religious. (HATTORI Unokichi 1939, 32, 90–1)

Hattori defined the teaching of Confucius as a new “philosophical religiosity”:

Ancient ceremonies were altogether religious, but Confucius explained the meaning of ceremony from a wholly ethical point of view. Ancient ceremony existed to bring fortune or avoid misfortune by the power of the gods, but Confucius preached only that we repay the fundamental favors of our ancestors. Still, Confucius deeply believed in the will of heaven, and believed it to be within him. In this respect he was religious. Confucian Teaching is ultimately religious if we think of religion as the coincidence of the finite and the

infinite or the relative and the absolute. The doctrines of many philosophers ultimately advocate such a coincidence and thus are religious. Confucian Teaching, too, is religious in this sense, but this religiosity differs from the Confucian religiosity of old. (HATTORI Unokichi 1938, 163)

Hattori was dissatisfied with any separation of public morality and private religion. His proposal of the Teaching of Confucius as modern Confucianism, ethical as well as religious, calls to mind the category of “civil religion.”

Hattori’s colleague at the University of Tokyo, Inoue Tetsujirō*, advocated the position that Confucianism was religious and ethical at the same time. His position toward Buddhism was more ambivalent. He had published a lengthy volume in 1915, *Philosophy and Religion*, consisting of the transcripts of university lectures on themes like life and death, in which he took Buddhism and Shinto as religions, and wrote of “the reform and the future of Chinese religions” and “the unity of religions in Japan.” In other works, however, he rejected Buddhism as an old religion, while accepting both Confucianism and Shinto. His principal agenda became the construction of a new type of religion, an “ethical religion” modeled after Confucianism. In his *Morality Beyond Religion* he wrote:

We need to make morality the place where our ideals become actualized to make it into our religion. We have no need for old religions, but the time has come to construct a morality as their successor. This morality is much more reasonable than any religion of old. Devoid of superstition, it aligns with the sciences of today. That old religions cannot align with current science is evidence of their obsolescence. That today’s morality is able to align with the sciences and foster individual autonomy is proof of its value as a replacement for old religion. Morality seen in this way surpasses any religion both in value and progressiveness. (INOUE Tetsujirō 1908A, 302–3)

Confucianism in this view was a public moral teaching that retained a religious core:

Confucianism is coincident with religion insofar as it reveres heaven as a greatness beyond human beings. It is quite different from religion, however, insofar as it ignores rituals and the afterlife. (INOUE Tetsujirō 1908B, 309)

On the other hand, Inoue related Shinto to public morality in a way that still recognized it as religion, that is, a faith. In the 1910s it seems he tried to mediate between much public sentiment that understood shrines as places of worship, and the policy of government officials that led to State Shinto and that proclaimed, “Shinto is not a religion.” He writes that visits to shrines to pay respect to the distinguished service of the nation’s benefactors can be understood in

a moral sense, reaching the depth of reverence that may be called faith. One’s

visit is morally fruitless without this depth. We may regard it as morality, recognizing that such faith is necessary for morality. (INOUE Tetsujirō 1917, 364)

By 1935 Inoue was promoting an amalgam of Confucianism and Shinto as the “Imperial Way” of Japan’s monarchy, superior to the merely “Kingly Way” of China and Korea that knew only Confucianism. Let it not be forgotten, though, that he had also presented Japanese neo-Confucian traditions as philosophies.

Two years earlier, Watsuji Tetsurō had made a case for the secular nature of Confucianism that distinguished it from religious faith. Watsuji regarded Confucius as one of the great teachers of humankind, but distinct from other teachers like Buddha, Socrates, and Jesus, in that he never touched on the problem of death, nor did his biography include any story about his death. The core doctrine of Confucius consisted in the “Way of humanity” with no reference to a “religious God.” For Confucius,

it sufficed to understand and realize the Way. The Way is a way of humanity, not the words of a God or a way to enlightenment. No fear or anxiety afflicted him if he followed the ethical way of humanity, that is, if he realized humanness and practiced loyalty and tolerance. That is why his doctrine had no need for mysteries of any shade, no demands to “believe by virtue of the absurd.” The Way is completely a way of reason. The most remarkable characteristic of the doctrine of Confucius is his recognition that the Way of humanity is significant on an absolute level. (WATSUJI Tetsurō 1933, 344)

For Watsuji the heart of philosophy was ethics, and for this reason alone the Confucian Way was philosophical at its core. Confucianism, had of course, been criticized long before, at the very beginning of the Meiji Era, by modernizers like Fukuzawa Yukichi,* but largely for the social practices that Watsuji and other philosophers divorced from its original teaching. Ōnishi Hajime,* writing at the turn of the century, is representative of the handful of philosophers who criticized Confucian values on explicitly philosophical grounds. The widespread acceptance of the appellation *Confucian philosophy* today is due more to the worldwide attention paid to intellectual traditions in China than to the efforts of Japanese thinkers like Inoue Tetsujirō. Indeed, Watsuji’s own work on ethics was as much Buddhist as Confucian, as the selection from his writings will demonstrate.

After the establishment of academic philosophy in Japan, there emerged a group of philosophy professors who were also steeped in Buddhist thought and practice. This group, the Kyoto School, took the philosophical nature of Buddhism for granted. As many of the selections in this volume show, the question for them had less to do with whether Buddhism counted as a philosophy than with the nature of religion and morality as seen from a Buddhist perspective. Their reflections on the intersections and divergencies of philosophy, ethics,

and religion display the depth to which such western categories had penetrated Japanese intellectual life, and the degree to which they were being transformed. From outside the Kyoto School, Maruyama Masao* offered an engaging explanation of the way Japanese thought developed through centuries of transforming concepts and categories, Confucian and Buddhist that came from China, and—from the West—Christian, democratic, and Marxist ideas. As contested as his analysis may be, it shows that Japanese philosophers have continued to take seriously the problem of the terms and categories in which they think.

[JCM, NT]

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NISHI Amane 西周 (1829–1887)

Nishi Amane is known for his pioneering work in introducing European philosophy and other disciplines into Japan. Born in the Tsuwano domain (present-day Tsuwano town in Shimane Prefecture), he was educated in Zhu Xi philosophy at a domain school for samurai youth, but later began to sympathize deeply with the thought of Ogyū Sorai,* a critic of the Zhu Xi School. Nishi learned Dutch and English in Edo (present-day Tokyo) and translated western texts for Tokugawa 'shogunate' officials. In 1862 he and the legal scholar Tsuda Mamichi were sent by the shogunate to study in Leiden in the Netherlands, where under the tutelage of Simon Vissering he immersed himself in legal studies, economics, and statistics. Returning to Japan in 1865, Nishi translated Vissering's lectures on international and natural law for Tokugawa Yoshinobu, Japan's last shōgun. He then headed a military academy and went on to become a professor at the Kaiseijo, an institute for the development of the sciences that was later incorporated into Tokyo University. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, he contributed a rescript on military affairs, regulations for a new system of education, and a draft for a national constitution which stated that the emperor would share legislative power with a national diet. This latter proposal was roundly criticized by Inoue Kowashi (1844–1895), whose views on the emperor's divinity ultimately prevailed in the Meiji Constitution of 1889. Nishi served as a counselor in an early form of the national assembly, as a member of the House of Peers, and as head of the Tokyo Academy.

Nishi's philosophical works introduced formal logic to Japan and systematized both western and eastern fields of scholarship. He translated John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism* and rendered parts of Auguste Comte's positivism into Japanese. He wrote treatises on human nature and psychology that explained the distinctions between objective and subjective viewpoints for the first time in Japanese, and sketched a theory of religion that advocated freedom of belief and the separation of state and religion. Nishi coined Japanese words for *philosophy*, *reason*, *sensibility*, *concept*, *idea*, *induction*, *deduction*, and many other terms. Theories of military affairs and of national education, economics, and law rounded out his accomplishments.

The following selections exemplify two different challenges that Nishi faced: advancing modern, liberal ideas and conveying the meaning of western concepts. As a leading figure of the 'Enlightenment' and the progressive Meiji Six Society, he insisted that self-cultivation was no substitute for training in legal affairs and the art of governing. Writing about the nature and limits of "freedom," a word that in Japanese could also denote egoism, Nishi clarifies the difference between the two notions and presents an argument that properly human freedom, in distinction from animal behavior, is gained in an ethical practice aimed not at the benefit of oneself but of society as a whole. In a more theoretical context we see Nishi comparing and contrasting the Confucian notion of 'ri', a concept that Zhu Xi scholars had

vigorously debated, with western counterparts like *principle* and *reason*. Addressing Zhu Xi School criticisms of western notions of principle, he goes on to advance his own understanding of *ri* as a term expressing a relation and not a substance.

[ST]

GOVERNING, FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE

NISHI Amane 1874A, 237–8; 1879, 312–13

Some scholars suppose that by coming to know the 'principle' of all things and to have a sincere heart and 'mind' they can spontaneously govern the country without further study, without investigating and clarifying what is in its interests or to its advantage. It is painful to think of the harm that would result from governance based on something like a Zen monk doing 'zazen'.

On the Idea that Freedom is Independence

All living things prefer to pursue and gain an advantage. Kites fly the skies, fish swim the waters, frogs leap—all seeking an advantage, and so is it with butterflies, lice, and fleas as well. Grasses and trees turn towards the sun and turn their backs on the shade. Human society, too, comes about because of the benefits it brings: the morality of mutual support (as with husband and wife, or father and son), the laws of division of labor (the exchange and distribution of work), the distinction between leaders and commoners (those in office and those not in office) and between government and citizens (the judiciary prevents conflicts, the army protects the nation). Hence, seeking what is beneficial is the basis of morality. The way of freedom does not gainsay the pursuit of gain.

Freedom is freedom precisely in relation to seeking gain. In this respect, it is important to note that gain cannot be a matter of freedom without rules. So in the making of a society and a nation, it is not possible for there to be no limits on the freedom of people. Savages have individual freedom, but almost without limits. Hence the indigenous in Africa are attacked, their people taken and sold as slaves. In order to eliminate calamities like these, the morality of a society emerges, governments are established and nations formed. We must be strict with people who are loose with the limits of freedom, but must not use our own freedom to violate the freedom of fellow human beings. (A vaccination steals a bit of health but in service of better health. Freely choosing one's occupation is the beginning of freedom.) There is no freedom without restrictions. (Forfeit freedom for one to gain freedoms for all.)

Only animals, insects, fish, and the like are free to pursue and gain benefit for themselves alone. In human society, one forfeits this smaller, lower form of free-

dom to obtain a greater, higher freedom. Thus in human society it may look as if the individual freedom of animals, insects, and fish is lacking, but in exchange one obtains a greater freedom. In human society people do not face the calamity of being killed and eaten. Hence freedom and acting for gain coexist; they are not contrary to one another. If we are to distinguish the two, then obtaining gain is the goal, and freedom is the means to get it. Consequently, morality exists in order to achieve freedom. Without independence, no freedom.

[ST, JCM, GCG]

PRINCIPLES, REASONS, SCIENCE

NISHI Amane 1873, 65; 1882, 167–72

On the Physical Basis of Psychology

Although the terms translated here as psychology and physiology had yet to assume their modern denotations, Nishi's view shows remarkable foresight.

Psychology or the study of human nature must discard views about the immaterial and base itself on the laws of matter. Beginning anew with physiology, psychology can unravel mysteries in the study of the human.

An Explanation of Principle

I lack sufficient capacity to discover and elucidate the principles that connect physiology and psychology, so for the time being I will explain the two, the principles of mind and of matter, separately. I will also try to explain in each case whether one comes before the other. Before explaining the principles of mind and of matter separately, however, we should ask one thing: How is one to define the concept 'ri' (which is used in the Japanese words for physiology and psychology)? What exactly is its essence?

Nishi attempts to show that the range of meanings covered by ri overlaps with European philosophy's central concern with reason and principle.

The word has been used since ancient times in China. Confucian works all discuss *ri* or "principle." Among ancient works we find the principle of change that symbolizes phenomena and is expressed by numbers in the *Book of Changes*; the principle of harmony in the *Doctrine of the Mean*; and the principle praised in the verse as "the workings of heaven without sound or smell." All of these express ways both lofty and profound to explain *principle*.

.....

So the meaning of the word has changed through time, and today has come

most often to signify the idea of reason, reasons, or reasonableness in the term *dōri*—literally, “the way of principle.” In the language of our country we also read the sinograph for *ri* as *kotowari*, the understanding of something or the understanding of words.

There follows a commentary on various Japanese expressions, after which Nishi explains the use of “ri” in compounds that translate various terms in European languages such as Vernunft, natural law, fundamental principle, ground, and idea.

Accordingly, we do not find a term in European languages that accurately translates *ri*. One sees Confucians from this country making statements like “westerners are as yet unaware of *ri*.” (I think Rai San’yō³ wrote this because at that time, of course, the country had not yet been opened to European teachings.) But Europeans certainly knew of this *ri*. Referring to recent European terms, *ri* has been used in two senses, to convey both the English *reason* and *natural law*, for example, or the French *raison* and *loi de nature*, the German *Vernunft* and *Naturgesetz*, and the Dutch *reden* and *natuurwet*, respectively.

Concerning the first sense, the more general word *dōri* (the way or principle) and the more specific *risei* (the nature of being principled) have translated reason. This *risei* or rationality is the original sense of right and wrong and the discrimination with which human nature is endowed; it points to the reason why humans are the lord of all creation. The more general term *dōri* comes to mean what it does by virtue of the fact that it includes opinions, decisions, speculation, and explanations. When the sinographs are used in this broad sense of reason, their meaning ranges from reasoning on the basis of observations to the reason or principle of heaven and earth, but in the latter case they indicate only what human thought itself ordains. Consequently, one should be aware of the fact that as translations of European terms, *risei* and *dōri* do not denote anything beyond the human realm like the principle of heaven or the ‘Way’ of heaven.

Concerning the second sense, *rihō* translates *natural law*, the law of heaven or nature. Newton’s law of gravity, Kepler’s laws of planetary motion, Bode’s planetary distance law, and the like are all things that do not directly concern human affairs. Although they come about as a result of human discoveries, they differ from the *ri* that the human mind can ordain. They belong to the category of objective things. In addition, the English word *principle*, the French *principe*, the German *Prinzip*, and the Dutch *beginsel* in their original meanings can all be translated as *genri* (“original principle”) or even *shugi* (“doctrinal principle”).

3. [Rai San’yō (1780–1832), a Confucian thinker and historian, was the author of an *Unofficial History of Japan*.]

Even though it is not the case that *ri* alone can express the essence of all these concepts, when we use the word it can suggest the original ideas, just as when one speaks of *humaneness* and *righteousness* to indicate Confucian ideas.

In addition, we encounter the English word *idea*, the French *idée*, the German *Vorstellung* and *Idee*, and the Dutch *denkbeeld*, deriving from the Greek and the Latin. These words were originally a modification of the Greek word for seeing, and in the sense of illuminating a shadow or an image, they refer originally to the impression that physical things leave on the mind. This notion came to refer to understanding and imagination in general. The word we now use to translate it, *kennen*, may seem to bear little relation to the word *ri*, but it has the same import it did for the Confucians of the Song period.

To give a little more detail about the gist of the word, with regard to the question of whether Europeans have been unaware of *ri*, we can say that the various European distinctions among the meanings of the word *reason* are more precise than Confucian meanings of *ri*. As Song Confucians explained it, all things, from heaven and earth and wind and rain to matters of human morality, exist within *tenri*, the immutable principle of heaven, and to part from this principle is to transgress against it. We must say this view is an overgeneralization. It would be a great mistake to act on such a belief. Such a way of thinking results in impossible ideas, like the idea that solar and lunar eclipses, and calamities such as droughts and floods, are related to the policies of the ruler. (That people in the past thought like this was due to their shallow level of knowledge, so we should not blame them. We should also not blame the Song Confucian scholars, because they did not yet know of European learning. But if people now still adhere to these ideas, we should be alarmed and criticize them.) It could also not be helped that people jumped to the conclusion that the ships of the Mongols were capsized by the divine winds of Ise, or by the power of the banners that read “Praise be to the wonderful dharma.” In short, things are equal insofar as they depend on *ri*, regardless of their size. There are a priori *ri* and a posteriori *ri*. Depending on their force, there are enduring *ri* and there are *ri* that vanish. There are fundamental *ri* and minor *ri*. We cannot capture these meanings in one generalized statement.

People often say, however, that “there are *ri* outside the *ri*.” In other words, many believe that *ri* may be such and such, but things do not necessarily occur in accordance with those *ri*. People who say this do so because they see *ri* as one sort of thing among others. But they do not know *ri*. In its vastness and in its detail, the scope of *ri* leaves nothing uncovered. If you let it free, so to speak, *ri* traverses heaven, earth, and the four directions. If you wrap it up, *ri* recedes and fits in the details. At its largest, there is nothing outside it. At its smallest, there is nothing inside it. If there are two things, then there is necessarily a *ri* between them. It is just that we cannot discern it entirely. The “*ri* outside the

ri” are just those things that cannot be explained with the usual *ri*. If there is a phenomenon or activity, then there is necessarily a reason and cause to bring it about. Also, if a *ri* is such and such, but the facts do not fit with this *ri*, this is merely because we have not yet discovered the *ri* that exactly applies to the facts in question. Once we have discovered this *ri*, it will necessarily fit the facts. For example, if you want to divide two oranges equally between two children, you will give one orange to each child. But in terms of weight and size, they are not exactly divided equally. If you would weigh them before dividing, you would get closer to dividing them precisely. But chemical characteristics such as sweetness or bitterness cannot be equally divided by measuring the weight of the oranges. So until we also find a technique to divide equally sweetness and bitterness, it will be difficult to divide the oranges perfectly.

As for the *ri* of the human mind, we know it only where it is constant and rather coarse. There are many *ri* we do not know. When people says of things they do not really understand that they lie “outside of *ri*” or that “the *ri* does not match the reality,” they can only mean not that the *ri* are insufficient, but that they themselves are.

There are things whose *ri* the human mind can know only in part but not entirely. Take the cosmos: we call it “the world” or “heaven and earth,” and we can infer that it has no limits, but we have not the slightest idea about why this is. So it is with *ri*. If we have two things, we may know the part entirely determined by necessity, but we have no reason to say we know the whole. This should be enough to dispel the confusion among people.

[ST, JCM, GCG]

FUKUZAWA Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835–1901)

Fukuzawa Yukichi, in his own estimation, was the initiator, or at least an inspiration for, many of the reforms that took place during Japan's process of modernization. Be that as it may, his was a strong dissenting voice against the lingering habits of feudalistic thought. Trained in western learning, Fukuzawa taught himself Dutch and English. Shortly after the opening of Japan, he made the first of three trips to the United States. On returning he was employed in the Tokugawa 'shogunate's' translation bureau. It was during this period that he published his first work, *Conditions in the West*, which was an immediate best seller and set him off on a prolific career as a writer and social critic.

Fukuzawa's two main points of philosophical reference, as will be seen in the following excerpts, were the European Enlightenment and modern scientific methodology, both reasonings on which he relied—but rarely rehearsed in any detail—for his relentless campaign against both traditional preconceptions and the unreflective rush to incorporate western models of government. Again and again he insists on intellectual 'cultivation' as the first priority for the awakening of Japan and its advance with the "spirit of the times." The most comprehensive presentation of his philosophy is contained in his *Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, an opening excerpt from which stresses the need to cultivate intellect as a balance to private morality.

In addition, Fukuzawa produced a considerable body of writings on women's questions. Although much of it may sound dated to contemporary ears, as the selection below will testify, his refutation of dominant Confucian ideas undergirding the suppression of women was very much a novelty in his own day. As someone trained in the physical sciences, he held the arguments from authority or traditional texts in rather low esteem when the result was injustice.

[JWH]

VIRTUE, KNOWLEDGE, AND WISDOM

FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1875, 102–43 (77–106)

Virtue means morality, probity; in the West it is called "morals." Morals refer to a person's interior good behavior; they enable a person to feel inwardly at peace and ashamed of nothing, not even one's innermost thoughts. Knowledge means intelligence; in the West it is called "intellect." It is the function of pondering, understanding, and relating things. Morality and intelligence are in turn each divided into two types. First you have what may be called private virtue: fidelity, purity, modesty, integrity, and the like—things that pertain to an individual's own heart. Secondly you have the sense of shame, justice,

straightforwardness, courage, and the like, which appear in people's dealings with others and in social relationships; these may be called public virtue. Thirdly you have the capacity to fathom the principles of things and respond to them; this may be called private knowledge. Fourthly you have the ability to evaluate persons and events, to give weightier and greater things priority, and to judge their proper times and places; this may be called public knowledge. Private knowledge can perhaps be called the lesser knowledge of know-how, while public knowledge can be called the greater knowledge of wisdom.

Of the four things distinguished here, the most important is the last one. Without wisdom, private virtue and private knowledge cannot develop into their public counterparts, or the public and the private functions can end up at odds with each other. There has never before been a clear discussion of these four, but by examining the views of scholars and what people commonly say one can see that they are aware of these distinctions.

.....

There are some gentlemen who can move a whole country with a word, but who cannot regulate their own households. Though they are talented at ruling the country and bringing peace to the land, they are unable to order themselves and their own households. Some people devote all their energies to maintaining their personal integrity, but they know nothing of what is going on outside their gates. Some go so far as to fatally weaken their health and die without in any way benefiting society. All of these people are lacking in wisdom and err about the order in things; unable to distinguish between what is important and what is not, they lose a proper balance in their pursuit of virtue.

Because the function of wisdom is to regulate knowledge and virtue, when speaking about morality we should really call it the supreme virtue. However, because we are here using terms according to their popular understanding, wisdom should not be called a virtue. In ancient Japan the term "morality" referred principally to an individual's private virtue. It was expressed in such phrases as "be gentle, modest, and deferring to others," or "rule by inaction," or "the holy person does not have ambition," or "the gentleman of the highest virtue is like a fool," or "the benevolent person is like a solid mountain." These all refer to inner states which in the West would be described as merely "passive." Since the word described an attitude of passive receptivity, rather than one of aggressive initiative, virtue was conceived only in terms of the liberation of a person's inner heart. The Chinese classics, of course, do not teach only this kind of passive virtue. Some few passages imply a more dynamic frame of mind. However, the spirit that breathes throughout those works stirs up in people an attitude of patient endurance and servility. Shinto and Buddhism are practically the same as the Chinese classics when it comes to their teachings on the 'cultivation' of virtue. Because we Japanese have been reared according to such teachings, the

popular understanding of the concept of virtue is extremely narrow; the term does not include the function of wisdom.

.....

In their hearts, of course, people naturally know the distinctions among the four classifications of knowledge and virtue that I described above, yet sometimes they seem to know it, sometimes they seem not to. Ultimately, then, what people in general are inclined to value most is private virtue. Therefore, I, too, shall go along with the common understanding of people and shall discuss the function of wisdom under the heading of intelligence, while morality I shall have to define narrowly as passive private virtue. When I discuss virtue..., it will be in this sense. Hence, when I compare intelligence and morality and describe the functions of the former as important and wide-ranging, and those of the latter as unimportant and narrow in range, I may seem to be biased. Scholars will not misunderstand me, however, if they are clear about what I say here.

... Now, because private virtue is a universal principle valid for all ages and all lands, the simplest and most beautiful of principles, of course later generations should not revise it. But one must choose the place to exercise it, in accord with social changes, and one must consider the proper ways to use it. For example, people's need for food has always been the same, but whereas in antiquity people simply put things directly into their mouths with their hands, people later developed numerous new styles of eating. Again, private virtue in the human heart is like the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth in the human body; nobody argues about whether they are useful or not. No human can be without them. Discussing the usefulness of these parts of the body may be relevant in a world inhabited by deformed people, but such discussion is only a waste of breath where people are all normal.

Because Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, and Christianity were proclaimed in ancient and less civilized times ("immature times," as it were), there is no denying that they were necessary at those times. Why, even today eighty to ninety percent of the world's population is in that sense immature, and as a result moral teachings cannot be neglected. Or perhaps for that very reason there is such a drive to talk so much about them. However, because the essence of civilization lies in moving forward on all fronts, we must not rest secure with the simple ways of antiquity. If people today are not happy with eating with their fingers, and if they realize that having eyes, ears, nose, and mouth are no special cause for smugness, then it should be clear that the cultivation of private virtue is not the be-all and end-all of human attainment...

Since intelligence and morality split the human heart, as it were, into two, each controlling its own proper sphere, there is no way of saying which is the more important. Both are needed to make a complete human being. But eighty to ninety percent of the theories of the past have stressed morality over intel-

ligence. Some scholars went so far as to deny the usefulness of intelligence altogether. This is a most deplorable evil in human society, and yet when one sets out to remedy this evil, one will encounter a great difficulty. For if you try to correct the evils of the past by first of all distinguishing between intelligence and morality, and then clarifying the respective spheres and functions of each, shallow people will complain that the explanation belittles virtue in favor of knowledge, that the territory of morality is being encroached upon. There might even be some who, after a cursory glance at the explanation, will mistakenly conclude that morality is of no use to people. Now, knowledge and virtue, together, are as necessary for civilized society as vegetables and grains have to be supplemented by fish and meat for the nourishment of the body. My saying that intelligence should not be overlooked is no different from offering meat to an undernourished vegetarian. Of course, it would be necessary to explain the value of meat and the problems of eating only vegetables and grains, and why both types of food should be taken together, because if the vegetarian then goes to the other extreme of eating only fish and meat, it would be the height of folly and no less a mistake.

Learned persons of ancient and modern times have also distinguished between knowledge and virtue, but because they feared the harm that would result from being misunderstood, they did not speak about it openly. But one cannot go on indefinitely knowing something and not speaking of it. When something is reasonable, ten out of ten people will not misunderstand it. Even if two or three do happen to misunderstand, it would be better to speak of it. It is unreasonable to deprive seven or eight people of an intelligent insight for fear of a misunderstanding by two or three. When you come down to it, to conceal an argument that should be discussed, or to obscure an issue for fear of being misunderstood—as they say, “adapting one’s teachings to the level of one’s audience”—is a course of action that belittles one’s fellow human beings. To take it upon oneself to refrain from telling things the way they are because of the supposed stupidity of one’s fellows shows a lack of due respect and love. This is not the way a true gentleman should act. If one thinks something is true, one should speak out on the matter frankly and leave it to others to judge whether one is right or wrong. This is precisely why I myself do not hesitate to discuss the distinction between knowledge and virtue.

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Morality is the activity of one person. Its prime sphere of influence is the family circle. If the head of the family is honest, the rest of the people in his household will tend to be honest. If the words and actions of parents are refined, then the hearts of the children will naturally be the same. Even friends and relatives can exhort one another to do good and thus lead others to virtue, but ultimately the sphere in which moral encouragement can lead another to good

is extremely limited. This is what is meant by the saying, “One cannot call on every door or preach to every person.”

Intelligence is something quite different. Once some truth is discovered and announced to others, in no time at all it moves the minds of a whole nation. If the discovery is very great, the power of a single individual can change the face of the entire world. James Watt invented the steam engine, and the manufacturing industry changed all over the world as a result. Adam Smith discovered the laws of economics, and world commerce took on a new dimension. How are such ideas diffused? They are spread through word of mouth or through books. As soon as people put into actual practice ideas they have heard or read about in books, they are in reality no different from Watt or Smith. As a result, yesterday’s ignoramus can become today’s sage, and hundreds and thousands of Watts and Smiths can be born all over the world. In speed of diffusion and breadth of influence, this is in a completely different category from one person’s giving lessons in morality to his family and friends.

Someone may object that Thomas Clarkson’s⁴ sweeping away the evil laws of slavery in society on the strength of his inner vision, and John Howard’s⁵ elimination of the evils of the prison system through his own diligence were works of morality, and, therefore, that even virtue can have extremely vast, immeasurable effects. To this I answer: True, these two gentlemen broadened private virtue into public virtue and thus had a vast, immeasurable influence on the world. However, these two men accomplished what they did by fearing no odds and sparing no pains in putting their ideas into effect; they wrote books, exhausted their funds, endured criticism, braved dangers, and finally succeeded in moving people’s hearts. But this was not directly the fruit of private virtue; it was rather the work of wisdom.

The two of them accomplished great things, true, but if we look at the matter exclusively in terms of morality and understand morality the way people commonly do, then the only thing they both did was sacrifice their lives for the sake of others. As far as motivation goes, there is no difference between Howard’s loss of his life to save countless others and the case of a Confucian gentleman who would lose his life trying to save a child from falling into a well.⁶ The only difference is that Howard acted for the sake of countless others and left a legacy

4. [Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846) spent his life campaigning for the abolition of slavery, beginning with his native Britain and then extending to the slave trade around the world.]

5. [John Howard (1726–1846), a public servant in England, is known as the father of modern prison reform.]

6. [The reference to *Mencius* 2A.6, where someone reaching out to save a baby about to fall into a well is said to demonstrate not an act of reflective virtue, but the inherent goodness of the human being that emerges naturally and of its own accord.]

of virtue and merit for all ages, while the latter's deed is for the sake of only one child and would be of temporary influence. There is no difference in morality between the two as far as offering their lives goes. Howard's saving of countless people and his legacy to countless future generations derived from his enlarging private virtue with the aid of wisdom; by this means he was able to widen his range of moral influence. Our humane person, the Confucian gentleman, possesses private virtue but is poor in public virtue and public knowledge, while Howard possessed all of them.

Private virtue may be likened to raw ore, and wisdom to craftsmanship. If the ore is not worked on, the iron will be nothing but a heavy, hard object. But when even a little craftsmanship is added, you can produce a hammer or a pot. If it is a little more skillfully wrought, it can become a knife or a saw. If it is even more skillfully worked on, and on a large scale, it can be made into a steam engine, while on a tiny scale it can become the mainspring of a watch. When people compare a big pot and a steam engine, is there anyone who does not value the steam engine more highly? And why? The reason is not that a big pot, a steam engine, and the raw ore are different materials, but that people value the craftsmanship that has gone into them. Therefore, as far as the raw ore that goes into iron instruments is concerned, the pot, the engine, the hammer, and the knife are all exactly the same, but what determines their relative values is the amount of craftsmanship involved in producing them.

.....

Morality is not something that can be taught externally. It is something attained through interior efforts on the part of the one learning it... Han Yu⁷ wrote his memorial about the bone of Buddha to remonstrate with the emperor, for which act he seemed like a perfectly loyal subject. When he was banished to the provinces, he wrote a poem expressing his loyal zeal, but after that he wrote a letter to influential quarters in the capital, pleading to be recalled. He was the first of the pseudo-gentlemen. Neither Japan, China, or the West has been lacking in people like Han Yu. Ingratiating flattery and greed for money can be discovered even in one who expounds the Confucian *Analects*. People out to deceive the ignorant, intimidate the weak, or grasp simultaneously for fame and profits can be found even among those westerners who preach Christian doctrine. All such base characters take advantage of the fact that there are no concrete norms by which to test another's real moral sincerity. They are just

7. [Han Yu (768–824), a celebrated literary figure in Tang China, recommended burning Daoist and Buddhist books because they encouraged quietism and a distance from social affairs. His *Memorial to Buddhism* was written to protest Emperor Wuzong's reverence for a bone from the finger of the Buddha.]

illicit traffickers in morality for their own selfish ends, and proof that people cannot be regulated by morality alone.

Intelligence is not like this. The world has an abundance of intelligence; without its having to be taught, people learn it from one another. It transforms people on its own, leading them into its own realm, in a manner not unlike the edification process of morality. But the power of intelligence is not limited to spreading itself only by means of edification. There are concrete methods of acquiring intelligence, and one can clearly see its effects. If the techniques of arithmetic are learned, they can be put to immediate use. When one hears about the principle of producing steam from boiling water, then learns how to make an engine and use steam power, one can produce a steam engine. This engine will be no different in its functioning from Watt's steam engine. This is called the concrete teaching of knowledge. Since the teaching is concrete, there are also concrete norms and measuring devices for testing it.

.....

Present-day teachers of morality say that it is the foundation of all human affairs and the prerequisite for any human enterprise. They say that if one but cultivates personal virtue, there is nothing one will not be able to accomplish. Therefore, morality must be taught and learned before anything else, even at the expense of everything else. For once morality is cultivated, the rest will take care of itself. It is said that a society without moral teaching is unable to see where it is going, like a person without a lantern on a dark night. They add that western civilization is the product of moral teaching, and that the semi-developed civilizations of Asia and the still primitive states of Africa are the way they are entirely because of their respective levels of moral development. Moral teaching is like the temperature and civilization like a thermometer whose reading is an accurate gauge of the level of virtue. Consequently, these teachers of morality lament people's immorality and grieve over their lack of goodness, some proposing that Christianity be introduced into Japan, others advocating the revival of Shinto or Buddhism. Confucians have their solutions; Native Studies scholars have theirs; and the bitter, long-winded arguments among them go on and on. The frantic way in which they bewail the ills of society makes one think a fire or flood were about to ravage our houses. But why all the fuss?

I look at things in an entirely different way. We should not bring up extreme cases and limit our discussion to them. If we set up a complete lack of goodness and morality as our criterion, and think we have to save such people, then of course it will seem we are facing an emergency situation. But applying a remedy only to one faulty area is still far from solving all of society's ills, just as merely living from hand to mouth cannot be called the total economy of human life. If we were to settle discussions by looking at extreme cases, even moral teaching would become powerless. Suppose for a moment we were to make moral

teaching the exclusive basis of civilization, and were to make the people of the whole world read the Christian Bible and do nothing else, then what? Or what if we promoted the Zen idea of “non-teaching,” with the result that everyone in the nation became illiterate? Shall we call people civilized if they can chant the *Kojiki* and the five classics by heart and have learned the feudal virtues, but do not even know how to make a living? Or shall we call people enlightened if they eliminate their desires and emotions and live ascetic lives without any knowledge of the world of human beings?

On roadsides one can see stone images of three monkeys, one covering his eyes, another his mouth, and the third his ears. Representing not-seeing, not-hearing, and not-speaking, they are supposed to symbolize the morality of patient endurance. According to this idea, one’s eyes, mouth, and ears are the vehicles of immorality, as though when heaven creates persons it gives them tools of immorality. But if there is something wrong with one’s eyes, ears, or mouth, then evil can also be performed with the hands and the feet. Therefore, a deaf, dumb, and blind person is still not yet a hundred percent good and it would be advisable to deprive such persons of the use of their four limbs as well. Or maybe the wisest course would be not to create such a useless being at all and to eliminate humankind from the face of the earth altogether. Can we say this is the plan of creation? I, at least, have my doubts. Still, those who contemplate the Christian Bible or adhere to the Zen doctrine of non-teaching or venerate the feudal virtues or eliminate their physical emotions and desires, all have an unwavering faith in moral teachings. Now, there is no reason to condemn as evil those people who have an unwavering faith in a teaching, no matter how ignorant they may be. To castigate their ignorance has to do with their intelligence and has nothing to do with their morality. In conclusion, then, if we wish to argue in terms of extremes, as far as moral teaching is concerned anybody who lacks private virtue is called an evil person, and the goal of moral teaching consists entirely in reducing the number of evil people in the world. Nevertheless, if we make a wide and careful study of the workings of the human heart and accurately observe their effects, we do have grounds for refusing to equate civilization with reducing the number of evil people in the world....

Of course, in the last analysis, Shinto, Buddhism, Confucianism, and even Christianity are not so oppressive by nature. Yet if we look at the ways they are transmitted to the general public or how people feel when they are subjected to their teachings, we see that this abuse is inevitable. One might describe this phenomenon as similar to a man with an extremely acidic stomach: whatever he eats or drinks all turns acidic, and he cannot benefit from the food. There is nothing wrong with the food or the drink; he just has a chronic condition. Scholars should reflect on this problem of the harm that comes from ways of teaching.

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Now, it would be a great mistake to govern a society on the basis of something accidental. When one is born into this world, one cannot claim that taking care of one's own affairs is enough; one's duty as a human being does not end there. I would like to ask all virtuous gentlemen: Where do the daily necessities of life come from? Even though the blessings of the Lord on high are great indeed, clothes do not grow in the mountains and food does not rain down from heaven. And as civilization progresses, its benefits do not stop at food and clothing. The blessings of the steam engine, the telegraph, government, business—where do they come from? They are all the gifts of intelligence. The idea that all persons have equal rights does not mean that we can just sit back and receive the gifts of others. If gentlemen of virtue were merely hanging like bottle-gourds without having to eat, their words might fit their actions, but if they take food, wear clothes, enjoy the benefits of steam and the telegraph, and share in the conveniences of government and business, they have to bear their share of responsibilities, too. Further, even though one's physical needs are fully satisfied and one is fully virtuous in private life, there is no reason to be satisfied with stopping there. Such satisfaction and perfect virtue may suffice for present-day civilization, but they certainly have not reached the peak of their potential. The development of the human spirit knows no limits and its creative capacities have no fixed boundaries. People must fathom the fixed principles of things with their infinite spirit, so that all the things of heaven and earth, both concrete and abstract, can be comprehended within this human spirit. At that stage of human history, it will be unnecessary to distinguish between knowledge and virtue and to fight over their respective spheres. On that day humans and God will stand side by side, as it were. That day will surely come for some future generation.

[DAD, GCH]

IN PRAISE OF METHODIC DOUBT

FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1876, 202–10 (93–100)

There is much that is false in the world of belief, and much that is true in the world of doubt. We need only consider how stupid people believe in other people's words, books, novels, rumors, the gods and Buddha, and fortune-tellers. On the advice of a masseur they use grasses and herbs to cure a parent's mortal illness. At the time of the marriage negotiations over their daughter, they believe a fortune-teller's analysis of the "physiognomy" of a suitor's house, and thus lose a good husband. Their faith in Amida prompts them to intone

the *'nenbutsu'* instead of calling a doctor when they have a high fever. Because of their faith in *'Fudō Myōō'* they die after a twenty-one-day fasting. In these cases, the quantity of truth is small indeed. But where truth is sparse, falsity cannot help being proportionately great. For even though these people believe in facts, they are believing in false facts. Hence I say that there is much that is false in the world of belief.

The progress of civilization lies in seeking the truth both in the area of physical facts and in the spiritual affairs of people. The reason for the West's present high level of civilization is that in every instance they proceeded from some point of doubt. Galileo discovered that the earth is a planet by doubting the old theories of astronomy. Galvani discovered electricity in animals when he doubted that frogs' legs are the cause of convulsions. Newton discovered the principle of gravity when he saw an apple falling from a tree. Watt entertained doubts concerning the properties of steam when he was experimenting with a boiling kettle. In all these cases, the truth was attained by following the road of doubt.

Let me now turn to human progress, leaving behind the investigations for natural laws. It was Thomas Clarkson who put an end to a source of great social misery for later generations by calling into question the justice of the law of buying slaves. It was Martin Luther who reformed the Christian faith through doubting the false teachings of the Roman religion. The French began the French Revolution by calling into question the authority of the *ancien régime*. The American colonists achieved their independence by calling into question the laws set up over them by England.

Even today the reason that the great persons of the West lead people along the path to higher civilization is that their sole purpose is to refute the once firm and irrefutable theories of the ancients, and to entertain doubts concerning practices about which common sense had never doubted before. For example, although it seems to be an almost natural human division of labor that the man should work outside the house and the woman keep order within it, John Stuart Mill wrote a book on women that set out to destroy this custom, which had been fixed and immovable since time immemorial. Many English economists advocate the doctrine of *laissez faire*, and its adherents believe it to be a universal law of economics. But American scholars advocate protective tariff laws. In fact, each country proposes its own economic theory. Every theory gives rise to a countertheory and disputes between rival theories never cease. In contrast to this ferment of ideas, the peoples of Asia have uncritically believed in foolish teachings, been bewitched by the gods and Buddhas, or listened to the sayings of the so-called sages. They have not come under their influence only temporarily; they have been unable to escape from these ideas for thousands of generations. The quality of their deeds, the depths of their courage of mind and

will be incomparably less than that of the peoples of the West. Pursuing the truth when there is a conflict of different opinions is like sailing a boat against the wind. The boat's course must tack to the right and to the left. The high waves and strong winds may force it to sail through several hundred miles of water, even through the direct route would come to no more than three to five miles. It is also possible to sail with a following breeze, but this is never so in human affairs. The course to the truth lies only through a zigzag course through the disputations of rival theories. These theories all arise from doubt. Hence I have said that there is much truth in the world of doubt.

Yet if it is true that we should not lightly believe things, we should also not doubt things uncritically. One must have insight into when to believe and when to remain skeptical. The essence of learning may lie in clarifying this kind of discernment. Even in Japan, the sudden change in men's minds since the opening of our ports, the reforms in government, the overthrow of the nobility, the development of the school system, publication of newspapers, the establishment of new railroads, telegraph, military conscription, industries, etc.—the reform of a hundred practices in a very short period of time—can all be said to have been the accomplishment of those who endeavored to effect these changes after calling into doubt customs that had been observed since time immemorial. Still, ancient customs were called into question only after Japan had been opened to intercourse with the West. The reformers saw the superiority of western civilization, and tried to imitate it. They were not motivated by self-originated doubt. They only believe in the new through the same faith with which they once believed in the old. The focus of past beliefs has only been redirected toward the modern West, but we have no guarantee that a truly critical choice has been made concerning present beliefs and doubts. I regret, of course, that due to my as yet shallow learning and limited experience I cannot enumerate in each and every case the rightness or wrongness of what is being accepted and discarded. But surveying the general trend of the changes in human life, it can be clearly shown that human sentiment tends to ride along with the times. Conservatives and liberals all go to extremes; neither side knows how far to go in believing or questioning the old and the new.

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If four hundred years ago a Saint Shinran had been born in the West and a Martin Luther in Japan, and if that Shinran had reformed the Buddhism practiced in the West and spread the True Pure Land teaching, while that Luther opposed the Roman religion of Japan and founded Protestantism, the reformers would certainly change their views. They would say that the great purpose of religion lies not in killing but in the salvation of all sentient beings; and to the extent that this purpose is misunderstood, the rest of the teachings are not worthy of consideration. In the West, they would go on, Shinran embodied

this principle. He slept in the fields with a stone for a pillow. At great cost and suffering he devoted a lifetime of labor to reform his country's religion, and so wide did his evangelism reach that today it is the religious faith of the majority of its people. And after Shinran's death, the fact that his disciples neither murdered men of other faiths nor were murdered themselves for religious reasons can be said entirely to be due to the merits of his teaching. But reflect, they would say, on how Luther came forward to challenge the old teachings of Rome. The Catholics did not easily succumb to his attack. The old and new teachings fought each other tooth and claw, like a tiger and a wolf. After Luther's death, the number of Japanese citizens killed and the amount of the nation's resources wasted in the name of religion and warfare aimed at destroying other nations are too high to be recorded with the pen or spoken in words. So great were the sufferings the barbarous Japanese, with their penchant for slaughter, visited on the souls of their fellow humans as a result of the teachings of "universal salvation" and "love of one's enemies." As for the fruits of these efforts, Luther's Protestantism did not succeed in converting even half of the people of Japan. This is how the proponents of reform would view the differences between the religions of East and West!

I myself have entertained doubts about these things for a long time. But I still am not sure I have grasped the real causes of the great differences between the religions of East and West. When I ponder the matter privately, the following kind of questions come to my mind. Although Christianity preached in Japan and Buddhism in the West are similar in nature, is it that they promote a spirit of killing when they are practiced in a barbarous land but create a spirit of tolerance in an enlightened country? Or do they differ in essence from the start? Or did Luther, the founder of the Japanese Reformation, and Shinran of the West differ greatly in the attainments of their virtue? The proponents of reform would say that these questions are not to be recklessly and superficially decided, but await the judgment of the scholars of future generations.

In terms of the above, our present-day reformers, who dislike the old customs of Japan and believe in the things of the West, cannot be said to have entirely escaped the criticism of having their own superficial beliefs and doubts. They believe in the new with the same blind faith with which they once believed in the old....

As I ponder these questions, a hundred doubts well up in me. It is as if I were now groping for something in the dark. Living in the very midst of these complex and intertwining problems, is it not difficult to compare things eastern and western, to believe how things should be and to raise doubts about it, to accept and reject things with proper discernment? The responsibility for doing so falls today on none other than scholars such as ourselves. We must make every effort. To consider these problems there is nothing better than to study

them. If we read many books, touch upon many of these questions, and take a keen interest in them, without anxiety or prejudice, in order to find the truth, we shall suddenly be able to distinguish the areas of belief and doubt with clarity. Yesterday's beliefs may become tomorrow's doubts, and today's doubts may melt away in tomorrow's sun. Let us, therefore, make every effort as scholars.

[DAD, HU]

THE EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1885, 9–10, 45–6 (11–13, 39–40)

Confucius said, “Whenever there is work to be done, the young will take on its burden; whenever there is wine and food, the old will be the first to enjoy it” [*Analects* 11.8]. Borrowing this saying to describe men and women in Japan, “Whenever there is work to be done, women will take on its burden; whenever there is wine and food, men will be the first to enjoy it.”

Women of our country have no responsibility either inside or outside their homes, and their position is very low. Consequently, their sufferings and pleasures are very small in scale. It has been the custom for hundreds and even thousands of years to make them as feeble as they are, and it is not an easy matter now to lead both their minds and bodies to activity and to vigorous health. There are animated discussions on the education of women. No doubt education will be effective. When taught, women will acquire knowledge and the arts. When the body is exercised, the body will develop. But those attempts will be nothing more than attacking limited areas in a life of confinement and feebleness. The results of these attempts can be surmised even before they are begun.

I once compared the present efforts in schools for the education of women in Japan to caring for a dwarf pine in a pot and hoping it will grow into a big tree. Without doubt, fertilizer is important in a tree's growth. When it is administered in proper measures and moisture and temperature are controlled, the pine will put out branches and leaves in profusion and their green luster will be beautiful. However, that beauty will be limited to the beauty of a potted plant. One can never hope for its growth into the sublimity of a hundred-foot giant. To rectify the sad state of women's ignorance, the use of school instruction and such means will not be in vain. A woman may become well versed in science or in literature, even well informed in law. Such a woman may well compete with men in the classroom, but when she returns home from school, in what position does she find herself?

At home, she owns no property of her own, and in society she cannot hope

for a position of any consequence. The house she lives in is a man's house and the children she brings up are her husband's children. Where would such a person, without property, without authority of any sort, and with no claim on the children she bears, and herself a parasite in a man's house, make use of the knowledge and learning she acquired? Science and literature will be of no use. Even less would her knowledge in law serve her. The normal reaction of the general public is to regard a woman who discusses law and economics as liable to bring misery upon herself.

Knowledge and scholarship deteriorate when unused, just as a machine will rust when left unused and be unfit for operation when the need arises. Highly educated women after their marriage usually appear to be normal housewives with nothing to indicate special ability. This must mean that all the education received at school has faded away during their long confinement in the home. This is an eradication of all the school education by one act of marriage. All the hard work expended at school was not as effective as the care given the pine tree in the pot, because while the pine would preserve its lustrous green for years, the luster of school education does not survive beyond the classroom.

On top of all this, suppose that school education were Confucian or Buddhist, and taught such sayings to the effect that women and tools are irredeemable, or that it is a virtue for women to lack wisdom, or that the five faults that women are liable to and the three obediences⁸ they must observe are proof that women are sinful by birth. Such education is less than useful, for it serves only to oppress women and to beat into them a kind of "modesty" and "reticence," resulting in the deformation of even their physical organs—ears, eyes, nose, and tongue. Yet some educators never realize the results of their training. They have veritably been doing nothing but hindering the healthy development of women's minds and bodies.

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It is an irrefutable fact that men and women do not differ in their body structures and in the workings of their minds, and that they are equal beings. When human beings are called the masters of creation, both men and women are masters of creation. When it is said that without men a nation cannot exist nor a household stand, it should also be declared that without women a nation cannot exist. To the question of which of the two, men or women, should be rated as more important, we know of no reason to say that one is above the other in importance, rank, or nobility.

Confucianism characterizes men as *yang* (positive) and women as *yin* (nega-

8. [The five faults are indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness. The three obediences are obedience to one's father while in his care, obedience to one's husband when married, and obedience to one's son after one's husband's death.]

tive); that is, men are like the heavens and the sun, and women are like the earth and the moon. In other words, one is high and the other is humble. There are many men who take this idea as the absolute rule of nature, but this *yin-yang* theory is the fantasy of the Confucians and has no proof or logic. Its origins go back several thousand years to dark and illiterate ages when men looked around and whenever they thought they recognized pairs of something, one of which seemed to be stronger or more remarkable than the other, they called one *yang* and the other *yin*. For instance, the heavens and the earth looked very much like the ceiling and the floor of a room. One of them was low and trampled on with feet, but the other was high and beyond reach. One was classed *yang* and the other *yin*. The sun and the moon are both round and shining; one is very bright, even hot, while the other is less bright. Therefore, the sun is *yang* and the moon is *yin*. This is the level of the logic behind this theory and we today should regard it as no more than childish nonsense.

This theory simply attached itself to people's minds with not much of a basis. On seeing a pair of similar objects, one somewhat superior to the other, they classified the first in the *yang* category and the other in the *yin* category. Then they would think up ideas to embellish their theories. That was all. Therefore, between men and women, there never existed any such distinctions as *yin* and *yang*. The idea itself being fictional to begin with, there could not have been any actual features to suggest such a theory. But some scholars of the Confucian trend must have felt like belittling women, and for no other reason than their own prejudice, classed women as *yin*. It was a great nuisance on the part of women to have been thus involved in an empty theory which extended to the sun and the moon and heavens and earth, and which had nothing to do with women's relations to men. It was truly a misfortune for women to be thus made victims of the Confucian scholars' ignorance of science.

[KE]

NAKAE Chōmin 中江兆民 (1847–1901)

Nakae Chōmin (Nakae Tokusuke) was a journalist, an advocate of natural rights, free thinker, and politician. From 1862, he began to study “Western Learning” and the French language. As part of a government mission to Europe, he lived in France from 1871 to 1874, during which time he studied law, philosophy, history, and literature. After returning to Japan he opened his own school for French language studies, and undertook a translation of Rousseau’s *Social Contract*. Through articles and editorials for a number of newspapers, Chōmin made an important intellectual contribution to the popular rights movement of the 1870s and early 1880s. In 1887 he published a treatise highly critical of the government, called *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*, which led to his expulsion from Tokyo for two years, but he returned to take an elected post in the House of Representatives. Diagnosed with throat cancer in 1901 and expecting to live only another year and a half, Chōmin produced what are perhaps the clearest statements of his materialist philosophy: *A Year and a Half* and *A Year and a Half, Continued*. He died in that same year. As the following excerpts from that work will show, Chōmin was a confirmed atheist and materialist. He argued against the existence of God and the immortal soul or spirit, presuppositions running throughout much of the idealist philosophy of Europe and America, against which he directed his critique. He reversed the idea of impermanent body and immortal spirit, arguing instead that the “true substance” of the body (the elements by which it is constituted) continue to endure in some form indefinitely, while the spirit, a mere “effect” or epiphenomenon of the body, is extinguished at death.

[RMR]

NO GOD, NO SOUL

NAKAE Chōmin 1901, 233–43, 258–9

When investigating the problems of so-called world philosophy, it is completely impossible to limit our scope to the five-foot human body. Even if such a narrow approach were possible, we would merely produce, without being fully aware of it, a partial view. And it will not do to limit our scope to humanity, nor to the eighteen-layer atmosphere, nor even to the solar system and the celestial bodies.

Naturally, space, time, and the world are each unique. If we consider these concepts, even with a limited imagination, we see that there is no reason to affirm that these things—space, time, world—must have a beginning. Moreover, there is no reason to think that up and down, east and west, have limits. And

yet we limit our scope to the five-foot body, to humanity, to the eighteen-layer atmosphere. We restrict our view to our own interests and aspirations. We focus our inquiries on the animal called the human being, displaying indifference or contempt for other creatures, the birds and beasts, the insects and fish. As a result, we put forward arguments for the existence of God and for the indestructibility of the spirit, for the view that after the body dies, the soul of each person endures. Such views are certainly convenient for this particular animal, that is, for humanity, but they give rise to extremely illogical, extremely unphilosophic nonsense.

While Plato, Plotinus, Descartes, and Leibniz were all great men with broad and deep learning, it is ridiculous that they could write such splendid books and so pontificate boldly, yet when it came to contemplating conditions after their own deaths (which they could not know of), they were concerned only with the benefits of creatures like themselves, that is, human beings, and failed to reflect on the fact that the way of heaven, hell, the belief in one god, the indestructibility of the spirit, and so on are like so much smoke. No, smoke actually exists; they are like bubbles or illusions emerging out of their words. It is no less laughable that a large number of scholars in Europe and America, guided by superstitious beliefs that they absorb together with their mother's milk, beliefs that flow with their blood through their veins, maintain that one has committed a great crime if one says there is no God or no spirit.

Indeed, there have been extremely selfish and atrocious thieves who made mincemeat out of the flesh of others and yet lived long lives, while Yan Hui, the disciple of Confucius said to be practically a sage, suffered an early death. In addition, there are thieving "gentlemen," ones who follow the rules when it suits them, who flourish, while those who obey the rules of justice eke out a humble living and then die in poverty. Confronted by this, many find it convenient to believe that in the next world there will be a court of justice. In particular, for those people whose bodies have come to be afflicted by a great illness, for whom, with each year, each half a year, day by day, month by month, death draws nearer, it is a great consolation to believe that there exists a deeply benevolent and just God, that the soul is immortal, and that after the body is gone, one's unique essence will endure. But if we adopt this viewpoint, how do we address the sublimity of science? What about the qualifications of philosophers who must calmly preserve their commitment to the truth? While I have lived for fifty-five years, read a number of books, and come to understand something of the truth, I unhappily lack the courage to spout the nonsense that God exists and the soul is immortal.

Concerning philosophy, I believe that to be extremely dispassionate, extremely frank, extremely uncompromising, is a philosopher's duty. No, more than this, it is his fundamental qualification. For this reason, I firmly assert that there is no

Buddha, no God, no soul, that is, I assert a simple materialist theory. Without limiting my theory to the five-foot body, or to humanity, or to the eighteen-layer atmosphere, or to the solar system or even to the cosmos, I place the body at the center of time and space (if we can suppose that something with no beginning and no end, with no boundary and no limit has a center), and, without drawing upon religious doctrines and not caring what those before me have said, I merely put forward my own views to make this argument.

The Soul

Let us begin our examination with the soul. What is the soul? That the eye sees, the ear hears, the nose smells, the hand grasps, the legs walk, at first glance truly one must call this wondrous and strange. Yet, what governs these actions? And when it comes to the power of imagination and of memory, these wonders are even more remarkable. We may go further to ask by what power was today's society constructed? By what power have the various disciplines been advanced? By what power have we been able to emerge from barbarism and advance toward civilization? Must we reply that it is the power of the so-called spirit? If this body is in the end merely a mass of flesh, limited to five or six feet and formed from some thirteen or fifteen elements, the miraculous spirit would have to be its master. The body of flesh is thus slave to the spirit.

But to accept such a view as just outlined is the very first step to falling head-long into a great error. Spirit is not the true substance; rather, it is an effect or operation that emanates from this substance. The true substance is the five-foot body. The workings of this five-foot body are the miraculous effect called spirit. For example, it is like coal and flames, or like kindling and fire. Zhuangzi had already discerned the truth of this theory that spirit is an effect of the body, that the body itself is a temporary combination of thirteen or perhaps fifteen elements. With the chemical reduction of the body, that is, with its dissolution or death, the effect of the body (that is, spirit) will be extinguished at the same time. When coal is reduced to ashes and kindling to embers, the flame and ash will at the same time be extinguished. To maintain that spirit continues to exist after the dissolution of the body is absurd in the extreme.

I do not expect that those with a healthy brain, those not poisoned in the slightest by religion and not preoccupied with the conditions one is to experience after death, will understand this idea of an immortal soul. To say that when red pepper is used up a spicy taste remains, or that when a skin drum is torn, the "rum-tum-tum" of the drum will continue to sound, these are hardly the kind of statements that could come from the mouths of philosophers who speculate on the truth. In Europe prior to the seventeenth century, if one asserted the view that there is no God and no soul, one would likely be subjected to severe

punishment of fire and water. This may perhaps explain why few questioned the prevalent views of those days. But today, when we enjoy freedom of speech and are guided by reason, why continue to spout such nonsense?

Thus, the body is the true substance; spirit is the operation or effect of the body. When the body dies, the spirit immediately perishes as well. From the standpoint of humanity, this is a regrettable conclusion. Regrettable though it be, what is to be done if it is true? The aim of philosophy is not convenience, nor is it to console. And if something does not satisfy the demands of inner reason, philosophers, to the extent they are uncompromising and frank, will not say it.

Theologians and philosophers enchanted by a particular doctrine assert, as though calculating the gain of humanity, that the so-called spirit exists within the body. They claim that even if separated from the body, spirit continues to exist independently. Just like a puppeteer manipulating a puppet, spirit acts as the master of the body, and even with the body's dissolution, that is, even though the body dies, this spirit supposedly continues to exist. But if this is the case, then where does the spirit reside while in the body? Is it in the heart, in the brain, or perhaps in the abdomen? Isn't this kind of speculation a matter of sheer imagination? And wherever we decide the spirit is, because the body's internal organs consist of cells, would we conclude then that spirit is in fact billions of fragments, that spirit takes up a temporary residence within these many cells?

Some say spirit has neither form nor substance. These are truly meaningless words. To say that something is without form means that it is not accessible to our eyes and ears, or even that it refers to things that we can sense but of which we take no notice. Air, for example, has form only to the eyes of science. It has form only under a microscope, but to the naked eye it is truly without form. In general, all formless objects are of this sort. Though they do indeed have substance, it is extremely miniscule. And while we may not feel it ourselves, the truth is that they do indeed have form. Now, if spirit is not like this, if it is purely formless and without substance, shouldn't we call it nothingness? And is it really reasonable to say that nothingness is the master of the body?

Have not all the sciences throughout time been unable to grasp this thing called the "formless"? Even if science could grasp it, the body of flesh would have no way to become aware of it. That is to say, as is the case with light, warmth, and electricity, as science advances more and more, all these things become visible under a microscope, do they not? Perhaps even spirit is the effect of grey-colored brain cells, scattering extremely tiny particles with each operation of the spirit. In establishing a hypothesis concerning an unresolved point of science, it is a matter of course that we try to choose something close to the truth. In regard to spirit, we may hypothesize that the nervous system within the body merges particles together such that different particles are attracted to

one another and similar particles are repelled. With this, the operation of sight, hearing, smelling, tasting, and also of memory, sensing, thinking, and decision-making is triggered. Every time this happens, it is like drops of water dispersed about a waterfall.

And if we hypothesize that we may be able to observe these extremely tiny particles, there is no reason to view this as contrary to reason or to think it will necessarily offend anyone. On the contrary, is it not truly absurd to argue that spirit, as pure nothingness, should not be understood as a collection of particles and that it has no form or substance, and yet nevertheless acts as the master of the entire body and regulates all its operations? Is not this the quality that people should find offensive?

The Destructibility of the Spirit

Let us consider reproduction and the “great remainder theorem.” All living things leave behind descendants after their deaths, passing on a part of their body and spirit (which emanates from the body) to their descendants. The offspring is an offshoot, a portion of the body of the parent, so that although the parent dies, the child remains and thereby satisfies the mathematical principle of the remainder theorem.

Take the silkworm moth as an example. Does it not die immediately after laying its eggs? Is it reasonable to assume that the eggs receive both the body and spirit of the parent moth and that, once these newly born moths die, only their bodies perish while their spirits continue to exist independently? Let us suppose that the fourth son of Mr. Li and the third son of Mr. Zhang, that is, two average people, each leave behind a child. If we assume that after they die their souls are not destroyed but continue on in their own independent existence, then the population of the land of souls will grow exponentially. It will grow from a billion, to ten billion, to one hundred billion, to a trillion, to ten trillion—it will infinitely multiply as none of the inhabitants of this country will perish. Can we really say that this is in accord with the mathematical principle of the remainder theorem?

All living things, even the grass and the trees, are no different from humans and animals in that all have ancestors of a sort who had descendents and thus, in this sense at least, have not truly perished. One might say, therefore, that so long as one has offspring one has not truly perished. But then to claim on top of this that one continues to exist in the form of spirit is entirely too arbitrary—and extremely unphilosophical. If such a statement were to come from a rustic, half-dead old woman, it would evoke little comment, but for those who pride themselves on being philosophers to spout something as extremely unphilosophical as this is shameful.

The Indestructibility of the Body

Thus the body is the true substance. Spirit is the operation or effect of the body. For this very reason, should the body stop breathing and die, its effects—sight, hearing, speech, movement—would immediately cease as well. In short, when the body dies, spirit is extinguished, just as the fire goes out when the kindling is consumed. Through such reasoning, immortality or indestructibility is not the quality that spirit possesses; rather, it is the quality of the body. This is because the body consists of many elements; death is merely the first step of the dissolution of these elements. And yet, though the elements break apart, they are not destroyed. Once the body breaks apart and begins to decompose, the vaporous elements within it mingle with the air while liquids and solids get mixed into the earth.

In short, though each element separates from the others, each continues to exist somewhere in the world. Some are absorbed into the air, others into the roots of grasses and trees. Not only are they not destroyed, they in fact will go on to serve some other purpose as part of an endless cycle.

Therefore, the elements (that is, the substance of the body) neither decay nor come to be destroyed, while spirit, the body's effect, decays and perishes without a trace remaining. This is obvious and clear to reason. If the taiko drum is torn, the “toh-toh” sound dies out. If the bell is broken, its chime will cease. And yet, the broken drum and bell, no matter what form they take afterward, even if broken into pieces, continue to exist somewhere. No portion of them, however small, has been destroyed. This is the difference between the substance of an object and its operation or effect....

While the souls of ‘Shakyamuni’ and Jesus have long since perished, horse manure on the road, like all substances in the world, is eternal. Although the soul of Sugawara no Michizane⁹ has perished, the leaves and branches of the plum tree that he loved, broken down into tens of millions of pieces, continue to exist somewhere in the world; their elements do not decay nor do they perish.

I do not know how noble, miraculous, or mysterious the term “immortality” rings in the hearts of the religious, but in the hearts of calm-minded philosophers, this is one of the qualities of all things of substance. Among things of substance, all are immortal. The soul of nothingness, however, which is equal to true emptiness, is not immortal. What is more, it never existed to begin with. It is merely an illusion created by the language of spiritualistic philosophers....

9. [Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), a scholar and poet of the imperial court, died in exile but his ghost was believed to have returned to revenge his unjust treatment.]

Synopsis

Based upon the above discussion, we can conclude that spirit is not indestructible, while the body—the true substance of spirit formed through the combination of a number of elements that eventually break apart—is indestructible.

For example, consider the death of Napoleon or of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Of the elements their bodies comprised, some of those in a vaporous form may have dispersed into the air to be ingested by birds. Solid elements may have dissolved into the water in the earth and may have been absorbed by carrots and radishes. They may perhaps have entered into someone's stomach. Yet, though these elements in this way may move about and take on different forms, they in no way disappear. For this reason, when a person dies and the five-foot body begins to break apart, the elements scatter, but all are indestructible. Therefore, if a person dies, there is no need to hope for heaven and no need to fear hell. There should be no expectation that one will once again be born into this world and receive a human body. In this world, our second generation is our children.

Despite the arguments for many gods or for just one, there is no reason to think that any God exists. All things in this world are without beginning and without end.... As the effect of the coalescence and dissolution of elements, object A changes into object B, then into object C and then object D, without end and without any intervention on the part of the mysterious entity called God. In this way, the great history of this world unfolds.

[RMR]

INOUE Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855–1944)

Inoue Tetsujirō was one of the most important figures in the formation of philosophy as an academic discipline in Japan. His concern with the confusion surrounding philosophical concepts and categories in the Meiji period prompted him to compile several dictionaries of philosophy. He studied in Germany from 1884 to 1890 under Eduard von Hartmann, after which he assumed a post at Tokyo University, which he held until retirement in 1923. During those years he was active in philosophical discussions, served as president of the Philosophical Society, and exerted a powerful role as ideologue for the Meiji government.

He collaborated with Ariga Nagao on *Lectures in Western Philosophy*, the first major work to introduce western philosophy to Japan, and later on the *Philosophical Dictionary*, also the first of its kind. Always more sympathetic to Buddhism and Confucianism, in 1893 he published a book entitled *Collision between Religion and Education*, in which he denounced Christianity as incompatible with the Japanese nation and modern science, triggering a wide debate on religion in Japan. Later he advocated the religion of ethics, based on his understanding of Confucian values. Known more for his pioneering work in establishing the history of Japanese Confucian thought as philosophy, on a few occasions Inoue also tried to locate his own position, the “theory of phenomena as reality,” within the larger world of philosophy East and West as he understood it. One of several attempts in the Meiji period to overcome the duality of subject and object, it shows Inoue’s pioneering concern with the definition, scope, and method of philosophy.

[GCG]

FRAGMENTS OF A WORLDVIEW

INOUE Tetsujirō 1894, 489–512

The first thing to be said of the nature of philosophy is that it differs considerably from science. There are many examples to illustrate this, but let me begin by noting that philosophy investigates the general and as such is really different from those specialized fields that study only one small area. It may seem that philosophy is not a specialized field of study, but in the sense that there is no other discipline that investigates the general in a similar way, it is indeed a specialized discipline after all... Philosophy is also a discipline that aims at acquiring spiritual peace, which again distinguishes it from science. In particular fields like chemistry, physics, algebra, and geometry, attaining spiritual peace is not an objective; in philosophy, it constitutes the loftiest ideal. To

achieve spiritual peace, it is necessary to have a worldview, which is why the kind of inquiry called “philosophy” first came into existence....

The study of philosophy can be divided roughly into method, which is called “logic,” and contents, which can be divided into three areas: the true, the good, and the beautiful. Truth has to do with knowledge, the good with the will, and the beautiful with feelings and emotions. The inquiry into the truth gave rise to the domain of “pure philosophy,” also known as “theoretical philosophy.” This field can be further divided according to whether it studies mind, matter, or reality as such. Philosophy that studies the good can be divided into “ethics” and “political philosophy.” The field that studies the beautiful is called “aesthetics.” These three fields can together be called “practical philosophy,” in contrast to the theoretical philosophy just mentioned. It is impossible, however, to construct anything like a worldview without theoretical philosophy. There have, of course, been many attempts to attain spiritual peace by relying only on either the good, the true, or the beautiful. This can be seen in many philosophers who only relied on the intellect to attain spiritual peace, in religionists who relied only on the will, and in many poets and the like, who relied only on the emotions to attain peace of mind. But my concern here is with pure philosophy.

There is a basic problem that only pure or theoretical philosophy deals with, and traditionally there have been two totally opposite theories about it, one claiming that we cannot attain the truth, and the other that we can. The former is called “skepticism” and the latter includes all other philosophical positions. These latter can be further divided into two large groups: the *subjectivist* school and the *realist* school. If we suppose truth to be completely unattainable, pure philosophy would be impossible and only opinion would remain. It would also be impossible to construct a worldview. Without entering into this discussion here, suffice it to say that I think that truth can indeed be attained.

Philosophies holding that truth is attainable can be divided into subjectivism and realism.... The essential point on which they differ lies finally in their conception of the objective world. Realism sees the objective world as actually existing, as something different from subjectivity and existing outside the subject, and as a substance that provides us with various impressions.... The opposing position is that the objective is no different from the subjective, indeed that it is a product of the subject and originates in it, so that outside of the subject there is nothing that can be called an object. Only the subject really exists. This position is called monism, or alternatively, subjectivism.

Passing over the varieties of subjectivism, we may note two main types of realism. The first we may call “phenomena-as-reality theory.” This claims that phenomena exist as objects outside the subject and as such constitute reality. There is no independent reality outside the phenomena. A second type of realism may be called *transcendental realism*. It argues that various phenomena

exist in the objective world as objects for our knowledge but do not belong to reality. True reality, on this account, exists independently of and beyond those phenomena. This first type sees phenomena and true reality as the same, whereas the second does not. This distinction is clear enough, but, in fact, within phenomena-as-reality theory there are two additional branches. The first of these says that only the phenomena exist, and that there is nothing distinguishable from the phenomena that can be called reality. This position is similar to experimentalism. For the second branch, although it is possible to distinguish phenomena from reality on a theoretical level, the two are, in fact, inseparable and of the same substance, a unity in duality. Take, for example, a tool and the material of which it is made. If you are referring to the tool you do not need initially to talk about the material, even though all tools are made from materials so that the material *is* the tool and the tool *is* the material. In this sense phenomenon is reality.

Now these two positions should not be confused. I am assuming the second of them, phenomena-as-reality theory, rather than transcendental realism. The difference between phenomena-as-reality theory and subjectivism should be more or less clear from the foregoing, but to explain a bit more in detail, for phenomena-as-reality theory, the object of my knowledge is nothing other than the entirety of phenomena that make up the objective world. The objective world is different from my knowledge, exists objectively, and provides me with various sorts of impressions. In contrast, subjectivism claims that there is nothing outside of my subjective phenomena....

Phenomena-as-reality theory is also not to be confused with transcendental realism, which typically holds that a reality exists apart from the phenomena and is the origin of phenomena, whereas the phenomena themselves do not truly exist but are only appearances of this transcendental reality. Herbert Spencer's philosophy also belongs to this position. In contrast, phenomena-as-reality theory holds that all phenomena are at the same time phenomena *and* reality. There is no reality outside and separate from phenomena.... What I mean is that "objective phenomena" is a name we give from the point at which these phenomena present themselves to us, but that we cannot say if this is what they are really like apart from our sense perception of them. For example, the variety of colors appears to us simply as colors, but objectively there is no variety of colors but only movements of light. What appear to us as colors are only the different intensities of the movement of light.... Where there are phenomena, there, too, is true reality; there is no separating the two....

There is a form of subjectivism known as *idealism*. Not all subjectivism is of this sort, but the history of philosophy shows a tendency in that direction. Typically idealism comes down to saying that the objective world is produced by me, is a product of the subject, and eventually denies the existence of an

objective world. The objective does not exist in reality; only mind or spirit does. Up until now such a worldview has appeared at least three times, each in a different place. In Greece, the tendency towards idealism began with Parmenides and was brought to completion by Plato. In Germany, it was introduced by Kant and carried to an extreme by Hegel. In India, the idealist idea first appeared in the Upanishads and was elaborated in the Vedānta....

To illustrate where such idealism leads, imagine a coach traveling from east to west. If you want to observe it, you have to follow the course the coach is taking; you cannot do the opposite and try observing it from the west moving east. In other words, necessary causal relationships are objective. Were they totally subjective, as idealism would have it, one would be free to observe the coach from either direction. Space, time, and causality precede us and exist objectively, even if in knowledge they are a posteriori, acquired through experience. The ideas of space, time, and causality do not exist a priori in the brain. They are results of our accumulated experience, but only because prior to that experience they exist objectively.

.....

The subjectivist and idealist worldviews, then, are fundamentally unsound. Realism, and in particular phenomena-as-reality theory, is a sound and certain worldview. Still, there are any number of schools within realism and even some who wrongly conflate it with materialism. Although materialism argues for the unity of subject and object, it is a form of realism insofar as it assumes the real existence of the object. But one needs to take care: realism is not necessarily materialism. Materialists can never explain the world, because time and space and the like cannot be material... and attempts to explain subjective phenomena and especially knowledge, which have no extension, cannot be very successful from the standpoint of materialism....

Therefore, the position I am taking cannot be materialist, but neither can it be idealist. Expanding on this would take us to many other subjects, but let us leave it at saying that I am neither materialist nor subjectivist, and monism is just monism.

Nor do I wish my position to be confused with evolutionary theory. Evolutionary theory is, of course, one form of realism.... But we have to say that evolutionary theory is not sufficient to construct a worldview. This is because evolutionary theory begins with assuming fundamental existence without explaining it. It does not pay close attention to what matter actually is, but assumes that matter as such is self-evident. It restricts itself to studying the branches, unlike philosophy which does not take the roots for granted.... In evolutionary theory, if we ask what evolves, the answer is: the objective phenomena. If one would ask what these objective phenomena are, the evolutionary theorists would answer “matter,” but if one would further ask what matter

is, the answer would amount to nothing more than that matter is matter. It is, therefore, a field that stops at the surface of things without penetrating to the subtler and more profound levels. The field of pure philosophy cannot find satisfaction in taking for granted matter with extension and only investigating its phenomena, which is little more than natural science. Naturally, doubts will arise as to whether it is possible or not to study matter more profoundly than what we usually understand it to be, or indeed whether we can understand matter at all. This is where we enter the realm of pure philosophy, and there is no way to know if we can investigate such questions unless we try.... Realism and evolutionary theory are not, therefore, in opposition to each other, but realism occupies a larger domain than evolutionary theory....

That realism is the most rational worldview is witnessed in the fact that its interpretation of truth is free of contradiction. Realism says that truth can be attained. Too many scholars have researched extensively the question of what “truth” is to go into detail here, but one thing seems clear from where I stand: truth is a correspondence between subject and object, a correspondence between concepts that I have received through experience and the relations between phenomena in the objective world. From the standpoint of idealism, the question of what truth is will be answered simply by saying that it is impossible to establish any truth beyond what *I think* the truth to be. There is no standard by which to determine whether this truth is really the truth or not. In the end, there is nothing outside my thought. But it cannot be that the truth is merely what I think, and therefore the idealist worldview always ends in conflict with the experienced reality of the objective world.

This can be seen very clearly in the history of philosophy. All knowledge I have is acquired through experience. My philosophical position does not allow for any other kind of knowledge. But experience is experience of the specific, and out of these specific experiences are generated representations. Through our inner functions, these representations are combined and abstracted, allowing for concepts to be formed. The result is knowledge. Since these concepts were originally formed from experience of the world, in order to determine whether they are correct or not, there is no other way than to verify them against the phenomena of the objective world. Suppose you experience a multitude of specific stars and form the concept of “star.” There is no way for you to verify this concept except by comparing it to objectively existing stars. My philosophical position leaves no room at all for anything like a priori ideas or a priori knowledge, but I will not enter into this question any further here.

There are basically three ways of thinking about the application of knowledge acquired through experience. The first argues that such knowledge can only be applied to what has already been experienced and to nothing else. The second position claims that knowledge acquired in experience can be applied not only

to what has already been experienced but to the realm of what *has not yet* been but *can* be experienced. The third view would argue that knowledge acquired in experience can also be applied to what cannot be experienced, transcending the limits of experience.

This is a very difficult problem, but we at least can say for certain that the first option is not viable. What has been experienced does not remain exactly the way it was experienced; it changes with time, just as all phenomena are always changing, not only in terms of time and place, but also in terms of content, and indeed remain the same only for a short while. To allow knowledge acquired in experience to refer only to what has been experienced would inhibit any certain knowledge. This is how a skeptic might reason, arguing that it is totally impossible to attain certain truth and that therefore there is no truth. But any kind of skepticism is self-defeating in the face of the self-evidence of mathematical units. No matter how much one may doubt the certainty of human knowledge, there is no denying a fact like two and two are four. Nor for that matter can any brand of skeptics deny the reality of their own existence. From the outset, skepticism presupposes knowledge. Saying that all knowledge is uncertain is to take one's own knowledge as the standard of what constitutes knowledge. In that case, skepticism ends up assuming knowledge all the same and claiming that it is certain and correct. In this case that would mean that nothing is true except the truth that the skeptic himself asserts.

I adopt the second position regarding the application of knowledge to the realm of experience or the scope of what we are able to experience. Even if we have not experienced it, we can apply the results of the multitude of experience that we have accumulated to that which we have not yet experienced. Our knowledge, laws of reason, and truths, are all practical applications of the results of past experience. We do not doubt laws of reason; we do not doubt that two plus two make four. This is not something that can be proved completely, but neither is it something that can be doubted from the start. Every time you add two and two, you end up with the same result. We do not think of it as *probably* true, but accept it as certain knowledge. Similarly, we do not doubt that all humans are mortal or that all phenomena are governed by cause and effect. That we consider these things as truth and certain knowledge means we can apply the knowledge acquired through accumulated experience to that part of the realm of experience that we have not yet experienced. Everyone assumes this to be the case. What I mean by "truth," then, is simply a correspondence between subject and object, based on a great deal, if not an unlimited amount of experience, which has never been contradicted or opposed. I mean "laws," like the laws of reason, namely, the permanent coincidence of subject and object. Skepticism would probably say that these are not truths, but that would leave us with no knowledge at all. These laws of reason are what "knowledge" is all about.

I completely disagree with the third option, according to which knowledge can be applied to what cannot be experienced. This transcendental application is fully the same mistake made by people of old. Just as we cannot jump over our own shadow, so we cannot apply the knowledge acquired through experience to a realm beyond experiencing and totally different from what we have experienced, should such a realm exist. We can imagine a lot of things, but that is not knowledge. Imagination is completely different from knowledge.

Someone may object that if this is the case, then perhaps it is not possible to come to universally valid knowledge at all. My answer is that “universally valid knowledge” means nothing other than knowledge that is acquired as a result of countless instances of experience without ever having met with anything to contradict it. Apart from this, there is no universally valid knowledge. To say that this knowledge is absolute depends on what one means by “absolute.” Even if this knowledge is relative in relation to what lies beyond it, within the realm of experience it is absolute. In the world of experience, “two plus two equal four” must be called absolutely true. If, however, we take this as something entirely different from our world of experience, then it could no longer be called universally valid knowledge. We might, for example, imagine a world in a solar system far removed from earth and where two and two make four there as well. This clearly transcends our world experience, which means that we can neither affirm nor deny anything about it. We simply do not know.

Should the time come that we can discuss this question from such a viewpoint, we would no longer have any absolute knowledge. But it is safe to say that we will never be in a position to do so. We can, therefore, conclude that something is absolute knowledge if, in our world of experience, we have yet to encounter anything that goes against it, and if it is impossible to imagine encountering anything to contradict it. Once again, much depends on what is meant by “absolute.” If you take it in the sense of transcendental realism, then there is no absolute truth. If you mean it in an empirical sense, then there is absolute truth.

In other words, from the point of view of realism, this world is not the product of the subject, and the world is not the illusion the Vedānta says it is. It is not the case that the world does not exist or that what exists is only mind or something like it. There exists an objective reality outside and apart from the mind, a reality that provides us with a variety of impressions. Vedānta philosophers give the example of a rope lying on the ground that is mistaken at first for a snake until one realizes that it is only a rope. This, they claim, is similar to what happens when one realizes that the world is a kind of dream. When I die, I awaken to the fact that what I thought to be the world of truth, was like a dream, an illusion. Or even before death, the eyes of one who achieves enlightenment are opened to the illusion. From the standpoint of realism, the

comparison is mistaken. What I mean by “truth” is limited to what is governed by causality. Whatever completely eludes the law of causality cannot be called truth. All the phenomena of the objective world are ruled by the law of cause and effect stretching back infinitely in time and into the future without end. Only this can be called truth; nothing else deserves the name. To return to the example of the rope, recognizing in an instant the delusion of thinking the rope to be a snake is to see that there is something that does not match the law of causality. At first glance I thought it to be a snake, but if the cause of what I saw had been a “snake,” it would function like a snake and be able to move or bite. But after watching it for a time I realize that it is not moving and does not bite, which makes me realize that it is not a snake. In other words, I discover a discrepancy in the relation between cause and effect and hence recognize my mistake. The law of causality, stretching endlessly back into the past and forward into the future, governs this world. Should the law of causality not govern the world, and that which we take for truth turn out to be an illusion, then eventually we would have to accept an extreme form of idealism like Vedānta. Northern Buddhism, Vedānta, and other idealisms of the sort are worldviews shaped by the mistakes of the ancients. Realism seems to me the only certain and sound worldview for us today.

[GCG]

INOUE Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919)

Inoue Enryō was probably the most influential and prolific Buddhist theorist of the Meiji period. He was expected to become a priest in the True 'Pure Land' sect of Buddhism, but after studying philosophy in Tokyo, decided to go his own way. He traveled widely throughout Japan and its colonies, delivering thousands of lectures in village and town halls, and journeyed around the world three times. Although a philosopher by profession, he is widely remembered for his multivolume work on supernatural phenomena, *A Study of Ghosts and Phantoms*.

The selections that follow are taken from Enryō's lectures and show his simple and straightforward manner of exposition, if not a certain naiveté in his understanding of philosophical problems. They also give good insight into the problems Meiji philosophers were grappling with. As such he was a stimulus to Nishida Kitarō and is often credited for being a precursor of Kyoto School philosophy.

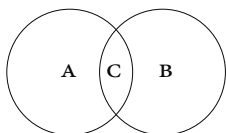
Writing in an age when Buddhism was under heavy criticism, Enryō became an ardent defender of a modernized and philosophical Buddhism. He was concerned with the structural distinctions among religion, philosophy, and science, as well as with the place that Buddhism should take in this grand modern reclassification of thought. These questions motivated him to formulate a "Buddhist philosophy." In his masterful three-volume *Revitalization of Buddhism*, he reinterpreted Buddhism with western philosophical concepts and presented a dialectical history of Buddhist philosophy, criticizing Christianity and arguing for Buddhism's compatibility with modern science. In order to make philosophy accessible to those who could not afford a higher education, he founded the Institute for Philosophy in 1887, which later developed into Tōyō University. He also sought to create a "philosophical religion" based on Buddhism, for which he erected a Temple of Philosophy in 1904 that people could visit in a parklike setting.

[GCG]

B U D D H I S M A N D P H I L O S O P H Y

INOUE Enryō 1893, 107–113

One of the questions currently facing us is whether Buddhism is a philosophy or a religion. One hears it said that "Buddhism is a religion and not a philosophy," or that "Buddhism is a philosophy, not a religion." But these have both to be seen as biases leaning to one extreme. This is exactly the question I will take up. One part of Buddhism consists of religion, and another part of philosophy; it is a union of philosophy and religion, as the following diagram purports to show.



If we let A stand for philosophy and B for religion, the area that is a union of the two, C, is Buddhism. Thus Buddhism joins philosophy and religion, each of which admits of great variety outside of Buddhism.

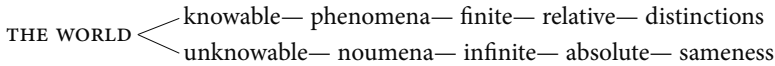
I am not going to treat the part of Buddhism that belongs to religion, but only the part that falls under philosophy. This is what I am referring to as “Buddhist philosophy.” In order to make clear where Buddhism stands in relation to philosophy and religion, I will begin by describing the relation between philosophy and religion. If philosophy and religion are different in name, they must originally be different in nature. I first have to know what the definition of philosophy is, and how religion is explained. But since the definitions of religion and philosophy have not yet been settled, rather than risk a lack of clarity from the start, I believe a shortcut is in order to explain the relationship, the differences, and the similarities between the two. Let us begin with the differences and similarities.

Roughly speaking, the world—in the broadest possible meaning of the word—consists of two parts. Technically these are called the knowable world and the unknowable world.¹⁰ In plain language, they refer respectively to the world that can be known with the human intellect and the world that cannot. In other words, they point to the distinction between philosophy and religion. The knowable world is the world of phenomena; the unknowable world is the world of noumena. Wherever there are phenomena, their noumena must also be present, and vice versa. The knowable world of phenomena emerges from the substance of the unknowable world. In addition, the world of phenomena is finite, while the world of noumena is infinite. The multitude of beings and appearances of the world of phenomena is limited both spatially and temporally; but as the world of noumena is unknowable, it is impossible for the human intellect to put a limit on it.

Further, the finite world is relative, and the infinite world is absolute. This is because the finite world consists of all things that can be compared—moving and still, hard and soft, big and small, high and low, and the like, all existing in opposition—while the infinite world does not have anything to which it can be compared. Finally, the relative world is a world of distinctions, whereas the absolute world is the world of sameness. The multitude of things that make up the relative world, from the sun, moon, and stars above, to the insects, fish, and shellfish below, are all different in form and nature, which accounts for distinctions. But insofar as the world of the absolute exists outside of our intellect, it is impossible to see any distinction in it; it is a sameness without distinction.

10. [Inoue probably took these terms from Herbert Spencer’s *First Principles*. Inoue first studied philosophy under Ernest Fenollosa, who put strong emphasis on Spencer’s thought.]

We may lay this all out in the following diagram:



In Buddhism, phenomena are referred to as the “forms of things” and their substance as “essential nature.” But the countless things that make up the world of phenomena are called ‘*dharma*’ and their substance ‘*tathatā*’. This distinction expresses the relation between religion and philosophy. The two have a different basis: philosophy goes from the knowable to the unknowable and religion begins from the unknowable and proceeds to the knowable. Philosophy admits an unknowable existence, religion attempts to explain it. Thus the two only differ in direction, the one comes from the right, as it were, the other from the left. This is one way of distinguishing between philosophy and religion.

Next, from the viewpoint of psychology, philosophy and religion treat the functions of the ‘mind’ differently. Philosophy is based on the function of the intellect, while religion is based on the functions of the feelings and emotions. And yet the two are interrelated: to some extent emotions and feelings are involved in philosophy and in several aspects the intellect plays a part in religion. Hence the distinction is a rough one. It is well known that in psychology, the human mind is divided broadly into three functions: intellect, emotions, and will.... The intellect, based on thought, reflects deeply, makes inferences, and is active. In contrast, emotions and feelings are passive, receiving outside stimuli and storing them in the mind.

Since the intellect harbors thought, while emotions and feelings engender faith, thought is based on logic and faith is based on intuition. Logic lies at the basis of reason; intuition lies at the basis of revelation. To generalize, we have the following:

philosophy → intellect—thought—logic—reason

religion → emotions and feelings—faith—intuition—revelation

Combining this with what has been said so far, the differences and similarities between philosophy and religion should be clear. To start with, the knowable, which is the object of philosophy, is based on the intellect, which means that what the intellect reaches we call the knowable and what it does not reach, the unknowable. Employing the powers of intellect and rationality, philosophy progresses towards reason and, in the process, infers the existence of the unknowable. Religion, based on the emotions, awakens immediately to the existence of the unknowable. The unknowable is not achieved by seeking it out with the powers of the mind but is sensed spontaneously in the mind itself. This is what we call revelation. In this sense, the differences and similarities between philosophy and religion are only general and are intimately connected.

Philosophy is mainly concerned with the knowable world but also discusses the unknowable world. So how does philosophy, which is based on the intellect, come to know anything outside human intellect? It is, of course, totally impossible to grasp the unknowable by getting inside of it and examining it. But it is possible to begin from the knowable and come to know of the existence of the unknowable as such, and even to infer more or less what it is like. In other words, the more I examine and the deeper I go, the closer I approach the boundaries of the unknowable, but in the end I can only circle around it without ever getting inside of it. I may conjecture that the unknowable is such and such a thing, and I may form a vague notion of it. But this unknowable I am thinking about slips into the knowable before I realize it, so that I have really done nothing more than apply the logic of the knowable to the unknowable. Since ancient times scholars have struggled with this problem, and Buddhism was no exception.

The discussion between Vimalakīrti and the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* is one such example. The Buddha is said to have ordered a few of his disciples to go and inquire into Vimalakīrti's health. In comparison to Vimalakīrti, however, the disciples' knowledge was too shallow to grasp even part of the Buddha's Way, with the result that Vimalakīrti refuted their views one by one and rejected their limited understanding. Then Mañjuśrī himself went and argued that the unknowable nature of things is something that cannot be grasped or thought. Vimalakīrti kept silent and did not answer, whereupon Mañjuśrī realized his error. The unknowable is the unknowable precisely because I cannot know it, so that one who utters "this is the unknowable" does not realize the true unknowable. As Laozi says, "Those who know, speak not; those who speak, know not" [*Laozi* 56]. One who understands the Buddhist Way does not speak of it, and if one does, this means that it is not the true Buddhist way. This was the reason for Vimalakīrti's silence.

Still, I do not think that Vimalakīrti had fully realized the Buddhist Way. Even though he did not express himself in words, in his mind he thought he understood the essence of the Buddhist Way, which made his silence a logical consequence. If I were in his place, I would just fall asleep and enter a state in which there are no thoughts. The true unknowable cannot be uttered with the mouth or pictured in the mind. Before it words perish and thought is cut off. That said, there is no way to avoid thinking with my mind or speaking with my mouth. If I sense a modicum of the unknowable when philosophizing about it and try to go further and penetrate to its core, I only get bounced back. It is in this sense that philosophy and religion are both concerned with the unknowable, but only differ in the way they approach it.

From a psychological standpoint, even though religion is based on faith, the intellect is also involved to some degree. That is to say, those who believe in reli-

gion, do so only if their minds have grasped it in some measure. No matter how uneducated ordinary people are, everyone possesses the intelligence needed to think about what they believe and to understand with their own minds what it is they believe. Scholars, too, even if they have the same religion as ordinary people, appeal to the powers of intellect. First they reason and think it through, and then they acknowledge its truth.

By the same token, philosophy, which puts primacy on these same intellectual powers, must also rely on faith. If a question is raised in philosophy, for example, one investigates it, and if a simply promising theory appears, one has to place faith in it. Insofar as Kant and Hegel believed their theories represented eternal and unchanging truth, their position does not differ at all from faith in religion. Or when a thinker like Hume advances a skepticism that rejects all theories and claims that there is no truth, no matter, and no mind, he thereby believes in the truth that there is no truth and no belief. And this belief is grounded in emotions and feelings. Hence, however distinct religion and philosophy may be on the whole, if you look at the question more closely, you will see that they are intimately linked. Buddhism's connections to both philosophy and religion are especially close. Indeed, the link Buddhism has with philosophy has no parallel as yet among the many other religions.

We still need to explain why both religion and philosophy are to be found in Buddhism. In the teachings of every Buddhist sect there is a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical elements are rational investigations of the principles of each particular sect, and these belong to philosophy. The practical elements explain the methods of belief and the rules for religious training, and as such belong to pure religion. The goal of Buddhism is to reach 'nirvāṇa', the unknowable world of *tathatā*. The reality of nirvāṇa is explained rationally in the various sects. These explanations are a philosophy, but the teachings on how to attain nirvāṇa are a religion.

[GCG]

A VIEW OF THE COSMOS

INOUE Enryō 1917, 236–40

Since ancient times views on the cosmos have included materialism and idealism, monism and dualism, superrationalism and nihilism. Everybody looks at things differently. For a thousand people there are a thousand theories, and almost none of these discussions has been settled. Each theory is no more than a partial view of the cosmos. One can only come to the truth about the cosmos by unifying all these views and integrating them into one. In sum, one can look at all these theories since ancient times as each having some logic and

truth to them. To give an account of these views and point out their strong and weak points is the domain of the history of philosophy, which is not my intent to discuss here.

A few years ago I presented my own view of the cosmos in the hopes that it would receive wide recognition. In a book entitled *A New Design for Philosophy*, I distinguished two perspectives on the cosmos: the surface view and the view from the back. The surface view was further divided into the vertical and horizontal dimensions. This is not the place to go into details, but I will summarize the gist.

To begin with, the vertical dimension is based on the nebular hypothesis, namely that the world began originally from a nebula that differentiated and opened up to bring a multitude of beings and phenomena into existence. This is how the cosmos evolved to where it is today, but in the future it will gradually degenerate and return to its original state of a nebula. The world thus emerges from the nebula and returns to it. I called this the “great change” of the world, but since it submits to a cycle of evolution and degeneration, I also refer to it as “recurring change”. The world evolves from the nebular world, opens up, brings numerous phenomena into existence, then degenerates, closes in on itself, and brings the manifold of phenomena together again. Once this return to the nebula has taken place, the nebula must again open up. Prior to the world as we know it today, there must have been previous worlds coursing through the process of evolution and deterioration, of opening and merging. There was a world before this one and another before that, just as there will be a world after this one, and then another and another. Coming from the past, but without a beginning, moving into the future without an end, a never-ending cycle: such is my idea of the vertical dimension of the surface view of the universe.

This theory of endless cyclical change is a conclusion that follows necessarily from the three great scientific laws of the indestructibility of matter, the conservation of energy, and the law of cause and effect. Unless we are deceived by the law of cause and effect, we can affirm as a matter of logical necessity that after several billion *'kalpas'* an identical world like this one will come into existence. The Japanese empire will emerge again and Inoue Enryō will be reborn. It stands to reason, however, that because of the causes that direct our lives today they will no doubt undergo some measure of change. Thus my death is not a real death but a kind of “long sleep.” And if today’s events have a causal effect on the next world, this means that if I do my best for my country and for other people, this should carry over into that long sleep. As the saying goes, “Do your best and wait to see what heaven has in store for you.” But if it is obvious that the fate in store for us will appear in the next world, we should rephrase it to read: “Do your best and wait for the next world.”

Turning next to the horizontal dimension, we see the opposition between

mind and matter. If we examine matter comprehensively, we end up back at mind, and if we examine mind comprehensively, we end up back at matter. Matter is one extreme and mind the other extreme. We might say that this union of the two extremes is what classical materialism and idealism have demonstrated clearly. The claim that either materialism or idealism is the truth is biased. Viewed from the outside, both are nothing other than two extremes of one and the same thing, two aspects of a single thing. If we apply this same logic to the relationship between the absolute and the relative, we see that a thoroughgoing examination of the relative leads us to the absolute and vice versa. Hence, the relative and the absolute are also two aspects of one and the same thing. I have called this the “theory of mutual containment and inclusion.”

In the past, as today, not a few philosophers have argued for a theory of the existence of one substance with two aspects. But their explanations were like reflections on dead matter and failed to capture the flexible and independent logic of the relationship. These theories were incapable of showing how one can see the back side in the front side and the front side in the back. As with the relation between mind and matter, in which matter is seen within mind and mind within matter, we need to see a single thought as containing the world and a single molecule and including the intellect—in a word, the two mutually include each other. This is why I say that there is one thing with two sides, but that the two sides include each other.

Through this logic of mutual inclusion the contradictions of classical theories can be overcome. One thinks of all the pain and frustration that so many scholars have suffered to locate the problem of philosophy in one or the other and thus resolve the contradiction. If one were only to apply the logic of mutual inclusion, these long-standing doubts would melt away in an instant. I want to claim, therefore, that contradiction as such is truth. In an age when people believed the earth was flat, explaining the universe caused a great deal of consternation. But once we recognized that the earth is a sphere, a host of problems and doubts were resolved. Similarly, attempts today to interpret the universe in terms of plane surfaces and straight lines has given rise to numerous contradictions.

In other words, thinking in terms of straight lines means pursuing the argument that matter is always matter and mind is always mind. Such thinking cannot avoid contradictions. One should know that small and large are extremes; small is one extreme and large the other extreme; that the same holds true of one and many, of difference and sameness, of self and other, and of being and nothingness. People may call these contradictions, but if one realizes that the truth of the cosmos is that, large and small, one and many, sameness and difference, self and other, being and nothingness, all include each other mutually, then one can awaken to the truth that contradictions are not just contradic-

tions. What appears as a contradiction from the general standpoint of philosophy harbors within itself the truth. Thus I have no hesitation of saying that contradiction is truth.

If one requires proof of this logic of mutual inclusion, I think there is ample evidence in the fact that it recapitulates thousands of years of philosophy. Just as materialism is idealism, so idealism is materialism; just as monism is dualism, dualism is monism; just as the theory of the relative is absolute, so the theory of the absolute is relative; the sun and moon rise and set, warm and cold come and go—everything in endless repetition. Completely opposite theories contain each other within themselves. In sum, the history of philosophy East and West, from ancient times up to the present, proves the logic of mutual inclusion. Therefore, each event and each thing, the myriad of phenomena and transformations always and everywhere possess the nature of being free and unrestricted. If I were to give a name to this, I would call it an “*enryō* philosophy,” based on the two sinographs that make up my name: “circle” and “complete.” To adhere to linear logic or geometrical reasoning is to run into all kinds of contradictions, to get entangled in a web of doubts, to become lost in a fog. One can hardly resist from a smile of pity at the sight.

The earth contains a sphere within a flat surface and a flat surface within a sphere. Many people can understand this easily if they take a moment to think about it. So, too, one can understand that although north, south, east, and west are nowhere to be found in the world, obviously these directions exist, and within these directions themselves there are no directions. The flat surface holds a sphere, the sphere contains a flat surface; there are no directions and yet directions appear within it; there are directions, but within them there are no directions. In the same way that one can see how the two contain each other, one should see that in solving all philosophical questions concerning the universe with this logic of mutual inclusion, time-worn problems vanish in an instant like mist before the sun, giving the world of philosophy a clear view to the deep blue sky above.

In Chinese philosophy, the emergence of all phenomena and changes in the universe is explained by the dualism of *yin* and *yang* in which *yang* contains *yin*, and *yin* contains *yang*—clearly nothing other than this same law of mutual inclusion at work. In Buddhism, theories of the nonduality of matter and mind, of the correlativity of being and emptiness, become clear when viewed through this logic of mutual inclusion. Because this theory is unknown in the West, countless debates have arisen in which neither side is given to compromise, and no one has a clue about how to decide which side is right. This is yet another point on which eastern philosophy is one step ahead. Western philosophy offers detailed views based on analytical reasoning, while eastern philosophy offers a more inclusive, intuitionist view of the whole. It is like the difference between

a microscope and a telescope. Or we may compare it to the construction of a house, where eastern philosophy is like the work of the architect and western philosophy like the work of the builders. Thinking out the grand scheme is the strong suit of eastern philosophy, while western philosophy excels in finishing and working out the details.

To know this logic of mutual inclusion is to know that my body includes the nation and our nation contains the world. So, too, it should also be clear that hope for the perfection of the world means doing one's best for the development of the nation, just as hope for the development of the nation means attending to 'cultivation' of one's own person. Never forgetting that one's body contains the nation, and one's nation contains the world, one should push on and work hard. That is my position: a philosophy of action.

[CGC]

THE TEMPLE OF PHILOSOPHY

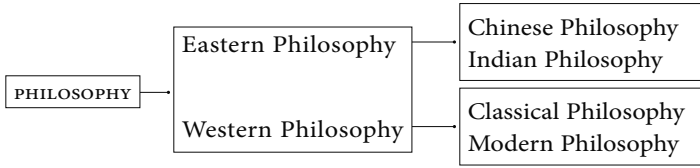
INOUE ENRYŌ 1899, 69–72

The Temple of Philosophy began with the construction of a building in 1904 to commemorate the Ministry of Education's recognition of the Philosophical Institute as a university. In January 1900, upon my retirement from the university, it was designated as my place of retreat. As I was to manage it myself, I wanted it to be not only a place for my own spiritual cultivation, but to be expanded into a place for the spiritual cultivation for others for years to come. It started with the Hall of the Four Sages, to which were added the Pagoda of the Six Wise Men and the Arbor of the Three Teachings. The complex as a whole was named the Temple of Philosophy. Its purpose is not one of religious worship, but simply educational, ethical, and philosophical spiritual cultivation. Accordingly, the sages and wise men who are revered here are all people whose person, character, nature, virtues, words, and deeds are models for me. To stand before them from time to time is conducive to spiritual cultivation.

The Contents of the Temple of Philosophy

The Hall of the Four Sages is a place to worship the four sages: 'Shakyamuni' (Buddha), Confucius, Socrates, and Kant. There are those who ask why Jesus is not included, but the answer should be obvious if one remembers that it is not a temple of religion but a temple of philosophy. Jesus is a great religious figure but not a philosopher. No matter how many different histories of philosophy by different authors you read, you will not find anyone who treats Jesus as a philosopher. In contrast, it is accepted in the East as well as in the West, that Shakyamuni is a religious figure as well as a philosopher.

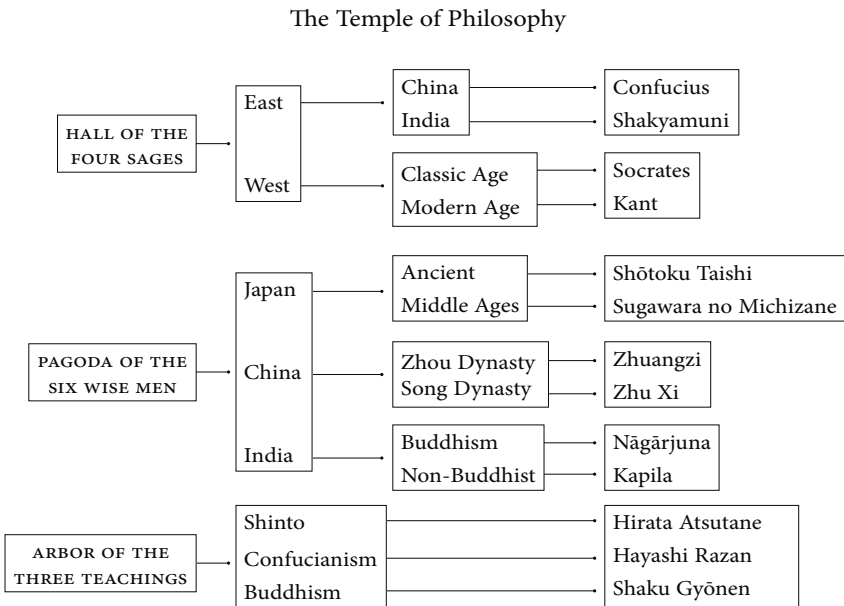
We may divide philosophy in the world of today as follows:



Following this scheme, I took one representative philosopher from each category: for Chinese philosophy, Confucius; for Indian philosophy, Shakyamuni; for classical philosophy, Socrates; and for modern philosophy, Kant. Obviously Jesus does not figure in the list.

Last year it was decided that, in addition to these four sages, the six wise men and the three teachings would also be revered. This was done in response to those people who visited the Temple of Philosophy and said they were disappointed not to find a Japanese sage in the Hall of the Four Sages. The temple was, therefore, further enlarged to accommodate two additional sages each from Japan, China, and India. From our country, one scholar was selected from each of the three teachings: Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. In this way the Pagoda of the Six Wise Men, and the Arbor of the Three Teachings was constructed.

The complete scheme is shown in the following diagram:



The Hall of the Four Sages and the Park

First, the architecture of the Hall of the Four Sages. The Hall has four sides of about five and a half meters in length and four facades. In the center the bases of four pillars are suspended from the ceiling and naturally form a canopy to express the shape of the universe. The four pillars are intended to symbolize the four pillars of heaven. The gold-silver colored glass at the inside is based on ancient legends about the time before heaven and earth were separated, like the unstructured contents of a chicken's egg. The lamp made of red-colored glass suspended from the middle of the gold-colored hemisphere represents mind, while the square incense-burners that hang down from the surrounding pillars represent matter. Together they are intended as an allegory of mind (transparent and round) and matter (opaque and angular), where mind emerges from the spiritual essence of the universe and matter is differentiated from its physical substance. Also, from the center of the ceiling and radiating outwards are a number of smaller round beams that serve as rafters and symbolize rays of light emanating from the center. All of this together, it was decided, would constitute the ideal 'principal object of veneration' with no other images to be added.

The park is divided into the area atop the hill and the area at the bottom of the hill. The latter has a left and a right wing. In the right wing is a garden designed in the shape of the sinograph character for *matter*, and in the left another in the shape of the sinograph for *mind*. These express materialism and idealism respectively. The following elements are contained in the garden:

Atop the hill, in the center: the Gate of Philosophical Reason (commonly known as the Gate of Ghosts, since the right side has a statue of a *tengu* goblin and the left side a statue of a ghost), the Gate of Commonsense, the Hall of the Four Sages, the Pagoda of the Six Wise Men, the Arbor of the Three Teachings, the Roof of Respecting Virtue, the Skull Hermitage, the Cave of Spirits, the Cabinet of All Phenomena, the Hall of the Universe (in which to place the House of the Imperial Rule of Japan), the Inexhaustible Storehouse (that will function as the library), the Slope of Time and Space, the Valley of Relativity, the Bridge of the Ideal, the Boundary of the Absolute, the Area of the Absolute, the Monument of the Sages, the Plum Tree of Spirits, the Pine Tree of Tengu, the Grass of Miscellaneous Subjects, the Harbor of the Academic World, the Hedge of Monism, the Crossroads of Dualism, the Turbulent Place of Doubt.

At the bottom of the hill, on the right wing (of materialism): the Slope of Experience, the Peak of Sensation, the Bush of All Beings, the Valley of Creation, the Den of Myths, the Pond of the A Posteriori (or more commonly, the Fan-Shaped Pond), the Bridge of Atoms (commonly known as the Bridge of Fan Ribs), the Vessel of Natural History, the Pool of Physics and Chemistry, the Channel of Evolution, the Platform in the Shape of the sinograph for "Matter," the Hermitage of Objectivity.

At the bottom of the hill, on the left wing (of idealism): the Station of Consciousness, the Path of Intuition, the Road of Knowledge, the Barrier of Logic, the Pass of Dogma, the Cliff of Psychology, the Spring of A Priori, the Bridge of Concepts, the Pool of Ethics, the Island of Reason, the Pond in the Shape of the Sinograph for “Mind,” the Resting Place of Subjectivity.

Such is the Temple of Philosophy. Although not yet completed, I designed it in such a way that explaining the names of its various elements clarifies the meaning of philosophy.

[CGC]

ADDRESSING THE DIVINE

INOUE Enryō 1917, 440

Christianity does not have a fixed phrase when addressing God, but in Buddhism there are *namu-Amida-Butsu* (I entrust myself to Amida Buddha), *namu-Kanzeon-Bosatsu* (I entrust myself to the Bodhisattva Kannon), *namu-Daishi-Henjō-Kongō* (I entrust myself to Daishi, the Universal Adamantine Illuminator), *namu-myōhō-rence-kyō* (I entrust myself to the Lotus Sutra), and *namu-Shakamuni-Butsu* (I entrust myself to Shakyamuni Buddha). These sayings are fixed. Saying one of these arouses the mind of faith, swipes away the manifold of thoughts, and is very effective. I wish to introduce such a mantra for “philosophical religion”: *namu-zettai-mugenson* (I entrust myself to the absolute infinite). If you concentrate your whole mind on it and chant this phrase repeatedly, there is no doubt that the great spirit of the universe will flow out naturally from the source of the absolute into the gates of the mind.

[GCG]

Ōnishi Hajime 大西 祝 (1864–1900)

Ōnishi Hajime, philosopher, Christian apologist and social critic, studied theology at Dōshisha Eigakkō (present-day Dōshisha University) from 1877 to 1884, and then philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University from 1885 to 1889. He subsequently lectured on philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, and logic at Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō (present-day Waseda University). In 1896 he joined forces with Anesaki Masaharu and Yokoi Tokio to establish the Teiyū Ethics Society. He also assisted in the editing of the Christian socialist journal *Cosmos*. In 1898, he traveled to Germany to study with Otto Liebmann and Rudolf Eucken at the University of Jena, but his trip was cut short by an illness that took his life the following year. In his philosophy and ethics, Ōnishi drew upon Kant, T. H. Green, and the philosophical idealism of personalism. As a social critic, he wrote various commentaries on the 1890 *Imperial Rescript on Education* and defended Christianity against its critics during the so-called conflict between education and religion in the early 1890s.

In the selection below we see Ōnishi combining philosophy and social criticism together to argue against setting up loyalty and filial piety as the foundations of morality. He is responding to state-sponsored scholars who equated filial piety toward one's parents with loyalty to the emperor (the father figure of the “family state”) and who upheld both as the moral basis for social order. Loyalty and filial piety, two key virtues espoused in the *Imperial Rescript on Education*, were conjoined ideologically as part of a project to construct a national morality of obedience to the state. Ōnishi sets out methodically and critically—or in his term, “scientifically”—to dismantle the various arguments for this morality of obedience. His own argument calls to mind Socrates' reasoning in the *Euthyphro*, but without the assumption of a higher, divine authority. Implicit in his critique is the subversive assertion that disobedience to the state may in certain cases constitute true moral action. [RMR]

QUESTIONING MORAL FOUNDATIONS

ŌNISHI Hajime 1893, 308–23

Some say that loyalty and ‘filial piety’ are the foundation of morality, or in particular, that they constitute the foundation of morality in our country. I am not one to reject this out of hand, but I would like to consider the significance of the term “foundation.” If we approach the meaning of the term “moral foundation” scientifically, I do not believe that it can be applied to loyalty and filial piety... Utilitarian philosophers take the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people to be the foundation of morality. Kant takes the great law

of reason as the foundation of morality. Can we say that loyalty and filial piety form the foundation of morality in the same way? To approach loyalty and filial piety from the standpoint of ethical theory, we must begin with this kind of questioning spirit.

Scientifically, we cannot say that the foundation of morality differs from one country to the next. We cannot claim, for example, that loyalty and filial piety are the foundation for our country's morality, and at the same time maintain that in western countries a different moral foundation exists. Some argue that the idea of a single moral foundation spanning East and West, past and present, is mere conjecture, that somehow morality must in fact differ according to time and place. If we understand this to mean that there are no fixed or universal principles, no standards, no foundation in morality, then we end up with a theory that does away with ethics. With no fixed and universal principles, no standards and foundation, the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, become simply a matter of individual choice at any given moment. If the only basis of morality is the individual who believes something to be right at one time and wrong at another, right and wrong will themselves become meaningless. Even what we now refer to as moral fallacy will become meaningless. After all, without a general standard, how are we to distinguish truth from falsehood? If morality means one thing at one time and another thing at another time, this will ultimately lead to the destruction of ethical and moral distinctions.

For this reason, even those who uphold a desultory morality—one that differs with time and place—assume the existence of a common character that covertly pervades the people of a given nation or society. On this hypothesis, they believe it possible to construct an ethics or morality. If we accept that such a common nature is present in a nation or society, and that we can build a morality on its basis that is common and universal for that nation or society, why not presume a common nature of humanity as a basis for building a common and universal morality for all nations? The starting point for ethical theory cannot be simply the conditions particular to any given nation but rather an ultimate moral foundation common to all humanity. To discuss the morality of a nation or society scientifically, we must in the end come to this level of discussion. The claim that we can scientifically establish a national morality distinct from the way of humanity shows the ignorance of the scholars who make it. The fact that values and customs differ from one nation to the next is no different from the way evolutionary conditions differ among animals depending on climatic variation, even though all are subject to the same principle of evolution. Does the foundation of morality really differ according to the country? Scientifically, can we really say that loyalty and filial piety are the solid foundations of our country's morality?

Some will argue that, of course, science itself does not differ from one country

to the next, and that loyalty and filial piety are not the foundation of morality in our country alone. At the same time, they will insist that loyalty and filial piety are the foundation of morality for all peoples, regardless of differences of time and place. If one follows this line of reasoning, the problem that immediately arises is whether we are inclined to see loyalty and filial piety as equally foundational for morality. After all, if we merely take loyalty and filial piety in a loose sense as a moral foundation and we disregard the relationship between the two, in the end we will be at a loss how to make sense of this foundation. If we take loyalty and filial piety as two separate things, and say that either one of them can serve as the foundation for morality, we can only conclude that morality has two discrete foundations. How, then, are we to guarantee that there will be no contradiction between the two? Can we be certain that there will never be a situation in which, out of the desire to be loyal one must be unfilial, or in which the effort to be filial requires one to be disloyal? What is one to do in such a situation? Are we to give one more weight than the other?...

Alternatively, should we then view loyalty and filial piety as identical? If they are completely identical, a single object with no differences to distinguish them, why is this object then deliberately expressed by means of two distinct sinographs, one for loyalty and one for filial piety? If we allow that loyalty and filial piety are not entirely identical, may we still argue that there is a point at which the two come together and are unified, that there is an identical spirit running through both, an identical root from which both emerge? If so, we must ask at once: What exactly is this identical root, this identical spirit? And if we are to allow that such a root exists and inquire into it, do we not need to take the further step and go beyond the discussion of mere loyalty and filial piety? We would have to conclude that the foundation of morality lies precisely in the coincidence of loyalty and filial piety, in their identical spirit and identical root. In other words, rather than say that the foundation of morality lies in loyalty and filial piety, we should say that it lies in something identical that runs through each.

But then, might we not say that this underlying element that runs equally through loyalty and filial piety runs through other moral actions as well? If so, what is to prevent us from saying that it is this root element that is the foundation of morality? These kinds of questions do not occur to many of those who preach loyalty and filial piety as the foundation of morality. Indeed, they find it distasteful to consider such issues at all, preferring instead to spew random and emotional abuse at their critics. For those concerned with the eternal plan of the state, such an attitude simply will not do. What can one say to those who claim that loyalty and filial piety are the foundation of morality in terms of ethical theory when it does not even occur to them to ask what these terms mean?

What we must first ask of those who preach loyalty and filial piety as the

foundation of morality is this: What is this loyalty, this filial piety they speak of? If they try to answer this question calmly, I fear they will not get more than halfway. What is filial piety? What is loyalty? Can they answer these questions adequately? Some will say that filial piety is to obey the commands of one's father and mother, and that loyalty is to follow the commands of one's ruler. This is probably the most familiar interpretation and the one that springs first to mind. Let us for the moment follow this interpretation through.

1. If we say that loyalty and filial piety mean obedience to the command of one's ruler or father, and we take this as the foundation for morality, we cannot establish morality beyond the domain of one's ruler or father. This is the inevitable result of such a view. Thus, the command of one's ruler or father would actually have to extend to every sphere of social action in all of its infinite complexity....

2. If loyalty and filial piety are the foundation of morality, then all moral action must be inferred entirely from these two concepts. Even should a particular moral action appear unrelated to these concepts, on this view we would have to argue that all actions are ultimately expressions of loyalty and filial piety in one way or another. Can we really say such a thing? When we rescue a child who has fallen into a well, is even this an act of loyalty and filial piety?... Ordinarily, when we carry out such actions, do we really do it in order to be loyal or to be filial? Some suggest that if only we could disseminate the spirit of loyalty and filial piety, which incorporates the whole of moral action, then those who are properly loyal and filial in all situations would be suitably moral. But what exactly is this so-called spirit of loyalty and filial piety? If it means to obey the commands of one's ruler or father, as discussed above, then, one would expect that the spirit that runs through both loyalty and filial piety must consist in obeying the command of one's superior. Will the dissemination of this spirit really encourage one to rescue a child who has fallen into a well?...

3. If we interpret loyalty and filial piety to mean following the command of one's ruler or father, and further, if we take this to be the foundation for morality, then the command of the ruler or father itself would have to lie outside the realm of morality. That is, if the right and the good first only emerge in obeying the commands of a ruler or father, and if wrong and evil only emerge in disobeying those commands, then the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil cannot be applied to the commands themselves. If we attach a moral quality to the ruler's or father's command itself, the foundation of morality would not lie in *obedience* to a command (that is, in loyalty and filial piety), but in the *reason* the command of the ruler or father can be said to possess such a moral quality. If we say that we must obey the command of the ruler or father because it is good or because it is right, we are assuming a notion of the right and the good that transcends the ruler's or father's command. Thus, right and

good cannot be the result of the command of the ruler or father; rather, the command is issued because right and good exist. In other words, the foundation of morality exists in the rightness and goodness determined by the ruler's or father's command. For example, if we argue that we must obey the command of the ruler or father because it is something that will protect the stability of the country and promote the happiness of the family, this is already to locate the foundation of morality not in the conception of loyalty and filial piety, but in the stability of the country and the happiness of our family. In short, if we take loyalty and filial piety as the foundation of morality and the beginning of moral action, the action of the ruler who issues a command is not a moral action, and we cannot praise it as right and good, because it lacks a moral quality.

.....

There will probably be some who will find the foregoing commentary on the idea of loyalty and filial piety as obedience to the command of one's ruler or father narrow-minded. Others might argue that filial piety does not consist simply in following the commands of one's father and mother but has to do with loving and respecting one's parents. But even this understanding of filial piety as respect and love is, in effect, nothing more than one particular condition of morality. The reason it cannot be seen as the foundation of morality would not be difficult to see for those who have grasped the point of the foregoing argument. For unless we interpret loyalty and filial piety in the widest possible sense, as somehow incorporating all virtues, then we must view it as nothing more than one kind of moral action. As for those still eager to proclaim loyalty and filial piety as the foundation of morality, I advise them to define their terms calmly.

In writing this essay and discussing the reason why, in the context of ethical theory, loyalty and filial piety cannot provide a foundation for morality, I may be accused of fighting enemies that do not actually exist. It is not that I do not truly welcome such criticism, but how can one deny that the reality is otherwise? Finally, I would like to register the view that upholding loyalty and filial piety as the foundation for morality is not the right way to preserve their value. The very purpose of my discussion has been to maintain throughout the value of loyalty and filial piety, and hence I do not expound on these virtues as part of any political strategy or seek to gloss over their complexities.

[RMR]

The Kyoto School

Nishida Kitarō

Tanabe Hajime

Mutai Risaku

Miki Kiyoshi

Kōsaka Masaaki

Nishitani Keiji

Shimomura Toratarō

Kōyama Iwao

Takeuchi Yoshinori

Abe Masao

Tsujimura Kōichi

Ueda Shizuteru

Hase Shōtō

Ōhashi Ryōsuke

The Kyoto School Overview

Because of the important place it is recognized to have in the intellectual history of Japan, the Kyoto School has been extracted from the rest of twentieth-century philosophy for special treatment. Nishida Kitarō* and the circle of thinkers he inspired at the University of Kyoto are often considered Japan's first original philosophers in the modern sense of the term, and have become known as a bridge between East and West. While their originality and their faithfulness to disparate traditions remain matters of dispute, their impact on philosophical discussions within Japan and outside the country is unquestioned. Kyoto School thought most closely resembles what is called “speculative philosophy” in the West, but with a significant difference from the usual characterization of that type of thinking. Like speculative philosophers in the West, Kyoto School thinkers commonly seek an account of the whole of experience and reality that unifies its various aspects—such as nature, culture, morality, art, mind, and conceptions of the absolute—and that privileges universality and totality over the particularities of the concrete natural and social world. Unlike western speculative philosophy, however, the Kyoto School typically defines any systematic principle of unification in negative terms, indeed in a manner that undermines the notion of a grounding principle, as we shall see.

Less clear are the factors that otherwise distinguish the Kyoto School as a distinct group of thinkers. The criteria of membership are often conflicting and there is little agreement in the vast secondary literature on just how to group the several subcurrents within the School. In general, political critics tend to classify members according to their degree of collaboration, or at least perceived collaboration, with the military ideology of the Pacific War. Historians who stress their place within the general history of philosophy draw the lines quite differently. In order to preserve this diversity of opinion, it seems best to consider the Kyoto School as a kind of “fuzzy set” with fluid boundaries and varying degrees of association.

Surely the single feature common to all the thinkers associated with the Kyoto School is their connection to Nishida, the reputed “founder” who had no

intention himself of founding a “school.” On the one hand, Nishida’s philosophy stands on its own as a towering achievement, and can be understood and interpreted independently of almost all work by others aligned with the School. The one exception is the work of Tanabe Hajime*, whose criticisms so influenced Nishida’s development that their respective philosophies can be said in part to have grown in reaction to one another.

On the other hand, Tanabe and Nishida initiated a new direction in philosophy that characterizes four generations of thinkers in the loosely defined tradition represented here. If we count Nishida and Tanabe as the first generation of the School, Nishida’s students Mutai Risaku*, Miki Kiyoshi*, Nishitani Keiji*, Shimomura Toratarō*, Kōyama Iwao*, and Kōsaka Masaaki* make up a second generation who may be said to have consolidated it as a School with its own tradition. Tanabe’s students Takeuchi Yoshinori* and Tsujimura Kōichi*, Nishitani’s student Ueda Shizuteru*, and Abe Masao*, who was closer to Nishitani in his own thinking, make up a third generation that revitalized the School particularly by spreading it abroad. Hase Shōtō* and Ōhashi Ryōsuke*, whose initial training was in French and German philosophy respectively, represent a fourth generation that is drawing inspiration from Nishida and Nishitani as well as from European philosophers. A number of thinkers who appropriated Nishida’s ideas or defined themselves in reaction to them, are taken up elsewhere in this volume. Some, like Kuki Shūzō*, Watsuji Tetsurō*, and Tosaka Jun*, pursued a relatively independent direction in their philosophies. Others, like D. T. Suzuki*, Hisamatsu Shin’ichi*, and Karaki Junzō*, were engaged more as philosophically minded Buddhists than as philosophy professors.

Given all this ambiguity over defining the membership of the Kyoto School, we may nevertheless identify five interlacing factors that define its philosophical direction and help place individual thinkers.

First, Kyoto School philosophers have shown *a deep if critical appreciation of the value of both Asian and western sources for doing philosophy*. Unlike most other professional philosophers in Japan, who until recently eschewed Japanese traditions and devoted themselves entirely to philosophies imported from the West, from the beginning those associated with the Kyoto School appropriated ideas from East Asian texts in their engagement with European and American thought. To be sure, if their appropriation of material from Asian traditions has been quite selective, their stance toward western philosophy has been rather critical. Kyoto School thinkers neither rejected the philosophies from Europe and the Americas that they encountered, nor simply accepted them. Like creative philosophers everywhere, they critically engaged their sources in a way that sets them apart from Japan’s first generations of philosophy professors. Nishida, for example, explicitly criticized western ontologies and their search for the ground of beings, and developed a “meontology” (from the Greek *meon*,

nonbeing)—or more accurately, a philosophy of ‘nothingness’—that sought to contextualize rather than ground. But Nishida’s philosophy also contains a latent critique of Buddhism’s relative lack of appreciation for the historical world and the individual who acts in it. Moreover, several Kyoto School philosophers questioned the very categories of East and West that the School is often presumed to bridge.

Second, and related to their stance toward European and American philosophy, is the *critical attitude Kyoto School thinkers take toward western conceptions of modernity*. The problem of modernity engaged many of the second generation of the School in particular. Kōyama addressed this issue throughout his career. Shimomura and Nishitani, along with their historian colleague and fellow student of Nishida, Suzuki Shigetaka (1907–1988), participated in a 1942 symposium on Overcoming Modernity* that discussed alternatives to a wholehearted acceptance of western values and institutions, and promoted East Asian, and above all Japanese, hegemony. Nishitani advocated going through and beyond the idea of modernity rather than retreating from it, but argued that the move required a retrieval of East Asian, and particularly Buddhist, values. Hisamatsu and his student Abe later advanced an alternative that went completely beyond national or cultural identities and proposed the idea of a “postmodernist” era with sovereignty shifted to “all humankind.” More recently, Ōhashi has argued for the recognition of cultural resources that do not derive from modern Europe.

A third factor, related to their stance toward modernity, has to do with the way *Kyoto School philosophers of the first two generations took explicit if divergent political stances toward Marxism, the nation-state, and the Pacific War*. Whatever their appraisal of it, Marxism exerted a powerful influence on these thinkers. Some students of Nishida, like Tosaka, embraced its critique of idealist philosophies; others, like Nishitani, rejected its materialism. Marxist currents in the 1920s and 1930s undoubtedly helped turn Tanabe’s interest to history, and they form the background of his ideas of historical mediation and the “logic of species.” Nishida criticized the Marxist interpretation of history and culture but was still deeply affected by it. He felt compelled to address the problems of the historical and social dimensions of reality largely because of the criticisms Tosaka, Miki, and Tanabe had raised against him. Nishida formed his notions of *poiesis*, production, and action in counter-distinction to Marxist ideas.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, with Marxist ideas on one side and rightist extremism on the other, thinkers associated with Nishida also took overt stances regarding the Japanese nation-state and the Pacific War that range across a rather broad spectrum. If there is a common factor, it is the conviction that a new world order was needed in which the East would have its rightful place alongside the West in the new “world-historical world.” This is partially,

if not entirely fairly, represented in the *Chūōkōron* Discussions*. Supporters of the School judge this conviction, in its general orientation, to be legitimate; critics condemn it as naive at best, imperialist at worst. More specifically, supporters say Nishida and Tanabe tried to present the Japanese government with a third possibility for national identity and global presence, neither Marxist nor ultranationalist; but critics see their efforts as justifying the Pacific War. The rapid decline of the Kyoto School following Nishida's death in 1945 is directly related to these accusations, which left the School in virtual limbo for an entire generation.

In the fourth place, these thinkers are characterized by the religious nature of alternatives they sought. In general terms, it may be said that *Kyoto School thinkers looked to Buddhism and interreligious encounter for solutions to social as well as philosophical problems*. The theme of religion as representing humanity's most powerful and profound demands is common to many of them. Zen and the True 'Pure Land' Buddhism of Shinran* in particular, but Christianity as well, exemplify religion for these thinkers even as they question traditional religious boundaries. Nishida's Zen practice is often cited as a source of his conception of "pure experience." Hisamatsu, who spoke of a religion of awakening and a philosophy of awakening, was a practicing Zen master. Nishitani, Tsujimura, and Ueda have offered philosophical interpretations of Zen texts and have drawn upon Zen in interpreting Meister Eckhart and Martin Heidegger. Tanabe, Takeuchi, and later Miki, turned principally to the True Pure Land tradition of Buddhism. Nishida's and Nishitani's writings on religion referred to True Pure Land faith as well, and they advanced interpretations that undermine any fundamental difference between that faith and Zen practice, between 'other-power' and 'self-power'. Kyoto School thinkers have found in Zen and Mahayana traditions not only a source of personal spirituality but also a resource for philosophical reasoning about social problems. The Buddhist logic of 'soku-hi', 'emptiness', and self-negation offered a framework that enables cultural and national renewal (D. T. Suzuki), the overcoming of nihilism (Nishitani), or a human community beyond national egoism (Abe).

Many Kyoto School thinkers shared a deep appreciation of Christianity and set out to elaborate its common philosophical ground with Buddhism. Tanabe gained his appreciation in the final stage of his career. His 1948 book, *Christianity and Dialectics*, gave it a Buddhist interpretation, and he proclaimed himself *ein werdender Christ* if not *ein gewordener Christ*—a Christian in the making, if not one who has become Christian. Nishida himself, near the end of his life, felt he had located both the expression and the negation of the absolute in Christianity and Buddhism alike. Nishitani's *Religion and Nothingness* is permeated with both critical and appreciative discussions of Christian ideas and doctrines. The concern to find a common meeting ground between Buddhism

and Christianity, in the mysticism of Eckhart or the kenotic understanding of Christ, for example, describes some of the work of Ueda and Abe respectively. Both intensified the efforts begun by Nishitani and Nishida to demonstrate that the modern world is a global arena of religious encounter.

Fifth, in their appropriation of Buddhist ideas, *most Kyoto School thinkers invoke the notion of 'absolute nothingness'*, and with such regularity that it has almost become an identification tag. Despite its ubiquity in the texts, the meaning of the term is problematic, and the stance various Kyoto School writers take toward it varies considerably. The relevant Buddhist notion of nothingness can, of course, be traced back far earlier, but Nishida and Kyoto School thinkers gave it a novel and more powerful explanatory role. Nishida took the experiential and practice-oriented thrust of the '*mu*' of Zen texts and redirected it toward a philosophical account of the world. For him, absolute nothingness is the ultimate 'place' of historical reality in all its immediacy and its resistance to objectification. Tanabe criticized Nishida's designation of it as a place but retained the notion in describing the working of absolute mediation. Hisamatsu and his followers made it synonymous with the "formless self" and invoked it as the notion that differentiated the East from the West. Nishitani later shifted it again to its traditional Buddhist roots when he replaced it with the notion of emptiness as distinguished from nihility. Whether these various permutations of absolute nothingness retain a univocal meaning is a question best answered by close scrutiny of their writings. The following selections are an initial foray.

If these five interlacing factors define the contours of the Kyoto School within the practice of philosophy in Japan, the reach of its thought outside Japan is also important. No other group of Japanese philosophers has had such a strong impact on thinkers worldwide. To be sure, professional philosophers in Japan who practice philosophy of western origin have also received international recognition as a group, Japanese phenomenologists being the most notable example. More often than not, however, the name "Japanese phenomenology" indicates no more than the geographical location of phenomenologists who rarely if ever convey anything of Japan's older intellectual traditions. The Kyoto School is the exception, even where these thinkers had no intention of advancing a particularly Buddhist or "Japanese" philosophy.

The name of Nishida reached Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, when Miki, Tanabe, and Nishitani were among the Japanese who studied with Husserl and Heidegger. Along with Kuki Shūzō and Watsuji Tetsurō, Kyoto School philosophers were the first to disseminate phenomenology in their native land. Their influence on the Europeans, to be sure, was much less obvious than the initial impact of phenomenological philosophy on them. Except for the possible case of Heidegger, the German and French professors tended to keep Japanese thought at a distance, until a later generation began to seek instruction from

their Japanese students, and those students began to lecture in Europe and North America.

Initially the impact was felt most strongly among theologians and philosophers of religion in North America and Europe. Takeuchi lectured several times in Germany in the 1960s, and Nishitani lectured in the United States for a semester in 1969 and briefly in 1979. But serious engagement with Japanese Buddhist philosophy had to wait another decade or so. In the 1980s and 1990s Ueda lectured widely in German-speaking countries, and Abe taught in the United States, focusing on the thought of Nishida and Nishitani, and presenting Zen Buddhist thought, often in dialogue with philosophers and theologians. In these cases the influence was mutual. Religious thinkers in the West, and Kyoto School thinkers fluent in German or English, began to appropriate ideas from their counterparts and pursue common interests. Major figures in the School were able to represent it abroad as a living tradition. Political and social historians who knew of the misadventures of earlier Kyoto School thinkers in the war period, on the other hand, continued to give them a much more selective and cursory reading.

Whether the Kyoto School as such is still active is an open question, but the effect of its dynamic exchange with western thinkers is clearly visible. It has helped turn both pre-Meiji and contemporary Japanese thought into an area of philosophical research within Japan as well as abroad. Since the 1980s that research has slowly found its way into the philosophy curriculum of universities in Europe and the Americas, and scholars worldwide have begun to recognize the existence of “Japanese philosophy.” Since the 1970s there has been a steady stream of publications in Japan on Nishida. By the first decade of the new century, it had expanded into a growing literature on Japanese philosophy in general, in both Asian and European languages. In Japan, some thirty-one volumes entitled *Selections of Kyoto Philosophy* (where this designation is taken in a very broad sense) have appeared, and two new journals are devoted to Nishida and the history of Japanese philosophy. Abroad, conferences and independent scholars have produced a number of volumes treating Kyoto School thought in particular but premodern Japanese philosophy as well. If the Kyoto School has its own distinct identity, its effect has reached far beyond the parameters that define it.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

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[JCM]

NISHIDA Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945)



Nishida Kitarō, generally considered Japan's greatest academic philosopher, made it his lifelong task to wed the spiritual awareness cultivated through a decade of Zen practice with modern philosophy. From Zen he had come to appreciate the living unity of experience that precedes dichotomies of mind and body, subject and object; in western philosophy he recognized the importance of logical thinking, the critical examination of preconceptions, and a comprehensive vision of the world. Beginning with the experiment of his maiden work, *An Inquiry into the Good*, to see all of reality as "pure experience," each step of Nishida's

way posed new questions, leaving behind a trail of neologisms to mark the route he had taken: acting intuition, 'absolute nothingness', knowing by "becoming," the 'self-identity of absolute contradiction', the logic of 'place', the dialectical historical world, 'inverse correlation', and so forth.

Nishida's academic career was centered in Kyoto University, where he taught from 1910 until 1928. The circle of disciples and colleagues that had gathered around him during his life and continued to debate and pursue his ideas after his death produced a rich body of philosophical thought that has come to be known collectively, if somewhat loosely, as "Kyoto School philosophy."

Although a considerable portion of Nishida's writing was done in the seventeen years after his retirement, his crowning idea, the logic of *place*, had been framed in an essay published during his final year at Kyoto University. The opening section of that essay is included here. His final essay, completed in the year of his death, was an attempt to weave together the various strands of his mature thought into a single tapestry, a "religious worldview" as he called it. Notoriously difficult for its mixture of dense paraphrases of old ideas with subtle intimations of new ones, it has been the focus of considerable discussion among scholars in Japan. The excerpts included below were chosen to reflect its style and content.

In response to Marxist dialectics, which were gaining popularity in Japan during the waning years of Nishida's teaching career, he sought to add a social and historical dimension to his philosophical reflection. Global politics at the time, including the rise of German nationalism and Italian fascism, further moved him to clarify the meaning of history and the correlation of individuals, ethnic groups, cultures, and nations. As Nishida's perspective gained in concreteness, he gradually shifted his focus away from the working of consciousness to the historical world as a whole. Brief passages acknowledging that shift have been included here. He came to view human existence as the "self-determination of the world," where the roots of its

internal self-contradictions are to be sought. In particular, he viewed the individual as a kind of monad that both reflects the world and is a concentrated reflection of it. Unlike Leibniz's, Nishida's individual is shaped by history and at the same time shapes it. Throughout it all, he maintained his affection for the dialectical logic of affirmation-in-negation in order to prevent the contradictions of reality and human life from ending up in the simple irrational *Angst* he found in western existential thinking. The passage from his essay on Michelangelo and Goethe demonstrates Nishida's ability to turn away from his typically recondite prose to rephrase his ideas in concrete, moving imagery.

During the years immediately following the war in Japan, and especially during the 1980s in the West, Nishida's political beliefs came under sharp scrutiny, one side accusing him of ultranationalism, the other defending him as a determined but subtle critic of the military regime and its ideology. Although he himself was not ignorant of the charges, as an examination of his personal correspondence at the time makes clear, he was convinced that if the major insight of his logic of *place* were understood properly, his view of history would be correctly understood. The final selection, a lament against his critics, hints at this.

[YM]

PURE EXPERIENCE

NISHIDA Kitarō 1911, 3, 9, 11–12 (XXX, 3–4, 6–7); 1933, 5; 1936, 3–4 (XXXI–III)

For many years I wanted to explain all things on the basis of pure experience as the sole reality. At first I read such thinkers as Ernst Mach, but this did not satisfy me. Over time I came to realize that it is not that experience exists because there is an individual, but that an individual exists because there is experience. I thus arrived at the idea that experience is more fundamental than individual differences, and in this way I was able to avoid solipsism. Further, by regarding experience as active, I felt I could harmonize my thought with transcendental philosophy starting with Fichte.

.....

To experience means to know facts just as they are, to know in accordance with facts by completely relinquishing one's own fabrications. What we usually refer to as experience is adulterated with some sort of thought, so by *pure* I am referring to the state of experience just as it is without the least addition of deliberative discrimination. The moment of seeing a color or hearing a sound, for example, is prior not only to the thought that the color or sound is the activity of an external object or that one is sensing it, but also to the judgment of what the color or sound might be. In this regard, pure experience is identical with direct experience. When one directly experiences one's own state of

consciousness, there is not yet a subject or an object, and knowing and its object are completely unified. This is the most refined type of experience.

Usually, of course, the meaning of the term *experience* is not clearly fixed.... Given the nature of consciousness, we cannot experience someone else's consciousness. And even with one's own consciousness, whether consciousness of some present occurrence or a recollection of the past, when one makes judgments about it, it ceases to be a pure experience. A truly pure experience has no meaning whatsoever; it is simply a present consciousness of facts just as they are.

.....

The directness and purity of pure experience derive not from the experience's being simple, unanalyzable, or instantaneous, but from the strict unity of concrete consciousness. Consciousness does not arise from the consolidation of what psychologists call simple mental elements; it constitutes a single system from the start. The consciousness of a new-born infant is most likely a chaotic unity in which even the distinction between light and darkness is unclear. From this condition myriad states of consciousness develop through differentiation. Even so, no matter how finely differentiated these states may be, at no time do we lose the fundamentally systematic form of consciousness. Concrete consciousness that is direct to us always appears in this form. Not even an instantaneous perception diverges from this. For example, when we think we have perceived at a glance the entirety of a thing, careful investigation will reveal that attention shifted automatically through eye movement, enabling us to know the whole. Such systematic development is the original form of consciousness, and as long as the unity maintains itself and consciousness develops of its own accord, we do not lose our foothold in pure experience.

[AM, CAI]

Nishida eventually abandoned "pure experience" as a foundational idea in favor of a "logic of place." In 1933, and then again three years later, he had the following to say regarding his initial standpoint.

A theory of direct or pure experience takes reality to be the empirical content immediate to oneself, that is, what is internally perceived in the broad sense. This standpoint is prior to the division of subject and object, to be sure, but that is only looking at things from the inside out. The true self is the self at work, and true reality must be considered the object of this acting self. We are born in this world and realize our selves by acting in it.

[JWH]

As I look at it now, the standpoint of consciousness... might be thought of as a kind of psychologism.... I do think, however, that what lay deep in my thought... was not something that is merely psychological. In *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, through the mediation of Fichte's *Tathandlung*,

I developed the standpoint of pure experience into the standpoint of absolute will. Then in the second half of *From the Actor to the Seer*, through the mediation of Greek philosophy, I further developed it, this time into the idea of 'place'. In this way I began to lay a logical base for my ideas. I next concretized the idea of place as a *dialectical universal*, and gave that standpoint a direct expression in terms of *acting intuition*. That which I called in my first book the world of direct or pure experience I have now come to think of as the world of historical reality. The world of acting intuition—the world of poiesis—is none other than the world of pure experience.

[AM, CAI]

THE LOGIC OF PLACE

NISHIDA Kitarō 1926, 415–28, 433–4

Epistemology as we know it today treats the relationship among three distinct elements: objects, contents, and acts. It seems to me that, at bottom, this distinction comes down simply to an opposition between a transitory cognitive operation and an object that transcends it. For these objects to be related to one another and to sustain themselves in a single, self-sustaining system, we need to consider not only what *sustains* the system but also what *sets it up*—that is to say, where it “takes place.” Everything that is, is *in* something else. If it were not, there would be no way to distinguish between what is and what is not. This allows us to distinguish logically between the terms of a relationship and the relationship itself, between that which holds a relationship together and that in which the relationship is located.

The same can be said of the operations involved. If we think in terms of something like an ego that serves as a simple unifier of the operations, the ego is construed in contrast to what is not ego, and that in turn entails something that enfolds the opposition between ego and not-ego within itself and brings into being what we call the phenomena of consciousness. The receptacle required for such ideas I will call, following the lead of Plato's *Timaeus*, “place,” although it should be obvious that this is not identical to Plato's idea of a space or receptacle.

The idea itself is a simple one. We tend to think of material bodies as existing and interacting within a space, as traditional physics has done. Or perhaps there is no space outside of things and space is just the relationship between one material body and other; or again, perhaps space is *inside* of things, as Lotze¹

1. [Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817–1881), an idealist metaphysician who developed a variant of Leibniz's monadology.]

suggests. Even so, the things that are related and their relationship would have to be one and the same, just as they are in the idea of physical space. But that which relates one physical space to another cannot itself be a physical space; there must be a further *place* in which physical space is located. One may, of course, suppose that things in relationship can be reduced to a system of relations that make up a single, unitary whole without any need to introduce anything like a *place* to account for it. Now strictly speaking, for any relationship to come about we must be able to identify the elements of that relationship. In knowledge, for example, form requires content. We may think of the two as united into a single whole, but there must be a *place* within which that unitary whole is reflected. Such a “place” may appear to be a purely subjective notion, but insofar as the object of knowing is independent and transcends the acting of the subject, the *place* in which that object arises cannot belong to the subject. Further, when we objectify the subject’s activity to look at it, we see it reflected against the same *place* that holds the objects of thinking. If meaning itself is to be considered something objective, then the *place* in which it arises must be objective as well. One may claim that all such things are simply nothing at all, but even nothing has objective significance in the world of thought.

When we think of things, then, there must be a *place* to reflect them to us. To begin with, we can think in terms of a field of consciousness. To be conscious of something means that it is reflected on the field of consciousness. Here we need to distinguish between the conscious phenomena that are reflected and the field of consciousness that reflects them. Some may claim there is no such field of consciousness but only a string of conscious phenomena. And yet there must be an immobile field of consciousness against which conscious phenomena come and go from one moment to the next, relating them one to another and stringing them together. One may further claim that this field is more like a single point, an ego. And yet if we distinguish what lies within consciousness from what lies without, then the phenomena of my consciousness would have to fall within the frame of my consciousness. In this sense I can be said to enfold the phenomena of my consciousness within consciousness. This at least offers us a starting point to acknowledge a field of consciousness.

Our act of thinking also belongs to consciousness. In the first place, the content of thought is reflected on the field of consciousness, where it is identified as an object in terms of its content. Epistemologists today distinguish between the content as immanent and the object as transcendent. The object is said to stand on its own and completely transcend our conscious acting. As such it lies outside the field of consciousness and has no need of it. If we are to relate consciousness and object, then, there must something to embrace them both—a *place* in which they can be related. What might this be? Granted that the object transcends our conscious activity, if it were to lie entirely outside of conscious-

ness, there would be no way for us, who are within consciousness, even to think of the content of consciousness as identifying an object, let alone to conclude that it transcends our conscious activity.

For the Kantians, the subject is held to be transcendent, a general consciousness set against the world of cognitive objects. How can we, from within our epistemological subjectivity, transcend consciousness and leave the field of consciousness? The field of consciousness may have its outer limits, but this does not imply that it simply fades away. Psychologically speaking, the field of consciousness consists of what has already been thought. It is no more than a kind of object that the field of consciousness itself cannot, even at its outermost limits, transcend. Even if we think of the field of consciousness as something real, there is always something behind it that transcends reality. “Experimental psychology” may hold the field of consciousness to be nothing more than a range of measurable sensory perceptions, but there is no consciousness without meaning. Consciousness wraps up yesterday in meaning by calling it to mind today. It may be called the self-determination of a universal. Even sensory consciousness, to the extent that it can be reflected upon later, can be called a conscious phenomenon. Granted the universal cannot be reached at its outermost limits, but neither can individuals.

When the Kantians argue that cognition is able to unify matter by means of form, they are assuming a constitutive activity of a subject that has been equipped with form. Were this not the case, any “object” formally constituted would lie beyond its opposition to the constitutive act. At the same time, to claim that objective form constitutes objective matter would make the constitutive act entirely objective and thus incapable of generating cognitive meaning. We cannot speak of the opposition between form and matter in the same breath as that between subject and object. The form-matter opposition cannot account for the object of an act of judgment; a different kind of opposition has to be introduced into the picture. The immediate content of judgment entails the question of whether it is true or false. The *place* that sets up an opposition between truth and falsehood must be other than the *place* in which the opposition between form and matter is set up. Within the *place* where cognition arises it is not enough for form and matter to be separate; their separation and conjunction must be free. It is here that we can speak of subjectivity as appended from without to an object that lies beyond the subject-object opposition.

As Lask² argued, the object of a completely alogical experience can be set up in opposition to fundamental logical form. At the same time, he recognized that

2. [Emil Lask (1875–1915), the closest of the neo-Kantians to Husserl, tried to ground the distinction between fact and value in what is “given” in concrete experience.]

knowing, too, is a kind of experience. The allogical nature of what is experienced does not mean that it is identical to “sensory matter.” We might better refer to it as transcending logic or enveloping it. The same may be said of the experience of art and morality. The standpoint of cognition also requires that experience reflect itself within itself. Knowing is merely experience taking shape within itself. The opposition and relationship between form and matter emerge in the *place* of experience, as does the subject-object opposition in which the self, as a true “I,” reflects itself infinitely within itself, making itself nothing in order to contain the infinity of being. This *place* cannot be called identical or different; it cannot be said to be being or ‘nothingness’. As that which establishes logical form it cannot itself be determined according to logical form. No matter how far we pursue form, we cannot get “beyond form.” The true form of form is the *place* of form. In the *De Anima*, too, Aristotle follows the thinkers of the *Akademia* in conceiving of the soul as the “place of forms.” This kind of self-illuminating mirror, as we might call it, is the *place* in which not only knowledge but also emotion and will arise. When we speak of the content of our experience, more often than not we have already converted it to knowledge, which accounts for our treating the experience itself as allogical matter. True experience is a standpoint of complete nothingness, a standpoint of freedom removed from knowledge. The things of the heart are reflected in this *place* as well, which is why insight, emotion, and will are all considered conscious phenomena.

Following this line of thought, I understand activity as the relationship that occurs between an object that is reflected and the *place* that reflects it. To take only the reflected would give us mere objects without any dynamic. There has to be a mirror behind the objects that reflects them, a *place* for them to take place in existence. Naturally, if one takes this *place* as a reflecting mirror in which objects are located, there would be no dynamic in the objects themselves. This turns everything into an object of cognition transcending all activity and resting on a sort of “field of consciousness in general” that reflects everything by completely emptying itself of itself. If the object were completely unrelated to consciousness, we could not speak of consciousness reflecting an object or of an object being located in consciousness. For this reason we can posit the act of judgment as connecting the “space” between them. On one hand, we can see the object as transcending that act; on the other, we can see the field of consciousness as transcending that act and enveloping it within itself. When we think of the field of consciousness in general as infinitely expanding to make room for objects within itself, we can then see the objects as occupying various positions there and as capable of being reflected in a variety of forms. It is here that the “world of meaning” arises through the various ways in which objects are analyzed and abstracted; at the same time we can think of the act of judgment as reflecting these objects in positions and relations.

With this separation of the transcendent object from the field of consciousness in general, such that the act cannot be said to belong to either of them, we arrive at a kind of “knowing subject” that unifies activity. If we follow the commonsense view that things exist in space, things and space are seen as different, and this enables us to think of things as having various relations in space and as capable of changing shape and position. This in turn leaves us no choice but to think in terms of a kind of force distinct from space and things. And if we suppose things to possess force in the sense of something that exists of itself, we can attribute force to space and thereby arrive at the idea of physical space. My idea is to see knowing as belonging to the space of consciousness.

Traditional epistemology begins from the opposition between subject and object, and sees knowing as constructing matter by means of form. I wish rather to begin from the idea of self-awareness in which the self reflects itself within itself, which I consider to be the fundamental significance of knowing. From knowing what is within itself, it knows what lies outside of itself. What is given *to* the self must first be given *within* the self. We may think of the self as a kind of unifying point that sets up within the “consciousness of the self” an opposition between the knower and the known, that is, between subject and object, form and matter. This unifying point is not the knower but merely that which has already been objectified and known. The same would hold true if we were to posit an infinite unity instead of a unifying point. Knowing means, first of all, enveloping. When what has been enveloped is external to that which does the enveloping, it simply *is*, much the same as when we think of material objects as being located in space. When the enveloping and the enveloped are taken as one, a kind of infinite series is set up. When we then think of this one as infinitely containing matter within itself, we have something like an infinite dynamic or pure act. Even so, we cannot refer to it as the knower. We can only speak of knowing when we can think of that which is located within the self as itself being enveloped once again.

As to the relationship between form and matter, we cannot speak of knowing as simply a formal construct. Knowing has to do with enveloping within the opposition between form and matter. If we take matter to be a lower level of form, the knower can also be seen as the form of forms. It would then have to be a kind of *place* that transcends pure form and pure act, and makes them arise within it. This is why Lask sees the subject as destroying the objectivity of the object. Just as we can think of material objects as separable in space, so can we think of objects of thought as separable in the *place* where thought occurs. And just as material objects in space are infinitely separable in any number of senses, so, too, are the objects of thought in their *place*. For the knower in the sense just described, this would seem to imply that the significance of the subject-object

opposition is lost, and with it the sense of synthesis or act on the part of the subject. Indeed, the very meaning of a “subject” would disappear.

Without entering further into this question here, suffice it to note that in the simple placement of things in space, both things and space are external to each other, which does away with the sense of any subjectivity for space. When we shift from the substantial quality of things to their relationship in the *place* wherein they are located, things are reduced to force. If we think of force as a substance, we need to think of relations with respect to the terms that are related. Where is this force as a thing in itself to be sought? If we look for it in things in their original state, this would leave us with things that could not finally be reduced to force. If we reduce force in itself to space, we can only conceive of it as a point constituting the terms in a spatial relationship. But if relationships in themselves are simply a kind of point, there would be no such thing as force. Only something like a field of force, where all lines function as vectors, can envelop within it relationships of force.

So, too, in the *place* of cognition that embraces pure acts, all phenomena must be possessed of directionality. The reason we suppose that the meaning of the subject-object opposition gets lost when the knower is seen as enveloping is that we conceive of *place* as something outside of the things contained within it. Empty space of itself cannot truly enfold physical phenomena within itself. What truly envelops its objects must reflect its forms within itself similar to the way forms are constituted in space. One might even say that the sense of “being located” is forgotten, and with it the sense of *place* as infinitely expanding to make room for the objects it envelops. And yet these two meanings combine on the field of consciousness, which remains separate from all objects of knowing even as it takes them into itself.

If knowing is reflecting oneself within oneself, and if acts of consciousness are visible in the relationship between that which is reflected and the *place* in which it is reflected, what of Lask’s “object without opposition” that completely transcends acting? Even such an object needs to be located in something. We recognize that something *is* by opposing it to what *is not*. But to recognize what is not by setting it against what is, is to make it into being for the sake of the opposition. True nothingness must envelop both the *is* and the *is not* of that opposition; it must be the *place* where both arise. The nothingness that opposes being by negating it is not a true nothingness. True nothingness forms the background of being.

An example may help. When something is said to be *not red*, it is being compared to something that *is red*, which means that *not red* is a color, too. But something that possesses *colors* and holds them in place cannot itself be a color if it is to locate both the *red* and the *not-red*. The same idea, it seems to me, can be advanced beyond determining the objects of knowing to include the

relationship between being and nothingness. If we think of a kind of “*place* for locating” things, then color can be said to be a kind of a thing, much as Aristotle does by claiming that the quality of a thing is *inherent* in it. The problem is that when things are said to have attributes, the significance of *place* is lost. In contrast, when things are dissolved without remainder into relationships, that which contains being and nothingness can be thought of as a single act. Even so, it is possible to posit a latent form of being behind the activity. In contrast to substantial being, we may speak of a pure act, of work without a working substance, but if we exclude latency from the act, it ceases to be acting. In the background where such latent being arises we need to think in terms of something like *place*.

When we can think of a thing as possessing a certain quality, the counter-quality cannot be present in it. But for something to be working, it must contain its opposite within it; whatever changes, changes into its opposite. This is why we immediately think of the *place* that contains being and nothingness as involving activity. Now, in order for a particular act to become visible, there has to be an idea of specificity at its ground. Only an idea determined at the level of the specific can allow relative opposites to be seen. The *place* in the background of activity needs the character of nothingness: it should not be simply any place, but a place that possesses a particular, determined content. Being and nothingness combine in act, but this does not mean that nothingness envelops being. In a true *place* a particular thing can shift not only into its opposite; it can shift over into its contradictory and break out of its categorical specificity. True *place* is not only a *place* of change but also a *place* of coming-to-be and passing away. In superseding the category of the species and entering into such a *place*, even the significance of working is gone, leaving only seeing. As long as we understand *place* as the idea of specific determination, there is no way to eliminate latent being: we can do no more than see what is at work. This is not even so in a *place* understood to reflect the idea of the specific: there we see what it is that envelops the work going on within it. Genuinely pure activity does not consist of something that works but something that envelops that working. It is not latent being but actual being that comes first, and therein lies the “object without opposition” that fuses form and matter.

This object without opposition, as it is fittingly called, transcends the field of consciousness entirely. But if it lies completely outside of the subject, how can it come to be reflected there and become the telos of cognitive activity? I do not think that even such an object lies outside the field of consciousness (understood in the sense of *place*); it is always and everywhere grounded in it. When *place* is understood merely as a nothingness that stands opposed to being and negates it, we cannot help thinking of objects as transcending the field of consciousness from without, as subsisting in themselves. As noted earlier, the

“standpoint of consciousness” is normally understood to be a standpoint of nothingness vis-à-vis being. When a nothingness defined in contrast to being subsumes everything into the idea of a single species, it becomes a kind of unitary latent being. The standpoint of consciousness appears when we assume a standpoint of nothingness that endlessly negates every kind of being, that is, when nothingness stands on its own independently of being. The totality of being can be reflected and analyzed on a standpoint that transcends all of being. True nothingness is one that envelops being and nothingness with no such character of opposition. Even a nothingness that has negated every kind of being remains a nothingness in opposition. Break away from any idea of a determinate species as it may, to the extent that it is something *thought*, it cannot shake free of such an idea. As long as a sense of latent being remains, it sets up a spiritualistic metaphysic. True consciousness is one that also reflects this kind of “consciousness,” which in effect is nothing more than a further form of objectification.

The *place* of true nothingness must transcend the opposition between being and nothingness in every sense in order for that opposition to arise there. True consciousness comes to light at the point where any and every idea of the specific has broken down. Not even a transcendent object without opposition can be said to have transcended outside of consciousness in this sense. On the contrary, it is by being reflected in this *place* that it is visible as such. The “object without opposition” becomes the object of our thought about the “ought,” the standard for deciding on the primary sense of what we call the content of judgment. To think otherwise is to fall into contradiction and render thinking self-destructive. There is no other way to conceive of the object without opposition. Seeing an object without opposition, we might think that we have transcended the field of subjective consciousness where the contents of opposition are set up, that we have simply left it behind. In fact, all that has happened is that we have advanced from a standpoint of oppositional nothingness to one of true nothingness, from a *place* that reflects the shadow of things to a *place* where the things are located. It is not a question of abandoning the “standpoint of consciousness” but of radicalizing it. True negation has to be a negation of negation; otherwise there would be no point at which we could single out consciousness in general from unconsciousness; consciousness would become meaningless.

If we have to think in these terms in order to avoid landing in contradiction, the field of consciousness must be able to reflect the transcendent object within itself. Because such a standpoint is a true nothingness, a negation of negation, it can also negate everything that is reflected in the *place* of oppositional nothingness. It is by truly emptying itself that the field of consciousness is able to reflect objects just as they are. One might think that in this case the object is simply being located in itself. If that were so, it could not serve as a standard

for determining the contents of consciousness. The *place* in which objects are located can only be the same *place* in which consciousness is located. When we look at an object as such, we may think we have grasped it by direct intuition. But perceptual intuition is also conscious and cannot take place apart from the field of consciousness where contradiction is also found. We normally suppose intuition to be completely different from thought, but in order for something intuitive to sustain itself, it must be located in a kind of “*place* where it takes place.” This is the same *place* where thinking is located. When intuitive perceptions are reflected in the *place* where they are located, they become the content of thought. Such intuitions have to be considered part of what we call “concrete thought.” I do not see how consciousness can ever cut itself off from the background of universal concepts, which always play the role of reflecting mirrors. Even when we take the intuitive standpoint where the unity of subject and object is thought to obtain, consciousness is not far from the realm of universal concepts; on the contrary, it has arrived at its outer limits. Even to break through the realm of universal concepts and position oneself outside of it on a standpoint conscious of contradictions implies an objectification of those concepts. Such an objectified universal concept is nothing more than an already determined particularity; it does not even make sense to call it knowing. The *place* that reflects perceptual intuitions must also, and immediately, be the *place* that reflects the contradiction of a concept.

There will be a great many objections to acknowledging a field of consciousness—a *place*—behind intuition, but if intuition simply meant the absence of a subject and an object, it would amount to a simple object for thought. When we speak of perceptual intuition we already imply a distinction between the knower and the known as well as the union of the two. Moreover, the knower does not refer merely to a process of working or constructing. It has to envelop the known, or better, reflect it within itself. At the same time, the union of subject and object, or their absence, can only mean that the *place* in which they are located has become a true nothingness, a mirror that reflects.

We tend to think of particulars as objective and universals as merely subjective, but insofar as the particular represents a content of knowledge, it is also subjective. And if we allow an objective given for the particular, we might also allow an objective given for the universal. In Kantian philosophy, the objective given is simply an a priori form, but this presupposes that it is constituted by the constitutive act of the subject. Constituting is not, however, the same as knowing. Knowing requires reflecting a self within itself. The true a priori is one that constitutes the content of the self within the self. For this reason, in addition to constitutive form we may introduce a category of domain (what Lask called *Gebietskategorie*). It is through the self-determination of such a *place* that we are able to perceive universal concepts among a world of epistemologi-

cal objects. What we call a “universal concept” is a *place*’s self-determination or self-objectification.

Plato’s philosophy conceived of the realm of the universals as an objective reality, but it did not arrive at a universal that truly envelops all things and provides a *place* for them to arise. Instead “place” was taken to be something unreal, a “nothing.” Still, there has to be some such “place” at the ground of the intuition of the *ideas* themselves. Even the highest *idea* is no more something particular and determined; the very *idea* of the “good” cannot avoid being relative. Simply to posit the *place* of oppositional nothingness as a *place* of consciousness may lead one to conclude that it fades away in intuition. One may even refuse to recognize anything at all like a *place* in which intuition is located. For my part, I consider such a *place* not as enveloped by intuition but as enveloping it.

It is not only intuition that is located in the *place* of consciousness, but volition and action as well. This is why we are able to think of volition and action as conscious. Descartes considered extension and thought as secondary substances; motion he held to be mode of extension, and volition a mode of thought. In this sense, true extension would have to be a kind of physical space while true thought would have to be the kind of *place* we have been speaking of here. It may seem that being conscious and reflecting in the realm of objects of knowledge are one and the same, but strictly speaking, we cannot reflect the contents of what we feel and will onto the world of known objects, a world that always carries the sense of a determined *place*. The only *place* wherein emotion and will can be reflected is a still deeper and wider *place*. To say that what we feel and will is conscious does not mean it belongs to cognitive knowledge. The field of consciousness common to knowledge, emotion, and will cannot belong to any one of them. It expands infinitely to make room even for “intuition.” The deepest meaning of consciousness lies in the *place* of true nothingness. Whatever reflects conceptual knowledge belongs necessarily to a *place* of relative nothingness. In “intuition” we already stand in the *place* of true nothingness, but the *place* that brings about emotion and will must be a still deeper and broader *place* of nothingness. This is why we can conceive of an unconstrained nothingness at the ground of our will....

Only in the place of true nothingness can we see what is free. In the place of determined being all we can see is working. In the place of oppositional nothingness the workings of consciousness are visible, but in the place of ‘absolute nothingness’, true free will comes into view. Because oppositional nothingness is still a kind of being, conscious activity incurs interruptions: between yesterday’s consciousness and today’s there are breaks. True nothingness surpasses oppositional nothingness and envelops it so that from the standpoint of the acting subject, yesterday’s “I” and today’s “I” are immediately united. Conceived in these terms, will is without cause and effect; it must be eternal in itself. In

that case, it is possible to think of an unconscious in the background of will, but behind consciousness there can only be absolute nothingness. There must be something that negates not only all of being but nothingness as well. Conscious activity that comes to be and passes away in time is not consciousness. Consciousness must be an eternal present. In consciousness, the past is the past located in the present, the present is the present located in the present, and the future is the future located in the present. What we call the “present” is but the shadow of the present reflected in the present. It is not the experience of knowledge but the experience of will that clarifies for us the essence of such consciousness. Our consciousness becomes most luminous to us in our experience of will, and insofar as knowledge is conscious, we can think of it as a kind of willing.

[JWH]

THE ETERNAL IN ART AND POETRY

NISHIDA Kitarō 1932, 321–24, 329–30

We can think of time as flowing from an eternal past into an eternal future: it is born within eternity and passes away into eternity. Everything that appears in history takes shape against this backdrop of eternity. As located in history, we cannot but think of everything as flowing from an eternal past into an eternal future through causal connections. But if time determines itself as something enveloped in an “eternal now,” the idea of enveloping time and extinguishing it suggests that eternity is something personal.

It may be that all of culture is shaped by history against the backdrop of eternity, but this is especially so in the case of art. In much the same way, Michelangelo’s “unfinished sculptures” and Rodin’s statues were hewn out of blocks of marble; great art is a relief carved out of the marble of eternity. In comparison with the more personal things of life, such a background may seem rather impersonal, but the personal is not a question of matter as opposed to form, but of where and how something is given shape. Absent the backdrop of eternity, there is nothing personal. Michelangelo’s block of marble is not mere matter; it is part of the art. We think of the mind as seeing itself in itself. So, too, the “personal” is nothing other than the shadow cast by eternity into eternity.

Such a background is indispensable to all art; without it, there is no art. If various personal elements come to light through one’s relationship to things shaped against this background, so do various artistic elements. Eastern art is generally considered impersonal because this background is an essential part of the art. It reverberates in a formless, infinite echo, in faint traces of a voiceless infinity. In contrast, western art is completely shaped. In Greek sculpture, which

is seen as the actual embodiment of an *eidōs*, the beauty of the form is shaped down to the last tap of the chisel so as to leave nothing wanting. Still, one cannot help feeling that Greek sculpture is something lacking in depth. The eternity of the Greeks stands visibly before us; it does not reach around to embrace us from behind. When we enter Christian culture, recognition of the significance of personal reality lends depth and background to art. Early Christian art seems to show an interiority that calls to mind Buddhist paintings of the East. When we come to the art of Michelangelo with its sheer glory of inner strength, we cannot suppress the feeling of standing at the mouth of a deep volcano swirling around in black flames. His very art is possessed of a depth and background that can only be called sublime.

What of the background to Goethe's poetry? Of what stuff did he carve his poems? If we think of the eternity that forms the background to art in spatial terms, it can be imagined as two-dimensional or three-dimensional, as formed or as formless. The three-dimensional background could be distinguished further according to height and depth. Thus the inner recesses of Michelangelo's sculptures can be called deep in virtue of a strength that seems to surge up from the very pit of the underworld, whereas Dante's *Divine Comedy* seems to contain behind it a height that draws one's gaze upwards: the transcendent Christian God. What forms the backdrop to Goethe's poetry, however, seems to be rather two-dimensional, as if it were something formless. In referring to eastern painting, we speak of a distance that is alternately viewed as high or deep or level. What I am calling two-dimensional here, however, is a height without height, a depth without depth, a distance without distance. Art that has as its background a kind of formless, infinitely expanding level plane cannot avoid the tendency to slip from time to time into a denial of the human element. An infinite that is a mere negation of the finite can also be conceived of as a dark fate irreducible to anything human. The background to Goethe's poetry is not two-dimensional in this sense. It is something that embraces the human and, while not negating it, seems to dissolve it into itself. It is not a dissolution in the sense of forfeiting the individual. On the contrary, it is only against such a background that the echoes of the individual human can resound—a kind of sounding board of the human.

I am not qualified to speak of painting, but do not the backgrounds to Rembrandt's paintings show something of the sort? There is a depth there, but one very different from what we find in Michelangelo: softness rather than strength, a depth of feeling rather than a depth of power. As Verhaeren remarks at the end of his study of Rembrandt, "He brings the tears, the cries, the joys, the sufferings, and the hopes into our most inward selves to show us the God whom he is celebrating, a God troubled by the same confusion as we are." His "God" is like a sounding board of humanity. The idea of a soft depth may also remind

us of Leonardo Da Vinci, though he is rather more intellectual: the smile of his Mona Lisa may be mysterious, but it is not a smile of love.

The fact of Goethe's relationship to the philosophy of Spinoza is well known. Goethe recounts how already, as a young lad, he had knelt before the throne of nature, and once having read Spinoza's *Ethics*, he was so greatly moved by the teachings and the man that he remained close to them for the rest of his life. Goethe's serene and contemplative view of the human, resting as it did on the conviction that all things are one and that nature is God, strikes the same keynote as Spinoza's pantheism. And yet he was less a Spinozan than he himself or others have thought. Indeed, from one point of view he may even be called anti-Spinozan. Spinoza's pantheism was a plane, a two-dimensional eternity that negated the individual. His idea of substance was a complete rejection of the individual; the individual in his philosophy was no more than a modality of substance. There is nothing corresponding to time in his philosophy. No room is left for anything individual. His nature was a nature of mathematical necessity. He discarded Jewish theism, though his monism and his strict logical precision testify more than anything to his Jewish traits.

Goethe's pantheism, in contrast, always includes the individual. His nature does not deny the individual but finds it everywhere. It is like an infinite space, giving form to everything but itself without form.

.....

Goethe's universalism does not, like Spinoza's, deny the human person and reduce everything to a single substance. On the contrary, he sees all things in the human person. But neither does he view individual things as indestructible substances, as Leibniz proposes in his theory of monads:

Im grenzenlosen sich zu finden,
wird gern der Einzelne verschwinden.

Individuals are absorbed into the universal with no preestablished harmony between them.... For Goethe there is no within and without. Everything is just as it is. There is nothing where it comes from and nothing where it is going to. And yet where it enters nothing from nothingness, there is the faint echo of the human. Indeed, Goethe has turned Spinoza's universalism on its head. The resultant view of the human does not remind us of the intellectual love of the Stoic sage but of the love of Mary, of the eternal feminine.

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History does not just flow from the past into the future. True history also works the other way, flowing backwards from the future to the past—round and round in the eternal now. To think of history as vanishing into an eternal past in which everything becomes a shadow of eternity, yields something like Greek culture. To think of history as vanishing into an eternal future in which every-

thing is a road to eternity, yields something like Christian culture. But when we see history as a determination of the eternal now in which both past and future vanish into the present, everything that comes does not come from anywhere, and everything that goes does not go anywhere; things are eternal just as they are. Such is the current that flows at the bottom of the eastern culture in which we have been raised.

[JWH]

A RELIGIOUS VIEW OF THE WORLD

NISHIDA Kitarō 1945A, 316–17, 319–25, 330–6, 340–1, 355–6, 358–9 (20–1, 23–8, 84–5, 87–90, 94, 108–9, 111–12)

God

The real absolute is a 'self-identity of absolute contradiction'. This is the only way we can describe God in logical terms. God faces himself in the manner of an 'inverse correlation' as absolute self-negation, and contains absolute self-negation within itself; it exists in and of itself, and precisely because it is absolutely nothing, it is absolutely being. Being absolutely nothing and being, God is omnipotent and omniscient. This is why I say, "Because there is Buddha, there are sentient beings, and because there are sentient beings, there is Buddha. The created world exists because God the Creator exists; God exists because the created world exists." This kind of view should not be taken as similar to Barth's conception of God as absolute transcendence. Nor is it pantheistic....

The absolute always has its existence in its own self-negation: the real absolute becomes the relative. The one has its existence in the individual many. God is thoroughly present in this world through his self-negation. In this sense, God is thoroughly immanent. Thus, God does not exist anywhere in this world and yet there is nowhere where God does not exist.

Buddhism describes this paradox in the logic of '*soku-hi*'. In the *Diamond Sutra* we read: "All phenomena are not phenomena, therefore they are called phenomena" (T 8, 751b). Buddha is not Buddha, and therefore is Buddha; sentient beings are not sentient beings and therefore are sentient beings. Zen master Daitō Kokushi wrote of this relationship: "Separated by an eternity, yet not separated even an instant; face to face the whole day, yet not face to face even an instant." A God that is merely transcendent and self-content is not a real God. God must be thoroughly characterized by *kenosis* or self-emptying. The truly dialectical God is totally transcendent-and-immanent, immanent-and-transcendent. As such, God is the real absolute. It is said that God created the world out of love. God's absolute love must be essential to him as his absolute self-negation; it is not an *opus ad*

extra. This view, though not pantheistic, may be characterized as “panentheistic,” although I do not subscribe to objective logic. My way of thinking is absolutely contradictorily self-identical and thoroughly dialectical. Hegel’s dialectic did not depart from the standpoint of objective logic. That was why his thought was interpreted pantheistically by Hegelians of the left. In contrast, the Buddhist thought of the ‘*prajñāpāramitā*’ tradition is thoroughly dialectical....

The World

This absolutely contradictorily self-identical world expresses itself in itself through self-negation; and it forms itself affirmatively by way of the negation of negation; in other words, it is creative. I use the word *world* to express such a thoroughly *topological being* that does not stand opposed to us. One may also call it absolute being. (In my discussion of mathematics, I speak of it as a “contradictorily self-identical entity.”) In this contradictorily self-identical world, the self-expression of the absolute being is none other than God’s revelation, and its self-formation is God’s will. The absolutely contradictorily self-identical world of the absolute present mirrors itself within itself, has its focal points within itself, and forms itself while revolving around these dynamic focal points. The trinitarian relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit may be seen here. We, as the “individual many” and unique individuals, determine the world and express the absolute. Again as the self-expression of the absolute, we become the self-projecting points of the world. As the creative elements of the creative world, we continue to form the creative world. In this way, one can see that our existence is personal and grounded on a trinitarian character of the world.... It is the world in which individuals are everywhere active. Moving from the created to the creating, it is the world of the absolute will. For this reason, it is also the world of absolute evil....

Evil

It may sound extremely paradoxical, but a God who is truly absolute must be demonic in a certain respect. Only as such can God be said to be both omniscient and omnipotent. Yahweh is a God who demanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his only son (see Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*). He demanded of Abraham the denial of his personhood itself. If God merely stands against evil and fights it, though he may conquer evil, he is a relative God. A God that is simply a transcendent supreme good is but an abstract notion. An absolute God must contain absolute negation in itself; it must confront that which is most evil. A God that saves the most wicked is the truly absolute God. The highest form must inform the lowest matter. Absolute *agape* must extend to the most wicked. In an inverse correlation God dwells secretly even within the heart of the most

evil. Of course, by saying this, I do not mean to do away with the distinction between good and evil....

Infinite Sphere

I have often compared this absolutely contradictorily self-identical 'place'—this world of the absolute present, this historical space—to an infinite sphere whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere. Lacking any ground of its own, this contradictorily self-identical sphere mirrors itself within itself. On the one hand, its infinitely centripetal direction is the transcendent God. Therein one sees the absolute subjectivity of the historical world. Its centrifugal direction, on the other hand, is infinitely negative and demonic. Therefore, such a world is thoroughly filled with demonic elements. As individuals of such a world, we are both demonic and divine. A theology of the "logic of *place*" is neither theism nor deism; it is neither spiritualism nor naturalism. It is historical.

Divine Grace

What makes the self fundamentally religious? Why is it that the deeper we reflect on the ground of our existence, that is, the more we become self-aware, the more we feel the need for religion arising from the depths of our being and that our struggles with religious questions intensify? Because we are an absolutely self-contradictory existence.

.....

This world, where negation is simultaneously affirmation, is the world of a thoroughgoing inverse determination, of inverse correlation. God and human beings stand in an opposition of inverse correlation. Our religious awareness does not actually arise from within us; rather it is evoked by the voice of God or Buddha. It is God or Buddha at work; it arises from the elemental ground out of which the self comes into being. As Augustine put it in the beginning of his *Confessions*, "For you made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you"....

Morality is undoubtedly the highest human value. But religion is not necessarily mediated or underscored by morality. In a religious relationship where the self stands opposite an absolute being that is the source of its life, the wise and the foolish, the good and the wicked, are all the same. As has been said, "Even the good can attain salvation, how much more so the wicked." In our fundamentally self-contradictory world, occasions leading us to embrace religion abound. Religion is the absolute reversal of values. In this sense, one may say that for a self-righteous moralist to enter religion may be much more difficult than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle (Matt 19: 24)....

Knowledge and Spirituality

In the act of knowing, the self transcends itself; it stands outside itself. Conversely, the thing known becomes part of the self and determines the self. The workings of cognition come about in this contradictory self-identity of the knower and the known.... This is precisely what I mean by “acting intuition.” At the depths of our self-awareness self, there is something that transcends our self. The deeper our self-awareness grows, the more this holds true. The true self functions “immanently ‘*qua*’ transcendently, transcendently *qua* immanently;” that is, in a contradictorily self-identical manner. Intuition is definitely present; acting intuition is the dialectical process mediated by this kind of negation.... If the idea of “acting intuition” is understood to mean “intellectual intuition,” it would amount to no more than a distortion of the Kantian position. When it comes to things like aesthetic intuition, the self is viewed as something objectified. My acting intuition looks at things the other way around; it sees things from a perspective that transcends the conscious self. The fact is, there is something at the ground of the self that transcends the conscious self. Suzuki Daisetsu* calls it “spirituality”³ and says that the power of the will transcends itself when sustained by such spirituality....

In psychological terms, the source of the self is neither simply sensory nor volitional; it is an absolutely contradictory self-identity of the two. For this reason, embracing religious faith requires an overturning of one’s standpoint. It is a “conversion,” but not in the usual sense of a process of reorientation. The self is neither animal nor angelic, and that is why it can lose its way and why it can turn around to find solace within that absolutely contradictory self-identity. Conversion is the “lateral leap of faith” of which Shinran* spoke. It is a circular movement.

In religious conversion or spiritual liberation, we do not leave behind the self-conscious self with all its desires and rationality. We do not become “unconscious.” Rather, we become even more acutely self-aware and dwell in the intelligible realm. We do not abandon the judging, discriminating self. Suzuki refers to it as a “nondiscriminating discrimination.” Spirituality is this nondiscrimination beyond discrimination.... The self comes into being as the affirmation of the absolute self-negation of God....

Eternal Life

The self resides in the knowledge of its own eternal death. But at that moment of self-knowledge, the self is already in eternal life. When we penetrate through to the ground of our existence, we embrace religious faith. This is our

3. [The reference is to SUZUKI Daisetsu, 1944B.]

“conversion.” This is possible only as the self-determination of an absolute being, as something enacted by God’s power. Faith is grace. At the very foundation of the self, we hear the voice of God calling. This is why I say that in the depths of the self there is something that transcends us and establishes our self. For this reason “birth is no-birth,” and “‘birth-and-death’ is eternity.”

.....

That the self returns to the absolute by penetrating to its own elemental ground does not mean taking leave of reality. On the contrary it means arriving at the bottom of historical reality. It means that we become thoroughly historical individuals as self-determinations of the absolute present. In the words of a medieval Zen master, “Having attained to the ‘dharma-body’, there is nothing special there, and I am no different from me, Makabe no Heishirō.” Nansen says, “The ordinary mind, that is the way” (*Mumonkan* 19); and Linji says: “As to the ‘buddha-dharma’, no effort is necessary. You have only to be ordinary, with nothing to do—defecating, urinating, wearing clothes, eating food, and lying down when tired” (*Rinzairoku* 1.13).

It would be a great mistake to read these words as disimpassioned. They are a total engagement that extracts a drop of blood at every step. To annihilate the discriminating mind does not mean that we become indiscriminate. It means, as Dōgen* said, that we become truly as nothing:

To model yourself after the way of the buddhas is to model yourself after yourself. To model yourself after yourself is to forget yourself. To forget yourself is to be authenticated by the totality of phenomena. (*Shōbōgenzō, Genjōkōan*)

It is not different with the pursuit of scientific truth. It is what I call “seeing a thing by becoming it, hearing a thing by becoming it.” What we must negate is the dogmatism of a self conceived abstractly; what we must sever is the attachment to a self conceived in absolute terms.

The more religious we become, the more we forget ourselves, exercise our reason, and engage our heart. To be enslaved by any kind of formalism would mean a degeneration of religion. A creed is nothing less than a blade that cuts off life at the roots.

Self, God, and the World

The self, as the self-negation of the absolute, faces the absolute utterly in the manner of an inverse correlation: the more individual we are, the more we stand in relation to that absolute one that is God. We face God as the extreme limits of individuality, and when we stand in relation to God, we do so in a contradictorily self-identical way, at the extreme limits of the self-determination of the historical world into individuals. For this reason, each of

us faces God as *the* representative of human beings of the eternal past and the eternal present. We face the absolute present as momentary determinations of that absolute present. In this way, our existence may be likened to the innumerable centers of an infinite sphere whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere.

When the absolute determines itself as the absolutely contradictory self-identity of the many and the one, the world, as the groundless self-determination of absolute nothingness, is volitional. The world is that of a holistic absolute will, and, at the same time, the wills of the innumerable individuals stand opposed to the whole.

This is how the world comes into being...

Freedom

That our every action is eschatological as the self-determination of the absolute present means, in Linji's words, that we "act with our whole body." Conversely, it means that "as to 'buddha-dharma', no effort is necessary" and that the Buddhist path is "ordinary" (*Rinzairoku* 1.18, 22, 12). I understand "eschatological" in a sense different from the Christian meaning. I understand it not in the sense of a transcendent object, but as the self-determination of the absolute present in the sense of an immanent transcendence. In the depths of the self, there is nothing; we are utterly nothing and respond to the absolute by way of an inverse correlation. To transcend ourselves always and everywhere, from the ground of our self-existence to the tip of our individuality, and to respond to the absolute—this means that in that act we transcend everything. We transcend the historical world, which is the self-determination of the absolute present; we transcend the past and the future. In so doing, we are absolutely *free*. This is the state that Panshan Baoji⁴ described as "wielding a sword in the air," the same standpoint of freedom that Dostoevsky sought...

Shinran said that Amida's vow was made for him alone. The more individual we become, the more this statement holds true. Therefore, we have our existence by way of an inverse correlation. There, we have the standpoint of the bottomless "ordinary level." This is the standpoint of the inverse-correlation as absolute negation *qua* absolute affirmation. Moreover, as the standpoint of the self-determination of the absolute present itself, this is the standpoint of absolute freedom where every point is an Archimedean $\pi\upsilon\upsilon$ $\sigma\tau\omega$, the standpoint at which "wherever you stand is the true place" (*Rinzairoku* 1.12). The more individual we become, the more we stand absolutely freely at this ordinary level. So long as we are governed by the instinct from without or by reason from

4. [Panshan Baoji (720–814), a Rinzai monk cited in the *Hekiganroku*, case 37.]

within, we are not genuinely free. What I mean by freedom here is diametrically opposed to the modern western notion of freedom. Human freedom is not part of a Euclidean geometric entity.

Religion as Symbolic Expression

The standpoint of religion consists in a radical appropriation of the standpoint of the eternal past and the eternal future of this historical world, the standpoint where the beginning and the end of human beings are connected, the standpoint that is deepest and shallowest, furthest and nearest, greatest and smallest—that is, the “ordinary level.” *To be religiously aware means never losing sight of how human beings come to be human.* The standpoint of religion, because it is the standpoint of standpoints, has no fixed content of its own. If it did, it would be no more than superstition. Religious creeds need to be understood in a fully symbolic manner, as immediate self-expressions of our historical existence. Only in this way can symbols take on religious significance. The real end of religion is to grasp eternal life, which has no ground of its own. It consists of embracing the ordinary level at which it can be said, “I am no different from me, Makabe no Heishirō.” Here all standpoints are negated and all standpoints come to be. It is a standpoint without a standpoint. What is more, it is there that infinitely great wisdom and great action appear. As it is said, “a drop of water from the deep source is inexhaustible.” The standpoints of truth, good, and beauty also emerge from here.

[YM]

MY LOGIC

NISHIDA Kitarō 1945B, 431–2

After long years of reflection I believe I have been able to clarify the mode of thought of the historically acting self—that is to say, the logic of historical creativity. Up until now logics have been constructed from the standpoint of the abstract, conscious self. Through my logic I have also tried to consider a variety of basic questions related to natural sciences, morality, and religion. I further believe that I have succeeded in finding a framework for putting questions that have not been taken up by previous logics, or at least for indicating a way to clarify them. The neglect has been due to a lack of complete logical formulations. Thought cannot be given to concrete things from the standpoint of abstract logic.

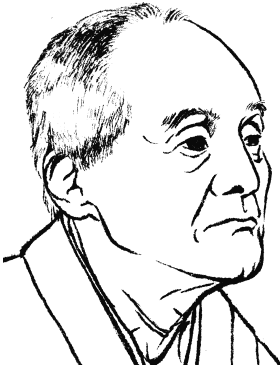
My logic, however, has not been understood by the academic world, or rather I should say it has not been given the slightest consideration. Not that there

have not been criticisms, but they have approached what I am saying from a different standpoint, twisting its meaning and reducing it to an object of critique. The criticisms have not looked at things from my standpoint. A critique from a different perspective that does not understand what it is criticizing is not a genuine criticism. I am looking for criticisms that begin by taking what I have to say from my point of view.

Some people say my logic is not a logic, but a religion or something of the sort. If that is so, I have a question for them: What is logic then? No one is likely to claim that Aristotle's logic is not a logic. Kant claimed that logic has not advanced or retreated so much as a single step after Aristotle, whose logic they seem to consider definitive. Aristotelian logic appears to be the formulation of the linguistic self-expression of a world expressing itself symbolically—logic *par excellence*. Kant's own transcendental logic is no longer Aristotle's. And Hegel's dialectical logic stands opposed to what Aristotle took the discipline of logic to be. Contradiction is not permitted in Aristotelian logic, while in a dialectical logic, it is the proper formulation of self-development. Are not the logics of Kant and Hegel logic? We have to try giving some thought to what logic is. It is a formulation of our thinking. To make clear what logic is, we have to begin from the essence of our thinking.

[JWH]

TANABE Hajime 田辺 元 (1885–1962)



Tanabe Hajime was first drawn to philosophy through his study of mathematics and the natural sciences. His early work on the philosophy of science brought him into contact with the neo-Kantians, which inspired him to rethink Kant's transcendental logic in the light of Husserl's phenomenology, Bergson's vitalism, and the original philosophy of Nishida Kitarō*. After Nishida invited him to join the faculty at Kyoto University, he was able to fulfill his dream of studying in Europe. Although quickly disillusioned with Husserl, he was befriended by the young Heidegger.

After returning to Kyoto in 1924, his interest was piqued in Hegel, which he read for several years with his students in the original German. Out of this he distilled his idea of "absolute mediation," which in turn led to a novel interpretation of Nishida's concept of 'absolute nothingness'. In 1927 he succeeded Nishida in the chair of philosophy, but within three years published criticisms of his mentor that would sour their relationship forever.

A combination of dissatisfaction with the abstractness of his own thought and the break from Nishida, who had been developing a "logic of 'place'" based on the self-awareness of absolute nothingness, Tanabe began to work out his own position, which he called a "logic of the specific." His aim was to rescue the logical category of species from its weak position in the syllogistic minor to a more prominent status. Inspired by Bergson's critique of the "closed society," he sought the grounds for a critique of the irrationality that kept an ethnic group closed in on itself, and at the same time recognized that there was no way to be rational except by working through the specific limitations imposed on thought by virtue of social existence.

Before these ideas could be worked out fully, Japan plunged itself into war in the Pacific. Tanabe responded by focusing attention on the identity of the Japanese nation. Persuaded that the universal community of humanity did not offer a suitable locus for the absolute to make itself manifest in history, he tried to insert the nation into that role. He argued that at the level of the nation, a people could countenance the inevitable irrationalities of social existence and then spread its enlightenment to other nations, and that Japan represented a "supreme archetype" to set this process going—an idea that fit handily into the wartime ideology of Japan's aggressions into neighboring lands of Asia.

Although long insisting that subtleties of his thought escaped the attention of both his critics and the military ideologues, Tanabe made an about-face in the closing years of the war, turning his philosophy in the direction of a critique of all philosophy, or what he called a "metanoetics." After initial attempts to resurrect his

logic of the specific, he all but set it aside after retirement in order to focus his attention on the borderlands between philosophy and religion.

The following passages on his logic illustrate the recondite style in which Tanabe was accustomed to write, rarely pausing to introduce a concrete example from ordinary life and paraphrasing in ever more dense prose. A second selection shows his later espousal of Dōgen's* and Shinran's* thought, a precursor to the proposal of a philosophy that exhausts itself through absolute critique. The final passage from the preface to his *Philosophy as Metanoetics* explains the personal background to that proposal.

[JWH]

THE LOGIC OF THE SPECIFIC

TANABE Hajime 1935, 70–1, 128–30; 1936, 248–58;
1937, 449–63, 466–73; 1939A, 27–8

The Logic of Social Existence

Consider a philosophy whose standpoint is one of absolute affirmation transformed and mediated by absolute negation, the negation that underlies the painful awareness of finitude that dawns on us when we look the reality of evil in the eye. For such a philosophy, social existence is first of all a problem of particular, finite, relative societies. Only then does the need arise to extend that structure of opposition and negation to mediate the human community as a whole. This mediation is nothing other than the logic of the specific. We begin, then, with a clear distinction between the *generic* society of the human race and particular *specific* societies....

Granted the presence of “irrational elements” submerged within the individual, it is only by recognizing their mediation in a specific and particular society that one can actually speculate about these elements concretely. If that were not the case, the meaning of the word “irrational” would ring hollow and everything we say about it would be vacuous. Lacking the mediation of opposing rational elements, the irrational would become absolutely irrational, and our rationalizing would come to a standstill. The individual presupposes the specific and is grounded in the life of the specific as its direct and determining matrix. The self that stands in opposition to this surrounding matrix and wellspring of its vitality expropriates the determinations of the specific and monopolizes them for itself. In seeking to usurp what belongs to the ground of the self, it sets itself up as an “other” and separates itself from its ground in the specific. In the freedom of rebellious separation, the irrationality of “individual existence” comes about. The individual is necessarily an individual within the specific; there is no such thing as an individual cut off from the specific.

The absolute unity of the genus, however, negates this kind of individual freedom, and as its mediator, sublates the primordial unity of the species to the status of an absolute negation. The reality of the genus is a function of its absolute negating mediation. Because the genus is also mediated by an implicit unity of the specific and is manifest directly as such, in its phenomenal form of existence it seems to be identical with the specific: apart from the species there is no genus. And yet, contrary to what we refer to as the specific in virtue of its particular aspect, in virtue of its universal aspect it can be thought of as something that does not supersede genus. From its etymological roots the word *genus* is associated with “generation,” which implies a blood relation in the same way that *species* is normally thought of in terms of blood and family groupings. But if we stop there, we have no reason to distinguish genus essentially from species, thus completely relativizing the difference between the two. It is not genus that stands in true opposition to a species understood in such an essentially generic sense. Rather, as we have said, it is the individual, with a unity mediated through absolute negation, that opposes the direct unity of the species and stands apart from it. Only then can genus and species be essentially distinguished. It is the separation of the individual itself that effects the distinction.

Now the individual, on the other hand, presupposes the specific, opposes it, and in negating it, mediates it. Hence the logic of genus is necessarily a synthesis of the logic of the specific and the logic of the individual. To conceive of the unity of the genus as unmediated is to turn it directly into something specific, which is a negation of logic. To avoid this confusion, the logic of the specific needs to precede the logic of genus and individual, and to be seen as mediating them. Given that in a logic of dialectical mediation nothing is simply immediate and everything from the start is involved in an absolute mutual mediation, if the specific does not presuppose at the same time an individual opposing it, it forfeits its meaning of specific. Similarly, if the species does not imply a mediation that sublates the individual in the genus, clearly it cannot be called specific. Nonetheless, such a logic of absolute mediation requires first of all that the development of a logic of the specific follow from the essence of the specific itself. Logic, by means of its essence as absolute mediation, requires from the start the companion mediation of a logic of the specific. Without a logic of the specific, logic loses its substance as logic.

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The religious belief that awareness of the finite relativity of finite relative things is the first step towards the ‘transference of merit’ from something infinite that transcends finite relativity is the self-evident basis on which all argumentation rests. “Finite” means that whatever determines something lies outside of it; “relativity” means that the stability of something depends on the mediation of an other. In this sense, species and individuals as we have thought

of them up until now are finite and relative. Obviously, the individual that contains within itself an element of negation and arises only through the mediation of the specific is relative and finite. The same can be said of species. The sense of having the specificity of a common society is only possible by supposing a determination of the individual in which the individual tries to reverse the role of the specific as set in opposition to itself and by thus breaking down its unity. At first glance, the community that has as its principle the immediate determination of the will to life appears, in consequence of that immediateness, to be infinite and to possess infinite life. In fact, since its immediateness is highly abstract and lacks sufficient awareness of its own finiteness and relativity, it may be characterized as the exact opposite of an infinite absolute....

As we noted earlier, the view that posits an infinite absolute as something unmediated and seeks to understand the emergence of finite, relative things as simply its determinations is an abstraction that tends to absolutize finite, relative things and then reverse course to unify them. By ignoring the mediating role of the specific in the structure of the individual, we end up in the gross distortion of confusing the absolute universal that forms the ground of the conceptual interaction of individuals in an I-Thou opposition with the relative universal directly implied in a community. We have seen how, as a result of the structure by which the individual acknowledges itself as an object of mediation, that is, by which it recognizes the specific only to reverse its determination and expropriate it exclusively, the opposition of I and Thou takes real, concrete shape. For this reason, a conceptual realization of the universal based on the simple opposition and interaction of an I and Thou is at once able to clarify that the I and Thou that stand opposed in what is in fact a relationship of exclusive expropriation, do not bring about the unity of a concrete universal. The reciprocal awakening of I and Thou hint at the mediation of an absolute universal, but since this does not include the mediation of the specific, neither does it include any actual confrontation. It effects a kind of conceptual integration that seems to provide an immediate basis for a union of neighborly love, and yet the exclusivity of the subjective ego with its will to expropriate the mediating power of the specific works against this. In order to sublimate this opposition, a way must be devised to negate effectively the isolating, exclusivistic will to power. Without taking this way of negation into account, talk of abandoning the ego will not get very far beyond, what shall I say, simple feelings of nostalgia....

Renouncing ego does not consist simply in denying the desire to belong to one's own inner ego. The true meaning of letting go of ego lies in denying the egoity that seeks the superior domination of the ego vis-à-vis the other in one's relations with others. Failing to take the will to power in the social dimension into consideration when explaining the abandonment of ego is simple sentimentalism. Nonetheless, the will to power is the will of a two-dimensional

individual bent on mediating the will to life of the species. Consideration of the will to power entails a self-awareness of being mediated by the specific and of standing opposed to the elements that deny that mediation. This leads to the egoity of the individual being mediated by the finite, particular, and direct totality of the specific.

No attempt to explain the absolute unity of the genus apart from the mediation of the specific can avoid ringing hollow. A genus that synthesizes the qualities of being in-itself and for-itself only emerges in the form of an absolute negation—a negation of a negation—that sublates the individual that sets itself up in a negative opposition to others by including the mediation of the implicit, direct unity of the species in the process. Because this entails denying the simple isolation of the individual and sublating the direct opposition of I and Thou and bringing it to the unity of an absolute universal, it is the realization of an absolute totality. However, as is the case in the direct unity of the species, this is not a closed, continuous unity but an open society that signals a unity in which individuals isolated from one another by mutual negation are absolutely negated. If the closed unity is a totality of being, the open unity may be called a totality of 'nothingness'. This coincides precisely with Bergson's distinction between the two types of societies. But unlike Bergson, for whom both types exist apart in relative opposition, the two must mediate each other. That is to say, open societies serve as a sublating liberation for closed societies, correspond to a genus that only exists when they are correlative to closed societies, and necessarily entail the mediation of the specific.

The Logic of the Specific and a World Scheme

In a logic of absolute mediation, logic is mediated along with its negative form of intuition, so that logic is made to include intuition as a constitutive element just as intuition includes logic. Applying Kant's notions here, we might say that logic is schematized and intuition is conceptualized. The scheme of transcendental conceptual power mediates the categories of logic and the pure forms of intuition. For the logic of absolute mediation, too, what mediates itself to intuition also takes place in a scheme. Logic necessarily includes a theory of schematization. Kant's schematic theory realized the logic of absolute mediation from a transcendental philosophical standpoint and as such belongs to the most dialectical part of his critique of reason.... But the schema cannot be simply temporal as it is in Kant. The obscurity of his schematic theory, of course, stems in part from the difficulties of trying to make dialectical things blossom into analytical logic, but not a few problems arise from the abstraction of the temporal scheme. The logic of absolute mediation does not, like transcendental logic, require a temporal scheme but a "world scheme."

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There is no need to repeat the point that the concreteness of a world scheme in contrast to a temporal one lies in the exteriority of the spatial. Accordingly, the individual existence that arises from the standpoint of a world scheme, unlike the abstract person of existential philosophy, is a concrete, moral human existence that realizes itself in historical society in the form of a substratum that is at the same time a subject. For this moral human subject within the substratum of historical society, the world scheme does not stop at the mediation of knowledge as the temporal scheme does. Not only does it go beyond the simple world of nature to serve the critical establishment of knowledge in concrete historical society, it also serves to mediate awareness of the praxis of the subject.

As we have seen again and again, knowledge and praxis—corresponding to the substrate dimension and the subjective dimension of absolute mediation—are unified through absolute negation. It follows that knowledge, even at the most abstract level of knowledge of the natural world, is not something that can be exhausted by a simple conceptual system of passive perceptions like that found in Kant's epistemology. To say that the role of sense intuition in knowledge is one of passivity-in-activity does not in any sense mean that it stops at a kind of two-sided conscious unity. To call it active implies volitional action. Without bodily action it cannot be called active. Sense intuition, too, includes an activeness that is determined and at the same time determining. The experimental procedures of today's natural sciences are a development along this same line. Nor is there simple passivity in our knowledge of nature. Action always requires the lead of knowledge in order to be self-aware. The running of experiments is conditioned by, and in turn itself conditions, theoretical assumptions. Knowledge of the natural world develops by novel theories emerging on a standpoint of generic universality through the negative mediation of the historically specific existence of the subjective activity entailed in the conducting of experiments. This can only take place within the mediation of a world scheme. World schemes, in the sense described above, are mediated by epistemological awareness and at the same time are mediated by knowledge itself. This is because absolute mediation entails a knowledge-in-awareness and an awareness-in-knowledge. Thus the theory of world schemes does not, like the theory of temporal schemes, stop at mediating the awareness of knowledge and intellectual human existence, but itself mediates knowledge and subjective existence. It is, moreover, mediation of knowledge and action. This absolute mediation is a logic, and yet in the immediacy of its role as an element negating that mediation, it takes the form of an explanatory world scheme. Therefore, the theory of world schemes can be called the dimension of subjective perspective in logic. It is the dimension of logic that appears directly in the subjective self-awareness of the individual.

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I refer to the logic that sets up absolute mediation by correlating it to this theory of world schemes as a *logic of the specific*. One might also call it a logic of the substrate. From the start, the immediacy of the “species” is restricted to its role as an element of mediation within the logic of absolute mediation; it does not consist in any other direct and unmediated state apart from mediation. Like the substrate, it is nothing other than an aspect of mediation. We know the specific substrate in this kind of immediacy in which it mediates the subjective individual and the totality of the genus, and in turn is mediated by them. Through a negative mediation with the subject, it is then sublated to the totality of the genus. The self-awareness achieved in this mediation of mediation is the special mark of the logic of absolute mediation, setting is clearly apart from both an individual logic of nothingness that promotes an absolute mediation, as well as from a logic of the totality that seeks to transcend the dialectic.

As an immediacy of negative mediation, species is not simply a presupposition of mediation; the collapse of the self-alienation of mediation itself into immediacy is likewise something specific. Because the logic of mediation locates this element of negation in the category of species, it is self-negating and at the same time dialectical. For only in a logic of the specific does mediation become an absolute dialectic. The mediational state of the specific posited midway between individual and genus unfolds dialectically, through the logic of the copula, into a logic of the specific. In this case it is a formal trait of logic. The inferential nature of logic, what we might call the necessary development of the copula, no longer possesses a formal meaning like that within the form of the fixed syllogistic deduction where the species occupies the place of the minor term. In absolute mediation, mediation is also mediated, which obviously entails a circularity in the deduction. In a dialectical logic the circularity is strained and broken by awareness of the contradiction, and yet at the same time the contradiction adjusts itself to the circularity just as it is. We may define dialectics as a synthesis in which contradiction and circularity are sublated through absolute negation.

Here again we see the same structure as the world scheme. The world is a contradictory existence, and at the same time it is something that can sublimate this contradiction in a circular unity and come to self-awareness of its absolute unity through the mediation of negation. The logic of the specific mediates the theory of world schemes to make itself into a philosophy of the world. This is a *Weltphilosophie* that takes a position directly opposed to the irrational, self-reflective, interpretative standpoint of a *Lebensphilosophie*. The logical nature of absolute mediation is that of a *Weltdialektik*, synthesizing the contradictory development and circular unity of the world in a nothingness of absolute negation and bringing it to self-awareness as a unity of motion-in-stillness. The

world reaches awareness of itself in the transcending act of denying itself. In this way the difficulties a vitalistic philosophy faces for its lack of transcendence are disposed of.

However, as in the case of a logic of nothingness and a logic of totality, we must strictly distinguish philosophical theories of the world from any standpoint that involves the unmediated intuition of a transcendent absolute—be it ‘absolute nothingness’ or absolute being. Such views are in no sense a *Weltphilosophie*; indeed they champion a philosophy of world transcendence. Now, there is no way to transcend the world without being correlative to the world. World-transcending philosophies, in their negative or affirmative positing of an unmediated transcendent absolute, are reduced to mysticism. They cannot but negate a logic whose essence is absolute mediation. Only a philosophy of the world that brings the immanence of vitalism and transcendence of mysticism to an immanent-transcendent mediation can see a logic of absolute mediation through to term. The ontology needed to bring this about is not that of classical natural ontologies, in which the substrate and subject are identified as a *hypokeimenon* so that there is no subject apart from the substrate. But neither is it like recent personalist ontologies, in which the substrate is reduced to the subject which alone is recognized as truly existing. It is rather an ontology in which true existence is seen as a dialectical unity of substrate-in-subject, subject-in-substrate. This is an ontology of historical society, an ontology of “world existence.” From a standpoint that lays particular stress on the substrate of species as the core of mediation, it is possible to construct an ontology of historical society or a theory of social existence suited to a logic of the specific, a logic of the substrate. For a philosophy of the world, the theory of “the social as existence” is an especially important task, one that it seeks to elaborate through a logic of the specific. There is no returning to the standpoint of the ancients for whom subject and substrate, which share a similar etymology, were not yet distinguished. In contrast to the subjectivism of recent personalist thinking, in which the substrate is ignored, we refer to the logic of the specific as a logic of the substrate in order to highlight this special characteristic of restoring the meaning of the substrate as a mediator of the subject. A philosophy of the world comes about through a logic of the substrate. This is nothing other than the realization of a logic of absolute mediation.

A Clarification of the Logic of the Specific

A few years ago I raised the question of a logic of the specific to serve as a logic of social existence. Two main things brought me to think along this line, one of them practical, the other logical.

Regarding the first, it seemed to me that of late and in various countries the

sudden rise of ethnic unity and the power of state control contained something completely unintelligible from a standpoint that tries to see society as a mere interaction of individuals. Not only the received categories of interactive relationship used in so-called formal sociology, but also the phenomenon of human relations seen in recent hermeneutic phenomenology were incapable of explaining fully the controlling power of this kind of ethnic nationalism. To this end, I reasoned that it was necessary to go beyond the psychological and phenomenological state of individual consciousness to acknowledge not only the existing situation but also its underlying theory of existence. What the French romantics called *choses* had to be seen at the ground of national societies.

Society is not exhausted by relationships that arise after the emergence of individual persons or simultaneously with them. My idea was that if society possesses a substrate independent of the birth and death of individuals and to that extent must preexist them, then it is not something that can unify individuals by controlling them. Individuals are part of a race in virtue of being born within this social substrate and enveloped by it, for which reason I thought to call it a *racial substrate*.

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Even granting that the controlling power that a society exercises vis-à-vis the individual stems from such a racial substrate, we cannot suppose that the moral duty of the individual is exhausted in subservience to the controls of nature. For the individual possessed of reason, there is no moral restraint without a confluence of outer coercion and inner autonomy. For someone like me who cannot but believe in the reasonableness of reality, the controls of a national society must also be converted, through reason, into autonomy. This is something that cannot be managed simply by force but requires a rational ground. As I understand reason, real individuals who elude all controls that restrict them and take on themselves the universal laws from within the self as criteria for the regulation of will do not exhaust the capacity of formal lawfulness. The unrestricted universality of reason is not merely something abstract but must constitute a concrete totality. The ultimate regulations of a self viewed as an objective entity contain contradictions and fall into antinomy, and as a result the self ends up in nothingness. Hence, reality itself needs to complete the self subjectively as a totality, and unrestricted universality must come about as a self-in-reality. In Kantian terms, the ultimate self-negation that lands the logical, objective regulations of the real self in nothingness by means of the antinomies is at the same time nothing other than an absolute negation seen as the subjective self-affirmation of practical reason: dying in the logical sense of pure reason signals a conversion to an absolute negation that is living in practice. Therefore, unless we begin with the opposition of the individual self resisting the control of the social substrate, we cannot arrive at the reasonableness of reality.

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Now, the conflict between the individual and the specific substrate that opposes it in negation—what has been converted into an affirmation of the absolutely negating subject at the extreme where the two interact in negation—constitutes a correlative identity of the nation as a subjective totality and the individual. It is here that the conversion of subject-in-substrate takes place and the system of totality-in-individual is born. In this way the nation, insofar as it depends on a principle of mediating synthesis, is a higher totality than that of a contract among individuals. As a result it is necessarily coercive and yet at the same time this coercion is directly converted to a freedom, so that the individual, while being negated, on one hand, is affirmed on the other. It must be a system that takes the form of a self-negation which entails a self-realization. The concrete structure of social existence as a rational reality is something of this sort. It is realized at the standpoint of praxis, where a negative synthesis of the rational and the real comes about in a general sense; it is an embodiment of the dialectic of the acting subject. It must also be logical, since existence, logic, and action constitute a syllogistic unity. Here Jellinek's⁵ two-dimensional theory of the nation is raised to the level of a dialectic, so that by mediating the aspect of social existence and the aspect of law in praxis, this dialectic is recognized as the essence of the nation.

If one accepts such a standpoint, my view, which may at first appear to be an extreme nationalism, in no sense leads simply to an irrational and totalitarian nationalism. In arguing for a self-sacrifice that entails a self-realization, a control that entails freedom, I believe it should be easy to see that my aim is the construction of a nation as a subjective reality of a totality that depends on the spontaneous cooperation of each of its members. In referring to such a nation as a humanity-nation, I do not mean to imply anything like making the entire human race into a single nation. What I have in mind is a plurality of ethnic nations, each of which possesses a human universality in the sense that each mediates the rational individuality of the citizens that make it up, so that the nation is ethnic and at the same time correlative to the individual. The idea is not to exclude the specific control of a nation's people, which is impossible, or to combine ethnic nations into an international federation, but to restore it to what Bergson calls an "open society" by mediating it through the absolute negating character of the individuals that comprise it, so that the nation indirectly acquires the character of the human race.

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5. [Georg Jellinek (1851–1911) was a German philosopher of law who opposed the dominant culturalism and nationalism of the day to argue for a theory of universal human rights.]

At the outset of this essay I summarized the two motives that led me to propose the logic of the specific. First, I sought the underlying reasons for the control a national society exercises over its individuals and from there tried to ground its control in a practical demand in order to make rational sense of the attitude we take towards society.... The results of my attempt to clarify the logic of the specific from this direction were of a general nature, going beyond the merely practical meaning attached to changing realities in order to speak to the method of philosophy as such. But from the start, a second motive for considering a logic of the specific was present in addition to this purely logical, speculative one. I should like now to elaborate.

In a dialectical logic the unity of opposites is central, but there is no being to mediate that unity; it is unmediated and direct. Basically there is nothing to unify being and nothingness, affirmation and negation. But when we pause to consider the idea of an immediate unification of being and nothingness, we see that the two are originally set in absolute opposition, separated from one another by an unbridgeable abyss of negation. There is no way they can directly be linked together without mediation. In the end, being is not nothingness and nothingness is not being. Without positing some kind of mediator to span that abyss of negation, there is no reason to expect the two ever to be unified. This is the reason that the *absence* of mediation must at the same time signal the *presence* of mediation. In other words, the mediator that connects being and nothingness must itself be something that is being even as it is nothingness. Insofar as it is nothingness and being, it must also negate nothingness, which makes it clear that it can be nothing other than an absolute nothingness.

Absolute nothingness functions as a mediator in dialectical logic, and the dialectical world may be thought to emerge with absolute nothingness as its base and support. If we conceive of absolute nothingness as a place that contains that world, then that would be the “place” of absolute nothingness.”

Following this line of thought, an absolute nothingness would seem to be exceedingly evident and beyond question, as would the reasons for conceiving a place of absolute nothingness. Nishida’s philosophy, which is acknowledged to be the most profound philosophy of our day, takes this idea as foundational. Thinkers influenced by it agree and it seems as if no further explanation of this meaning of nothingness is called for.

For my part, however, I am unable to explain absolute nothingness in this way. It is ten years since Professor Nishida began speaking of the place of nothingness, and during that period his thought has continued to increase in depth and clarity, developing into a majestic system. Still, I find myself unable to shake off the doubts that have continued to bother me from the start right up to today concerning the ground of this admirable system of his. Simply put, my doubt is this: insofar as absolute nothingness is established as the immediate ground of

the system—as the so-called place of nothingness—is it not being and no longer nothingness? It is never permissible for absolute nothingness to be being; it is only nothingness. To speak of absolute nothingness, however, as the base and background of the dialectical world, and to designate it as the place in which self-negating existence is located, is to posit it directly as a being and at the same time really to forfeit its meaning as nothingness. Thus all the rest of existence is negatively mediated as a dialectical negation-in-affirmation and located in nothingness. But when the place of nothingness itself, which is located in nothingness insofar as it is seen as a mediator that locates beings in nothingness, is affirmed in a non-dialectical way, absolute nothingness cannot avoid losing its sense of being and nothingness, and thus being converted directly into being. This amounts to a non-dialectical assertion affirming dialectic.

I cannot help but think of such a dialectic as incomplete. In other words, I think that absolute nothingness must also and at the same time be negatively mediated. What this means is that because absolute nothingness is always and ever nothingness, whatever opposes it negatively, must be being. Just as in dialectical thinking, affirmation is in general mediated negatively and being is mediated through nothingness, conversely, it is also required that nothingness be mediated by being and that negation be mediated by affirmation. Absolute nothingness has being as its own mediator, and it is only in virtue of negating being that it is absolute nothingness. Only in negating being as its own negation, and thereby affirming its own nothingness, is absolute negation—negation mediated by negation—possible. In other words, absolute nothingness must possess the self-negation of being as its mediating aspect. In this way absolute nothingness, insofar as it is not established directly but in an act of self-negating mediation, cannot consist in immediate being but is always mediated negatively. In this sense, absolute nothingness may be said to be nothing other than the working of absolute negation.

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For reasons elaborated above, and in order to make dialectical logic complete, my intent was to explain the true intent of absolute nothingness by way of an operation of absolute negation that affirms this logic itself in dialectical fashion by negating it through the mediation of that which stands opposed to it. If not, by reason of its immediacy absolute nothingness would not be nothingness; it would be turned into being. In a word, because nothingness, as nothingness, is always a dynamic of negation, there must be being to be negated. Now, since being, seen as the negative mediation of such a nothingness, is a mediator of nothingness, it must itself be direct and unmediated being. Insofar as being is presupposed as a mediator of nothingness, it would seem to be unmediated itself. But when we shift to a dialectical mode of thinking, we expect all affirmations of being to be mediated by negation. If being is necessary in order to

mediate nothingness negatively, by the same token nothingness is necessary in order to mediate being. Otherwise, a further breakdown in symmetry would be unavoidable.

Now, the nothingness that mediates being, as the question has been conceived of up until now, is absolute nothingness and there is no room for any other nothingness. Thus if we speak of nothingness mediating being, there is no reason to look beyond absolute nothingness. Nevertheless, absolute nothingness took being as its own mediator, which means that absolute nothingness itself mediates the being that in turn is the mediator of absolute nothingness, so that it does not possess a mediator for itself outside of itself. Properly speaking, there can be no being outside of absolute nothingness. This is the spirit of a dialectic that viewed all being as mediated by nothingness and was therefore taken as obvious. Absolute nothingness, therefore, means that which mediates itself absolutely in negation.... But absolute negation, as we have seen here, means that nothing is exempt from absolute mediation. That being so, it follows as a matter of course that the dynamic of absolute negation can only be a dynamic of absolute mediation.

The Logic of National Existence

The structure of social existence, which I took as a practical negative unity of substrate-in-subject present in the genus whose opposing elements were the specific substrate and the individual subject, I now wish to examine logically under the prototype of the nation. I saw the logic of social existence as necessarily entailing a logic of history as its natural development. That is to say, a practical understanding of the state within the dialectic of the contradictory elements that make it up means acknowledging it as an unfolding dynamic that is at the same time a process of construction. History, therefore, is really nothing other than a grasp of the processes involved in unifying the correlative internal and external oppositions that make up national society as entailing a dynamic that is active and at the same time self-aware. In explaining the “logic of social existence,” I did not go beyond an intrinsic, cross-sectional structure of the self-awareness of historical-social reality, without coming to a practical self-awareness that correlates development and construction, becoming and act, the intrinsic (in-itself) and reflective (for-itself) dimensions. Real, concrete self-awareness is only possible by developing a logic of history.

My basic concern from the start was with questions related to the philosophy of history, but I felt a fundamental dissatisfaction with seeing history simply in terms of a humanistic view based on the direct and living workings of expression and formation. Such a viewpoint could not possibly yield a grasp of the significance of history as harboring a crisis of national survival or demise that

today holds our life and death in the balance. It seemed to me that history needs always to be understood from the nation as subject, and that this begins with a clarification of the social emergence of the nation as an all-inclusive structure of substrate-in-subject. I, therefore, sought to establish a logic of social existence as a logic of the specific. Hampered by the complications this brought to the question, as well as by my own inadequacies, I took up the question again several times, but was never able to overcome the many defects that left it decidedly incomplete. For this reason, despite pressure from several quarters, I have let it stand in the form in which it was published in academic journals without bringing it together in the form of a book.

Perhaps because I am not adverse to offering a provisional summary, I decided here that rather than touch up older essays I would attempt to expand on them from my present standpoint. Even setting aside any defects stemming from my own inadequacy, given the standpoint from which I was working, it was inevitable that the logic of social existence as it had been presented thus far would be accompanied by unavoidable abstractions. Therefore, to clarify why it was natural for this to evolve into a logic of history, and to show from this standpoint the source of the limitations I wanted to avoid and a way to overcome them, I laid out the conditions for a logic of history suited to the logic of social existence. I hoped in this way to enlarge on what had come before and complement it with a somewhat different model. The historicization of social existence takes place in the nation. Because I reasoned that the conjunction of society and history necessarily constitutes a nation and that history begins together with the nation, it seemed to me that my aims would be met by clarifying the historical existence of the nation. For me, the nation is the most concrete existence, indeed the prototype of existence. So-called fundamental ontology must involve the existence of the nation.

[JWH]

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DŌGEN

TANABE Hajime 1939B, 451–8

In the *Shōbōgenzō* of Eihei Dōgen*, a work steeped in the tradition of Japanese thinking, we sense a discovery of the source of the self and recognize a way to the ultimate ground that western philosophical speculation needs to reach. I have been struck by the depth and precision of Dōgen's speculations and found my confidence in the speculative faculty of the Japanese renewed...

To begin with, we need to ask whether Dōgen's thought belongs to religion, and whether or not for that reason it is to be discounted as philosophy. In gen-

eral, I would argue that religion and philosophy differ from one another and yet entail each other. Insofar as philosophy focuses generally on the relation between the absolute and the relative, and seeks to understand the absolute meaning contained in relative historical reality, there is no doubt that it is in part entailed in religion. The reason is that religion promotes belief in a relationship between the relative and the absolute: a belief in the absolute's assumption of the relative that stands opposed to it, and a witness to the dependency of the relative on the absolute. Moreover, insofar as it is vis-à-vis the absolute that the relative possesses its relative, autonomous existence, there is always the possibility that the relative, from its own standpoint, can resist the absolute and sin against it. Thus in its capacity to absorb this kind of relative, the absolute transcends the so-called opposition between good and evil. To the extent that the good belongs only to the voluntary action of the relative, it is necessarily accompanied by evil and can never be perfect. By the same token, insofar as evil represents an opportunity to do good, it is good in the sense that it always contains the potential to be turned to good, to effect an absolute conversion of the relative values of good and evil that will absorb everything into absolute good. In this way, religion has us believe that the negative conversion of the relative, even as it retains its relativity, is none other than a manifestation of the absolute. In this transforming manifestation of the absolute as the fountainhead of the relative, religion attests to absolute good as action that partakes in negative mediation. Hence, in essence religion thinks in absolute and negating terms.

This leads us to conclude that religion, at the level of thought, is structurally the same as philosophy—a way of transformative mediation through absolute negation. Particularly in the case of Buddhism, the tendency to all but unite itself with philosophy is natural, given the way it sees enlightened wisdom as the power to become a buddha. Its dismissal of mythical explanations of nature and humanity in favor of the search for true and authentic knowledge means a virtual evaporation of the difference between religion and philosophy. That said, the stress in religion on the individual's practice of the 'Way'—the forsaking of the standpoint of human relativity for a standpoint of belief in the absolute—means that there is no place for a concerted search for scholarly knowledge of nature or culture as these relate to worldly human life. Such engagement is no more than an 'expedient means' for the practice of the Way, namely a particular form of returning to the world for the benefit of others. Of itself, such learning does not really enter into the dynamic, mediating unity of religious faith, act, and witness.

In contrast, philosophy always takes the path of 'learning'. Through the mediation of its critique and negating transcendence of the limits of scholarly knowledge, and through its involvement in the correlation of historical progress with a return to the origins, philosophy seeks to apprehend the transforma-

tion of the relative and the absolute. Because it is forever bound to the rational awareness of historical reality, philosophy stops at indicating the orientation of religious faith to self-awareness and confirming its necessity. It does not, of its own, attempt to establish faith through practice or effect self-enlightenment. This is why religion and philosophy entail each other but are essentially different, and why, as I explained earlier, philosophy may be said to take a position from which to unify religion and science in negation.

Put in these terms, it is also difficult to claim that Dōgen, as a religious person, mediated his thinking through a critique of real scholarly knowledge, leaving us to conclude that his thinking is religious, not philosophical. And yet, unlike many religious persons Dōgen does not stop at a one-sided stress on leaving the world and negating the human standpoint. Even as he denies humanity and the world, the desire to inspire and affirm them is not absent. Of course, 'Mahayana' Buddhism rejects the teaching of the two vehicles that advocated abandoning the secular world in order to strive for 'nirvāṇa'. It sees them as two sides of the same coin, teaching that even as 'bodhisattvas' attain the Way for their own benefit, they also return to the world in order to work selflessly for the emancipation of all living things. As a doctrine of liberation, however, the natural tendency is simply to negate and abolish the relative. Dōgen's admonition on this point is clear: the only way to avoid having the absolute end up as no more than the opposite of the relative, and hence collapse back into the relative, is to return to the relative and make it into a mediation, to allow the mutual negation of relatives to mediate a return to the source through an absolute negation-in-affirmation. It is here we see Dōgen's orientation towards a unity with philosophy...

The oft-cited words from the *Shōbōgenzō* affirm the point that there is no absolute apart from an absolute negation-in-affirmation of the relative: "To model yourself after the way of the buddhas is to model yourself after yourself. To model yourself after yourself is to forget yourself. To forget yourself is to be authenticated by the totality of phenomena" (DŌGEN 1252, 7)... Or again, "Those who think that worldly affairs hinder the 'buddha dharma' only know that there is no buddha dharma in the world; they do not know that there are no worldly 'dharmas' in the state of buddha" (DŌGEN 1231, 742 [14]). The absolute negation-in-affirmation of the secular world is nothing other than the buddha dharma, which sees worldly dharmas as negative elements that are converted into a mediation of the self, and as such do not represent an obstacle. On the contrary, it is clear that there is no Way of the buddhas apart from this mediating practice. The copulative "-in-" ('*soku*') that is used to join absolute negation and affirmation does not as such signal an affirmation of worldly dharmas in the buddha dharma that is their absolute negation. Rather, even as the secular world is being negated, it is being affirmed as the negative element of the bud-

dha dharma. Speaking of the opposites of heaven and earth, life and death, Dōgen writes: “It is not a matter of unity, but neither is it a matter of variance; it is not variance, but neither is it identity; it is not identity, but neither is it multiplicity” (DŌGEN 1242B, 244). The sense is not that of an identity but of a unity in opposition. Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō* may belong to religion, but clearly his penchant for thinking in terms of absolute mediation makes it intelligible as philosophy.

Once again Dōgen’s buddha dharma stands in contrast to the Rinzai lineage and its tendency to put all the stress on discipline, reducing the practice of transforming mediation of absolute negation-in-affirmation to sticks and shouts, and its symbolism to the ‘*gathas*’. The sinographs used to express “attaining the Way” can also be taken to signify a mediation through dialogue or words. Dōgen’s buddha dharma does not stop short at ‘sudden enlightenment’ through “a special transmission outside the scriptures, not founded upon words and letters, pointing directly to one’s mind and letting one see into one’s own true nature and thus attain buddhahood.”⁶ Dōgen’s is a philosophical path that consistently pursues a dialectics of dialogue through the interchange of questions and answers between opposing relatives:

Without speaking of going beyond the buddhas, we do not realize the process of going beyond. They neither manifest themselves nor hide themselves in relation to each other; nor do they give or take in relation to each other. Accordingly, when speaking is realized, it is in itself the process of going beyond the buddhas. When the process of going beyond the buddhas is realized, you do not hear it... That is, at the moment of speaking, there is no immediate hearing whatsoever; the realization of immediate hearing is at the time a realization of not-speaking. (DŌGEN 1242A, 224)

Only a buddha transmits to a buddha, and a buddha who has thus inherited the dharma from a teacher already surpasses the buddhas and patriarchs. It may be said that through the practice of going beyond the buddha, as buddhas relate to one another and develop relative to one another, they manifest in dynamic fashion the absolute that is beyond speaking and hearing. By correlating what is spoken with words and what is not spoken with words, by the mutual mediation of the relative and the absolute, what philosophy manifests through the spoken word corresponds to the unspoken and unheard involved in going beyond the buddha. Religion, we may say, is mediated with philosophy...

The *Shōbōgenzō* represents the culmination of dialectical reasoning and one cannot help but admire the precision of its transforming mediation in relation to Shinran’s* *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Perhaps it is only coincidence, but it seems profoundly significant that the three founders of Japanese Buddhism, Dōgen,

6. [The classical description of Zen, thought to have originated in Tang China.]

Shinran, and Nichiren*, all of whom appeared around the same time during the Kamakura period, bear a logical relation to one another as genus, individual, and species. In this respect might we not say that it was only through their mutually mediated unity that Japanese Buddhism became complete? It is futile to compare their relative strengths with an eye to ranking them. But from the standpoint of philosophical thought, the power of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* to enliven the Japanese language in the service of logic, and to bring the unspoken and unexplained to light through speaking and expounding, is beyond compare. In him the practice of Zen—wherein the knowledge of enlightened wisdom and the insight into emptiness are sublated, realizing it as a practice of absolute negation in which buddha and nothingness become as one—is given a solid basis in a dialectical method where the attainment of the Way is logical mediation and a non-mediation, where practice-in-knowledge is mediated in the correlation of the spoken and the unspoken. This makes his thought all the more philosophical.

In Dōgen the attainment of the Way is perfected into an expression of the Way. That is, the Way is subjectified in action.... This is nothing other than making philosophical speculation the negative element of religion. Moreover, since the attainment of the Way is correlated to the non-attainment of the Way and explanation is made inseparable from its unexplainable ground, philosophy does not negate religion in order to replace it. Both remain autonomous in their relative opposition to each other and yet entail each other in a negative, mediating way. The unspoken and unexplained are at bottom unspeakable and unexplainable, but they do not exist apart from speech and explanation. The ineffable and unexplainable come about at the limits of speech and explanation.... The two remain separated in negating one another, but as opposing individuals each is transformed into the other. This transformation is an activity and a mediation... so that neither can simply replace the other....

Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* is a milestone to his own achievement of such a transforming mediation. To be sure, it is more than a philosophical treatise; it is a religious activity of instruction and guidance intended for the benefit of others. This does not make it a sermon aimed primarily at moving his listeners. Its speculation and dialectics through the negative mediation of philosophy are aimed at the manifestation of the unexplained, and in this way open up a universal and objective path to the unity of action, faith, and witness. It brings philosophical mediation out into the open in a way that direct, mystagogic transmission by a master does not. Philosophy is a negative mediation of religion, from which it retains its difference. Accordingly, as we saw in the passage cited above regarding the relationship between worldly dharmas and the buddha dharma, there must be a sense in which there is no philosophy within religion. Consequently, philosophy is in a sense philosophy and yet not philosophy;

it is mediated and at the same time unmediated. Mediation itself is a category in the meditational thinking of philosophy, so that from the viewpoint of religion it is simply unmediated....

Philosophy must exist only for the sake of its own exhaustion. That is not to say that if philosophy exhausts itself and passes away, and if as a result the 'self-enjoying *samādhi*' of religion comes about, philosophy is no more than a procedure for arriving at religion. That would land us in the error Dōgen vigorously dismissed: that of seeing practice and awakening as successive steps on the Way. Rather than give us a "mediacy-in-immediacy," this would amount to no more than exchanging being mediated with not being mediated. It would indeed be a form of rational thinking, which in religious terms would have to be identified as a causal element in the cycle of 'birth-and-death'. Far from forfeiting its function of mediating religion, philosophy would turn into a karmic cause for hell. From a philosophical viewpoint, in mediating religion through exhausting itself, philosophy is mediating, but from a religious viewpoint it does not mediate. In the same way, it is always correlated to religion in a relationship of being-in-nothing, nothingness-in-being; it is mediated in not mediating. This is how I see the concrete relationship between philosophy and religion. This should help clarify what I said earlier about philosophy and religion standing opposed in their difference and yet entailing one another.

[RMü]

PHILOSOPHY AS METANOETICS

TANABE Hajime 1945, 3–13 (VI–LXI)

Last summer, when the fortunes of war had turned against Japan and the nation was under the increasing threat of direct raids and attacks, the government found itself at a loss as to how to handle the situation, and in the stalemate that ensued, it showed itself completely incapable of undertaking the reforms necessary to stem the raging tide of history. Instead, government officials tried to keep the actual course of events secret from the people in order to conceal their own responsibility. Criticism of any kind became impossible. All public opinion, except for propaganda in favor of the government's policy, was suppressed. Freedom of thought was severely restricted, and the only ideas given official recognition were those of the extreme rightists.

In the midst of economic distress and tensions, and an ever-deepening anxiety, our people were greatly concerned about their nation's future, but did not know where to turn or to whom to appeal. I myself shared in all these sufferings of my fellow Japanese, but as a philosopher I experienced yet another kind

of distress. On the one hand, I was haunted by the thought that, as a student of philosophy, I ought to be bringing the best of my thought to the service of my nation, to be addressing the government frankly with regard to its policies toward academic thought and demanding a reexamination, even if this should incur the displeasure of those currently in power. In such a critical situation, where there was no time for delay, would it not be disloyal to my country to keep silent and fail to express whatever ideas I had on reform? On the other hand, there seemed something traitorous about expressing in time of war ideas that, while perfectly proper in time of peace, might end up causing divisions and conflicts among our people that would only further expose them to their enemies.

Caught between these alternatives, I was unable to make up my mind and was tormented by my own indecision. In the impasse I even wondered whether I should go on teaching philosophy or give it up altogether, since I had no adequate solution to a dilemma that philosophically did not appear all that difficult. My own indecision, it seemed to me, disqualified me as a philosopher and university professor. I spent my days wrestling with questions and doubts like this from within and without, until I had been quite driven to the point of exhaustion and in my despair concluded that I was not fit to engage in the sublime task of philosophy.

At that moment something astonishing happened. In the thick of my distress, I let go and surrendered myself humbly to my own inability. I was suddenly brought to new insight! My penitent confession—metanoesis (*'zange'*)—unexpectedly threw me back on my own interiority and away from things external. There was no longer any question of my teaching and correcting others under the circumstances—I who could not deliver myself to do the correct thing. The only thing for me to do in the situation was to resign myself honestly to my weakness, to examine my own inner self with humility, and to explore the depths of my powerlessness and lack of freedom. Would not this mean a new task to take the place of the philosophical task that had previously engaged me? Little matter whether it be called “philosophy” or not: I had already come to realize my own incompetence as a philosopher. What mattered was that I was being confronted at the moment with an intellectual task and ought to do my best to pursue it.

The decision was reached, as I have said, through metanoia, or the way of *zange*, and led to a philosophy that is not a philosophy: philosophy seen as the self-realization of metanoetic consciousness. It is no longer I who pursue philosophy, but rather *zange* that thinks through me. In my practice of metanoesis, it is metanoesis itself that is seeking its own realization. Such is the nonphilosophical philosophy that is reborn out of the denial of philosophy as I had previously understood it. I call it “a philosophy that is not a philosophy”

because, on the one hand, it has arisen from the vestiges of a philosophy I had cast away in despair, and on the other, it maintains the purpose of functioning as a reflection on what is ultimate and as a radical self-awareness, which are the goals proper to philosophy.

To be sure, this is not a philosophy to be undertaken with 'self-power'. One's own powers have already been abandoned in despair. It is rather a philosophy to be practiced through 'other-power', which has turned me in a completely new direction through metanoesis and has induced me to make a fresh start from the realization of my utter helplessness.... This other-power brings about a conversion in me that heads me in a new direction along a path hitherto unknown to me....

My experience of conversion—that is, of transformation and resurrection—in metanoesis corresponds to the experience that led Shinran (1173–1263) to establish the doctrine of the Pure Land 'Shin' sect. Quite by accident I was led along the same path that Shinran followed in Buddhist discipline, although in my case it occurred in the philosophical realm. Reflection on this parallel led me to interpret Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* from a metanoetic point of view.... I was also surprised to find that once I had arrived at belief in other-power, I found myself feeling still closer to the spirit of Zen, whose emphasis on self-power is generally considered opposed to Pure Land doctrine....

Understanding the *Kyōgyōshinshō* as the metanoetical development of Buddhism has not received general approval as a correct interpretation. I myself had long been reluctant to accept such a viewpoint. My innate attraction for the idealistic doctrine of self-power made me more sympathetic to the Zen sect than to sects that taught "salvation by other-power." Although I had never undergone discipline in a Zen monastery, I had long been familiar with the discourses of Chinese and Japanese Zen masters. I was ashamed that I still remained an outsider to Zen and could not enter into the depths of its holy truth, and yet I felt closer to Zen than to Shin doctrine. This was why I had taken little notice of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* up until that time.

One of my students, Takeuchi Yoshinori*, had published a book under the title *The Philosophy of the Kyōgyōshinshō* (1941). Drawing on the intellectual acumen he had developed through reading Hegel under me, he was able to produce an outstanding interpretation of the work. While I learned much from reading this study, it was impossible for me at the time to develop a philosophy of my own based on the thought of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. It was only when I set out to develop a new philosophy, a philosophy of metanoetics based on other-power, that I returned to reread the *Kyōgyōshinshō* carefully and was able to find a way to understand it. I regard Shinran with gratitude, love, and respect as a great teacher from the past.

.....

I am deeply convinced of the fact that, in the last analysis, we are all responsible, collectively, for social affairs. Once one assumes such a standpoint of social responsibility, there can be no doubt that metanoetics is indispensable for each person at each moment. Therefore, metanoetics, like morality, can provide the way to a universal philosophy....

From the point of its very inception, metanoetics needs to be developed metanoetically. That is, it should not be a “philosophy of metanoesis” in the sense that it treats an object called metanoesis. Neither should it be a phenomenological or *lebensphilosophisch* interpretation that applies its own established methodology to the investigation of metanoesis. Metanoetics is a philosophy that has to be erected at the very point that all prior philosophical standpoints and methods have been negated in their entirety; it is a philosophical method of “destruction” more radical than even the methodical skepticism of Descartes. It cannot be treated on the same level as philosophy up to the present inasmuch as it is a philosophy achieved through a death-and-resurrection process of transformation....

In the course of my reflections, I discovered a logic that functions throughout metanoetical thinking, which I called “absolute criticism”.... Absolute criticism means that reason, faced with the absolute crisis of its dilemma, surrenders itself of its own accord. In the course of this critical task, the personal subject that is undertaking the critique of pure reason cannot remain a mere bystander at a safe remove from the criticism. The subjects of the critique cannot avoid getting tangled in their own web and exposing themselves to self-criticism. They cannot avoid being undone by the absolute dilemma of their own thought. Yet in the very midst of this absolute disruption and contradiction, the power of contradiction is itself negated: the absolute contradiction contradicts itself. At this point an absolute conversion takes place and philosophy is restored, through the power of the transcendent, as a “philosophy that is not a philosophy”... It was for me a great joy to discover in the course of reconsidering the thought of such figures as Meister Eckhart, Pascal, and Nietzsche that problems I had never been able to penetrate deeply now became clear to me—at least as far as my limited abilities would allow.

.....

It is as an act of gratitude that I offer metanoetics as a philosophy that belongs rightly not only to me but to all of you. With this thought in mind, I felt I ought to publish this work as quickly as possible. Of course, in making this recommendation, I have no intention of forcing others to accept this philosophy. Nonetheless, it is my sincere desire to offer metanoetics to those of the Japanese people who seek a philosophy at the present time.

[TY, JWH, VV]

MUTAI Risaku 務台理作 (1890–1974)

Mutai Risaku, a peripheral figure of the Kyoto School, was first attracted to psychology, but during his time under Nishida Kitarō* at Kyoto University he was persuaded to secure a solid basis in philosophy from Kant to the present day. In 1923 he took a post at Ōtani University, leaving three years later for studies in France and Germany, where he worked for a time directly under Husserl. He later taught at Taipei Imperial University before assuming a post at the Tokyo University of Education in 1932. During these years, under the direction of Tanabe Hajime*, he continued his studies on Hegel. After completing his dissertation in 1935 he wrote monographs on Fichte, Husserl's phenomenology, and problems of ethics, before concentrating on his own philosophical quest of a new humanism.

In developing his humanism, Mutai pursued the basic orientation of Nishida's "logic of 'place'" but maintained sympathies for the Marxist leaning of others in the circle, such as Tosaka Jun* and Miki Kiyoshi*. Basing himself on a 'Huayan' model of Nishida's dialectics of the universal and the particular, and drawing on Tanabe's "logic of the specific," Mutai developed a firmly antinationalist and antimilitarist brand of humanism. Taking as his model the *Weißer Rose*, a resistance movement against the Third Reich, he advanced a global humanism, a "humanism for the human race." The promotion of peace and independence, he insisted, could not take place apart from political self-determination and social justice. To this end, he adopted Tanabe's "specific" as a paradigm for fundamental political sovereignty to mediate Nishida's correlation of the "one" and the "many" in the service of global peace. Mutai reminds the reader that each member of a "specific society" is only one of many and, at the same time, transient. If the misrepresentation of any one specific society as a totality leads to nationalism, the interrelationship of individual, specific societies, and the entire human race can promote international peace and at the same time safeguard the self-determination of every specific culture.

[GK]

SOCIAL ONTOLOGY

MUTAI Risaku 1939, 106–7, 109–12, 59–61

The Subject and the World

I understand the actual world as the beginning and end of everything that exists. Since nothing exists outside of it, everything belongs to the actual world and is located in it. It is not that time and space constitute a framework within which the actual world is inserted, but rather that they are established together within the actual world.

.....

Thus conceived, the world represents an openness of infinite expanse but at the same time is concentrated in innumerable focal points. When we concentrate our analysis of the actual world on its expanse, that is, when we examine the vertical dimension of the actual world, we find the historical world; it is in its horizontal dimension that we see specific societies emerge. Let us begin by considering the historical world.

Obviously, the historical world is temporal and transient. In a matter of speaking, it appears as a world that is in a constant state of flux and becoming. The historical world *is* the actual world itself. As such, it has to be thought of as transcending itself by subjectively taking itself as a moment of itself. That is, the world is historical in virtue of the process of advancing beyond itself. This I take to be the first structural feature of the actual world. The historical world constitutes the actual world itself at the very moment that it paradoxically deepens its actuality as one element in the greater process.

The term *historical* is usually associated only with temporality. It is generally assumed that time does not return again to a specific moment once it has passed beyond it. Time is thought to be an infinite manifold stamped “the past.” But historical time is not only the flow of time; it has also to be taken as the point at which future time abides simultaneously in the past. In history, past and future oppose each other and, at the same time, exist side by side. Historical space is located in time. As the historical world flows along in time, it harbors within it spatial determination. The whole of the past is cast on us as something given, as facts already determined; it cannot complete itself by itself. Its completion lies in the promise of the future. Thus the shape of the past is transformed in accord with the depth of the world consciousness by which we view the past (and thereby restore it to a modality of the world’s expressing itself). In other words, we are engaged in a metamorphosis. This is why we can say that history is always rewritten in line with our current consciousness of the world. It also means that the past exists simultaneously with the present and, consequently, with the future as well. None of this compromises in the least the facticity of the past. Although history is rewritten according to present world consciousness, obviously this must take place in a way that allows facts to remain facts.

.....

The acting subject constitutes the second moment of the actual world. It is located in the standpoint at which “I act,” not in the sense of a subject acting self-consciously, but simply as a subject that acts. In fact, as I have already stated repeatedly, for us human beings the only path to understanding the world and society correctly is by way of the acting subject, that is, through the subject seen as “I act.” The evidence that guides each step of this process lies in acting intuition. In this sense, the acting subject relates to the historical and expressive

world through the content of its action, which, in turn, is determined by the historical world. On this basis, it relates also to a specific social community... a society based on this very content.... The foundation on which the acting subject posits itself lies in its relationship to the world. The acting subject, that is the individual, is located, as it were, in an a priori opposition to the world.

The individual and the world stand in opposition. The individual advances beyond itself and towards the world in order to determine the world as a multiplicity of individuals. The world extinguishes the individuals inside of itself to dissolve them into a universality. The individual turns to face the world insofar as the subject possesses the power to transcend itself from within. Similarly, the world strives to annihilate the isolation of the individual with its power to embrace the individual, as it were, from without. In this opposition individual and world are contradictories, and yet the subjective transcendence of the individual opens out into the self-determination of a world expressing itself *at the same time* within the multiplicity of individuals. This opposition grounded in contradiction constitutes a completely *simultaneous* existence or “identity.”

.....

This point of identity entails a negation in which the flux is *at the same time* a cancellation of flux. Accordingly, it is within this aspect of negation that space is introduced as opposed to time. This point also marks the collapse of the instant of simultaneity. Thus the simultaneity that is mediated by ‘nothingness’, in being overturned, constitutes a qualitative manifold, an underlying, qualitative mediator of the mutual determination taking place between the individual and the world. Simultaneity is simply that which mediates by becoming itself a complete nothing; it does not represent a third element in addition to the individual and the world. But simultaneity by virtue of what it is, effects an alienation from absolute mediation in the form of immediacy and enables its transformation into a substrate of being as the backdrop of absolute mediation. This substrate, because of its manifold character, harbors within it *at the same time* a qualitative *twist* that decides the specific particularity of the substrate. The substrate as such is specific and mediates the interrelationship between the individual and the world, giving it its particular orientation. This is the specific society seen as the third moment in the actual world.

.....

As a manifestation of the productive *twist* or orientation of the world, the specific society presents us with a crosscut of the actual world. These *twists* of productivity show up along this crosscut as so many independent and thus multiple centers. Each *twist* forms its own center and seeks to ground its existence according to a logic of particularity-in-universality. Yet seen from another point of view, the productive power of the world is none other than the daemonic, specific power of self-determination. That the specific is positively productive

and negatively self-alienating follows in fact from a logic that sees both poles as existing at the same time and accounts for our need to think of them as simultaneous. By means of this simultaneous determination, the specific comes to locate its self-alienation within the world, even as it comes to manifest a specificity that is productive in the true sense of the word. This is why the praxis of the active individual, as a member of the specific, is called for.

Society as the Specific

When we search for patterns of historical culture in today's world—as, for example, when we examine the oldest elements in Japanese culture in search of archetypal elements—we discover a kind of self-enclosure: the Japanese of an outmoded world barricaded in on itself with no idea that there would be other kinds of specific societies outside of their own, or at least none that they would seriously negotiate with. Similarly, in the closure of ancient Chinese and Indian culture, we find similar worlds, each with its own culture at the center. In this sense, we may say that there existed in antiquity a number of separate small worlds, each complete in itself.

Now, such worlds gradually expand in proportion as the historical experience of their people is broadened. We may imagine something like this happening in Japan as its people left the world of ancient Japan to become participants in a wider eastern world that included Korea, Manchuria, China, Mongolia, India, West-Asia, and so forth. By the time of the Tokugawa period, the world in which the Japanese people lived was by and large the eastern world in this sense. Only later did the western world intrude into the mainstream, affecting the lifestyle of the Japanese people. In the same way, today's Japanese have taken leave of the eastern world in order to contribute to the construction of an emerging "global world" in which the western world that had once occupied the center for Japan is sublated into something greater. The very fact that we think about the historical growth and metamorphosis of the world in this way may be said to indicate something of the greatest significance....

In this way, as the world grows historically and as a wider understanding of the world emerges together with regional expansions, it gradually becomes monolithic. And what happens to the small, self-sufficient worlds of the past being swept up in this process? What meaning is to be assigned to this plurality of small worlds in this new emerging reality? From a global perspective, as these small worlds come to lose the completeness they once had, they open up to a wider world and the walls of their enclosure break down. In this sense, the small worlds of the past may be thought to be falling apart. Seen from a standpoint of world history, their self-sufficiency has already disappeared and life within a closed block is no longer viable. This means that along with the

growth and expansion of the historical world, the small worlds of antiquity are already a thing of the past, and their completeness is only interesting as a relic of days gone by....

If we think about it, any single world may be said to contain within it a number of specific societies. For example, it may be thought that a specific society and world were virtually identical in ancient Japan, but even at that time we can recognize distinct specific societies in the cultures of the indigenous Japanese and of those who arrived later. And even among these latter immigrant peoples, several specific societies can be distinguished. Over the years, especially following the recent expansion of the Japanese world, these specific societies have combined to form a single culture. Meantime, the Japanese world had given up its claim to completeness and moved out into the eastern world, which in turn meant engaging other specific cultures....

In any case, the development of specific societies is always continuous, provisional, and consistent with tradition and lore; or rather, they themselves constitute the foundation of tradition. Tradition is in some sense closed off and complete in itself. Even to think of the small world of antiquity as self-enclosed and complete is, in fact, to consider them in terms of the actual specificities of tradition. No world can be considered in any sense complete and self-enclosed. Every world is mediated by itself becoming nothing. The reason a world can be thought of as blocked off and complete, as is the case with the small worlds of antiquity, is that they were viewed as such from the perspective of specific cultures. That is, these small worlds of antiquity are themselves specific worlds. In this sense, we have to consider that within a specific society there may be something that sustains self-completeness in the midst of change and self-enclosure in the midst of movement. Insofar as the dynamic of the world is mediated by its becoming nothing, it is discontinuous, and yet the dynamic of specific societies is continuous. Although we cannot identify any point at which the flux of the world comes to term and reaches completeness, specific societies harbor enclosure and completeness as part of themselves. History has to be thought of as a mutually defining identity of both elements.

[GK]

A THIRD HUMANISM

MUTAI Risaku 1961, 221–5, 227–8, 285–7, 289–93

Up until now, I have referred to a global humanism for the whole of humanity as a “third humanism.” I have done so because it seemed proper to distinguish among modern humanisms a first literary form of humanism

characteristic of the Renaissance, a second individualist humanism found in modern cities, and a third humanism with us today. If the first humanism was aristocratic and the second bourgeoisie, the third, in contrast, is a humanism of the human race, a socialist humanism. Of course, literary and civil humanism survive in a deformed state, but, as I have explained earlier, they cannot resolve the kind of complex problems and conflicts that humanity faces today.

Still, calling this humanism of all humanity a “third humanism” does not seem quite right. After all, humanism is not particular to the modern age; it is found in antiquity and has its medieval expression as well. There are also eastern forms of humanism distinct from those of the West. For example, in Japan we can distinguish among the aristocratic humanism of antiquity, reflected in the ‘*Man’yōshū*’, the martial humanism of the Kamakura period, reflected in the annals of war, and the popular humanism found among the merchant class during the Tokugawa period. All of this makes me question the classification of the humanism of today as a *third* humanism.

.....

First of all, global humanism—that is, a humanism for the whole of humanity—is based on a naturalist view of history in the broad sense of the term. By that I mean to extend the history of humanity to include the history of nature. Some may object that since history is made by human subjects and is concerned exclusively with human beings, there is no history in nature. They reason that nature may be the object of history but will never be its subject, that nature as such may possess a temporal process but will never have its own history. Obviously, if we consider history in the narrow sense of the history of human beings, there is no way to construct a history of the natural world. But if we trace human history backwards, we eventually realize that there is no way to divorce it from the natural history of the human race, let alone from the natural history of life forms that preceded it. And if we continue to follow that path, we come to see that human history raises the question of the origins of life, and consequently is related to the process of purely inanimate matter.

.....

Secondly, global humanism believes that future history will not be borne by the modern bourgeoisie but will pass over into the hands of the material and intellectual laborers, that is, of productive human beings.... Of course, I assume that classes of intellectuals, literati, artists, inventors, entertainers, and so forth will continue to exist, but not as the direct or indirect parasites of the bourgeoisie they are today. They will rather assume roles related to intellectual production in the broad sense of the term (that is, in the production of education, thought, culture, science, technology, and so forth). In short, their role will be played out insofar as they are related directly or indirectly to the establishment of a new society centered on productive laborers.

.....

The first two standpoints of the third humanism may raise the suspicion that religion and morality are being negated. There are still those who cling to the view that religion and morality require tracing the origins of humanity and its values back to a transhistorical absolute. From the first standpoint of natural history, we end up reducing human origins and systems of values to natural and social conditions that have nothing to do with anything sacred or divine. If we take the second standpoint, that future history is taken away from the hands of the nobility and passed over to those of more humble state, these suspicions are absolutely irrepressible. In any case, since the first view does not allow for religion, we may expect its opposite to emerge forcefully at some point.

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The absolutization of productive power appears in two forms. In the first, the absoluteness is abstracted to make it independent of human beings and self-subsistent, draining humanity of all its power. In this form all human relationships are absorbed into God, before whom humans stand powerless, incapable of sustaining themselves in existence without God. Everything human is occluded and human beings become the pitiable slaves of God. We might refer to this as making a fetish of the absolute. That is to say, the relationship between humans and nature, and between individuals and society is displaced into the magic power of a fetish. A God who excludes the history of nature is a God whom people are made to believe possesses the magic power of an idol or fetish. This kind of God had an important role to play at a certain stage in the development of human society. But in our time, when the workings of human subjectivity have come to self-awareness through science and technology, it has gradually become clear that the magical power of such a fetish obscures what is human and brings about the alienation of human beings. A global humanism must see to rescuing humanity from this kind of absolute. In this sense global humanity seeks to draw a line between itself and the modern civil humanism that has somehow uncritically taken on the absoluteness of a fetish-idol God.

In the second form, the very opposition, contradiction, and conflict that result from acknowledging the confrontation between humans and nature, individuals and society, is duly recognized as an indispensable part of securing human subjectivity on the one hand, and of elevating the social and historical status of human beings on the other. From there, in rendering the power of human production, values, and creativity relative to the historical process, it tries to gain absoluteness by way of this relativity. This absoluteness is not like an absolute that transcends humanity in a nonhuman way, but an absoluteness that serves as one of the elements involved in developing relativity as relativity. Perhaps we may refer to it as a relative absolute. It is not an *absolute* lord pos-

essed of magical, fetish powers, but an *absoluteness* that makes productivity and values more historically effective....

If there is to be a contemporary religion, it has to take this second form of absoluteness as its base.... Religion in this sense takes seriously the fate of human subjectivity and the problem of human alienation. It never shies away from the contradictions and conflicts between the human and natural worlds, between human beings and society. I fear for the fate of human beings in today's technological age, where a single misstep (especially in the case of a nuclear war) could wipe out the human race. It is hard to avoid pessimism on this score. There is little point in getting infatuated with theories of happiness and harmony, but neither should we simply leave human beings to a pessimistic fate. Instead, we need to penetrate to the depths of our common destiny, replacing a divine fetish with the whole of humanity and trusting in the realization of humanity and the formation of a human community. Everything must not be left to natural and social conditions; it will take courage to pursue the desire for a complete humanity. In a word, these religions will emerge not by shirking the oppositions, contradictions, and conflicts within natural and social conditions, but by stepping up and breaking through them as a way to secure absoluteness in the midst of relativity.

The Dilemma of Absolute Pacifism

"Humankind" is no longer a conceptual construct that exists only inside the heads of philosophers. It exists on earth as something real whose nucleus is made up of workers both manual and intellectual, as well as of the youth who bear the promise of the future, all of whom in a variety of forms have begun to build a community of the human race. We should perhaps call the coming age the age of the human community, to distinguish it from the age of geniuses and the age of the bourgeoisie. Such is the image wrapped up in our new idea of the human race. To dismiss it as an empty fancy or as so much idealism is to miss the meaning of the historical transformation that it implies.

The goal of this notion of humankind is, as I said, the happiness of the human race. And this is nothing other than the complete fulfillment of human potential. The humanizing of human beings is the greatest happiness of humankind. To achieve this fulfillment the world has to be in a state of permanent peace. The guarantee of happiness is the formation of a human community, and for that, peace is an absolutely necessary condition. Nothing divides people or alienates them more than war. Universal peace is the indispensable prelude to happiness.

But this way of thinking gives rise to a most difficult problem. If peace is absolutely essential to the realization of our full potential as human beings, then

war—in all its forms—must be opposed. In its radical form, this view amounts to absolute pacifism. It argues that whatever the reasons, whatever the kind of warfare, war is an enemy to the peace of humankind and is absolutely intolerable. This means that we must stand opposed even to wars of independence in which people risk their lives for the liberation of people whose nations live under a colonialism, semi-colonialism, or semi-independence that oppresses their happiness and brings about their alienation. For war means military force, extreme force, and human bloodshed. The question is how those who support peace should think about the relationship between absolute peace and war.

The theory of absolute peace seems to contain a kind of a contradiction. It bases itself on humanitarianism in its absolute opposition to war, but at the same time it stands absolutely opposed to the existence of colonies. What are we to think, then, of wars fought to liberate colonies, to secure the independence of a people, or to resist the unjustified invasions of another country that threatens independence? On the one hand, there is no denying that such wars are clearly a form of violent warfare; on the other, we have to promote people's armed struggles for independence. If liberation is possible without recourse to war, we ought to point in that direction, but to condemn all war without indicating an alternative is to fall into contradiction.

It is a serious problem to decide whether to put the emphasis on peace or on independence. How are we to arrange the priorities among the three: humanity, peace, and independence?

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In terms of historical character, today's wars are commonly divided into four main types. First, there is the classical war between two sovereign, independent nations, each equipped with a structured military force, for the purpose of expanding the power of one's country or pursuing an increase of its wealth. Such expansionism is typically justified as the exercise of self-defense....

Second, when relationships between independent countries have risen to a high level of tension, there may be a war of interference in which one country makes advances into the other to incite a rebellion or revolution, or to lend its backing to such movements. Such wars include, of course, conflicts between capitalist nations but they may also take place between a capitalist and a socialist nation.

In the third place, there are wars of independence in which a semi-independent country incites a rebellion for the liberation of a people and the acquisition of independence from unjust interference of another country through full or partial colonization.

Finally, there are wars of genuine self-defense. That is, one side sets out to expand its power or wealth by invading another country with complete disre-

gard for moral justice. The invaded country justly resists and fights back in the name of self-defense.

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Absolute pacifism may be set up as an ideal, but it is an ideal that obviously needs relativizing to accommodate historical conditions. There is no contradiction involved here. For absolute pacifism, war is an abstraction removed from the historical context, so that in effect it approaches the first type of war discussed above. The reason is that traditionally wars were by and large based on unilateral invasion. If war is universalized to this first type, then opposing it in favor of absolute pacifism follows as a matter of course. A problem arises, however, when we start thinking in the abstract about the historical nature of wars of liberation. From that point on, absolute pacifism itself becomes an abstraction.

All of this is based on the fact that the independence of peoples is the most important condition for the realization of world peace. Moreover, this is not a problem of a particular people but of the entire human community. Far from being only a question of the fate of some particular ethnic group or other, the fate of all humanity hangs in the balance.

Even so, I do not think that absolute pacifism is useless. I have no doubt that the spirit of pacifism is an essential ingredient in the movement for world peace. Its ideals are necessary as a mediating element in peace movements. Its greatest and most effective role lies in minimizing the number of victims resulting from wars of liberation and independence.

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This brings us back to the problem of establishing priority among human happiness, world peace, and the independence of peoples. The formation of a human community is important for the happiness of humankind and world peace is one of the conditions to realize this goal. A basic condition for securing world peace is the erasure from the face of the earth of all colonies and semi-colonies, all diminishing of independence through unjustified invasions and foreign interference, and all oppression of ethnic groups by strong nations. In terms of requisite conditions for building peace, the complete independence of peoples is the ground floor on which the peace needed to achieve the happiness of humankind can be secured for the world.

[GK]

MIKI Kiyoshi 三木 清 (1897–1945)

Miki Kiyoshi is a tragic figure among the Kyoto School philosophers. He studied under Nishida Kitarō* and Tanabe Hajime* in Kyoto and then under Martin Heidegger in Freiburg. He was gifted with both keen philosophical insight and superior writing skills. In 1930 he lost his job as a lecturer at Hōsei University and was imprisoned on the trumped-up charge that he actively supported the Communist party. Shortly after his release in the same year, his wife passed away. Unable to resume his teaching duties, he began to work as a journalist. In 1942, he was sent against his will to the Philippines as a military reporter. He died of kidney failure in Tokyo's Toyotama prison shortly after the end of the war.

Miki's writings are, by Kyoto School standards, extremely clear and accessible. He stands out among his Kyoto School peers as the first who tried to give Nishida's philosophy social and political relevance. In some sense, Miki combined Nishida's nondual paradigm with Tanabe Hajime's critiques of Nishida's philosophy as a whole, to argue that Nishida's writings were too ethereal and, ultimately, ahistorical. In particular, he was unhappy with Nishida's notion of the "eternal present" because of its focus on the transcendent reality and what he perceived as the reduction of the "historical world" to an abstract and largely empty concept. Miki's own thought emphasized his conviction that human existence is not only worldly, as Heidegger would say, but inherently social. This insight became an important building block in his greatest philosophical achievements: his philosophical anthropology and humanism, and his logic of imagination.

The two essays extracted in part below stress his twofold conviction that human existence is ultimately an ambiguous mixture of subjectivity and objectivity, interiority and exteriority, *pathos* and *logos*; and that to be relevant, any social and political philosophy must take this into account.

[GK]

THE STUDY OF THE HUMAN

MIKI Kiyoshi 1936, 127–9, 147, 167, 170–2

First, even if one were to decide on "the study of human beings" as a satisfactory definition for philosophical anthropology, the object of study to which the term itself points cannot in fact be defined like other things. To define something one needs to come up with a generic idea and specific differences. Textbooks of logic tell us that a definition is produced by fixing the specific to the closest approximating generic idea. But the "human being" referred to in "the study of human beings" does not meet these formal requirements. Might

we not say, then, that the very fact that it cannot be defined by ordinary methods applied to other objects constitutes the first definition of the “human being” indicated in “the study of human beings”? This paradox harbors a fundamental law of human nature. Of course, it is not completely impossible to define human beings by means of generic concepts and specific differences. But inquiries adopting this approach do not represent the study of the human in the sense I intend here; they are closer to scientific disciplines like anthropology, which, as is well known, treat the human like any other object of science. The fact that real human beings can never simply be defined in such a way provides the *raison d'être* for a different way to study the human. Both the study of the human race and the study of the human being can be called “anthropology,” but if the former is properly termed a *scientific* anthropology, then the latter is best referred to as *philosophical* anthropology.

The fact that “human being” does not fit the pattern of definition taught in traditional logic shows such logic to be objective, or rather a logic of objects that can treat human beings objectively but not subjectively. Therein lies the fundamental difference that sets off the standpoint of philosophical anthropology from other sciences like physical anthropology, biology, psychology, and the like.... The reason we cannot define human beings is not to be found in arguments about humans being the crown of the natural world. If we were to follow Linnaeus in placing human beings at the apex of vertebrates and mammals, and hence of all life forms, “vertebrates and mammals” would become a human category since an apex must belong to that of which it is said to be the apex. The ability to walk upright and the development of the cerebral cortex would then become the specific differences that define the human. The reason human beings cannot be defined lies rather in the fact that their existence is beyond the reach of formal logic and therefore can only be described dialectically. Of course, the claim that human beings need to be conceived of subjectively does not completely eliminate the objective point of view. In the same way in which dialectics includes object-oriented logic, we must recognize the sense in which even the subjective point of view is not really subjective unless it includes the objective standpoint.

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Our standpoint of philosophical anthropology is one of acting self-awareness. It does not disembodify human beings but grasps them in their subjective and social existence. Even what we are calling subjectivity includes the objective point of view as part of the dialectical process. The existence of human beings is at once internal and external, subjective and objective. Only a standpoint of acting self-awareness can grasp the human being in its entirety. Bringing action into the picture rules out any kind of “immanentism” and requires recognition of something transcendent. Moreover, it requires something like what I have

called “dual transcendence” which implies something transcendent within the human being as well as without it. In this sense, a standpoint of acting self-awareness entails an objective and a subjective dimension within self-awareness itself. Self-awareness is the basis of philosophical anthropology, but this does not mean that self-awareness is simply immediate knowledge; it has always to be mediated. True self-awareness must be mediated subjectively and, at the same time, objectively. Only a standpoint of acting self-awareness makes possible such a concrete understanding of human existence as that which is simultaneously internal and external, simultaneously subjective and objective.

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All action implies expressive action. We might say that action connotes not only *praxis* but also *poesis*. In other words, as active, action is not restricted to interiority but by its nature manifests itself in the outer world. Of course, action is never merely outer expression; it always has an inner counterpart. As Maine de Biran⁷ observed, one’s desires are expressed in the outer world and at the same time internally, within oneself. What is expressed outwardly is also expressed inwardly.

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Expressive action is always moved to action by means of something expressed. Even if we say that human beings are always determined by nature, nature serves as the expressive. Human beings are born from the natural world. This world simultaneously belongs to the I and to the Thou. Expression unites one person with another as instances of an eidetic universality. Society, as culture, carries the sense of this kind of expressive world. We probably should say that human beings are born from society rather than from nature. In society, separate individuals oppose each other as expressives, and within that culture already possess a common expression. However, society is not simply expressive as culture, nor is its expression restricted to its relation to us. Granted, as an expression that stands opposed to us, society is culture, but it is not *only* culture. Society must rather carry the sense of “nature giving birth”—and here we distinguish, as philosophers traditionally have done, *natura naturans* (generative nature) from *natura naturata* (generated nature). If culture stands *opposed to us*, society *embraces us* from within. This is the reason for a fundamental distinction between society and culture. We would need to recognize a relationship between society and culture not unlike that between expression and action.

There is no greater error than to suppose that society can be viewed like an object standing in opposition to us. Society is something that embraces acting

7. [Pierre-François Maine de Biran (1766–1824) argued that philosophical anthropology needs to be grounded in the primacy of the will, which can only be understood by combining physiology with introspection.]

human beings within itself, as an expression of itself. It is further necessary to distinguish between the objective character of culture and the subjective character of society. Our actions are not determined simply by what transcends us from without but also by what transcends us from within. This is what makes them expressive. But inner and outer transcendence are dialectically one: society embraces us not so much in the form of persons external to ourselves but as something wider that embraces those persons as well—in this sense as well, society as culture and expression cannot be referred to fundamentally as something opposed to us—and not so much as human interiority but as a wider interiority that includes the human. Thus the human being is born as a self-determination of society. As subject and objective, human beings are born in society as independent. Creation consists in the making of something independent. As creations of society, human beings are expressive of society. For the human being, society is not only transcendent but simultaneously immanent. This creation cannot be conceived of simply as immanent or transcendent. Born of society, the human being functions independently of society and in fact changes it. Human beings are continually changing society through their own actions and are continually reborn from this changing society. Moreover, their actions are forever mediating society, so that human beings constitute the dialectical dynamic in society.

In this way, human beings are born from themselves and at the same time are born from society. Philosophical anthropology needs to grasp human being from its *birth*.... It is the study of the historical human being that must take precedence.

[GK]

TOWARDS A LOGIC OF IMAGINATION

MIKI Kiyoshi 1939, 4–10

Ever since the publication of *A Philosophy of History* in 1932, I have been preoccupied with the question of how it is possible to unite the objective with the subjective, the rational with the irrational, and the intellectual with the emotional. At the time, my primary aim was to formulate this question in terms of combining *logos* and *pathos*, to analyze all the logical and emotional elements of all historical reality, and to argue for their dialectical union.... Throughout these concerns with rationality and *logos*, I was never able to escape the questions of subjectivity, interiority, and *pathos*. This is why I was attracted to Pascal and influenced by Heidegger. Even at the time of my initial interests in a philosophy of history, when I devoted myself to the examination of materialism, my desire to provide a human foundation to the materialist view of history was

a function of that same frame of mind. My desire not to lose the *pathos* in favor of the *logos*, and not to let *logos* eclipse *pathos*, eventually led me to a humanistic framework. It was as if I had advanced from philosophical anthropology to humanism....

My goal is to formulate a philosophy of action based on the logic of imagination. When we talk about the powers of imagination, we usually think only of artistic activities. Even *eidos* has by and large been conceived of from the standpoint of *theoria*. Here I mean to loosen imagination from these restrictions and relate it to action in general. In doing so, it is important not to conceive of it abstractly as a matter of the will, as subjective idealism usually does, but to think of it as creative. All action creates something in the broad sense of the word, that is, all action is productive. In this sense, a logic of imagination is a logic of production. Everything produced possesses form. The word *action* implies the creation of new forms insofar as objects are transformed when they are worked on. As something produced, form is historical and the changes it undergoes are historical. Such form is not simply something objective but a unity of the objective and the subjective, of idea and existence, of being and becoming, of time and space. A logic of imagination is a logic of historical forms. Moreover, even if action is said to produce things, history cannot be thought of unless the “making” (ποίησις) is at the same time a “becoming” (γένεσις). History can only be conceived of when production (*poiesis*) entails generation (*genesis*). A logic of imagination deals with form and the transformation of forms, but what I call the philosophy of forms, unlike traditional morphology, is not a philosophy of hermeneutics but a philosophy of action. In addition, much traditional morphology is irrationalist, whereas what I am aiming at is a unity of eidology and morphology achieved on a standpoint of action.

With the probable exception of the logic that searches for the foundation of modern science, all conventional logic can be called a logic of forms. The logic of Aristotle, who is said to have perfected formal logic, is of this sort. It also represents a synthesis of Greek ontology, which conceived of the real in terms of forms or ideas. At the time, forms were taken to be something unchanging, not something historical. The logic of Hegel, who is said to have perfected dialectics, basically consists of a logic of forms. Although Hegel adds a historical point of view to his dialectics, he follows Greek ontology in resting content with a contemplative standpoint without passing over to a standpoint of action. His dialectics, as well, are a logic of reflection or rethinking, not a logic of action or creation. The logic of imagination I am proposing resembles the logical systems of Aristotle and Hegel insofar as it is a logic of forms, but it grasps form from within a standpoint of historical action. It does not aim to reject the logic of forms or Hegelian dialectics, but rather to assimilate them. As a kind of *Urlogik*,

the logic of imagination educes these two from within itself as configurations of self-reflection.

Assuming a standpoint of acting intuition, the logic of imagination will acknowledge an elemental meaning of intuition that traditional philosophy has slighted. This is not to say it is simply intuitionism. Authentic intuition is mediated by multiple layers of reflection. It is a point in the present at which countless pasts are gathered together and thrust into the future. But neither is the logic of imagination simply a logic of mediation. The latter remains caught in reflection and cannot serve as a logic of action. Its mediation remains at the level of abstract principle and, as a result, completely misses the crucial point at which a manifold of mediations crystallize into a single form that leaps to life. This is clear in the creative activity of art and in technological innovation in general. All human action, seen as a functional response to the environment, is technological. The principle underlying technology is form. If we link technology and the logic of imagination conceptually, we will be able to understand the relationship between the logic of form and science. The remarkable developments of modern technology were made possible by advances in modern science on which technology is based. Following this line of thought, the logic of imagination, mediated by the logic of science, can develop into an actual logic.

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The ideal of a culture of *Gemeinschaft* that existed prior to the modern *Gesellschaft* can be viewed as an ideal of form. Nowadays attention is drawn to the abstract nature of the modern culture of *Gesellschaft*, moored as it is to the ideals of science, in order to call for a new culture of *Gemeinschaft*. The logic of imagination may be able to provide philosophical foundations for the creation of such a new culture. But a new *Gemeinschaft* must not merely set itself up abstractly in opposition to the existing *Gesellschaft*, any more than the logic of forms can simply oppose science in the abstract. There must be a sublation in which the old mediates the new.

The logic of form is not a universal logic of culture, but unites nature and culture as well as natural history and human history. Nature itself is technological and creates forms. Human technology continues the work of nature. Unlike abstract thinking, which isolates nature from history or culture, a logic of imagination enables a unified grasp of both from a perspective of the transformation of forms. It does not think of history in terms of nature, but of nature in terms of history. In so doing, the logic of imagination will be able to restore the descriptive sciences—wrongly despised in comparison to the mathematical natural sciences—to their rightful place vis-à-vis nature and culture.

[GK]

KŌSAKA Masaaki 高坂正顕 (1900–1969)

Less a metaphysician than a historian of philosophy, Kōsaka Masaaki was concerned with the continuity between “nation and culture” in the historical world. This shows up in his 1937 work *The Historical World*, where he focused on Hegel’s civil society and the role of the nation in the philosophy of history, as well as on Marx’s idea of class, all the while maintaining the neo-Kantian personalist standpoint he had elaborated previously. A disciple of Nishida Kitarō* (on whose thought he later published a splendid introductory volume), Kōsaka pursued this perspective not only in his reading of Nishida’s philosophy of the historical world as a “self-determination of ‘absolute nothingness’” but also in his great admiration for Watsuji Tetsurō’s* “hermeneutical anthropology.”

The question of the ‘Way’, which represents an important concept in Japan’s intellectual history, is reflected in the short excerpt on “Roads” included below, a lecture appended to the 1937 volume. Kōsaka cites Dōgen’s* idea that “to learn the Way is to learn the self,” along with the Japanese Confucian idea of the Way as a unity of action and insight worked out by such thinkers as Itō Jinsai* and Ogyū Sorai* in response to Zhu Xi’s doctrines of ‘principle’ and ‘*ki*’. In opposition to the Confucians, Motoori Norinaga* detailed a standpoint of “the Yamato ‘mind’” by arguing for a “Way that leads to things.” The significance of the Way was further incorporated in Daoist and Shinto ideas as well as in the standpoints of the arts of tea, flowers, swordsmanship, judo, and *bushidō*. From a broad overview of this tradition, Kōsaka takes up the hermeneutical structure of the Way in resistance to the narrow standpoint of the “imperial way” to which it was being reduced at the time. He does this by pointing to the historical dimension entailed in the determinations of Nishida’s ‘place’, in the public nature of roads, in the interpersonal encounters enabled by roads, and in their simple meandering quality.

Later, during the brief period following the war in which he was driven from public service, Kōsaka devoted his energies to “existential philosophy,” and after reinstatement in his teaching post, to “educational philosophy” and educational politics.

[kōs]

A HERMENEUTICS OF ROADS

KŌSAKA Masaaki 1937, 251–5, 257, 259–60

History is the determination of the world, the determination of a ‘place’. The foundation of history includes space as well as time. This “temporal space” that undergirds history is not space in the ordinary sense, but rather a “climate.” More accurately, climate itself is the place of living things and as such

does not suffice as the place of history. It lacks self-mobility and subjectivity. What gives history its place must be something subjective, something that possesses coherence, organization, and the ability to move itself. What provides nature with coherence, system, and mobility—the so-called *logos* of nature that obliges us to read it and at the same time speaks to us of itself and unfolds itself—is this not what a road is? It is on roads that nature organizes itself into a world. The impulse to the world is woven into the road. The world is assembled through the sounds and colors of the road. What, then, are the defining characteristics of the road?

A roadway consists of tracks cut into the earth by intercourse among persons. It is not fundamentally something that belongs to me alone. Even where it is a side road or a bypass, insofar as it is a road, it must allow for the traffic of other persons. A road that is all mine is not a road. Roads are not the property of individuals but of groupings like villages and towns. They are a kind of legal expression. Roads are public thoroughfares. Formerly a road was something people were in touch with; they put up notice boards on it and were exposed on it. To stand on a road was to place oneself in the midst of the world. The fact that a road is not something that comes into being by a single act of walking speaks to its public nature. Villages are set up along a road and roads open up into plazas: the common quality of the road is something that develops of itself. Thus the first defining quality of the road is that it is something public. A road is the expression of a public place. Since all “places” are attached to a road, the road marks a shift from a hidden way of being to an open one. On the road, the world manifests itself by itself.

That roads are public implies that when I am on a road I have left my own world to stand in a common space. There an unknown world draws near to me. The road on which I take leave of my interiority for what lies outside of it is also the road on which what is exterior can enter within. The road is properly a coming and going. A road built for one community to attack another is the same road that the other community can use to attack back. The first characteristic of the road as something public thus leads to a second: the road is reversible; the road runs both ways. This twofold directionality of the road means that the road is not simply a locus of commonality and intimacy but also something estranging, a meeting place for enmity. It can occasion the exchange of friendly greetings or just as well let people pass one another by.

Yet comings and goings alone do not exhaust the meaning of the road. More than just an expression of movements, the road shows fixture at a certain ground. It is not the trace of a single act of walking but of repeated ambulation. The emergence of a road may display the shift of a people from a nomadic to a settled existence. There a road finally becomes a village; it carries within itself the capacity to turn into a town. As roads crisscross one another, a transition

of form takes place from a bidirectional straight line to a plane. Thus towns are born as the result of roads. Towns are bundles of roads. Unlike the *Weg*, which heads off in another direction, a town stays put, as the etymological roots of *Stadt* in the verb *stehen* reflect—an interesting play on words. The inclination of the town to surround itself with walls displays this tendency to fixture. It is said that the English word *town* is related to *Zaun*, the German word for fence. Through its fixture, the bidirectionality of the road limits its own movement. Here the road does not lead people outside of a certain area; rather, by means of traffic along crisscrossing routes it reaches deeper into its own interiority. It is when nature is fitted out with roadways that we first come into possession of a homeland. In the first place, the road is public; in the second, it is reversible; and now, in the third place, it is seen to be fixating. With that, have we covered all the characteristics of the road?

Wherever there are fixed city walls there are always gates as well. Insofar as a town is a collection of roads, it is not possible to prohibit roads from leading to the outside. Gates break the fixation of roads; they link the inside with the outside. In passing through a gate to the outside, a road opens out into an expanse of infinite distance. This infinity represents for us one of the most noteworthy characteristics of the road, and that being so, there is no telling whence it might have originated. It is probably not so much that long journeys teach us about distance, as that distance sets us off on long journeys. Distance, and especially an infinite distance, is our own “projection” or *Ent-wurf*. Various kinds of barriers and passageways only have meaning as things that limit the impetus of an infinite road. They merely attest to the reverse side of the road’s drive to infinity. The infinity that belongs to the road is something we conjecture, even if only as a deceptive feeling, from within a cul-de-sac. The cul-de-sac is not a road. Beyond the road an infinite world opens up. The road is the expression of an impulse to the world.

That said, we must not forget that, in the end, a road is a restraint. Once given shape, a road cannot easily be reformed. It limits our walking and orients us. As such, roads keep us from taking a road that is not a proper road. The restraint is another important characteristic of the road.

In an attempt to lay out the traits of the road, I have enumerated five elements. On the one hand, it is public and infinite; on the other, it is fixed and restraining; and in between, as if mediating the two pairs of opposites, it is reversible. At the same time as the road binds us to one area, it leads people endlessly to other areas. The road is shouldered with a contradictory nature, and in that regard finds a happy expression in the phrase “coming and going.” The world is not simply an infinite opening beyond the road; it presses on us incessantly. The world also works within us. Given its dual character of an outward orientation and a return within, the road is equal to the task of expressing

our drive towards the world. If we may think of a bridge as one form of road, and of a tower as another, we can speak of the outward orientation of the road as well as of its vertical orientation towards the depths of its own interiority. Presumably we think of people on a bridge as crossing over to the world on the other side, and people in an ivory tower as trying to protect their own world by closing themselves in.

What, then, is the mode of being proper to the road? And what significance does it have for the historical world? I believe we find a clue to the answer in two phenomena seen on the road: *encountering* and *meandering*. To begin with, what sort of depth does the encountering we see taking place constantly in the streets disclose to us?... Encountering refers to the way in which the world, and in particular the historical world, is given to us; it is the category of “givenness.” A simple “you” is an obvious presence to an “I,” but the chance nature of their encounter must be due to a world that transcends the “you.” The world, as something to be encountered, represents the need for contingency.

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Meandering allows one region to be conveyed to another. Land ceases to be simply something fixed. If, generally speaking, there is some historical particularity present in a communication, this does not mean that people need to pay attention only to the temporality of what is transmitted; the spatial aspect is also present. The dynamics of history always include spatial movement as well, that is, movement occurring on a road. Leaving aside the problem of determining just when and where history began, we need only suggest that the beginning of history coincides with the beginning of roads.

.....

Words are the expression of people; roads are the expression of the earth. In words people occupy the center; in a road, the earth is central. If I be permitted the bold generalization of saying that the philosophy of the West stems from *logos* and the philosophy of the East is rooted in the ‘Way’, then may we not argue that whereas the *logos* of words belongs to human expression, the road is the ‘Way’ of heaven grounded in the expression of nature? Be that as it may, unlike words, which express by disclosure, roads express by the closure of silence. Words may speak in fixed meanings but roads have no such vocabulary to speak with. Even as they speak of things, they keep them hidden. “Hidden disclosure” may seem a contradiction in terms, but does not this very contradiction indicate an expression that is not human, an expression of heaven? When we speak of nature “talking,” we are personifying nature, its ability to “express itself” being an extension of the human body. When we speak of human beings following the Way of heaven, however, nature and humans are as one being raised in the selfsame soil. Human beings are not alone in possessing expression; heaven has its expression as well. Roads may be seen as an expression of

heaven. Rather than express *logos*, the road expresses activity. It is the active expression of heaven taking place in the four seasons.

In my interpretation of roads I have understood them as expressions of heaven because of their hidden mode of expression. Something metaphysical resides deep within the recesses of the roads traversed in our unconscious minds. Even in philosophy we must speak of trying to see what lies close to hand and directly underfoot. In the recesses of the road there is a metaphysics of heaven or a metaphysics of earth. Only by way of the road can we speak of understanding the “world” completely.

[JWH]

NISHITANI Keiji 西谷啓治 (1900–1990)



Nishitani Keiji was born 27 February 1900 in a small town on the Japan Sea. He was fourteen when his father died of tuberculosis, a disease from which Nishitani himself suffered as a young man. As a high-school student, Nishitani was attracted to Zen through the writings of D.T. Suzuki* and at the same time read widely in western sources outside the curriculum. Drawn to philosophy by a volume of Nishida Kitarō's* essays, he enrolled in the department of philosophy at Kyoto University where he studied under Nishida and Tanabe Hajime*, graduating with a thesis on Schelling. In the ensuing years he translated two of Schelling's works and published a range of essays on a variety of philosophical questions from Plotinus to mysticism to Kant. In 1932 he was appointed lecturer at Kyoto University and in that same year published his first book, *A History of Mysticism*. Four years later he began a practice of Zen that was to last for twenty-four years. In 1943 he was given the lay Buddhist name Keisei, "voice of the valley stream."

At thirty-seven he set out for two years of study under Martin Heidegger at the University of Freiburg, his initial plan to study under Henri Bergson having been frustrated by the latter's failing health. During his time in Germany he prepared and delivered a talk on Nietzsche and Meister Eckhart, and carried these interests back with him to Japan, convinced that the mystics had brought religion and philosophy together in a way wholly compatible with eastern modes of thought.

As one of the rising generation of young philosophers, Nishitani was drawn into roundtable discussions of the wartime ideology (see pages 1059–84) and indeed was encouraged by his teachers, Nishida and Tanabe, to take part in the intellectual resistance against the irrational tendencies of the time. These efforts drew him further and further away from his philosophical and religious interests, with the result that he cast his first original philosophical work, *A Philosophy of Elemental Subjectivity*, in such a way as to include a political philosophy, one he would later abandon entirely. In 1943 he was appointed to the chair of religion, but was relieved of his post at the end of the war three years later, judged "unsuitable" by the Occupation authorities. The years that followed were difficult ones for Nishitani, but he managed to produce a number of important philosophical works, among them *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*. In 1952 he was reinstated in the chair of religion, conceding it six years later to Takeuchi Yoshinori* while he himself moved to the chair of the history of philosophy. In 1961 he published his masterpiece, *Religion and Nothingness*.

In 1963 Nishitani retired from Kyoto University but retained a lectureship at Ōtani University, where he also served as chief editor of the English-language journal founded by D. T. Suzuki, *The Eastern Buddhist*. Meantime, he not only continued to write and lecture within Japan and abroad, but also kept up a lively exchange with scholars from around the world.

The selections below include the bulk of an essay on the meaning of nihilism for Japan, passages dealing with the conversion from a standpoint of nihility to one of 'emptiness' (*śūnyatā*) from the opening chapters of *Religion and Nothingness*, and passages from a late essay on the logic of emptiness. → See also pages 1197–1200.

[JWH]

THE MEANING OF NIHILISM FOR JAPAN

NISHITANI Keiji 1949, 175–86 (173–81)

The Crisis in Europe and Nihilism

Nihilism is a recognition of the presence of a fundamental and universal crisis in modern Europe. It is a crisis in the sense that people began to feel a quaking underfoot of the ground that had supported the history of Europe for several thousand years and laid the foundations of European culture, thought, ethics, and religion. More than this, it means that life itself is being uprooted and human “being” itself turns into a question mark. Since the latter half of the nineteenth century, this sense of crisis or nihilism, combined with a sense of pessimism and *décadence*, has been attacking Europe sporadically. In fact, this sort of thing can and does occur regardless of time or place. The sense that life is groundless and human existence without meaning can arise in connection with the religion and philosophy of any era of history. Here we have focused on the nihilism connected with the historical consciousness of Europe.

Nihilism is not restricted to religion and metaphysics, but reaches over to culture and ethics as well, bringing into question the historical ground of the entire human endeavor, diachronically and synchronically. The confrontation it promotes with the whole of previous history occurs at the metaphysical ground of history. In short, nihilism is a historical actuality in the absolute sense. This accounts for its momentous importance, and it also explains why the attempt to come to grips with nihilism in the form of a personal experiment means to preempt the destination of history and strike down to its very bottom.

The encounter with nihility at the base of historical actuality was the turning point in which Nietzsche’s “counter movement” emerged from nihility: the shift away from a nihility of death to a nihility of life, or to what Stirner calls “creative nothing.” Through this shift, nihility unexpectedly took on a new life that could

not be beaten down by wind or rain.⁸ For the thinkers who cleared the ground for it, this life represented a unity of creative *nihilism and finitude*. Nihilism in the true sense appears not only when the world of all finite beings (the world of “phenomena”) is seen to be fundamentally null and thus transcended negatively, but also when the world of eternal being (the world of “essences” conceived after this negative transcendence) is negated. This double negation elicits a standpoint in which finitude and eternity are one against the backdrop of ‘nothingness’. Here finitude becomes a full and final finitude. This is what Nietzsche meant by speaking of “*this* life, *this eternal* life.” Such a life lives time temporally, as something primordially given as self-being and “ripening with time.” Finite self-being, though *in* the world, embraces the world *within* at the ground of its nihility. Eternal recurrence in Nietzsche, the world as property of the individual in Stirner, and the standpoint of transcendental grounding in Heidegger all carry this sense.

Affirmative nihilism began to emerge from an awareness of the fundamental crisis in Europe as a way to overcome this crisis at its roots.

The Crisis Compounded

If “nihilism” is the historical actuality of Europe, and if under these circumstances it becomes a historical-existential standpoint, how are we to determine its meaning for us in Japan? Our ways of thinking have become Europeanized; our culture is a recent offshoot of European culture and our thinking a shadow-image of European-style thinking. Still, our importation of European culture never went to the extent of including the Christian faith that has served as the basis and formative power of the European spirit, not to mention the ethics and philosophy that have been developing since the age of the Greeks. Unlike objective realities like institutions and cultural artifacts, or academic disciplines and technologies having to do with objective things, these things of the spirit are directly rooted within the subject and not readily transferable from one place to another. The spiritual basis of Europe has not become our spiritual basis; and in that sense, a crisis generated from the shaking of those foundations is not a reality for us. There seems to be no way for nihilism to become a vital issue for us. Does that mean we can do no more than eye it with curiosity as “someone else’s business”? The enduring popularity of Nietzsche and the current popularity of existentialism may seem to strengthen this suspicion.

What makes the issue still more complicated is the fact that we do not have any spiritual basis whatsoever at present. The West still has the faith, ethics,

8. [The allusion is to the first lines of “November 3rd,” a poem by Miyazawa Kenji (1896–1933), whose work is deeply informed by Zen ideas.]

ideas, and so forth that have been handed down from Christianity and Greek philosophy, and the integration of these various elements is still the dynamic force behind the formation of the person. No matter how much this basis is now being shaken, it is still very much alive, and one battles against it only at the cost of fierce determination. For us in Japan, things are different. In the past Buddhism and Confucian thought constituted such a basis, but they have already lost their power, leaving a total void and vacuum in our spiritual ground. Our age probably represents the first time since the beginning of Japanese history that such a phenomenon has occurred.

Up until the middle of the Meiji period, a spiritual basis and highly developed tradition were alive in the hearts and minds of the people. Indeed, the reason Japan was able to take in western culture with such unprecedented alacrity was that people then were possessed of true *ability* born of spiritual substance. However, as Europeanization (and Americanization) proceeded, this spiritual core began to decay in subsequent generations, until it is now a vast, gaping hollow in our ground. The various manifestations of culture at present, if looked at closely, are mere shadows floating over the void. The worst thing is that this 'emptiness' is in no way an emptiness that has been won through struggle, nor a nihilism that has been "lived through." It is the natural result of our having been cut off from our tradition. Before we knew what was happening, the spiritual core had wasted away completely.

From the perspective of political history, Japan's being cast onto the stage of world politics during the Meiji Restoration was the greatest change in the history of the nation. But if we look at the change from the point of view of spiritual history, the greatest spiritual crisis in the nation's history was also taking place. What is more, we went through this crisis without a clear realization that it was a crisis; and even now the crisis is being compounded by our continuing lack of awareness of our spiritual void. This is why we find it so difficult subjectively to make European nihilism a serious issue, although objectively it ought to become the most pressing problem for us. Hence nihilism tends to be seen as a passing fad, and not something acutely urgent for us. This is the paradox of our situation.

.....

From the beginning, the westernization of Japan was clearly a national resolution of a kind rarely found in the history of the world. It was forced on us from outside by the enormous progress of world history, and at the same time it was impelled by a powerful will from within. This distinguishes it from the Europeanization of other non-European nations, and no doubt accrues to the greatness of those people who led Japan around the time of the Meiji Restoration. Such individuals were the products of the high quality of traditional oriental culture, of the national "moral energy" cultivated in that culture, and of the vitality

of a nation not yet weakened by over-saturation with culture. As westernization progressed, however, this moral energy and spiritual core began to weaken and disappear, and a self-splitting began to take place in the will of the subject.

On the one hand, the ideas of the “cultured person” and the “civilized lifestyle” that began to appear during that period harbored at bottom some measure of self-contempt vis-à-vis the overwhelming influence of European culture. There was a tendency to a mood of resignation about having been born Japanese.... Thus “culture” forgot itself in being among others, and eventually lost itself. On the other hand, national moral energy gradually metamorphized into the violence of exclusionist and uncultured “patriots” as a reaction against this loss of self. The self was clung to without consideration for others, or for the historical context. In another sense, this, too, was a loss of ties to the historical ground. Both extremes are one-sided, and represent a falling away from the spirit of “free mastery,” of being able to be oneself among others....

Nietzsche stresses a sense of responsibility toward the ancestors, a “thinking through the succession of the generations,” and bearing the accumulation of every possible spiritual nobility of the past. His nihilism, a radical confrontation with history, was backed up by responsibility toward the ancestors to redeem what is noble in the tradition. His standpoint calls for a returning to the ancestors in order to face the future, or to put it the other way around, a prophesying toward the tradition. Without a will toward the future, the confrontation with the past cannot be properly executed; nor is there a true will toward the future without responsibility toward the ancestors. For us Japanese now, the recovery of this primordial will represents our most fundamental task. It is here that European nihilism will begin to reveal its fundamental significance for us.

The Significance of European Nihilism for Us

As noted above, our crisis is compounded by the fact that not only are we in it, but we do not know that our situation is critical. Thus our first task is to realize that the crisis exists in us, that modern Japan is a living contradiction with a hollowness in its spiritual foundations. To awaken to this fact is to place it in the context of the spiritual history of modern Japan. In other words, we need to reflect historically and ask how it is that we have become unable to “think in terms of the succession of generations.” What teaches us to pose the question in this fashion is precisely European nihilism. It can make us aware of the nihility within—a nihility, moreover, that has become *our historical actuality*. And this in turn can bring us to Nietzsche’s “positive nihilism,” or so-called “pessimism of strength.” This is the first significance of European nihilism for us.

The essential thing is to overcome our inner void, and here European nihilism is of critical relevance in that it can impart a radical twist to our present situation

and thereby point a way toward overcoming the spiritual hollowness. This is the second significance that nihilism holds for us. The reason the void was generated in the spiritual foundation of the Japanese in the first place was that we rushed earnestly into westernization and in the process forgot ourselves....

The reason the Japanese at the time were not aware of the extreme anxiety the leading European thinkers were feeling about themselves and about Europe was that they were not interested in spiritual depth but only with more or less external matters (such as politics, economics, military concerns, and so forth) such as might redound to the strength of the country. The result was an oblivion of the problem of inner spiritual depth. This was not so much of a problem as long as the wisdom and spiritual “energy” that had been cultivated in the tradition still held sway. The high achievements of Meiji culture which drew on that power represented a zenith in Japanese cultural history. Now we find ourselves in the exact opposite situation, radically different from that of the Japanese of the Meiji era. And this is not simply because the war put an abrupt end to the process of becoming a strong nation. It is rather due to the fact that the wisdom and moral energy that people in the Meiji era had inherited from the tradition were no longer there, and that the western civilization in which they had innocently believed began to show conspicuous signs of an inner crisis, even to their eyes. Nietzsche did not succeed in eliciting any response during his lifetime. He ended up in solitude, shouting in a vacuum as it were. Toward the end of his life he said: “People will come to understand me after the coming European war is over.”

The prophecy proved to be true. The First World War exposed the profound crisis of Europe, and at the same time Nietzsche’s nihilism came to attract more attention than the ideas of any other thinker. Those of our generation learned about this self-criticism of the Europeans, and of their nihilism in particular, at the same time as our own spiritual substance was slipping away from us. European nihilism thus wrought a radical change in our relationship to Europe and to ourselves. It now forces our actual historical existence, our “being ourselves among others,” to take a radically new direction. It no longer allows us simply to rush into westernization while forgetting ourselves. Nihilism teaches us, first, to recognize clearly the crisis that stands in the way of western civilization—and therefore in the way of our westernization—and to take the analysis of the crisis by “the best thinkers in Europe,” and their efforts to overcome the modern period, and make them our own concern. This may entail pursuing the present course of westernization to term.

Secondly, European nihilism teaches us to return to our forgotten selves and to reflect on the tradition of oriental culture. This tradition has, of course, been lost to us moderns, and is thus something to be rediscovered. There is no turning back to the way things were. What is past is dead and gone, only to be

repudiated or subjected to radical criticism. The tradition must be rediscovered from the ultimate point where it is grasped in advance as “the end” (or *eschaton*) of our westernization and of western civilization itself. Our tradition must be appropriated from the direction in which we are heading, as a new possibility, from beyond Nietzsche’s “perspective.” Just as European nihilism, the crisis of European civilization, and the overcoming of the modern era become problematic, so must our own tradition. In other words, it cannot be divorced from the problem of overcoming nihilism.

Creative nihilism in Stirner, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and others was an attempt to overcome the nihilism of despair. These attempts, conducted at varying depths, were efforts (in Nietzsche’s words) “to overcome nihilism by means of nihilism.” The tradition of oriental culture in general, and Buddhist standpoints like emptiness and nothingness in particular, become a new problem when set in this context. Herein lies our orientation toward the future—westernization—and at the same time our orientation toward the past—reconnection with the tradition. The point is to recover the creativity that mediates the past to the future and the future to the past (but *not* to restore a bygone era). The third significance of European nihilism for us is that it makes these things possible.

Buddhism and Nihilism

Nihilism in Europe culminated, we said, in a standpoint of “transcendence to the world” as “the fundamental integration of creative nihilism and finitude.” Taken as a general perspective on the human way of being, this is remarkably close to the standpoint of Buddhism, and in particular to the standpoint of emptiness in the ‘Mahayana’ tradition, if we look at it from the general perspective of the way of being of humankind. Following on Schopenhauer’s profound concern with Buddhism, Nietzsche makes constant reference to Buddhist ideas in his discussions of nihilism. He also picked up Schopenhauer’s biases and oversights, however, especially regarding the Mahayana tradition. As I mentioned earlier, he referred to the most extreme nihilism of “nothing (meaninglessness) eternally” as “the European form of Buddhism,” and dubbed the nihilistic catastrophe about to befall Europe “the second Buddhism.”⁹ Furthermore, based on the idea that the sincerity cultivated by Christianity reveals the falseness of Christianity itself, he called the standpoint of “everything is false” a “Buddhism of doing” (*Tat*), and considers such “longing for nothingness” a quasi-Buddhist characteristic.¹⁰ In Nietzsche’s view, Buddhism is the culmination of what he calls *decadence*: a complete negation of life and will.

9. *Will to Power*, §55.

10. *Will to Power*, §1.

Ironically, it was not in his nihilistic view of Buddhism but in such ideas as *amor fati* and the Dionysian as the overcoming of nihilism that Nietzsche came closest to Buddhism, and especially to Mahayana. For example, as mentioned earlier, he spoke of the Dionysian as a “great pantheistic sharing of joy and suffering” and a “feeling of the necessary unity of creation and annihilation.”¹¹ It is beyond the compass of these pages to go into a comparison with Buddhism. What is clear, however, is that there is in Mahayana a standpoint that cannot be reached even by nihilism that overcomes nihilism, even though this latter may tend in that direction. For this standpoint:

By virtue of emptiness everything is able to arise, but without emptiness nothing whatsoever can arise.¹²

In other words: everything is possible in a person in whom the nature of emptiness arises. As a master once said to his students, or “followers of the ‘Way’”:

He, who at this moment, before my eyes is shining alone and clearly listening to my discourse—this man tarries nowhere; he traverses the ten directions and is freely himself in the three realms. Though he enters the differentiations of every state, no one of these can divert him. In an instant of time he penetrates the ‘*dharmadhātu*’: on meeting a buddha he persuades the buddha, on meeting a patriarch he persuades the patriarch.... (*Rinzairoku* 1.13)

For the present this standpoint remains buried in the tradition of the past, far from historical actuality. One way to retrieve it and bring it back to life is, as we have been saying, to grasp in advance the point at which our Europeanization is to culminate, and make European nihilism an urgent problem for ourselves.

Today non-European powers like the United States and the Soviet Union are coming to the fore; in any event, they are the players who have stepped onto the stage of history to open up a new era. But neither “Americanism” nor “communism” is capable of overcoming the nihilism that the best thinkers of Europe confronted with anxiety, the abyss of nihilism that opened up in the spiritual depths of the self and the world. For the time being they are managing to keep the abyss covered over, but eventually they will have to face it. In this regard, Dostoevsky may be a prophet whose time is coming in the Soviet Union, much as Nietzsche’s time is coming in Western Europe. Nietzsche referred to himself as “the spirit of the bird of prophecy,” and his sharp cry still echoes in the ears of thinking Europeans. Stefan Zweig, for example, says that Nietzsche’s ideas are “deeply decisive for our spiritual world”; and Heidegger calls him the last of

11. *Will to Power*, §1050.

12. Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā* 24/14.

the determinative thinkers, the one in whom the history of western philosophy since Plato turned into a question. Both Dostoevsky and Nietzsche anticipated the nihilism that was to come, and dared to descend to the depths of history and humanity to struggle desperately against it. They can even lead us Japanese to the nihilism lurking in the ground of our historical actuality. But in order for us to take up the struggle, we need our own means. The way to overcome it must be of our own creation. Only then will the spiritual culture of the Orient which has been handed down through the ages be revitalized in a new transformation.

[GP, AS]

NIHILITY AND NOTHINGNESS

NISHITANI Keiji 1961, 9–25, 51, 79–82, 142–5, 155–7
(6–19, 43–4, 69–71, 125–8, 137–9)

When we think of “reality” from an everyday standpoint, we think first of all of the things and events without us: the mountains and streams, the flowers and forests, and the entire visible universe all about us. We think, too, of other people, other societies and nations, and of the whole skein of human activities and historical events that envelop them. Next, we think of reality as the world within us: our thoughts, our feelings, and our desires.

When we pass from the everyday standpoint to that of natural science, we find that it is the atoms, or the energy that makes them up, or the scientific laws that regulate that energy, rather than individual events and phenomena, that are now regarded as reality. In contrast, the social scientist, for his part, might posit that economic relations provide all human activity with its basis in reality. Or again, a metaphysician might argue that all those things are only the appearances of a phenomenal world, and that the true reality is to be found in the ideas that lie behind them. The problem with these various “realities” is that they lack unity among themselves and even seem to contradict one another... In short, while the various standpoints of everyday life, science, philosophy, and the like all tell us what is real, there are grave discrepancies and contradictions among them. What the scientist takes to be real from the viewpoint of his science and what he takes to be real from the viewpoint of his everyday experience are completely at odds with each other, and yet he is unable to deny either of them. It is no simple matter to say what is truly real...

Death and nihility are also very real. Nihility is absolute negativity with regard to the very being of all those various things and phenomena just referred to; death is absolute negativity with regard to life itself. Thus, if life and things are said to be real, then death and nihility are equally real. Wherever there are

finite beings—and all things are finite—there must be nihility; wherever there is life, there must be death. In the face of death and nihility, all life and existence lose their certainty and their importance as reality, and come to look unreal instead. From time immemorial, human beings have expressed this fleeting transience of life and existence, likening it to a dream, a shadow, or the shimmering haze of the summer's heat.

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Although we ordinarily think of things in the external world as real, we may not actually get in touch with the reality of those things. I would venture to say that, in fact, we do not. It is extremely rare for us so to “fix our attention” on things as to “lose ourselves” in them, in other words, to *become* the very things we are looking at.... One might say that we look out at things from within the citadel of the self, or that we sit like spectators in the cave of the self.

Feelings, the self, and so forth are all real, to be sure. On the field of consciousness where they are ordinarily taken for real, however, they are not present in their true reality but only in the form of representations. So long as the field of separation between within and without is not broken through, and so long as a conversion from that standpoint does not take place, the lack of unity and contradiction spoken of earlier cannot help but prevail among the things we take as real.... The field that lies at the ground of our everyday lives is the field of an essential separation between self and things, the field of consciousness, within which a real self-presentation of reality cannot take place at all. Within it, reality appears only in the shape of shattered fragments, only in the shape of ineluctable self-contradictions.

This standpoint, which we may best call the self-contradiction of reality, has come to exercise a powerful control over us, never more so than since the emergence of the subjective autonomy of the ego in modern times. This latter appears most forcefully in the thought of Descartes, the father of modern philosophy. As is commonly known, Descartes set up a dualism between *res cogitans* (which has its essence in thought or consciousness) and *res extensa* (which has its essence in physical extension). On the one hand, he established the ego as a reality beyond all doubt and occupying the central position with regard to everything else that exists. His *cogito, ergo sum* expressed the mode of being of that ego as a self-centered assertion of its own realness. Along with this, on the other hand, the things in the natural world came to appear as bearing no living connection with the internal ego. They became, so to speak, the cold and lifeless world of death. Even animals and the human body itself were thought of as mechanisms.

.....

The self of contemporary people is an ego of the Cartesian type, constituted self-consciously as something standing over against the world and all the things

that are in it. Life, will, intellect, and so forth are attributed to that ego intrinsically as its faculties or activities. We are incapable of conceiving of the subjectivity of individuals without at the same time conceding to each individual its own ego, absolutely independent and irreplaceable. We designate as “subject” that entity which can in no way ever be made an object itself, or can never be derived from anything else, but is rather the point of departure from which everything else may be considered. The formula... *cogito, ergo sum*... contains a fundamental problem. From the first, Descartes took the *cogito* as an immediately evident truth, the one thing that stood above all doubt and could therefore serve as a starting point for thinking about everything else.... But for all its self-evidence, does the *cogito* really give us an adequate standpoint from which to think about the *cogito* itself? Does not that very self-evidence need to be brought out into the open at a more elemental level?

...The self-evidence of the *cogito* can in no way be derived from the field of anything that is completely other than the ego, be it life, matter, or God. But because this ego is seen as self-consciousness from the standpoint of the *cogito* itself, ego becomes a mode of being of the self closed up within itself. In other words, ego means self in a state of self-attachment.

...Compare the method of doubt that Descartes adopted to arrive at his *cogito, ergo sum* with the doubt that appears in religion. Doubt and uncertainty show up in the vestibules of religion. We see them, for example, in the questions... concerning the life and death of the self and the transience of all things coming to be and passing away in the world. Contained in the pain of losing a loved one forever is a fundamental uncertainty about the very existence of oneself and others. This doubt takes a variety of forms and is expressed in a variety of ways. For instance, Zen speaks of the “self-presentation of the great doubt.”... The very condition of basic uncertainty regarding human existence in the world and the existence of self and others, as well as the suffering that this gives rise to, are surely matters of the utmost, elemental concern.

...We come to the realization of death and nihility when we see them within ourselves as constituting the basis of our life and existence. We awaken to their reality when we see them as extending beyond the subjective realm, lying concealed at the ground of all that exists, at the ground of the world itself. This awareness implies more than merely looking contemplatively at death and nihility. It means that the self realizes their presence at the foundations of its existence, that it sees them from the final frontier of its self-existence. To that extent the realization of nihility is nothing other than the realization of the self itself. It is not a question of observing nihility objectively or entertaining some representation of it. It is, rather, as if the self were itself to become that nihility, and in so doing become aware of itself from the limits of self-existence....

When Descartes entertained the possibility of doubting everything that pres-

ents itself to us by suspecting it all of being the illusion of a dream or the trick of a malicious demon, and so, considering that this doubt itself was the only thing beyond doubt, he arrived at the conclusion *cogito, ergo sum*: he was engaged from the very start in a process of doubt. This is something fundamentally different from the self-presentation of the great doubt.... The *cogito* of Descartes did not pass through the purgative fires in which the ego itself is transformed, along with all things, into a single great doubt. The *cogito* was conceived of simply on the field of the *cogito*. This is why the reality of the ego as such could not but become an unreality. Only after passing through those purgative fires and breaking through the nihility that makes itself present at the ground of the ego, can the reality of the *cogito* and the *sum*, together with the reality of all things, truly appear as real. Only then can this reality be actualized and appropriated. If we grant that Cartesian philosophy is the prime illustration of the mode of being of modern people, we may also say that it represents the fundamental problem lurking within that mode.

.....

The omnipotence of God must be something that one can encounter at any time, listening to the radio, reading the paper, or chatting with a friend. Moreover, it must be something encountered as capable of destroying both body and soul, something that makes man fear and tremble and presses him to a decision. Without this sense of urgency, for all our talk about them, divine omnipotence and God himself remain mere concepts....

No doubt, a lot of people will claim that they do not encounter the omnipotence of God when listening to the radio. At those times, then, such people should encounter the nihility of the self instead. But if they insist that they do not encounter nihility either, or that they are too busy and have no time for nihility, that they are not persons of leisure or that their intellect does not recognize such things as nihility, then they encounter nihility in their way of *not* encountering it. Nihility makes its presence felt in the very fact that they do not encounter nihility. Whatever sort of people they be, however busy or intellectual, or rather the more busy and more intellectual they are, the more they are unable to retreat so much as a single step from nihility. Even if their consciousness and intellect do not encounter nihility, their *being* does. Nihility is apparent in their busy or intellectual mode of being itself. If, on the contrary, they were to encounter nihility directly, that would enable them to take a first step away from it. But the fact that they do not only entrenches them all the more deeply within it. Such is the nature of nihility....

The human capacity for evil arises out of the nihility that lies at the ground of our existence by virtue of our having been created *ex nihilo*. And when human beings themselves become the locus of nihility in their awareness of radical evil, as discussed above, when the conversion of faith becomes a reality, then salva-

tion is realized, even though they remain sinners and unable to rid themselves of evil. Here divine omnipotence is realized as the absolute affirmation that permits evil even while persisting in its absolute negation. This absolute affirmation as negation directed at the evildoer is nothing other than the pardoning of evil in a person of faith. It is divine love. There is absolutely no evil in God, and yet evil falls absolutely within the compass of divine omnipotence.

.....

The idea of the human as person is without doubt the highest conception of the human yet to appear. The same may be said of the idea of God as person. Once the awareness of subjectivity had been established in modern times, the notion of humans as personal beings became practically self-evident. But is the way of thinking about person that has so far prevailed really the only possible way of thinking about person?

Put simply, until now the person has been viewed from the standpoint of the person itself. It has been a person-centered view of person.... Person is, rather, a phenomenon that appears out of what cannot itself be called personal and does not entail any confinement of self-being.... When I say that person is a phenomenon, however, I do not wish to imply that there is some other “thing” behind personal being, like an actor behind a mask. Person is an appearance with nothing at all behind it to make an appearance. That is to say, “nothing at all” is what is behind person; complete nothingness, not one single thing, occupies the position behind person.

While this complete nothingness is wholly other than person and means the absolute negation of person, it is not some “thing” or some entity different from person. It brings into being the thing called person and becomes one with it. Accordingly, it is inaccurate to say that complete nothingness “is” behind person. Nothingness is not a “thing” that is nothingness. Or again, to speak of nothingness as standing “behind” person does not imply a duality between nothingness and person. In describing this nothingness as “something” wholly other, we do not mean that there is actually some “thing” that is wholly other. Rather, true nothingness means that there is no thing that is nothingness, and this is ‘*absolute nothingness*’.

“Nothingness” is generally forced into a relationship with “being” and made to serve as its negation, leading to its conception as something that “is” nothingness because it “is not” being. This seems to be especially evident in western thought, even in the “nihility” of nihilism. But insofar as one stops here, nothingness remains a mere concept, a nothingness only in thought. Absolute nothingness, wherein even that “is” is negated, is not possible as a nothingness that is thought, but only as a nothingness that is lived.... The shift of the human being as person from person-centered self-prehension to self-revelation as the

manifestation of absolute nothingness... requires an existential conversion, a change of heart within individuals themselves.

Existential conversion consists in extricating oneself from a person-centered mode of being to come out on the *near side*, in a mode of personal being in the immediacy of the actual self. The “nothing at all” behind the person comes out into the open on the side of the self, the original self. If person be regarded as the sheer mode of self-being itself, “behind” which there is nothing, this is so because the matter is being looked at from the side of the person. In this case, nothingness only goes as far as being looked at or thought about. When the “nothing at all” opens up on the near side of the personal self, however, and is seen as sheer self itself, then nothingness really becomes actualized in the self as the true self. Then it is appropriated in the self. Self-existence, in the sense spoken of earlier, becomes the realization of nothingness. “Appropriating” is not “looking at.” Pressed to give it a name, we might call it a “seeing of not-seeing,” a seeing that sees without seeing. True nothingness is a living nothingness, and a living nothingness can only be self-attested.

.....

The assertion that being is only being in unison with emptiness belongs in its fullest and most proper sense to the point of view that speaks of the “substance” of things.... We have here a completely different concept of existence, one that has not up to now become a question for people in their daily lives, one that even philosophers have yet to give consideration. The haiku poet Bashō seems to hint at it when he writes:

From the pine tree
Learn of the pine tree,
And from the bamboo
Of the bamboo.

He does not simply mean that we should “observe the pine tree carefully.” Still less does he mean for us to “study the pine tree scientifically.” He means for us to enter into the mode of being where the pine tree is the pine tree itself, and the bamboo is the bamboo itself, and from there to look at the pine tree and the bamboo. He calls on us to betake ourselves to the dimension where things become manifest in their ‘suchness’, to attune ourselves to the selfness of the pine tree and the selfness of the bamboo.

.....

That being is only being in unison with emptiness means that being possesses at its ground the character of an “illusion,” that everything that is, is in essence fleeting, illusory appearance. It also means that the being of things in emptiness is more truly real than what the reality or real being of things is usually taken to be (for instance, their substance). It signifies, namely, the *elemental* mode of

being of things on their own home-ground and tells us that this is the thing itself as it is.

... On the field of nihility, where the field of reason has been broken through, cognition is no longer the issue. Things and the self are no longer objects of cognition. The field of nihility is rather the appearance of the self-awareness that the selfness of things and the self are utterly beyond the grasp of cognition. Once on the field of nihility, objects (things and the self as objects) and their cognition cease to be problems; the problem is the reality of things and the self... nihility still stands over against existence; it is situated alone, by itself, "outside" of existence. That is, it is still taken as some "thing" called nihility. It is not an object of consciousness, and yet there remains a sense in which nihility is still viewed objectively. It is not the standpoint of consciousness, and yet there remains a sense in which nihility is still viewed representationally as nihility. In a word, nihility is still, to a certain degree, seen as a far side, and hence at the same time still clings to the standpoint of a near side looking beyond to a far side. Its character is essentially a transitional one.

Nihility is an absolute negation aimed at all "existence," and thus is related to existence. The essence of nihility consists in a purely negative (antipodal) negativity. Its standpoint contains the self-contradiction that it can neither abide in existence nor abide being away from it. It is a standpoint torn in two from within. Therein lies its transitional character. We call it the standpoint of nihility, but in fact it is not a field one can stand on in the proper sense of the term... As essentially transitional and a negative negativity, it is radically real; but the standpoint itself is essentially hollow and void, a nihility. The very standpoint of nihility is itself essentially a nihility, and only as such can it be the standpoint of nihility.

The standpoint of '*śūnyatā*' is another thing altogether.... It is the standpoint at which absolute negation is at the same time... a great affirmation. It is not a standpoint that only states that the self and things are empty. If this were so, it would be no different from the way that nihility opens up at the ground of things and the self. The foundations of the standpoint of *śūnyatā* lie elsewhere: not that the self is empty, but that emptiness is the self; not that things are empty, but that emptiness is things. Once this conversion has taken place, we are able to pass beyond the standpoint on which nihility is seen as the far side of existence. Only then does the standpoint appear at which we can maintain not merely a far side that is *beyond* us, but a far side that we have *arrived* at. Only on this standpoint do we really transcend the standpoint still hidden behind the field of nihility, namely of a near side looking out at a far side. This "arrival at the far side" is the realization of the far side. As a standpoint assumed at the far side itself, it is, of course, an absolute conversion from the mere near side. But it

is also an absolute conversion from a near side looking out at a far side beyond. The arrival at the far side is nothing less than an absolute near side....

On this field of emptiness, the modern standpoint of subjective self-consciousness, which had been opened up by Kant's Copernican Revolution, has to be revolutionized once again. We appear to have come to the point that the relationship in knowledge, whereby the object is said to fashion itself after our a priori patterns of intuition, and thought has to be inverted yet again so the self may fashion itself after things and correspond to them. The field of emptiness goes beyond both the field of sense intuition and rational thinking; but that does not mean that the subject turns to the object and complies with it, as is the case with sensual realism or dogmatic metaphysics. It pertains to the realization (manifestation-'sive'-apprehension) of the thing itself, which cannot be prehend by sensation or reason. This is not cognition of an object, but a noncognitive knowing of the nonobjective thing in itself; it is what we might call a knowing of non-knowing, a sort of *docta ignorantia*.

[JVB]

EMPTINESS AND SAMENESS

NISHITANI Keiji 1982, 111-13, 133-9, 143-4 (179-80, 196-201, 204-5)

The words "sameness" (*soku*) and "emptiness" (*kū*) are usually encountered in Buddhist doctrinal studies as specialized terms used in Buddhist thought. The countless results of research by Buddhologists on these categories is such that we can probably say there is nothing more to add. I wish to problematize these concepts from a slightly different angle.

To begin, the first problem is that the words "emptiness" and "sameness" were not originally coined within Buddhism; they were, and still are today, widely used, common words. This can be clearly seen even among the uses found in various Chinese Buddhist dictionaries. For example, the sinograph for emptiness/sky is often used in combination with that for "void." However, the compound in this case indicates the "sky" one sees with one's eyes, literally the empty sky. The sky is an eternally constant empty space with unlimited depth and endless width. It is the only "eternal thing" we can see with our eyes. The sky of the visible world has been used in scriptures as an image (*Bild*) to indicate eternally unlimited things that cannot be seen with the eye, or eternal limitlessness. With that meaning, the words "sky" and "empty sky" can be seen fundamentally as metaphors, although there is something that cannot be reduced to a simple metaphor. The empty sky, to the extent that one can see it with the eye, is a given fact and a reality. Even if it is supposed to indicate the

limitless eternity that one cannot see with the eye, there is a much more strict relationship than a metaphorical link between the visible phenomenon and the invisible thing indicated by those words. Earlier I used the word “image,” but actually the empty sky visible to the eye has no form, and, in a strict sense, one cannot say it is a figure or image. Rather, one should say that it is a visible image without form. In this case, the relationship between the visible and the invisible thing is not clearly defined. Insofar as the word “analogy,” which has been used from ancient times in western philosophy, comes under the heading of ontology and is related to ontological discourse, it is not clear whether or not it can be applied to the relationship we are problematizing. This is because this word is altogether too vague to regulate the relationship logically. We can only say that this relationship has an intimacy that exceeds logic.

Secondly, the words “sky/emptiness” and “empty sky,” along with permeating Buddhism and being used as Buddhist terms in scripture, have come to be used to express a Buddhist-like feeling. Rather than being a logical expression of Buddhist ‘dharma’, these are sensory expressions of those principles....

At this point Nishitani enters into a discussion of classical Chinese and Japanese poetry. Examples from the haiku of Bashō lead him into a discourse on the boundary between ‘unhindered reason’ and ‘unhindered things’, both implied in the Japanese term ‘koto’. He questions the separation of the realms of art and religion, and uses this terminology to return to the relationship between “essences” and “phenomena.”

The boundary line resembles a partition that separates two rooms. Side x of the partition facing room A represents room B in the sense that it marks the limit of room A. We may say that in essence side x is the expression of room B that is shown to room A. At the same time, the side x that expresses room B, as one part of room A, belongs to room A. Insofar as it appears to room A as a “phenomenon,” it belongs to room A as an element of room A’s structure. The same can be said of side y facing room B. Side y belongs to room B as part of room B’s structure. “Phenomenologically,” it is one part of the phenomenon known as B. At the same time, however, side y, as that which sets the limits of B from A, essentially represents room A in B. It is the expression of room A that appears in room B.

In general, a “boundary” implies that a division is also a joining. This joining comes into being as a relationship that I have called reciprocal permeation and mutual projection among differentiated things. If we may refer to this structure as a “circular reciprocity,” the most important thing for such a relationship is, first of all, that when something belonging essentially to A is a phenomenon reflecting itself (moving toward) or projecting itself onto B, it does not phenomenologize itself as A in B but rather appears as part of B. In other words, when

body A transmits itself as body B, it does not transfer itself in the “form” of A but in the “form” of B. Body A communicates (*mitteilen*) itself to B in the form of B, while B also partakes (*teilhaben*) of the form of B of what it has received from A. This is the “function” of A known as self-transmission to B. The same thing happens when the transmission occurs from B to A.

The point I have raised here relates to the problem of the image mentioned earlier. The issue of the image is a problem that always occurs in ontology and epistemology whenever we theorize about “essence” and “phenomena.” In those cases, it is not enough to frame the problem of the image by starting, as is usually done, from the standpoint of divergence and discrimination in which we first think of the essence or phenomenon of a “certain thing” called A and then, after thinking in the same manner with regard to B, ponder over the “reciprocal operations” of the two. In that case, one comes ultimately to rely on the operational judgment of the discerning intellect and seeks to theorize the thing. But under these conditions one ought not to be able to think really of the problem of image and, by extension, the problem of art and religion as well. Rather, a viewpoint comes to be required where it is as if we can see, at the same time, both divergence and discrimination, or essential connection affiliation and nondiscrimination, as one. In that case A, taking the form of B, is reflected onto the completely other B. To borrow a term from Eckhart, “thinking itself toward” (*hineinbilden*) B is nothing other than the making of A into an image. In the realm of humans, for example, things like the “image of God” (*imago Dei*) or ‘buddha-nature’ informing all creatures are first understood in this sense....

In the connections that we call the “world,” there are partitions, divisions, and limits everywhere. Pine trees are pine trees and they are not cedar trees; this pine tree is *this* pine tree and not that pine tree. In the various dimensions of “being,” being always includes a sense of self-sameness that is itself and is not the same as any other thing. Insofar as one piece of dust, or even the individual atoms inside the particle of dust, are existing “beings,” they possess self-sameness. In whichever dimensions they come to stand, the various self-samenesses include essential (that is, peculiar to “being”) partitions and boundaries between them and all the countless other possible things.... That A is A and cannot be B or C, or that B is B and cannot be A or C, is an indication of a kind of self-enclosedness that encounters barriers wherever it turns.

Because this means that the self can never venture out of itself, all other things become obstacles to the self. And the fact that all things in the world are able to exist only as varied selves, with various boundaries on all sides, indicates that the world of connections includes a system of thorough ramifications and discriminations. Yet a diametrically opposed situation also appears with regard to the connections of the world—that is, nondiscrimination and equality, or oneness and unhinderedness, on all sides. These connections are simultaneously and neces-

sarily accompanied by separation and equality, discrimination and nondiscrimination, closedness and oneness, obstacles and unhinderedness. At this point, the diametrically opposed directions I just cited are linked together. In other words, they are “fused together” into a sameness. But what is this “sameness”?

When a certain A is in the world, it is given its own “place” among the various other things (B, C, ...). This is not merely the locus of phenomenological being; rather, it is the place that signifies the essential field of being itself—the “purportedly innate field” of that materialization. When among all things A “achieves its possible being” as A (in short, when A is A as A), A has “achieved its place” in the world. Earlier I said that the self-sameness of A ($A=A$) indicates thorough boundary settings as individualistic restrictions. But we might now also say that A has an innate field given to it in the world: a “place” peculiar to itself. Although that “place belongs to the “world” and is one of the “local fields” of the world itself, at the same time it is also a “place” peculiar to A...

...These connections are infinitely complex. If we try to grasp the makeup of the structure of these linkages using logical schemes such as “one” and “many,” and express this in the *logos* of language, then we evoke the standpoint of “scientific” knowledge—and such a standpoint will lead us from “scientific” considerations to “philosophical” speculations. This mental procedure will not exhaust our thoughts on these relationships, however. Those speculations will clarify the linkages in a world of “theory” but will be unable to deal with the reality that is actually given to things—a world of “things” that can only be experienced by the emotions. This is due to the fact that apart from the “theoretical world,” the solid “universe of actual things” remains. Therefore, a formula like “one = many and many = one” is necessary in order to grasp these connections in their structure. This is the *logos* of the law I earlier labeled unhindered reason. In this case, “unhindered” indicates the form of the structural relationship known as “sameness.”

.....

The notion of one without many and many without one—both as an abstract concept of formal logic and as a concrete concept of ontological logic—suffers from the logical contradiction between the “hollow space” of openness, where no “thing” exists, and the “actuality” where all sorts of things exist...

These two extremities—the “law” of the absolute one and the absolute many and the “thing” (false and true) as the world’s opening, which includes the world’s worlding, and as the coming into being of all nature, all existences, and all things—stand in an absolute, contradictory position to each other.

At the same time, however, this absolute contradiction does not end as a contradiction. This is because all existence, all things in the world, are the world’s opening. Conversely, the world opens because all nature comes into being there. Without the materialization of all things, the nonadherent “opening” would not be actualized—and without actualization it would not be the opening of

the actual world. On the other hand, the actualization of all things depends on the fact that the world's opening actually opens. Therefore, these two extremities are two faces of the same coin, and these faces are mutually contradictory. This is not a relationship of "circular reciprocity" in which self-sameness is a "sameness" as self-sameness. Moreover, it is not sustained by a logic of unhindered reason. The self-sameness of the absolute one and the absolute many is not "one = many"; nor is it "many = one." And it is not the equality of equality. If we really want to talk about equality, then we should say one = zero, zero = one, and then call it the equality of these two "equals" (=). But by no means can we talk about a *logos* or a "law" here. It is rather a lack of logic, a "non-logic." Moreover, by doing away with the absolute one and the absolute many, there is no one nor many in one = many, many = one; nor is there any equality between the two equals. In short, there is no circular-reciprocal world relationship. The concrete, actual "world" as the world's relationships is possible only because the contradictory extremities, as absolute non-circular reciprocity, are the same thing. This sameness must overcome all "equalities" and also the "logic" of equality. This is nothing but the universe of "unhindered things" mentioned earlier. This makes possible the formation of the actual "world" as the universe of "unhindered things." What makes the "world" possible as all of nature, all of being, and all things (potentially the whole, limitless cosmos) is the "world" as opening of the place where everything is potentially coming into being.

[MFM]

SHIMOMURA Toratarō 下村寅太郎 (1902–1995)

After studying philosophy in Kyoto University under Nishida Kitarō* and Tanabe Hajime*, with a concentration on Leibniz and the philosophy of science and mathematics, Shimomura Toratarō began his teaching career in Tokyo. He went on to produce a number of weighty volumes on the interface of natural science, mathematics, and philosophy, as well as on symbolic thinking and the relation between the human spirit and the mechanization of society. In 1956 he traveled for the first time to Europe in what was to prove a turning point in his life and thought. From then on, his attention was focused on intellectual history, in particular with reference to the European Renaissance, and indeed he was one of the principal figures in establishing the discipline in Japan. He published a series of volumes on a wide range of subjects from Leonardo da Vinci to Francis of Assisi to philosophical aesthetics, culminating in his masterful 1983 book, *The World of Jacob Bruckhardt*.

Although Shimomura wrote widely on Nishida's thought and was the central force in preparing his collected works for publication, he considered his writings on Tanabe, whose background in science he shared, the more solidly academic. As scientist, philosopher, and historian of art and ideas, Shimomura's mature work returns again and again to the question of Japan's role in intellectual history. Bucking the trend to "overcoming modernity," he argued the merits of enlightened humanism. As the following passage will show, Shimomura was concerned with probing beneath what is particular and unique in Japanese and Asian thought to arrive at its deeper and universal content, and to do this focused on the philosophy of "subjective nothingness" as developed among leading Kyoto School thinkers.

[JWH]

THE LOGIC OF ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS

SHIMOMURA Toratarō 1962, 483–8

From ancient times the Japanese have had a sharp and lively sensitivity for distinguishing novelty from *excellence* in the ideas and art of other countries, undaunted by the difficulties of learning them and tenacious in holding on to them. History bears this out, for example, in the fact that Japan is the only country in the world today that still preserves 'Mahayana' Buddhism. Our acceptance was never simply passive but always based on strict selection of our own initiative. This would not have been possible without a refined sensitivity and a capacity for intellectual understanding.

Far from a casual imitation, our way of thinking is bound up with the idea of 'nothingness'. If we are tolerant and "open" to all sorts of ideas—often open-

minded to the point that we seem to avoid confrontation, despite our careful selectivity—the reason lies in a mentality marked by ‘absolute nothingness’. Such a mind does not reject confrontation, it merely refuses to see confrontation and criticism as the highest form of thinking. It is a kind of non-confrontational confrontation, an *absolute* confrontation. Nor is it a matter of simple eclecticism: the mind of absolute nothingness is open to everything and capable of receiving everything precisely because it has no fixed form of its own. What is received, therefore, is not necessarily exclusive or possessed of a definite meaning. Novelty is received not by dismissing old traditions but by coexisting with them.... Such a mentality may be hard to understand for the kind of critical, decisive thinking we see in the West. Thinking in terms of absolute nothingness never stops at the religious ideas of antiquity or at philosophical speculation; it is actually *lived* in the thoughts and feelings of everyday life. The idea of absolute nothingness is nothing less than a conceptual formulation of the vitality of our present lives, and as such lies at the ground of how we think and feel.

Might it be that thinkers from the West will find this idea of absolute nothingness uninteresting? It may strike them as strange, but it is probably no stranger than Christian ideas were to Greek philosophy on its first encounter with them. It must have seemed to them utterly impossible to rationalize those ideas and shape them into a philosophy. In any case, absolute nothingness belongs to our *thought* as eastern people, and our knowledge of the existence of “philosophy” and strong interest in it leave us no choice but to recognize it as our appointed philosophical task to give *philosophical* shape to that idea. This means carrying our thinking beyond the *local* horizons of what we call the “East” and elevating it to a universal, worldwide status.

That said, I do not see how it is possible to lay out the idea of absolute nothingness as a category of Greek thought or European philosophy. It is more a mysticism that lies beyond rationalization. It belongs to a way of thinking that does not have words as its final aim but rejects words in pursuit of a return to silence. Such thinking—if we may call it thinking—is without words and without form. Does this not make it impossible in principle, indeed a self-contradiction, to give it a distinct formulation? This question is my reason for speaking of varieties of philosophical thinking.

When linguistic scholars set out in nineteenth-century Europe to establish a universal grammar with Indo-European languages as the standard, they soon came to see the task as impossible and started again from the plurality of languages. (Wilhelm von Humboldt is a case in point.) I note this here because something similar is yet to take place in the realm of philosophical thinking. As nonsensical as such a philosophy must appear to western philosophers, the ideas of nature, spirit, gods, and even existence found in the East do not fit western categories and can only seem irrational and paradoxical *as far as*

western logic is concerned. In the East, however, such thinking is the ground of actual, everyday thinking and as such pervades all feeling and volition. Far from stopping at mere intuition, it represents a higher level of thinking and as such presupposes a logic of some sort. Nishida Kitarō*, Tanabe Hajime*, and other leading contemporary philosophers have made it their life's work to formulate a philosophical logic for this 'absolute nothingness'.

D. T. Suzuki*, whose thought is already widely known in the West, belongs to the same current. Lacking interest in the fundamentals of logic needed to persuade western philosophers, however, his explanation of Zen and absolute nothingness are more psychological in tone. No doubt Suzuki's interpretations, and the wealth of living Zen experience he brings to his scholarship, offer a unique and extremely valuable approach to absolute nothingness. Yet he never explains Zen by comparing it to western ideas, insisting on the contrary that there *is no* "common measure" to do so. The point is crucial for understanding the idea of absolute nothingness.

As noted above, a similar situation arose in western philosophy with the shaping of Christian thought. Insofar as it took its lead from Greek philosophy the project was unable to achieve any more than a modicum of *reconciliation*. It was only after reaching awareness of the essential differences between the two that Christian philosophy proper was able to employ an independent logic of its own and make positive progress.

First of all, we may consider the fundamental difference between a logic of the finite and a logic of the infinite. No matter how great a finite might be, it is not infinite; the infinite is not a mere extension of the finite. Or as Hegel says, the *endlos* is not of itself *unendlich*; it may be "infinite" in the sense that it has no limits, but this is only an endless finitude. The only *aktuelle Unendlichkeit* is not an unending enlargement of the finite but a *negation* of it. Only by negating the finite do we arrive at the infinite. Moreover, the infinite cannot be directly intuited but has always to be grasped indirectly through a negation of the finite. The logic of the infinite was only able to take shape in the history of philosophy after a "negative theology," which thought of God as nameless, unlimited, and beyond knowing, had passed over into thinking of this negative limitation in positive terms so that the unknowability of God itself became a positive knowledge of God. Such a historical process has also to be borne in mind when it comes to the formation of a logic of the eastern idea of absolute nothingness.

If Christian thought seemed utterly irrational and "foolish" to Greek philosophers, eastern thought is no less irrational and paradoxical to the western way of thinking. Yet there is no way to enter into the idea of absolute nothingness without passing through the paradox. When it is referred to as irrational, we need to ask what counts as *rational* or *reason*. To the Greeks, the highest form of the self-expression of reason was language. Language and reason were

inseparable: whatever could not be determined and defined with language was virtually nonexistent. For Christian thinkers this posed a problem, since where the infinite God was concerned, *determinatio est negatio*. That said, Christianity clearly speaks in terms of the “word of God” and declares that “in the beginning was the word.” For Buddhism, in contrast, the ultimate teachings are given “without words,” which is not a mere refusal of verbal expression but its outright negation. Zen ‘kōan’ are one way of *abolishing* language and conceptual thinking. Enormously ironic though it seems, the Buddhist scriptures are many times longer than the Old and New Testaments combined! And yet they are all made up of words explaining the negation of verbal expression, words about transcending words. It is not a matter of a mere negation of words but their *absolute* negation, not a simple wordlessness but an *absolute* wordlessness.

Is not the distrust of language a tendency visible in western philosophy today as well? There is a strong current of contemporary philosophy stressing the importance of linguistic analysis. Clearly science has been a motivating factor here. Modern science adopts mathematical symbols as its mode of expression because of the imprecision of language. As the Greeks might say, “scientific reason” is best able to express itself in symbols. This leads to the mechanization of language, and eventually of reason as well. However much this may accomplish, it is at the same time fundamentally restrictive, analogous to the functions of a machine. Scientific knowledge no longer locates the *problem* in the essence of things but only in the regularity of phenomena. It is a question *merely* of universal, objective knowledge; truth and objectivity are one and the same. The opposition of subject and object is assumed, but subjectivity is not and cannot be an issue.

When Kant took up the question of the possibility of this sort of *objective* knowledge, he did so by inquiring into subjectivity as the foundation of that possibility. He saw this as “consciousness in general” and based objectivity on the work of construction that goes on within it. To account for the possibility of moral action, however, he had to posit a “practical reason” that would account for free will, namely, for causality that takes itself as its final cause. The intelligible world can only become a reality on the ground of such practical reason. Metaphysical existence comes to light in the subject of moral action. As for the possibility of *aesthetic* judgment, which is in essence subjective and individual, Kant distinguished between determinative judgment, in which the particular is determined by a *given* universal, and reflective judgment, in which the particular is determined by the universal that is *sought after*. Aesthetic judgment, which is based on taste, depends on the latter. But the universal that is sought after *does not exist*; it is, we might say, a universal of nothingness. The subject of subjective, individual judgments of taste is none other than the *individuum* and this presupposes nothingness. The *individuum* is the true subject of free-

dom. That is, true freedom is “the capacity for good and evil.”¹³ Such a *free individuum* is undetermined by anything and is completely irrational, whereas that which is determined by the universal is still no more than a *particular*. Thus the positive provision of the *individuum* consists in that it is not determined by the universal. Nishida formulates it this way: “The individual is individual only to an individual.” What determines the *individuum*, he says, is “absolute nothingness,” which he refers to as a “dialectical universal” that determines without determining. In the final analysis, to the extent the subject is brought into question, absolute nothingness has to be recognized. Nishida’s philosophy shows how western philosophy up until now has only made a problem of consciousness *become conscious* but has failed to take into account consciousness that *makes conscious*, that is, true *subjectivity*.

Philosophers in countries of the West have taken existence as ultimate and principally concentrated on the problem of existence. Only in modern-day existentialism do we find nothingness being treated positively. Even so, the nothingness they acknowledge is related to finitude and chance within existence; it does not see nothingness at the ground of *Existenz*. Recently Nishitani Keiji*, in his *Religion and Nothingness*, has pointed out how the Christian idea of God itself requires the idea of absolute nothingness. He insists that the idea of nothingness is not only something peculiar to the East, but needs to be accepted in Christianity and indeed *universally*....

Since western thinkers have not conceived of God in terms of absolute nothingness, they have been hard pressed to make rational sense of the notion of a “creator.” Some have resorted to calling it a myth. In the Buddhism of the East, there has been no such myth of a creator nor any need for one. In this sense, it is more *rational* than the West!

In the West, the end of life is death. Life basically means existence, and death, as the limit of life, means nonexistence. The Bible speaks only of eternal life. In the East life is always thought of in connection with death; there is no idea of life by itself. Here it is not “life and death” but “life-death.” It is not that death comes at the end of life, but that death accompanies life.... Life and death are absolute opposites and yet one and the same. Absolute life is not life without end but “life and death as one.” The same logic governs the relation between existence and nothingness. Existence is not thought of independently of nothingness but simultaneously with it. The ground of existence is absolute nothingness, which transcends the opposition between being and nothingness. In the West existence is first presupposed and nothingness is thought of as its negation.

[JWH]

13. F. W. J. Schelling, *Das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1925), 23.

KŌYAMA Iwao 高山岩男 (1905–1993)

Kōyama Iwao's broad interests in philosophy—ranging from history, society, and politics to logic, education, and ethics—reflect his education at Kyoto University, where he studied under such illustrious figures as Nishida Kitarō,* Tanabe Hajime*, Watsuji Tetsurō*, and Hatano Seiichi*. Unlike many in the Kyoto School tradition, Iwao wrote in a clear and elegant prose, making his writings accessible to those not familiar with the unusual jargon of his colleagues. Like many of his generation, he was concerned with the question of “overcoming modernity,” a concern that remained with him for over sixty years, from his first book on Nishida in 1935 to his final posthumous work, *Reflections on Kyoto Philosophy*. His own original thought, carried out before and during the war, focused on what he called “cultural patterns.” These were not restricted to distinct nations but included Buddhist and Christian culture as well. He argued for preserving the universal dimension of culture, but not at the expense of allowing any one particular culture to define that universality for any other. During the war years, he sought to put these ideas into practice by collaborating with liberal friends in the navy in the attempt to bring the weight of the intelligentsia to bear against the excesses of the army. The result was the ill-fated *Chūōkōron* Discussions* of 1941 and 1942, which were to attract the criticism of later generations.

He characterized his 1976 book, *A Philosophy of Education*, completed at the age of seventy-two, as the culmination of his philosophical thought, a book into which he had poured his mind and heart more than any other. The following passages are taken from the portion of that volume that treats his “logic of antiphony,” forged in response to what he saw as the abstractness of Nishida's logic of ‘place’.

[JWH]

IDENTITY IN ANTIPHONY

KŌYAMA Iwao 1976, 94–99

Kinds of Logics

The logic of inference that we are taught at school basically has to do with the argument and proof that take place in verbal exchanges. It abstracts the contents of what is argued through linguistic and dialogical debate, omitting subjective (I and you, that is, the first and second persons) and linguistic-dialogical elements that fall outside that bracketed area. Inference is what happens within the brackets, and its simplest form is the syllogism.

Such logic takes up the *judgments* that form the structural units of inference, and the *concepts* that are the structural units of judgment. This leads to a typi-

cal curriculum that proceeds in the order of concepts–judgments–inference. Like items adorning a storefront window, this ordering hides from view the constructive process that goes into the finished results, so that unless teachers put their wits to work on that larger background story, students will come away thinking for the rest of their lives that logic alone is exempt from the processes of creation and growth, that it comes into being fully mature in a single moment. Such logic, referred to as formal logic, was perfected long ago in the East and the West and came to be a school subject because of the need for correct inference in proof, speculation, and composing essays...., as if nothing has changed during the past 2,500 years.

This was the start of logic as an academic discipline, but logic itself does not stop there. Formal logic points to a system of rules that needs by all means to be followed if we are to think (and that means infer) correctly; as always, *proof* is its central task. But *searching* is the lifeblood and chief task of scholarship. We might say that proof is necessary for the search to come to an end, declare its results, and arrive at a correct and persuasive conclusion. Therefore, if there is a logic of proof, there can also be a *heuristic logic*. In a logic of proof there are standards for proper and improper forms of arguing, whereas in a heuristic logic it is rather standards for truth and falsehood that are required for the reasonableness of the search. Naturally, the need for inference and formal logic are not suspended during the search, but in contrast to formal logic, which is known in advance in the sense that its task is to argue about things *already discovered*, a heuristic logic has as its task to learn things unknown or *not yet discovered*. The method for such discovery cannot be one of mere inspection and classification; it requires a new method of verification through experimentation....

Logic is not restricted to these two forms. In a broader sense of the term, we may speak of another logic, a logic that runs through the varieties of *life experience*, a reasonableness that permeates “life,” “making,” and “becoming.” This idea of “reasonableness”—or logic—is easily understood as having to do with the aspect of perception, knowledge, and scholarship in contrast to creation, praxis, and action. Thus the various forms of lived experience involved in life, making, and becoming also include the intellectual disciplines of knowledge and scholarship, even if we normally think first of the practical disciplines of creation and action. Thus a third form of logic comprises the *reasonableness* of life experience in which the practical and logical disciplines are brought together. This is why we may refer to this logic as reasonableness.

This third logic is what I have called *philosophical logic*. I use that term to draw attention to philosophers in the history of philosophy East and West who have expounded on this sort of logic. From early on in the West, Plato took dialectics as his philosophical principle, and in modern times so-called German idealists like Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel developed it further,

culminating in Hegel's construction of a detailed dialectical logic. In Buddhist philosophy, schools relying on the wisdom sutras functioned on principles that we might call a dialectical method. The 'middle way' logic of the eight negations in Nāgārjuna's *Middle Treatise*, as well as the Sanlun School in China that took it further, are among those who pushed to an extreme the absolute negation unique to their dialectic. The 'Tendai' tradition which argued for a mutual inclusion of oppositions so that true emptiness is converted into wondrous being, and the unity and mutual interpenetration of the one and the many in the 'Huayan' can both be said to have clarified the frame of dialectical logic. Each of them is an unusual example of how what normally drifts into "mysticism" can be constructed as a *philosophical logic*....

I call this third form of logic, or philosophical logic, a "logic of 'place'." The term was first used by my teacher Nishida Kitarō* in his later years to designate his own logic, and it is from him that I have inherited the idea. We usually think of place in the sense of a location for *individuals*... in the general sense of the term. A place changes according to the type of individuals it locates, and in this sense it can be understood roughly as the equivalent of an environment. Originally the word "environment" referred to natural habitat within which living things exist and live, but... it may also be expanded to the human realm with its social, cultural, and intellectual environments. The logic of place sees a particular relationship between individuals and their environment or place, and this relationship is thought to be the reasonableness that obtains between them. But just what kind of reasonableness *is* this?

Dialectical Logic

As everyone knows, formal logic is based on the principles of identity and non-contradiction. Identity says that "A is A," and non-contradiction that "A is not non-A." In other words, a proof that harbors a contradiction is no proof, since proof entails a non-contradictory self-identity. It is the same with heuristic logic, but Kant's transcendental logic looks for the special characteristics of heuristic logic in the self-identity of the ego (I am I); that is, self-awareness is seen as the origin of the principle of self-identity in logic. Since my self-awareness includes within itself consciousness of what stands opposed to the "I" as "not-I," the self-identity of self-awareness cannot really be said to be non-contradictory pure and simple. German idealism gradually shaped this idea into dialectical thought....

In the ancient world, Zeno is famous for having denied movement. His proof of why arrows cannot fly or why fleet-footed Achilles can never catch up with the slow-footed tortoise is well known and, as a proof, free of error.... But the fact that movement does occur cannot be denied. There is nothing *formally*

wrong with Zeno's demonstration, but something is clearly wrong somewhere. But where? The error lies not within the process of proof, but in latent assumptions made prior to the start of the process. To be specific, Zeno's proofs assume that it is possible to divide a given distance ad infinitum until one arrives finally at a point that has no length, and that when the arrow passes that point, the arrow *is* at that point. If one accepts those assumptions, arrows cannot fly. For the idea of being at a certain point is the same as saying that the arrow is at rest at each point that it passes. No matter how innumerable the points of rest, rest does not become movement. It is the same as a snapshot of an arrow in flight taken with high-speed film, which shows the arrow at rest, no matter where it happens to be. Thus, insofar as one grants with Zeno that the idea of passing particular points is needed to understand movement, there is no way to reject his proof.

Movement is a fact that takes place before our eyes. Even a child can wave its arms and legs above and understand that much. As the Zen saying goes, "One knows hot and cold on one's own." At the moment we make a fact of something immediately evident into an object of knowledge, it becomes incomprehensible. If we use physics to explain colors and sounds in terms of lengths of beams or waves, would this mean that the color blind can *understand* color or that ordinary people can *understand* what timbre is? Once we turn the immediately evident fact of movement into an object of knowledge and try to explain it in terms of the entirely distinct idea of rest, however, Zeno's claim that there is no such thing as motion is correct....

The arrow that passes a point cannot be said to *be* at that point. If so, Zeno would be right and arrows in flight do not move. Does that mean it *is not* at that point? If the arrow were not at any point, then there would be no flight either. The arrow neither *is* nor *is not* at any given point.... In being there it is not there; in not being there it is there. *Without being there, it is without not being there; without not being there, it is without being there.* Clearly this offends the principle of non-contradiction.

.....

Insofar as Nishida's logic of place adopts a principle of the 'self-identity of absolute contradiction', it may be considered one form of dialectical logic. Nishida faults Hegel's dialectical method for dissolving contradictions in order to sublimate them to a higher level of being without facing the fact of contradiction head-on, with the result that the element of continuity is strong in absolute spirit and contradiction fades away. If the real form of contradiction is seen to appear where contradiction as such is not contradiction (where it is self-identical), its principle is a self-identity of *absolute* contradiction.... For Nishida this comes about in a place of emptiness, a place of 'nothingness'. To be sure, this place includes places at several levels, from the high to the low, and the unifying

element that runs deep underneath them all is the true individual, that is, the self-aware human being....

In taking over the legacy of Nishida's logic of place, I have made slight adjustments along the way. The most crucial point of difference has to do with what I consider the overly formal nature of the "self-identity of absolute contradiction." I tried to direct my disappointment at the fact that this idea lacked substance, much the same way that the principle of non-contradiction is only a principle of *formal* logic. I came up with the principle of "antiphony" to restore this substantiality. Insofar as it is a *dialectical* logic, the logic of place also makes a formal principle of the self-identity of absolute contradiction, but when it comes to what is distinctive about it as a logic of *place*, one may think of antiphony as its substantial principle.

The Principle of Antiphony

Elsewhere I have argued that the fundamental pattern that awakens human activity and explains the phenomena of human life in general is one of "problem and resolution." I further drew attention to the fact that an antiphony of call-and-response is present between a problem and its resolution. Here the twofold character of the *practical* (active) and the *theoretical* (intellectual) are linked.

.....

When a problem anticipates and awakens a resolution, only then does it become a resolution: it is a kind of antiphon to the problem. While problem and resolution are completely different things, when they are separated each is meaningless. They are, we might say, *one in being two, two in being one*. It is the same with antiphony: the call anticipates the response and the response is made to the call. We may, therefore, say that the foundation of problem and resolution lies in antiphony. *Without antiphony there is no possibility of problem-response.*

Now obviously antiphony has to do with a relationship of call and response between a first-person subject (I) and a second-person subject (you). The two are one and the same, as when we say of something "if you strike it, it resounds." They are also simultaneous, like a mother hen pecking at the egg from the outside to help the chick inside struggling to break out. *The antiphony of call and response is the most fundamental relationship of human existence*, a sort of ground without which we would not have human beings. And just why does antiphony come about to begin with? We cannot say. Explanation is itself an antiphonal activity, such that *antiphony is the ground for explaining everything else*. Antiphony is a fundamental phenomenon that we can only acknowledge, a self-evident condition that does not admit of explanation.

When we speak of antiphony as a dialogical relationship between two sub-

jects (I and you), we ought not think in terms of two persons muttering and gesturing like two physical objects existing in space. This is no way to explain antiphony, because the two individual persons present here are two “I”s and not an “I” and a “you.” Whenever two “I”s speak out, there is no call and hence no response. It is not dialogue but two monologues that just happen to coincide. However much effort is exerted between two such individuals to endow the relationship with the character of dialogue and antiphony, there is no endowment. Indeed the effort to do so is no more than an attempt to infuse antiphony—that fundamental phenomenon inexplicable in terms of anything else—into two wooden marionettes. There is only one possible explanation for how a physical body incapable of being human comes about: by usurping and erasing all distinction of persons, all dialogue, and all antiphony from the dialogical give-and-take between the two subjects, I and you, the subjects are transformed into third-person entities, or rather impersonal objects. [JWH]

TAKEUCHI Yoshinori 武内義範 (1913–2002)

Takeuchi Yoshinori was born in 1913 in the northern city of Sendai, Japan. He studied philosophy under Tanabe Hajime*, concentrating on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* and then broadening out to other major German philosophers of the nineteenth century. As a graduate student he also worked under Nishitani Keiji*, Tanabe's successor to the chair at Kyoto University. Takeuchi's philosophical interests were balanced by an interest in early Buddhism, particularly as he found it in the writings of Ui Hakuju and Watsuji Tetsurō*. At Tanabe's recommendation, though initially resisting the idea, he focused his graduate studies on Shinran*, a figure neglected in philosophical circles at the time. His study culminated in the highly influential classic work, *The Philosophy of the Kyōgyōshinshō*, which appeared in 1941 and became the inspiration for Tanabe's *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. In 1946 he assumed the post at Kyoto University from which Nishitani had been removed by the Occupation forces, and continued to teach there until his retirement thirty years later.

In 1960 he traveled as visiting professor to Marburg, Germany, where he struck up friendships with Rudolf Bultmann and Friedrich Heiler. In addition to a series of important essays on the thought of Tanabe and Nishida, Takeuchi monitored the translation into English of their works. An ordained priest of the Takada branch of Pure Land Buddhism, after retirement he assumed duties at the temple in central Japan that had been in his family's care for fifteen generations, while continuing to lecture in a local university for several years. Takeuchi combined in a rare way the talents of an original scholar and the holiness of a deeply religious man, as attested by the brief selection offered here.

[JWH]

BUDDHIST EXISTENTIALISM

TAKEUCHI Yoshinori 1960, 309–10 (3–4)

For Buddhism, the philosophy of religion consists in philosophical reflection on the heart of Buddhism. It is in the very nature of Buddhism as a religion to be permanently bound up with such philosophical reflection. This is not to say, however, that the two are the same. In Buddhism religion always needs philosophy (or, more accurately, metaphysics) in order that it might transcend philosophy. This frees Buddhist philosophy of religion from the error that the rationalistic philosophy of religion falls into by approaching the essence of religion from the outside—however sympathetically—and overlaying it with an alien gridwork that forces on religion the measure of its own principles and

categories until finally religion comes to be reduced to a pure system of rational thought.

In Buddhism religion and philosophy are like a tree that forks into two from its base. Both stem from the same roots and both are nourished by the same sap. To be sure, religion forms the main trunk, and philosophy its branch, but the two remain intimately connected to each other. There have been times in the long history of Buddhism in which a pruning of the philosophical branch has helped the trunk to flourish, and other times at which the philosophical branch stood in full bloom while the trunk had become hollowed out. But by and large, the two have shared together the common fate of the same tree, through its flower and its decay—two partners locked together in dialogue. Religion reflects on its own essence through philosophy and thereby deepens and renews its vitality. It is like the steady flow of water gushing forth from an underground spring: at the same time as the steady stream of water continues to purify and freshen the water that flowed before it, it also goes on boring its own well deeper into the earth. The life of religion includes philosophical thought as its counterpart, a sort of centrifugal force to its own centripetal tendencies, both moved by the same dynamism.

Strictly speaking, Buddhism has nothing like what Saint Paul refers to as the “folly of the cross.” This is both its weakness and its strength, and has led Buddhist philosophy in a direction different from western philosophy and theology. That is to say, the religious experience of the “folly of the cross” set philosophy and religion in opposition to each other in the West, establishing the autonomy of reason to criticize religion from the outside; but at the same time this basic opposition led to a new, albeit secondary, relationship between philosophy and theology, a mutuality grounded in a common concern with metaphysics, which Heidegger has referred to as “onto-theology.”

Originally philosophy served as an inner principle of religion for Buddhism, not as an outside critic, even though it has often functioned as a means of criticizing the obscurantism of religion. That is to say, philosophy in Buddhism is not speculation or metaphysical contemplation but rather a metanoia of thinking, a conversion within reflective thought that signals a return to the authentic self (or *anātman*). For Buddhism this “metanoesis” represents the true meaning of awakening to the truth of religion. In other words, Buddhist philosophy is a metanoetics. It is not a metaphysics in the western sense of the term but a philosophy that transcends and overcomes the presuppositions of metaphysics. This is what I like to call Buddhist existentialism: the appropriation through philosophical thought of the Buddhist appeal to awaken to the absolute reality of truth....

In Buddhism, religion and philosophy form a dynamic unity, but a unity that is grounded in opposition. They stand over against each other and therefore

cannot simply and without further ado be made equivalents. The Buddha himself often warned his disciples against confusing the religious search, the “noble quest,” with philosophical and metaphysical questions.

[JWH]

HISTORY AND NATURE

TAKEUCHI Yoshinori 1974, 41–5 (139–43)

In 1961 during my stay in Marburg, I had the good fortune of meeting frequently with Bultmann. At the time he was seventy years old, but continued to display the lively speculative powers that were his special gift. On one such occasion, Bultmann reached into his bookshelves and pulled down a copy of the *Zen Ten Oxherding Pictures* in the German translation prepared by Tsujimura Kōichi* of Kyoto University and Hartmut Buchner. “This is a remarkable book,” he told me. “What it explains is the very thing that Christianity teaches. In my view, the ox stands for the human heart and chasing the ox can only mean the quest for the true self. Pursuing the true self means forgetting the self, for the self becomes the true self only when it is forgotten. In the *Ten Oxherding Pictures* that idea is depicted in an extraordinarily clever way, but the content, for all practical purposes, does not differ from Christian truth. The only difference is that history does not appear in it. I do not find the idea, so strong in Christianity, that truth is realized in history.”

I replied, betraying the influence that the thought of the Japanese philosopher Nishitani Keiji* had had on my own thinking: “It is true that history seems to be absent in the *Ten Oxherding Pictures*, but is it not equally true that in Christian teaching, particularly in its Protestant form, nature is absent?” Bultmann asked me what I meant by “nature,” and I explained that I understood it as existential nature, the nature that must be present when existence becomes true existence, and not the nature that falls under the physical categories of time and space, or what existential philosophers call “the vulgar notion of the world.” I repeated my question regarding the apparent failure of Christian doctrine to take this existential nature into account. After a moment’s reflection, Bultmann answered that this was indeed the case.

Bultmann then turned the question back in my direction, inquiring how I would interpret existential nature. At that moment I recalled his own interpretation of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to Saint Paul, resurrection is meaningless if it is not bodily resurrection, and he even goes so far as to assert that if Christ did not rise up in the flesh, his own faith would be in vain. In treating the theology of Paul in his *Theology of the New Testament*, first

published in 1948, Bultmann had interpreted these passages by drawing a distinction between the Greek word *sarx*, meaning the “flesh,” or body of sin, and *soma*, meaning the body of resurrection. In the English translation this distinction is rendered through the words *flesh* and *body* respectively. Thus the phrase “resurrection in the flesh,” which appears in ordinary parlance, really refers to resurrection in the *soma*, not resurrection in the *sarx*. According to Bultmann, *soma* is the locus where real truth makes itself manifest.

With that in mind, I replied, “If you want an example of the existential meaning of nature, would not the way you yourself conceive of the corporality of the risen Christ, the *soma* as the locus of resurrection, be a good example of that existential nature?” This time Bultmann sank into thought for quite a long time and then, alluding to the notion of the *Geviert* that Heidegger had just started using about that time as a symbol for the world, inquired whether my concept of nature did not resemble that notion.

Having been influenced heavily by the thought of Heidegger, I had to admit that my ideas on the subject were in fact close to Heidegger’s, to which Bultmann observed that he was opposed to such a way of thinking. He explained his objections by noting that although this *Geviert* is a world in which truth is disclosed, there is no place in it for a true encounter with a Thou. At that point it struck me that his criticism of Heidegger was altogether typical of Bultmann. His remarks have stayed with me to this day. Not to be satisfied with the idea of the *Geviert*, or “world-openness,” through which the later Heidegger deepened his awareness of the world, but to struggle earnestly for a more congenial understanding that would include as a necessary element the encounter with a Thou, and then to proceed from this encounter to conceive of history in its full sense—that, it seems to me, is the inevitable conclusion to which Bultmann’s point of view leads.

If I may be allowed a personal comment on Bultmann’s approach, I would say that his “decision of faith,” which posits the world as its mediation and locus of conversion, aims at replacing the traditional idea of a historical transmission of revelation (the word of God) in the past with the idea of a here-and-now encounter with the Gospel *kerygma* that ad-venes from the future. With the world as its mediation, history can thus open up from the individual history of existential reality into world history, and the existence of being-in-the-world can become a religious existence that makes its decision in the historical world. Consequently, the full meaning of history, strictly speaking, can only be conceived in terms of the meaning of religious existence as a being in the historical world. And it is the *welten* (with its connotation of rotation) of this world that accounts for the element of encounter in our religious existence by giving the existence of Jesus Christ in the past a cyclic turn and enabling us to meet the Christ-event as something ad-vening into the present from the future. In

other words, through the mediation of the world, the movement from past to present is converted into a movement from future to present, and it is there that encounter with the Word of God becomes possible.

It is the same in the case of the name of 'Amida' Buddha. I encounter the name of the Buddha here and now ad-vening as eternity from the 'Pure Land'. This takes place in the form of an I-Thou encounter in the actuality of the present, with the name (as the Thou) ad-vening from the future. Conversely, at the moment of this encounter, in the religious act of uttering *namu-Amida-Butsu* as a decision that brings evocation and response into one, the symbolic world (in which all buddhas continually praise the name of Amida Buddha and guarantee the truth of that name and birth in the Pure Land through its invocation) is discovered directly underfoot of the present.

In still more concrete form, this symbolic world, which represents the background for one's encounter with the name, also signifies the opening up of the world in which the '*nenbutsu*' is transmitted historically. Just as with Heidegger's *Geviert*, this in turn means the realization of the world of all buddhas praising and reconfirming the name of Amida—a world in which everything mirrors everything else. And just as in Bultmann's historical world, it is in this world of ours that the encounter with the Thou, the encounter with the name, takes place. In that sense, we have here a concrete synthesis of the standpoints of Heidegger and Bultmann.

In the second chapter of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, entitled "True Living," Shinran refers to the seventeenth vow (or prayer) as "that which is praised by all buddhas" and as "that in which all buddhas pronounce the name." This means that all buddhas praise Amida Buddha and exalt his name, and that by pronouncing his name all buddhas praise Amida. Understandably, this is generally interpreted not as referring to our utterance of Amida's name, but to an event belonging to the absolute world where *namu-Amida-Butsu* appears with the 'dharma'. That is, it is an event that occurs among the buddhas in their buddha-worlds, transcendent to the world of man. It is a matter of all buddhas praising one another and exalting the name of Amida.

Were that the whole truth, it would be difficult to see how this praise by the buddhas has anything to do with our own religious practice ("living") of the *nenbutsu*. At the beginning of the "True Living" chapter, Shinran states clearly: "The great living is to pronounce the name of the 'Tathāgata' of unimpeded light." I should like to interpret the term "great living" as religious or symbolic activity wherein the practice of all buddhas praising the name of Amida is mirrored in our own "pronouncing the name of the Tathāgata of unimpeded light." Here we are aware that our utterance of the name is praise and exaltation of the name, and that our utterance of the name is in turn mirrored in the praise of all

the buddhas. This makes it clear that “what is praised by all buddhas” is “that in which all buddhas pronounce the name.”

In other words, the Pure Land and this world, all buddhas and all living beings, the cosmic chorus sounding the name throughout “the ten quarters,” and the career of the historical *nenbutsu* on earth combine in this symbolic action to form a locus of *Geviert*. It is at this point that my encounter with Amida takes place. With Jaspers, we may refer to symbolic action of this sort as absolute action wherein all opposition between subject and object melts away, so that concrete reality can appear on the standpoint of action in all its purity. It is precisely there that the encounter and mutual evocation of I and Thou are realized.

This idea of the “standpoint of action” cries out for further reflection in connection with Nishida Kitarō’s* view of acting intuition and Tanabe Hajime’s* elucidation of action from the viewpoint of practice-faith, but it seems to me equally relevant to the difference of approach between Heidegger and Bultmann referred to above. In any case, the *namu-Amida-Butsu* that issues forth at the point where the opposition of subject and object is overcome, in the “great practice” characteristic of religious action, seems to me to reveal extraordinary depths of meaning, and its significance for our present day to become all the clearer when explored in the light of the contemporary problematics of theology and the philosophy of religion.

[JWH]

Following the trail that had been blazed by D. T. Suzuki,* Abe Masao spent over thirty years in dialogue with western philosophers and theologians, representing Zen thought and the tradition of Kyoto School thought as he had inherited it from Tanabe Hajime* and, above all, Nishitani Keiji*. Although born into a 'Pure Land' Buddhist family and, as a young student at Osaka City University, moved by the ideas of Shinran* he found in the *Tannishō* (A Record of Lament over Divergence), Abe lost his faith for a period. In 1941 he left his job and returned to study western philosophy at Kyoto University, where he met Hisamatsu Shin'ichi*, whose critique of Pure Land Buddhism turned Abe to Zen. After completing his studies he taught briefly at a number of universities in Kyoto until 1952, when he received a permanent position at Nara Educational University. At age forty he spent a brief period at Union Theological Seminary in New York, where he attended the lectures of Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and D. T. Suzuki. For fourteen years after retiring in 1980, Abe taught at six universities in the United States. In 2000 he was awarded the Award of Merit from the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism.

In a lengthy essay on Nishitani's classic work *Religion and Nothingness*, Abe laid out the contours of an approach to 'absolute nothingness' that he would develop over many years. In particular, he stressed the dynamic, creative quality of 'emptiness' or *śūnyatā*—an idea present in germ in Nishitani and Tanabe—as the common foundation of all religions. Like his two teachers, he also developed a philosophical interest in the thought of Dōgen*, collaborating on an English translation of the *Shōbōgenzō* and composing a series of essays on the work. His wide-ranging interests, shaped in part by his encounters with leading Christian theologians in Europe and the United States, always brought him back to the bedrock of ideas he had found in his Kyoto professors, and in this sense he was instrumental in making their ideas more widely known in the West. The essay from which the following excerpt has been taken offers a glimpse at his style of debate with the ideas he found in western philosophy.

[JWH]

ŚŪNYATĀ AS FORMLESS FORM

ABE Masao 1987, 139–48

According to Plato, beyond the realm of phenomena perceptible by our senses and subject to time and to change, there exists a realm of "forms" which are immutable, timeless, and knowable only by the pure intellect. This realm exists independently and transcends the phenomena that participate in

the forms. Forms are realities and prototypes which make individual things what they are—as the copies of the former.

Like Plato, 'Mahayana' Buddhism insists that everything in this world is mutable, transient, and subject to time and to change. Unlike Plato, however, Mahayana Buddhism does not expound the existence of an immutable, eternal, and transcendent realm beyond this world. There is *nothing* eternal, transcendent, and real behind or beyond this transitory world. In spite of the fact that the human intellect desires and expects to find the existence of an immutable, eternal, and transcendent world beyond this mutable, temporary, and immanent world, if we are to awaken to the ultimate reality we must overcome such a dualistic way of thinking. What is real in Mahayana Buddhism is not eternal, self-existing "forms" but '*śūnyatā*', which literally means "emptiness," and which is without any form whatsoever....

For Plato this actual world perceived by our senses is a perpetual flow of ever-changing appearances of which no real knowledge is possible. It is the world of earthly phenomena, a mutable and unreal shadow play. Plato arrived at the theory of forms in an attempt to determine the real nature of moral goodness which, according to Socrates, is the *same for all*. Since only by really knowing goodness can one become truly a good man, it became a serious problem to know the true and unchangeable reality of things. In this connection, Plato employed the Pythagorean doctrine that the soul can realize its divinity and contemplate eternal numerical truth that transcends our sense perception.¹⁴ Thus Plato's theory of forms might be said to be motivated by the problem of moral goodness and the problem of knowing reality. He insisted that "there certainly are self-existent forms unperceived by sense, and apprehended only by the mind" (*Timaeus* 51)....

For Buddhism as well, this actual world is an unceasing flow of ever-changing phenomena which are unreal and illusory.... So far there is a great affinity between Plato and Buddhism. Buddhists, however, do not share the doctrine of forms, for Buddhists do not accept the existence of suprasensual and unchanging reality beyond this world. From the earliest times Buddhists emphasized... 'dependent origination', relationality, relational origination, and co-arising. This means that everything is dependent upon something else without exception, nothing whatsoever in the universe being independent and self-existing....

Thus we may say that the interdependence emphasized in the Buddhist notion of dependent origination is realized in the strictest sense by rejecting both transcendence and immanence. Accordingly, there can be nothing whatever, at least in the sense of any substantial thing such as a soul, that is more real

14. A. H. Armstrong, *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy* (London: Methuen, 1949), 37.

and eternal, and that lies behind or beyond the interdependence of everything. This is true whether one speaks of the temporal or nontemporal realms, sensual or suprasensual realms. In Buddhism one cannot emphasize too strongly the interdependence of everything. Therefore, when we say that there can be “nothing” whatever that is real and eternal and beyond this world of complete interdependence we must notice the following two points:

1. This ‘nothingness’ should not be taken as simply distinguished from “something.” If so, it is merely “relative nothingness” in contrast to “somethingness.” It is still “something” called “nothingness” and not true and ‘absolute nothingness’. The Buddhist idea of dependent origination, therefore, implies that there can be absolutely nothing whatsoever that is real and eternal—behind this actual world.
2. This “nothingness” is neither directly graspable by the conceptual intellect nor objectively observable. It is properly understood only through existential and nonobjective awakening.

We now see that the Buddha’s doctrine of dependent origination was supported by an existential realization of “absolute nothingness,” and we maintain that it remains today supportable by such direct experience....

Thus the realization of *śūnyatā*, or “emptiness,” may be said to be the fundamental foundation for the doctrine of dependent origination. Complete interdependence of everything throughout the sensual and nonsensual world is possible only in and through the realization of *śūnyatā*, which is boundless, limitless, and without form. This formless *śūnyatā*, in Mahayana Buddhism, best describes ultimate reality.

Platonic Forms and Mahayana Śūnyatā

Now we must clarify the likenesses and the differences between Plato’s idea of “forms” and the Mahayana idea of *śūnyatā*. A form is the universal quality common to all things belonging to a “kind” of being. It is ever immutably the same, simple, and everlasting, and becomes the standard, eternal model or paradigm for the particular group of phenomena over which it presides. Being distinct from phenomena, it is an intellectual and normative idea not only in terms of knowledge but also in terms of moral practice. This is why the form of the good is also the highest and most universal form of all, by which the mind may ascend through the hierarchy of forms to find “an abiding city” for its final rest. Accordingly Plato’s forms, particularly the hierarchy of forms with the form of the good at its summit, have an ideological or paradigmatic significance. The form of the good is the end to be reached by *eros*, the instinctive and unceasing longing of the mind. Here, however, a question arises: Can the mind actually reach the form of the good for being? The answer must be

negative. In order to explain why, we must deal with the dualities of body and soul, phenomenon and form in Plato's philosophy.

First, let us consider the duality of body and soul. For Plato... the body can perish, but the soul cannot. In so far as the soul is embodied and belongs to this actual world, it cannot reach, although it may approximate, the form of the good, because the form of the good is essentially transcendent beyond the realm of this actual world. The soul, however, may reach the form of the good after its separation from the body after death—hence Plato's idea of the duality of the body and the soul. But is there a justifiable ground for the body-soul duality? Isn't it merely an assumption that Plato posited idealistically? The unreal nature of the body-soul duality conception will become clearer when we ask why the soul has to be embodied, which Plato never explains clearly.

If the idea of the body-soul duality is called into question, the idea that the soul can reach the form of the good is questioned along with it. The soul must be said to be always "on the way" to reaching the good. There is an essential gap between the soul and the form of the good. It is a paradox and dilemma for the soul that searches for the abode of the final rest in the form of the good to have to be always on the way to it. The final rest can never be found "on the way" to the abode of the final rest. Once this dilemma implied in the Platonic approach to the form of the good is fully realized, the very approach tends to collapse. Here we come to examine a wider and more basic form of duality than that of body and soul—that is, the duality of phenomenon and form.

For Plato, forms are realities, whereas particular things in this world are unreal and only participate in the former. Forms are common qualities that belong to universal, absolute existence as paradigms for particular things. Here a series of problems arise which include at least the following three difficulties, all of which disclose the limitation of the duality of phenomenon and form.

1. When two particular things owe their similarity to an idea, to what must we ascribe the similarity between the idea and the two particulars? This is the difficulty which Aristotle in his criticism of the theory of forms called the problem of the third man. This leads to a *regressus in infinitum*.¹⁵
2. Plato's theory of forms as the universal idea for things seems logically to compel us to admit even forms corresponding to negative universal terms and denoting the absence of good—sickness, ugliness, evil, and so forth. But their existence is very difficult to reconcile with the function of the forms as universal standards, with his doctrine that all forms derive their being from the good, and with his conviction that evil belongs entirely to the lower world and has no place in the realm of real being.

15. E. Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen* (Leipzig: Reisland, 1920), 1: 149.

3. The third difficulty derived from the duality of phenomenon and form is the problem of participation. If the forms are essentially separate from particular things, how can the latter at the same time participate in them? Participation is only possible when both one can be many, and many one. But how can one form be in the many things which participate in it? (*Parmenides* 142A)

At least these three difficulties clearly show the limitation of Plato's idea of the duality between phenomenon and form. They especially undermine his claim that the form of the good is real. If we take the forms to be universal ideas for things, we are logically required to admit the form of evil. Considering the paradigmatic and teleological nature of the form, the idea of the form of evil is self-contradictory, so Plato's theory inevitably falls into a dilemma.... To reach the ultimate reality we must go beyond all duality, including dualities between body and soul, good and evil, form and phenomenon.

Buddhists strongly insist on the necessity of going beyond dualistic ways of thinking to awaken to ultimate reality. For the dualistic way of thinking always conceptualizes reality by analyzing and distinguishing it into two entities. Naturally Buddhists do not accept the duality of body and soul, or Plato's idea of the immortality of the soul. In Buddhism it is not that the soul is immutable and self-existing apart from the mutable body, but that body and soul are equally mutable, perishable. In other words, the soul is not excluded from the teaching concerning the impermanence of everything whatsoever. This will be clear when we recall the rejection by Buddhists of the Hindu idea of *ātman*, which is an eternal and unchangeable self. Emphasizing the nondualistic oneness of body and soul, Buddhists insist that it is an illusion, or at least an unreal conception, to believe in the preexistence of the soul and thus to posit a duality between body and soul.

Again, Buddhists do not accept the duality between phenomenon and form, and thereby between phenomena and the form of the good as well. There is absolutely nothing that is real and unchangeable apart from this changeable world, and everything in this changeable world is dependently related for its origination and for its ceasing to be. Like Plato, of course, Buddhists speak of the sensual and suprasensual realms. For Buddhists, however, the suprasensual realm does not, ultimately speaking, have superiority over against the sensual realm. In the Buddhist understanding, the sensual and the suprasensual realms mutually participate in one another. It is not the suprasensual realm itself which is real, but rather this dynamic relationality of mutual participation between the sensual and suprasensual realms. The so-called sensual and suprasensual realms, as rigidly distinguished from one another, are merely conceptual productions derived from this primary reality of mutual participation. This mutual

participation or interdependence is also true of the relation between good and evil, life and death, being and nonbeing, and so forth.

Ideally speaking, we should seek the good. Realistically, however, the more we seek for the good the more we realize how far away we are from the good. A search for the good inevitably discloses our evil nature. Not only conceptually, but also existentially, good and evil are inseparably connected with one another. This dynamic conflict between good and evil is realized by Buddhists as an endless karma. Once Buddhists fully realize this endless karma through the conflict between good and evil within themselves, they are led to go beyond karma and to awaken to the reality which is neither good nor evil—that is, to the reality of *śūnyatā*. For Buddhists the solution does not lie in an approach to the form of the good, but in an awakening to *śūnyatā*, which is beyond the duality of good and evil.

From Teleology to Śūnyatā

We now realize that, although both Plato and Buddhists are aware of the mutability of this world, Buddhists are more deeply aware of it than Plato.... With the realization of complete transiency and dependent origination, an ideological approach to the form of the good is replaced by a fundamental awakening to *śūnyatā* in which good and evil are mutually participating in one another and which in itself is neither good nor evil. In this respect Plato is strongly oriented by an intellectual morality, whereas Buddhists are faithful to the actuality of man and the world. Therefore, the question is not whether Buddhists are pessimistic or optimistic, but whether they are realistic or nonrealistic.

For Plato, form has a positive significance. It indicates a universal definition and a clear intellectual limitation of an idea. On the other hand, for Buddhists form is something negative, and the formless *animitta* (freedom from form and color) has a positive significance. This is because for Plato reality must be knowable and definable by human intellect, while for Buddhists reality is undefinable and unlimited by human intellect. Buddhism, however, is not a mysticism in the western sense; nor is it an agnosticism.

Although Buddhists emphasize *śūnyatā* as true ultimate reality, which is without any form whatsoever, if it simply remains formless, it is involved in a kind of duality—that is, a duality between form and formlessness. In order to attain *śūnyatā* as the ultimate reality, we must go beyond formlessness together with a duality between form and formlessness. Formlessness remaining dualistically distinguished from form becomes a form named “formlessness.” True *śūnyatā* is formless not only in the sense that it is beyond any form or any definition such as good and evil, but also in the sense that it is free from both form and formlessness. This indicates that, being formless in itself, true *śūnyatā*

does not exclude forms, but freely and unrestrictedly takes any form as its own expression. True *śūnyatā* is not statically formless but has a dynamic structure, being freely form and formless at one and the same time.

This is not a conceptual play, nor a state objectively understandable. Instead it is a most serious religious issue in the Buddhist tradition, which can take place only through a complete negation of one's ego-self and a subjective and existential awakening. Mahayana Buddhists often emphasize "Do not abide in 'samsara' or in 'nirvāṇa'." It is essential for Buddhists to go beyond samsara—transmigration of life and death—and to attain nirvāṇa. However, if we simply abide in nirvāṇa, forgetting fellow beings who are still in samsara, it can never be true nirvāṇa. Although we should transcend samsara, we should not abide in and cling to nirvāṇa, just as we should go beyond form but should not be attached to the formless. To attain true nirvāṇa, we should go beyond even nirvāṇa into the midst of samsara to save others. In true nirvāṇa, in the Mahayana sense, one freely moves from samsara to nirvāṇa, from nirvāṇa to samsara, without abiding in either to save others as well as oneself. Nirvāṇa in this dynamic sense is simply another term for *śūnyatā* as formless form.

The Platonic approach, because of its dualistic assumption of the forms transcending this actual world... must necessarily fall finally into a dilemma in which, despite the idealistic intention of the approach to the goal, it cannot go beyond being "on the way." Thus Plato's ascending approach to the form of the good inevitably collapses. With the collapse of Plato's teleological approach, which intensively converges with the form of the good which is One, the boundless field of *śūnyatā* is opened up, a field of emptiness which is without any form whatsoever.

Once the teleological structure converging on the form of the good disappears, every point of the ascending approach is realized as the end. The goal or end is not something "over there." It is right here at our feet. This means that ultimate reality is not to be found far away from here, sometime in the future, but is realized right here and right now. This is true not only for any point in the process, but also for its very beginning and lowest point. It is not that ultimate reality stands in front of us, but that we are standing in the ultimate reality. The ultimate reality is not an object to be reached, but the ground which is non-objectifiable. Hence it is without form.

Śūnyatā indicates precisely this non-objectifiable, ultimate reality. Plato regards the form of the good as the ultimate reality and takes it as the object to be attained. Plato, however, seems to realize that ultimate reality is non-objectifiable when he thinks that the good is the form of forms, that is, something more than a form. Here we see an intimation of formlessness, and thereby the non-objectifiable nature in Plato's idea of the form of the good. However, the formlessness implied in the form of the good is conceived in Plato as somewhat

beyond, or at the summit of, the hierarchy of various forms. Accordingly, that formlessness is still to this extent objectified. Since Buddhists insist that ultimate reality is completely non-objectifiable, it is not the form of the good but the formless *śūnyatā*.

When the Platonic approach to the highest collapses, and the boundless field of the formless *śūnyatā* is opened up, we come to know the following two points. First, each and every point of the process of our movements and activities is an end and a beginning at one and the same time. This is possible because the process is now taking place on a field of boundless emptiness, and therefore the process in itself is without end and without beginning. In other words, since the process of our activities is beginningless and endless, each point of the process is immediately realized as beginning and end at once. Here Aristotle's criticism of Plato's theory of forms in terms of *regressus in infinitum* is overcome through the realization of emptiness. Second, each and every thing in the universe is completely interdependent. This complete interdependence is possible when each and every thing has its individuality and uniqueness. A combination of these apparently contradictory aspects—the aspect of interdependence and the aspect of universal individuality—is possible not in a teleological and hierarchical structure but on the boundless field of emptiness. A difficulty concerning Plato's theory of forms—namely, how one can be many and many one—is solved in the field of emptiness. As Buddhists often say: “Flowers are flowers, willows are green,” or “Mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers,” and as I should like to put it, “You are you and I am I.” Everything and everyone exists together, lives together without losing individuality—that is, with its own particular form, on the field of formless emptiness.

But as soon as we take this formless *śūnyatā* as a goal to be attained and thereby objectify it, as has often happened in the history of the Mahayana tradition, it loses its dynamic nature and turns into a superficial affirmation of or an uncritical indifference to this actual world. Formless *śūnyatā* should not be taken merely as a goal but as a fundamental foundation on which we base our being, and as the point of departure from which we can properly begin to live freely and to start creative activities. Formless *śūnyatā*, taken as the fundamental basis, is not merely formless. It is full of forms because it is the boundless field or bottomless ground that lets everything exist and work with its particular form within itself.

In this dynamic structure of *śūnyatā*, nothing is excluded. You and I and everything else are existing and living together with particular forms, without losing individualities in this *śūnyatā* as formless form.

TSUJIMURA Kōichi 辻村公一 (1922–2010)

Tsujimura Kōichi studied philosophy at Kyoto University under Tanabe Hajime,* and went on to assume his teacher's chair from 1948 until retiring in 1982. More formative for his thinking, however, was the Zen he practiced with Hisamatsu Shin'ichi,* coupled with the thought of Martin Heidegger, whom he knew personally from travels in Germany. His translations and essays often elucidated Zen texts and Heidegger's thought in the light of one another to introduce novel interpretations of both. For example, Tsujimura translated Heidegger's term *Gelassenheit*, and the book based on it, using a Buddhist term for liberation. In addition to translations of Heidegger and two books on him, as well as *Various Thoughts on German Idealism* (1993), he published several influential articles in German that explore the relationships between Zen thinking and European philosophy. His work has turned the attention of many German philosophy professors to East Asian Buddhist texts. One may mention in particular the *Oxherding Pictures*, which he co-translated with Hartmut Buchner. "In Absolute Nothingness and the Question of Being" (1977), Tsujimura offered an interpretation of awakening aimed at uncovering connections and differences with Heidegger's questioning and the Kyoto School's notion of 'nothingness'.

The following selection draws on Heidegger's interpretation of modern technology as the form of truth or unconcealment that pretends nothing remains hidden and unavailable to human control and manipulation. But Tsujimura puts this view into the context of longstanding notions of everything—all things taken together—found in both western and Chinese Buddhist philosophy. The title of his essay uses an expression from the famous poem, "Faith in Mind," attributed to Sengcan, the Third Patriarch of Zen, and also functions to translate an expression found in Heraclitus. The essay ends with a suggestion that would deepen Heidegger's thinking about technology and find a positive place for it.

[JCM]

ALL-IN-ONE EAST AND WEST

TSUJIMURA Kōichi 1982, 391–404

My immediate aim in studying the notion of "all-in-one" (*All-Einheit*) is to seek out the points at which East and West differ in their understanding. But my long-term goal is to find some way to alter the dominating control of modern technology (*Machenschaft*). In the sense in which the human work of creating and producing controls all things, including human beings themselves, *Machenschaft* means that "everything is made and anything can be manipu-

lated.” This I see as a form of the all-in-one in today’s technological age. On the way to changing this mode of thought, our reflections are inevitably drawn to the ancient modes of all-in-one in the East and in the West. Perhaps the germ of some new form of the all-in-one in the light of which *Machenschaft* may be transformed is contained within those old forms which have been forgotten in our times because of that very *Machenschaft*...

Differences East and West

In the West, the idea of all-in-one—all:one, one:all—has to do with the *connection of all things to a single principle*. In its primary sense, the one (τὸ ἓν) occupies the position of a principle, whether it be “being itself,” “a unity of all opposites,” a “harmony within contradiction,” or “a oneness of being and nonbeing.”¹⁶ All four of these explanations have been offered as interpretations of the Heraclitean fragment, “All is one” (ἓν πάντα εἶναι, fragment 50). There *the singularity of individually existing things* is inserted into the “all”... The *is* (εἶναι) refers to the relation by which all things are *grounded*—in the widest possible sense—in the one. This *grounding* implies gathering together, distributing, emanating, creating, conditions for enabling, animating and reanimating, causal efficacy, absolute mediation, and so forth. For Heraclitus, *human beings* belong to the “all is one” by “correspondence” (ὁμολογεῖν).

The primary meaning of the “one” as a single principle is expressed by Plotinus in extremely clear language: “It is because of the one that all beings are beings, those whose existence is primal as well as those who in any sense are included among beings.” The one is the “origin of all things” (ἀρχὴ τῶν πάντων) and the “cause of all things” (τὸ πάντων αἴτιον). At times Plotinus calls the one “that thing” (τὸ ἐκεῖνος) or “God” (θεός), but all of these expressions, including “the one,” are merely unavoidable ways of speaking, since fundamentally there is no “name” (ὄνομα) that suits it. In contrast, individual beings are spoken of as “one in part” (κατὰ μέρος ἓν).¹⁷ As the principle of all things, the one can only come to human experience in ecstasy. Such would seem to be the fundamental form of the all-in-one in the West.

In the East, the idea of all-in-one has no relation to a single principle for all things. In its primary sense, it means that *each and every individual existing thing is connected to all things, that is, to the world*...

16. Martin Heidegger, “Heraklit,” *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975) 55: 292ff; Karl Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), 201, 206; Uvo Hölscher, *Anfängliches Fragen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 172.

17. *Enneads* 6.9.1.

Near the end of the aphoristic verses of the third Zen patriarch Sengcan's (d. 606) *Verses on Faith in Mind* we read:

All-in-one, one-in-all
Be capable of that
And you will not fret over how things turn out.

I like to think that there are two ways of understanding the “one” spoken of here: as a “principle of oneness” and as referring to any individual whatsoever. This latter sense became clear to me through the original Chinese of the ‘*Huayan*’ Sutra.... For instance, this cup in front of me is “all,” it is *the world*. At first glance, this all sounds rather puzzling.

Concerning the sense of the *principle* of all things that exist, Sengcan's text has this to say in another place:

One is the source of two beings,
But do not hold on to the one.

Although we tend to get attached to a principle of oneness, it is precisely this principle about which we must not remain inflexible, any more than we should cling to ecstatic states.

In East Asian Buddhism, *human beings* belong to the all-*in*-one. Just what is the human being who is capable of saying something like “all-in-one, one-in-all”? It is a buddha, an awakened one, or perhaps a ‘*bodhisattva*’ who aspires to be a buddha and at any moment can instantaneously become a buddha, but who willingly sets aside becoming a buddha for the sake of sentient beings.

The relationship known as ‘dependent origination’ is sovereign in the general Buddhist view of the world. Following my colleague, the Buddhist scholar Saigusa Mitsuyoshi, who describes it as *Relationalität*, I would like provisionally to describe it as a *zusammengehöriges Geschehen*, a kind of “shared event.” The sense is that no individual entity is ever born or dies by itself, but is always co-joined with and codependent on everything else. In this way nothing that exists individually has, in reality, a substance of its own; each and every thing that exists is *connected* from the start with everything else. This is an indispensable condition for the reflections that follow.

Cusanus and Fazang

To clarify the differences between the all-in-one in the East and the West in terms of the two forms indicated above, we need examples that best typify them. I suggest comparing the all-in-one of Nicholas of Cusa and the thought of the third patriarch of the Huayan tradition in China, Fazang....¹⁸

18. [Fazang (643–712), perhaps the greatest systematic thinker in Huayan Buddhism, drew

Individuals. For both, “one” means something “individual” like a coin, a pearl, the sun, or the moon; and “all” refers to the world or the cosmos. Cusanus, however, understands the individual as a *creature*, thus implying a *creator* God. In contrast, for Fazang the individual, whether subjective or objective, is something “other-dependent.” It is “being-like” but without an individuating substance of its own, which ultimately implies *tathatā*, the ‘suchness’ of things just as they are. Because *tathatā* is without form, it is unchanging and conditioned....

Here, individual creatures in Cusanus are seen as the occurrence of particular *contractions* of the universe. For Fazang, individuals are seen to contain within themselves all other things as “conjoined, empty, and hidden.” Thus we might say, the two views of the all-in-one are *oriented in opposite directions*. This is the first point of difference.

That said, for Cusanus, the cosmos is not the sun and the moon, or anything individual. It is rather *the negation of individuals*. No individual, such as it is, constitutes the world. In Fazang, if a particular individual *within the interrelationship of individuals* occupies the position of a “manifestation” as “subject” or “existent (thing),” other individuals are positioned opposite it as “conjoined, empty, and hidden,” but this relationship is always reversible. This is the second point of difference.

The world. For Cusanus, the world or cosmos is the sole and maximum contraction and as such is the “likeness” of God, though always “infinitely lower than what is absolute” (*De docta ignorantia* 113–14). This leaves no doubt that Cusanus conceived of the world *from the standpoint of God*, as a contraction of the divine. In line with tradition, he conceived of the *all* in the formula “all-in-one, one-in-all” as the world or cosmos that proceeds from the absolute, unifying principle, which is God.

What of Fazang’s view of relationships within the realm of cosmic law? We need to consider what he calls the “mutually influencing six traits” of things, namely, totality, particularity, commonality, distinctiveness, constructiveness, and destructiveness. He likens the world to a house in which totality is the house as a whole: particularity, the beams, pillars, stones, roof tiles, and so forth; commonality, the way in which the former elements do not oppose each other but collaborate to build up the whole; distinctiveness, the individuating characteristics of each of the elements; constructiveness, the way in which the elements come together to make the house as a whole; and destructiveness, the way in which the various elements fail to blend together should any of them cling to its uniqueness as what it is. The first three traits form one group that is

on a vast range of Chinese religious and philosophical sources for his numerous commentaries and is particularly remembered for his interpretations of interdependent causality.]

set in opposition to the last three. The two sides do not clash with one another but collaborate to influence one another. This is made possible by the fact that any one of the six traits contains the other five in a “conjoined, empty, and hidden” manner. In this way, the world and the things that make it up become possible. For Fazang, the world does not become a world in virtue of a divine contraction but through a *fusion of the whole and the parts*. This is the third point of difference.

The absolute. For Cusanus, God is the “absolute principle” within things. How so? Cusanus compares God to the infinite oneness of a single point from which lines and forms develop: “Therefore, God is all-enfolding, since all things are in God; and God is all-unfolding, since God is in all things” (107). As *omnia complicans*, God is the sole, incomparable principle of the one-in-all. As enfolding, God is liberated from all comparison and relationship—that is, God is *absolute*. This is the aspect of divine transcendence vis-à-vis all created things. As *omnia explicans*, God is within all things that exist, so that we may speak of the divine unfolding in individual things as a “contraction.” As he explains, “Contraction implies something being contracted *to* in order to become one thing or another” (117). Thus, contraction means that the absolute contracts itself so that this or that can come into being. Here we have Cusanus’ unique approach to “creation.”

In contrast, Fazang speaks of the two meanings of *tathatā*. First, it is “unchanging” because it is empty and without form. Second, it is “conditioned.” Absent these two qualities, it would be one-sided and cease to be both absolute and concrete. Fazang relates these two aspects of *tathatā* through the metaphor of a bright mirror. Whatever changing forms of reality happen to stand before the mirror (that is, the unchanging *tathatā*), be they clean or defiled, are reflected there. This ability to reflect changing reality within itself means that the *tathatā* does not exist on its own but adjusts to the dependent origination of all sorts of realities. Nevertheless, or rather precisely for this reason, the mirror does not lose its brightness and the *tathatā* does not cease to be unchanging. The greater the variety of things the mirror reflects within itself, the more it bears witness to its own brightness and unchanging nature. In this way, the two meanings of the *tathatā* are internally unified.

Put in these simple terms, the models of Fazang and Cusanus appear to correspond. But this is only a *highly formal correspondence of principles* involved in the western and eastern modes of the all-in-one. The differences between the principles are also evident. Unlike Cusanus’ view of creation in terms of unfolding and contraction, Fazang has no conception of creation. As obvious as this is, it touches on a profound and ultimate difference between the two that affects everything said above.

Let us pause a moment longer at the metaphor of the bright mirror. Ordinarily

ily we see an image of something or other reflected on the surface of the mirror, which means that we distinguish between the reflected image and the reflected thing to keep the two distinct. However, if we unite the two, we are no longer standing outside and looking on; we *become* the mirror itself. The mirror as such disappears in becoming completely one with the image reflected in it. In so doing, we return to the original nature of the mirror itself, empty and without form. We see the dependent origination of individual things as the starting point for the arising—or, to use a Heideggerian term, the *Ereignis*—of empty, formless *tathatā*.

The ground of the differences. Ultimately, the differences between the two thinkers are based on their characterization of the notion of the absolute itself and on the way they conceive the world of reality to come into being. For Cusanus, reality comes about as a “contraction of God,” which is his way of understanding it as a divine creation. In contrast, for Fazang and East Asian Buddhism, reality is seen as a harmony of individual things—each of them, however, without an individuating substance—that are absolutely and mutually related to one another.

In the West, the absolute, seen as the unifying principle behind the relationship of all-in-one and one-in-all, is God. It is God who grounds all things in the broadest sense. In the East, the absolute that serves as the principle of all-in-one and one-in-all is *tathatā*. *Tathatā* is empty and without form, but for that very reason is capable of assuming the forms of individual things as the need arises as well as the form of the totality of things.

If we favor Fazang’s standpoint, we would probably conclude that if God takes the position of the “manifest Lord of being,” the Buddhist *tathatā* would stand opposed as “conjoined, empty, and hidden,” like the ‘nothingness’ of *creation ex nihilo*. If the formless *tathatā* were to take over the position of the manifest Lord of being, God would become conjoined, empty, and hidden after the manner of a personality without form. More than this, I cannot say.

Machenschaft

To describe the dominating control of *Machenschaft* by the formula “everything is made and anything can be manipulated” implies, first of all, that we understand it as a thesis about the *being* of things that *are*—that is, from an ontological point of view. For the fact is, things that have not been made, even today, continue to exist from an ontic point of view. For example, the eggs and vegetables, meat and fish that we eat every day came to be and grew over time. But today all these things are being bred and raised artificially; they are the results of manufacturing technology. To be sure, we can speak of them as belonging to things that grow, but if we look deeper, we see that they

have been manufactured. The sun, the moon, and the daily weather are not, of course, manufactured products. But through astronomical and meteorological research these non-manufactured things are being taken into the domain of *Machenschaft*. Test-tube babies live among us today. In this way manufacturing has arrived at the point of bringing into being things that are born and grow, as well as non-living natural phenomena, drawing them more and more under the control of the forces at work in the background as an ontological power. But *Machenschaft* is far from omnipotent. The fact that our capacity to think about it is not itself part of the *Machenschaft* tells us as much.

From somewhere deeper in the background, manufactured things exercise a radical control over things that are born and grow. Just what is pulling the strings back there behind the manufacturing itself? *Machenschaft* is forever blind to what it is that gives predominance to human making and manipulating. Its rule is a simple chain of making and more making. Should the chain be broken, its reign would end; there would be no more *Machenschaft*. What keeps this chain going is the *connectedness* of all things that exist with all other things—that is, in the one-in-all. The chain of making and more making is already grounded in the one-in-all. In the West, it is creation and the *creatio continua* that lie at the root of *Machenschaft* and, therefore, also of the things that are made and manipulated, so that we can no longer speak of human production. In the East, it is the *cosmic realm of dependent origination keeping all things inexhaustibly connected to one another* that lies at the root of *Machenschaft* and makes it impossible any longer for dependent origination to give form to the formless.

The heart of the matter for the West, as I see it, is to ask whether and how there can be a transformation of *Machenschaft* that will satisfy the sense of continuing creation; but this would require some kind of new mode of creating. In the East, the crucial question is whether and how *Machenschaft* can be transformed so as to find its place within the realm of cosmic law that connects all things to each other. This will probably require that making and creating be situated within Fazang's all-in-one.

In either case, we need to relocate *Machenschaft* within the kind of deeper, larger, and broader relationship indicated by the ancient idea of all-in-one, to bring order on this relationship, and to impose limits on it.

[JWH]



Ueda Shizuteru is the central figure of the third generation of the Kyoto School. A student and successor of Nishitani Keiji* and a foremost interpreter of Nishida Kitarō*, Ueda inherited their commitment to bringing western philosophy and religion into dialogue with the practice and thought of 'Mahayana' Buddhism. The son of a 'Shingon' Buddhist scholar, Ueda himself, like Nishida and Nishitani, has engaged in an intense and prolonged practice of Zen. His involvement in a group for lay practitioners at Shōkoku-ji monastery in Kyoto continues to this day with the monthly talks he gives on the classical texts of the Zen tradition. In the course of his academic work, however, he turned explicitly to Zen only after first pursuing studies in western philosophy (initially Kant and Hegel and then focusing on Heidegger and other existentialists and phenomenologists) and Christian mysticism (primarily Meister Eckhart). After spending three years (1959–1962) at Marburg University, he completed a doctoral dissertation in German on Eckhart's thought. Ueda's linguistic versatility and experience—his strong competence in German and in other European languages as well as in classical Chinese, are all evident in his reflections on language.

By way of exploring the profound resonances as well as certain differences between Eckhart and Zen, Ueda began increasingly to write from and about the standpoint of Zen. A central and persistent concern of his has been the relation between the experience of Zen and the rational thinking of philosophy. This concern was taken up in his interpretations of Nishida, who had begun by attempting to develop a philosophy of "pure experience" both as that which precedes the subject-object split with all linguistically mediated deliberations, and as that which engenders and dynamically unifies all the divisions and articulations of reality. Following Nishida, Ueda came to locate language in a philosophy of 'place', that is, in a topologically layered conception of reality. He often explains the relation between experience and language according to a three-tiered model: (a) the prelinguistic and protolingistic level of pure experience; (b) the level of rudimentary phrases in poetic-religious expression; and (c) the level of philosophical and worldly discourse.

For Ueda, what lies beyond the reach of language is not to be understood as an ineffable realm to which one ascends and remains, but rather is to be experienced in extreme moments from the limits of language as that which at once tears through and mends, exceeds and encompasses, transcends and transforms our linguistic worlds of meaning. He agrees with Heidegger that human being is not a self-encapsulated ego but rather a being-in-the-world. And yet, he insists, the world

is essentially twofold: the world of linguistically mediated and articulated meaning, in which our daily lives are located, is in turn located within a hollow-expanse that transcends and envelops this world. This hollow-expanse is beyond conceptual understanding, insofar as concepts have as their medium the world of language and its determinations of meaning. Nevertheless, certain forms of language, namely what Ueda calls the “hollow words” found, for example, in poetry and Zen sayings, can attune us to this ultimate place in which our lives are located. Insofar as we do not close in on ourselves and rigidify our linguistic delimitations of the world, we can open ourselves up to the silence of this surrounding expanse of unlimited openness, which in turn allows us to speak and act more freely and responsibly in the world of linguistic actuality.

[BWD]

LANGUAGE IN A TWOFOLD WORLD

UEDA Shizuteru 1990, 290–98; 1997, 347–67

What sort of phenomenon is language? Assuming its givenness, in what follows I would like to investigate a number of points where the manifold phenomenon of language shows itself. The words of language (*kotoba*) show things, events, or states-of-affairs (*'koto'*). Words express or manifest things; at times they can be said to manifest while expressing them. Therein lies the *power* of language. Moreover, as things are revealed, they disappear as words. This is the *wonder* of language. In the process of showing something, a word disappears as word and in its place something appears as something. For example, if I say, “I took the day off yesterday,” I am not using words to talk about words but rather to talk about something; and those who hear me think the same.

Taking off from this basic situation, there are two points that I would like to draw attention to. First, insofar as the complex of associations surrounding any matter or state of affairs can be seen as a “world,” we can say that when language shows something, a world is displayed. And, since this appearance of something passes through a pattern of articulation, it is from the start imbued with a structure of significance. As humans, our mode of being is “being-in-the-world,” and the world in which we are is always already a linguistic world, that is, a space of meaning. Things are from the start revealed interpretively through language. This is the reason that language is referred to as “a way of seeing the world” or as an antecedent hermeneutic system that constitutes a world. To begin with, this situation positively signifies that language is the enabling condition of our being-in-the-world. And yet, at the same time it signifies that language is also a limitation. This ambiguity of language thus portends a fundamental problem for our human existence.

Secondly, when we say that things appear through words that simultaneously hide themselves, the very distinction between words and things becomes problematic. Is even this distinction something within language? To be sure, already in everyday reflection we are aware of a distinction between saying (*koto*) and things (*koto*). As the ancients used to say, “Our mouths do not burn when we say *fire*.” It is not that things appear as things prior to being spoken of with words; but when things do appear by way of words, they do so as more than mere words, as something that precedes words or as something external to words. Even when a given thing appears as a thing through the medium of language, or when something is described for the first time through words—for example, in fantasy literature and certain types of poetry, or in the extreme case of a false or “hollow” thing that exists only within language—this thing appears as something other than words. A poem, for instance, exists only as words; but this does not mean that the poem is only speaking about words without indicating something else. From the standpoint of language, this “something” is usually said to be the “meaning of the words.” But does that really resolve the issue? Even given the condition of appearance through language, insofar as the distinction between words and things can be made, at one extreme some thing is being taken to exist *outside of language*. Hence, for instance, the problem of the “ineffable” arises.

This, in fact, brings us to a major problem which takes a variety of forms. Even when we say “outside of language,” this saying itself is also language. Therefore, it is possible to take the extreme position that everything is *within language*. According to this view, it is in principle impossible for a human being to revert back to a prior state where there is no language; and any attempt to seek an experience of life in direct contact with “naked reality” is a fictional delusion and is fundamentally mistaken. Conversely, because it is possible to consider things from such a standpoint, the opposite extreme position is also possible, according to which language is what cloaks the true face of the world and blocks the way to true reality, such that language now becomes a sign of hollow falsehood, evidence of impotence.

Although these two extremes give us a close-up view—and double vision—of the nature and locus of the problem, it must be said that, as standpoints, they are both one-sided. We need to preserve the fact that things appear as things only through language, as well as the fact that the things which appear through language, even if they cannot be *separated* from language, can nevertheless be *distinguished* from language. There is a kind of misalignment or gap between words and things (not only linguistics, which takes language as its subject matter, but also hermeneutics may be said to pursue the reasons for this gap), and thus at the limit one surmises there to be an outside of language. Even if it is granted that “outside language” is a linguistic expression, we can understand

this expression in two ways: either (1) as something like a trace within language of some thing that lies outside of language and which is given to us only as a trace of what lies outside of language; or (2) even if it is a trace, it may be so in the sense of a passageway from what is within language to some thing that lies outside of the words, outside of language. In either case, the difference *within* language between words and things (the word “things”) is reflecting, as language, precisely the extra-linguistic difference between words on the one hand and things that are not words on the other. I said earlier that the world in which we are located as beings in the world is always at the same time a world of language; but to be more precise and concrete, we should say that our existence, in fact, straddles the very gap between words and things. This is fundamentally connected to the question of the invisible twofold character of *‘place’*. The manner of being that takes this gap as its place is not a tranquil but an anxious dwelling, and this anxious dwelling demands a fundamental movement.

Leaping a step ahead, I wish to view this fundamental movement as that of “exiting language and then exiting into language.” That is to say, I wish to see a dynamic integration of the fact that in and through this movement the possibility of experience is conditioned by language, with the fact that what is experienced at its extreme tears through the linguistic world. Precisely because language is a condition for the possibility of experience, being at a loss for words is a fundamental experience, and it is precisely this fundamental experience that seeks new words for its self-understanding. I am not supposing that, when there is an event of language being torn through, the ineffable is in some manner there. This is a crucial point. What I call exiting language and then exiting into language is not a smooth and automatic movement. It is rather a movement consisting of a twofold breaking through: language is torn through into silence and silence is torn through into language. It is precisely this movement that is primordial experience, which altogether I understand as a living wellspring of the death and resuscitation of experience. The primordial sentiment of “Oh!” could be taken as one archetype for this event of fundamental experience.

It can be said that we are, in fact, variously—to some degree, in some way, and in some sphere or another—carrying out this movement of exiting language and then exiting into language. For example, we depart from language toward a state of affairs itself, and then bring this state of affairs concretely into language. Or, we depart from language toward a rigorous thought, and then express this in precisely accurate words. Or yet again, we depart from language for the kind of spirit that letters are said to kill, so that this spirit is free to speak in its own words. This movement also pervades the work of translation. Moreover, in the process of carrying on dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity, each side leaves the linguistic world peculiar to its own doctrinal language in order to seek together a common language, and thus to promote self-understanding

and mutual understanding. Although all these movements of exiting language and then exiting into language are indeed taking place within the horizon of language, it is the movement at the extreme limits of these movements that I am looking for here. Insofar as this movement is at the extreme limits, it rarely arises; and, in fact, for the most part, it does not occur at all. But even this nonoccurrence gives rise to certain problems, and in this way determines our manner of being.

In order to understand this movement, it is necessary to see that our being-in-the-world is in fact a two-layered being-in-the-world. In short, the world as a comprehensive space of meaning is in turn located within the world of a *limitless openness*, a “hollow” space of *no-meaning* that is without limits. Insofar as we are in the world, we are located within this limitless openness. Yet, since the world of language is layered upon this world of limitless openness, often, indeed usually, we unwittingly remain bound by the delimiting power of language and the framework of relations of meaning. Hence, the world of language alone is taken to be the world of our being-in-the-world, and the limitless openness that transcends and envelops this world remains closed off to us. Therein lies the root of a number of problems that humans create in the world. On the one hand, the true configuration of the world is, simply expressed, “hollow-expanse/world,” a configuration that we may call the world’s “invisible twofoldness.” On the other hand, because this is an invisible twofoldness, the invisible aspect of it is not sensed, and only what is visible and determined by language is taken to be the world. Then, where this visible and linguistically defined world is taken to be the one and only world, the human subject that inhabits this world—either individually or collectively, and in various manners and levels—attempts to appropriate it as “my world”; and this is what gives rise to confrontations, conflicts, struggles, and distortions within this closed-off world. This kind of being-in-the-world must be broken open by the true countenance of the world, so that the reality of human existence can be realized. The fundamental dynamic of this event is especially what is meant by the notion of “exiting language and then exiting into language.”

If we take the original and fundamental structure of human existence—which takes place in this dynamic of exiting language and then exiting into language—to be a twofold being-in-the-world, then the being of the human should be understood as the double movement of going from the world into the limitless openness, and then back again into the world. This is nothing other than the basic structure of the phenomenon we usually refer to as “religion.” Now, generally speaking, as historical actualities, the various religions have taken one of two forms: a standpoint of faith, that is, of a belief in the saving grace of the absolute to overcome the severance between humans and the absolute; or a mysticism that evinces a communion or union with the absolute. In

terms of the dynamic of going from the world into the limitless openness, and then going back again into the world (or exiting language and then exiting into language), how might these two types of religion be characterized?

By way of simplification, I think we can characterize them as follows. In the case of mysticism, the human subject becomes the very *movement* of exiting the world and then reentering the world. Zen in particular may be characterized by this orientation insofar as it emphasizes the event of the breakthrough itself, that is to say, the event of the twofold breakthrough referred to earlier, namely, the dynamic of exiting and reentering language and the world. In the case of faith, the human subject abides in the standpoint of the world that is within the dynamic of exiting the *world* and then reentering the *world*, and from there makes contact with the movement between the world and the limitless openness that transcends and envelops the world. More specifically, in most cases the human subject of faith makes contact with this movement as a divine or religious personality, and in this way the human subject also participates in this fundamental movement. Such a typology of religions is possible insofar as the original movement of exiting the world and then reentering the world can be taken up with an emphasis on the dynamic of exiting and reentering, or with an emphasis on the world. Of course, since the world cannot be separated from the entire movement, it is located within the limitless openness and is a twofold world. Nevertheless, when the world is taken as the place from which one looks, the limitless openness in which the world is located becomes a transcendent world, and at the same time a transcendent subject appears over against the human subject; hence, religion becomes a matter of making contact from within the world with a divine or religious personality that commutes between these two worlds.

Now language is profoundly involved in each of these two types of religion, mysticism and the standpoint of faith. But in each of them language is accentuated in a particular form. In the case of mysticism, the movement of exiting language and then exiting into language itself becomes the crucial issue as primordial language or what may be called “originating words.” In terms of the human subject, what is crucial is the direct utterance of primordial language and the capacity for such utterance. Mantras presumably have this quality. In the case of the standpoint of faith, since the human subject makes contact with and participates in the movement *from within the world*, language as it is spoken and heard within the world—even if it is language that originally comes from God—becomes fundamental. For example, whether it is the words of Jesus, or of the Gospels, or of the Bible, the forms of discourse or written texts are typically foundational. Here it is a matter of “sacred texts.” What is crucial to this standpoint of faith is that these words, which are heard in the form of human language, are interpreted in such a manner that they are directed back to an

original event, which is often taken to be an esoteric sacrament. For example, the words of the Bible are *interpretively* heard as the “word of God.” In taking the leading role in interpretation, theology actively takes part in the construction of this standpoint of faith.

It is true that mysticism also gives birth to numerous, if not countless, texts. Yet even where these can be formed into a theology, mystical texts are developed for the sake of self-understanding, and the core of what is given to be understood is always to be found in primordial language itself. Thus, mysticism often gives rise to theologies that can be traced back to primordial words, or even to radical instances where sacred texts are destroyed. Contrary to this, what is crucial to the establishment of the standpoint of faith are words in the form of human discourse or texts, that is, words which have their element in human language—even if this language is taken to be the word of God. This is what the theologian Ernst Fuchs had in mind when he entitled an essay “Why Does Faith Require Texts?”

There is another important point regarding the movement of exiting language and then exiting into language. Although depicted above as a movement of the human subject as being-in-the-world, for the subject itself, the movement is also at the same time, and in an overlapping manner, a movement of language itself. Indeed, the subject awakens to the movement as one that leads, supports, and brings to fruition. This movement goes in the opposite direction of the movement of the human subject, namely, as exiting into language and then exiting language.

We may explain this movement with three pairs of images: exiting into language (*deus revelatus*, the revealed) and exiting language (*deus absconditus*, the hidden God); the movement between the God of revelation and the divine nothing; and, drawing on Buddhist terminology, the movement between “the provisional body of the Buddha” (*upāya dharma-kāya*, the ‘dharma-body’ of ‘expedient means’, a provisional form assumed out of compassion for suffering beings) and “the absolute body of the Buddha” (*dharmatā dharma-kāya*, the dharma-body of essential truth, ultimate reality empty of form). Putting the movement in these terms, the standpoint that makes contact only with the revealed God, or with the provisional body of the Buddha, is faith. For the standpoint of faith, God’s movement between the revealed God and the hidden God becomes the depth of God taken as an esoteric sacrament. Mysticism, on the contrary, takes up even this depth of God between the revealed God and the hidden God as an elevated place of the human subject’s movement of exiting language and then exiting into language. Hence, as we see in the case of Meister Eckhart, for mysticism the “language” at issue in exiting language includes even the word *of* God and the word that *is* God.

Actuality and Hollowness

It is possible for language to speak of “things” that are impossible. Language has the ability to say things that, in fact, cannot be the case, or things that are logical contradictions; and such things can be said not just accidentally but purposefully. Furthermore, such things can perhaps only be expressed in language. How is this so? To begin with, I would like to quote a poem I chanced upon in a magazine. It was written by a child living near the shores of Lake Nojiri in Nagano Prefecture and is entitled “Evening Glow.”

The sun sets between Mt Kurohime and Mt Myōkō;
 Just then an orange cloud
 Smoothly passes before my eyes.
 Carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along.
 I was studying at school—
 Is it watching that, I wonder?

The words of the fourth line, “Carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along,” are decisive in making this poem a poem. The first three lines introduce a certain mood, but the “matters of fact” in these lines are within the everyday experience of the world. But the fourth line—however naturally it might seem to “smoothly” flow from the first three lines—brings about a qualitative reversal. On the one hand, what naturally connects the fourth line to the first three lines is the continuity of the movement of the cloud, which goes from “smoothly passing before my eyes” to “carrying the day’s events.” On the other hand, the *qualitative reversal* is from the cloud that passes before my eyes to the cloud that carries me as it drifts along, that is to say, from the cloud that I watch to the cloud that watches me. Up through the third line, the poem is about the “matters” of the world that I see. The cloud that drifts along is also within my world. But when the fourth line says, “Carrying the day’s events,” I am among those events of the day. This “I” is also carried along by the cloud. I, too, am inside the cloud and am included in its movement. And yet, despite the reversal, the cloud is the same. The cloud that “I” see in the evening after a day full of studying and a variety of other activities, the cloud that “smoothly passes before my eyes,” this is the cloud that drifts along “carrying the day’s events.” It is not another cloud, but the quality of the cloud undergoes a change. There is a decisive change, and this qualitative conversion takes place right in the midst of looking at the cloud. What is the nature of this qualitative conversion, and what is taking place here with regard to the question of language?

“Carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along.” The poetic dimension is opened up decisively with this fourth line. By means of this verse all six lines, including the first three, become one poem. Although as a poem all six lines are

harmoniously linked together, the fourth line, which distinctively opens up the poetic dimension, is spoken in qualitatively different language. As we read the first three lines, we are able to describe to ourselves the “matters” expressed by its words. In reading the first three lines, through their words—that is to say, by passing through or, in fact, by passing through and going beyond their words—we make contact with the manifestation of these matters....

Here we find a basic function of language at work, one that is ordinary and yet fundamentally mysterious. Namely, language manifests matters (objects, events, states of affairs), and yet in doing so, it conceals itself behind the manifestation of these matters and is no longer seen as language. In disappearing as words, matters are manifested as the matters they are. It is in this way that words express and manifest matters. This is truly a wondrous operation of language. If upon meeting a friend I say, “Yesterday I went to Okayama and it was raining there,” surely this friend would not think that I was just saying this. He would hear me as speaking a “matter of fact.” It is precisely because language can operate like this that false or hollow speech is possible.

The fourth line of the poem is different. Although “the day’s events” and “the cloud drifts along” can each on their own be described as “matters” in the same way as the first three lines, when they are put together as “Carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along,” this is no longer the case. Even while “something” is conveyed here, it cannot be described like the “matters” of the first three lines.

This something is neither an abstraction nor a nullity. Even while evoking the preliminary images of “the day’s events” and “the cloud drifts along,” “Carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along” is not a mere matter of fact that can be described by passing through and going beyond language. The “thing” (or event or state of affairs) expressed by these words must presumably be seen as something that is only in language. Here, words do not disappear behind the manifestation of something as they manifest it; rather, they linger as words, maintaining this something within language. And yet “things” are not words. Some “thing” is manifested by words. In this sense, the “thing” said in the fourth line of the poem is something that can only be expressed in words, and indeed only in these words. Here is a peculiar “world of language” that can only be opened up by and in language. This world of language is qualitatively different from the linguistic world that we spoke of when we said that, for being-in-the-world, the world is over-layered with a linguistic world that stores up understandings of the world. Although the linguistic world is layered over the world, “Carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along” is not an affair within the world.

Let me restate the crucial points. (A) *Words show matters (objects, events, states of affairs within the world)*. When they do this, as matters become

manifest, words disappear as words. That is to say, when words express matters, matters are manifested in such a manner that they erase words as they become manifest as matters. In such cases, the matters manifested by language are “actual” matters. From this point of view, “actual” matters are not only the so-called actual matters of reality, but anything that could be or any event that could happen within the world, including hypothetical and fictional things. In this case, language operates in terms of the “actual.” Recall the opening lines of the poem:

The sun sets between Mt Kurohime and Mt Myōkō.
Just then an orange cloud
Smoothly passes before my eyes.

Even if colored by sentiment, these words manifest actual matters.

(B) *Words express “things” (or events or states of affairs).* When words do this, they do not disappear together with the appearance of this “thing”; on the contrary, the “thing” expressed exists only inside words (it is maintained only in words), and the appearance of the “thing” makes words stand out as words. I propose that we view the “things” expressed by words in such cases—in contrast to (A)’s *actual matters*, which depart from language in the fullness of their actuality—as *hollow things*. In this case, language operates in terms of the “hollow.” If we just take the line by itself, “Carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along,” it expresses this kind of hollow thing. Such a hollow thing can only be expressed with language and it exists only within language. And yet, it is not only language. It persists as some “thing.” Yet such “things” are unlike the matters that are manifested by the language of actuality; they are unlike matters which can be seen if one just looks at them. Even if in a sense they become visible by evoking provisional images, they are “things” that only exist in the element of language.

(Let me note in passing at this point that, while I am borrowing the terminology of “hollow” or “fictional” and “full” or “actual” from traditional Japanese literary theory, I am making relatively free use of these key words here in order to shed light on the question of language.)

The question is this: If we can speak in this way of actual matters and hollow things, what is the significance of the fact that language operates in these two forms? And the human beings who speak language, in what way or ways do they exist? In particular, how is it possible to say hollow things? And even granted that it is possible, why is it necessary to do so? In order to answer these questions, I would like to reflect further on the poem quoted above.

The fourth line, “Carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along,” expresses a hollow thing that exists only in language, and here a hollow world opens up. This hollow verse establishes the poetic dimension for the entire six-line poem.

Thus, this hollow world is not just qualitatively different from the actual world; it is also a hollow world that transcends and envelops the actual world. The natural world of matters like the cloud at sunset, as well as the human world of matters like studying at school, are all included in the “day’s events” that are “carried by the cloud as it drifts along.” The “day’s events” are the matters of the actual world. When the cloud carries these along, the actual matters, just as they are, are hollowed out into the openness that transcends and envelops the world. While the world is qualitatively converted into a kind of daydream, this does not mean that the day’s events were a mere dream, but rather that the day’s events are re-experienced as “things” that are in the world and at the same time in the openness of a hollow-expanse. It is a re-description of the world within a limitless openness, and in this manner also a description of this limitless openness. Of course, the limitless openness itself cannot be described. Insofar as it is described, it is a world. Insofar as things that cannot be in the actual world are naturally described in it, it is a hollow world; and yet, it is a hollow world in which, at the same time, the actual world is described.

In line with the ancient saying, “light and darkness make a pair,” we may say that hollowness and actuality make a pair. Here “things” are experienced and awakened to in terms of such a pairing of hollowness and actuality. In the fifth and sixth lines of the poem, the “I” becomes the focus for this hollow/actual pairing of things, and the six-line poem is completed. Although the entire poem is harmoniously unified, if we divide it up according to the content and nature of its words, we may say that the first three lines speak of “actual matters,” the fourth line speaks of “hollow things,” and the fifth and sixth lines speak of a pairing of hollowness and actuality. In this way it could be said that the true form of human existence in its entirety, that is, as existing within the twofold hollow-expanse/world, is expressed in the words of this poem. As realized in this poem, language not only expresses actual matters, it also hollows them out to express hollow things. Hence, language is indeed the seal of self-awareness of a human being’s actual existence and hollow-existence within a twofold hollow-expanse/world.

In elucidating the poem, we began with the qualitative difference between the actual matters of the first three lines and the hollow things of the fourth line, and then proceeded to the pairing of hollowness and actuality in the poem as a whole. Now, I would like to draw attention to the fact that this hollowness/actuality pairing is already there in the midst of the *seeing* taking place as “the sun sets, and a cloud passes before my eyes.” The hollowing out taking place here is not just the description of a linguistically thought-up falsehood (a factually hollow thing), nor is it an ideational abstraction; rather, in the very midst of the sensation of seeing, by forgetting myself while seeing, the limiting restrictions placed on this sensation by my ego are removed, allowing the sensation to reach

out toward a limitless place. Without altering the present sensation of seeing the sun set and the cloud passing by, the sensation extends outward and one has the vast sense of a limitless place. Thus, what one has a *sensation* of is spoken of as an actual matter, and what one has a *sense* of is spoken of as a hollow thing.

We might say that what Nishida Kitarō* calls the self-origination and self-unfolding of “pure experience” naturally proceeds to differentiate itself in terms of hollowness/actuality. What is crucial is the forgetting of the ego while seeing, that is to say, seeing by forgetting the ego. What is at stake here is not just the “‘nothingness’ of my ego” in the midst of seeing, but also the manifestation of an originary nothingness (hollow emptiness or hollow-expanse). Sensation passes through to this hollow-expanse and becomes sense, and then seeing takes place from there. This reversal of direction from “I see the cloud” to “the cloud sees me” comes about by means of forgetting the ego while seeing. Yet this is not simply a directional reversal between “me” and the cloud, nor does it become possible by this kind of simple reversal. Rather, by forgetting the ego, an exit out to an openness which transcends and envelops the relation between “I and the cloud” and “the cloud and I” takes place, and “I” am seen from there.

.....

Insofar as we exist in the manner of being-in-the-world, we are located within the world, and at the same time, we are thereby located within an invisible “limitless openness,” which is like a hollow-expanse in which the world is located. While actually existing in the world, at the same time we hollowly exist in the limitless openness in which the world is located. By means of language we, who are located in this twofold manner, come to awaken to our actual/hollow existence. We actually exist by means of language, and we hollowly exist in language. Language reveals the world and reflects the hollow-expanse. Language is essentially actual/hollow....

Language does not just express facts, that is, the “actual matters” of the world; it also manifests “hollow things.” It does not just expressively manifest actual matters; it also reflectively manifests hollow things. Such language harbors the potential to awaken the human subject from its inauthentic to its authentic manner of being. Authentically, the human subject is an actual/hollow existence that passes through the hollow-expanse/world in the manner of “I, in not being I, am I.” But for the most part, the human subject remains closed in on itself in the manner of “I am I.” Without sensing the invisible hollow-expanse, and thus without seeing the world as the hollow-expanse/world, but rather seeing it only as the world, the human subject remains secluded in a world that it distorts and makes over into “my world.” Against a way of being that is accustomed to matters within the world, that is, against a way of being which, in resting content with the linguistic world, in fact becomes closed in on itself

and allows meaning within this enclosure to then proliferate like an intoxicating addiction, against such a way of being, words that utter something non-meaningful, such as “a man crosses a bridge, and the bridge flows while the river does not,” have the power to deliver a shocking blow. In stronger terms, it is as if this linguistic world were being twisted and torn open to expose it to a different kind of air. Contravening the nihilistic desertification within the world that results from a toxic excess of meaning, such non-meaningful words stir up the world and, supplying it with fresh air, promote a regeneration of meaning. In any case, we can perhaps think of this in terms of what the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* sutra calls “sending away words by means of words.” This is not just an operation of extreme negation; at the same time, something is being revealed that could not be said with other words. It is a reflective manifestation. The non-meaningful delivers a shocking blow to the world that is only the world; but in the hollow-expanse/world it is also experienced as play.

Signs, Symbols, and Hollow Words

Let us reiterate what was said above regarding the operation of language that reveals the world and reflects the hollow-expanse:

(1) With its segmented organization, language reveals the phenomena within the world; it expresses and manifests each particular phenomenon and the relations between phenomena on each particular occasion. In this case, language consists of signs that determine meaning. In this context, language is a system of signs.

(2) But language does not end there. Even as a system of signs, the nature of this system is to be a kind of whole that can never be completely surveyed; and, at the same time, this whole is reflected in the mutual referentiality of its signs. Thus, language reveals phenomena within the world as reflecting the whole of the world. That is to say, through revealing phenomena within the world, language reveals the totality of the world embedded in these phenomena. Moreover, language reveals this totality as something that cannot be completely surveyed and yet carries the sense of transcending the world. This totality of the world is also the totality in which the human subject is located, and both this totality and that subjectivity are reflected in language as that which cannot be determined. In this case, words are symbols; and meaning has a depth that includes the difference in level between individuality or particularity and totality. What we call “narratives” originally narrate this kind of world.

(3) But there is still more. Language not only symbolically reveals the totality of the world as located within the limitless openness of the hollow-expanse. It also reflects this limitless openness that transcends and envelops the world, and it does so by means of the egoless self-awakening of the human subject who

opens up to this openness. In passing through the linguistic world that is layered over the world, or in interrupting its worldly references, language reflects the limitless openness. Although language cannot reveal the hollow-expanse itself, it can reflect it by way of describing a kind of virtual world within the hollow-expanse that reflects it. This virtual world of language that reflects the hollow-expanse is semitransparent like a rainbow, and like a mirror image is an inverse world. For example, “carrying the day’s events, the cloud drifts along,” or “the bridge flows and the water does not.” Words of this nature differ even from symbolic words, and I suggest we call them “hollow words.” (What we call “fantasies” originally describe this world of the hollow-expanse.)

We may simplify all of this as follows. Language reveals things. When this happens, (1) words are signs, and language is a system of signs that reveal beings (the various beings and their specific relations). (2) Insofar as these beings are located within a totality of beings, words, while revealing beings, are symbols that reflect being as a whole or the whole of being. (3) While revealing beings and while reflecting being as a whole, words are “hollow words” that reflectively expose the hollow-expanse or ‘absolute nothingness’ in which being as a whole is located.

Thus, language consists of a dynamic relation between these three states, which we might call three levels of meaning, allowing that the third level is non-meaningful. These three states—each with its own light and shadows—are dynamically interrelated, and language operates in this threefold manner of signs, symbols, and hollow words. When language is fully and completely spoken, one goes back and forth between all three levels, even if one may remain self-consciously at a certain level for a while. What often happens, in fact, is that one or the other level gets closed off, or one level gets mistaken for another, and this leads to a distortion of human existence. The existential task is, then, to correct such distortions.

I consider this matter of the three levels important, and to explain it further, I would like to set up an analogy by borrowing terms from the western tradition. When something is illuminated by the light of the moon, which in turn receives its light from the sun, (a) the sun and the moon are both things of the natural world (they are within the world); (b) the sun and the moon are both, as they were for Saint Francis, things of God revealed by the glory of His “divine light”; (c) this divine light is a rainbow over an absolute nothing or what Meister Eckhart calls “the nothing of the godhead (the essence of God).” In this way we can propose the three levels of world, God, and the nothing of the godhead, and distinguish three types of language spoken at these levels. We can further note how the human subject passes through these three levels: (a) as a human being who is a being-in-the-world; (b) as a child of God; and (c) as one who is no-one—that is to say, as what Eckhart meant when he said, “I am neither God

nor creature,” or as what Hisamatsu Shin’ichi* called “*der Nichts*,” “the no-one.” Putting the problem of language in medieval terms, the logic of analogy is used to relate to God from the world, while the breakthrough from God to the nothing of the godhead takes place by way of negative theology.

Let us return to our poem:

The sun sets between Mt Kurohime and Mt Myōkō;
Just then an orange cloud
Smoothly passes before my eyes.

If we take these words by themselves, they can be understood as signs showing certain phenomena. But in the poem they become symbols which, by means of those phenomena, reveal nature along with an “I” in nature. This is why these first three lines alone already convey a certain poetic sentiment. The reason behind this symbolic sense—namely that nature and the “I” are located within a limitless openness, a hollow-expanse—is pronounced in the fourth line, which taken on its own consists of hollow words. The fifth and sixth lines then repeat the hollow-expanse and the “I” in the present. In its entirety this poem reveals all that can be said by language, and it reveals the truth of the human being who says it in this way.

I study at school. The actual matters within the world are properly engaged in. Yet the life of the “I” does not consist in this alone. The sun sets between Mt Kurohime and Mt Myōkō, an orange cloud passes by, and I am attentively watching it. Then, in the midst of this,

Carrying the day’s events,
the cloud drifts along

—and thus do I grasp the truth of existing in a world that is located within a hollow-expanse. In this way, while properly being within the world, the sublimity of that which transcends and envelops the world is manifested naturally.

These three different aspects of the nature of language are not only to be found in poetry; they also appear in prose, insofar as it too is language. As an example of this, I would like to cite a passage from Nishitani Keiji’s* essay, “The Luminous Scenery of Okunoto,” where he reminisces on the hometown of his youth.

On the other side of the beach the tranquil ocean opened out, and the horizon could be seen off in the distance. There was something very pure about the vast beach.... On it there were many small shellfish, and I used to go along with others to collect them. The shells were transparently thin and pink colored; they were as beautiful as rubies, but were extremely fragile and so without the hardness of a precious stone. Even as they lay there on the sand, they had a noble purity about them that made them seem as if they were nowhere, as if

they were something not of this earth. And the seashore itself had a clarified purity about it that made it, too, seem somehow not of this earth. This image of this seashore, together with the memory of me myself collecting shellfish there, were etched deep into my young heart and mind. [NKC 21: 155–6]

This essay was written by Nishitani when he was over seventy years old. It was not just the beauty of nature that left this lifelong impression on him as a young boy. There was more at work than simply a beautiful “actuality” within the world. Peering through and beyond this beauty, Nishitani repeatedly uses expressions like “as if they were nowhere” or “as if they were something not of this earth.” These words are a reflection of the hollow-expanse/world. This is why the essay frequently speaks of “luminous scenery.” The invisible hollow-expanse becomes a kind of aureole that soaks into the scene and transforms it. Thus he speaks of “the luminous scenery of the seashore” and “luminous scenery that calls to mind a phrase from an ancient Chinese poet, ‘the mountain resembles antiquity in its quietude.’” He explains:

In Chinese legends there are visions of fairy-tale lands like Mt Penglai and Taoyuanxiang where hermit sages and wizards dwell. Similar mythical visions can be found in ancient Greece and elsewhere. In the whole luminous scenery of the seashore, with its mountains, ocean, and sky, I felt as if such a visionary land had suddenly manifested itself and become real. [NKC 21: 157]

This is not just a typical scenic view; it is something that one feels the need to call “luminous scenery.” And one becomes clearly aware of this with language, that is to say, in writing and in saying words. On the one hand, there is a scenic view (which can become a “scene” where human artifice is added to the natural landscape); and on the other hand, there is luminous scenery (which is untouched by human hands). In this way scenic-view/luminous-scenery becomes another way of indicating the twofold world.

When the blank margins and spaces between the lines of the text of the world become transparent, showing through to the hollow-expanse, there are a variety of ways in which it is possible for this hollow-expanse to come to be reflected in the dimension of the world. What discloses the originally invisible twofoldness of the world/hollow-expanse as a visible twofoldness within the world is not limited to something specific. In principle everything has the potential to do this in conjunction with the modulation of the human subject as being-in-the-world, insofar as every entity is in truth located within the twofold world. In the child’s poem it was the cloud; in Nishitani’s essay it was the shellfish. Listening to Nishitani reminisce in his seventies is to see how a deep impression left on a young heart and mind can become the undertone of a view of life and the world, an undertone that continues to resonate long thereafter.

The Language of Zen

In the Zen tradition the following words from a dharma talk by Master Qingyuan Weixin have been passed down.

An old monk said: Thirty years ago, before I began practicing Zen, if I saw a mountain I thought, this is a mountain; and if I saw water I thought, this is water. Later, when under the guidance of a wise master I reached an initial stage of insight: if I saw a mountain I thought, this is not a mountain; and if I saw water I thought, this is not water. Now that I have attained the ultimate resting abode, I resort back to where I was before: if I see a mountain I think, this is just a mountain; and if I see water I think, this is just water.

A mountain is a mountain; a mountain is not a mountain; a mountain is a mountain. (1) The first instance of “a mountain is a mountain” is a matter within the world; it is a “mountain” for a being-in-the-world who is only within the world. The word that indicates this mountain operates as a sign. (2) Yet the world, as a world, is located within the hollow-expanse. Because this is true of the world, being-in-the-world must open up to the hollow-expanse. In opening up to the hollow-expanse, matters within the world are temporarily negated. The mountain that only existed within the world is negated out toward the hollow-expanse. Hence, in the second instance, “the mountain is not a mountain.” The “not” operates here, it could be said, as a hollow word that reflects the hollow-expanse. (3) Together with the opening up of the hollow-expanse, the true countenance of the world located within the hollow-expanse is actualized. And in this truly actual world, that is, in the hollow-expanse/world, it is revealed that “the mountain is a mountain.” This is the true and actual mountain. In Buddhist terms, we may call the language of this third instance, where one says “the mountain is a mountain,” “just-so words,” or “suchness¹-words.”

When spoken as signs, the words “the mountain is a mountain” or “the water is water” refer to separate things (so that when one says “mountain,” this means that it is not water). But in the case of suchness words, it is not just the “thing” mountain that is revealed; for in this case just saying “the mountain is a mountain” reveals both the true actuality of the whole of being, and at the same time, the true actuality of the subject who does the saying. The second and third instances are linked together in such a way that, as can be seen in many examples from the *Zenrinkushū*,¹⁹ hollow words and suchness words overturn one another. For example, the phrase “willows are green and flowers are red,” although it has also become something of a worldly platitude, was originally a

19. [A collection of Zen sayings compiled in 1688. The passages cited here can be found in Victor Sōgen HORI 2003, 173 and 284.]

suchness word; and its reversal, “willows are not green and flowers are not red,” is spoken as a hollow word.

The mountain revealed by the suchness word of the third instance is not the mountain of the first instance of “the mountain is a mountain”; it is rather a mountain that enfolds the entire series: the mountain is a mountain, the mountain is not a mountain, the mountain is a mountain. In being inverted and repeated, it gets reopened, such that it can be said that “the mountain is a mountain in not being a mountain, therefore (in this way) the mountain is a mountain.” This is what Suzuki Daisetsu* calls a “logic of *‘soku-hi’*” or affirmation-in-negation. Here, “the mountain is not a mountain” deals a severe blow of negation against one’s stagnating attachment to the first “the mountain is a mountain.” At the same time, this is taken as play for the suchness words of the final “the mountain is a mountain,” which playfully unfold into view what was enfolded in the hollow words. As demonstrated in many Zen sayings, however, when what has been enfolded is once again opened up, it is not expressed via the rational route of the logic of affirmation-in-negation, but rather the passage through the affirmation-in-negation remains enfolded in poetic language. This poetic language is permeated by the sense of a heterogeneous space that has opened up so as to include a different level. It is a play of true actuality. Here are four examples:

Endless mountains into the distance,
layers upon layers of green.
Yellow leaves turn in the sky;
for whose sake are they falling?
In planting a flower on a rock,
one’s life too becomes spring.
I loaded my empty boat full of moonlight
and came home.

In the last verse, the actual fact—a boat goes out to fish and, having caught nothing, goes back to shore empty in the moonlight—is hollowed out into emptiness, and in this emptiness the boat goes home filled with the moonlight. Empty and yet filled with the moonlight. By comparison, even the most bountiful catch of fish leaves one feeling empty. The hollow/actual “thing” that is really being expressed by the words of this verse is this: whether one catches or does not catch fish, in true emptiness—that is, emptiness in the sense used by Dōgen* when he speaks of “returning empty handed”—one returns full. Being “empty” indeed goes along with “being filled with the moonlight.” “Empty” indicates an obversion toward the hollow. The actual matters within the world, while being hollowed out toward the hollow-expanse within which the world

is located, are reflected back toward the world; and as this return reflection they become these words: “I loaded my empty boat full of moonlight and came home.” These words express well the pairing of hollowness and actuality.

As we have seen, from a statement such as “the mountain is a mountain” up to and including poetry, language operates so as to reveal things. But this is not an automatic operation. As in Qingyuan’s example—“before I began practicing Zen,” “when under the guidance of a wise master I reached an initial stage of insight,” “now that I have attained the ultimate resting abode”—language operates as the dynamic and interlinked existential course of a person’s life. A quote from the Zen tradition was used to indicate this existential course of life, but this is not just about Zen. It concerns human being as such....

My reason for emphasizing the “hollowness” or hollowing-out operation of language is that it has so far received little attention. But the true operation of language, in connection with the fact that the human subject is located in the invisible twofold world, is always that of a pairing of hollowness and actuality. The true operation of language is a speaking that goes back and forth between the dynamically interconnected moments of “the mountain is a mountain” (actual matter of fact), “the mountain is not a mountain” (hollow thing), and “the mountain is a mountain” (hollow/actual thing).

Given the distortions to which human subjectivity inclines, this pairing of hollowness and actuality is extremely difficult. As Miyazawa Kenji²⁰ says, “there are no true words here.” For the most part, the hollowness of language even serves to increase the danger of language. Even though the true actuality of the whole of existence is made possible by this twofold-being-in-the-world as hollow/actual existence, it can also happen, as the hollowness and hollowing-out operation of language rarefy the actuality of human existence, that the hollowness of language gets used arbitrarily. As the old saying aptly puts it, the true actuality of human being is that of “playing in hollowness while abiding in actuality.” In other words, insofar as one is engaged in the world of actuality, playing at the same time in the world of hollowness is the true way of being. But with the distortion of human subjectivity, the hollowness of language all too easily breaks away from its actuality. Rather than “playing in hollowness while abiding in actuality,” one “toys with actuality while abiding in hollowness.” Words can then be used arbitrarily to say just about anything. Particularly in our day and age, the danger of language being taken in this direction seems to be growing, due to the central role the media has come to play in contemporary society. The dismantling of reality and its glitzy reconstruction (in the sense of

20. [Miyazawa Kenji (1896–1933) was as a celebrated poet and author of children’s stories known for their celebration of the simple life and love of nature.]

hollow embellishment) in and through the media is progressing at an accelerated rate. Nevertheless, actuality is not the proper criterion for judgment here. How untrue, after all, is a world of actuality alone where hollowness has been forgotten. How rampant in the so-called real world of actual society are hollow words spoken as lies. The criterion should rather always be “hollowness/actuality” or “actuality/hollowness.” For when a balance of actuality and hollowness has not been established as the rule, distinctive difficulties and dangers arise for human existence.

In any event, while the stress may be placed on the actual or on the hollow, depending on the matter at hand, in truth, language operates in the manner of hollowness/actuality. When the two are separated in such a way that language functions only in one or the other, language itself becomes something dangerous. When language speaks only in terms of actuality, there is a danger of rigidifying experience. When language speaks only in terms of hollowness, there is a danger of rarefying experience. In the one, reality gets overly determined by how it is spoken of; in the other, reality evaporates through language. In contrast to these one-sided operations, the child’s poem quoted above, and—even if they are explanatory rather than poetic—Qingyuan’s words, “the mountain is a mountain,” “the mountain is not a mountain,” “the mountain is a mountain,” may be called the language of true actuality. These words of true actuality beckon us to the language of true actuality. When will we become capable of listening?

[BWD]

HASE Shōtō 長谷正當 (1937–)

After completing his doctoral studies at Kyoto University in 1965, Hase Shōtō took up a teaching post at Kyoto Industrial University and for ten years threw himself into the study of French spiritualism from the eighteenth century on, centering on figures like Maine de Biran, Félix Ravaisson-Mollien, Jules Lachelier, Henri Bergson, Maurice Blondel, and Gabriel Marcel. In 1975 he moved to Kyoto University, where he taught until his retirement in 2000. Since then, his interest in French philosophy has been concentrated on Paul Ricoeur, Simone Weil, and Emmanuel Levinas, whom he sought to relate to his ongoing research into the writings of Shinran* as well as to the thinking of the Kyoto School philosophers Nishida Kitarō*, Tanabe Hajime*, Nishitani Keiji*, and Takeuchi Yoshinori*.

Gradually this wide range of ideas came to focus on what Hase calls a “hermeneutics of the self,” a position spelled out in a 1987 book entitled *Symbols and Imagination*. Under the influence of Ricoeur, Levinas, and Nishida, he tried to shift thinking about the “self” from its customary locus in the subjective case to the accusative—from *je* to *soi*—and to emphasize its role as a grammatical predicate rather than as a subject. This in turn led him to rethink the place of “desire” that lies latent in the ground of the self, and from there to take up the question of religious transcendence in its connection with desire. These ideas were gathered in two major works, *The Philosophy of Desire* and *The Reflection of Infinity in Mind*. As the following excerpt will show, Hase adopts the two ideas of desire and image as mediators to define the relationship between the finite and the infinite, between the deep but concrete experience of the religious person and the transcendent activity of ‘Amida’ Buddha.

[JWH]

GRIEF AND RELIGIOSITY

HASE Shōtō, 2003, 146–52

The mystery of pain and evil lies in the awakening they prompt within us and the great eruption of life they bring about. This mystery of encountering this kind of affirmation in negation is also present to us in familiar feelings. Pathos is one such feeling. Indeed, in “grief” we are able to come into contact with a transcendent dimension opening up in the inner recesses of the existence of the self. Nishida Kitarō* had a profound grasp on the unique quality of such pathos.

The starting point of Nishida’s philosophy, he tells us, was not wonder but grief. Further, he claims that grief has also to be seen as the starting point of

religion: no one who has been gripped by profound grief can fail to feel religiosity well up from the bottom of their minds and hearts. His famous stipulation of religion as a “spiritual reality” does not mean simply that it is not a speculative, schematic construction. Calling it a spiritual reality is meant to point to the fact of religiosity bursting forth into the ‘mind’ through grief—an eruption of life of infinite depth.

How did Nishida understand grief? In the preface to the book of a friend who had lost a young child, Nishida calls to mind the pain he himself experienced at the death of someone close to him, words often cited as an expression of Nishida’s deep feelings:

When my child died, the depth of my grief was too much to bear.... One might think that death is, after all, a part of all our lives, young and old alike, that one’s own child is not the only one to have died, and that therefore there is nothing left in reason to be sad about. As ordinary and everyday though our sadness may be, it is still sadness; as natural as it is for people to be hungry and thirsty, hunger and thirst are still what they are. People tell us to resign ourselves and to forget, that nothing we say can bring back the dead. Such talk is hard for a parent to bear. It is a grace of nature that time heals all wounds, and in one sense this is probably important, but in another sense it is mere hardness of heart. Not wanting to forget, wanting to leave a memorial or at least to remember for the rest of one’s life—this is what it means to be a parent. Way back when, you and I sat with our desks side by side and read Washington Irving’s *Sketch Book*. There was something there about how we want to forget other things that pain and wound the heart, but when it comes to the wound of bereavement, even though we try to hide it from others, we want to embrace the wound and nurse it in our hearts. That seems especially fitting here. There is at least some solace and attention towards the one who has died that comes at those times when something moves us to remember. This sorrow may indeed be painful, but it is a pain that a parent has no wish to go away. (NKZ 1: 330–1)

It is worth noting the contradictory elements in what Nishida has to say here concerning the feelings of grief. Grief is pain and at the same time something is at work to heal the pain. We might call it something transcendent within grief itself, a power to heal pain. Nishida notes that in response to the urging of others to forget quickly since nothing can be done to bring back a dead child, the parent has no wish for the pain to go away. Within the very pain of having lost a child there is at the same time a sense of something that binds parent and child: the love of a parent for a child. The truth of what it means to be a parent, the grief is a function of the pain. Because the pure love of a child is visible in grief, the wound of loss is consoled in grief. This is the healing power of grief.

Two reciprocal elements are present simultaneously in grief: the eternal loss

of a child and the living actuality of the child who has been forever lost. There is a contradictory situation of separation and connection. What is unique to the feeling of grief is that in one and the same sentiment the affliction of loss is fused with the calm of presence, the wound with the healing. Nishida understood religiosity to contain this kind of contradictory state, referring to it in his last essay on religion with the notion of 'inverse correlation'. To express this two-sided relation of the feeling of grief, we may call on the phrase of Daitō Kokushi that Nishida was fond of citing: "separated for an eternity yet not separated for an instant." At the time he wrote his preface, Nishida had not yet grasped conceptually the contradiction implied in grief, but that very failure to conceptualize may be seen as a concession to the richness of the feeling. Logical, conceptual language is prone to skip superficially over the matter rather than enter into the depths of the situation. If there is any logic at work there, it is a "logic of the heart" too deep to be visible or manipulated conceptually. Before we think in terms of concepts, we need first to pay attention to the invisible laws at work in the depths of our feelings.

As we saw earlier, grief is inseparable from pain, but there is something at work there that transcends pain. Hence grief is a complicated feeling full of contradictory elements, and in this sense it may be called a "complex." Normally we think of a complex as a turning of feelings inwards in a restricting, self-enclosed pathos, but grief is liberating. It works towards dissolving the self-enclosure of the complex and releasing the hold that it has on the mind. A complex with this liberating quality can be named a religious sentiment.

.....

A wound to the human body arouses the activity of a greater life force to heal the wound. By awakening this kind of life force from the very source of life, the wound is healed naturally. This must be all the more true in the case of wounds to the mind and heart. Religiosity—the religious mind and heart—is something "pure," "good," and "consummate." In a word, it is a mind born from the inner recesses of the heart and directed to what we may call the 'Tathāgata'. This does not mean that one's own mind is pure and undefiled. Because the mind gets wounded and suffers pain, what heals it is something pure and undefiled that is born in the depths of the mind from a transcending height. The pure and undefiled is something of unfathomable depth and unlimited expanse—something 'empty'. This is the condition of the Tathāgata. Religiosity shows to one the infliction of wounds that none but the undefiled mind of the Tathāgata can heal.

Evil that is inflicted on people from without in the form of wounds creates the possibility of self-healing by generating in the human mind an aspiration to the good. But for persons in whom the wholeness of the soul has been broken by virtue of the wound itself, there must be a highest good, a supreme good,

a completely undefiled mind. The reason for the healing power of grief is that something of this purity has entered into it. The undefiled mind born from the depths of the heart and mind to heal it is “religiosity.” When Nishida remarked that in persons who had met with extreme unhappiness and grief, religiosity would invariably simmer and erupt from the bottom of their minds and hearts, what he understood by religiosity was the undefiled mind of the Tathāgata flowing in the depths of grief as a healing force for such a troubled mind. This is what he meant when he said that “grief is enough to comfort even a lonely death” (NKZ 1: 333).

[JWH]

DESIRE AND FAITH

HASE Shōtō, 2003, 208–19, 229

There are not a few philosophers who understand the essence of the human as *desire* and pursue questions of philosophy and religion with such a grasp of the human as the point of reference. One thinks of Plato, Spinoza, Hegel, and Freud as representative examples.

.....

In acknowledging these philosophers as having identified the essence and starting point of the human in desire, I have no intention of reducing all of human activity without remainder to sense desire. It is rather to get at the real foundation of a transcendent demand at work in human beings by way of desire. The latent, underlying concern that lies in the background of their theories is the attempt to understand transcendent intentionality and the grounding in a transcendent principle that fulfills it as the most immediate and innermost point of the human....

In desire human beings are linked to sensible nature, but at a more elemental level, sensible nature is rooted in a world of freedom that transcends sense desire, the world of the transcendent. For that reason, to grasp human beings as desire does not mean to see humans as entities that function simply through the working of sensible, egoistic, blind impulses, as entities ruled by delusions and passions. In reality, it is hard to deny the fact that most human desire takes the form of just such egoistic passions, but this is no more than the surface of desire. In its ground, desire transcends such mere sensible, egoistic appearances and is oriented towards the good and the infinite. What appears as an infinite and unbounded impulse and pathos is also a quest for something unrestricted in the ground of desire, for something good. To grasp the totality of desire in its full sweep, we cannot begin from desires that cloud this reality. These are distortions

of desire, no more than corrupt and constricted parts of a greater whole. Rather, we need to see this desire that covers over the truth of desire as an inverted and corrupted form of the desire for the good at work in its ground, and then begin to understand desire from that elemental desire for the good.

.....

The true object of desire—or the transcendent dimension to which desire is connected at its ground—is normally hidden from us. In our everyday world desire sinks to the bottom of the unconscious, veiled by its various objects so that we are incapable of recognizing it for what it is. But it is not always so covered and hidden. It can erupt into conscious awareness, sometimes by slow degrees, sometimes abruptly. Desire appears in consciousness from the depths of the unconscious when the close bond between desire and its objects is broken and desire is left on its own without any object. The transcendent dimension of desire appears within consciousness through the breach between desire and its objects. This disconnection of desire from its objects is occasioned by some sort of negative experience.

Anxiety is one such case. In anxiety the fixed and close connections between desire and its object are broken and 'nothingness' opens up at the bottom of our being. But anxiety does not end with a simple negative experience. The appearance of the world as we had become accustomed to it breaks down and at the same time a voice calls out, echoing from the bottom of nothingness. The call issues from the bottom of elemental desire, hidden in the self. Heidegger refers to it as the voice of conscience that makes itself heard from out of the depths of the nothingness of anxiety in order to call the self to authentic existence. We may refer to what appears here as the transcendent dimension latent in the ground of desire. There is no need, therefore, to eliminate all anxiety or compensate for it. By enduring anxiety and discovering in it the nothingness that opens up at the bottom of the self, something opens up at the bottom of the self that makes it possible to transcend nothingness. When that happens, anxiety becomes the path to transcendence.

Hope is another of those privileged situations in which the transcendent dimension of desire opens up. As with anxiety, hope is occasioned by the plight of a subject whose existence is being threatened. But what we have to note about hope is that even though it is born in travail, it has the power to find its way through the circumstances of its birth to open a horizon that rises above them. Such power distinguishes hope from simple sense desires and wants. In time of travail all sorts of sense desires are either crushed or they close an eye to reality and get lost in fantasies and delusions. In contrast, hope places itself squarely within the distress and, without closing an eye to it, opens a dimension beyond the travail. This shows hope breaking through the appearances of inverted desire to expose the transcendent dimension of desire at its ground; it

shows hope appearing where the transcendent dimension of desire is manifest in human consciousness. For this reason, hope is accompanied by a kind of selflessness and peacefulness, a humility and feeling of freedom that is not had in desire....

Desire is bound to the egoity of “I myself” which, when faced head on with its own negation, is thrown into fear and a paralysis of the will. In hope, however, this “narrow I myself” is superseded to open the transcendent dimension latent in the ground of desire. This is where the world of freedom lies. In desire I am attached to my own organic life; in hope, on the contrary, my thoughts are moved toward that which lies beyond the mere survival instincts of the self. That is to say, in hope I am not closed within “I myself” but belong to a higher order or spiritual purpose that surpasses mere life. As Gabriel Marcel says, in hope “I” am opened to “us.” This is why he speaks of a “mysterious light” that resounds through the core of hope, a light through which hope, though caught in the thick of travail and tempted to despair, opens a path that leads one beyond.... He writes:

Hope consists in affirming that within being, beyond everything that is given..., there is a mysterious principle that is complicit with me, that cannot but wish what I wish for, at least if what I wish for indeed deserves to be wished for and is in fact wished for with all my being.²¹

This is none other than the affirmation in faith of the “mysterious principle beyond everything that is given” that wishes for and affirms what the self desires at its ground. In affirming the transcendent principle at work in the elemental desire of the self and bringing it to awareness, the self’s desire is truly fulfilled and achieved. This is how things are with faith.

This sort of transcendent principle at work in the ground of desire is what ‘Pure Land’ Buddhist teaching has understood as “the vow of ‘Dharmākara’” or “the mind of desire of Tathāgata ‘Amida’,” which is also a “mysterious principle beyond everything that is given, which favors us and affirms its desire of what we desire.” Only when this mind of desire is recognized at the ground of the self’s desire can the self’s desire be fulfilled and achieved. This is what Pure Land Buddhism explains as faith.

.....

Faith means that when the *quest* for transcendent reality becomes one with the *concern* and *love* for that reality, a bond is created between the human and transcendent reality. This bond is confirmed in the acceptance of the good

21. Gabriel Marcel, *Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique* (Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1949), 68–9.

from transcendent reality. The point here is that to know transcendent reality is to know that bond. Put the other way around, in that bond—that is, in faith—transcendent reality can be said to be known. Or in other words, faith does not consist in the human activity of grasping transcendent reality, but in the fact that the working of transcending reality is known and accepted. What is important is that human beings possess that bond within themselves. This is what makes the human worthy of respect. As Simone Weil says, those who indeed have respect for the human, whatever their particular beliefs, in fact know transcendent reality; those who do not in fact feel such respect, however much they profess to have faith, lack affinity to that reality.

[JWH]

ŌHASHI Ryōsuke 大橋良介 (1944–)

After completing undergraduate studies at Kyoto University in 1969, Ōhashi Ryōsuke traveled to Germany where he entered the graduate program in philosophy at the University of Munich, receiving a doctorate in 1974 with a thesis on Schelling and Heidegger. He returned to take up a university post in Japan and to begin work on a major study of Hegelian logic, which he submitted for *Habilitation* at the University of Würzburg in 1983. His aim of locating a point of encounter for philosophies East and West was influenced by his study abroad and by the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō*—in particular, the latter’s logic of ‘place’—which he later sought to relate to advances in contemporary continental philosophy. Drawing on his wide contacts in Europe, Ōhashi coordinated the German translations of key texts of the Kyoto School in 1990, the first such anthology to appear in any western language. In addition to translating works by western scholars into Japanese, he has also published original works in German and Japanese on the culture and aesthetics of Japan.

Ōhashi’s interests in Dōgen* as a further point of philosophical contact is reflected in his doctoral and habilitation theses as well as in his collaboration in a new German translation of selected chapters of his *Shōbōgenzō*. In recent years he has focused on developing what he calls a “phenomenoetics” of the Buddhist idea of ‘compassion’ as a bridge between the philosophical worlds of Japan and Europe. Given what he sees as the failure of Kyoto School philosophy to treat Buddhist compassion as thoroughly as it does Buddhist wisdom, he has tried to bring that tradition to bear on questions raised, but not adequately treated, by European phenomenology. The excerpts that follow reflect both the wide range of learning that Ōhashi brings to his project as well as the creative manner in which he has inherited the thinking of his predecessors in Kyoto. → See also pages 1192–4.

[JWH]

A PHENOMENOETICS OF COMPASSION

ŌHASHI Ryōsuke 1998, 7–12; 2005, 11–13, 15; 2009, 29, 39, 44–9

My basic idea of ‘compassion’ is borrowed from ‘Mahayana’ Buddhism, which is not to say that I have taken it over in its full doctrinal context. My intention is rather to assume the standpoint that Nishitani Keiji* adapted in employing the notion of ‘emptiness’. Regarding his treatment of Buddhist ideas, he writes:

Removed from the frame of their traditional conceptual determinations, therefore, they have been used rather freely and on occasion—although this

is not pointed out in every case—introduced to suggest correlations with concepts of contemporary philosophy. From the viewpoint of traditional conceptual determination, this way of using terminology may seem somewhat careless and, at times, ambiguous.²²

In Buddhist terminology, compassion refers to the ‘mind’ of the buddhas and ‘bodhisattvas’ who take pity on the suffering of sentient beings and seek to alleviate it. Removed from that particular context, the idea surfaces first of all in questions having to do with the “other.” In terms of Buddhist experience, sentient beings and ‘dharma’s’ are both essentially “empty.” To turn one’s mind and heart to an “other” from this kind of bottomless ground is not *sympathy* extended from a position of superiority or for moral reasons. The other must also be empty in its essential nature. The *Kyōgyōshinshō* reiterates the point: “The bodhisattva, in observing sentient beings, sees that in the final analysis they are nowhere to be found” [IV, 17]. This kind of experience may be no more than a fleeting glance, something seen in a flash, but it leads us to ask if it might not be possible to develop a phenomenological theory of the other that traditional phenomenology is hard pressed to reach given that it takes ego-consciousness as the all but self-evident starting point.

If the disclosure of the “other” is inextricably linked to our own “self,” we may expand a bit on the meaning of disclosing the self. The “self” cannot be grasped through reflective knowledge. The self that is objectified in the act of reflection is a *known self* but not a *knowing self*. The self is pushed away in reflective knowing. This is not to say that by nature the self is simply unknowable. We may compare it to a headstream, which is only visible in the flow of a stream. So, too, the headstream of the self that is beyond the grasp of reflections should, in fact, make itself manifest as one with the existence of the self in an acting intuition that breaks through reflective knowledge. As the saying goes, “even after reaching the headstream, the water keeps flowing.” The headstream that can be “reached” is not the real headstream, whose nature is to gush and flow.

So it is with the self that cannot be seen as an object or a substance, but is always manifest within actual reality itself. It needs to be backed up by an experience of the non-objectifiable self and a view of the other *qua* other. In this way the fundamental disclosure of self and other can be designated with the same term—compassion. Clearly this entails an inexhaustible plurality of forms of sensitivity and of manifestations of moods and feelings.

Now, “other” does not refer to anything in the singular but to the innumerable entities that form a “world” through coexistence and coactivity. The world of the other is always and ever the actual world. The disclosure of the other *is* the

22. NISHITANI Keiji 1982, XLIX.

disclosure of the world. This is the third meaning of compassion. In Buddhism this world is also empty. Emptiness is not some dogma imposed from above. It is more like a beam of light that has turned on the ground of traditional notions of ontology, obliging us to rethink them. When ideas like substance, infinity, and creation are brought head to head with the experience of “emptiness,” they need to return to the fundamentals, there to break through the limitations of traditional ontology.

In this way compassion surfaces as a disclosure of self, other, and world. If we delve deeply into the kind of disclosure we have just described, we would in effect be engaged in a “phenomenology of compassion” for self, others, and world.

Here, however, I will use the term “phenomenoetics” rather than “phenomenology.” The choice is a result of giving some thought to the fundamental character of phenomenology. As Husserl insisted, phenomenology must always remain *strenge Wissenschaft*, “strict science.” At the same time, it should entertain a fundamental intuition that turns the tables on “science” to confront questions from life and the world—the foundations of all science—and to that extent supersede science from within. The “seeing” or *noesis* involved in this kind of fundamental intuition is an act that precedes its objectification as “reason” or *logos*. What I am calling phenomenoetics is thus already to be found in the inner recesses of phenomenology. Tanabe Hajime’s* idea of “metanoetics” may come to mind here, but his was a *meta-* project, an attempt to go beyond *noesis*. My focus is rather on understanding the fundamental intuition of a *phenomenon* under the rubric of “intuition” or *aesthesis* in its deeper sense of the “seeing” or *noesis*.

Another reason for preferring the term “phenomenoetics” to develop this kind of *noesis* and correlate it to *logos* is that I have in mind the “theory” of Mahayana as a development of the sermons of the Buddha laid out in the sutras. Buddhist theory was not developed along the lines of objective, scientific cognition, but was passed on as “teachings” that in turn became doctrine or dogmatics. One problem is that, from a philosophical point of view, Mahayana Buddhist theory got stuck in a closed system of dogmatics and did not develop into an open philosophy. Still, its theory was able to accommodate an “intuition” more fundamental than the theoretical approach that objectified things and made them into its subject matter. It intuits phenomena or *forms*, just as they are, to be *empty*.

This intuition of emptiness is not knowledge or science, but an awakening to existence as it is lived by the self. In this sense, Mahayana’s theory has the character of a phenomenoetics that precedes and grounds phenomenology. The idea of a phenomenoetics of compassion is to shed light on the awakening implied in Mahayana Buddhist “theory.”

Compassion as Common Sense

Let us begin our consideration of compassion with the idea of “sensitivity” as it is generally explained in the idea of “common sense.” Aristotle was the first to draw attention to this idea of sense in his notion of κοινή αἴσθησις as a general quality common to the five senses. If we liken the five senses to the five fingers, what Aristotle calls the “common sense” would correspond to the palm of the hand. This is particularly striking in the Japanese word for “palm,” *tanagokoro*—literally, the “mind” or “heart” of the hand, which coincides with Aristotle’s suggestion that the common sense contains the level of mind and intellect.

In contrast to Aristotle’s use of the term, the ancient Romans referred to the *sensus communis* as a sense that people held in common, much the same as we speak of “common sense” today. The reference to commonality here is to groupings like a race, a people, or a gender, to which Vico would later supply a historical orientation. In addition to the social level that the term implied, it was deepened to include the aspect of “taste.” Kant referred to this *Geschmacksurteil* as a *sensus communis aestheticus*, by which he meant to include both the subjective judgment of individual taste as well as the collective sharing of aesthetic perception in a defined range of persons.

Gadamer drew attention to the dimension of “community” in common sense, and eventually came to develop the notion of a “fusion of horizons.” He did not take this as a direct development of the notion of common sense as such, which he continued to understand basically in its traditional sense. As he saw it, however, the scope of common sense clearly embraces the hermeneutics of artistic production. If common sense extends down as far as the level of mind and intellect, and thus includes conscious judgment and aesthetic consciousness, “sensitivity” would not be restricted to the perceptual sensation (*sentio*) of things. It would also extend to the pain that touches one profoundly in the heart (*patior*). Despite its range of associations with things like suffering, zeal, and passionateness, the word “passion” is better suited as a term to express this kind of sensitivity. Similar to the way the notion of common sense is constructed, when passion is felt in “common,” compassion arises. The *com-* of commonality with an “other” is philosophically important. It is another name for the working of *com-patior* in which one is receptive, along with an other, to the past, the present, and the future of the world.

As it happens, the English word *compassion* is particularly suited to translate the Mahayana Buddhist meaning. It seems fitting here to think of the “deep level” of common sense as overlapping with the Buddhist idea of compassion. In my earlier *Prolegomenon to a Phenomenoetics of Compassion*, I presented compassion as a field of disclosure at the three levels of self, other, and world.

Here I take the further step of understanding it as “historical sensitivity.” We often say that our “heart is struck with grief” at some tragic event of the past, just as we say that our “heart goes out” to the current state of the world or that our “heart is set on” making the future the way it should be. This “heart” is something that arises within us, but at the same time it is something touched off in us by the way things are in the world. It is a state of mind that is past, present, and future; in it the world of the past and the world of the future interact with the world of the present. The subject of this threefold mind is a “world mind” in which this threefold world opens up, and yet at the same time is “my mind” and “my heart.” This is why common sense, at its deep level of compassion, possesses a level of meaning that I refer to as “historical sensitivity.”

I should add that the single sinograph that I am interpreting here as compassion carries the connotation of sadness or sorrow. Taken in the sense it has in worldly life and separated from the context of Buddhist doctrine, it conveys sentiments that belong to proper, convivial behavior. It takes on the meaning of a magnanimous “living together.” Compassion and conviviality can be seen as two sides of the same thing in the sense that, paradoxically, it is in the big-hearted and uplifting things of life that the shadow of death falls thickest. The abyss of nothingness shows itself at the height of the *force de vivre*. Once we grasp this compassion at the depths of common sense, a way of presenting the “historical world” phenomenologically—one that relies on the guiding light of Buddhist experience and at the same time corresponds everywhere to the manifold spectacle of reality—can be expected to open up.

The Common Sense of Non-Commonality

“Sensitivity” undergirds the whole process of the development of mind. In Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Mind*, the fields of sensitivity that open up along the way are obscured on the surface of description like veins of ore hidden from sight. Yet it is possible to mine them out through a deconstruction of the work. The deeper one digs, the more one comes to the depths of a “common sense.”

.....

In the chapter on “Self-Consciousness” dealing with the master-slave relationship, Hegel lays the groundwork for a new horizon of meaning to common sense in classical fashion (although he himself never intended it as such). The master faces the slave from a standpoint of authority and absolute control, the decision to grant the slave life or death firmly in hand. The slave, under the fear and threat of death, submits his entire existence to the master. Not only everything the slave produces through his labor but his very person belongs to the master who accepts it without reserve. The relationship between the master

and the slave is a polarized opposition, as are their respective feelings for one another. Hence there appears to be no room to speak of a community of common sense between the two. For example, the “things” that the slave produces are surely received with different sensibilities by master and slave. The slave is excluded from the satisfaction that the master feels at enjoying the beauty of a pot. Even though it is his own handiwork, he is alienated from the aesthetic appreciation of it. All he can feel in the pot is his own alienation.

Insofar as the relationship between master and slave is itself shaped by both in collaboration, there is something they have in common. The ‘*place*’ that brings master and slave together may be called, in Nicholas of Cusa’s phrase, a *coincidentia oppositorum*. This locus of relationship is not marked by homogeneity. Even in the case of ordinary relationships between persons, even though both are human, to the extent that each remains an “other,” the relationship entails difference and rupture.

Ordinarily, the community of shared perception implied in the term “common sense” contains a tacit assumption of homogeneity within the community. When the judgment of taste that a number of persons embrace subjectively with regard to a phenomenon is in effect common, this is because the teleology of that judgment is shaped in concert among the individuals of a community that transcends the individual. We may call this an aesthetic common sense. In fact, however, no matter what the community, there will be mutual differences and ruptures that obtain in virtue of the otherness of its constitutive persons towards one another. They may all seem equal as they look at a pot and judge it to be beautiful, but all sorts of individual differences remain. These differences are rooted in the way they perceive one another and also in their relationships to one another. A common sense rooted in these kinds of differences is not essentially one of homogeneity; it is bound to contain elements of otherness. When such otherness is minimal, a homogeneous common sense may be thought to arise. Even so, this is the exception, much the same as Euclidean geometry holds true where non-Euclidean geometry reaches its limits.

Master and slave are located on a relational field marked by a polar opposition. The feelings of the master who holds absolute control and of the slave who fears death can be seen as the formative elements and the self-determination of a *place* of the ‘self-identity of absolute contradiction’. In this way the feelings that each has for the other are not mere psychological emotions; they are the self-expression of a collective *place* and as such are “world feelings.” Because this world is a world whose identity embraces contradictions, the feelings of master and slave represent the common sense of a non-commonality. On this basis, the sense of alienation for the slave who creates a splendid piece of pottery but cannot claim it as his own, and the sense of absolute satisfaction for the master who expropriates for himself both the slave and his pot, represent the two faces

of a common sense of non-commonality. The dialectical master-slave logic that Hegel develops is enabled by the underpinning of just such a common sense of non-commonality.

This way of interpreting common sense is a radical departure from the usual way of conceiving it, which understands “common” in the sense of “homogeneous.” The normal tendency would be to avoid as contradictory the idea of a common sense that contains an opposition of contradictories. But once brought into question, the tacit assumption hidden in this normal way of looking at things, namely, that the individual subject is the bearer of common sense, no longer looks so self-evident. A different perspective allows us to shift our focus to the community to which the individual subject belongs. The community is the true carrier of common sense. This is the core ingredient in the view of a “common sense of non-commonality.”

The next step is to show how the common sense of non-commonality brings out both the disclosure of the “other” and the disclosure of the “world” and “history.” Concretely, the *Phenomenology of Mind* goes on to describe reason, spirit, religion, and absolute knowledge. Along with this, the common sense of non-commonality already embraces the unbounded interiority and mental spirit referred to as “perception” or “sensitivity” and can be interchanged with “compassion.” This is expressly stated in the chapter on “Reason,” realized in the chapter on “Spirit,” and made immediate in the chapter on “Religion.” In the final chapter on “Absolute Knowledge,” compassion shows up as the feeling of the “absolute” that arises there.

I have tried to show that the task of deconstructing the *Phenomenology of Mind* as a “phenomenology of sensitivity” emerges from the perspective of compassion and, conversely, that the locus of that task is one *place* where compassion is formed phenomenologically. In this sense, it is also a meeting place for philosophical ideas East and West.

[JWH]

Twentieth-Century Philosophy

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Ōmori Shōzō

Yuasa Yasuo

Nakamura Yūjirō

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Twentieth-Century Philosophy Overview

In Japan the category “twentieth-century philosophy” is reserved by and large for philosophical thought as it is found in Europe and the United States, and for Japanese engagement with it. When writing of their own intellectual history, Japanese scholars tend to follow the same divisions as Japanese history in general. This means that philosophers of the past hundred years are located either in the imperial era in which they flourished (Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa, Heisei); in their relationship to Japanese “modernity” (the establishment of Japan as a modern nation dating from the *Charter Oath*, a proto-Constitution promulgated in 1868); or, in the periods centered on the Pacific War (the militaristic period of 1937–1944 and the postwar peace of roughly 1945–1960). In one sense, our decision to sidestep these categories and treat the twentieth century as a distinct historical unit only substitutes one set of ambiguities for another. At the same time, it is intended to suspend judgment on the varieties of classification and on the placement of particular authors within them. It further reflects Japanese philosophy’s steady advance over the past hundred years to its present self-critical position within a culturally diverse, multilingual, and worldwide forum.

There is probably no major current of thought or major thinker in twentieth-century western philosophy that has not washed ashore in Japan from abroad or been imported by legions of young scholars sent to study in leading foreign universities. The large majority of Japanese philosophers have concentrated on securing sufficient expertise in some western tradition to be able to represent it faithfully to Japan and to earn worldwide recognition as scholars. To this day, most Japanese journals of philosophy differ little in content and style of argument from their western equivalents. And Japanese philosophical curricula, although gradually being absorbed into larger interdisciplinary programs, distinguish themselves from their western counterparts only by the language of instruction. Only in the late decades of the twentieth century have this group of Japanese philosophers begun to engage the vast array of resources represented in this volume.

Imitation of the western philosophical tradition is only half of the picture, though perhaps the one most striking to the outside observer. The other half is subtler and not often visible on the surface of philosophical writings. On closer inspection of the texts, the student of Japanese philosophy becomes aware of the manifold ways in which those trained in western thinking have sought to cultivate its content in the native soil of Japan. Even where this process of appropriation is deliberately disguised in an idiom that has been twisted to suit the needs of western languages and modes of thought, the shadow of a very different intellectual heritage hovers in the background, as does a dim awareness that the wider literary and cultural resources on which foreign philosophers draw are by and large inaccessible in the Japanese setting. With the turn of the twenty-first century, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of young Japanese scholars choosing to dispense with the pretense and to foreground this divide. In part, this is due to the pressure to respond to foreign scholars specializing in nonwestern philosophies. More importantly, in the waning years of the twentieth century, there was a dramatic surge of interest in Japanese currents of thought which engaged western philosophies by drawing on its own native intellectual history. The concluding extract from Fujita Masakatsu* addresses this phenomenon, of which the preceding selections serve as a representative cross-section.

The importance of the Kyoto School philosophers in this turn of events can hardly be overestimated, as frequent direct and indirect allusions to their work in the selections that follow attest. Ideas of “self-awareness,” “no-self,” and ‘absolute nothingness’ continue to echo the novel interpretations that this school gave them. If figures like Watsuji Tetsurō*, Takahashi Satomi*, Tosaka Jun*, Imanishi Kinji*, Yuasa Yasuo*, Kimura Bin*, and Sakabe Megumi* all acknowledge the influence of Nishida Kitarō*, it was less the furtherance of his actual ideas that gave their thought its distinctive stamp than it was their emulation of his courage to explore the borderlands of Japanese and western thought. At the same time, we should not overlook the diversity of other pioneering efforts, not to mention the many precedents to be found in centuries past among Buddhist, Confucian, and Shinto thinkers. The lectures of Raphael von Koeber (1848–1923) challenged Ōnishi Yoshinori*, Abe Jirō*, Nishida, and Watsuji as young students to apply their education in western philosophy to reconsidering Japan’s own “philosophical” past. In later years thinkers like Maruyama Masao* and Minamoto Ryōen*, who had breathed this same air of confidence in the dialogue with imported philosophical systems, turned to the Confucian tradition as a resource for creative response. Meanwhile, Hatano Seiichi* and Takizawa Katsumi* typify those thinkers who drew on western theology and philosophy of religion to pursue lines of thought diverging from those of Nishida and his disciples.

In short, in the quest for a distinctively twentieth-century Japanese philosophy, the more one reads and the closer one looks, the overlapping influences make it hard to demarcate clear schools and traditions. Indeed, aside from the Kyoto School, it is difficult to identify any distinctively Japanese philosophical “school” of philosophy. Where dominant forms of thought can be detected, they are not the kind that can be woven into a single tapestry, any more than they can be seen as a direct continuation of one or the other tradition of Japan’s past. Nor can they be seen as a simple mirror-image of one or the other western philosophical currents. What we see in twentieth-century Japan is more like a kaleidoscope of resources, eastern and western, tumbling around and reflecting now one way, now another, of questions that have marked the search for wisdom from centuries past.

Throughout the twentieth century in Japan, western philosophies have come and stayed, gone and returned, or simply departed with no other discernible reason than they had been the curricular emphasis for a time. By the 1940s, for example, the early narrow focus on European thought from Descartes to Hegel was called into question and eventually corrected with a study of medieval and classical thought. Thus, scholastic philosophy was introduced to Japan. It played only a minor role in twentieth-century thought and is not represented in this volume, but deserving of mention here are the pioneering historical studies of Iwashita Sōichi (1889–1940), which sought to rectify the historical bias he and his fellow students had inherited from von Koeber at Tokyo University. We may also note Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko (1904–1945) and his efforts to bring neo-scholastic philosophy to bear on the problem of modern atheism. In such cases, however, there was never any noticeable attempt to bring medieval thought into contact with the native resources of Japanese philosophy.

In time, the study of foreign philosophies was extended to include not only Russian, Islamic, and Jewish thought, but also esoteric traditions from hermeticism to alchemy and Gnosticism. But it was the western mainstream that was most decisive in the study of philosophy in Japan. Vitalism, neo-Hegelianism, neo-Kantianism, existentialism, nihilism, personalism, phenomenology, pragmatism, logical positivism, Marxism, linguistic analysis, structuralism, deconstruction—to mention only some—have all had key roles to play in the full story. Some of these have drawn on native resources and taken a characteristically Japanese face; others have kept their distance from things Japanese. In either case, there is proof enough in the pages that follow to dismiss the claim that Japanese philosophy is little more than a fashion import industry.

If Japanese philosophy in the twentieth century shows a sharp but fluid divide between the dominance of western ideas and the attempt to appropriate them to Japan’s indigenous sensitivities and modes of thought, this distinction cuts across another no less important one between abstract systems of thought

and the social engagement of ideas. Many thinkers presented in these pages display an affinity for the contemplative, the transcendental, and the ideal that combines a strong emphasis on existential experience but a certain resistance to locking horns with the dominant institutions of contemporary society. In the pursuit of the universal, they seem often to lack that ethical edge and sharp social commentary that we would expect of the contemporary philosopher. As disarming as this rational and logocentric objectivity can be, even in the midst of praise for the nonrational, it nevertheless echoes something of the same call for relief from the pure subjectification and instrumentalization of reason that the radical cultural critics in Europe had lamented at the end of the war.

The contrasting histories and influences between social or political thought and academic philosophy in Japan is a story all its own, and one that to some extent has blocked the larger picture from view in western academia. The turn of the twentieth century was marked by relaxed pressure from abroad to westernize. On the one hand, the hectic pace of western studies and translation continued nonetheless, and philosophy was no exception. On the other, some intellectuals marshalled the social thought of thinkers like Marx, Proudon, and Fourier to criticize corruption in late Meiji society and, at least initially, propose structural changes that even saw a positive role for the bourgeoisie. This gave reactionary forces in the government the chance to regroup and tighten their control on the intellectual life of the country. While Confucian, Buddhist, and Shinto thought were unaffected, political thought intensified through the contact. The social movements that had marked the period known as “Taishō democracy” were countered by the Peace Preservation Law of 1928 that called for the death penalty for anyone attempting to alter the *‘kokutai’* system. The close ties between subjective autonomy and national autonomy, whose roots go back to the Meiji period, were inscribed into law. Three years later Japan invaded Manchuria, setting the stage for a series of foreign aggression that continued until defeat in World War II.

In spite of this, throughout the 1920s and 1930s translations of Marxist-Leninist thought flourished, as did the flow of young scholars to study abroad who in turn brought neo-Hegelian, neo-Kantian, and phenomenological approaches into the mix. Thinkers like Miki Kiyoshi*, Kawakami Hajime (1879–1946), and Fukumoto Kazuo (1894–1983) tried to reconcile these elements by introducing “self-awareness” into classical Marxist revolutionary praxis. Others attacked this stress on the individual as a bourgeois attempt to replace social reform with abstract cultural ideals. In 1935 Tosaka published his critiques of Nishida and Watsuji as an expression of rebellion against the reduction of philosophy to historical, textual, and interpretative studies. The attempt to recover “subjectivity” from the alternative excesses of idealism and materialism in the decades following World War II is represented in thinkers like Maruyama Masao and

Umemoto Katsumi (1912–1974). Ironically, the postwar years that had brought a newfound freedom of expression also saw a marked decline in Marxist thought, though it is marked by the careful text-critical work of Hiromatsu Wataru* and the study of alienation in the early Marx by Shirozuka Noboru (1927–2003). In particular, Hiromatsu criticized classical Marxism for its objectivist slant and wrestled with the existential Marxism of Sartre and his Japanese followers to focus on modernity and the enduring legacy of “reifying” modes of thought. Meantime, Funayama Shin’ichi*, who produced a masterful history of Meiji philosophy, took an unorthodox approach to Marxism with Leninist leanings before the war and later distanced himself from his critique of capitalism. In contrast, Ienaga Saburō*, for whom Marxist ideas needed the tempering of neo-Kantian thought to avoid falling into fascism, stands out among his fellow philosophers for using the legal system to take on the *kokutai* ethics of government bureaucrats in postwar Japan. He waged a thirty-year war against the Ministry of Education to have Japan’s wartime aggressions fairly presented in school textbooks.

The fall from grace of the Kyoto School after the death of Nishida and allegations of wartime complicity in its ranks marked a turning point in the diversification of Japanese philosophy. On the one hand, in thinkers like Ide Takashi (1892–1980) and Tanaka Michitarō (1902–1985), and more recently in Yoshimoto Takaaki (1924–), we see a return to the early Greek and Socratic ideals. Similar complaints about the bankruptcy of philosophy and its expropriation by narrow specialists resurfaced during the 1970s with thinkers such as Ikimatsu Keizō (1928–1984). From the opposite direction, Sawada Nobushige (1916–2006), Ichii Saburō (1922–1989), and Nakamura Hideyoshi (1922–) were among those seeking to fill the gap by turning to logical positivism and linguistic analysis. Ōmori Shōzō* may also be mentioned here for his attempts to rescue philosophy from its heavy, specialized jargon and bring it back to a more conversational idiom, while Sakabe Megumi is an example of those who attempted to draw out the distinct nuances that the Japanese language brings to critical thinking. Popularist philosophies like the post-structuralism of Nakamura Yūjurō* and the cosmopolitanism of Imamichi Tomonobu (see the Overview of Bioethics in this volume) are typical of those who sought to bring the results of academic philosophy from around the world to a wider audience.

Many of the following selections are only the lids on jars full of debates whose temporal settings are occluded in a collection such as this. They need to be pried open one by one to have a more concrete sense of how philosophical discussion came to life in twentieth-century Japan. For example, the attempt to reinstate the importance of the body that we find in Abe Jirō as early as 1920 was to come to full bloom in the 1930s. Miyake Gōichi’s* critique of Heidegger’s neglect of “the body,” Watsuji’s attention to bodily perceptions in his ethics, and Kimura

Motomori's (1895–1946) arguments for viewing the body as an essential expression of thought set the stage for a topic that was to be addressed by any number of original thinkers. Here we may single out Ichikawa Hiroshi (1931–), whom Hiromatsu Wataru identified as the cutting edge of Japanese philosophy after its all but exclusive association with the Kyoto School. Later Yuasa Yasuo was to turn the tables, demonstrating the importance of Nishida's thought for theories of the body. A second example is the way in which Nishida's philosophy of life and Tanabe's logic of the "species" influenced the philosophical ecology and biology of Imanishi Kinji, who rejected mechanistic explanations of nature, and considered life forms to be interactive with their respective environments.

If we investigate the Japanese take on the western philosophical heritage throughout the twentieth century, the similarities between the traditions, however striking, are deceptive. Only when the material gathered here is set against the larger traditions of the premodern period does the picture come to life. Ideas like affirmation through negation, symbolic layering of language, natural pantheism, radical immanentism, family relations, seniority as foundational for an I-Thou relationship, mind-body unity, the logic of contradictions in harmony, relations to death and the dead, the individual defined as a subset of group consciousness, the primacy of experience over rationalism and of shared tradition over private experience, and so forth, will immediately suggest cognates in the West. But in Japan these analogies are often true only on the surface. That is, they can be objects of historical study, even comparative study, while their rootedness in the native soil of literature, religion, and social experience lives on, often without visible expression, woven into assumptions that the Japanese reader brings to a text.

This is part of the reason that so much academic philosophy is trapped in a kind of specialization that western thinkers find it hard to sympathize with. As influential as thinkers like Heidegger, Hegel, Kant, and Aristotle have been in Japan, their ideas tend to remain closed up in rooms walled off from one another, each of them opening out into a crowded corridor where they are quickly swallowed up by the dominant modes of thought. It is also why philosophy composed in a Japanese key and deliberately drawing on native resources needs to be listened to carefully for the melodies flowing beneath the text—like a kind of *basso ostinato*, as Maruyama Masao has it—that resist reduction to the lowest common cultural denominators.

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[JWH]

HATANO Seiichi 波多野精一 (1877–1950)

After completing studies at Tokyo Imperial University in 1899, Hatano began teaching the history of philosophy at Tokyo Senmon Gakkō (present-day Waseda University). Five years later, in 1904, after publishing his doctoral thesis on Spinoza in German, he was sent to study for two years in Berlin and Heidelberg. His 1901 book, *Outlines of the History of Western Philosophy*, was widely read throughout the Taishō era as a reference work. His more specialized writings on western philosophy ranged from studies of ancient Greek thought to Plotinus and Kant. Hatano, who had been baptized a Christian in 1902, began to focus on the philosophical foundations of Christian thought in his 1908 volume, *The Origin of Christianity*. In 1917, at the invitation of Nishida Kitarō* and others, he took up a professorship in religious studies at Kyoto University, and his later books and lectures laid the groundwork for the philosophy of religion in Japan.

The passage selected below, from Hatano's 1943 book *Time and Eternity*, treats the discrepancies and opposition between two key concepts: finite time and eternity, with a view to how divine love relates the two and unifies them. If finitude refers to original sin, or the nothingness built into the structure of created human existence, the forgiveness of that original sin means that human beings empty themselves to become a vessel for receiving divine love. In this process of becoming nothingness, time is united with eternity and eternity appears at the core of time.

[MH]

THE ETERNAL AND TIME

HATANO Seiichi 1943, 472–83

The Immanence of the Eternal

According to the above argument, eternity is something that is already experienced in this world. Though the eternal and time bear opposing characters, and though eternal existence strictly preserves its transcendence over against natural and cultural life, it is from another aspect immanent therein. The same subject that lives a natural-cultural life is already able to stand in an intimate relation to the eternal world.

Of course, since this comes about through the revelation of the love of the Holy One, not through the subject's own power, it is only when one adopts the standpoint of this revelation that the intimate relation of eternity and temporality becomes an evident reality. It cannot be said that eternity has nothing to do with time. Whereas its content is determined through the notion of love, the

determination of its form, that is, its definition, is attained by means of and in relation to temporality.

I have often referred to “the imperishable present.” This is the first essential characteristic of eternity. The present is a mode of existence of the subject, and the same can be said of the imperishable present. As has already become sufficiently apparent, the fellowship of love instantiates this mode of existence.¹ The imperishable present is entirely incompatible with the past. The past, as we have particularly insisted, signifies in its root meaning the sinking of being into nothingness, an annihilation of existence. Therefore the thorough overcoming of the past must be the second essential characteristic of eternity.

What then is the future? It, too, is preserved in the eternal. In primordial temporality, the future indicates a really existing other. The future is formed in the attitude of the subject who goes out to welcome what is coming from beyond. Since one may also discern in the eternal existence and in love the attitude of awaiting what is coming as a really existent other (or coming from it, that is, from beyond)—nay, since this attitude constitutes the essential character of love—even in the eternal the future is preserved.

The love that constitutes eternity is the pure and entire fellowship of the life of the subject and the other. In accord with this, the eternal itself is the pure and entire union of future and present. In virtue of this, both present and future take on an entirely new face. In the natural life that forms the basis of the life of this world, to go to meet what is coming means on one side the formation of the present, and to that extent it prepares, however feebly, the fellowship of subject and other. But from another angle it signifies the destruction of the present and it impedes and makes impossible any kind of fellowship. Against this, in eternity the subject, through going to meet what is coming, overcomes nothingness and is spared every kind of perishing. “The entire coincidence of present and future,” “the entire presentness of the future”—just this is eternity.

Creation is not merely a once-and-for-all event at the beginning of time, as the myths of all peoples like to say. Rather it is an event that is continually arising in the eternal world. Where there is creation, everything is constantly in movement, in a constantly new, constantly young, constantly vital way. Ever to receive fresh existence from the gushing spring of the future, which never runs dry; ever to be pervaded by the inexhaustible joy of the young present—that is the eternal. Where the future thus entirely coincides with the present and entirely controls the present, not only is there no place for a past but there is no place for the “not yet” to reside.

As already said, the “not yet” is a derivative phenomenon that arises where

1. [The preceding two sentences are missing in the *Collected Works*, but are found in the text as published by Iwanami Shoten in 1943 (12th reprint, 1993).]

future and present do not coincide. The fundamental sense of the future is “what is to come”; the “not yet” means that “what is to come has not yet come”; this is nothing other than a limitation imposed on the future by an inherent defectiveness of natural life. In the eternal world this limitation is completely eliminated. Here “what is to come” truly—that is, necessarily—comes. When the experience or the expectation of eternity exists, to go on speaking of the “not yet” can be seen as showing an extreme lack of reflection.

In general, then, eternity, as opposed to timelessness, is not a simple negation of time. While it is without doubt an overcoming of time, from another angle it is bound to it in a relation of immanence. The defects of temporality, such as perishability, fragmentariness, instability, and so on, are to be understood as stemming from a failure to establish the unity of present and future. In its essence, the subject seeks fellowship with the other. However, in natural life, the direct connection of subject and other, which may even be called a preparation for fellowship, turns out to have been the path to the subject’s destruction. This is temporality. But when life brings to fruition its originary desire, that is eternity. Thus it can be said that time is a longing for the eternal, and conversely that the eternal is what perfects time.

Again, just as God’s sacred revelation and the grace of creation are the source of the natural existence that lies at the root of every existent in this world, so the eternal can be understood to be the origin of time. How time arose from eternity is a separate problem, and one that lies beyond all theoretical inquiry.

Beyond Spatiality

Eternity also overcomes spatiality. Here the overcoming is different from the case of temporality, being equivalent to a pure negation. Originary spatiality, as we have already said, is an exclusiveness between the subject and the really existing other, a state of pure exteriority. If one were to see this from the point of view of temporality, spatiality is the estrangement and non-concordance between present and future. Since this is entirely abolished in eternity, nonspatiality must be said to be an essential characteristic of the latter.

But, here too, the inner connection with temporality cannot be entirely severed. Through the overcoming of the past and through achieving an entire accord of future and present, eternity overcomes temporality, or rather perfects it. In eternity the connection of future and present, the other and the subject is thoroughly one of fellowship, and thus an immanent one. And complete immanence amounts to complete overcoming of spatiality. Now, looking back on this, we see that spatiality has been overcome, in a way, on the level of concepts. There again spatial representations are pervaded by metaphoricality. The opposition of otherness and selfness still remains as an exteriority that cannot

be overcome and cut away. But in eternity even the opposition of otherness and selfness is abolished without trace. While natural life continues to prevail as a foundation, the residue of spatiality will remain. In contrast, when natural life is completely overcome, the self is transformed into the perfect symbol of the other in eternity and the residual scent of spatiality completely disappears. Here we see the basic difference between temporality and spatiality, as well as the superiority of the former.

Finitude

The problem of time and eternity naturally leads us to reflect on the relation between “finitude” and eternity. Finitude and temporality are usually thought of as no more than the two sides of the same thing. However, this cannot be right. When an existent is marked by limit, bound, lack, that is, to put it generally, when it is essentially tied to the nonexistent, it is called finite. Spinoza’s definition of this as a partial negation (*ex parte negatio*)² can be said to be typical. Temporal existence indeed matches this definition, for the subject that exists in time stands in reciprocal contrariety to existing others, to other subjects; limiting the others it is itself limited as well; again, in virtue of being itself it cannot possibly ever be the other. The result of such commerce is a continual fall into nothingness, into nonexistence.

It is hard to contest that finitude has an extremely close relation to temporality. But does it in all cases stand in a position that is alien to eternity and irreconcilable with it? In relation to this point, there is need for a fundamental correction of the way we usually think. In relation to eternity our investigation has clarified the following conditions: The human subject, through the grace of creation by the divine, ceases to be a being that puts nothingness outside itself or that is turned to the outside, and succeeds in finding it deep within itself, in the center of its being, as an element that has been overcome. Then, for the first time, temporality is overcome and eternity produced. Now if this is so, is it not only in virtue of the subject’s being finite that it can be eternal? Eternity is the subject’s true mode of being. As a temporal existent, it should yearn for this and must strive to mount to it. Such finitude is the pure form of the original character of what is finite in its essence, true finitude. This finitude is not, like the finitude equivalent to temporality, mere partial negation, that is, a kind of compromise existence, half being, half nothing. Rather it is on one side thoroughly, to its essential core, nothingness, and on the other it is thoroughly being, that is, an imperishable existent. If we now call this true finitude, we should give the name “bad finitude” to the finitude that is linked to temporality as its obverse.

2. [*Ethica* I, 8, schol. I]

In true finitude the subject abides in love of the absolute other, and does not seek an autonomy of the self separated from this. The center of its subjecthood and activity consists exclusively in the assertion of self as a pure symbol of the other. Its attitude is one of obedience and trust. However, in natural life the subject is finite in essence, and while standing on nothingness and embracing nothingness at the center of the self it comports itself as if it were pure being. It is devoted exclusively to self-assertion. The immediacy and naturalness of sex express this. But if we succumb to this denial of our original finitude we negate the eternal.

The subject that seeks to put itself at a safe distance from nothingness ends up losing its imperishable existence. Such is temporality. In temporality the subject expels nothingness outside itself and stoutly affirms only its own being. The result of this, however, is that we are pushed into the nothingness that is outside us and arrive unceasingly at the fate of perishing. Here the bad finitude is constituted. That is, it consists in the subject relying on its own strength and casting off the true finitude that is its original nature, thus reducing to nothing the divine grace that is created by God, and while being itself equal to nothing, it makes a perverse use of the gift of grace, seeking itself to become God and manifesting a comportment that is rebellious. It will be clear from our previous explanation that from this bad finitude arises the bad eternity, as unending time. The overcoming of temporality is found only in the subject's retrieval of its original face, its return, in obedience to the love of God, to its true finitude.

Temporality and Original Sin

Now, we find ourselves led to the close relation between temporality and sin. Temporality as the state of the subject, or as a destined state to which it is compelled to conform, is not the same thing as sin. If one were to locate sin in temporality itself, seeking a timelessness that would be a simple rejection of both eternity and temporality, and surrendering ourselves to the contemplation of such pure existence—pure truth, which knows not time—this would be a path of overcoming temporality. But to us, who have discovered eternity in love, temporality itself is not as such sin, as we have made clear. However, in some sense it must be the result of sin. Sin is casting off the obedience to God that comes from love; it is disobedience, and rebellion against the divine. Such sin lies at the origin of temporal existence and occasions the fall from eternity and the arising of time. That is, the wages of sin are temporality and its most radical form, death.

The fact that sin lies at the root of temporality, including death, shows clearly the error of reducing this sin to the individual actions of human subjects. It must rather be sought in the original activity of the arising of time from eter-

nity. However, since the actual life of humans always bears the character of temporality, this activity must be something that emerges before time, something before one is born.

This way of speaking, already shaped by temporal determinations, can, of course, only be metaphorical. Although since ancient times religious and philosophical imagination, as in the Hebrew legend of Adam, for example, or as in the myth of the fall of the soul in Plato's *Phaedrus*, has given concrete content to the idea using the embellishments of this world as an aid to understanding, a trans-temporal fall into sin is something that transcends our powers of representation and conception, and is a matter that is certainly difficult to approach theoretically. Let it suffice for us to posit at the root of every temporal activity, every temporal existent, as an antecedent restriction, as a defining mark of its essential character, some activity that ties time and eternity together.

Since this lies at the origin or root of the various temporal actions, in theological or philosophical thought it is named "original sin" (*peccatum originale*) or "radical evil" (*das radikale Böse*). In addition to the fact that this original sin transcends the temporality of activity and governs even past actions, in other words, in addition to the fact that, as if clearly showing the reality of the self's responsibility for the past, one is not liberated from the control of original sin by leaving the present and returning to nothingness, the light of eternity as an overcoming of the past is also clearly reflected here.

Now, original sin is what makes the activity of the human subject a naïve, immediate self-assertion. The wickedness of individual temporal actions is founded on the immediacy of this self-assertion. Since it refuses that which founds the realization of the love that overcomes this, and takes up an attitude of disobedience toward this love of God, for the finite subject the overcoming of temporality must be the overcoming of this radical evil.

Salvation

The overcoming of sin is called in religious terminology "salvation" or "redemption." This is a restoration of true finitude, of the subject's natural figure, which is accomplished only by the grace of the Holy One. This natural figure is not a mode of existence that the subject can actualize through its own inherent power; rather, the self must become an empty vessel, reducing itself to nothing in order to be filled with what is given from beyond. That is, salvation is accomplished only as creation. Throwing away the original face it has as a creature, acting quite as if it were the creator, the subject is completely devoted to affirming itself, and thus ends up pursuing the road of perishing. But what reduces this subject thoroughly to nothingness, bestowing on it new subjecthood and true finitude and creating it as a subject of love, is precisely salvation.

This salvation, merely by illuminating the natural and cultural subject in the light of grace and showing a glimmer of love, can be said to begin already in this world.

However, as long as this world lasts, the attitude of the subject will still be self-assertion and the character of its life cannot be rid of temporality. As long as our actual life continues, neither sin nor temporality are overcome. How can such a life show a glimmer of love? Is not what shows itself rather something like a will-o'-the-wisp that confuses our awareness? Salvation being entirely a matter of God's grace, it is not a matter that can be discussed on the basis of what humans can know by self-reflection about their state or their achievement and so on. Thus if we ask what shape salvation takes in this world in which both sin and temporality still cannot be overcome, we must look to the special character of the motion and revelation of divine grace. This is none other than "the forgiveness of sin."

Forgiveness

The forgiveness of sin should be called the most fundamental action of the divine love discussed above, which presupposes the actuality of evil. A sinless world is an eternal world, in which, of course, both the actuality and the necessity of the forgiveness of sin do not exist, and the finite subject is pervaded by the joy of the divine love as he lives in a perpetual present. In other words, to the human subject that endeavors to stick to the natural, cultural stage of life and represses the yearning for fellowship, investing instead in a desperate effort to find fulfillment in a false finitude, just as sin will not exist so forgiveness will be no more than a fantasy. However, once the reality of sin has entered our field of vision, the fundamental importance of the forgiveness of sin becomes evident there and then. To the finite subject who scarcely escapes corruption, supported by the hand of grace, in the unfathomable abyss of nothingness, the evil that resists grace has no other meaning than destruction. Even though turned in the direction of bad finitude, the very fact that the subject can maintain its existence is already a gift of grace, which overlooks the rebellion as rebellion.

The life of this world is founded on the forgiveness of sin. This, which first comes into motion as it were and grows over against individual behaviors, is no superficial matter. It is from this that we realize that not only is God's creation at the origin of eternal existence, but temporal existence itself is constituted by the grace of creation; and so we escape from all pessimistic world views. Despite all oppressive hardship, all pain and sorrow, all deception, vice and confusion, all conflict and violence, the life of humans, in both its cultural and its moral dimensions, is sustained by the strength of a divine, omnipotent love. Though sin lodges in the depths of natural and cultural life, that life is a vessel contain-

ing God's grace, and from faith to love it is constantly advancing to true human fellowship, and it becomes the stem that holds the bud of eternal life appearing at the heart of time, all this only through the forgiveness of sin.

The way to respond to the grace of constantly receiving the forgiveness of sin meekly, possible only in the special place thus granted, is to fulfill one's duty to the best of one's ability, renouncing self and eliminating ego, and serving the public. The poor man's lamp, the widow's mite,³ shine here with unflinching dignity. If to do one's best and leave the rest to Heaven is the right path of one who lives an eternal life, the very capacity to do one's best is already disposed by Heaven. In this way, the forgiveness of sin is the appearance of the eternal in the midst of time itself, and it is the foundation of every immanentization of the eternal.

[JSO]

3. [Mark 12:42-4; Luke 21:1-4.]

ABE Jirō 阿部次郎 (1883–1959)

Born in Yamagata Prefecture in 1883, Abe Jirō entered Tokyo Imperial University in 1904 and studied philosophy under the guidance of Raphael von Koeber. In 1912 he was granted a research fellowship by the Ministry of Education to study in Europe. On returning to Japan the following year, he was appointed as the first professor of aesthetics at Tōhoku Imperial University. Influenced by Theodor Lipps's theory of empathy, Abe is one of the pioneers of research on aesthetics in Japan. His numerous works include *Basic Problems of Ethics* (1916), *Aesthetics* (1917), *Social Status of Art* (1925), *Art and Society in the Tokugawa Period* (1931), and *World Culture and Japanese Culture* (1934). After his retirement in 1945, he continued his comparative research on Japanese culture, and in 1954 he founded the Abe Japanese Culture Research Center. Apart from his philosophical works, Abe is well known for his best-selling *Santarō's Diary* (1914).

The following text is the partial translation of a 1921 essay on Abe's personalist standpoint. In it he emphasizes that the highest of all values is not the nation but the value of every individual person. Along Kantian lines he suggests that a person is not a thing but rather a spirit that engenders values and meaning. From this position, Abe develops his argument that personalism is a counterweight to materialism. Critical of the prevailing materialistic lifestyle in modern Japanese society, he saw personalism as a third alternative to radical capitalism or communism. [CCY]

A CRITIQUE OF HUMAN LIFE

ABE Jirō 1921, 113–16

Like everyone, I, too, have my own standpoint from which to observe and criticize human life and society. In a word, mine is a personalistic viewpoint. In what follows I would like to give a brief explanation of what this means. Of course, this short essay is not an attempt to give a deep philosophical ground to this viewpoint or to make precise applications of it to concrete problems of real life. Much as this appeals to me, it is too much to handle here. Deepening and broadening the idea of personalism is an important task for the future. For now, the attempt to state the basic approach as a belief and to make the structure of this belief as clear as possible seems worthwhile for me and for society to the extent that I am actually living what I believe....

What, then, is personalism? Insofar as it is related in some way to human life, it takes the growth and development of a person as an ultimate value. The meaning and ranking of all other values depends on their relationship with this

ultimate value. There is nothing that can take the place of the value of the person; at the same time, the value of all other things is assigned in terms of how the value of the person is served. Thus everything we think must begin from the question: What does “person” mean? In response, I offer four remarks.

First, the *meaning* of “person” lies in its distinction from “thing.” Secondly, person is not the sum of the conscious experiences of an individual but the self that supports and unifies the undertow of these experiences. Thirdly, person is an individuum in the sense that personhood cannot be abstracted from persons but belongs inseparably to the life of particular persons. And fourthly, person contains transcendental elements that differ from anything acquired. In Kant’s words, the essence of the person lies not only in its purely empirical character but also in its spiritual character.

Are spirit and body two beings, or are they two facets of one and the same being? Is either of them a primordial being from which the other is derived? However we interpret the question of *being*, spirit and body must have distinct *meanings* in that they are conceived separately. The difference in their meanings is that spirit is the *subject* of thinking, feeling, and willing, while body is their *object*. All beings that are subjects of thinking, feeling, and willing can be considered spirit, but if they are only the object of these functions, they are body. When spirit and body are separated in any sense, the meaning of this difference is naturally patent in their opposition. Hence, at least with respect to value, the separation of spirit and body means seeing the spirit as subject and the body as object—that is, making body subordinate to spirit. The value of anything is first determined by the spirit. Assessing the value of anything without taking the demands of the spirit into account is meaningless.

Person refers, therefore, to this spirit. It is called “person” because it is the subject of value and meaning. A “thing,” in contrast, is no more than an object of value and meaning. Since person is spirit, as long as we are persons we can *think, feel, and will* like persons. But we cannot be money, time, or body. These *things*—including bodies—are only our possessions.

The difference between person and thing is indeed the difference between the subject of “to be” and the object of “to have.” We *are* someone and we *have something*. This distinction between our possessions and our spiritual attributes, then, constitutes the first of our comments. (In short, the difference between what Bertrand Russell has called “doing” and “having” can finally be subsumed in the opposition of “being” and “having.” Doing is a kind of being, since it is motivated by being. The distinction he makes is at least as old as the one made by Christianity, if not that advanced by Socrates and Plato. The distinction made by Russell is important not because it is new but because it tries to revive the eternal truth in modern terms.)

At this point I find it necessary for me to assert, from my position, an idea

that runs counter to the one just mentioned. This idea is found in the chapter “On the Despisers of the Body” in Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where spirit is treated as something minor, a mere toy for the “I” or the will to play with. The hidden player is greater, a more powerful commander, an unknown wise man whom Zarathustra calls the “self.” Since the self is, in fact, the body, what ultimately controls human being is not spirit or “I” but body. “There is more reason in your body than in your finest wisdom.... It does not say I but does I.... The creating body created spirit for itself as a hand of its will.”

What are we to say of this praise of body and condemnation of spirit? How should we respond to this idea which stands as a direct challenge to our position? The answer can be stated simply. If young Zarathustra’s intent is to stress the significance of the body as the *natural condition* of spiritual life, it amounts to the same thing as the old saying, *Mens sana in corpore sano*. But this aphorism only claims that if spiritual health is the *goal*, then one must preserve the body’s health as its natural *condition*; from the viewpoint of value or goal, the spirit retains its primacy. Granted, there is some measure of general truth to this, it is not enough to refute our traditional standpoint. But if Zarathustra’s intention—as clearly stated in the passages cited above—is not only to enhance the significance of the body as one’s natural condition but also to claim primacy for the value of “body,” where is the evidence for such a claim? This body must become something greater than the spirit, a commander, a wisdom, an actor or creator. In other words, he means something more than body in its everyday sense—in our terms, it is none other than the *spirit*.

Zarathustra uses strong terms like body and self, but in reality he is trying to draw attention to two distinctions in the world of spirit. Reading him this way, we appreciate the importance of the truth of our second remark on person. Our person is not the sum or duration of the contents of thinking, feeling, and willing at each particular moment. Person is rather the subject of inner activities that thinking, feeling, and willing give rise to, which of themselves do not do justice to the self. Person is the principle of unity; person is life. The relationship between person and the outer world is not merely the relationship between consciousness and its data but the relationship between a creator and the materials of creation. When dealing with the conceptualization of the person, therefore, we need to pay special attention to the relationship between person and the idea of will or life.

Therefore, person is something that cannot be divided; it is an individuum that has life as its essence. Where there is no continuity with a single life, there is no person. When there is no duration in life, there the whole composed of the parts cannot be the ground of personal unity. In this sense, person is individuum. The reason the person is an individuum does not lie in its opposition to or mutual limitation with another person but in its possession of a single

persisting life. Opposition and mutual limitation are merely the empirical facts to be found in what we call a particular person. If we assume there is a God or a universe that is without limits and possessed of a single life, insofar as that life is spiritual, we will call it an *individuum*. There is no need to feel any contradiction in calling it a person. To be a person is not to emphasize confrontation with an other; it is to return to one's essence. Here we see a confirmation of our third remark on person, distinguishing personalism from ordinary individualism.

Finally, the life of the person contains a universal and transcendental principle that enables the self to criticize itself and accept blame for its faults. Whatever the circumstances, character, and fate, the life of a person is subject to a categorical imperative that no one can abrogate and that gives one no rest if that life has been violated. In addition to possessing a natural unity as a single life, the person is unified transcendently by an ought. Here we see a difference between person and empirical character. The empirical elements of the person encourage, stimulate, overwhelm, annoy, refine, and purify character, and train the person as a person. In this way we affirm our fourth remark, the difference of personalism from subjectivism.

Against Materialism

As mentioned, personalism puts the ultimate value on the growth and development of the person. As such, it naturally stands opposed to the position of *materialism*. Even from the position of personalism, there are values in things. What meaning does the possession and the use of things hold for a person's life? Needless to say, there are many answers to the question, depending on the weight given to particular things, but one thing is clear: it is impossible not to have possessions or use things. This is why things have value. But the reason personalism sees value in things is that they are a condition for enhancing the *value of the person*. In other words, they have *values for a person*, and beyond this there is no other ground for their value.

That said, the possession or the use of things enhances the value of the person only under certain conditions, and when these conditions are absent, they become a burden to the person. This is something we see often enough. For the wealthy, and especially for their "descendants," too many possessions can corrupt. Therefore, there is no value to a thing in itself. Its entire value is reflected in the person who possesses it. It is the light of the one who uses a thing that illuminates it. Here we see a fundamental connection between personalism and the meaning of things. In modern society, any importance attached to the production and distribution of things is *conditional*; these are not goals in themselves. To conflate condition and goal is to risk confusion. Personalism opposes such confusion. To repeat what was said at the outset, I do not mean

that one should neglect conditions entirely. Insofar as they are necessary for the realization of personal value, the question of conditions can indeed be a matter of life and death. The danger of making goals of mere conditions is that it forgets that it is the goal that limits the possession or use of things; things themselves never constitute an unconditional ideal. When possessions are elevated to such a status, even taking into account the compromises reached along the way to possession, there is no question of a limit to possessions based on some external principle. It is the great mission of personalism in modern society to teach the spirit of limiting the accumulation of things that are harmful or useless for personal development, of limiting the desire to possess.

Set against personalism, materialism shows itself to be a mere delusion. No matter what kind of materialist one is, no one *in fact* can put an independent value on things. Nevertheless, those who claim to do so have not performed the necessary autopsy of the self to know what they really want. Not even a miser wants just money but the *happiness* of possessing money. Because this thing called money is a necessary *condition* of happiness, money itself has value. Thus the happiness of having money is finally derived from the enjoyment and convenience resulting from its use. The happiness guaranteed by having a thing is a sensual happiness; it is directly proportional to the degree of possession of the thing. Materialists are, therefore, hedonists. They put value on things as the *condition* of sensual enjoyment. Their aim is to achieve a certain *mental state* of sensual enjoyment. A significant possession of things is a necessary condition to that end, which is why they seek to accumulate as many things as they can. In fact, they care only to possess things. In this sense, to be a hedonist is also to be a materialist as a matter of course.

The value of things depends on the person who holds these values. A thing that is valuable to a person increases the value of that person. Materialistic hedonists are all like us in this regard, since we, too, measure the value of things according to the same principle. But what is the value of the human? Their criteria is the degree of sensual enjoyment: the more things you have in your life, the more your life is meaningful. Everything else is discarded in the preoccupation with purchasing more opportunities and advantages for enjoyment. This is where the loss of the value of the person begins. The error of such thinking is clearly visible in the consequences of pursuing such a way of life. Enjoyment reduces our attitude to the person as something negative, and the sway of impressions from the external world over mind and body is seen as something agreeable.

The result of such a life is hypersensitivity leading to passivity. One becomes a slave to external things. When people have a craving for beautiful clothes, the clothes become the master and they the slaves. It is not that they wear the clothing, but the clothing wears them. Or again, when people set their hearts on fine

food, the food becomes the sovereign and they become its subjects. It is not that they savor the food, but the food eats up their person. The active dimension of person—what makes a person a person—is gradually diminished as a result of this lifestyle. All those special moments in a person's life, such as the pleasure of creation, the joy of hard work, the courage to overcome difficulties, are corrupted by materialistic hedonism and become all but extinct.

This attitude toward life has put modern society in a crisis. We have been too poisoned by materialism to grasp the point at once. To give an example, anxiety over one's financial situation is undoubtedly a major problem for modern society. I am one of those who fear that even in the most horrid cases, the basic assumptions of materialistic hedonism lurk in the background. From the beginning I have felt that present-day economic problems are deeply rooted in the defects of modern society, and that these in turn are to the fundamental problems of personal life. We need to be rigorously clear regarding the question of personal rights and their direct collision with materialistic hedonism. Personal and economic problems always run the danger of being mixed together and it is, therefore, necessary to have a clear grasp of the distinction between them. I do not know much about Russia and England, but at least in contemporary Japan the conflict between those who seek luxuries for themselves by sacrificing the rights of others, and those who are jealous of the luxuries enjoyed by others and insist that they share the right to the same things, has the makings of a class war of attack and defense, and the danger is that we will fall into it. We must not slacken in our efforts to reflect on this matter. When it comes to economic problems, it is our duty to give them their due significance and at the same time to prevent them from overstepping those bounds. I consider this one of the principal tasks for personalism in society today. The social problem of the struggle over the right to luxuries being waged among slaves to food, clothing, and housing must not degenerate into a scuffle among hungry devils.

[CCY]

TAKAHASHI Satomi 高橋里美 (1886–1964)

Takahashi Satomi studied philosophy at the Imperial Tokyo University. In 1921 he assumed a post in the science faculty at Tōhoku University in Sendai. He subsequently spent two years studying abroad in Germany with Rickert and Husserl. He made a name for himself as one of the foremost critics of Nishida Kitarō* (already in 1912, as a graduate student, he had published a critique of Nishida's *An Inquiry into the Good*), as well as one of the early exponents of phenomenology in Japan. His pivotal ideas of a “standpoint of totality” and method of “inclusive dialectics” were driven by a continued insistence on the cognitive limitations of human beings and on the utter transcendence of the absolute. This, in turn, grounded his argument for a final irreconcilability between the absolute and the relative and between the totality and its parts. Thus he turned the aim of religion from “becoming a buddha in this body,” to “*not* becoming a buddha in this body,” and saw the totality not as a given but as a perfection that is manifest at the end of the dialectical process. Despite these clear-cut distinctions, Takahashi remained convinced that philosophical thinking is open to countless perspectives and, in principle, opposed to all dogmatism and fundamentalism. Similar to Tanabe Hajime's* “absolute critique,” he saw philosophy in need of continued refinement.

Although the impact of Hegelian dialectics and Husserlian phenomenology are most evident in his thought, Takahashi's terminology suggests the influence of Karl Jaspers's notion of the “encompassing”; the ‘Tendai’ conception of the “fusion of the three truths” of ‘emptiness’, conventional existence, and the ‘middle’; as well as the general Buddhist ideas of ‘thusness’ and ‘principle’ to describe the transcendent totality of reality. Insofar as his philosophy not only combines insights from a wide range of philosophical sources but also promotes the vision of philosophy as an infinite project, it can be said to mark the transition from modernity to postmodernity in Japan.

[GK]

A STANDPOINT OF EMPIRICAL TOTALITY

TAKAHASHI Satomi 1929, 84–7, 89–93, 95

Before one begins to philosophize, it is considered necessary to clarify one's standpoint. The limitations of one's standpoint restrict the objects of one's investigation to a specific part of reality. Thus, many approaches reveal to us a skewed rather than an optimum view of their subject. In the worst of cases, a philosophy can produce a serious misconception or even caricature of what it is investigating. Phenomenologists often criticize other philosophies for being

Standpunktsphilosophien, demanding instead an opening of all standpoints by means of the phenomenological reduction. Herein lies the true reason for the phenomenologists' call for a return to the things themselves—*zu den Sachen selbst!*—and a bracketing of the construction of all doctrinal thought.

.....

It is customary when advocating a new philosophical standpoint to return to the notion of philosophy itself. I realize that people are often bored at general discussions of this kind, but I also believe that it is the very notion of philosophy that makes my own position necessary.... As is well known, there is a wide variety of positions as to what constitutes philosophy. This fact is a devastating blow to the “courage for truth” of those who look to philosophy out of systematic interest, and it is only through the sheer strength of one who embraces the philosopher's fate, and only after many doubts and hopes, that it is possible to break through this barrier. In philosophy it does not suffice simply to study the history of philosophy or to demand nothing more than a philosophical education. Is there anyone who has not experienced in youth a desire to see the essence of truth in philosophy? At bottom, what kind of discipline *is* philosophy? Or can it ever be just a discipline in the general sense of the word?... Philosophy is an endless, untiring pursuit of knowledge. This is why it is always asking after the nature of philosophy itself, a quest for the name that it lacks, for the definition that it lacks. Philosophical knowledge is fundamentally a *docta ignorantia*; its name is not a real name and its definition not a real definition.

However, when we actually begin our philosophical labors, we are not permitted to stop short at this kind of grandiose lack of regulation. In the midst of the absence of a definition we find a definition that must serve as a clue for our investigations. But since philosophy cannot fundamentally be defined, this definition has at first the character of a working hypothesis. Having accomplished this, the work of philosophy gradually comes to take on the provisional hue of a decisive idea of what philosophy is. I will attempt to suggest such a tentative yet rather decisive definition of philosophy: for me, philosophy is the system of knowledge concerning the totality of experiences we have or are capable of having at one time or another....

When we try to regulate philosophy in this way, the first thing it shows us is the “infinity of problems.” As a temporal and historical process, our experience does not constitute an absolutely perfected system but is constantly unfolding and expanding; at least, no change is ever final. For this reason, at any given moment the totality of our experience is never more than a relative totality. The object of philosophy is such a relative totality. Our interpretation of philosophy is never final and cannot escape the infinity of problems that are its nature. That said, this does not contradict the stasis of high potency within an absolute perfection of infinitely developing experience. When we ask how unlimited

development is possible, we must anticipate a stasis in the totality of the development as an enveloping ground.

.....

The totality of experience indicates the whole realm that embraces all of experience without remainder. Even if we think about theoretical experience, which is only one part of that totality, it contains not only present “concrete” experience but also “abstract” experience. It does not stop at the actual or the real but also includes experiences of the imaginary and unreal. It is not only immanent but also transcendent. It is not only possibility but also impossibility, value and counter-value, meaningfulness and meaninglessness; even contradiction and nothingness belong to it. The totality of theoretical experience embraces the whole world of forms, situations, and objects that can be felt, symbolized, thought about, remembered, imagined, fantasized, and hallucinated, as well as to the plurality of possible operations that correspond to it. And it can be expanded to include other realms of emotion and will. Thus, the object of our philosophical research is comprised of the complete realm of experience with all these possible expansions and their internal limitations....

That being so, from what viewpoint do we stand when we extend our perspective in this way? It is usually considered self-evident that the standpoint from which one sees must lie outside the object that is seen. In fact, in a relative sense, we have to agree with this. But in an absolute sense, is it not possible to conceive of a standpoint outside of, and transcendent to, the experience of seeing? A standpoint must be a structural part of the total experience itself. This would not be possible without the introduction of a new way of thinking or at least a new awareness.

In any case, a standpoint of the whole that views the totality of experience is one that transcends all other limited standpoints, and in this sense signifies a “minimal position.” By this I do not mean any fear of taking a position. Rather, the need is to embrace all other particular standpoints within one’s own, excluding none of them. In this sense, it can be said to aim at a “maximum position.” The standpoints of empiricism and psychologism, of apriorism and critical theory, or even a phenomenological or Hegelian standpoint, would not suffice for the extremely universal and concrete standpoint of the totality of experience that I have in mind. Unless my instincts are mistaken, each of these standpoints could be understood as an abstraction of that standpoint and can thus be constituted within it.

.....

When we adopt such a standpoint of totality, the method of investigation must also be total and not restricted to any particular method. For the academic independence of philosophy, its unique object and even more importantly its unique method are frequently sought out, but it would seem not to have any

such unique object, let alone method. My own suspicion is that methods like the developmental, critical, phenomenological, and dialectical methods could be introduced as various abstractions of a single concrete and total method. Further, it is easy to see that the relationship to the maximum and minimum will fit here as well. And we need also to note that just as a standpoint does not, in any absolute sense, exist apart from experience, method is not something outside of experience but is itself a constitutive part of experience....

It is not possible to seek for the totality of experience apart from that which establishes the connection between standpoint, method, and object—which also belongs as part of the whole....

When we now talk about the standpoint of total experience we mean, first of all, that the object being viewed is not simply part of the experience but is in fact the whole, or is a part that stands in relation to the whole. If this is, what kind of standpoint is this standpoint of the totality of experience?...

What I call the standpoint of the totality of experience is a standpoint that considers objects in their total relationship to experience. Since even a standpoint is itself a part of the total experience, and since philosophy is not a completed discipline but an *amor docentiae* in the making, we must begin from some particular point or other of experience and advance towards the whole of experience.

[GK]

INCLUSIVE DIALECTICS

TAKAHASHI Satomi 1940, 310–14

Dialectics, which has often been rejected as so much clever sophistry, is not only currently recovering its former reputation but is also gradually expanding its influence. This is particularly the case in Japan, where it was cultivated by the 'Mahayana' Buddhists and neo-Confucians, on the one hand, and is now being embraced by the followers of historical materialism and its principal representative, Karl Marx, on the other.... To this extent, dialectics has become an object of admiration and loyalty rather than an object of criticism. However, whenever a mode of thought becomes self-evident, fashionable, and dogmatic in this way, it is necessary for scholars to maintain an attitude of strict theoretical criticism towards it....

To be sure, philosophies that share the name "dialectics" show differences in content and form.... I would distinguish between process dialectics, dialectics of 'place', dialectics of opposition, dialectics of pure negation or pure movement, the dialectics of the "fusion of the three truths," the dialectics of infinity

or infinite dissolution, and the dialectics of totality and parts.... Even the point at which we arrive in this inquiry, as is finally the case with all forms of the dialectics, is the insight that we must presuppose the totality of an inclusive dialectics as the foundation of its formation. What I am calling here “the totality of inclusive dialectics” is not a simple totality conceived of as the opposite of composite parts....

I believe that the relationship between the totality and its parts contains something that is not exhausted by reference to an original, formal dialectic. If I am correct, this *something* is itself that which truly constitutes the core of the relationship between the totality and its individual parts, and the dialectical relationship between the two is no more than its abstraction.

The totality seems to envelop its parts, but this enveloping is more than a mere act of transcendence: it designates an act of transcending through embracing. It is not simply an act of one thing embracing another from the outside but an embrace that permeates the embraced internally: it is at the same time immanent. This does not mean that transcendent immanence and immanent transcendence constitute a dialectical unity of the immanent and the transcendent. They rather form a totality of inclusive dialectics. What I mean by this term is not just one more type of dialectics, but a dialectics that sublates all forms of dialectics by enveloping and embracing all dialectics in the mode of their negation. That is to say, it is a non-dialectic. As such, it not only includes all forms of the dialectic but constitutes the totality that truly embraces everything, enveloping everything from outside of dialectics. Since it takes the dialectical process as its starting point, however, we have no choice but to refer to it as an “inclusive dialectics.”

.....

This enveloping totality (viewed in terms of what we are calling “inclusive dialectics”) would seem to be very similar to the kind of totality spoken of as the mutual determination of being and nonbeing, these constituting the thesis and antithesis of dialectics. On the following points, however, it differs fundamentally:

1. In contrast to a dialectical confrontation of being and nonbeing, which is commonly thought of as a discontinuity, the totality of inclusive dialectics includes in itself at the same time the continuous process from nonbeing to being, as well as that from being to nonbeing.
2. In the former, becoming opposes the unity of being and nonbeing; in the latter, the juxtaposition of being and nonbeing presupposes the two kinds of becoming discussed above.
3. In the former, the opposites advance to the highest stage through mutual determination, but in the latter, the opposition implies that unity has

already been achieved at the stage of opposition. This unity is the unity of inclusive dialectics.

4. The movement of inclusive dialectics cannot sublimate the beginning within the end since as movement it is limited; on the contrary, the standpoint of inclusive dialectics perfectly sublimes the beginning, middle, and end within itself as the point of supreme rest.
5. The totality of inclusive dialectics sublimes and envelops this becoming and opposition, but it makes becoming possible and, at the same time, it constitutes the basis, which directly makes possible the total situation of that which is contradictory and yet identical.
6. In the totality of inclusive dialectics, it is possible to recognize from the start the existence of something indeterminate and neutral in the dialectical opposition of thesis and antithesis at the beginning (the standpoint of the law of identity). By the same reasoning, direct negation that does not approach the dialectical negation (the standpoint of the law of contradiction) has to be included here from the start. All this is made possible by the totality of nothingness which I refer to as “systematic nothingness.” In this sense, even the standpoint of formal intellectual logic and the standpoint of dialectical logic are formed for the first time from the standpoint of inclusive dialectics.

To simplify what has been said so far, I suggest the totality of inclusive dialectics and of enveloping comprises at one and the same time the processes of becoming and of degeneration, while the totality of that which truly envelops—that is, the totality that functions to include everything and at the same time to envelop the whole of the process of becoming manifest in the orientation to opposition—has to be understood as the totality of a single existence. In this way, at the outermost extreme of the enveloping, the totality of one existence is enveloped and extinguished in what I understand as absolute nothingness. All methods return to oneness and the one returns to nothingness.

I fear I have still overlooked some fundamental elements here. In particular, in grasping the mode of formal and abstract explanation, something may be wanting at the level of the concrete. If the totality of enveloping constitutes in some sense the totality that envelops time and history, it remains itself neither temporal nor historical. If it is indeed always possible to grasp things like time and history on the basis of something that envelops the many forms of reality in general, we may refer to that something as a ‘suchness’ that envelops ignorance or a ‘principle’ that envelops all phenomena. In either case, whether we speak of “things as they truly are,” “suchness,” or “noumenon,” none of this approaches the original meaning of “knowing.”

The totality of enveloping, both in terms of content and in terms of experi-

ence, must be regulated as a love that is a single unity embracing will and action along with knowledge. In this way, the ultimate consists of absolute love as empirically regulated absolute nothingness. Hence, all things, at bottom, can be wrapped together in an absolute love in which at once all is one and one is nothingness.

[GK]

KUKI Shūzō 九鬼周造 (1888–1941)



Kuki Shūzō, a truly cosmopolitan philosopher, introduced existential philosophy and hermeneutics to Japanese academia and authored innovative accounts of temporality, contingency, aesthetic sensibilities, and literary theory. Born of an aristocratic father (Japan's first ambassador to the United States) and an artistic mother, and mentored in childhood by the foremost champion of Japanese art, Okakura Tenshin, Kuki inherited the title of “baron” and a deep sensitivity to poetics and painting. From 1921 to 1929 he studied in Germany under Rickert, Husserl, and Heidegger, and in Paris with Jean-Paul Sartre

as his language tutor and informant on *les philosophes français*. Later he taught at Kyoto Imperial University as somewhat of a black sheep on the fringes of the then dominant Kyoto School. That he dallied in the pleasure quarters and the fine dining of Paris and Kyoto did not seem to diminish in the least his ardent devotion to hard intellectual work. He studied texts in their original languages—ancient Greek, Latin, German, and French; composed detailed analyses of difficult philosophical problems; and educated the academic world in Japan about currents in French philosophy.

Kuki lamented the artificial split between body and spirit he found so prevalent in the European world, and he sought to recapture their unity in his poems, his poetics, and many of his philosophical essays. His major philosophical writings, however, also celebrated irreducible difference and individuality. *Propos sur le temps*, lectures given in Pontigny, France in 1928, propose a series of contrasts that foreshadow his later concern with method: phenomenological versus objective time, oriental cyclical versus western linear time, and the *'bushidō'* willingness to embrace time versus Indian Buddhist liberation from it. More detailed studies continued to proceed from lived experience and to use contrasts and tensions to elucidate philosophical issues. His 1930 book *The Structure of "Iki"* plays on the gap between analysis and experience as well as on the tensions of allure, resistance, and resignation that define concrete human relationships, that between the sexes above all. Numerous studies of contingency grapple with the problem of representing a reality without rules or arrangement in a general theory that gives it structure and classifies it. Both the tensions of allure and the chance encounters underlying contingencies depend upon duality or “preserving a dualistic relationship, that is, keeping possibilities open.” In the writings on contingency, he emphasizes that chance encounters, requiring at least two people or things, point to the metaphysical possibility that one not exist at all, a possibility he considers “fundamentally a rebellion against unity.”

Several features distinguish Kuki's work on contingency from that of his European sources and his Japanese mentors. His is probably the most systematic account in the history of philosophy. While the terms of his classification are modeled after Kant's typology of judgments, he applies them to types of possibility and contingency rather than necessity. Metaphysical or disjunctive contingency is the place where nothingness is encountered. This is not the 'absolute nothingness' of Nishida and Tanabe, but the possibility of the negation of being. Unlike the existentialist philosophies, Kuki relates contingency to the future as much as to the past, and accords it more import than transcendence. To account for freedom, contingency is a feature of reality and human life that one must embrace rather than attempt to overcome. And unlike Watsuji who emphasized communal life, Kuki seizes upon individuality and duality. A later addition to the excerpt included here focuses on personal, existential contingency. The exemplary instance of duality is the difference between self and other, I and Thou. Kuki proposes that I "interiorize" the Thou which conditions me, and that together we interiorize contingency itself.

In the end Kuki hints at the possibility of an ethics of contingency that transforms the Kantian categorical imperative into an imperative that is not merely hypothetical and inimical to Kantian ethics, but rather, in Kuki's terms, metaphysical—an imperative to accept the contingencies, the possibilities of not being, that manifest nothingness in the world. → See also pages 1188–92.

[JCM]

CONTINGENCY

KUKI Shūzō 1932

Contingency originally indicates the negation of necessity, where necessity means something necessarily being the way it is. For something to exist means that it has its ground within itself. Thus, contingency in the sense of something accidentally being the way it is means that something does not have sufficient ground in itself, that it is possible for it not to exist. In other words, contingency arises when some existence is intrinsically and inextricably related to nonexistence. Contingency names the condition wherein being has its roots in nothingness, the specter of nothingness transgressing being.

In contingency, existence confronts nothingness. So the core meaning of metaphysics lies in going beyond existence toward nothingness, going beyond the physical to the metaphysical. Assuredly, metaphysics deals with the problem of true existence, ὄντως ὄν. But true existence originally becomes a problem only in relation to nonexistence, μὴ ὄν. Existence as it forms the problem of metaphysics is existence that is enveloped by nonexistence, by nothingness. This is exactly what differentiates metaphysics or philosophy in its primary sense

from other disciplines. Other disciplines deal only piecemeal with existence or being, and their problems concern fragments of existence or being precisely as given; they would know nothing of nothingness or the relation between being and nothingness.

Insofar as the problem of contingency cannot be separated from the question of nothingness, it is strictly a metaphysical problem. Disciplines other than philosophy as metaphysics do not make contingency a problem. Or rather, they prefer not to make it a problem. One might think that probability theory in mathematics makes a problem of contingency, and to be sure probability theory does deal with contingent matters. But it does not deal with the contingent precisely as contingent. It does not attempt to clarify the very meaning of contingency. Probability theory only goes so far as to quantify the relations between all possible cases of something occurring or not occurring and the contingent cases of its occurring or not occurring. Further, quantifiable relations, theoretically considered, attain validity empirically only when the number of observations is increased to infinity, so probability theory does not go beyond trying to determine the relative constancy of the total number of cases that a contingent phenomenon will occur. It does not go into the details of contingent variation in the least, and it is the change in details that constitutes contingency as contingency. In sum, probability theory does not investigate the contingent itself. The contingent itself cannot be calculated. What can be calculated is what is in some sense necessary. The subject matter of probability theory is not the “calculation” of the “contingent,” but the determination of the “percentage” that the “probable” will “necessarily” occur. Apart from philosophy as metaphysics the problem of contingency proper does not arise.

Nevertheless, precisely because all disciplines seek to investigate necessary relations among things, they cannot in principle avoid the problem of contingency. The idea of the necessary generally arises in connection with the idea of the contingent. And just as we cannot think of the contingent apart from the necessary, we cannot think of the necessary apart from the contingent. What we call necessary is something that cannot *not* be. What cannot not be is conceivable only with respect to something for which it is possible not to be, that is, with respect to the contingent. Therefore, all disciplines that would thoroughly inquire into the necessity of things, at least when they start to reflect on the principles of what they are doing, necessarily run into the problem of contingency. In this sense all disciplines in their roots are connected to metaphysics.

In short, the problem of contingency, insofar as it relates to nothingness—that is, insofar as it is best grasped on the level of nothingness—is strictly speaking a metaphysical problem. Whether this problem can be perfectly solved or not is an entirely separate problem in itself. In any case, we must attempt to

pursue contingency as a philosophical problem, even if we reach the conclusion that we cannot find a positive solution.

Insofar, then, as contingency is the negation of necessity, to grasp the meaning of contingency we must start by clearing up the meaning of necessity. We have already defined necessity as something necessarily being the way it is, that is, as the impossibility of its being otherwise. The impossibility that something be otherwise means that it has within itself the reason for its existence, that a given thing itself preserves itself precisely as it is given. Self-preservation or self-identity is a matter of the self preserving itself at all costs. In other words, the concept of necessity entails identity. The strictest expression of necessity is the formula of the law of identity, "A is A." Necessity, after all, expresses nothing but the essential determination of identity from the perspective of its modes.

The determination of identity and, accordingly, of necessity, is most evident in the concepts of logic, the causality of the empirical world, and the absolute of metaphysics. Thus, insofar as contingency means the opposite of necessity, there are three modes of contingency corresponding to the three modes of necessity. We must therefore take up the problem of contingency in three parts: logical contingency, empirical contingency, and metaphysical contingency.

Logical Contingency

Logically, the structure of concepts is based on our observation of some universal attribute that individual phenomena have in common. The constitutive content of a concept is the totality of the essential attributes abstracted as identical, and the possible content is constructed through the process of abstraction by making a place for nonessential attributes outside the confines of the identity. The essential features are characterized by the fact that if they were negated the concept itself would be negated. For the constitutive content of the concept and the totality of essential attributes form an identity. The relation between the essential attributes and the concept, insofar as it is determined by an identity, is necessary. In contrast, the relation between the concept and the nonessential attributes is contingent, for, as something that depends on whether there is a place for such attributes or not, the relation itself lacks an identity. If we call the essential attributes necessary, we may call the nonessential attributes contingent. Logical contingency, then, is just the contingency of contingent attributes.

We have a concept of clover, for example, and this concept includes essential and nonessential attributes. We can ask which kind of attribute it is to have three leaves. In other words, does the quality of having three leaves belong to the constitutive content of the concept of clover or to the possible content? In the strict sense of the word, we cannot say that the property of three leaves

belongs to the concept's constitutive content as one of the essential attributes of clover. For when we find a four-leaf plant that has otherwise identical properties we do not say it is not clover; we call it four-leaf clover. That is, the concept of clover does not necessarily entail three leaves as an essential attribute; being three-leaved is not necessarily implied by the very concept of clover. So the relation between clover and being three-leaved is, strictly speaking, a contingent one. Nevertheless, the attribute of having three leaves is, if not ever-present, then nearly so. Although it qualifies as what John Stuart Mill called a "separable accident" it is also close to being an "inseparable accident." According to Mill, an inseparable accident bears no relation to essential attributes, and so it is possible for it not to exist, even if, in fact, we know of no instance of its not existing. It is universal but not necessary. A separable accident is one that, in fact, often does not exist. That is, it is not only not necessary; it is also not universal.⁴ While the property of having three leaves is not an inseparable accident, it is extremely close. The reason that we regard a four-leaf clover as particularly fortuitous is that the property of having three leaves is so close to an inseparable accident, or rather, that we grasp it as quasi-essential.

Logical contingency, which has to do with nonessential attributes, cannot serve the function of subsuming something under a universal identity. This subsumptive function is performed by way of the schema of "always" or "nearly always." Logical contingencies abstracted from this function have the structure of "rarely" as the negation of "always" or "nearly always." That is the reason that contingency takes on the meaning of an exception to a general law, and also the reason for instances based on the fact that this "rarely" is a word that expresses contingency....

Citing Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," B.10,12, Kuki goes on to relate the distinction between concepts and contingent attributes to Kant's distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, making the point that the former are based on an identity of subject and predicate and therefore give rise to a necessity, while the latter are not and so are contingent.

Of course, in the case of one particular perceptual judgment, the concrete content of perception given to the perceiving subject is analyzed and a judgment is formed. For example, we form the judgment, "this clover is four-leaved," which should count as an analytic judgment where accordingly the connection between "this clover" and "four-leaved" is necessary. But what we are trying to indicate here is only that Kant, assuming that the subject of the proposition is a general concept, provides for contingencies insofar as he distinguishes between analytic judgments that refer to necessities and empirical synthetic judgments.

4. J. S. Mill, *System of Logic* 1, ch. vii, §8.

That is, in the empirical, synthetic judgment, “some clover are four-leaved,” the union of the concept of “clover” and the predicate “four-leaved” is entirely contingent. The distinction between universal and particular judgments is likewise related to that between necessity and contingency.

.....

Furthermore, in immediate inferences we encounter the so-called *conversio per accidens*. From the case that “all A are B” we can infer that “some B are A.” The description *per accidens* means that A does not entail an identity with the concept of B; that is, A is merely a contingent attribute of B. For example, we can say that “all people of the yellow race are human beings” but not that “all humans are of the yellow race.” We can only turn the universal judgment in this case into the judgment that “some humans are of the yellow race.” Skin color that distinguishes races is only a contingent attribute of the concept of human being. In logic, then, contingency is to be found in particular as opposed to universal judgments....

Kuki goes on to relate the distinction between concept and attribute to that between substance and accident. He cites Plato's ideas as exemplary of the notion of substance.

Contingency refers to the gap between prototype and imitation, to the imperfection inherent in the participation of individual spatial things in the ideas due to the roots of such things in nonexistence. Aristotle calls this kind of contingency συμβεβηκός, something which “belongs to some thing, and is truly predicated of it, but not necessarily (ἐξ ἀνάγκης), and in many cases (ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ) not at all.” Aristotle thus clarifies the distinction between “of itself” (καθ’ αὐτό) and “contingently” or “by chance” (κατὰ συμβεβηκός), which later became current as the distinction between *per se* and *per accidens*. “By itself” refers to an “essence” or “all that belongs to the essence,” or “something received directly into itself or into part of itself.” For example, “one is alive because one’s soul is a particular aspect of oneself.” Thus “it is an accident that humans are white (for this is not so always or for the most part); but a human being is not by accident an animal.” In sum, “a general statement (τὰ καθόλου) would apply to the subject essentially, whereas accidental attributes are not of things in their own character but of individual cases severally (τὰ καθ’ ἕκαστα).” “Matter (ὕλη) is the cause of contingency.” Accordingly, “Contingency and nonexistence are closely related” (ἐγγύς τι τοῦ μὴ ὄντος).⁵

The references to Plato and Aristotle make it abundantly clear that logical contingency has to do with individuals. And if contingency relates to individual things then the reason for frequently calling contingent attributes “individual

5. *Metaphysics* Δ 30, 1025A; Δ 18, 1022A; E 2, 1026B; Δ 9, 1017B; E 2, 1027A, 1026B.

attributes” is clear, as is the reason that Schleiermacher wanted to restrict the applicable domain of true synthetic judgments to individual facts. Contingency on the logical level then is the specification that individuals, as opposed to general concepts, enjoy. It is contingent that I am of the yellow race, for the characteristic of being yellow is found only in some particular humans. Similarly, it is contingent that a clover is four-leaved, for this characteristic is discovered only in certain individual clover. In the Buddhist scripture *The Questions of King Milinda*, King Milinda puts this question to the monk Nagasena: “Why is it that all men are not alike, but some are short-lived and some long-lived, some sickly and some healthy, some ugly and some beautiful, some without influence and some of great power, some poor and some wealthy, some low born and some high born, some stupid and some wise?” Along with being a question about human joy and suffering, Milinda’s query is a philosophical one and belongs to philosophy. Nagasena answers with a question of his own: “Why is it that all plants are not alike, but some sour, and some salt, and some pungent, and some acidic, and some astringent, and some sweet?”, to which the king replies, “Because they come from different kinds of seeds.” “Just so, great king, are the differences you have mentioned among men to be explained.... Beings have each their own ‘karma’.... It is karma that divides them up into low and high and the like divisions.”⁶ And when this answer does not satisfy the questioner the query must be developed further on a new level.

We said previously that in the particular perceptual judgment, “this clover is four-leaved,” the conjunction of “this clover” and “four-leaved” possesses a kind of necessity. It is only where we think in terms of universal concepts that the conjoining of “clover” and “four-leaved” is contingent. When the determiner “this” modifies “clover” the relation between a particular clover and the feature of having four leaves is no longer contingent. The fact that “this clover” is “four-leaved” must have some cause, such as its previous nutrition, the influence of climate, or perhaps an injury or irritant. Similarly, we consider the appearance of a person as handsome or ugly to be contingent because we observe a particularity in the relation with the universal concept of “person.” That this person is “handsome” and that person is “ugly” must have some cause, such as the particular way the sperm and ovum came together, or the state of health of the mother during pregnancy. In this manner we can shift from the problem of concepts to that of causes, from the abstract domain of logic to the empirical domain of the philosophy of nature or of spirit.

6. [*The Questions of King Milinda* III.4, T. W. Rhys Davids, *The Sacred Books of the East* 35 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1890), 100–101; translation adjusted.]

Kuki next inquires into the structure of causality. He relates Leibniz's law of sufficient reason to the law of causality and then notes that the law of causality is rooted in that of identity.

What we call the cause of one phenomenon is the identical thing we discover in another phenomenon. If we say that water results from the combination of hydrogen and oxygen, we imply that within the compound what we call the elements of hydrogen and oxygen each preserve their own identity. Hence the causal relation can be idealized and expressed in an equation. This is what is meant by the phrase *causa adequat effectum*. We said previously that concepts are based on identity, and we see here that it is also possible to root causality in identity. If a causal relation is nothing but a relation of identity then the law of causality, too, should possess the necessity enjoyed by the law of identity. We think that combining hydrogen and oxygen necessarily produces water. There is a necessary relation between water and the compound of these two elements precisely because each preserves its identity within water. This is a case where necessity is entailed by something remaining the same.

The relation between means and end can also be seen as a kind of causal relation in a broad sense. Instead of an efficient cause here we have the concept of a final cause.

.....

Borrowing a phrase from Octave Hamelin, we can say that finality is “a determination by the future.”⁷ That the future which is supposed to be lacking in actuality can assume it and function as a cause is due to the temporal priority of consciousness. Ends, purpose, and finality are concepts that strictly speaking have validity only in the domain of consciousness. If we are to recognize them as constitutive principles in the natural world, transcending the realm of consciousness, we must probably do so via the concept of the unconscious. This is based on the fact that conscious actions that become habits turn into unconscious reflex movements. In *De l'habitude*, Félix Ravaisson-Mollien regards the limit of such unconsciousness as the world of nature.⁸ In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant suggested that the genius creates a work of art “by second nature” or half unconsciously (§46), and his theory of the genius undoubtedly linked his aesthetics to his philosophy of nature. While he allowed the application of a telos to the natural world only as a regulative idea, to acknowledge telos as a constitutive idea he implied a concept of necessity, that is, a concept of the unconscious that assumes a telos. The relation between means and end, then,

7. Octave Hamelin, *Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation* (1907) (Paris: Alcan, 2nd ed. 1925), 332.

8. Jean Gaspard Felix Ravaisson-Mollien, *De l'habitude* (1838) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999).

for example, in the phrase “for B one must do A,” implies a necessary relation, and this necessity ultimately derives from a causal relation. The means-end relation “for B one must do A” anticipates a cause-effect relation, “if we do A then B will necessarily result,” and this is where necessity comes in.

Kuki next acknowledges a distinction between the causal “has to” and the teleological “ought to” but finds a sense of necessity in both.

Since contingency is the negation of necessity, we would expect there to be two sorts of contingency, causal and teleological, each negating the corresponding kind of necessity, causal and teleological. Causal contingency arises from the lack of causality, and teleological contingency from an absence of finality. We can call these sorts of contingency empirical in contrast to logical contingency. Among the numerous words expressing contingency we have those that imply a negation of causality or of finality, such as “coincidence,” “happencance,” “accident,” “fluke” and “inadvertence.” The ancient Greek expression *automaton*, deriving from αὐτὸ (of itself) and μάρτην (without reason) likewise rests on a negation.

Mechanism in its most consistent form is conceivable only in terms of causal necessity, and so leaves no room for the existence of causal contingency. On the other hand, by negating teleological necessity it allows for teleological contingency. The worldview of the natural sciences represents such a tendency. In contrast, teleology in its most consistent form would account for all things solely in terms of the necessity of ends, so there simply is no teleological contingency at all. On the other hand, by denying causal necessity, it allows for causal contingency. When Christian theology explains all things as the outcome of God’s will, its recognition of miracles that imply causal contingency is based on this kind of relation. In this sense, causal necessity is easily associated with teleological contingency, and teleological necessity with causal contingency. The paradox of “the necessity of contingency” arises because we can make this sort of association....

Kuki continues with an analysis of two ways of conflating necessity and contingency: (1) conflating causal necessity and teleological contingency, or causal contingency and final necessity, and (2) conflating causal necessity with final necessity, or causal contingency with teleological contingency. He exemplifies these two ways and some criticisms of them with citations from the history of western philosophy, starting with pre-Socratic fragments, taking up Aristotle’s contrasting ideas of τύχη and αὐτόματον, Christian notions of providence, and Kant’s notion of destiny, and covering more recent notions of contingency (“contingence” and “hasard” in Octave Hamelin and Émile Boutroux, and “Zufall” in Friedrich Albert Lange).

In summary, teleological contingency springs from the negation of teleology, from the observation that a certain matter has no telos or the observation that

something shows up but it does not count as an end or telos. These two observations, negative and positive respectively, agree in their denial of teleology. An example of the negative sort would be idiocy seen as a teleological contingency. If the actualization of the ability to think counts as one telos of the human being, then idiocy as the lack of this ability can be considered something contingent, something that has no purpose. Another example is a certain kind of double-petaled flower. If the function of a flower is to ensure the reproduction of the plant and the stamen becomes a petal, then what we have is a negation of a telos, so that from the perspective of botany such a double-petaled flower is an aberration, that is, a contingent phenomenon. Aristotle calls this kind of teleological contingency “unnatural”⁹ and Hegel attributes it to the “impotence of nature.”¹⁰ The idea behind calling it “unnatural” is the teleological view that “nature does not make things without a reason (μάτην).”¹¹ Similarly, to conclude that nature is impotent in a certain case one must have already assigned to nature some kind of progression as its telos. Turning now to examples of the positive sort, suppose someone is chewing on abalone and comes upon a pearl. If the purpose of eating the abalone was to savor its delicious taste, then finding a pearl did not fit in with this purpose and thus counts as contingent or accidental. Another example is the alchemist who attempts to find a substance that transforms silver into gold by a process that involves evaporating urine, and by chance comes across the element that gives off light. He has accidentally discovered phosphorus, a contingent result that lay outside his purpose.

These cases illustrate the two ways of understanding teleological contingency. The examples of idiocy and the double-petaled flower can be understood simply in negative terms as cases where a naturally expected end failed to actualize. The examples of the discovery of the pearl and of phosphorus can be grasped in positive terms as cases where a purpose or end does exist but what results does not count as fulfilling this purpose. Aristotle’s distinction between αὐτόματον and τύχη corresponds roughly to the difference between these two ways of understanding contingency. That is, αὐτόματον denotes the lack of a telos simply in negative terms, and so is a concept applied to things incapable of purposive action. In contrast, τύχη denotes in positive terms the actualization of something that can be regarded as an end or purpose; it applies only to beings capable of purposive action. In short, what the cases of negative and positive contingency here have in common is their negation of teleological necessity. To be sure, they reflect only a partial view of teleological contingency. There is

9. παρὰ φύσιν, *Physics* II.6, 197B.

10. “Ohmacht der Natur,” *Encyklopädie*, G.J.P.J. Bolland, ed., (Leiden: A. H. Adriani, 1906), §250.

11. *De caelo* I.4

also a worldview that negates teleology *in toto*, exemplified by Greek atomism, d'Holbach's *Système de la nature*, and La Mettrie's *L'homme-machine*. This sort of mechanistic determinism proclaims that the entire universe is teleologically contingent. In other words, the idea of teleological contingency here arises by way of a conflation with causal necessity.

Just as contingency on the level of logic occurs only with respect to universal concepts, teleological contingency arises only with regard to conceived or conceivable ends and purposes. The two kinds of contingency then are intrinsically and inextricably related. Where an end or purpose accords with a universal concept and there is a need to realize the end, a logical contingency entails a teleological contingency.... Teleological contingency, along with causal necessity, can be reduced to the problem of causation at least in the narrow sense.

What remains is the problem of causal contingency, which means the nonexistence of causal necessity.

.....

Boutroux also recognizes the existence of causal contingency. For him the law of causation as an abstract principle can serve as a practical maxim for the sciences, but strictly speaking it is not applicable in the world of concrete reality. All calculation is merely approximate; in principle it is impossible to reach absolute accuracy. Experimental verification ultimately comes down to fixing the value of measurable factors as narrowly as possible between proximate limits. What we see is, so to speak, no more than the vessel, not the thing itself. A minute indeterminacy still inheres in phenomena to the extent that we go beyond the effective domain of our rough evaluative methods. And this is precisely the *contingence* of Boutroux that denotes the nonexistence of casual necessity. In the form of a "philosophy of contingency" Boutroux strongly advocates the sort of "philosophy of freedom" proposed by people like Maine de Biran and Ravaisson. But in contrast to the doctrine of indeterminism in Epicurus, which conflates causal and teleological contingency, in Boutroux we find a conflation of causal contingency and teleological necessity.... His thesis in *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature* ultimately depends upon the teleological necessity of the universe. He talks of "necessity in the form of duty," that is, of "an end that can be thought of as necessary," and says that although "freedom is limitless" in God there is such a thing as "practical necessity"¹².... The lack of an original cause fully entails this kind of causal contingency, and allows one to speak of an absolute causal contingency. And once one has claimed an absolute causal contingency *for a part*, one is led ultimately to a denial of cau-

12. *De la contingence des lois de la nature* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1895), 155–7.

sality *in toto*. Yet the idea of absolute causal contingency cannot avoid being an extremely specific view... and at any rate remains very problematic.

Is it really the case, however, that there is no contingency in any sense of the word with regard to causality? For we also have an idea of relative causal contingency. We consider it accidental, for example, when a tile falls from a roof and injures a passerby walking under the eaves, or when there is a solar eclipse while a volcano is erupting. The tile must have fallen on a specific spot as a result of some cause, such as a decaying roof or the force of the wind. And the passerby must have been walking under the eaves for some reason, to avoid the heat of the sun or traffic congestion, for example. But we call the meeting of two phenomena arising from two different series of causes accidental. Similarly, the volcano erupts as a result of the force of underground steam reaching a certain point, and the sun goes dark because it is obstructed by the moon. The two phenomena arise from two entirely independent and unrelated series of causes. The two causal series are not linked by any necessity at all. The contingency in these cases is a matter of a non-necessary, relative relationship between one causal series and another. This is how the notion of *relative* causal contingency comes about, and this idea actually forms the core of the meaning of contingency...

.....

In Japanese, the word for contingency is *gūzen*, the first syllable of which, *gū*, can mean a pair, an opposition or contrast, a lining up, or a joining together. (With a slight alteration in the sinograph, it can be used as a verb to mean “meet”.) The core meaning of contingency is the chance encounter of A and B that negates the necessity of the law of identity expressed in “A is A.” In other words, it involves a duality, or contact between two different things. The prefixes in the words *συμ-βεβηκός*, *con-tingens*, *ac-cidens*, and *Zu-fall* all clearly denote contact between two things. *τύχη* comes from *τυγχάνειν*, meaning “to happen to be somewhere.” *Chance* comes from *cadentia* and *hasard* from *causus*, originally from *cadere*. Further, *cadere*, meaning “to fall,” figures in the expression *in ... cadere* or “fall upon” as in “the tile fell upon a passerby’s head,” and this oppositional connection gives us the sense of chance (echoed also in the German word *Zu-fall*).

Kuki goes on to cite Hegel, Aristotle, Leibniz, and Poincaré to support the idea that this kind of contingency involves an intersection of factors that can be infinite in number. He then mentions Spinoza’s claim that such contingency is related to a lack of a perfect knowledge of causes.

Still, we must consider the convergence of unerring explanation and perfect knowledge as no more than an ideal. While we may trace the path of necessity in the empirical domain, the “x” we seek as an ideal eludes us like an infinite progression. More than that, even if we grasp the ideal in the “infinity” beyond,

we have to admit that this ideal is Schelling's "primal-contingency" (*Urzufall*), of which we can say no more than "that it is, not that it necessarily is." Primal contingency is the "supreme truth of things," the "origin of history," the "primal event" (*Urereignis*), "unforeseeable doom" (*unvordenkliches Verhängnis*).¹³ When King Milinda questions the monk Nagasena as to why a row of trees are different, the monk replies that it is due to the different ways in which they were planted. The contingency of the trees shifts to that of the seedlings and the matter stops there. Again, when the *Satyasiddhi śāstra* says, "All beings are born of their karma," it is as if a causal explanation is given to contingency, but in truth such sayings do no more than prolong an unsolved contingency ad infinitum, to the point of primal contingency.

Metaphysical Contingency

It is the absolute of metaphysics that substantiates "primal contingency." The absolute by virtue of being the absolute is thought to be absolutely one. And by virtue of being absolutely one it is conceived as absolutely necessary. When Novalis said that "the necessary is the contingent"¹⁴ he meant nothing other than primal contingency as absolute necessity.

Aristotle's *Metaphysics* already includes the concept of the absolutely necessary, that is, the metaphysical necessary. The "Unmoved Mover," precisely because it is unmoved, "can never act differently."¹⁵ Accordingly, "it is something that exists necessarily" (ἐξ ἀνάγκης). Everything other than the Unmoved Mover is moved by something else, and so can act differently. That is to say, it is metaphysically contingent, the negation of metaphysical necessity. Maimonides, the medieval admirer of Aristotle, adopted the concepts of metaphysical necessity and metaphysical contingency and revived them as an essential part of his cosmological proof.

Thomas Aquinas, following Maimonides, reasoned from the contingency of the world to "something that exists necessarily of itself."¹⁶ In this way the relation between metaphysical necessity and metaphysical contingency took the form of an opposition between what is "self-caused" (*aseitas*) and what is "caused by something else" (*abalietas*). Spinoza's "cause of itself" is also nothing but metaphysical, absolute necessity. "God exists necessarily" (*Deus necessario existit*). In contrast to that, "to the extent that the existence of things is not

13. Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart: 1856–1861), II.1, 464; II.2, 153.

14. *Notwendige = das Zufällige*. Cf. Novalis, *Fragmente*.

15. οὐκ ἐνδέχεται ἄλλως ἔχειν οὐδαμῶς. *Metaphysics* Λ 7.1072B.

16. "Aliquid quod est per se necessarium," *Summa theologica*, I, q.2.

17. *Ethica* I, def. 1; I.11; IV, def. 3.

found to be necessarily specified or necessarily excluded, I call such individual things contingent (*contingens*).¹⁷

In his *Theodicy* and *Monadology*, Leibniz speaks of God as a necessary existence and of the world as a whole as a contingent existence.¹⁸ In the same vein, Kant writes, for example, that “what is limited in existence I call, in general, contingent, and what is not limited I call necessary,” and further, that “we know of contingency from the fact that some phenomena can exist only as the result of some cause. Therefore it is an analytical proposition that if something is assumed to be contingent, it has some cause.”¹⁹ Here Kant, too, is concerned with this same kind of necessity and contingency.

We have been noting that both on an empirical and a metaphysical level necessity and contingency form exact opposites. The empirical level proceeds “from below” and traces a series of causal necessities back infinitely until it reaches primal contingency. The metaphysical level proceeds from above and, as the negation of absolute necessity, arrives at a concept of a contingency bound to causality. In other words, a matter ruled by causality may be necessary on an empirical level but contingent on a metaphysical level. When the beginning of a causal series is grasped as an ideal, on an empirical level it is called primarily contingent, while on a metaphysical level it is called absolutely necessary. That is, there is within necessity a distinction between “absolutely necessary” and “hypothetically necessary.” Christian Wolff writes that “we speak of necessary being when some being is *absolutely* necessary. We speak of contingent being when it has the reason for its being outside itself.” Accordingly, “the being of contingent being is merely hypothetically necessary.”²⁰ Thus the metaphysical contingent that is merely hypothetically necessary, as Aristotle already pointed out, refers to that being that exists only because it has some primal cause outside itself; there is the possibility for it not to exist. For this reason Aquinas calls contingency “something for which it is possible not to exist” (*possibilia non esse*). Metaphysical contingency is after all nothing but empirical necessity, and even what is empirically necessary, when observed vis-à-vis the metaphysical necessity of the absolute, has the character of the contingent.

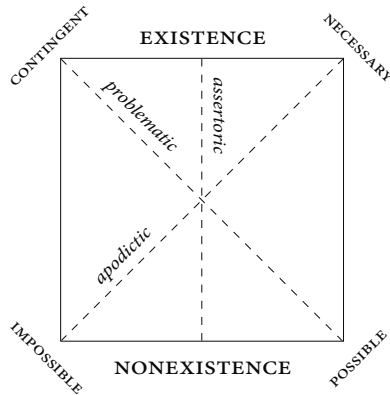
Generally speaking, then, the problem of contingency has deep connections to the problem of necessity. When we think of nonexistence or non-actuality it is with respect to existence or actuality. Existence or actuality concerns what is; nonexistence or non-actuality concerns what is not. With regard to “a being,” then, we can distinguish between “something that cannot not be” and “some-

18. *Opera philosophica*, J.E. Erdmann, ed. (Berlin: 1940), 506, 708.

19. *Critique of Pure Reason* B, 447, 291.

20. *Ontologia*, §309–10, §316.

thing that may not be.” That is, within “existence” there is “the necessary” and “the contingent.” Similarly, regarding what is not, we can distinguish between “something that could be” and “something that could not possibly be.” With regard to “nonexistence,” then, there is “the possible” and the “impossible.” Since contingency refers to that which negates the necessity of existence, necessity and contingency form logical contradictories. And since impossibility refers to that which negates the possibility of existence, the possible and the impossible form contradictories. Similarly, since impossibility means the necessity of nonexistence, it can be considered a kind of necessity. The characteristic that necessity and impossibility share is called “apodicticity.” Contingency refers to that which affirms the possibility of nonexistence, so it can be considered a kind of possibility. The characteristic that such possibility and contingency have in common is called *problematica* in Latin, but we also refer to it as what is “probable.” In addition, on the level of existence and nonexistence, we speak of the “assertoric” (*assertoria*) as opposed to the “apodictic” (*apodictica*) and the probable. If necessity is regarded as perfect existence, then contingency and possibility are regarded as imperfect existence. That is because contingent things, even while placed in existence, are still rooted in nonexistence insofar as contingency signifies the possibility of nonexistence. And possible things, even while situated in nonexistence, still long for existence insofar as possibility signifies possible existence. Contingency and possibility are, therefore, frequently regarded as very closely related matters. Aquinas, for example, uses the term “from the possible” rather than “from contingency” in his cosmological proof for the existence of God. Abelard says that “the possible and the contingent refer to the very same thing (*possible et contingens idem prorsus sonant*).”²¹ Spinoza



21. *Ouvrages inédits*, V. Cousin, ed. (Paris: 1836), *Dialect.*, 265.
 22. *Ethica*, 1.33, schol. I.
 23. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, G. Lasson, ed. (Leipzig: 1911), II: 173.

writes of “the contingent or the possible,”²² and Hegel says that “the contingent refers to actuality being posited at the same time as simply possible.”²³ These relations can be expressed in a diagram:

To think of contingency as related to possibility in this way means to see a given actuality or existence against a metaphysical background. In other words, it is to see actuality or existence from the standpoint of logical disjunction. To ask whether A is B or C or D is to form a disjunctive possibility regarding actuality. The meaning of contingency seen from this standpoint becomes evident when we are perfectly aware that a matter has to do with possibility or a disjunctive choice. We completely recognize a case of possibilities, for example, when we assess the possibilities in a dice roll or a horse race or in a show of hands representing scissors-paper-rock, and play a game of chance, of contingency. We can, therefore, discover profound meaning in the philosophy of Vedānta which sees the creation of the world as the play of Brahman. Usually we say that it is a matter of chance or contingency which side of the die will show up because we keep six possibilities in mind and we know that five others could appear. In fact, the side of the die that shows up is necessarily determined by the physical nature of the dice table and of the dice and the way we throw them. On the other hand, contingency prevails insofar as we could take into account the causal series of other necessities, or consider that the causal series that actually did take place is not absolutely necessary, or could think of the discrepancy between the possibilities and what actually took place.

Poincaré’s comments on the game of roulette... provide another example of contingency.²⁴ We realize that when the needle that stopped on the red mark could have stopped on the black one, and when it stopped on the black mark it could have been the red one. Yet such considerations, as Poincaré remarks, do not depend on the fact that even a very sensitive apparatus cannot measure slight differences in the initial force of the push of the wheel, so that one cannot predict how the needle will move. Rather, they concern the fact that there is a contingency brought about by the player’s heart pounding, affecting the force of the initial push itself, and the fact that the particular strength of the given force has no absolute necessity. That is, they rest on the fact that there is no way to foresee other parameters of the force.

In this sense, that a certain clover has four and not three leaves is a matter of contingency, and that Mt Asama is a volcano and not an ordinary mountain is also a matter of contingency. Likewise, it was a matter of chance that Toyotomi Hideyoshi was born not in Kyoto or Osaka or somewhere else, but in Nakamura of what was once Owari Province. It is a purely contingent fact that I am not an

24. *Science et Méthode* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1916), 70–1.

American or an Indian but a Japanese, and that I am a human rather than an insect or a bird. Book 15 of the *Samyuktāgama* gives a clever illustration of the contingency of being born a human: a blind tortoise with an infinite lifespan lurks in the great sea and once in a hundred years sticks its head into the only hole of a floating log that drifts to and fro with the wind. Being born a human is like the head of the blind tortoise just happening to meet the hole.

Contingency elicits a feeling of wonder and amazement. Compounds with the sinograph for “strange” such as “curious coincidence” and “chance encounter” attest to the universality of that feeling. A good contrast is the feeling of contentment that accompanies necessity. Similarly, hope or perhaps worry accompany possibility, and despair or perhaps peace of mind go along with impossibility. When some phenomenon is possible, by its nature it gives rise to tense feelings of hope or concern. When it is impossible, hope changes to despair, concern to peace of mind; that is, it produces a feeling of release. A quiet sense of contentment accompanies necessity when a problem can be solved by analyzing and clarifying it. In contrast, contingency arouses the sense of excitement we find in wonder when we face an unsolved problem. In sum, because of their fixed and demonstrable character, impossibility and necessity elicit only a weak, static sense of release and tranquility, whereas possibility and contingency, because they deal with the probable, occasion strong, dynamic feelings of tension and excitement. The principal difference between the tense feelings of hope or worry that go along with possibility, and the excited feeling of wonder that accompanies contingency, is that the former concerns the future and the latter has to do with the present. With the possible, we expect that something nonexistent will exist in the future. In the case of the contingent, we see that although something exists in the present, it faces nonexistence. The wonder that accompanies contingency in the very instant when one possible side of a disjunction is posited is a metaphysical feeling attached to the absolute reason for positing the disjunction. Plato gives a remarkable example of the wonder (θαυμάζειν) in the *Symposium* (192B) when he writes that when one encounters his other by chance (ἐντύχη) “the pair tremble with amazement” (θαυμαστὰ ἐκπλήττονται).

We might think that such wonder would accompany the positing of any sort of disjunction, but it is particularly remarkable when it seems to us that the disjunction is purposeful, that is, when it looks like it is directed toward an end or purpose. Hence Aristotle understands αὐτόματον and τύχη as pertaining to the realm of phenomena that occur *for the sake of* something (ἔνεκα του), rather than as the effect of some actual thing.²⁵ That is, he thinks of contingency itself as related to purposefulness.... In these and other instances we detect the

25. *Physics* 11.6.197.

appearance of purpose in a contingency... There are many examples where strangeness is nothing but the sense of wonder with respect to the seeming purposefulness of a contingency.

The love of the contingent we see in literature is also based on the feeling of wonder or amazement about an apparent purpose. Literature or poetry in the broad sense makes contingency an important part of both its content and its form. Contingency is an essential part of the content of works like the *Morning Glory Diary*.²⁶ What we find here, however, is not simply one contingency. It is nothing but a variation on a theme in a melody. Novalis in his *Fragments* says that “all things poetic have to be fabulous; the poet worships chance.” In terms of form, we find the use of coincident rhymes with words that happen to sound the same but have very different meanings. For example, the meaning of the words “sheer” and “shear” bear no relation to one another and yet have the same pronunciation. Poetry often uses homonyms to give life to such contingencies.... The strangely charming thing about such poems is that we sense the serendipitous coincidence of one sound and two distinct meanings.... Paul Valéry defined poetry as “the system of coincidences in a language,” and speaks of “the philosophical beauty that rhyme possesses.”²⁷

.....

The import of the contingency we find in the content and form of literature lies in the metaphysical sense of wonder and the philosophical beauty that accompanies it. In a word, the sense of wonder that accompanies contingency in metaphysical terms is the emotion that moves us to seek a reason for the shift from nonexistence to existence, from existence to nonexistence. Contingency signifies the possibility of nonexistence. As Shakespeare says, “it hath no bottom.”²⁸ For Hegel, contingency evokes “absolute distress” (*absolute Unruhe*) for the same reason: *Es hat keinen Grund*.²⁹ In contingency, nonexistence transgresses upon existence. To that extent, contingency implies fragile existence. It simply links an extremely infirm existence to “this place” or “this moment.” And absolute necessity is nothing but the plunge of all contingency... or, as Kant says, “the true abyss.”³⁰

Every contingency fundamentally harbors within itself the fate of disinte-

26. [An early nineteenth-century story that was adapted for performance in puppet theaters and in Kabuki.]

27. *Variété* (Paris: Gallimard, 1924), 67, 159.

28. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV, 1,

29. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, II: 174,

30. *The Critique of Pure Reason*, B 641.

31. [Kuki is combining four discontinuous phrases from a passage in the southern version of the Chinese text. T 12, 612C.22–8]

gration or destruction. Chapter 2 of the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* says: “Living beings all return to death, separation follows being together, life is swallowed by death, all things return to extinction.”³¹ Existence faces nonexistence, and when nonexistence threatens existence we join in the utter perplexity of King Milinda to ask “Why?” In answer we can only repeat the words of Hegel: “The individual’s inadequacy as something universal is its original sickness and inborn seed of death.”³²

Conclusion

We have considered the clarification of contingency on three levels: logical, empirical, and metaphysical. We could as well call them categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive. Logical contingency arises in categorical judgments when a predicate modifies a subject or concept in a nonessential way. That is, it arises in cases where it becomes clear that an assertion lacks demonstrability and hence necessity, because the subject and predicate do not form an identity. Empirical contingency, to use logical terminology, arises when a term falls outside the connection between reasons and conclusion in hypothetical judgments. That is, it arises as a datum outside the domain of the demonstrability and necessity provided by the identity of reasons and conclusion. Metaphysical contingency can be said to obtain when we regard a given predicative judgment or a given hypothetical judgment as one case of a disjunctive judgment where any number of other cases are conceivable. In other words, it arises when we turn assertoricity (being) or apodicticity (necessity) into a matter of probability by placing an assertion or discursive proposition in the context of disjunctive relations and regarding it as one possible case, while emphasizing the difference versus the identity of that distinct case.

The core meaning of logical contingency has to do with individuals. The core meaning of empirical contingency concerns the chance encounter of one series of events with another. And the core meaning of metaphysical contingency concerns the possibility that something not be. By the very fact of its individuality, what applies to the individual is not the general concept but rather the characteristic of contingency. Because one independent series can encounter another by chance, it falls outside any necessary relation between reason and conclusion. And because it is possible that something not be, we find deviation from the absolute necessity of the absolute.

The three core meanings of contingency are by no means separate from one another but rather are inextricably tied together. The core meaning of “the individual and individual phenomena” lies in “the chance encounter between

32. *Encyklopädie*, §375.

one series and another,” and the core meaning of chance encounter lies in the possibility that the encounter not take place, in other words the possibility that something not be. The prototypical meaning that basically governs all three types of contingency is that a duality is set opposite a monistic necessity. Necessity simply indicates a mode of unity, whereas contingency only arises with some duality. In tracing the origin of individuals we posit a duality as opposed to a unity. A chance encounter requires two people or things. The possibility that something not be is fundamentally a rebellion against unity. The philosophy of Parmenides determined the meaning of being by the law of identity and saw nothingness as contrary to that law. It sprang out of a sense of wonder or perplexity about contingency and ended with a sense of the hazard of duality. It is not that we recognize no truth in Parmenides’ philosophy, for there, too, we discover someone immersed in the delight and the distress of being human.

Thus far we have said that the problem of contingency, since it entails the question of nothingness, is, strictly speaking, a metaphysical problem. We have also claimed that disciplines other than metaphysics, insofar as they ignore the question of nothingness, do not really problematize contingency. Contingency, as the chance encounter that occurs “at this time and at this moment” is something that can elicit an acute sense of danger as it faces boundless nothingness. For disciplines that think in generalities and pursue the necessities of laws and regularities, contingency probably counts as something totally irrational and worthless. Even Aristotle talks about the paralogism or inscrutable nature (*παράλογος*) of the contingent.³³ And Hegel remarks on how very inappropriate it is to seek to understand contingency by way of concepts.³⁴ Contingency, in other words, poses a limit to conceptual knowledge. The wonder that springs from the scrutiny of a concealed problem and the penetration of thought to the limits of conceptual knowledge constitutes the freedom and the prerogative enjoyed by philosophy.

In the same way that contingency is something meaningless in disciplines outside philosophy, there is no place for contingency in any ethical theory modeled after the sciences. If Kant’s ethical theory attempts to formulate a moral law akin to a universal law of nature that permits no exceptions, Jacobi’s righteous indignation at “the will that wills nothing” is not necessarily unreasonable. Jacobi is rebelling against this will that wills nothing, and says Kant is deceiving himself as Desdemona deceived herself...³⁵

If morality is not an empty idea and if we are to actualize it and give it some

33. *Physics* II.5.197A.

34. *Encyklopädie*, §250.

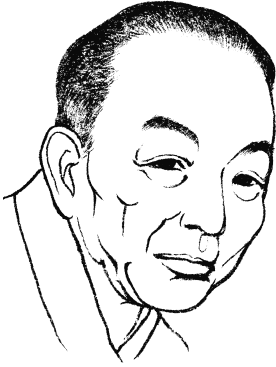
35. F.H. Jacobi, *Werke*, F. Köppen, ed. (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1812–25), III: 37.

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 Sutra* indicates as much when it says, "I observe that once the power of the Buddha's vow of salvation encounters me, the encounter never occurs in vain."³⁶ 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 "Why?" 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."

[JCM]

36. [T 26, 231a.24, 232a.28–29.]

WATSUJI Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960)



Watsuji Tetsurō was not only Japan's premier ethical theorist and historian of ethics in the first half of the twentieth century, but also an astute philosopher of culture and interpreter of religious traditions and practices. Born the son of a country physician in a village near the Inland Sea, at age sixteen he ventured out to the metropolis of Tokyo to study at its First Higher School and then the Imperial University, graduating in 1912 with a thesis on Schopenhauer's pessimism. Forty years later he published a memoir of his philosophy professor there, Raphael von Koeber. In his student years he took up the study of

Nietzsche, the subject of his first publication in 1913, followed two years later by a book on Kierkegaard, the first in Japan. In 1918 he issued a critique of Taishō-era infatuation with democracy, coupled with an appeal to ancient nature cults, under the ironic title, *The Revival of Idols*, and then began work on *A Critique of Homer* published nearly twenty years later. Among the religious, cultural, and historical studies he authored were *The Cultural-Historical Significance of Primitive Christianity* (1926), and *The Practical Philosophy of Primitive Buddhism* (1927).

Although he was not the first person to find philosophical thought in Dōgen* or Shinran*, the essay cited below opened Dōgen's writings to nonsectarian, philosophical inquiry for the first time. Watsuji's works were informed by the philological methods he learned from Koeber and later by the hermeneutical approach he gained during a year spent in Europe from 1927 to 1928, when he studied in Berlin, engrossed himself in Heidegger's just-published *Sein und Zeit*, and made excursions to the cultural centers of Italy. The trip proved to be a turning point in Watsuji's career and interests. Soon after returning to Japan he was made a professor of philosophy at Kyoto Imperial University, and in 1934 was appointed to the chair in ethics at Tokyo Imperial University. Inspired to develop the hermeneutical phenomenology he had come to know in Germany and further elucidate cultural differences, he published *Climate and Culture*, demonstrating how human spatiality shapes the intentionality of our perceptions and actions, and how climatic zones shape the character of interhuman relations and give rise to distinct cultures: pastoral, desert, and monsoon. The excerpt below from this work represents perhaps the world's first phenomenological description of weather.

Watsuji later abandoned these rather impressionistic idealizations of cultural types but continued to focus on interrelations among humans and between humans and their environments. His three-volume work on *Ethics* was completed in 1949 and followed Heidegger's lead in exploiting the literal meanings and the cultural

nuances of terms in his native language to drive home the insights of his analysis. The term translated as “human being” is an example. The ordinary modern Japanese word *ningen* refers to humans but its sinographs literally indicate the *inter-human* or relationship between one person and others, all who live together in a shared cultural space or “betweenness.” At the same time, he argued that Heidegger’s *Dasein* was individualistic and overemphasized the temporality of human existence to the neglect of relationality—spatial, temporal, cultural, and climatic—that Watsuji considered central. The passage cited below on the negative, dialectical structure of human existence reveals the influence of Nishida’s philosophy and Buddhist thought as well, but the work overall implies a critique of traditional Confucian and Buddhist thought that lacked a notion of intentionality and therefore an adequate base for philosophical analysis.

For Watsuji, ethics forms the core of philosophy, and in a two-volume *History of Japanese Ethical Thought* published in 1952 he attempted to lay out the manifestations of universal human relatedness in the particular historical strata of Japanese value systems, including that of emperor veneration as opposed to a feudal *‘bushidō’*. His critique of the samurai ethic did not, however, keep from applauding the benefits of self-negation, the superiority of Japan’s view of the human, and the virtue of the nation-state as the supreme form of human community—all of which served military factions during the Asian Pacific War with a rationale. While the political status of his views remains controversial, the clarity of his analyses is striking.

[JCM]

SHINRAN AND DŌGEN

WATSUJI Tetsurō 1923, 192–203

The most remarkable part of Shinran’s* teaching is his explanation of boundless ‘compassion’. For Shinran, compassion is the image of the absolute being.... But Shinran does not explain infinite compassion in phrases such as “love thy neighbor,” “love all humankind,” or “love between people is the most meaningful thing in life.” This is because he understands how feeble human love truly is, and how difficult it is for human beings to love selflessly. He distinctly separates human compassion from the Buddha’s compassion.... The path of sages is one of cultivating pity and sorrow. However, as long as people live in this world, we cannot truly help others, no matter how much our hearts pity or yearn for them.

Shinran’s great love for humanity is expressed here; we cannot help but be moved deeply by it. Indeed, how many hurting souls can we see immediately around us? And how much do we suffer because we cannot save people from their pain—or rather, because their pain is such that they cannot be saved from it? It is not that we don’t know the means to eradicate their suffering. The prob-

lem is that we can never embody these means, because our love is too meager, and human ability cannot go beyond certain limits....

This is where Shinran explains the compassion of the Buddha: The compassion of the 'Pure Land' is nothing other than chanting the name of the Buddha, quickly attaining buddhahood and, with that great compassionate heart, saving all sentient beings according to one's heart. It is not suffering due to unending compassion, but rather the interpenetrating compassion that is attained by chanting the Buddha's name, which we must call an all-encompassing compassionate heart. In other words, to save oneself is simultaneously to save others. To save others, one must be saved oneself. If you want to perfectly manifest the idea of "love thy neighbor," there is no alternative but to call upon 'Amida' Buddha. Through Amida we can *be perfectly loved* and we can *love perfectly*.

Thus the compassion that Shinran teaches is a great love that "cannot belong to humans." His emphasis was not on the relationship of person to person but rather the relationship of people to love itself. It is in this relationship of people to love that we can see the special quality of his belief that "all is forgivable." He says, "Of course even good people can reach the Pure Land (i.e., enter Heaven). Evil people are even more able to reach it..." According to this way of thinking, before the compassion of Amida there is no distinction between good and evil in human behavior. Indeed, it even seems that evil possesses more positive meaning than good....

Here there is a clear distinction between the 'karma' that controls humans and the humans that are controlled by karma. While karma leads much of human behavior, it is possible for humans, while being moved by karma, to place their hearts on the other shore. Namely, they can chant the '*nenbutsu*'. Thus, as long as a man's heart is on the other shore—or to put it another way, as long as he is chanting the name of the Buddha—no matter what evil deeds karma forces him to commit, he is not really the one responsible for them. Because of this, he is not punished for these evil deeds and can still be saved. However, if he does not entrust everything to Buddha, or in other words, if he believes he can make his heart one with karma and take the responsibility for his behavior himself, his fate and his karma must now go together. In this case, he cannot be saved. The question of whether or not a person can be saved is simply a matter of the attitude he takes toward *humans* and karma....

I have clarified two points so far. First, Shinran preached about Amida's compassion *toward* human beings, not about love *between* human beings. Second, at the core of his principle that all is forgivable is the condition that evil is both fearful and shameful. In contrast with Shinran, I will take up Dōgen*, who advocates "seeking the truth for the truth's sake..." What is the basis of his teaching of compassion? On what basis does he forgive evil, or fear it?

Dōgen says 'body-mind' must be abandoned for the sake of the 'dharma'.

This abandonment of body-mind has extremely important meaning for “loving thy neighbor as thyself.” The greatest force obstructing love is selfishness, which takes root in what Dōgen calls body-mind; this can be nothing other than “attachment to self.” When one throws away all desires to preserve one’s body-mind, empties the self, and lets oneself enjoy coming into contact with others, then love freely flows with the force of one’s whole character. The human compassion of which Shinran despaired will become a real possibility for one who throws away body-mind. This is because Shinran must regard the selfishness in karmic origins as an inescapable fact, while Dōgen is able to throw away selfishness. Whether we have the strength ourselves to completely alleviate the sufferings of others is not the issue here. The only issue is whether or not we can throw away the motivations within ourselves that obstruct love for our neighbors. Is it possible for there to be only one motivation, the motivation of love? By this alone can the compassionate heart, which is a problem for us, be resolved....

This type of mindset is “the mindset that places no weight in this life, deepens feelings for all sentient beings, and entrusts the self to the Buddhist faith.” This is an imitation of the patriarchs *for the sake of the ‘buddha-dharma’*, not for the purpose of saving people. If you do it for the dharma, in the instant that you give your body and your life to all sentient beings, your compassionate mindset acquires an all-encompassing understanding of your life in this world. In other words, you become compassion itself. Thus Dōgen saw this compassion—which is emptying the self and loving one’s neighbor as oneself—as a disposition no Buddhist could lack....

Of course, this was what Shinran called “compassion of the path of sages.” No matter how much this compassion is elevated, we cannot “completely save” all sentient beings.... If we were to ask about the effects of this compassion, they are sadly short-lived. But Dōgen does not teach compassion because of its effects. He teaches compassion because it is the path of the patriarchs. He often repeated, “The Buddha tore apart his body, flesh, arms, and legs, giving his whole body to all sentient beings.” The starving tiger that greedily devoured the Buddha’s body and flesh only satiated its hunger for a little while. If we consider the effects of giving one’s body and flesh for the momentary appeasement of one beast’s hunger, they are infinitesimal. But the Buddha’s sentiment in abandoning life and body to satisfy the hunger of a wild animal is deeply and boundlessly valuable.... For the Buddhist, the problem is not the degree to which one is able to alleviate the troubles of all sentient beings, but rather the degree to which one embodies *within oneself* the Buddha’s intention to alleviate the suffering of all sentient beings.

Here the distinction between Shinran’s compassion and Dōgen’s compassion becomes clear. The goal of Shinran’s teaching was compassion, and in order to

reach that goal he stressed that one should turn one's eyes away from human love for a while and only think devotedly of the Buddha. The goal of Dōgen's teaching was the truth, and in order to reach that goal he stressed selfless human love. Shinran preached the *Buddha's* compassion while Dōgen preached *human* compassion. Shinran placed emphasis on the *power* of compassion while Dōgen placed his emphasis on the *feeling* of compassion. Shinran's love is the infinitely increasing love of a *compassionate mother*; Dōgen's love is that of a *seeker of the way*, a love attained through disciplined training.

If this is the case, how does Dōgen's compassion handle the problem of evil? In the face of Shinran's compassion, any evil can be forgiven so long as one has the heart to fear it. Can Dōgen's compassion, which is a human compassion, forgive anything and everything?

First of all, if we are addressing the question of whether evil people can become buddhas, we must keep in mind that saving people's souls is not in the nature of the compassion that Dōgen teaches. For Dōgen, the perfect act of compassion is risking one's life and body to give food to the starving. In such a case, isn't the problem whether or not an evil person receiving this food can attain enlightenment? This compassion is practiced for the sake of the dharma; it is the practitioner's own practice, and is not aimed at salvation. Second, if we are talking about the attitude we should take toward "evil people," Dōgen's compassion does not ask whether a person is good or evil. For a child of the Buddha who "receives the family traditions of the 'Tathāgata' and must have mercy on all sentient beings as if they were his own only child," evil people are just sentient beings one "must have mercy on."

The same problem for Shinran arises for Dōgen: "Shouldn't we condemn evil?" The answer to this is that as long as we are concerned with our attitudes and not Amida's attitude, this problem does not have the great significance it had for Shinran. According to Dōgen, a person's "original heart" is not evil because good and evil are dictated by 'karma'. Therefore, people must seek good karma.... Children of the Buddha should throw away the "Hinayana' approach" that divides right from wrong and separates what is from what is not, and simply follow the words and deeds of the patriarchs, regardless of whether they are good or evil. Insofar as one imitates the devout patriarchs, one will naturally reject the evil they rejected. Where the actions of other people are concerned, as long as children of the Buddha treat them with compassion, it is unnecessary to ask questions of good and evil. This is because the child of the Buddha imitates the patriarchs and acts with compassion, not because he judges evil. To put it another way, for children of the Buddha, acting with compassion is important but judging evil is not....

One might suppose the compassion of the absolute not only forgives all but also never causes suffering. On the other hand, might one not also suppose

that when human compassion forgives all, it might be in error, and through its errors couldn't it tread on justice? For example, might not a compassionate mother's favoritism result in promoting evil?

If we understand compassion simply as the love inherent in humanity, there is probably no way to avoid this difficulty. However, Dōgen's compassion is the compassion of throwing off body-mind. It is the compassion of discarding attachment to self and love of fame. It is practiced for the 'Buddha's truth': to fill the world with goodness and righteousness, not to achieve worldly gains. Therefore, in the case of forgiving evil, let us not forget that it is not forgiving evil as such, but rather having pity for humanity. If we have this resolution, no matter what help others may require of us, we will always be able to help without any hesitation whatsoever....

To illustrate, Dōgen cites the example of everyday, petty things: for instance..., requesting someone to write a letter in order to press for a lawsuit.... If there is a way to aid the person even a little bit, it is best to throw away personal fame and fulfill the request....

Ejō³⁷ asked Dōgen about this point: "Is that really so? Even in the case of a person who intends to kidnap someone's family or hurt somebody, should we still help that person?" Dōgen replied:

How am I supposed to know whether one side or the other is in the right? To me it is only a matter of writing the one letter I was asked for. In this case, I think it goes without saying that you should write of your hope for the correct resolution; you should not pass judgment. Even if you knew the person requesting the letter was not in the right, once you heard the request to write it, it would be best to write the letter and include in it your opinion of the best solution to the situation.... Similarly, if you meet someone and you have reached the limit of your ability to help them, if you give the situation deep, deep intellectual assessment, in the end you will think of something. You should throw away attachment to ego and love of fame. (DŌGEN 1237, 38–9)

Through *faith*, Shinran blindly obeyed the guidance of patriarchs before him:

For me, Shinran, simply by doing the *nenbutsu*, I will be saved by Amida; for good people to make their wishes heard by Amida, they need nothing in particular other than faith. Is the *nenbutsu* really for being reborn in the Pure Land, or does it earn us karma that will condemn us to hell? I know nothing about this at all. Even if I were deceived by Hōnen Shōnin* and were to fall into hell because of the *nenbutsu*, I would have no regrets whatsoever. (SHINRAN N.D., 774)

37. [Koun Ejō (1198–1280) was one of Dōgen's principal disciples and came to be considered his successor in the Sōtō sect.]

As opposed to this, Dōgen imitated the patriarchs before him through 'cultivation'. He followed them for good or ill. Both Dōgen and Shinran are in agreement with regard to abandoning egoistic views and "following"; it is where the focus on "faith" and "cultivation" diverges that we find the notable difference between the two....

It seems to me that these similarities and differences recur again and again throughout both of their writings. Their similarities always maintain their different colors at the same time that they are one, and their differences, while having one root, remain different.... According to Shinran, compassion belongs to Amida. Therefore, human excellence loses its significance in the face of that compassion. According to Dōgen, compassion belongs to humans. Therefore, the significance of human excellence is deepened further by compassion. Shinran only explained the relationship between human good and evil and Amida's compassion, while Dōgen delved deeply into the relationships between people....

However, we cannot count too many of these similarities. This is because Shinran has very little to say concerning applied excellence. Therefore, we cannot know about the moral excellences that are supported by Amida's compassion. In contrast, we can find impassioned speeches on moral excellence by Dōgen, who preaches the compassion of humanity. Because of his "faith," Shinran, who was in immediate contact with the people and directly influenced their lives, had little to say about the path of human beings. On the other hand, because of his idea of "cultivation," Dōgen, who retreated into the forests and mountains solely in order to work towards realizing the truth, has great passion for the ways of human beings. This contrast is profoundly interesting.

[SB]

A PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE COLD

WATSUJI Tetsurō 1935, 7–10 (1–5)

All of us live on some piece of land or other, and the natural environment of this land "surrounds" us whether we like it or not. This seems an obvious fact, a matter of certainty. People usually discern this natural environment in the form of natural phenomena of various kinds, and accordingly concern themselves with the influences that the natural environment has on us—whether we are regarded as biological and physiological objects, or as engaged in practical activities such as the formation of a nation-state. Each of these influences is complicated enough to demand specialized study. What I am concerned with here, however, is the question whether the climate that we

take for a fact of our daily lives is to be regarded as a natural phenomenon. It is proper that the natural sciences should treat climate as a natural phenomenon from their own perspectives, but it is another question whether the phenomenon of climate is in essence an object of the natural sciences.

By way of clarifying this question, let me take as an example the phenomenon of cold, which is merely one constitutive part or moment within the phenomenon of weather, and something evident as far as our common sense is concerned. It is an undeniable fact that we feel cold. But what is this cold that we feel? Is it that the air of a certain temperature, that is, cold as a physical object, stimulates the sense organs in our body, so that we as physiological subjects experience it as a certain mental state? If so, it follows that the “cold” and “we” exist as separate and independent entities in such a manner that only when the cold presses upon us from the outside does the intentionality arise by which “we feel the cold.” In that case, it is natural that we think of this as the influence of the cold on us.

But is this really so? How can we know the independent existence of the cold before we feel cold? It is impossible. It is by feeling cold that we discover the cold. It is by misunderstanding the intentional relation that we consider the cold as something pressing in on us from the outside. It is not true that the intentional relation arises only when an object presses from the outside. As far as individual consciousness is concerned, the subject possesses the intentional structure within itself and as a subject already “directs itself toward something.” The “feeling” in “feeling the cold” is not a separate piece that results in a relation directed at the cold, but is in itself already a relation by virtue of its feeling something, and it is in this relation that we discover cold. As a relational structure, this intentionality is precisely a structure of the subject relating to the cold. The fact that we feel the cold is, first and foremost, a lived, intentional experience of this kind.

But, it may be argued, if this is the case, is not the cold merely a moment of subjective lived experience? The cold thus discovered is cold limited to the sphere of the “I.” But what we call the cold is a transcendent object outside me, not merely my feeling. How can a subjective experience form a relation with a transcendent object of this sort? In other words, how can the feeling of cold become related to the coldness of the outside air? This question involves a misunderstanding of what is intended in the relation of intentionality. The intention is not directed at some mental content. What is intended is not the cold as an experience independent of objective cold. When we feel the cold, it is not the sensation of the cold that we feel, but directly the coldness of the outside air, “the cold” itself. In other words, the cold felt in intentional experience is not something subjective but something objective. It may be said, therefore, that the intentional “relation” in which we feel the cold is one whereby we are

already related to the cold of the outside air. The cold as something existing transcendently comes about only in this intentionality. Therefore, from the start there is no problem in understanding how a feeling of cold supposedly comes into relation with the coldness of the outside air.

Seen this way, the usual distinction between subject and object, or more particularly the distinction between “us” and “the cold” as independent of one another involves a certain misunderstanding. When we feel the cold, we ourselves are already dwelling in the coldness of the outside air. That we come into relation with the cold means that we ourselves already “stand out into” the cold. Our very way of being is characterized by what Heidegger calls “*ex-sistere*” or, accordingly, by intentionality.

This leads me to the contention that, as “*ex-sisting*,” we ourselves stand over against ourselves. Even in cases where we do not face ourselves by means of reflection or by looking into ourselves, our selves are exposed to ourselves. Reflection is merely a mode of grasping oneself. Furthermore, it is not a primary mode of self-disclosure. But if the word “reflect” is taken in its visual sense, that is, if it is understood as bouncing against something and being displayed in the reflection coming back from it, then the word may well indicate the way in which our selves are exposed to ourselves. We feel the cold, that is, we are out in the cold. Therefore, in feeling the cold, we discover ourselves in the cold itself. This does not mean that we transport our selves into the cold and there discover the selves thus transported. The instant the cold is discovered, we are already out in the cold. Fundamentally, therefore, what is “present outside” is not some thing or object such as the cold, but rather we ourselves. “*Ex-sisting*” is the fundamental structure that defines our selves, and it is on this structure that intentionality depends. Feeling the cold is an intentional experience in which we discover our selves already *ex-sisting* outside in the cold.

We have considered the problem in terms of the individual’s consciousness in experiencing the cold. But as we have been able to use the expression “we feel the cold” without any difficulty, it is “we” who experience the cold, not “I” alone. We feel the same cold in common. It is precisely because of this that we can use words describing the cold in our exchange of daily greetings. The fact that the feeling of the cold differs between us is possible only on the basis of our feeling the cold in common. Without this basis it would be quite impossible to recognize that any other “I” experiences the cold. Thus, it is not I alone but we—or more strictly, I when I am “we” and we when we are each an “I”—who are outside in the cold. What fundamentally defines our “*ex-sistence*” is this we, not an “I” by itself. Accordingly, to “*ex-sist*” means already to be out among other “I”s before it means to be out in some thing such as the cold. This is not the relation called intentionality, but rather an interrelation called *aidagara*,

betweenness. It is primarily we in this mutual relationship of betweenness who discover ourselves in the cold.

I have attempted to clarify the phenomenon of cold, but we do not experience this phenomenon of the weather in isolation from others of its kind. It is experienced in connection with warmth or heat, as well as with wind, rain, snow, or sunshine, and so forth. In other words, the cold is simply one of the whole series of similar phenomena that we call weather. When we enter a warm room after being in the cold wind, when we feel a mild spring breeze after a cold winter is over, or when we are caught in a torrential shower on a boiling hot summer day, we first of all apprehend ourselves within these weather conditions that are other than ourselves. Again, when changes in the weather occur, we first of all apprehend changes in ourselves. This weather, too, is not experienced in isolation. It is experienced only in connection with the soil, the topographic and scenic features of some land, and so forth. A cold wind may be experienced as a mountain gust or as the cold, dry wind that sweeps through Tokyo at the end of the winter. The spring breeze may be one that scatters cherry blossoms, or that caresses ocean waves. So, too, the heat of the summer may be of the kind to wilt vigorous green leaves or to entice children to play merrily at the sea. Just as we find ourselves happy or saddened in a wind that scatters the cherry blossoms, so do we apprehend our wilting selves in the very heat of summer that scorches plants and trees in a spell of dry weather. In other words, we discover ourselves—our selves as interrelated—in climate.

[GB]

ETHICS

WATSUJI Tetsurō 1945, 11–22, 106–7, 125, 278, 283–6

The Study of Human Being

My approach to ethics is based on an inquiry into the meaning of the Japanese word for “human being,” *ningen*. The primary significance of this approach is that it frees us from a fallacy prevalent in the modern world, namely that ethics is to be constructed solely as a problem of individual consciousness. This fallacy is grounded in the individualistic view of man that developed in the modern period. Clearly, this concept of the individual is, in and of itself, an achievement of the modern spirit and is imbued with a profound significance that we must not overlook. At the same time, however, we must note that what individualism sought to do was to substitute the individual, which is but one moment of human existence, for the entirety of human being. This abstraction has become the source of all manner of fallacy. One example of this is the asser-

tion that the isolated ego should serve as the point of departure for modern philosophy. The fallacy of this assertion is not so pronounced when the assertion is placed within the confines of problems that call strictly for reflecting on an objectified view of nature. This is because the stance required to reflect objectively is already one step removed from the concrete nature of human existence. By virtue of this, it moves from a context in which those who do the reflecting function throughout as “viewers of objects” that are seen as specimens; or, to put it differently, it as if those who reflect were acting strictly from a subjective position. However, it must be said that this isolated subjective stance, from its inception, has nothing to do with the problem of human existence, which is a problem of the practical, active, and relational interconnections of our existence. Moreover, this isolated subjective stance, from which has been eliminated the practical, active, relational interconnections that exist between one human being and another, is then made to apply to ethical problems. With this, the context of ethical problems becomes confined to the *relationship that exists between subjectivity and nature*, and therein it is attributed to its own field as a problem of will, which is seen as standing in opposition to the problem of awareness. Consequently, such issues as the independence of the self in relation to nature, the control of self over itself, and the satisfaction of the desires of the self are placed at the heart of ethical problems. However, in whatever direction one seeks to develop a theory regarding such problems, if that work is based solely on this stance, it will never be possible to solve those problems. In the end, if such issues as the self that transcends the individual and the well-being of society and the welfare of all humankind are not brought forward, then first principles cannot be established. This tells us that ethical problems are not simply matters of individual consciousness.

The context of ethical problems is not to be found within the consciousness of the isolated individual, but rather within the mediating space or “betweenness” that exists between one person and another. Ethics thus is none other than what could be called the study of human being. Without seeing ethics as the study of this dynamic mediating space, which exists between one person and another, we will not be able to unravel the nature of virtue, responsibility, obligations, and of the good and the bad within human actions. Moreover, we will be able to clarify this issue through an examination of the concept of *rinri* or ethics itself, which is the very subject we are addressing here.

The concept of ethics is expressed by the word *rinri*. When we reflect on the nature of words and language, it is obvious that language is one of the most remarkable things created by humankind. There is no one who can say, for example, that he or she personally has created a language, and yet the words used by any one person are very much his or her own words. This characteristic of words originates from the fact that language is the crucible that converts

the subjective relations of human beings into noematic meanings. To put it differently, language is the process through which the existence that is prior to consciousness is brought into consciousness. This existence is simultaneously a subjective reality that cannot be objectified and a practical, active network of human relations already existing. Thus, when that existence is brought into consciousness, it possesses a structure that is not merely a source of individual existence, despite the fact that its contents rest within individual consciousness. In this sense, language is also an expression of the subjective existence of human beings and, consequently, it provides us with a passageway into our subjective existence. In trying to clarify the concept of ethics, I shall first make language into an intermediary in the process, and my reasons for doing this are based on the argument I have just stated.

With that, let us begin. The Japanese word for ethics, *rinri*, is comprised of two sinographs. The first of them, *rin*, means “companion” or “associate” or “someone with whom one has a relationship within a certain space.” This space of relationship, or *nakama*, can refer to a group serving as a relational system for a given set of people as well as to the individuals that comprise it. In ancient China, the ‘five relationships’ between father and son, lord and subject, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, and friend and friend were referred to as “the great human *rin*” and were considered the most essential relational spaces. But if the relationship between father and son can be characterized as a type of *rin* or *nakama*, this does not mean that a father and a son first exist as separate individuals and then later join to create this relationship. It is only within the context of this relationship that a father can be called a father and a son a son: the father comes to be a father and the son a son only by virtue of each belonging to a relational system.

How is it, then, that in one *nakama* individuals can be defined as father and son, and in another as friends? Because a *nakama* is none other than a way of engaging in a specific relationship. Thus, *rin* stands for both *nakama* (the individual or group that is engaged in a specific relationship with others) and the ways of actively engaging in that specific relationship within human existence. Hence, we may say that *rin* refers to the conventions or patterns of living in human existence, that is to say, to the broader order found within human existence—the “way of the human.”

The ways we engage actively in these human interconnections do not exist in and of themselves as something apart from the relationships themselves. In each case they exist only as *ways* of engaging with humanity through actions based on those active relationships. But insofar as human existence, which is dynamic in nature, realizes itself again and again in such *specific ways* of engagement, it is possible to abstract their *continued* expression from their foundation in dynamic existence, and thereby gain some understanding of them. The

Confucian concept of *rin* and the idea of the Five Constant Relations and “Five Cardinal Virtues” are examples of how these ways of engagement can take on noematic significance. The sinograph ‘*ri*’, which is appended to *rin* to form the word for ethics, is defined in Japanese as “reasoning” or as “that which establishes a reasoned connection within a discourse.” In general we may say that *ri* was added as a means of further emphasizing that ethics is a reasoned discourse on the active ways of engagement or order we have just referred to. Therefore, ethics is to be understood as nothing other than the order or way that makes the communal existence of humans what it is. In other words, ethics is the law of social existence.

If this is so, does ethics not carry within it a sense of functioning as a moral imperative, since the nature of the ethical order has already been realized? The answer is both yes and no. The fifth of the Confucian five relationships states, “between friends there is trust.” To the extent that an association characterized as a friendship has been established, it already has at its base the “trust” that is one of the constituent modes of engaging in this specific relationship. Without trust, a friendship cannot come into being. Yet an association between people is not static but exists dynamically in an active, interconnected relation. That a previous action within a relationship was expressed in a certain mode does not mean that one cannot break from that mode of action in the future. Consequently, at every moment communal existence bears within itself the danger of and potential for its own destruction. Still, by virtue of its own nature—that is, because human existence is human existence—it is permanently oriented turning toward the realization of a communal existence. From there, despite the fact that a mode of engaging an active interconnected relationship has already been determined, that mode also serves as the momentum that compels one to continue to act. Therefore, ethics is, on the one hand, something that already exists, though not as a simple moral imperative, and, on the other, something that must be eternally actualized, though not as a simple law of being.

Thus far, we have been able to clarify the concept of ethics based on an examination of the meaning of the word *rinri*. Needless to say, this word bears within it the intellectual history of ancient China, and the more we reflect on the social forms of ancient China in socioreligious terms, the more the profound significance of its intellectual history comes to the fore. However, it is important to state that what we are seeking to do here is not to revive an ideology of human relationships based on the social forms of ancient China exactly as it existed. Rather our assertion is simply that ethics is always a problem of the mediating relational aspects that exist between one person and another. By virtue of this, what we are attempting here is simply to resurrect the significance of ethics as the way of engaging relationships among human beings.

Yet, as we seek to clarify this concept of ethics, what also becomes evident is

that the keys to this clarification are to be found in none other than such concepts as human existence, active interconnected relations, and the “betweenness” that exists between one person and another. *Rin*, as we have seen, means both *nakama* and the modes of engaging in active interconnected relations as a *nakama*. But just what is this *nakama*, and what is this thing we call a human being? These are not self-evident concepts. To inquire into the meaning of ethics is, in the end, an inquiry into the ways of engaging human existence and, consequently, an inquiry into the very meaning of being human. In short, the study of ethics is the study of human being.

In light of this, we must first work to clarify this concept of human being, which we have used in a vague sense thus far. This is especially necessary in order to distinguish it from the philosophical anthropology that has become popular in recent years. Philosophical anthropology, as seen, for example, by Max Scheler in *Man's Place in Nature*, seeks to grasp the “person” as a unity of spirit and vital drives. This is simply another way of framing a view of the human in terms of the unity of body and mind. Scheler also locates the typology of classical anthropology within this same framework:³⁸

1. The concept of the person in the Christian faith. Here the person is created originally by a personal God, but is punished for his sin and redeemed through Christ. This becomes the point of departure for an anthropology centered on the problem of the spirit and the flesh.
2. The person as a rational being (*homo sapiens*). Here the person possesses spirit, that is, reason; this spirit forms the world as world; this spirit of reason within the human person is active in and of itself, without being influenced by sensation; this is unchanged by historical, ethnic, or cultural factors. (Only this last point is challenged by Hegel.) Dilthey and Nietzsche were the philosophers who saw through this argument and realized that this form of anthropology is nothing more than an invention of the Greeks.
3. The person as a working being, a technician (*homo faber*). This view conflicts with the former in seeing no essential distinction between human beings and animals. Still, given that humans create language and tools, they can be distinguished from other animals by virtue of their particularly developed brain. This is the anthropological position of naturalism and positivism.
4. The person as a being that has become enfeebled by spirit. This view is a new attack on *homo sapiens*.
5. The concept of the person as a transcendent being. This anthropology sees the grandeur of the person in the ascent to self-consciousness.

All five of these types abstract the human being from the context of the

38. “Mensch und Geschichte,” *Philosophische Weltanschauung*, 1929.

social group and treat the human being as an autonomously generated being. The problem of the person is always posited in terms of spirit and flesh or of a self. Hence, despite the fact that Scheler's form of mind-body theory stands in opposition to formal anthropology and is, therefore, advanced as a *philosophical anthropology*, insofar as it locates the essence of the person solely in the individual, there is no fundamental change of standpoint.

It seems to me that this tendency is based on the assumption that words like *anthropos*, *homo*, man, and *Mensch* can have no meaning apart from the individual human being. To adopt this position one has to express things like society, communal existence, and the betweenness between one person and another in language somehow distinct and removed from the person. If, on the other hand, a person is essentially a social animal, then it is impossible to abstract the betweenness or social element from the person. A person must be understood as a being who is capable of existing individually while at the same time living within a social space. The Sino-Japanese term *ningen* captures well this twofold nature of human existence. From the standpoint of *ningen*, the fact that the "study of the human" and the "study of society" have been set up as separate disciplines indicates that each has extracted one aspect of the concrete experience of the human being, raised it to an abstraction, and forced it to be examined in isolation. If we are to study human being in its concrete particularity, then there must be a single field that focuses on the study of *ningen*. Such a study does not aim at some vague synthesis of anthropology and social science; it must be something fundamentally different. For if we are ever to understand the individual and the social as constituting the dual character of the human and to uncover therein the profound essence and meaning of human existence, we cannot pose the question on the assumption of an unambiguous and radical distinction between the individual and the social.

.....

So we are in possession of this deeply significant term *ningen* and out of it have fashioned a concept of the human according to which the human being *is* "in society" and *is* an individual "person" in society. Human being *is not* just individuals and it *is not* just society. Here we see the dialectical unity of the twofold character of the human being. Insofar as human beings *are* individuals, they will always differ from society. They *are* human individuals because they *are not* society. Accordingly, one individual person is never entirely in commune with every other. Self and other are absolutely "other." That said, to the extent that human beings are in the world, they are always in commune with other individuals; they are a society, and never just isolated individuals. Human beings are human precisely because they *are not* isolated individuals. Self and other, though absolutely "other," are one in their communal existence. The individual, though fundamentally different from society, is effaced within society.

This is the sort of unity of opposites that human beings are. To ignore this dialectical structure is to fail to comprehend the true nature of our existence.

.....

The concept of *ningen* thus differs from that of *anthropos* by virtue of its twofold character of being in society and being an individual. But is it correct to equate, as we have, “being in the world” with communal existence or society? The question brings us to a key problem in modern philosophy.

When Heidegger defined human existence as “being-in-the-world,” he began from the idea of *intentionality* as developed in modern phenomenology. He deepened its structure and brought it into the realm of existence, understanding it as something akin to our connection to tools. Indeed, he gave us a model for clarifying the *subjective* significance of what it means to be “in the world.” But for Heidegger communication between persons has been overshadowed by the liaison between persons and their tools. Despite his insistence that he has not overlooked this question, the fact is, it has clearly been neglected.

.....

It seems clear that there is a sense in which the “world” can refer to *society as subject* or to *communal existence*. To know a few friends is not to know a society. One or two people causing a commotion does not amount to a social disturbance. The social world constituted by subjects who know each other or get involved in a disturbance with each other is an active connection taking place between persons, but at the same time it is also a *communal subject* in a connection that goes beyond the individuals: it is a *subjective communal existence*.

The advantage of this kind of idea of a “social world” as opposed to the simple idea of the “world” is that it grasps both the temporal and the spatial aspects of our subjective communal existence. As we have noted, “world” can refer to a generation or to a group or collection of individuals that belong to a generation as “located in its place.” With time, however, the temporal and ‘place’-related significance seems to have yielded to the tendency to see the world as the sum of the objects of nature. If the meaning of Japanese words for the social world, like *seken* and *yo no naka*, continue to undergo change, they have yet managed to retain some sense of the broader subjective element. Hence the very concept of the social world they convey entails historical, environmental, and social cultural structures that are integral to human existence.

[RMO]

The Negative Structure of Human Existence

In the course of trying to pinpoint the individual persons who make up the mediating space we have called “betweenness,” we saw that in the end they dissolve within their communality. Individual persons do not subsist in themselves. Yet in our attempts to locate something communal, some whole,

we have now discovered that this is nothing but the negation of the individual's independence. Nor does the whole subsist in itself. To say, moreover, that a whole takes shape in the negation of the individual's independence is still to recognize the independence of the individual who is being negated and restricted. Individual persons therefore subsist in their interconnection with wholeness. Similarly, to say that the individual's independence is constituted in the negation of a communality is already to recognize the whole that is being negated and rebelled against. Accordingly, we must say that the whole subsists in its interconnection with the individual's independence. Neither the individual nor the whole subsists in itself; each subsists only in connection with the other.

As we have seen, interconnection with the other is in each case a negative relation. The independence of the individual arises when it rebels against the whole, and a whole is formed when it negates the individual's independence. Thus the individual must have its separate individuality negated for the whole to form, and the whole is the base against which the individual must rebel in order for it to arise. For the one to exist in an interconnection with the other means that it exists by negating the other and by being negated by the other.

It is the betweenness characteristic of human existence that allows individuals and society to form in their mutual negations. Regarding human existence, therefore, we cannot say that individuals arise first of all and then form social relationships among each other, nor can we say that societies arise first and out of them individuals are created. Neither has precedence over the other. As soon as the one is discovered it has negated the other, and it arises as one that has already undergone the other's negation. If we are to speak of precedence at all, then, we necessarily imply this negation. This negation, moreover, is never found apart from individual and society mutually arising. In a sense, it makes its appearance precisely in the form of individuals and society. Insofar as individuals and society are already being formed, society is the relation between individuals and the individual is an individual within society. Hence, if on the one hand we regard society as a set of mutual activities or human relationships, or on the other hand see society as an autonomous group beyond the individual, we grasp only one side of the betweenness characteristic of human existence. Such views can be acknowledged as long as they do not claim to grasp the betweenness of human existence in its ground. Fundamentally, both sides arise through negation, and so it is only in negation that the mutual acts of individuals and autonomous groups, respectively, exhibit their true form....

The Fundamental Law of Human Existence

We have claimed that the negative structure of human existence is the fundamental law that ceaselessly allows human beings to take shape pre-

cisely as they do. Apart from this law there is no human existence; it is the very foundation of being human. Yet we began by defining the foundation of human community, that is, the law of human existence, as ethics. Hence we must conclude that it is precisely this fundamental law that constitutes foundational ethics. The basic principle of the discipline of ethics is this foundational ethics. We may, then, stipulate very generally that the basic principle of the study called ethics is “the dynamic activity of absolute negativity returning to itself by way of itself”...

Trust

Having understood human action in terms of the spatio-temporality of human existence, we may now consider the vital significance of trust and truth for human existence. What does trust mean? What is the ground of trust?...

In the previous section we looked for the ground of trust along two different lines, the ultimate principle of morality, and human society. To put it in our terms, we sought the ground of trust in the law of human existence, that is, in the reciprocal activity of diversifying and unifying. Yet this description does not suffice if we are to see the phenomenon of trust as a problem, for trust does not occur merely by a process of overcoming an opposition between self and other and creating a unity. The unity yet to come must also be assured beforehand, in the present. The ground of trust, therefore, will be adequately clarified only by referring to the spatio-temporal structure behind the activity of diversifying and unifying human subjects.

Nicolai Hartmann is someone who recognized the temporal element in the phenomenon of trust. He examines two kinds of trust, *Zuverlässigkeit* or trustworthiness, and *Vertrauen* or trust in another.³⁹ Trustworthiness is also called “the ability to make promises,” the ability to assure that one’s given word regarding a matter not yet realized will indeed be kept. Hence, trustworthiness is valuable to the degree that a future action is assured. The trustworthy person does not change his intention until the matter is realized as promised. In promising he binds his will. Only such trustworthy persons are able to remain within the bounds and order of social life, that is, to live in society. The capacity to be trusted is thus basically the moral capacity of the person to prescribe his or her future disposition beforehand. Personhood is realized by preserving oneself not only in present intentions but in intentions to come. This identity of intentions or will, and the identity of personhood behind it, constitutes the ground of trustworthiness. Hartmann discusses trust in others only after exam-

39. Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethik* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1926), 422ff.

ining that on which it is based, the trust proper to the individual person alone. For Hartmann, one trusts on the spur of the moment on the assumption that a person is trustworthy, and that is what trust in others implies. It is not the case that one trusts only after testing whether or not the person really is trustworthy. Trust involves taking a risk, making a wager. All human relationships are built on such trust. “Trust is the capacity for community.”⁴⁰ According to Hartmann, then, a society takes shape only when mutual trust exists among individual people. For him, human society is not the ground of trust. Hence the second line of investigation that we mentioned above is discarded, and the ground of trust is once again relegated to the personal identity of the individual or the moral value of personhood. The point we wish to emphasize is different. Even if it comes down to a matter of personal identity, it is necessary to proceed from personal identity only because one can prescribe beforehand one’s future will or intention, one’s future behavior or actions.

This aspect is much more important than Hartmann thinks. He believes that “self-predestination” can be explained purely in terms of personal identity. He writes, “The person making a promise identifies himself as one now who will be the same self later.”⁴¹ But does one’s self-identity vanish when one breaks a promise? No, rather self-identity underlies the ability to break a promise. Self-identity does not change according to whether there is trust or distrust, fidelity or betrayal. We must say that Hartmann is misled in his attempt to ascribe moral persistence (*moralische Beharrung*) to personal identity. A more basic law is at work in the ability to prescribe beforehand one’s future behavior. To recognize it we must come to grips with the temporal element in the law of human existence.

The phenomenon of trust is not simply a matter of believing in another person. It requires taking a stance *in advance* toward an undetermined future within the relationship between one and another. Such a decision is possible because the past that we carry with us is at the same time the future we head for. Our actions right now occur in an identity between this past and the future, in the sense that we “recur” in our actions. While the past that our actions carry with them belong, for the time being, to yesterday’s mediating space, this space of betweenness arose in our doing or not doing something. And this doing or not doing likewise occurs as the dynamic activity of recurrence. The past, then, is the dynamic activity of recurrence going on endlessly. Similarly, while the future that our actions aim at belongs for the time being to tomorrow’s mediating space, this space of betweenness will presumably arise by our doing or not

40. Hartmann, *Ethik*, 471.

41. Hartmann, *Ethik*, 466.

doing something. The future likewise moves on endlessly as the dynamic activity of recurrence. Our actions right now continually carry this activity from the past and head for it in the future. What runs through the entirety of our actions is nothing but the dynamic activity of a return to our undetermined, original authenticity. Present actions, as a link in this activity, exhibit the dynamic structure that we call recurrence. So no matter how finite human existence may be, we must not lose sight of the fundamental movement that proceeds from this original authenticity and returns to it. Our origin, where we start out, is also our final destination, the culmination of our origin. The decision to take a stance in advance toward an undetermined future is rooted most profoundly in this original authenticity.

The ground of trust, as we have said, is found in the spatio-temporal structure of human existence. In other words, the law according to which human existence unfolds spatially and temporally is also what allows trust to appear. The supposedly self-evident proposition that human relationships are based on trust actually has the matter backwards. The basis on which human relationships occur is the law of spatio-temporal human existence, and that is the ground of trust as well. Along with human relationships, trust also arises on this ground. Human relationships, then, are at the same time relationships of trust; where they exist, trust is found. In saying this, however, we are not claiming that there is no such thing as a relationship of distrust or of betrayal. Distrust and betrayal indicate a lack of trust. As a rebellion against the law of human existence, they are negated in its uttermost depths. This is why betrayal has always been held in contempt as a most detestable offense. But how is it possible to lack trust? This question turns our attention to the issue of truthfulness in human beings.

[JCM]

MIYAKE Gōichi 三宅剛一 (1895–1982)

It was reading Nishida Kitarō's* *An Inquiry into the Good* as a middle-school student that first turned Miyake Gōichi's attention to philosophy. Already from the time of his undergraduate studies at Kyoto University Miyake was recognized as one of the brightest students in Nishida's circle. For ten years after graduation he submerged himself in neo-Kantianism and study of the phenomenological method, culminating in a year at Freiburg where he participated in seminars in Husserl's home and attended Heidegger's lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology*. While in Germany he collaborated with another Japanese student in Freiburg to prepare a German précis of Nishida's recently published book, *A Self-Aware System of the Universal*, which he presented to Heidegger only to have it dismissed rather lightly. After returning to Japan Miyake published a major essay on Heidegger's thought, prompting harsh words from Nishida, who considered "hermeneutical phenomenology" nothing more than another brand of idealism. He devoted the next several years to a serious study of the history of western philosophy, but this was only the prelude to his deeper pursuit of the inner structure of history. In studying the idea of history in Nishida's later thought, Miyake's own philosophical position took shape. In 1954 he was invited to take a chair in the history of philosophy at Kyoto University, where he remained until retirement. Although Miyake himself is rarely associated with the Kyoto School, he always held Nishida in the highest regard. His philosophy is a curious blend of realism and pessimism, somehow suited to his ascetic and withdrawn nature. The work for which he is best known is his *Human Ontology*, completed when he was seventy-one years of age. The passages extracted below are all from that book and include its opening and closing sentences. It was followed in the next decade by works on ethics, aesthetics, and time.

[JWH]

HUMAN ONTOLOGY AND HISTORY

MIYAKE Gōichi 1966, 1–6, 141–5, 154–6, 193–5, 233–8

For some time now I have had it in mind to organize my philosophical ideas into a theory of human existence. As I began thinking and writing about the reality of the human in history and society, and about how we come to our knowledge of it, I found a vision of the whole gradually taking shape around a central axis of considerations. I am now persuaded that a careful and comprehensive consideration of the reality, and indeed the possibility, of the human is fundamental for philosophy....

My method I would describe as phenomenological, although I understand

that term in a liberating and performative sense: while my fundamental orientation is phenomenological, it is not bound to the methods of any particular philosopher.

In the history of western philosophy, ontology has taken any number of forms. To clarify its relationship to theories of human existence requires attention to the history of philosophy. I have given the matter some consideration in these pages, but as this is not my principal concern, there are many points at which my arguments are incomplete.

Previously I tried to elaborate my own position with regard to absolutist philosophies in Japan, and of late my ideas seem to have earned some acceptance. The treatment of Nishida's* philosophy in this book are in the same vein, although there are probably points at which my understanding is inadequate. On such matters I look forward to serious criticism and refutation—not just criticisms from the outside, not just defensive and disengaged commentary, but a discussion that gets to the heart of the matter and engages the responsibility of those philosophizing. In this sense I have high regard for Tanabe Hajime's* and Takahashi Satomi's* critiques of Nishida's philosophy, even if theirs is not the last word on the subject.

Questioning Human Existence

What does it mean to think about human existence? Why make a particular problem of our existence? All sorts of things can be objects of knowledge and the human being is one of them. This is how the empirical sciences pursue the human, and to be sure they give us knowledge of various abstract aspects of the reality of the human. But do they really clarify, in a fundamental and comprehensive way, human existence itself, this thing we call “human life”? Human life refers to the totality of human reality, including the reality of death. The quest of the human is not restricted to science. It presses in on us in literature and elsewhere, even more forcefully than it does in philosophy. All of this needs to be brought into the picture.

The quest of the human is not aimed at some entity that lies outside the quest; it must include the very one doing the seeking. The concrete reality of the human being as subject and as consciousness cannot be clarified simply in terms of a subjectivity opposed to an objectivity, or a consciousness opposed to the objects of consciousness. We cannot know reality without experiencing it, but what does it mean for human beings to experience themselves? And how does this relate to the experience of other persons or things in the external world? These questions need to be foremost. We have to begin by clarifying the mode of being of the object being asked about, the way it is received, and the means by which it is known and understood. Philosophy's study of the human

has its own special quality that differs from scientific knowledge of human beings or from theories of human life based on intuition and feeling.

If one asks what a human being is, expecting the answer that “the human being is such and such,” one is aiming at a definition of the human being as something that exists. When we are told that the human being is a living thing possessed of logos (language and reason) or an animal that wields tools, what is the logical status of such an essential definition? It is a way of locating the human being unambiguously within a completed system of already known existing beings.

In the history of philosophy, general ontology was conceived of and took the form of the study of existence itself—or τὸ ὄν in general. But could human existence be grasped adequately in this kind of ontology? The definition of the human as “such and such a thing” is an object-definition in the broad sense of the term (that is, including systemic definitions). In the final analysis, can the reality of the human—that fact that humans *are*—be defined in terms of an object? The idea that the life of a human being and the reality of the human are in fact things that cannot be defined as objects is hardly new. But this needs to be examined in terms of whether a particular character assigned to actual human existence is right or wrong, whether a concrete analysis is suitable or not. The questions should not be discussed in the form of a full-fledged *Lebensphilosophie* or existentialism.

Things can exist in any number of ways. Stones and trees exist, as do birds and beasts, houses and roads. The world itself can be said to exist, but where does *human* existence fit in this picture? Given the different kinds of domains in which things exist—for example, we may speak of nonliving things and living things, humans included, as each having their own domains, or of the domains of nature and history—and given the construction of what we may call a territorial ontology for these various domains of existence, is human existence one of these domains of existence? Or is it something that cannot be conceived in such terms? To answer this question, we have to clarify the connections that unite these domains of existence into a whole. Is this not finally the role of general ontology? I believe that the epistemic situation of contemporary philosophy does not permit the philosophical elucidation of human existence to take place within the system of general ontology. But more than just taking the present situation into account, we have to consider the history of philosophy up until now, including the recent history of Japanese philosophy...

Historical Interaction

Let us return to our consideration of the essential character of historical activity. History is interaction centered on behavior that produces social

results. Concrete behavior, accordingly, is invariably motivated by the needs, wants, tasks, and so forth of a given set of circumstances. If that is so, what are those circumstances concretely?

Historical circumstances come about through the interweaving of the past and the future in the present, of subjective and social objective factors. The way in which those conditions are received constitutes experience in the broad sense, but this does not mean that experience is purely passive. The present urges of the senses and the perception of one's given situation include a participation in a collective life that has already been culturally and institutionally organized. As agents, human beings experience their circumstances with an accompanying orientation towards the future, determined by whether they are satisfied with their situation or not, whether it makes them feel liberated or oppressed. Action is undertaken either in submission to present circumstances or in a readiness to change them. In the case of the latter, it is possible to confirm through phenomenological reflection that the way in which circumstances appear already shows an orientation towards the future, that one's concrete mode of being in the present depends on the attitude one takes towards future possibilities.⁴²

The reality of human life includes the way circumstances are received and the subjective attitude taken towards them. Action is an event within that life, but the fact that it can have social functionality means that in some sense action is a response to demands and tasks grounded in collective experience. In this way, historical process is organized through the linkage of actions that have social functionality. Action takes place within particular circumstances or else in response to them. The way circumstances are received differs according to one's social class, generation, or affiliation. The "same circumstances" can induce different attitudes and aims: they can be reinforcing, satisfying, and beneficial in one case, and unjust, dissatisfying, and oppressive in another; or they can appear to consciousness as a blend of the two.

Any given set of circumstances is multifaceted because it is inseparable from the flow of human activity. Particular demands and tasks are tied into everything, from the customs and values that have been handed down to the work at hand. Historical decisions and actions are carried out as a positive response to needs that have arisen from these circumstances and presented themselves as tasks to be completed. Because circumstances do not appear the same to all, neither do the needs and tasks grounded in them. Consequently, what is demanded within any given set of circumstances, and what tasks are presented for resolution, are conditioned by various factors within the society in question. In actuality, these factors are systematically elaborated by established institu-

42. See M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, §65; J.-P. Sartre, *L'être et le néant* (Paris : Gallimard, 1957) 568–9.

tions. These institutionalized ramifications regulate and condition action. In other words, action takes place with ties to institutions like economics, law, politics, education, morality, and religion, and is connected to the preservation or reformation of those institutions. A particular view of history comes about when we identify the legal, contractual connections at work in the historical process of such institutional systems. I do not intend to discuss views of history here. My question is more rudimentary. A particular view of history is a judgment about the totality of the processes of history, but our historical experience and historical knowledge do not display the kind of dynamic regularity of unconditional structural relations to allow for such a judgment. The claim that in general one structural element of historical reality always and unilaterally governs the others is unfounded.

....

Historical activity comes about within circumstances that provide it with motivation. The way in which conditions are presented, experienced, and grasped is regulated by the posture of the subject towards the future. This posture is not a matter of individual consciousness alone; not a few collective unconscious elements come into play. As circumstances take concrete shape and incite action, they incorporate things from the past and the future, from social tradition and individual subjectivity. In trying to express this in logical form a certain circularity is unavoidable. While circularity and indivisibility may not prohibit concrete analysis, it does manifest the complex concreteness of the living present. Our historical and experiential knowledge in general takes its cue from the past and the regularities of the past. To the extent that the range of phenomena is relatively limited and the conditions that limit events can be more or less isolated from the surroundings, prediction of the future is in part possible. Economic phenomena are one example of this. The range of predictability may be expanded as the exact analysis of particular aspects of reality progresses. But when it comes to the processes of human history, all sorts of domains and aspects of reality are intermingled. The difficulty of predicting the movements of intellectual abilities and feelings is obvious. Broadly generalized predictions may be made, but the actuality of living individuals eludes prediction.

When we conceive of history as connections among actions of social functionality, this interaction is not, of course, meant in the sense of general, regulatory connections. In real human life, there are many things that do not enter into history. In contrast to life as the total reality of the human, history is a limited domain. Even if we restrict ourselves to the domain of history, history in the present is faced with a torrent of different possibilities. Only the future can show us the outcome of actions carried out at the present. To be sure, some general prediction is possible. Were it not, we would not be able to plan for the

future or even decide what to do. In fact, we are always making plans about the future. We live to some extent on our anticipations of the future, but our predictions never get beyond probabilities. The hidden dynamics of the present produce immense and unforeseeable social effects; time and again our expectations and plans are betrayed by the facts.

What we ordinarily call history is an interaction in the sense that it is a kind of factual construct. Hence its relation to the past. That said, insofar as there is always the possibility of the construct changing in the present, history is continually being made. This takes place within very narrow limits, however, and does not imply that one can simply introduce changes at will. Human wants and desires are also motives for action, but just how far that action can produce results depends on how effectively it can attune itself to what is actually possible. If, based on a reflection and analysis of past history, one is able to combine aims and designs of a social nature with the effects of one's actions, one will be able to introduce experimental meanings into history. But since circumstances are always particular, such inductions are not easy....

Nishida: Tradition and Philosophy

I address Nishida's philosophy in terms of "tradition and philosophy" because one can see in his work a serious attempt to integrate eastern, and in particular Buddhist, traditions with western philosophy. The idea of amalgamating East and West had been around in the abstract and had shown up in amateurish and crude philosophical thinking. What makes Nishida's ideas merit careful study is his attempt to locate the meaning of tradition in Japan's philosophy by wrestling with this question intellectually as a truly personal problem and bringing his sharp powers of intuition and unremitting speculation to bear on it. I myself cannot concur with Nishida's philosophy as is and would like to explain my fundamental problem with it, which will oblige me to clarify my own philosophical ideas.... Since the Meiji period no single philosopher has succeeded in bringing the traditions of Japan and the East, particularly the Buddhist tradition, to life within his own philosophy to the extent Nishida did.

....

Nishida seems to have acknowledged the initial difficulty with finding a positive significance to history from within a Buddhist standpoint.... I do not consider this Buddhist position to be a standpoint of the historical world. In both Mahayana Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism, the stress is rather on awakening to the true nature of things, after which "all sentient beings are buddhas" and "illusion is already enlightenment."

Whether or not, within the mind of a particular thinker, the subjective truth entailed in fusing different lines of thought and the intellectual systematization

of that fusion ends up forfeiting the original form of one of the elements is a separate question from the one I am asking here. The defining characteristics of Nishida's way of thinking about the historical world are these:

1. The totality of the human reality, including its moral and religious interiority, is seen as historical.
2. Historicity as an original potential and secular history, distinguished as the Christian and the existentialist standpoint, respectively, are seen as one.
3. It is not clear whether being creative, or existing as a true person, is a limit-possibility for human beings (the more individual one is, the more this can be seen), or whether in their everyday reality human beings are always already in such a state.
4. Even taking into consideration the bodily character of human beings, because this is viewed chiefly from the expressive aspect, the economic and political aspects of society are understood in overly idealistic terms.
5. How do we harmonize the ordinary, everyday way of thinking with the idea of a creative world? For those who discuss history, does not the ultimate become a problem of the awakening of the mind that observes history?...
6. The historical world is expressive.

Elsewhere I have referred to Nishida's philosophy as "a philosophy of 'mind'".... Is he not saying the same thing when he speaks of thinking "from the mind" and "from the world"?

....

The attempt to see ordinary everydayness as the achievement of an acting intuition or a self-identity of absolute contradictories and to view it as the fountainhead from which the historical world springs shows the pains Nishida took in trying to link eastern tradition to a theory of history. His uniqueness lies in his introduction of the idea of a formative intuition that "sees by making." But it is unreasonable to expect to understand the real world of history entirely in these terms. Nishida recognized in history the tendency to decline, but he did not explain what makes it happen or what form this decline takes. Religion and morality will have to be taken up later. Since it is the business of philosophy to distinguish clearly what needs to be distinguished, it will be necessary to show how these two interact in the human reality. My attempt to think in terms of a human ontology, as opposed to a "philosophy of mind," is a consequence of that approach.

[JWH]

TOSAKA Jun 戸坂 潤 (1900–1945)

Tosaka Jun entered Kyoto University in 1921, the same year as Nishitani Keiji*, to study philosophy. As students, the two of them took part in discussions at Nishida's home and read Aristotle under the direction of Miki Kiyoshi*, whose criticisms of Nishida's political ideas Tosaka was to carry on. His studies were interrupted by a year of military service. In 1926 he began a teaching career, but rejoined the army within a year and was appointed an officer. In 1931 he succeeded Miki in a teaching post at Hōsei University, but was removed in 1934, under government pressure due to his Marxist leanings. From 1932 to 1938 he was one of the central figures in the "Research Group for the Study of Materialism," but by 1936 he had gone into hiding and the following year a ban was announced on his writings. He was arrested in 1938, released and rearrested twice thereafter, and finally sent to prison for the last time in 1943, where he died just one day before Japan was to make a formal offer of surrender to the Allied Forces.

The considerable body of writings he composed in a mere eleven years display a mixture of initial attempts at a comprehensive critique of ideology in Japan and a strong resistance to the central ideas of Nishida's thought, none of which was given sufficient time to mature in later life. The following excerpts focus on three themes that run throughout the writings he left behind: historical consciousness, time, and morality. It is not hard to detect between the lines echoes of his opposition not only to what he saw as the idealism of the Kyoto School (a term he was the first to use), but also to the ruling ideologies of liberalism, fascism, and Japanese militaristic nationalism.

[NT]

TIME, HISTORY, AND MORALITY

TOSAKA Jun, 1933, 97, 101; 1930, 8, 12–15; 1936A, 300, 305–7; 1936B, 248, 298; 1937, 3, 59–60

The Principle of Everydayness

As a direct result of the natural sciences' insistence on the "ticking" of time, the idea of temporal units has turned into its very opposite. It has become something *external* and *contingent*, which has nothing to do with the *content* of time. It rather takes the internal reality of time as a matter for quantification and spatialization....

We live in the present actuality of historical time, that is to say, in a period that is properly called the *present age*. To say this tells us nothing new, of course. The only point I wish to make is that the "present age" is a *period* that emerges

through the marking of historical time. The present age has a *finite* length (one that is neither infinitely small nor infinitely large), but it is also a *peculiar* period whose length is not *constant*, but a *function* of the character of historical time.

What makes it a *peculiar* period? It is the fact that the *accent* of historical time as a whole happens to fall here, that it represents a particular concentration and focus of historical time, and that the three-dimensional solidity of historical time makes the point at which we now find ourselves the *center* of history.

Here, the reader will observe, the various regulations we have applied to historical time disclose for the first time the core of the crystal. Is there any need to go out of our way to say that even historical actions and historical records must take the present age as the point from which all their coordinates are drawn?

The only important thing is that the present age expands and contracts freely *according to need*. Depending on the situation, the *present age* can be condensed into *today* or as *now*, but this *now* has the same degree of *presence* or *actuality* as the present age itself. The fundamental meaning of the present age is the fundamental meaning of today. This is the *principle of today*—and of every day.

In this way historical time is controlled by the *principle of today*. Perhaps the core of the crystal of historical time, the *mystery* of history, lies in the principle of days, of each passing day, in the principle that however much the same things are repeated day after day, each day is different from the last, that however ordinary and mundane the affairs of the day may be, each day is absolutely unavoidable. This character, to which I attribute the same value as historical time, becomes the principle of everydayness and shows up there.

Character and the Sense of History

The special quality of character is that it does not extricate itself, even in terms of its final *telos*, from its relationship to the people who assign it. A carved seal must always be something *given*. When the *telos* of the concept of essence—its ideal—is cut off from its relationship to people, or, conversely, when the *telos* of the concept of character is maintained to the end, it shows its true face. Character is a concept that can only come about by containing *a relationship to people*. The concept of a carved seal—which is something *given*—would be a way of drawing our attention to this.

Only the one who is in tandem with the turn of the wheel of historical movements or contributes to it shows real character. A standpoint that reverses the turn of history's wheel opposes history and forfeits character. The character that it takes is no character at all.

Character can be understood as a tangent that touches each point on the curve of historical movement and is drawn by history as a whole. To stand at one particular point and to try to follow the line of a tangent proceeding from

another point is to misunderstand this character and fall into *anachronism*. In other words, it is only by adding strength to the tangential direction of the age that the wheel of historical movement can turn properly, effectively, and efficiently. It is the character of specific things and events that makes their turning functional, and conversely it is the orientation of particular tangents in particular periods that determines the character of things and events. These tangents of the age represent, as it were, the *character of a period*.

.....

The *sense of history* is not something attached to the totality of “history” in its academic sense. Nor is it belief in an ultimate telos of the world bound to some theological cosmology or other. It lies rather in the normal ability to grasp the historical movement of things and events, to see that this grasp can only function through practical social concerns. The character of a period can only be understood by means of such a sense of history—that is, by means of normal, practical, and social concerns. The ability to identify and penetrate the *necessity* of a period in relation to the dynamism and direction of historical movement, as it unfolds as a social phenomenon within society, is the sense of history.

Morality, Self, and Power

Morality (in the sense of a literary category) does not stand apart from the *self* (self, ego, or self-awareness in the sense of self-consciousness). When something becomes a *moral* problem (that is to say, when it becomes *literary*), it is, of course, viewed as such through the eyes of the author or the reader who is following the author. The more popular and universal the views of the author, the more the author turns into a unique “I myself.” As everyone knows, this kind of “I myself” has nothing scientific to say. On the contrary, were it to speak up, it would only further narrow its field of perception and become still more subjective; it would not gain anything at all in depth or uniqueness. The ability to display oneself without degenerating into the subjective is a distinctive mark of morality. Morality is a *personal matter* but never a private matter.

The private quality of morality has nothing at all to do with egoism or subjectivism. Simply because a morality is “one’s own” does not mean that it is a selfish or private affair. The “I” can be moral, but placing the “I” at the absolute center is never a moral act.

Morality (as well as the category of the “I”) is a necessary standpoint or foothold for literary understanding; it is its medium. The fruits of literary understanding are not themselves morality. Their morality is displayed rather in its intermediary function of making those fruits moral. To put this in purely abstract terms, the medium or standpoint has the quality of what has traditionally been called an “idea,” much the same as the idea of the good or of scientific

truth. To think of morality in these terms is to make it an idea like scientific truth or... the good. If science takes *truth* as its idea, literature takes the idea of *morality* as its object.

.....

Although it is true that Japan used force in constructing the nation of Manchuria, it was not power that was called on as a rationale for Japan's strong-arm diplomacy but the *facts* of the then-existing Manchurian Empire. The rationale is said to lie in the current situation, quite apart from questions of past processes, in questions as to what exercise of power brought about the situation in the first place, or whether it might not have been the use of force at all but the collective will of the Manchurian people that was responsible.

It is not a philosophy of power speaking here but indeed a philosophy of *fact*. As a concept, power constitutes a philosophy whose entire discourse *originates* from *conclusions* referred to as "facts" but which have no connection whatsoever to the processes that produced those facts. Similarly, Japanese fascist philosophy does not in general take an abstract category like "power" as its principle but lays out as its starting principles a perception of the "concrete" (?) actuality of "the current state of Asia."

.....

The fact that liberals in our country today are not really political liberals but what we might call *literary* liberals I consider an extremely important stipulation. There used to be a group called the Free League for the Arts and Sciences (of which, I should mention, I myself was a member), and it is significant that most of the group's members were literary scholars, authors, and artists. The literary liberals in our country often seem to have been motivated by humanism in a broad sense. They have no *logic* like an objective morality but consider themselves qualified as moralists. This is a particular characteristic of liberals. But in the end all moralists are merely a brand of skeptics. This is why they can also give rise to nihilistic liberals.

Literary liberals appear to be well aware of their skeptical essence. As proof, when it comes time to carry out a concrete action in which they have personal interest, consciously or unconsciously, they come off as opportunistic realists. In actual performance, skeptical persons only recognize the most vulgar "reality"; all consideration of external values has dropped away.

Thought and Culture

All real thought and culture must be translatable to the world in the broadest broad sense of the term. No thought or culture is real unless it is capable of being carried over into the categories of country and ethnic group. Just as real literature must be "world literature," so, too, any philosophy or theory that

can be only understood by a particular people or nation is, without exception, a sham. A culture of thought that remains faceless even to its own nation or people is not thought or culture but simple barbarity.

.....

It is not very difficult today to *translate* a logic from one country to another. The powers of production around the world have advanced to such a level that most technologies and mechanisms for production fully share aspects in common across national borders. And as these common features have come in several countries to stand in the forefront where production is concerned, the forefront itself has become an international reality. The theoretical mechanisms that provide reasons for countries to implement the methods of production currently in the forefront are also themselves creations of the forefront. As a result, the need for dramatic developments in systems for transporting people and goods is making the international nature of this logic a part of daily life. Translating something into its exact copy is not translation but simply substitution or acquisition. Those who think in terms of Japan's inability to digest European civilization fully, or of the difficulty that foreigners have in understanding the Japanese spirit, are guilty of a demagoguery that has not understood the significance of the logic of translation. And we should not forget that these same people are given to adopting the logic of ancient India or China today without giving the matter a second thought.

My approach throughout is that Japan must be seen from a *world* perspective, and this, in turn, is based on the belief that we must view things from the standpoint of *the people*. By that I do not mean what rulers mean when they refer to "the people" but rather the democratic masses that seek to defend their daily lives independently.... If the people are taken to be something other than the masses as a political force, we can only call it the height of demagoguery, a mockery of the people. It is as if the rulers were calling out to those in Japan today who lack this autonomy, "Stop the clock! You're too beautiful!" This is how the "reality" in Japan is praised under the rubric of its "people."

.....

The people's lack of political independence is both a fact and a condition for people in Japan. Conditions by nature impose their own limits, but it is by no means impossible to encounter a certain limit that requires a change in the conditions. Even the apolitical gas we call the Japanese people can always be ignited by the buildup of pressure within the cylinder. Conditions can only be maintained at ordinary temperature and pressure.

[NT]

ICHIKAWA Hakugen 市川白弦 (1902–1986)

Ichikawa Hakugen was a Rinzai Zen priest, professor at Hanazono University, and political activist who made his mark as the foremost scholar of “Imperial-Way Zen.” In his writings he chronicled Zen support for Japanese imperialism in the first half of the twentieth century and pushed the issue of Zen’s war responsibility. He analyzed the Zen approach to religious liberation and society, political ramifications of Buddhist metaphysical and logical constructs, limitations of Buddhist ethics, traditional relations between Buddhism and the Japanese government, and the philosophical system of Nishida Kitarō*.

In assessing the ethical issues surrounding wartime Zen and such Zen-influenced thinkers as Nishida, Ichikawa focused on Zen’s soteriological aim of attaining “peace of mind”; its epistemology of “becoming one with things” after extricating oneself from dualistic discrimination; its immanent metaphysical orientation (based in part on ‘Kegon’ Buddhism); such core values as loyalty, indebtedness, and gratitude; and Zen’s conservative, ‘karmic’ read on social arrangements. He argues that these facets of Zen serve to undermine a critical distance from the status quo and to support a general acquiescence to, if not valorization of, actual conditions. To designate this ethical pitfall in his tradition and in Japanese culture more broadly, Ichikawa deployed terms like “actualism” and “accommodationism.” His overall critique, and the attempt to locate it in Nishida’s use of Buddhist ideas, is evident in the passage selected below, where he stitches together statements from a number of Nishida’s works. Typical of the classical Buddhist style of argument, even philosophical positions are argued or rejected through the citation of texts, a practice Nishida himself follows in several of the passages cited.

[CAI]

ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS STUMBLES

ICHIKAWA Hakugen 1970, 191–6, 208–10

Nishida Kitarō* is the foremost figure in modern Japanese philosophy. With penetrating intuition and rigorous thought he constructed a new logic to convey the foundation of Japanese and Asian culture, thereby carving out a position for himself in world philosophy. Through his efforts modern Japanese philosophy and religion gained a profound expression, so that at present no new form of Japanese thought, religion, or culture can sink roots in this country without positioning itself relative to his philosophy.

For us the Pacific War was an unprecedented trial, and it is surprising that in the face of this trial even the mighty philosophy of Nishida stumbled. What

tripped it up was its fixation on actuality, which was closely bound to the “actualism” of the Japanese people that we have witnessed in Shinto, Native Studies, and the Japanese form of ‘Mahayana’ Buddhism. This spiritual climate still permeates us and remains at work in our daily lives. To reform our national character with its accommodation to actuality, we need to clarify the process and structure of the stumble of Japanese thought as represented by Nishida’s philosophy.

In a March 1945 letter to Suzuki Daisetsu*, Nishida wrote, “I would like to set forth the person, that is to say, personality, from the standpoint of the wisdom of ‘soku-hi’, and then connect that to the historical world of actuality.” In this short essay I will explore how and why, in the context of Nishida’s philosophy, a human being living in the world of actuality with a Zen and ‘Kegon’ Buddhist orientation could trip up.

Zen Investigation, Absolute Nothingness, and the Ordinary

In 1901, when he was thirty-one, Nishida wrote in his diary, “Philosophy, too, should separate from vulgar ambition and take as its foundation the peace of mind of the self, and the philosopher should quietly investigate things, unify his thought, and act in concert with his own peace of mind.” Elsewhere he declared that “one should not pursue trivial issues in one’s scholarship and thereby forget the foundation: peace of mind” (NKZ 17: 57). Ten years later, in his first book, *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida stipulated, “We must now investigate what we ought to do and where we ought to find peace of mind, but this calls first for clarification of... true reality” (1: 39 [37–8]).

Nishida thought that the problem of peace of mind was fundamental, that inseparably from this problem one needed to investigate the true form of reality, and that from there one established principles of action. Accordingly, he started his philosophical reflection by taking up the problem of reality. He portrayed his methodology as moving “from there to there”—in other words, it starts with the most immediate, concrete thing and returns to the most immediate, concrete thing. And in this case, that which discerns and confirms this “there” is acting intuition, in other words, experience in the mode of Buddhist ‘*prajñā*’. Through the mediation of western logic, Nishida delineated the operation (namely, acting intuition) that shapes the unfolding of “from” and “to.” Though he sometimes construed the mission of philosophy as the fusing of eastern and western cultures, at other times his philosophical system took on a Buddhist hue, as when he argued that Buddhist thought cannot be grounded in western logic and that he therefore needed to find a logic that could ground it, such as the logic of the dialectical universal or the logic of ‘place’.

One evening in his youth, Nishida was strolling along the streets of Kanazawa

engrossed in the sounds around him when he experienced a distinct intuition: “*That*, just as it is, is reality.” As he later put it, “Reality is actuality just as it is,” and this notion found expression in the opening sentence of *An Inquiry into the Good*: “To experience means to know facts just as they are, to know in accordance with facts by completely relinquishing one’s fabrications” (1: 9 [3]). The notion of “actuality just as it is” occupied Nishida’s thoughts throughout his student years in the castle town of Kanazawa, located on the less-developed side of the country facing the Japan Sea. During his years as a high-school teacher it developed into “facts just as they are,” and by the time he had become professor emeritus at Kyoto Imperial University his focus was on “historical actuality.” In the process he linked his thought to actuality and put his methodology of “from there to there” into practice.

In the logic laid out in his pivotal essay, “Place,” the simple, all-embracing philosophy of “fact” envisaged in *An Inquiry into the Good* took the concrete form of a philosophy of what Kegon Buddhism calls the ‘unobstructed penetration of thing and thing’, in which sociohistorical facts determine themselves, and the most fundamental *place* is the *place* of ‘absolute nothingness’. Nishida writes:

When one truly penetrates the consciousness of absolute nothingness there is no self and no God. And because it is absolute nothingness, mountains are mountains and waters are waters, and that which exists, exists just as it is. “When you release your hands from the top of a towering cliff, flames emerge from the head of the plow and burn the universe, the body becomes ash, the embers are resuscitated, and rice plants rise above the paths in the fields.”⁴³
(NKZ 4: 146)

In Nishida’s philosophy the world of actuality is a historical world that progresses, through the interaction between individual things and between subjectivity and its environment, from something created to something creating. This is the world of acting intuition in which to function or work is to see. For particular independent things to interrelate, the mediator must be something that absolutely negates those things while at the same time absolutely affirming them as a continuity of discontinuity. In other words, it has to be a dialectical universal. The logical structure of this world is that of a ‘self-identity of absolute contradiction’. The world of actuality is the image of God, the most fundamental contradictory self-identity. In other words, as Nishida writes, “In religious terms, the self-identity of absolute contradiction in which ‘if you try to direct yourself toward it, you go away from it’ (*Mumonkan*, 19), should be called the

43. [The verse is by Furugōri Kentsū, one of Hakuin’s lay disciples.]

true God” (NKZ 9: 328–9). The world of actuality is not, however, just another hypothesis or supposition. Formed in terms of the self-identity of absolute contradiction, actuality is the absolute, and phenomena, just as they are, are reality itself. The self-identity of absolute contradiction is the formula of the self-expression of the absolute. Logic is not the subjective formula of our thought but is the formula of the very self-formation of the world. It is not that we think about the world from the self; rather, we must think about the self from the world. This is an “absolute objectivism” (9: 490) in which one is “authenticated by the totality of phenomena.”⁴⁴

The philosophy that began from “facts just as they are” thus came around to the historical world in which actuality is none other than the absolute. In Nishida’s words, “It is not that something different appears. Arriving and returning are nothing special” (10: 108); “The most fundamental thing is what is ordinary” (8: 513).

When we penetrate the depths of the self and go back to the absolute... we touch the bedrock of historical actuality. As the self-determination of the absolute present, we become thoroughly historical individuals. “Having penetrated the ‘dharma-body’, I found that there was not anything there, just this Makabe no Heishirō.”⁴⁵ Nanquan says, “The ordinary mind, that is the ‘Way’” (*Mumonkan*, 19). And Linji exclaimed, “As to ‘buddha-dharma’, no effort is necessary. You have only to be ordinary with nothing to do—defecating, urinating, putting on clothes, eating food, and lying down when tired” (*Rinzai-roku* 1.12). (10: 336)

“Place”: *The Imperial Household as the Absolute Present*

To Nishida, when we live in historical actuality as a historical particular that is the self-determination of the absolute present, the *place* in which we live is the nation-state. The nation-state is where the historical world has been most concretely self-realized as the absolutely contradictory self-identity of the totalistic one and the particular many, and it is the most concrete historical actuality (9: 453). The Japanese state developed around the imperial household as its center. The imperial household occupies the global position in which it determines itself as the absolutely contradictory self-identity of the subjective one and the particularistic many. That which is subjective is “encompassed by the everlasting and unchanging imperial household as the temporal and spatial *place*,” and “the imperial household is the absolute present that encompasses

44. [Nishida is citing the *Genjōkōan* fascicle of Dōgen’s* *Shōbōgenzō* (1252, 7).]

45. [This verse is by Shōsai Hōshin, the founder of Zuigan-ji, whose secular name was Makabe no Heishirō.]

past and future—we are born in it, function in it, and die in it” (9: 50, 52; 11: 201).

The keynote of Japanese culture formed in this way is an unhindered merging of thing with thing in which facts determine themselves. In this lies the Way of the 'kami' in which people “go along with things.” The founding of the nation lies at the base of our Japanese national morality; it is the axis around which we form the historical world. The basic formative principle of Japan must now become the formative principle of the world, which is what prevents the Imperial Way from being turned—through the expansion of a specific particular—into military rule. In short, the imperial household must take on a world character. This is the true meaning of the saying “all the world under one roof.” In Japanese history for the first time humans realized the 'kokutai' in which the nation-state corresponded to morality; this *kokutai* is the self-determination of the absolute present.

Along these lines Nishida further observes:

The formation of the historical world has meaning insofar as the opening of heaven and earth is none other than the founding of the nation. For this reason, the unbroken line of emperors is coeval with heaven and earth.... This is why there emerges the notion of the land of the *kami*. We can hear in imperial edicts the voice of the *kami* speaking as a manifest *kami*. (11: 201–2).

Our morality faithfully accords with this fact and we return to the emperor as the center of the absolute present. Even loyalty, the loftiest moral ideal of Japan, was the expression of pure feeling. “Though if I go by sea my corpse may be tossed by the waves, though if I go over the mountains my corpse may be covered over by grass, I shall have no regrets to die for the cause of the emperor”⁴⁶ (6: 346). “Everything is from the imperial household to the imperial household... and we act in accord with the *kokutai*” (11: 208, 203). This is the way of living in which “ordinary mind is the Way”:

Guarding and maintaining the prosperity of the imperial throne is not limited to times of crisis. Ordinary mind is the Way; and walking, standing, sitting, and lying are never unrelated to the nation-state.⁴⁷

The zenith of Japanese spirit consists in recognizing that “actuality is none other than the absolute,” and from this standpoint “things are the things of the impe-

46. [Nishida is citing a 1937 military song whose lyrics are drawn from an ancient collection of poems known as the 'Man'yōshū'.]

47. [Ichikawa is citing the wartime ideological tract, *The Way of Subjects*, condensed in Otto D. Tolischus, *Tokyo Record* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1943).]

rial household, and facts are the facts of the imperial household” (11: 203). This stance of Nishida’s is echoed by the statement:

Our lives are our lives yet are not ours.... Though we may have a meal or a set of clothes, it is not our own.... In our personal lives as well we must not forget the thought of returning to oneness with the emperor and serving the state.⁴⁸

In the place of the religious formation of history, the whole and the part are one, and, according to Nishida, “Class conflict must be dissolved.... One factory can be the place of production for the creation of the historical world” (6: 336). In this way, Nishida formulated a philosophy for “patriotic industrial production.” As he wrote:

Religiously awakened people can become “master of every situation” as the self-determination of the absolute present. In all respects these people are active.... For all of them, “wherever they stand is the true place” (*Rinzairoku* 1.12).... From a true religious awakening one can submit to the nation-state. (10: 115).

Nishida’s standpoint and method centered on the movement from one experience of immediate self-awakening to the next. As Nishida wrote in his diary, “Maintain concentration on the things that are important. ‘Even at the time of great upheaval one does not depart from it, and even when one trips and falls one does not leave it’ (*Analects* 11.5)” (18: 132). To live is to function, and to function is “not merely to consciously desire things or be determined to act, but for us to become an event of this world. In this exists our true self” (9: 367). Just as a writer knows himself in his writings, Nishida discerned the self in this action. And we discerned the countenance of Nishida’s true self that was cultivated by Zen and, according to him, is absolute nothingness: “Our true self is absolute nothingness” (5: 178).

Nishida’s disciple Kōyama Iwao* once declared, “*Things* are the directly confirmed actuality from which we depart and to which we return, and ‘*principles*’ are a valuable means of constantly mediating them through negation.” It seems quite natural that in the year before the Pacific War broke out, the year when the Japanese Federation of Labor Unions was dissolved and the Imperial Rule Assistance Association was formed, Nishida, who had offered up a *valuable means* for the war fought in the name of the emperor, received a Cultural Medal at the ceremony commemorating the 2600th anniversary of the founding of the nation. In “Perfect Good Conduct,” a chapter in *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida wrote, “According to one story, when Pope Benedict XI asked Giotto to show him a work that demonstrated his ability as a painter, Giotto simply

48. [Cited from *The Way of Subjects*.]

drew a circle. In morality, we must attain to Giotto's circle" (NKZ 1: 134 [145]). The pure and simple acting intuition of following imperial edicts without fail and obliterating the self to serve the public—this is the "circle" of the layman Sunshin Nishida.⁴⁹

There was one framework that neither the Japanese people nor the profound philosophy of absolute nothingness could transcend: the Imperial Way... Nishida pointed out how Cartesian doubt and negation were not exhaustive, but the Imperial Way did not become an object of his own doubt. The belief that "if you look directly at the emperor, your eyes will burst" was fixed in the emperor's subjects during the Meiji period, just as the imperial household was fixed in the background of Nishida's objective logic and had his "pure experience" by the scruff of the neck....

By aiming his philosophical methodology of doubt and negation exclusively at the self, Nishida eradicated modern critical subjectivity before it could mature. Because of this excision of the modern self that could be expected to doubt, criticize, and resist the absolutism of the imperial system, the central concepts in the Imperial Way settled directly into the a priori position that pure experience occupies behind the individual self and thereby conditioned pure experience from the start.... As a result, the selfhood and historical body of Nishida as a "child of his majesty the emperor," his beliefs about the emperor, and his authoritarian moral consciousness completely failed to die the Great Death of which Zen speaks and to return to dust and ashes. On the contrary, through the death of modern intellectuality the Imperial Way was internalized and absolutized into a religious authority that came to control the personal life of Nishida and others like him.

It is here that one detects a rupture between the philosopher seeking universality and the subject believing in the emperor. With the self-awareness conveyed by the statement, "For history to become the norm of action, it must become *allgemeingültig*" (18: 63), Nishida's proposal that the Imperial Way be made into the "foundational principle of the formation of the world" was clearly unreasonable. The fundamental substance of the Imperial Way is that of a *contingent, irrational bloodline unique to one specific ethnic group*. Imperial succession, in contrast with the discernment of truth, is essentially xenophobic. Insofar as one stands upon the principle of the unbroken lineage of the throne and sovereignty, the Imperial Way cannot take on a cosmopolitan character, and for it to do so, one must discard that principle. An Imperial Way with a cosmopolitan character is as contradictory as a round triangle....

Had Nishida lived into the postwar period, he might have come to see that

49. [Nishida's lay Buddhist name.]

when his central concern, the “spiritual fact that does not move when struck or pulled,” was put to work in the actual world, it was ultimately incapable of freeing itself from an attachment to subjectivism *as a spiritual fact*. Insofar as “facts just as they are” and “actuality just as it is” are not the pure experience of animals but of humans, it should be obvious from the start that they include conscious and unconscious fallacies stemming from past education, mass communication, and changes in social conditions. We need to submit humbly to the awareness that when we think about the self from the world, that *world* itself includes the same fallacies.

If it were not for the educational controls and oppression by the absolutist imperial system, or if Nishida and those around him had achieved a modern self that was critical of such a system, he would not have succumbed to the confusion of seeing the absolute present and the imperial household as one, and absolute nothingness would not have served as a foundation for a “holy war.” Nishida’s expression, “Because there is experience, there is the self,” ultimately meant that Nishida’s “private philosophy”⁵⁰ emerged through an accumulation of acting intuitions within the actuality of imperialistic Japan. That is to say, a semi-modern individual called Nishida developed a semi-modern theory of “pure experience” that was widely accepted at that time by the semi-modern intelligentsia of Japan. As historical entities, all of us prewar types can only reflect on and regret deeply the disastrous impact that war and state power had on thought and religion, as seen in the stumble of modern Japan’s groundbreaking philosophy and religion of absolute nothingness.

[CAI]

50. I am not using the phrase in the same sense as Takeuchi Yoshitomo, who coined it.

IMANISHI Kinji 今西錦司 (1902–1992)

In 1941, within a year of completing his doctorate at Kyoto Imperial University with a specialization in entomology and ecology, Imanishi Kinji published perhaps his best-known and lasting contribution in the form of a philosophy of nature, *The World of Living Things*. In it he argued that since all things arise together, the “life” of the organic and inorganic should be considered as part of a single interactive world. Living subjects and the environment were part of each other, flowed into each other, and created a particular world over which each organism had some control, which he termed its “autonomy.”

Although Imanishi had no formal relationship to the Kyoto School, echoes of Nishida Kitaro’s* thought, especially from *An Inquiry into the Good*, are scattered through the book. In particular, Nishida’s observations, that as a unified whole reality necessarily includes mutual opposition, and that particular entities are never completely independent but must be seen as differentiated developments of a single reality, gave Imanishi a somewhat different slant on evolution from that of Darwinists. Indeed, he returned again and again in his writings to the idea that all life, the organic as well as the inorganic, were variations of one and the same reality, each segregated into its own habitat. As such, he considered nature as inherently harmonious and, therefore, put much less weight on competition and conflict than natural selection theorists did.

In his terminology, Imanishi considered the living world to be comprised of three essential layers: individual, *specia*, and *holospecia*. The key is the *specia*, or society of a species, which combine to comprise a *holospecia*. The passages excerpted here are taken from his chapters on society and history in which he develops the idea of sociality as a spatial-structural concept.

[PJA]

LIFE AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

IMANISHI Kinji 1941, 67–9, 74–8, 82–3, 92–3, 120–1 (33–4, 37–8, 41, 46–7, 61–2)

The relationship between life and the environment cannot be described with any thoroughness without taking many other things into consideration. Still, I think that introducing the concept of the environment has generally clarified the independence or autonomy of living things. The environment is the world where organisms thrive; it is their field of living. But this is not meant in the physical sense of something like a living space. From the standpoint of the organism, the environment is an extension of itself, which it controls. Of course, an organism cannot create and transform the environment

freely. If we regard the environment as something not ultimately controlled by the organism, and, in that sense, something that opposes it, then we can think of the environment as partly within our bodies, and of our bodies, which cannot be freely constructed or transformed, as extensions of the environment. As the environment exists in a living thing and the living thing exists in the environment, the two are not separate. They belong to one system originating from one thing. We may say, in a broad sense, that our world as a whole is that system; but from the standpoint of each living thing, which is the center of its own world, the organism and its environment constitute a single system....

Although living things cannot freely create or transform their environment, neither are they entirely controlled by it. Rather, from their respective standpoints, they continuously act on the environment and try to control it. If living things were simply swept along by the environment, we would not need to recognize their autonomy and independence—they would be nothing more than automata.

.....

Although the various things of this world are infinitely different when viewed from the standpoint of differences, from the standpoint of similarity, there is nothing that is completely isolated or dissimilar to anything else. Why do similar things exist in this world? Monkeys and amoebae, naturally, are not born to humans. Moreover, the child of humans is not only an individual human; it also resembles its parents. This is called heredity. But why do we recognize heredity? As far as the parents' instinct for self-preservation is concerned, we may think that the more closely the child resembles the parents, the better the objective is achieved. It follows that this contributes to maintaining the present state of the world. To explain why similar things are created biologically, we can only attribute it to inheritance. But if we consider that for anything we can identify in this world, something similar exists, we are led to think of this as a universal phenomenon that cannot be completely explained by biology. In that case, interpreting it lies beyond the scope of my abilities. Still, I am simply astonished at the fact that similar things do exist, and believe that in that fact may lie something like the principle of the structure of the world.

.....

Let us consider again the concept of environment. The environment is the place where organisms express what it is that makes up their life. I remarked that the environment is an extension of the living thing, and at the same time that the living thing is autonomous and governs the environment. Where two living things are harmonized in their vital energies, in terms of environment, they do not intrude upon each other; here we can recognize the independence of the individual autonomous organism in seeing the environment as an extension of it....

Yet despite the fact that the individuals of a species have the most similar requirements and are therefore fundamentally intolerant of one another, why do they exist within a certain area and not scatter? By doing so, they are able to reproduce, but this does not explain everything. The fact that similar entities remain in general proximity and are not isolated from one another reflects the fact that they did not come about independently and totally unrelated, but developed originally from one thing. Their differences ultimately reveal their degree of relationship or affinity. Thus, members of a species are found in proximity due to a kinship between them. Because this kinship reflects similar living requirements and yet allows things fundamentally intolerant of one another to coexist, there must be something besides kinship involved. This is also made apparent by the fact that members of a species have the same kind of life.

.....

Therefore, if we admit that living things tend to preserve the individual and maintain the present state, we can also think of them as avoiding needless friction and abhorring conflict. This equilibrium without friction or conflict can naturally result in members of a species aggregating. Even without assuming any natural attraction, the reason individuals of a species gather is that in their common habits they find the most stable, and thus the most secure, life. It is here that their "world" is made. That world is the world of the species, and life there is the life of the species. Structurally speaking, it is a continuous living place where individuals are born, live, and die. But it is not simply a world of structure. It is a system that forms part of a world continually in the making, and under development, a world that is spatial as well as temporal, structural as well as functional. If we now apply the terms *society* or *social life* to the world of living things, it refers first of all to this world of the species, that is, to the shared life of members of the same species. This shared life does not necessarily imply a conscious and active cooperation; rather, as the result of the interactive influence among individuals of the same species, a kind of continuous equilibrium comes about. Apart from it, the survival of the individual would no longer be assured. The gathering of members of a species is not simply an aggregation; it is communal life.

.....

To refer in abstract terms to a society of living things may be misleading. Depending on the concrete form of life of particular organisms, there are many cases where this does not apply, even where there are the mutual interactions between individuals or shared territorial restrictions. In principle, however, where individuals of a species gather together, they enable a state of affairs that is not otherwise possible. Even where this gathering is recognized to survive over time through a family or group structure, if they are not a "species" that gathers together individuals of the same species, we cannot speak of a collection

of individuals of the same species. The fact that in plants, or even in parasites, each species has a certain fixed area of distribution means that the species is a locus of communal living in which individuals reproduce and feed. To this extent, it seems to me the concept of species must contain something fundamentally expressive of society. In that sense, sociality is a structural principle of a world in which everything has been born and developed from a single thing. Even in the world of infinite differences, similar things exist. We can speak of a “structural principle” because similar things always oppose one another and opposing things finally have to expand spatially. Sociality may be taken as the fundamental characteristic that reflects this spatial-structural aspect and hence can be expected to exist in every constituent of this world. Although the society of living things is ultimately where the individual reproduces and feeds itself, I consider this spatial-structural character of society to point to a deeper relationship to sustenance.

.....

The various things of this world are not random, unrelated existences, but are all constituents of one great holistic system. I have discussed the society of living organisms in some detail in order to illustrate the world as a single structure composed of these elements. To review only the major points, the individual living thing is a constituent of a species-society in which it is born, lives, and dies, and it is distinct from other individuals of the same species. The species-society in turn is one constituent of a *synusia*⁵¹ and is thus distinct from other species-societies. Both the species-society and the *synusia* ultimately have their foundation in kinship relations. In the structure of this kind of phylogenetic community, a basically temporal development becomes spatial; I regard this also as one mode of diversification of living things. In contrast, in a *synusial* complex, where temporal things would be expected to become spatial, we find the spatial becoming temporal. This was considered another mode of development of living things. Hence, we cannot restrict the basis of a *synusial* complex to a phylogenetic relationship, but must recognize that a territorial relationship already exists there as well. Where a *synusial* complex further develops and separates into several *synusial* complexes, the relationship between them is based on severance, but it is a breaking of blood ties; the territorial basis of the society's constitution is not lost. Instead, as kinship relations become weaker, the territorial foundation becomes more clearly recognizable. What we recognize as concrete communities of living things can be seen on closer analysis to be several separate *synusial* complexes, but the whole society is always recog-

51. [*Synusia* is a somewhat dated term used in ecology to designate a community of species with a similar life form and environmental needs. Imanishi himself describes it as a “society of equal rank.”]

nized by us as this kind of territorial community of living things. This is why ecology attempted primarily to classify communities of living things according to geography or physical landscape.

This kind of territorial community of all living things is nature as we see it. On the one hand, it is the ultimate society, composed of the individual, species-societies, *synusia*, and *synusial* complexes. In that sense, it is the only total community of living things there is. But how should we interpret this kind of total community? Is its wholeness the same as that of the species-society or *synusia*? To begin with, the individual living thing is a complex, organic body. The whole cannot stand alone without the parts, nor can the parts exist without the whole, and the life and growth of living things lies in the maintenance of this relationship between the whole and the parts. Because of the inseparability of the whole and its parts in living things, such that each part contains the whole, the wholeness of an individual organism is always expressed as autonomy. Therefore, the development of wholeness is the development of autonomy. Although faculties of control such as consciousness and mental operations have been one effect of this development, even where there is no consciousness present, we cannot deny the autonomy of living things. The wholeness possessed by an individual plant is also always expressed as its autonomy. A holistic thing is autonomous, and autonomous things in some sense or other create themselves.

[PJA]

FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 船山信一 (1907–1994)

Funayama Shin'ichi, perhaps the most important figure in Japanese philosophical materialism during and after the war, is also widely respected for his studies of Hegel and Feuerbach as well as for his historical studies of modern Japanese philosophy. After graduating in 1930 from Kyoto University, where he focused on the philosophies of Hegel and Nishida Kitarō*, and came under the influence of Miki Kiyoshi*, he was persuaded by Tosaka Jun* to join the Materialism Study Circle. Under the influence of the Communist party, the circle became increasingly politicized, leading to the investigation and arrest of some of its prominent members, including Funayama. While his case was pending, he wrote an essay on the crisis of capitalism which led to a brief period in prison, cut short in 1936 by his formal recant. This marked a turning point in Funayama's life. He took up a job in the fishing industry, although he continued to participate in Miki's Shōwa Study Circle. In 1955 he returned to academic life as professor at Ritsumeikan University, and published three volumes of studies in the history of Japanese philosophy in the Meiji era (1868–1912) and the Taishō era (1912–1926). In addition to the writings of Marx, Hegel, and Feuerbach, the thought of Nishida and Tanabe Hajime* left their mark on Funayama's thinking, as will be seen in the following selections. Each of the three divisions treat much the same material, though the change of standpoint before and after his "turning point" will be apparent. In the first, we see the first steps towards a critique of Japanese consciousness. In the second, clearly influenced by the feelings of isolation and desperation he experienced in prison, he turns to a more positive evaluation of the emperor system; it was omitted from his *Collected Works*. In his final period, he returns to his project of pure anthropological materialism.

[NT]

BEFORE THE TURNING POINT

FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 1933, 370–2; 1935A, 370–1; 1935B, 388–9

Anthropology and Materialism

The attempt to ground Marxism in anthropology works on the assumption that Marxism's view of history can be understood as purely materialist—and also as only one of the many modern views of history—but that priority should be given to human beings over history, and history over the natural world. Anthropology, at least in its ideological form, is *essentially an idealism* of the self. I suppose this is because anthropology in some sense denies nature precedence over the human. And even from a standpoint that takes human beings not as *human beings per se* but as *historically social human*

beings, not much changes. Even in the case of Feuerbach's *philosophy*, which is materialist as far as it goes, it is not materialist when it comes to anthropology. His anthropology, by seeking nature within the human and acknowledging the precedence of nature over the human, is indeed a materialist anthropology and thus may be called *materialism*, and as a *merely* human materialism is not a mere *anthropology*. In terms of history he was an idealist; in terms of nature he was a materialist through and through—even if not a dialectical materialist....

As I see it, anthropology's progressive aspects only show up in connection with theology and not with anthropology itself. Anthropology today appears rather as a path to religion. This is even true of Feuerbach's materialism. Insofar as it was properly an *anthropological* materialism, obviously it was incapable of carrying out a Marxist negation of religion, but neither could it advance as far as the rejection of religion in French materialism. In effect it preaches a "religion of humanity" or "new religion." The *theoretical* limits of Feuerbach's atheism lay indeed in his *anthropology*. To this extent we are able to say that he is *prior* to Spinoza the *theologian* and *post*-Spinoza the *philosopher*.

Two Totalitarianisms

To say that the life of the Japanese is spiritual means, for example, that in contrast to the West, where relationships between capitalists and workers, between landowners and tenant farmers is based on the concept of rights, in Japan we see the concepts of duty, sacrifice, congeniality, the requital of kindness, and *service*; or that whereas in the West we see a profit-oriented society, in Japan society is oriented to cooperation; or again, that the individualism we see in the West is replaced in Japan with an ideology of the family or the totality. But all this is not a distinction between the West and Japan but between capitalism and feudalism, attempting only to show as far as possible the semi-feudalism of Japanese capitalism and its conceptual influence. The spiritual nature of Japanese daily life does not mean that things like the relationship between capitalism and workers in Japan itself *is* something "spiritual," but only that instead of material relationships being shown just as they are, they are *interpreted* spiritually and veiled so as to obstruct their real interpretation. It means that bad material relationships are converted into good relationships, particularly *within consciousness*....

In Japan individualism, or "the atomist system," has a remarkably negative image. As the Japanists see it, it is something western through and through, something clearly belonging to the petty bourgeoisie that needs to be spit out. Even for Tanabe Hajime,* who has recently lambasted the impotence of the "I-Thou" category, the "atomist system" is far more "abstract" than the category of "I-Thou." We, too, recognize the "atomist system" as a thoroughly bourgeois

principle and the source of a great number of social contradictions. This, too, is probably still “abstract.” And yet it has in fact played a role around the world of toppling feudal societies and constructing capitalist ones. Considered historically, this is a product of the submissive compromise of the bourgeoisie to feudal powers, as a result of which organic explanations constructed as a bulwark against the rise of the proletariat are held in incomparably high esteem. Indeed things like the cosmopolitan or bourgeois logic of “I and Thou” cannot hold a candle to the “atomist system.” Organic theories may be somewhat “concrete” and “contemporary,” but they are completely *reactionary*. In contrast, “atomist systems” seem already to be a “thing of the past,” but in the past they played a *progressive* and antirevolutionary role. No doubt we suffer from the existence of “atomist systems,” but it is no less painful to see their failure to develop, that is, to find organic theories and logics of “I-Thou.”

Our totalitarianism (?) is obviously a negation of the “atomist system.” But first it needs to wrestle with organic theories, from which is it completely different. Our totalitarianism (?) becomes a reality far more easily at the point that the “atomist system” has come to an end than where organic explanations and logics of “I and Thou” have remained and are still present. Despite the apparent similarities between *their* totalitarianism and *ours*, we must not overlook the essential differences as to history and class. The difference between what belongs to the “things of the past” and what to the “things of the present” can never be a norm for distinguishing between the reactionary and the progressive. Fascism clearly belongs among the things of the present and democracy to the past, but there is no doubt as to which is reactionary and which progressive. *In the past* people considered democracy to be progressive; *at present* it does not seem so. But today, and especially in this country, anyone who raises a passionate voice for democracy is a friend of ours, no questions asked. It matters not if such a person cannot take so much as a single step away from the bourgeois position. If this leaves us “unhappy” because we are necessarily inhibited from listening to any radical cry for democracy coming from the bourgeois quarter, then we can suppose anyone making such a claim must already, by that very fact, have superseded the bourgeois position. [JWH]

AFTER THE TURNING POINT

FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 1938, 430–6; 1942, 258–9, 162, 180–1

Japanism and Nationalism

As has been the case up until now, Japanism stresses the particularity and advantages of this geographically tiny world called Japan and historically

puts the emphasis less on contemporary Japan than on some period of the past—the ancient past, the great age of the emperors, the feudal period—extracting from them a common universal and lumping them all together. In this sense Japan is said clearly to have surpassed the present-day West. Hence, on the one hand there arises a desire to modernize Japanism, and on the other to proclaim an orientalism.

Japanism, as the word itself suggests, must at root be something modern. It does not stop simply at the subjective, spiritual tendencies of individual Japanese (for example, the sense of *'mono no aware'*). Insofar as it is a reflection of the totality of Japan as such and an objective system of thought serving as a guiding principle, it had to come about in modernity, or at least at the dawn of modernity. Or rather, put more strictly, Japan itself is a product of modernity. Put in these terms, it is possible to understand the Meiji restoration as one of decisive significance for Japanism. The Japanese we are bringing into question is the modern, political Japanism, namely Japanism as a *nationalism*.

.....

The demand thus arises for Japanism to become orientalism. But let it be noted that the kind of orientalism needed now was carried a stage further by Japanism—and Japanism seen as a modern nationalism at that. But is this kind of orientalism then a given? I think not. We have not had an orientalism that goes beyond modern nationalism and one remains to be forged in the future.

.....

I already mentioned that Japan cannot be content with a simple nationalism. If Japan were to withdraw its hand from China, or conversely, if it were to set out to colonize it, in either case a simple nationalism would suffice. But to set up an East Asian community—which obviously is not a simple alignment of Japan, Manchuria, and China but would make Japan the leader of an alliance—nationalism is useless. A new concept of East Asia would have to be established. For Japan not simply to save China but to secure its own position and development, nationalism would already need to have been overcome. The overcoming of nationalism is required not for purposes of conciliation but for development. On the contrary, if there are those who believe it is a good thing to pass the idea of East Asia on to China and Manchuria and to keep Japanism just as it has been, they can only be completely ignorant of Japan, the idea of East Asia, and the future.

The Transcendence of Imperial Authority

Limiting the problem of leadership to “the administration of the nation as a whole,” the principles of the Nazi leaders will not fit Japan just as they are. It is intolerable to conceive of the Prime Minister in this sense. In

Japan the revered emperor is the only “leader.” But even to think this way is already a source of trepidation. The revered emperor transcends such thinking. A leader is more immanent and democratic, whereas the revered Emperor is transcendent....

At root, authority must in some sense be natural. Authority is not a simple matter of culture. This is one difference between Japanese and German authority. Japan's Imperial Way is eternal, German totalitarianism is not. This is not to say that authority is merely biological, but that it is transcendent. I believe that what is called for now is not a physics but a metaphysics of authority.

.....

It is said that totalitarianism is an irrationalism. In totalitarianism the whole itself is certainly irrational. And yet within the principle of totalitarian leadership, the leader as such, as well as the relationship between the leader and the whole, are extremely rational matters, and in this sense are contingent. Even the Nazi principle of blood belongs to the people, not to the leader. If for the Nazis the blood of the leader falls within the confines of the blood of the people, anyone can be leader. However, in the case of Japan's principle of leadership, at least seen as a national principle, we have to say that everything depends on the blood of the *Führer*, the “leader.” For the Nazis, anyone with sufficient strength can be leader. In this sense the leader belongs among the masses, or at least emerges from their midst. In Japan, the “leader” is decided on unequivocally. Even if one goes down a level in leadership, it is not a matter of strength but of mandate. For the Nazis the emergence of a leader is rational and democratic, and therefore contingent and temporary, but in Japan it is irrational and decided unequivocally and eternally. For the Nazis the theory of leadership does not have much meaning. Even if there are myths related to the people, there is no myth of the leader. In Japan, however, everything depends on the “myth of the leader.” Or rather, Japan's distinguishing trait consists in the fact that the myth of the people and the myth of the leader are one.

[JWH]

AFTER THE WAR

FUNAYAMA Shin'ichi 1956, 240-2; 1971, 34, 60-1, 223

Anthropological Materialism Revisited

Japanese idealism is not a mere moralism or ideology of sovereignty. Attention must be drawn to the unique logics of ‘*soku*’ and ‘nothingness’ to which it gave rise. This may have arisen from Buddhism, but it is more than that. It was detailed systematically by linking up with German philosophy.

At the same time, if Japanese philosophy drew on German philosophy, it also carried it to a more radical level. The logic of *soku* and the logic of nothingness were born of the wedding of Buddhism and German idealism, and from there set the essence of Japanese idealism. While remaining an idealism, Japanese idealism aligned itself to realism by way of the logics of *soku* and nothingness. And then, by way of realism and positivism, it established connections with moralism, the ideology of sovereignty, and in general with an apologetical character. Japanese idealism easily took on dialectical thinking—or rather more precisely, it was dialectical from the start—and was taken in by being interpreted through these sorts of logics.

.....

The apologetical character of Japanese idealism is not simply a matter of logical abstractness but on the contrary, when the abstractness of logic fails to reach everywhere it introduces an element of reality and compromise. This is its realism. It may persist in maintaining the ideal against the real, the subject against the object, and abstract logic against the concrete, but even when it falls into imaginative fantasy, it never collapses into a simple apologetics. Unlike existentialism in France, for example, which is marked by a political character and political critique, Japan's existentialism today lacks this political dimension. Or again, unlike the kind of interiority or religiosity we see in German existentialism, Japanese existentialism is not permeated by subjectivity but is more fixed on reality. The apologetic nature of Japanese idealism does not consist in its attachment to abstract logic, subjectivism, and ideals, but rather in the realism of these things.

However, the claim that modern Japanese philosophy is apologetical and not critical is not restricted to idealism but is also visible in the materialism of Katō Hiroyuki and the atheism of Torio Koyata.⁵² This current, like fundamentally critical modern materialism, may have had different objects, but they were drawn into the same tendencies to fall into apologetics.

Is the world in fact finite or is it infinite? For Hegel, philosophy was in essence idealist, but this is due simply to the fact that he took the standpoint of the absolute, the infinite—that is to say, of God. If the absolute and infinite exists, the relative and finite can be considered unreal, conceptual, unnecessary—nothing.

52. [Katō Hiroyuki (1836–1916) was a scholar and apologist for the Meiji government who supported the introduction of western democratic and enlightenment ideals but in later years turned to social Darwinism, sharpening his critique against Christianity and western ideas of the state. Torio Koyata (1847–1905), a military leader and politician, was one of the early supporters for forging a Japanese constitution. In later years he left public life and devoted himself to the practice of Zen and served as the first president of the Greater Japan Society for the Way of Tea.]

Hegel's claim that Spinoza's pantheism was not an atheism but a denial of the cosmos suits his philosophy perfectly.

On the other hand, the standpoint of nothingness and nihilism are also an idealism, reducing everything finite and relative to the conceptual in order to deny it. Idealism is finally either a philosophy of the absolute (God) or a philosophy of nothingness. Furthermore, it is a subjectivism, but one in which the subject is thought of as absolute or as nothingness.

In contrast, there is a realism that considers only finite things to exist and *in this sense* takes them as its object, reckoning them to be autonomous subjects that do not subsist either within an infinite or God or within nothingness. It may be called a materialism but only as another name for "realism." When Feuerbach and the young Marx characterized their standpoint as a humanism or a naturalist humanism they seem to be referring to materialism in the true sense of the word. The historical human being within nature—this is all of existence.

.....

I consider that which surpasses consciousness both subjectively and objectively to be transcendent. Accordingly, *for me the immanent is conscious and conceptual, while the transcendent is actual*. Hence, in relationships to actuality, I hold transcendence not to consist in a transcendence *from the real*—be it towards God or towards nothingness—but in a transcendence of consciousness towards what is *within the real*.

.....

From the standpoint of anthropological materialism, reflection on "what faces us" begins first with anthropology, is followed by logic as an abstraction of that, and concludes with the study of reality as the source of logic and anthropology. "Within one's own person" the study of reality is fundamental; anthropology is born there as a link; and finally the study of logic comes about as an abstraction from anthropology and as an abstraction from the study of reality mediated by anthropology. To explain this latter relationship in a somewhat unusual way, history (the world) engenders anthropology, the study of logic exists as an abstraction from both of these, and anthropology—and in particular, its epistemology—reflects history (the world), so that anthropology itself, as well as history (the world) mediated by anthropology, are directly abstracted as the study of logic.

[JWH]

TAKIZAWA Katsumi 滝沢克己 (1909–1984)

Three years after completing undergraduate studies in philosophy at Kyushu University, Takizawa traveled to Europe where he studied briefly under Karl Barth until the latter's expulsion in 1934 under the Nazis. He returned to a post at his home university, where he remained for the rest of his academic career. At age forty-nine he was baptized a Christian. Three months after his death in 1984 he was granted an honorary doctorate posthumously by the University of Heidelberg.

As a young man of twenty-seven he published a critique of Nishida Kitarō's* philosophy that drew the attention of Nishida and his circle. The core of his argument, which would define his later work, lay in the claim of an *irreversible* dependence of finite and fallible phenomena on the infinite and infallible 'absolute nothingness' that Takizawa also referred to as "God." For Takizawa, Nishida's initial characterizations of the absolute—whether "pure experience" with its affirmation of universal unity or "contradictory self-identity" with its affirmation of mere *numerical* difference—do not capture the vital *qualitative* difference between the absolute and contingent phenomena, namely, that the latter is irreversibly dependent on the former for existence, moral direction, and soteriological transformation. In part at least, Nishida's proposal of an 'inverse correlation' between the absolute and the relative that maintain the distinct identity of each, although only alluded to briefly in his final essay, can be seen as a positive response to this critique. As the following excerpts will show, Takizawa considered this *irreversible* dimension of human relations to the absolute a protection against the kinds of sociopolitical errors to which some in the Kyoto School succumbed, as well as a stimulus to ethical action and religious awakening. Not limited to dialogue with the Kyoto School, Takizawa pursued dialogue with literary and cultural theorists as well as with Buddhist and Christian scholars, and even developed his own original position of a "pure theanthropology."

[CAR]

THE LOGIC OF IRREVERSIBILITY

TAKIZAWA Katsumi 1936, 9–24, 35–9; 1954, 431–4; 1973, 103–4

Nishida's philosophy uses the copulative 'soku' to bind concepts whose identities are dependent on one another: universal-*soku*-individual, absolute nothingness-*soku*-being, absolute death-*soku*-life, reality-*soku*-phenomenon, subjective-*soku*-predicative, noesis-*soku*-noema, subject-*soku*-object,... active determination-*soku*-expressive determination, time-*soku*-space, and so on. This relationship is also referred to as a "continuity of discontinuity"... Here I

propose to give some thought to what Nishida means when he states that the moment makes contact with eternity, and that we, with each step that we take, are directly connected to the absolute.... As he notes, not even the things I create are simply my creations.... In some sense, the fact that I am here now means that I am connected to the eternal as a self-determination of the eternal now, and that I recognize and serve *it*.... God is the creator and I am the created. In no case can this relation be *reversed*.... The moment I presume to be autonomous, the authority of God manifests itself to me in the *poena mortis*, the death penalty to which all life is subject.

.....

In recognizing that my being present here today means that I am connected to the eternal, I necessarily recognize the same to be true of my presence yesterday.... Tomorrow's "I," insofar as it is a body, will be a rearrangement of the same matter and a continuation of an ongoing energy. As I go about the activities of daily life, I arrive naturally at the "I" of tomorrow with its thinking and willing. But the real "I" is more than something that thinks and wills; it is a thinking and willing *body*. Hence my environment—my work, for example—changes the way I think and restricts the reach of my will. Not even my dreams are exempt from this influence. In this way, each step in my activity, whether or not I am aware of it, is affected not only by my human relationships but also by the economic structure of society, by institutions, laws, the nation—indeed, by a world whose infinite complexities are unknown to me in their entirety....

My relationship to society is always *relative*. On the one hand, I am ruled by society; on the other hand, I rule society (as is particularly obvious in the case of revolutionaries and tyrants). We shape society and at the same time society, by virtue of our mutual determination of one another, shapes us historically.... In contrast, God is said to be my creator and ruler; the relationship is *absolute*. There is no sense in which I can rule over God, much less create God. Any God I create is no more than an idol, never the true God....

Now, when we realize that being present here and now means being connected to the eternal, we have also to recognize that... *everything* that exists is connected to the eternal. For any given thing to be present at a given time and place is for it to be created by God. There is an absolute divide, a bottomless abyss of darkness separating the creator from the created. This is an order that cannot be violated even in the slightest degree... Nor can there be any being other than the eternal that established such a direct continuity with myself. In other words, the God who is absolutely beyond our grasp is the same God who always and everywhere creates all things anew. To use a metaphor of Pascal's that Nishida is fond of quoting, God is an infinite sphere whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere.... The fact that individuals are absolute in the sense that each "I" is connected to the eternal—that is, the fact

that there are innumerable other absolute individuals other than I—implies the existence of an absolute universal that is a direct union of absolutely independent individuals. From the standpoint of the absolute universal, the One is an absolute One and the many an absolute many. Thus, in the most basic meaning of the “absolute continuity of discontinuity,” I and Thou must look at each other.... This absolute universal is what Nishida calls *agape* as distinct from *eros*; it is the absolute love within God himself, a love that is eternal and lacking nothing....

If Nishida is claiming that we should set out immediately from within the world to think of subjectivity and objectivity, of ego and things, of life and death, as dialectically uniting at the polar limits of the world in a self-identity of absolute contradictories, then such a dialectical union would consist only of the contradictories and not their *union*.... From such a standpoint (as is the case with the philosophy of Takahashi Satomi*), absolute individuals are merely abstract ideas, and the absolute universal has no connection with this world but is relegated to the status of a “God” infinitely distant from this world.... But absolute nothingness is too real not to be called an absolute individual. We do not arrive at absolute nothingness merely by pushing an analogy with the “individual” to its extremes. Absolute nothingness cannot be inferred, as some erroneously think, from the assumption that it is something to be found at the ground of the “individual”.... Absolute nothingness is rather the true ground from which all sorts of questions arise and from which they need to be seen. It is not a mere postulate, but something of which I am as immediately aware as I am of what I see with my eyes and touch with my hands. Indeed it is absolute nothingness that creates our eyes and our hands, and creates everything directly intuited. It is not something I grasp but something that grasps me into its embrace....

For God to create things by word alone means that God is completely free; it does not mean that God is somehow limited by creation.... Although I am myself a thing..., I can also name things, control them, and even make things of my own will. A human being is not only *homo sapiens* but also *homo faber*, not only a rational animal (ζῷον λόγον ἔχων) but also a political one (ζῷον πολιτικόν).... As beings with bodies, we are created, and as befits our place as creatures we are separated from God by an abyss of nothingness. Nevertheless, as the image of God, we are equal with God: rational, free, and communal. This is not something that can be understood by logic alone; it has to be called an absolute continuity of discontinuity. However, as the first book of Genesis says of creation, “God saw that it was good.” There is nothing to lament about being created....

I cannot refrain here from raising a serious doubt concerning Nishida’s philosophy.... The absolute continuity of discontinuity cannot in any sense be

thought of in purely monistic terms. In the first place, it cannot refer to some dynamic yet unmovable subject in the manner of a Plotinian One, since God already possesses the clear structuring of an absolute One-in-many and many-in-One.... Nor, in the second place, can it refer to an unbridgeable abyss of nihilism that lies between God and created things. Finally, and most importantly, the absolute continuity of discontinuity cannot be reduced to the sense in which created beings have disobeyed God and face the abyss of nothingness as the ineluctable valley of death....

Nishida speaks of God as absolute righteousness, absolute power, and eternal life, but he rightly shies away from falling back into an antiquated metaphysics that sees God as external and transcendent.... To see God as absolute life does not, however, entail either positing an external and transcendent absolute or falling into a mistaken dualism of absolute light and absolute darkness. The clear distinctions... constituting the absolute continuity of discontinuity should suffice to protect against the danger of this sort of mistake....

Although in his later philosophy Nishida followed Aristotle's suggestion to become strictly objective and logical, in the final analysis... it does not appear that he was ever able to shake free of the weakness of *An Inquiry into the Good* in which he had to express the real and fundamental ground of the "whence and whither" of all things in terms of "pure experience"... To avoid being misunderstood as sliding into romanticism or pantheism, he claimed that the interconnection of *absolute* life and death on the one hand, and the various *relative* forms of life on the other hand, is always a "continuity of discontinuity." He emphasized not only that the *soku* that couples the moment and eternity, individual determination and universal determination, and so on, "always carries the sense of an inverse determination"; he also went so far as not to refrain from using expressions of Christian theology such as "creator and creation," "God and Satan," "last judgment," and the like, which are dangerous in the extreme for a scholar....

In all cases the "I" remains forever the "I" and the absolute remains the absolute, and yet the consciousness and daily life of the "I" cannot really take shape except as a self-realization of the absolute.... Thus for Nishida the mutual self-realization of the "I" and the absolute—distinct yet inseparable—is a matter of historical necessity. Had he taken the further step of following the original intent behind the ideas of the "continuity of discontinuity" and 'inverse correlation' to their logical conclusion, he might have seen that what transcends this world... and what is present here within this world... are actually distinguished by an absolutely *irreversible* sequence. Nishida could have discovered this irreversible sequence without doing any damage to what is positively expressed by his use

of *soku* and his idea of “self-identity of absolute contradictories” which serve as a decisive criticism of the “gloomy face” of conventional Christianity...

Since God’s self-expression is in all cases *prior to* human self-realization, human self-realization needs to *seek for* it. Human self-realization is merely an image that becomes real only through submitting to God’s self-expression. The fact that the things and human beings that exist in this world *become* real through authentic self-realization is itself a manifestation of the *idea* of God as the consciousness of things and humans, but this does not immediately manifest the divinity as it is in itself... Conversely, as long as actually existing human beings... fail to accept the absolute fact that nothing in existence can live apart from God, they are certain never to find true rest. Therefore, even a dialectical language of contradictory self-identity or the inverse correlation of the many and the one, the individual and the universal, always leaves something that cannot be expressed exactly...

Whether it was due to the influence of Zen tradition, the limitations of Nishida’s social and economic circumstances, or an insufficient study of dialectical materialism (above all, its economic theory), Nishida’s philosophy retained to the end his initial tendency to subjectivism, which he was always just one step away from falling into. In this sense, the criticism of the materialists, that Nishida’s thought amounted to no more than a “bourgeois idealism” clinging to prescientific religious and metaphysical ideas, is not without rational justification. Certainly this is the case in his various ideas of history and is disclosed most patently in his treatment of the question of the nation.

The correct way for a human being to express God is to correlate it with the self-expression of God in a human being. When such expression is perfectly achieved, it is one with God’s own self-expression, which is to say, the two become phenomenologically identical. To the extent that there is no gap between them, the way a person expresses God—indeed the very person who utters the expression—is necessarily the self-expression of God in the human. That said, no matter how perfectly matched divine expression and human expression may be, there remains an ineluctable distinction between prior and posterior, between leader and follower, which keeps the reflected original distinct from the finite reflecting image, the latter of which draws its life from the former and in turn is drawn towards it, which is judged by it and at the same time is inspired to be renewed by it.

[CAR]

Historian and philosophical critic, Ienaga Saburō is one of those modern thinkers who defies classification. He is especially well known for his open criticisms of Japanese narratives of World War II. In 1953 he wrote a Japanese history textbook, which was censored by the Ministry of Education due to “factual errors,” and Ienaga filed a lawsuit against the Ministry in a well-publicized case. The selection below focuses on another side of Ienaga and offers in translation an excerpt from the second chapter of his ambitious first book, *The Development of the Logic of Negation in Japanese Thought*, which was published in 1940. The treatise as a whole and the selection trace the emergence of the idea of negation in Japan, which he believes follows a trajectory similar to that of the West. In Ienaga’s view, in the West, the idea of negation was absent in ancient Greek views of the cosmos and emerged with the influence of Christianity. Similarly, he contends that in Japan, the ancient period did not have the concept of negation and that, before the introduction of Buddhism, people conceived a fluid relationship between the human and godly realms. He argues that the concept of negation is related to radical critiques of the present and to the projection of utopian ideals. Utopian ideals, in turn, make possible eschatological visions of history, which one can see in some modern interpretations of religion and in social and political philosophies such as Marxism. Hence, while Ienaga delves into the ancient past and medieval periods, in this work he aims to understand how modern ways of thinking were made possible by transformations in earlier patterns of thought. During the postwar period, he reinterpreted his early work and claimed that Japanese culture is pervaded by the absence of a great tension between good and evil, a lack that he links to the apathetic reactions to the war.

[VM]

THE NEGATION OF OTHERWORLDLINESS

IENAGA Saburō 1940, 11–16

Having discussed the development of the logic of negation in the history of western philosophy, when we turn to the development of the logic of negation in Japanese thought, we find a similar process. The Japanese also lacked the idea of negation in ancient thought. Negation as a form of thought was given to the Japanese by Buddhism in much the same way as it was introduced to the West through Christianity. What is more, as is the case with thinking that introduced the logic of negation, Buddhism and Christianity are both of foreign origin; on this point, the histories of Japan and the West converge. Just as their medieval period was established under the rule of Christianity,

so, too, our medieval period emerged, under the influence of Buddhism, as a negation of the ancient period. The fact that the medieval period was the negation of the ancient period, and that the force of that negation came from the Buddhist logic of negation, more or less parallels the role Christianity played in the West. But we are not concerned here with making a detailed comparison of these similarities and differences. Besides, it makes really no sense to overlook the basic logical differences between Buddhist and Christian thought, or to engage in a detailed comparative study between Japanese and western thought, by merely pointing out general, external similarities. Instead, we shall proceed to an internal investigation of Japanese intellectual history, appreciative of the important suggestions we have gained regarding how the western history of philosophy unfolded.

Because the logic of negation in Japan was of a foreign origin, in order for it to become a truly living logic, people had to go through rather considerable life-experiences to understand this idea. In this sense, the logic of negation became a constitutive element of Japanese thought not as an externally given piece of knowledge but as something that was digested in practice and grasped as part of people's daily life....

What kind of logic did the ancient Japanese possess before Buddhism came to Japan? To help clarify this, we may analyze the ancient stories and legends contained in the '*Kojiki*', as well as in the local chronicles known collectively as the *Fudoki* and other documents. The original content of the *Kojiki* dates back prior to the reign of Empress Suiko (554–628), to a time when the influences of Buddhism and Confucianism were not in the mainstream. Abstracting from those "external" elements, we are left with exceptional resources from which to glean what ancient Japanese thought was like during a period when the influences of Buddhism and Confucianism were all but nonexistent. Numerous works have been written on the structure of the worldview of the ancient people, beginning with the scholars of national learning (principally Motoori Norinaga*) in particular and advancing to eminent scholars of the present. Their rich and varied findings can be summarized, logically speaking, in two ideas: the affirmative vision of life and the view of the continuous world.

First and foremost, to the ancient Japanese all worlds were connected, spatially and qualitatively, to their own actual world. That is, all worlds were conceived of as no more than extension of the land in which they lived. Certainly, they thought about various other worlds apart from the geographical country of Ōyashima,⁵³ Chinese Han, Wu, and so forth, but they were by no means metaphysical worlds that transcended reality. The first, Takamagahara, was for the

53. [The "Eight Great Islands," an ancient name for Japan.]

ancient people a world above heaven. Its conception as the homeland of those who descended from heaven or the dwelling place of the imperial family prior to their settlement at the land of Yamato was a misinterpretation based on an erroneous reading of ancient stories and legends. Motoori Norinaga is faithful to true sentiments of the ancient people when he points out that “*Takamagahara* means heaven.” But does a description possess the majesty befitting a celestial world? It does not, and therefore the scenery of Nakatsukuni⁵⁴ was simply projected into the other world. Consider the following passage regarding the violent deeds of Susanoo:

Susanoo said, “Of course, it is I who have won” and in his victorious jubilation he acted wildly and destroyed the levies of the earth between the rice paddy fields belonged to Amaterasu. He blocked the irrigation canals and sullied with excrement the sanctuaries where fresh rice was being offered by the Great Goddess.... When Amaterasu was in the weaving chamber where she saw to the production of the sacred garments, Susanoo... took a sacred spotted horse he had skinned alive from the hind quarters and threw it into the room through the roof. The sight of the bleeding horse shocked the weaver maiden, who jumped back in alarm and fell on a shuttle that pierced her vagina and killed herself.

From this passage, we learn that rice was cultivated, weaving was practiced, and animals were kept in pasture.

Let us take another passage:

In the face of these events, the eight hundred thousand gods gathered in an assembly in a place called Ama no Yasunokawara, the Bed of the Calm Celestial River... The gods collected roosters from the eternal land and made them crow; they carried the hard rock from the river bed and made it the work surface. Deity Ishikoridome, who was ordered to cast the mirror, sought the help of god Amatsumara to accomplish his job. Deity Tamanooya was ordered to produce a set of radiant jewels connected by a long string.

Here we learn that there were mountains and rivers, domestic animals were kept, and mining and other industrial activities were carried out.

And again, we read elsewhere:

They pulled out the great *sakaki* tree growing on the celestial Mt Kagu.... Amenouzume, the goddess of dancing, fastened her sleeves with ivy vines from Mt Kagu, crowned her hair with ivy creepers, and held in her hand a bunch of bamboo leaves.

54. [The “Middle Land of Reeds,” another ancient name for Japan.]

This shows us that plants grew abundantly in the wild. This landscape is that of the middle land of reeds, and more precisely that of the land of Yamato, as Motoori Norinaga has written:

The mountains, the rivers, the trees, the plants, the imperial celestial palace, and all things, are similar to the country where Ninigi⁵⁵ reigned.

Moreover, one could come and go freely between Takamahara and Nakatsukuni, like many characters in the stories and legends of the age of the gods who traveled back and forth between the two worlds.

We see the same thing about *'Yomi' no kuni*, the land of the dead. Because ugly ogresses dwell there along with Yomotsushikome and eight thunder gods, we may have the sense that it is a very different world. But the fact that the god Izanagi went there and came back while he was still alive seems to indicate a lack of any pristine notion of the world of the dead. Moreover, according to the episode in which Izanagi visits the land of Yomi, it is a place where one can go on foot and is connected to the province of Izumo by a sloping road, Yomotsuhirasaka. Hence this land of the dead is nothing more than a geographical place connected to this land, which is why it is said that the cave west of Nogi in Izumo county is the entrance. Later, after the introduction of Buddhism, we find tales of the personal experience of going to hell, but these stories are typically related by persons who have died and returned to life. There is not a single story of a person going to hell and returning to this world on foot. It is clear that the concept of the “land of the dead” is totally different from that of a hell or underworld.

As a third other world, we should mention *Tokoyo no kuni*, the eternal land. Under the influence of Chinese thought, this land took on a utopian character, as seen in a passage in the *'Nihon shoki'* where the fisherman Urashima arrived at Tokoyo and encountered “holy men”; or again, in a poem contained in the *Man'yōshū* that reads:

Into the palace of the sea god,
the inner chamber of the beautiful palace,
two of us walk hand in hand.
We neither grow old nor do we die;
we will dwell forever together.

Both the story from the *Kojiki* of Tajimamori, who was dispatched to the eternal land, and the legend of Urashima can be interpreted as simple tales of travel to a faraway place across the sea. Even though this place may have been somewhat idealized, spatially speaking it is contiguous with this world.

55. [The ancestor of the imperial lineage and grandson of Amaterasu.]

Apart from these three worlds, there are a few other superhuman worlds. For instance, the world that appears in the legend of the beach of Ikago in the province of Ōmi is a celestial world, but it is utopian and unlike Takamagahara. This world most likely comes from a Chinese Daoist legend of the immortals and is not indigenous to Japan. In any case, one could reach this celestial world if one had wings to fly. The story has it that the inhabitants of this land descended to earth, married human beings, and become “inhabitants of the earth.” Here again there is no denying the spatial and qualitative continuity of the two worlds. More than that, insofar as the descendants of the celestial maiden are said to be the ancestors of the Ikago clan, one may also speak of a continuity of bloodline.

The single example that may contradict our observations on the continuous nature of the various worlds is an episode found in the *Nihon shoki* where the deity Ōanamuchi, the master of the great land, declares on the occasion of the terrestrial world being surrendered to the descendants of the gods of heaven: “What I know as the manifest things shall be ruled by the imperial descendants. I am about to retire to take care of the hidden things.”

The difference between the manifest and the hidden seem to resemble the distinction between the actual world and the metaphysical world, but according to Motoori Norinaga, this passage refers only to the difference between this land and Yomi, the land of the dead. Even according to Tachibana Moribe, who argued against this view, insisted on the signification of “hidden things” as “not external to the human world.” In short, it turns out that among all the stories and legends of antiquity, there is not even one instance of an “other world” that is sought as the negation of this world.

Together with the contiguous character of all worlds, the affirmative view of life represents a second important feature of ancient Japanese thought. The *Fudoki* of Hitachi contains an episode in which Yamato Takeru turns his glance to “the pure and clear flowing spring” to “admire its sublime beauty.” The ancients not only admired purity; they considered it to be the essence of the universe. As we read in a prayer of Shinto purification, “Words of Cleaning,” even if there were “unclean” defilements, the power of purification could easily sweep them away and create a land free everywhere of sin. To borrow the words of Motoori Norinaga, even if there are “nefarious things” like crimes and defilements, they have only a passive existence that “cannot affect things of splendor.” We have no trouble finding this optimistic mentality in stories and legends concerning the age of gods. Even at the time of extreme crisis, when “the high celestial plane became utterly dark, and the middle land of reeds was covered by dense darkness” because the sun goddess had disappeared, this optimism is reflected in the image of “Amenouzume delighting the eight million gods so that they all laughed.”

In examining the *Fudoki*, we find the following facts: at Mt Tsukuba in Hitachi, in spring and autumn, men and women enjoyed themselves by drinking and eating. At the festival of Kashima Shrine, men and women gathered, drank, and danced night and day. On the banks of the River Kuji, in the heat of the summer, the villagers forgot their troubles by singing romantic songs of Tsukuba and drinking delicious sake. At the village of Mitsuki in Ōi, in the height of summer, men and women gathered from near and far, relaxed, amused themselves, and enjoyed drinking. On the beach of Sakihara no Saki in Izumo, men and women met from time to time to throw merry banquets so enjoyable that they almost forgot to return home. At Mt Kishima, in Hizen, in spring and autumn, men and women climbed the hills hand in hand to enjoy the view, drinking and dancing. Thus, even in the Nara period (710–784), people in many places took pleasure in this kind of activity.

Various accounts lead us to believe that these customs were widespread in ancient times. Legend has it that deity Kamo no Taketsunomi had a great house built, fermented saké in large tanks, and offered a banquet to an assembly of all the gods for seven days and nights to celebrate his youngest son's passage to adulthood. Another old tale has it that men and women gathered for picnics at the time of the festival of Sumiyoshi Shrine. Some may contend that these customs had their origins in religious purification rites, and as such are no more than an ethnographical footnote to the customs widely practiced among peoples of the Far East in antiquity. But this does not prevent us from also seeing them as an expression of sentiments praising this world as “inexhaustibly pleasurable.” In the simple picture engraved on the back of a mirror dating from the age of hunting, we see how the people at the time actually sang and danced, “stretching out their arms.”

In sum, for the ancients evil was something easily overcome. The idea that anything could shake the foundations of the pleasurable nature of this world was not within their purview. It follows as a matter of course that for those who affirmed this world as it is, the idea of a transcendent world arising out of the negation of the present world was unthinkable. And it was this affirmative view of life that gave support to the contiguous worldview we discussed above. These two ideas, the affirmative conception of the world and the view of the world as continuous, were inseparable in forming and informing the foundations of ancient Japanese thought. What the two ideas had in common was the absence of a logic of negation. It is precisely for this reason that reality could be affirmed just as it is, with no need to assume a position of turning to an ideal realm by negating this world. Such is the essential characteristic of the thought of the ancient Japanese people.

[VM]

IZUTSU Toshihiko 井筒俊彦 (1914–1993)

Although brought up in the Zen tradition, Izutsu Toshihiko studied a wide range of philosophical and mystical traditions. Certainly the most linguistically gifted of all modern Japanese philosophers, Izutsu is reputed to have mastered over two dozen languages, including Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, Russian, English, and Greek. After graduating from Keiō University in Tokyo, he taught there for fourteen years. He subsequently taught at McGill University in Canada and the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy in Tehran on subjects ranging from the *Book of Changes* to the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Ibn al-‘Arabī. The first world-renowned scholar of Islam to appear in Japan, Izutsu translated the Qur’an into Japanese and wrote major commentaries on it, in addition to general works on Islamic thought and mysticism, including a comparison of Sufism and Daoism. He also produced a new Japanese translation and commentary of the *Laozi*, wrote on the Upanishads, and grappled with contemporary thinkers from Derrida to Jung.

The excerpt included here from his *Toward a Philosophy of Zen Buddhism* was published originally in English during his lectureship in Tehran. Although his principal reference points are Linji and Dōgen*, he draws on numerous Chinese and Japanese Zen writings to offer an overview of Zen philosophy that includes its epistemology, ontology, linguistic theory, and aesthetics. (He also collaborated with his wife, Izutsu Toyoko*, on several essays and a book on Japanese aesthetics.) Perhaps the clearest statement of his own mature philosophical position is to be found in his 1982 book *Consciousness and Essence*, from which short passages clarifying the scope of Izutsu’s thinking have also been included. Both selections evidence his blend of western-style argumentation with a profound understanding of eastern and near-eastern philosophies.

[JWH]

ZEN AND THE EGO

IZUTSU Toshihiko 1977, 18–25

From the point of view of Zen Buddhism, the “essentialist” tendency of the empirical ego is not admissible not only because it posits everywhere “objects” as permanent substantial entities, but also, and particularly, because it posits itself, the empirical ego, as an ego-substance. It not only sticks or adheres to the external “objects” as so many irreducible realities, but it clings to its own self as an even more irreducible, self-subsistent reality. This is what we have come to know as the “abiding ‘mind’” (*praśṭhitam cittam*). And a whole worldview is built up upon the sharp opposition between the “abiding mind,”

i.e., the “subject,” and its “objects.” This dichotomy of reality into subject and object, man and the external world, is the foundation of all our empirical experiences. Of course, even common sense is ready to admit that the phenomenal world, including both external things and the personal ego, is in a state of constant flux. But it tends to see within or behind this transiency of all things some elements which remain permanently unchangeable and substantial. Thus is created an image of the world of Being as a realm of self-identical objects, even the so-called “subject” being strictly speaking in such a view nothing but one of the “objects.” It is precisely this kind of ontological view that Zen Buddhism is firmly determined to destroy once and for all in order to replace it with another ontology based upon an entirely different sort of epistemology.

For a better understanding of the worldview which is peculiar to the supra-consciousness, let us, first, take up the normal type of worldview which is most natural and congenial to the human mind, and analyze its inner structure at a philosophical level.

Two stages or forms may conveniently be distinguished within the confines of such a worldview. The first is typically represented by Cartesian dualism standing on the fundamental dichotomy of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. As a philosophy, it may be described as an ontological system based on the dualistic tension between two “substances” that are irreducible to one another. As a worldview, it may appropriately be described as one in which man, i.e., the ego, is looking at things from the outside, he himself being in the position of a spectator. He is not subjectively involved in the events that take place among various things before his own eyes. Man is here a detached onlooker confronting a world of *external* objects. A whole ontological scenery is spread out before him, and he, as an independent personal “subject,” is merely enjoying the colorful view on the stage of the world. This is a view which is the farthest removed from the reality of the things as they reveal themselves to the eyes of the supra-consciousness.

The second stage may conveniently be represented by the Heideggerian idea of the “being-within-the-world,” particularly in the state of the ontological *Verfallenheit*. Unlike the situation we have just observed in the first stage of the dichotomous worldview, man is here subjectively, vitally involved in the destiny of the things surrounding him. Instead of remaining an objective spectator looking from the outside at the world as something independent of him, man, the ego, finds himself in the very midst of the world, directly affecting them and being directly affected by them. He is no longer an outsider enjoying with self-complacency what is going on on the stage of the theatre. He himself *is* on the stage, he *exists* in the world, actively participating in the play, undergoing an undefinable existential anxiety which is the natural outcome of such a position.

The commonsense worldview at this second stage is far closer to Zen than the first stage. Yet, the empirical worldview, whether of the first or the second stage, is strictly speaking totally different from the Zen worldview with regard to its basic structure. For the empirical worldview is a worldview worked out by the intellect that can properly exercise its function only where there is a distinction made between *ego* and *alter*. The whole mechanism stands on the conviction, whether explicit or implicit, of the independent existence of the ego-substance which stands opposed to external substantial objects. Whether the subject be represented as being outside the world of objects or inside, this very basic Cartesian opposition is, from the standpoint of Zen, something to be demolished before man begins to see the reality of himself and of so-called external objects.

In truth, however, even in the midst of this empirical view of the things there is hidden something like a metaphysical principle which is, though invisible, constantly at work, ready to be realized at any moment through the human mind to transform the normal view of the world into something entirely different. This hidden principle of the metaphysico-epistemological transformation of reality is called in Buddhism '*tathāgatagarbha*', the "womb of the absolute reality"...

The epistemological relation of the ego to the object in the ordinary empirical worldview may be represented by the formula: $s \rightarrow o$, which may be read as: *i see this*.

Thus the grammatical subject, *s*, represents the ego-consciousness of man at the level of empirical experience. It refers to the awareness of selfhood as *Da-sein* in the literal sense of "being-there" as a subject in front of, or in the midst of, the objective world. The *i* is here an independently subsistent ego-substance. As long as the empirical ego remains on the empirical dimension, it is conscious of itself only as being there as an independent center of its own perception, thinking, and bodily actions. It has no awareness at all of its being something more than that.

However, from the viewpoint of Zen which intuits everywhere and in everything the act of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the "womb of the absolute reality," there is perceivable, behind each individual *i*, Something whose activity may be expressed by the formula ($S \rightarrow$) or (*I SEE*), the brackets indicating that this activity is still hidden at the empirical level of self-consciousness. Thus the structure of the empirical ego, *s*, in reality, that is, seen with the eye of Zen, must properly be represented by the formula:

$$(S \rightarrow) s \quad \text{or:} \quad (I \text{ SEE}) \text{ myself.}$$

As we shall see later in more detail, the empirical ego, *s*, can be the real center of all its activities simply because that hidden Principle, ($S \rightarrow$), is constantly

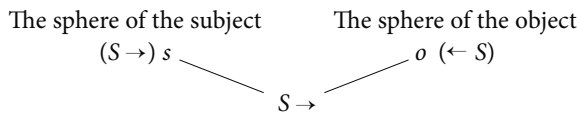
functioning through *s*. The empirical ego can be selfhood only because every subjective movement it makes is in truth the actualization here and now of that Something which is the real Selfhood. The nature of the activity of *I SEE* may best be understood when it is put side by side with its Islamic parallel presented by the *irfān* type of philosophy which finds an explicit reference to the same kind of situation in the words of God in the Qur'an: "It was not you who threw when you did throw: it was (in reality) God who threw" (VIII. 17). The important point, however, is that this state of affairs is at this level still completely hidden to, and remains unnoticed by, the empirical ego. The latter sees itself alone; it is totally unaware of the part between the brackets: $(S \rightarrow)$.

Exactly the same applies to the "objective" side of the epistemological relation (represented in the above-given formula by the small *o*). Here again the empirical ego has the awareness only of the presence of "things." The latter appear to the ego as self-subsistent entities that exist independently of itself. They appear as substances qualified by various properties, and as such they stand opposed to the perceiving subject which sees them from outside. Viewed from the standpoint of the above-mentioned '*prajñā*', the "transcendental cognition," however, a thing rises as this or that thing before the eyes of the empirical ego simply by virtue of the activity of that very same Something, $(S \rightarrow)$, which, as we have seen, establishes the ego as an ego. A thing, *o*, comes to be established as the thing, *o*, itself as a concrete actualization of that Something. It is properly to be understood as a self-manifesting form of the same *tathāgatagarbha*, the "womb of absolute reality" which is eternally and permanently active through all the phenomenal forms of things. Thus the formula representing the inner structure of *o* must assume a more analytic form:

$$(S \rightarrow) o \quad \text{or:} \quad (I \text{ SEE}) \text{ this.}$$

This new formula is so designed as to indicate that here, too, *o* is the only thing which is externally manifested, but that behind this phenomenal form there lies hidden the activity of $(S \rightarrow)$, of which the empirical ego is still unaware.

In this way, the so-called subject-object relationship or the whole epistemological process by which a (seemingly) self-subsistent ego-substance perceives a (seemingly) self-subsistent object-substance, and which we have initially represented by the formula $s \rightarrow o$, must, if given in its fully developed form, be somewhat like this:



In this last formulation, the *s* or the empirical ego, which is but a particular actualization of $(S \rightarrow)$, is put into a special active-passive relation with the

“object” or *o*, which is also a particular actualization of the same ($S \rightarrow$). And the whole process is to be understood as a concrete actualization of *I SEE*, or $S \rightarrow$ without brackets. But even in the *I SEE* there is still noticeable a faint lingering trace of ego-consciousness. Zen emphatically requires that even such an amount of ego-consciousness should be erased from the mind, so that the whole thing be ultimately reduced to the simple act of *SEE* pure and simple. The word ‘no-mind’, to which reference has been made, refers precisely to the pure act of *SEE* in the state of an immediate and direct actualization, that is, the eternal verb *SEE* without brackets.

We now begin to notice that the reality of what has been expressed by the formula: *i see this*, is of an extremely complicated structure, at least when described analytically from the viewpoint of the empirical ego. The real metaphysico-epistemological situation, which is covertly and implicitly indicated by the formula $s \rightarrow o$, turns out to be something entirely different from what we usually understand from the outward grammatical structure of the sentence. And the primary or most elementary aim of Zen Buddhism with regard to those who, being locked up in the magic circle of ontological dichotomy, cannot see beyond the surface meaning of $s \rightarrow o$ or *i see this* as suggested by its syntactic structure (“subject” \rightarrow “act” \rightarrow “object”), consists in attempting to break the spell of dualism and remove it from their minds, so that they might stand immediately face to face with what we have symbolically designated by the verb *SEE*.

We may do well to recall at this point that Buddhism in general stands philosophically on the concept of ‘*pratītya-samutpāda*’, i.e., the idea that everything comes into being and exists as what it is by virtue of the infinite number of relations it bears to other things, each one of these “other things” owing again its seemingly self-subsistent existence to other things. Buddhism in this respect is ontologically a system based upon the category of *relatio*, in contrast to, say, the Platonic-Aristotelian system which is based on the category of *substantia*.

A philosophical system which stands upon the category of *substantia* and which recognizes in substances the most basic ontological elements, almost inevitably tends to assume the form of essentialism.... The essentialist position sees on both the “subjective” and “objective” sides of the $s \rightarrow o$ type of situation self-subsistent substances, the boundaries of each of which are inalterably fixed and determined by its “essence.” Here *o*, say an apple, is a self-subsistent substance with a more or less strictly delimited ontological sphere, the delimitation being supplied by its own “essence,” i.e., apple-ness. In the same manner, the ego, which as subject perceives the apple, is an equally self-subsistent substance furnished with an “essence” which, in this case, happens to be its I-ness. Zen Buddhism summarizes the essentialist view through the succinct dictum: “Mountain is mountain, and river is river.”

The position of *pratītya-samutpāda* stands definitely against this view. Such a view, Buddhism asserts, does nothing other than reflect the phenomenal surface of reality. According to the Buddhist view, it is not the case that there does exist in the external world a substance with a certain number of qualities, called “apple.” The truth is rather that Something phenomenally appears to the subject as an “apple.” The phenomenal appearance of the “apple” as an “apple” depends upon a certain positive attitude on the part of the subject. Conversely, however, the very fact that “apple” phenomenally appears as such to his eyes, establishes man as the perceiving ego, the subject of cognition. Zen describes this reciprocal relationship or determination between the subject and the object by saying: “Man sees the mountain; the mountain sees man.”

Therefore, reality in the true sense of the word is something lying behind both the subject and object and making each of them emerge in its particular form: this as the subject and that as the object. The ultimate principle governing the whole structure is Something which runs through the subject-object relationship, and which makes possible the very relationship to be actualized. It is this all-pervading, active principle that we want to indicate by the formula *S* or rather in its ultimate form, the verb *SEE*.

But again, the word “something” or “ultimate principle” must not mislead one into thinking that behind the veils of phenomena some metaphysical, supra-sensible Substance is governing the mechanism of the phenomenal world. For there is, according to *Zen*, in reality nothing beyond, or other than, the phenomenal world. *Zen* does not admit the existence of a transcendental, supra-sensible order of things, which would subsist apart from the sensible world. The only point *Zen* Buddhism makes about this problem is that the phenomenal world is not just the sensible order of things as it appears to the ordinary empirical ego; rather, the phenomenal world as it discloses itself to the *Zen* consciousness is charged with a peculiar kind of dynamic power which may conveniently be indicated by the verb *SEE*.

Thus what is meant by *SEE* is not an absolute, transcendental Entity which itself might be something keeping itself beyond, and completely aloof from the phenomenal things. Rather, what is really meant thereby in *Zen* Buddhism is a dynamic field of power in its entirety and wholeness, an entire field which is neither exclusively subjective nor exclusively objective, but comprehending both the subject and the object in a peculiar state prior to its being bifurcated into these two terms. The verbal form itself of *SEE* may, at least vaguely, be suggestive of the fact that, instead of being a thing, be it an “absolute” thing or be it a “transcendental” substance, it is an *actus* charging an entire field with its dynamic energy. In terms of the previously introduced basic formula we might say that the whole process of *i see this* is itself the field of the Act of *SEE*. The real

meaning of this statement, however, will be made clear only by our analyzing in more detail the basic inner structure of this dynamic field.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND ESSENCES

IZUTSU Toshihiko 1982, 9–17

Since the time of Socrates' passionate insistence on the absolute need for "definition" in order to use human knowledge correctly, to develop precise ideas, and to avoid errors in our knowledge of things, the pursuit of the "essence" of the objects of thought and knowledge has been part of the mainstream of the western philosophical tradition up to this day. Leaving aside the question of a theory of "essences," the problem of essence has consistently occupied the speculations of thinkers throughout the history of western philosophy under a variety of names and in a variety of forms. But not only western philosophy. We are aware that in the East as well—I provisionally use the term "eastern philosophy" to refer to various traditions of philosophical thought that have developed from ancient times and stretch across the broad cultural realm of greater Asia, including the Far East, the Middle East, and the Near East—essence and comparable notions have played a remarkably important role in connection with the semantic functions of language and the manifold structure of human consciousness.

Taking our lead from the problematic of essence in this context and laying out the various sorts of philosophical problems that have arisen there, my initial aim is to draw out eastern philosophy as a whole from the complex historical web involved in these traditions and move it to a diachronic level where an attempt can be made to restructure it. That said, the range of things that have to be taken up, if only from the aspect of the resources involved, is far-reaching in the extreme, and for that reason my efforts will be no more than a first step, a prolegomenon to the construction of a diachronic eastern philosophy....

All humans, whoever they are, possess the almost instinctual disposition to grasp the "essence" of the multitude of things and events we encounter in the world of experience. The pursuit or quest of essence often, if not always, has a kind of special echo to it. In fact, if one thinks about it, the workings of a large part of everyday consciousness itself come about through acknowledging the "essence" of all sorts of things and events. It is built into everyday consciousness, that is, the very structure of surface consciousness made up of sensation, perception, will, desire, speculation, and the like, as the most fundamental part.

Traditionally, consciousness is said to be consciousness *of* something, but the original intentionality of consciousness does not become manifest without the

grasp of that something (x) in some form or other. This is the case no matter how vague, incoherent, or impressionistic that grasp of “essence” be. This is how the very semantic structure of the original articulation of existence comes to form the foundation for the emergence of consciousness *of*.

Say x is a flower or the word “flower.” In order to do this, one must grasp *what x is* (whatever it happens to be), that is, the “essence” of x. In order to be able to distinguish x and y linguistically, that is as conscious phenomena, by having the word “flower” stand for x, and the word “stone” for y, there must be an elementary understanding, at least in some crude form, of the “essence” of a flower and a stone. If this were not so, we could not uniformly assign the values x and y to a flower that is always a flower and a stone that is always a stone.

The Zen saying that “mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers” belongs (in its first sense) to the world where this kind of “essence” arises. It is the world that is seen as “articulated” through the distinction and interconnection of a multitude of essences. And this is what our everyday world is; subjectively, it is the elemental mode of the everyday, surface consciousness in which we view reality. In order to think of consciousness only in terms of surface consciousness, consciousness would have to be seen as the internal state that arises when “essences” of things and events are grasped following the instructions of the semantic function of words. The non-reflective or prereflective—in most cases, this might be called “instinctual”—grasp of essences always precedes the intentionality that determines the fundamental structure of surface consciousness. Without such preceding, consciousness *of* would not arise.

.....

Our everyday world, as it were, omits—or is unaware of—the process of the first, elementary knowing of “essences.” It is a horizon of meanings of an articulated existence, giving shape to entities seen as *things* that were already there from the start. We exist as subjects in the midst of the world that appears against this horizon of existence and are conscious of the *things* that envelop us as objects. At this time, of course, consciousness takes the form of consciousness *of* something without paying much attention to knowing the “essences” that are latent in that “something.” This is precisely why, when something or other effects a dropping-off of language and of essences, one is left with nothing to hold on to and nowhere to stand, in a state of consternation at being thrown smack into the middle of an indifferent and undifferentiated “existence” without any signposts. And this in turn awakens one to the difficulty of “essences.” One thus rushes back hurriedly to the world of clearly articulated entities where essences are fitted out with signposts....

The intellectual traditions of the East, at least in principle, are not driven to “nausea” in such circumstances. The reason is that, even in the face of an absolutely unarticulated “existence,” from the start preparations are made in a

methodical, systematic way so as to avoid consternation. The so-called sages of the East were persons for whom a deep consciousness had opened up in which they could locate themselves. They were able to place the things that appeared on the surface dimension of consciousness and events that arose there against the horizon of deep consciousness, and view them from there. On the metaphysical and physical horizons that extended across the surface and the depth of consciousness, the dimension of unarticulated “existence,” the “existence” articulated into thousands of items, appears there at the same time just as it is.

Verily, in the state of eternal non-being one would see the mysterious reality of the ‘Way’.

In the state of eternal being one would see the determinations of the Way.

These words from the opening chapter of the *Laozi* follow on a line that reads:

The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.

The named is the mother of ten thousand things.⁵⁶

The “state of eternal being”—or “absolute desirelessness”—is the original mode of being of deep consciousness. To be constantly free of desire, that is, to be absolutely detached, to have no attachment to anything that can be surmised as an object in virtue of its name, is a state of consciousness referred to as “nothing worldly, nothing holy” and “originally, not a single thing.”⁵⁷ Consciousness here is not consciousness *of*. There is no object and no intentionality—it is *non-consciousness*. This *meta-consciousness*, this “consciousness that is not a consciousness,” is everywhere acknowledged as a fact of experience throughout eastern thought.

[JWH]

56. [From Izutsu’s own translation of the *Laozi*, IZUTSU Toshihiko 2001, 28.]

57. [The first phrase alludes to legendary words spoken by Bodhidharma, the First Patriarch of Zen, to Emperor Wu; see *Hekiganroku*, Case 1. The second phrase comes from a verse ascribed to the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng.]

MARUYAMA Masao 丸山真男 (1914–1996)

Few intellectuals in Japan have left such a conspicuous mark on postwar intellectual discourse as Maruyama Masao. He is known for his active political stance in the postwar period as well as for his academic accomplishments. During the first part of his academic career, he focused on an analysis of early-modern and modern Japanese thought, inspired by the methods of Marx, Mannheim, and Weber. Later on, he devoted more energy to an elucidation of the particularities of Japanese intellectual history as a whole. Throughout his lifetime, he remained an opinion-leader of the liberal left.

Initially majoring in western political thought at Tokyo Imperial University, he devoted his doctoral research to early-modern Japanese thinking, bringing a breath of fresh air into a tradition-bound field both in terms of method and content. Drafted into the army in 1944, he narrowly escaped the devastation of Hiroshima. His wartime experience led him to adopt an active stance as a reformist in the postwar period. He was one of the first to offer an incisive “structuralist” critique of the emperor system under the military regime. He later became involved in the peace movement, though his primary focus was academic. Even today his writings on various aspects of Japanese modern intellectual history are obligatory reading.

After 1960, Maruyama turned to Japanese intellectual history as a whole, questioning the reasons for its failure to modernize in a spiritual sense. Although his views in this regard earned him criticism from a number of angles, they offer an intriguing historical perspective on the problem of modernity. The following excerpt is an example. In it, Maruyama argues that despite Japan’s reliance on foreign inspiration for its political and historical values, what has been imported has always been modified to fit its aversion to transcendence, speculative theory, and absolute moral principles grounded beyond the existing social order.

[J]

IN SEARCH OF A GROUND

MARUYAMA Masao 1984, 144–56

What is the essential factor in the modifications Japan has made to the foreign, universalist worldviews it has imported one after another since ancient times? Put this way, we can identify a tendency to two mistakes in the attempt to understand Japanese thought. On the one hand, Japanese intellectual history, to put it in extreme terms, may be read as a record of distortions of foreign thought. Confucianism and Buddhism, for example, can be thought to have suffered awkward misinterpretations when they found their way to Japan.

“Real” Chinese Confucianism was nothing like this. Or one could argue that the freedom and civil rights movement of the 1880s was a ludicrous hodgepodge of intellectual inspirations, tossing together ideas from the eighteenth-century thinker Rousseau with those from mid- to late nineteenth-century thinkers like Mill and Spencer. Looked at in this way, Japan’s intellectual history seems little more than a collection of distorted foreign ideas—a gross deviation from the authentic models. I do not myself consider this approach very productive.

On the other hand, much effort has gone into the search for a “homegrown” Japanese way of thinking, independent of what is considered “foreign thought.” These efforts have taken a variety of forms: Native Studies (in the Edo period), Japanism in the modern era, and more recently, the popular search for “indigenous” thinking. Methodologically speaking, this approach is bound to end in failure. (To be sure, as I have noted before, the repeated emergence of this way of interpreting—that is, opposing the foreign to the homegrown—is not without interest in its own right. Who in Europe today would think of Christianity as a “foreign” religion imported from the East!)

The fact that since ancient times Japan has come under the powerful influence of continental culture is obvious to anyone who reads Japan’s oldest literature like the *‘Kojiki’* and the *‘Nihon shoki’*, the *‘Man’yōshū’*, the *Fudoki*, and the *Kogojūi*. These texts were already permeated to the core by Confucian, Buddhist, and other ideas that had found their way to Japan from the continent. The attempt to pare away foreign cultural influence in the quest for what is authentically Japanese is like peeling an onion. What was so tragically comical about the Native Studies movement was that the only choice it could see was between devotedly peeling away at the onion or allowing different foreign ideologies to “syncretize” into something authentically Japanese, turning Japanese tradition effectively into a kind of pan-Japanism in which even Christianity can be seen as a derivative of Shinto. Eventually this led to the conclusion that all cultures of the world have their origins in Japan. According to the Amatsukyō (in fact, a current of Hirata Shinto), a religion that gathered a considerable number of devotees from among the military during the war, Christ was born in Japan and so was ‘Shakyamuni’. And, of course, it held that there was a writing system from the age of the gods that was independent of the Chinese characters. But even leaving such extremes aside, pan-Japanism is one of the many examples of a psychological complex towards foreign ideas turned inside out that have appeared in the course of history. It can also be understood as one more effort in the desperate pursuit of a Japanese intellectual identity. The attempts of the Hirata School, the zealous adherents of the orthodox “Imperial Way,” and wartime Japanists are at once tragic and comical in their attempt to turn the Japanese spirit into a worldview that can stand alongside universalist worldviews like Confucianism, Buddhism, and Marxism.

Be that as it may, I think it would be a mistake to think that Japanese intellectual history is nothing more than a history of imports, that there is nothing “Japanese” about it. From olden times what we have in Japan in the way of more or less structured thought and doctrine—to which we limit our scope here, given the nature of the matter at hand—has been of foreign origin. But once these ideas entered Japan, they underwent certain changes and even sweeping “correction.” Japan cannot be categorized as a mere “consumption type” that swallows foreign imports whole. Any attempt to distill the “authentically Japanese” into a cohesive ideology is bound to fail, and yet, a closer look enables one to discern a surprising similarity of pattern in these “corrections” of foreign ideas. This is not just a question of “high-level” thinking but is true of our overall spiritual attitude: we cannot keep our eyes from wandering here and there in search of novelties from abroad without ever earnestly undergoing change ourselves. It is exactly this “revisionism” that is repeated obstinately. I referred to this clearly in my 1963 lectures.

The Japanese term I used to refer to this pattern was *archetype*, though the foreign word I had in mind was closer to *prototype*. Not that I was inspired by the Jungian archetypes; at the time I had not yet read Jung. I had gradually distilled ideas that had been fermenting within me concerning the “opening of the country,” cultural contacts, and the paradoxical combination of continuity and change that marks Japanese culture and society. The upshot was a discussion of an archetype at the very start of my course on the history of Japanese political thought. I began with the Edo period and worked my way back as far as the ancient period. Since it was impossible to do everything in the course of one year, each year I began and ended with a different period. For example, the year that began ancient times ended with Kamakura Buddhism, and the next year would pick up from the closing stages of the medieval period and go as far as the arrival of Christianity. The year after that, we would start from the beginning of the feudal system and go up to the Meiji Restoration. And each year I would open my course with a treatment of the “archetype of Japanese thought” as a vantage point from which to consider in what respect Buddhism as a world religion had been modified by this archetype or how Chinese Confucianism changed shape when it came to Japan. As a result, the course was highly unfriendly to the students, since one had to attend for three consecutive years in order to learn about the history of political thought from ancient to modern times....

Here I will not elaborate on how the actual content of foreign ideas was affected by this prototype but confine myself to methodological questions. Think of it as a triangle. At the base is the prototype and above it we see the accumulation of “foreign” teachings or “systems” like Confucianism, Buddhism, and eventually Marxism. *At the same time*, with the advance of history, strata

are formed. Hence, the “archetype” at the bottom and the foreign ideas that have accumulated on top of it engage in a mutual exchange. It is, therefore, wrong to think that they just pile up in a spatial sense. Since this archetype does not function as any kind of doctrine, the only method left to identify it is *elimination*, one by one setting aside those categories that clearly express foreign teachings or foreign worldviews, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, democracy, and Christianity.

The example of Shinto may be instructive here. Shinto first combined with Buddhism, giving rise to doctrines like “syncretic Shinto.” Later on it merged with Confucianism, leading to Yoshida Shinto and Yoshikawa Shinto. Historically it has been the intellectual fate of Shinto to syncretize in this way. In terms of extracting the underlying prototype, it offers a most useful case. The most direct primary sources here are the Japanese myths. From the prewar period on, the idea has persisted that the myths found in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* belonged to the ideology of the ruling classes and did not necessarily represent popular thinking. The reason for this view are easy to see, but there is not time here to enter into a concrete analysis of the contents of the myths. However, as a methodological issue it touches on something that affects the intellectual history of any country. In this regard, I am persuaded that Marx’s famous statement that “the dominant thought of a given period is the thought of the ruling class of that period” still holds, and all the more so when we retrace our ancient history. It is impossible to obtain materials for intellectual history other than what has been recorded by the ruling classes or an intellectual elite subservient to it. Basically, intellectual-historical narratives of “popular” thinking that consciously confront the “ruling class” are a product of the modern era. Suffice it to suggest that the projection of such images onto the past is non-historical. It is not all that arduous a task to uncover the political intentions of the compilers when reading the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* myths, but my assumption is that they contain valuable primary material that can help us investigate the “individuality” of Japanese intellectual history, regardless of their ideological character.

Already from the sixth and seventh centuries, during which the myths took shape, Japan had experienced the penetration of various elements from continental culture, so that not even the myths can be viewed as an untainted expression of the underlying prototype. This is most important and reconfirms what I said about the process of elimination being our only route to the prototype. One has to eliminate all concepts that are clearly Chinese, and that includes not only Confucianism, but also Daoism and the Hundred Schools of Thought,⁵⁸ that is,

58. [The Hundred Schools of Thought refers roughly to all the philosophers and schools that flourished from the eighth to the third century BCE in China.]

to all ideas and categories based on these ancient Chinese concepts. Furthermore, we have to eliminate all concepts that originated from Buddhism in its capacity as a world religion. Mahayana Buddhism as it was transmitted from China is an obvious example. We may, then, do the same for the *Man'yōshū*, the *Ryōiki*,⁵⁹ and any other important texts with intellectual content. It might seem as if nothing would remain when we are done, but *something* does, and that something is none other than the archetype, fragmentary though it be. As such, the archetype can never become a doctrine; even if it tried to form itself into a systematic teaching, it would need the help of a foreign worldview. At the same time this fragmentary thinking has a surprisingly obstinate persistence to it, allowing it to modify any foreign system of thought that enters the country, “Japanizing” it. I realize that this approach by way of a process of elimination entails a circular argument, but I do not see any way around it.

.....

In a 1972 article... I first used the word “old stratum” instead of “archetype.” There was no weighty reason, since my essential perception had not changed. So why the change?

Needless to say, the term “old stratum” is a geological metaphor. The idea is that a number of foreign ideas accumulated atop the “old stratum,” things like Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, liberal democracy, and the like, leaving the “old stratum” at the bottom unchanged. I had feared that the term *archetype* would be made to refer to the most “arcane” stage, a term used in Marxist debates on the Asian mode of production and so forth, which in turn would bring it within the compass of a Marxist view of history as a linear progress of fixed developmental stages. My main reason for settling on the term “old stratum” was that it helped to overcome historical limitations and shed more light on the continuous process of *stratification*. A second reason was that it had a less deterministic ring to it than “archetype,” which could be taken to mean something decisively fixed from ancient times and unalterable ever since. True, “old stratum” may also seem somewhat rigid since it rests at the bottom of everything, but at least it does not rule out the possibility of a serious earthquake that would cause the old stratum suddenly to surface and transform the geological structure. The emergence of the school of Ancient Learning within the development of neo-Confucianism, and of the Native Studies School, both of which were referred to earlier, can be regarded as just such a sudden elevation of the “old stratum,” resulting from the policy of national isolation. There

59. [The *Nihon ryōiki* is Japan's oldest collection of Buddhist fables, compiled sometime in the early ninth century.]

is a *twofold advance* here in the process of the “modernization” of thought. Without elaborating on the specifics, I would just note that the surfacing of the old stratum signaled a process of resistance against the indiscriminate adoption of foreign ideologies. Still, the motive to “resist” is not of itself sufficient to consider a way of thought to be an *embodiment* of the “old stratum.” Although Native Studies assumed an intellectual awareness of the “old stratum,” the teachings of Motoori Norinaga* are, in fact, inconceivable without the stimulus of the study of Ogyū Sorai* and thus cannot be considered as belonging to a pure “old stratum.” Nevertheless, Native Studies furnishes a most valuable source of material for reflecting on the “old stratum.”

The term “old stratum” did not last long with me. It may seem irrelevant, a matter of wording, but I find it better to leave as little room as possible for misinterpretation. The term that I finally settled on, after quite some painstaking thought, comes from musicology: *basso ostinato*. I had already made extensive reference to it when visiting the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University in 1975, and in fact had previously used the word in a 1972 essay on “The ‘Old Stratum’ of Historical Consciousness.” Some may find the use of a musical term snobbish if not disagreeable, but I have not been able to come up with anything more suitable.

Basso ostinato—in English, “ground bass”—refers to the obstinate repetition of a low sound. So, why did I use it to replace “old stratum”? Given the clear influence of Marxism in Japan and the fact that my readers seemed to liken this “old stratum” to the Marxist notion of *Unterbau*.... The “old stratum” I was thinking of, however, has no such meaning. As mentioned above, it is something that can only be identified in fragmentary fashion and shows up in history in combination with thought systems of foreign origin. It is obviously not the same as the *Unterbau* or what Marx himself called “basis.” Still, my “old stratum” was interpreted as just such a “basis,” conditioning all ideologies “fundamentally” and “ultimately.” In the light of this error, I shifted my image to that of an “obstinately repeated bass.”

The *basso ostinato*, as musicians will immediately realize, is not the same as a *basso continuo* (a continuous bass sound). The latter is found in baroque music and refers to the basses that carry the harmonic progression as opposed to the melody of the higher voices. Scores often show numbers accompanied by symbols like # and ♭ on the bass line without indicating any particular note. After searching musicological dictionaries, I have found that there does not seem to be an established Japanese translation for *basso ostinato*, which is described as a phrase that includes a certain melody and recurs obstinately in the lower tones, resonating with the high and middle notes. It is a specific sound but *not necessarily* the main melody. The main melody may well be performed in high notes by the violin or woodwind like the flute. But if there is a *basso ostinato* in

the lower notes, the music as a whole progresses differently than it does when only a harmony accompanies the main melody. Applying this metaphor to the intellectual history of Japan, we may say that the main melody is overwhelmingly made up of foreign thinking, whose origins lie on the Asian continent and, after Meiji, in Europe. But these melodies have not resonated without alteration. They have constantly been modified by a specific, stubbornly repetitive ground bass that has blended in—obstinately, *ostinato*, unlike an ordinary bass line that just goes on and on protracting the bass chord. In certain cases, as with the Native Studies School, the ground bass is lifted to the surface and can be distinctly heard as a melody. In other cases, it is held down by a heterogeneous melody and sinks to the “bottom,” its contours obscured. I had found, it seemed, the image I was looking for to express the “essentially Japanese” as a kind of obstinately repeated pattern of thinking and feeling. Nevertheless, I greatly regret having to use this kind of musicological metaphor and await to be informed of a better way to express myself....

I have spoken of what I consider to be the erroneousness of any emphasis on the “particularity” of Japan’s culture and discussed my reasons for preferring to speak of its “individuality” or “individual character.” There is one more methodological problem to account for with regard to the “old stratum” or *basso ostinato*, namely that of continuity and discontinuity, of constancy and change. Though anyone familiar with my earlier explanations may find this redundant, I wish to remove any doubt on the matter. I by no means wish to assume that the approach outlined above entails a continuity *despite* its discontinuity, that *despite* the many changes there is some factor that remains constant throughout, as if change and continuity opposed and contradicted each other. It would be rather meaningless to put particular stress on the *basso ostinato* if the only point were to emphasize the “despite” in a kind of binomial opposition between homeostasis and fluctuation. What I mean is not that some factors change while others remain constant, that there are only disruptions in something that persists at the ground. My aim is rather to show there is a recurrently repeated tone *within* the patterns of change themselves, that is, in the *way* in which the changes take place. In a word, I am not claiming that changes take place within the intellectual history of Japan while all along some things remain unaltered.... On the contrary, I mean that astonishing changes occur *precisely because* there exists a certain pattern of thinking. In other words, it is not that heresy emerges irregardless of the prevailing orthodoxy, but that a tendency towards the unconventional, an “affection for the heretical” is typically reproduced *precisely because* thought does not fulfill the conditions of a genuine “orthodoxy.” To return to an example that I used before, the alacrity with which people adapt to changes in the *outside* world has become a part of “tradition.”

The opposition between “inside” and “outside” is not necessarily restricted to

Japan's relation to foreign countries. It applies equally to business enterprises, to *village communities*, and finally, at the individual level, to the relationship between oneself and other *persons*. It is a recurrent pattern of similar structure that is traced and retraced. The view that holds that things have not changed at all *and yet* have changed greatly is simply an inversion of the view that existed during the war and indeed goes back further to the Meiji era theory of "national morals." The idea was that, in spite of numerous historical changes, there is a "Japanese spirit" that has remained unaltered since ancient times, and that Japan's historical development amounted to no more than different manifestations of this Japanese "essence." In fact, I am convinced that we gain a better understanding of the "individual character" of Japanese intellectual history by trying to reflect on it from a standpoint that explains change not *in opposition to* unaltered factors but rather *in the light of* a specific unaltered pattern of change. Needless to say, I do not mean "unaltered" in an absolute sense of something eternally valid for heaven and earth; I mean simply that it is something not easily changed.

Thus, for reasons of convenience, I have come to think of the *basso ostinato* in three distinct areas:

1. historical or cosmological consciousness
2. ethical consciousness
3. political consciousness

The reason I speak of "consciousness" is that the word "thought" seems too firmly associated with an essentialist worldview to include the fragmentary nature of the *basso ostinato*....

[J]

MINAMOTO Ryōen 源了圓 (1920–)

After graduating from Kyoto University's department of philosophy in 1948, Minamoto Ryōen joined the editorial staff of the *Philosophical Quarterly* and collaborated with a team of Kyoto professors in editing the *Dictionary of Philosophy*. In 1960 he prepared a transcription of the lectures that would become Nishitani Keiji's* *Religion and Nothingness*. He then set out on a long teaching career that lasted thirty-seven years and included a time as visiting professor at Columbia University in New York. After retiring in 1991 he served as visiting professor at Oxford University and in 2001 he was named a member of the prestigious Japan Academy. Although his interests in the intellectual history of Japan were wide-ranging, his interests in the Tokugawa period, Confucian philosophy, and Japanese culture figure foremost in his writings. His longstanding interest in Kyoto School philosophy is also reflected in his writings.

Perhaps his most interesting philosophical contribution lies in his work on the idea of '*kata*' (form) as a recurrent theme in Japanese thought and culture. In a 1989 book devoted to the subject, he attempted to get to the mode of thought and feeling behind the appreciation of "form," a concept that eludes the form-matter distinction in classical western philosophy. Where Descartes focused on the distinction between the body and mind, Minamoto's primary distinction is between mind and 'no-mind', each of which entails a distinct and inseparable relationship to the body. The refining of artistic skill, particularly in the performing arts, mediates between tacit awareness and explicit awareness. But this achievement of mind is not fulfilled until mind *becomes* form and form *becomes* mind—that is, in no-mind where things cease to be external objects and the subject-object distinction breaks down.

In the following brief excerpt, published three years later, Minamoto applies his idea of *kata* to the development of a social history beyond the categories of politics and institutions to include the modalities of thought and action shared by individuals. In doing so, he looks at contemporary social mores and education in the light of a critical appropriation of traditional Confucian values and also tries to locate these questions in the broader context of Japanese aesthetics.

[JWH]

KATA AS STYLE

MINAMOTO Ryōen 1992, 20–28

A generation ago the question of *style* belonged chiefly to the history of art where it was treated in terms of a quality or manner of expression. It included not only things like literary style but even ordinary customs like hair styles. Compared to the *kata* of pattern and the *kata* of form, the *kata* of style

is a much wider and more fluent concept. Style is far more comprehensive than form, but in comparison with the more collective and general notion of pattern, it is more restricted to certain facets or elements of culture....

The *kata* of form and the *kata* of style differ in another sense. In the tea ceremony, for example, the *kata* of form can be grasped visually in the act of receiving guests with the preparation of tea, while the *kata* of style of a tea ceremony, since it covers the whole stream of decorum from the time before the guests arrive until the time they are seen off, affects a much longer course of time. The effect of this style, we might say, consists in the way it embraces the *kata* of form within the stream of time. It has a flow that form does not, allowing for the unexpected, the startling, the resourceful. The same can be said of all sorts of performing or martial arts. From the viewpoint of the students or spectator, the *kata* of form is at first glance by far the easier to learn or understand. Plainly put, it seems more manageable. Novices more easily fix their attention exclusively on the *kata* of form, but without the *kata* of style that includes what comes before and after, there would be no *kata* of form. Both are normative and restrictive, but while the *kata* of form requires twofold norms, outer as well as inner, the norms of style cover only the external aspect.

As we shall see, compared to pattern and form, the term *kata* lacks a fixed image and is much harder to grasp. Moreover, while form is general and universal to the extent that the name of the one who created it is forgotten, style has an individual face, as it does in the “taste” and “literary style” used in tea ceremony implements. And if we take continuity in its social dimension, the *kata* of style, in contrast to the *kata* of form, is unstable and fated to disappear. Still further, the reach of the notion of “style” is so very wide that it can cover both things that are not included in the temporal element, such as literary style, as well as things that revolve about temporality as their core, such as manners. This is why approaches to the question of *kata* from the angle of style are relatively few. When it comes to questions of culture, society, and history, however, this notion of style turns out to be far more important than I had originally realized. Quite apart from the way I first conceived of the problem by beginning with misgivings concerning the “collapse of *kata*,” I have come to recognize the importance and meaning of studying style as *kata* and would like to carry on from there.

Let me give an example of the kind of viewpoint made possible by introducing the notion of *kata* as style. I begin with a reflection on the way the discipline of history is carried out. The way in which Japanese history has been conceived since the Meiji period seems to have given the central position to political history, which, under the influence of German “national history,” was taken to be the core of institutional history. (We may say that in the Second World War social and economic history grew stronger and were in competition with each other.) Since institutions are surely the backbone of society, this kind of political

history focused on institutions is obviously necessary. Yet this kind of historical description failed to describe the human beings who lived through it and the kind of life they led, and could easily have become a history in which people were absent from the picture. Naturally, criticisms arose over concerns with the kinds of daily activities that individual people were engaged in. Initial attempts along this line by the *École des Annales* in France were extremely successful. Under their lead social history took shape, the influence of which appeared in Japan during the postwar period....

Were this new style of history as social history to take over all of history it would surely raise some eyebrows, but insofar as it brings to light parts of history that eluded previous ways of doing history, it is only natural that we recognize it as an important genre in the field. It has the additional merit of making it possible to combine history and basic-level culture, and thereby making previously overlooked details of everyday life into an object of historical study. Were it to stop there, however, it would leave something to be desired. If we think of history as a discipline that comes about through the principle of “change,” a description of the details of everyday life that shrinks the element of time down to its smallest unit, important though it be for social history, has to be considered only one of its ingredients.

It seems to me that the interpretation and description of the realm we may call the style of social life, which plays the role of mediating between descriptions of institutional history and descriptions of particular social phenomena, remains a task for social history. Since the focus is not on clarifying institutions but unarticulated social events, it may be said to belong to the category of social history, but it approaches historical events of a grander scale than the ordinary events that concern social history. For example, there is a passage in the *Discourses on Government* of Ogyū Sorai* that took me aback when I read it. Sorai takes a most remarkable view concerning what happened in daily life as a result of the feudal government’s “fixed seat” policy that located ‘daimyō’ with their families and retainers permanently in Edo, and what the political repercussions of this policy were. It had to do with “status.”

The term “status” was used in the sense of the poet Bashō who wrote in his *Secret Sayings of an Ancient Ancestor*, “To accede to status and never leave it is narrow; not to accede to status is to run down the wrong road. Only by acceding to status and leaving it can one be free.” Here he is using status in the sense of the *kata* of form. Sorai, in contrast, uses status in the sense of the *kata* of style.

In the Kyōhō period when Sorai composed his *Discourses on Government* (around 1726), the economic position of the daimyō had taken a decided turn for the worse. Given the chronic inflation at the time, for daimyō living in Edo, with each passing day subsistence became more and more of a luxury, and competition strained relations among the daimyō themselves. Clan authorities

borrowed money from the villagers to get by, but since they could not repay or even keep up with the interest, the villagers stopped lending to them. What is worse, with the passage of new currency regulations in 1718, money ceased to circulate and the economic world was hit with a depression. Conditions were such that the daimyō even stopped paying salaries to their retainers. We would have expected the daimyō to tighten their belts and cut back on expenses in response to the situation, but Sorai saw no reason for frugality and explained his reasons as follows:

To give my reasons for advising against the need for frugality: one must not weary of the status of daimyō, forfeit one's freedom of action, and become frugal. Such status is something to be carried around with one from morning to night. This is something different from dress, food, utensils, lodgings, and treatment of people, from the manners of one's wife, correspondence and exchange of presents, the ordering of emissaries, the retinue accompanying one on strolls around the capital town, and from the arrangement of journeys to ceremonial events which are all established by old customs and by laws of the 'shogunate'. Looking around at what is normal in social mores of the day, what can be done appears natural and excessive to social mores, but because it has been going on for a long time, it is now referred to as "status." This is the mind of one who understands what is of greater importance than one's own person, servants, and surroundings, and that to dismiss it is not a choice for a daimyō. There are many things here to be served without a thought for the future. Many things that can be done indeed go along with worldly desires. But there are also things established from long ago that are of no benefit. Yet because one realizes that they belong to status, they cannot be discarded in the least. That would be to forfeit one's freedom of action. (OGYŪ Sorai 1726, 322)

The *kata* of style in social life as shown in Sorai's idea of "status" does not show up very much in records and texts in the way institutions and laws do. It is the kind of thing that tends to be overlooked without a deep and careful reading of historical materials. Taking this point of view into account, however, clearly enhances social history. At the same time, this kind of attention to lifestyle will give rise to doubts and objections as to whether such things are not rather trivial, compared to the events that are the object of political history,

My response is this: In the case at hand, the daimyō and his attached servants and officials, who thought that reducing expenditures was not worthy of a daimyō, began by lowering the salaries of general servants and officials. As a final measure, they took the step of increasing the tax burden on farmers. On the one hand, this gave rise to doubts among lower ranking samurai concerning the system of affiliation; on the other, it provoked a nationwide "peasant's revolt" among farmers who were the sole victims of the policy, setting off

internal tremors in the system of feudal clans. While people were beginning to think that the unshakable order of society had come to an end, pressures from without came into the picture, bringing awareness that the policies of the feudal government itself could not maintain the independence of the country. The system of feudal clans went on to be overthrown. Taking this historical process into account, one has to wonder if the “status” that Sorai was pointing to, the *kata* of style for the daimyō, was not an important cause in the demise of the feudal government. Whether my reading of the events is convincing or not, I am persuaded that Sorai’s “status” as a *kata* of style in social life is a key element in mediating between social history and political history.

In various modes of life, the *kata* of style is not limited to the role that it plays in this kind of political history but plays just as significant a role in other respects. The first thing that came to my mind in reading Sorai’s defense of “status” was the problem of private schools and preparatory schools in postwar Japan. In particular, private schools that ready students for examinations are attended by a majority of the population. They, of course, have no place within the formal system of education, but few families are able to compensate for the defects of public education. For this reason, the percentage of the family budget allocated for such schooling is considerable.

As for the children, after school is out they commute to private schools and return home late at night, leaving little time for the enjoyment of extracurricular sports or playing with their friends. Clearly, this is not good for the children growing up in this fashion, but parents cannot stop having their children attend these private schools. Looking at the situation calmly, one can see the sense of making such study unnecessary by trying to improve the quality of official education and of adjusting the social system away from seeing graduation from a prestigious university as decisive for the rest of one’s life, by opening up new ways to respond to the value of each individual. Yet parents do not wish to disadvantage their own children in the struggle for survival, and so they suffer the economic burden of sending their children to schools that can give them what the official school system does not.

I cannot offer any clear conjecture as to the results of such a style of life, but there is a serious and unmistakable problem with the *kata* of style in Japanese society today. In addition there is the problem of “public opinion” and the “shaping of public opinion,” which for the mass society of Japan today is a problem of a new *kata* of style. In literature where the *kata* of style is understood from the viewpoint of writing, it seems that literary style is now caught up in a major turning point.

But can we not broaden our point of view to include the sort of “complex” *kata* we find in the “beginning–middle–end” pattern of ‘Nō’ theatre? The manners that cover the long span of time in the tea ceremony that begins with

water and ends with water, the manners of sumō wrestling that run through the short breaks in the bout, or the courtesies shown before and after drawing the bow in the Way of Archery, would then be further examples of the *kata* of style in traditional Japanese performing arts. Each performance contains a *kata* of form which tends to monopolize our attention, but if we include the long span of time before and after as part of the process, the *kata* of form is not possible without practice and performance. To concentrate on the *kata* of form in the moment of performance, the *kata* of style appears in the act of controlling breathing as a preparation for the *kata* of form as well as in the reverberations that echo through the act of closure after a performance. Attending to the performance as a whole, the *kata* of style includes the *kata* of form—whether multiple or singular—to give form to beauty in the flow of time.

If we go further to take social context into account, we may perhaps identify a style particular to time that goes beyond mere variations and changes in particular visible styles. This would be what historians of aesthetics refer to as “style” in the aesthetic realm. Or again, there would be a *kata* of form in some particularly striking aspect of individual styles that one might select and pursue to a high degree of refinement. In that case, style belongs to what is passing and ephemeral while form belongs to what is permanent, everlasting, and stable.

[JWH]

ŌMORI Shōzō 大森莊藏 (1921–1997)

Ōmori Shōzō graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in 1944 with a degree in physics, but in order to grasp theoretical issues related to science, he gradually became interested in philosophy. After the war, in 1949, he received a degree in philosophy from Tokyo University. Initially he studied phenomenology, but he was unsatisfied with this and went to the United States to study Wittgenstein and Anglo-American analytical philosophy of language. In 1966, he became a professor of philosophy at Tokyo University. Throughout his philosophical career, Ōmori focused on questioning conventional views of science and metaphysics, which he considered so focused on objective facts that they overlooked the ways in which subjective frameworks influence the construction of objects.

The first of the following selections shows this general emphasis on construction as he develops a theme from Michael Dummett's famous essay, "Bringing about the Past." Following Dummett, Ōmori cautions against reifying the past and adds to Dummett's position by stressing the importance of narrative in the formulation of the past. Ōmori begins with our lived relation to the past, focusing on the way in which we act towards the past, and then goes on to philosophize about what our practices presuppose concerning the nature of the past. The second selection offers a modern interpretation of the classical notion of *'kotodama'* or the "spirit of words." Resisting the temptation to mystify language, as has so often been the case in the past, Ōmori locates *kotodama* in the everyday ambiguities and layers of meaning and meaninglessness in words.

[VM]

TIME DOES NOT FLOW

ŌMORI Shōzō 1995, 45–9

In the world of European and American philosophy, the well-known thinker Michael Dummett has posed the riddle of the "tribal chief's dance." In a certain tribe, when young men become adults, they go lion hunting to show their strength. It takes two days to arrive and two days afterwards to return. The tribal chief prays for their success and dances during this period. The problem is that he continues to dance even when the young people have finished hunting and are on their way back. Dummett's question is the following: Why does the chief continue to pray for their good fortune at a time when the success or failure of the hunt has already been determined? As modern people we find it hard to laugh at the chief. Even *after* we hear the news of a plane crash or a train collision, might we not still pray that family members on board are unharmed? Or

even when we know the results of an entrance exam have already been decided, might we not pray for some slim chance of success?

It is not that any of us think we can change a past that has already been determined. My point is rather that deep inside of us, both the chief and those of us who live in Tokyo, there is room to hope that the past is not yet fixed, and thus to pray for a *desirable* past and to dread an unhappy one.

Does this not show a crack in our staunch belief in “the reality of a past that has already been decided?” At the bottom of this belief lies an idea, ingrained in all human beings, that one cannot reach “the past-in-itself” from the present. This “past-in-itself” may be like the “thing-in-itself (*Ding an sich*)” that Kant thoroughly criticized; at least the two concepts belong to the same genus. Modern people who agree with Kant’s critique would, as a matter of course, criticize the idea of a “past-in-itself,” but in fact the question itself has been neglected. The small chink in our heedlessness caused by the earthquake of the lion hunt draws our attention to a crack that can bring down the towering building of the “past-in-itself.” And once this building has been dismantled, what type of barracks can we construct?

We are reaffirming something here that human beings have practiced in the course of their daily lives, down a road that reaches back to the stone age. At the final stage of that road we have become caught in the illusion of a “past-in-itself” and a “thing-in-itself.” My strategy is to reaffirm and revive that road by paring away the stage of illusion.

What sort of thing, then, is the past? What is the past? No one would doubt that memory is the root and trunk that teaches us the meaning of the past experientially. The fact is as true today as it was in olden times: memory is our only fundamental source of information regarding the past. The past is nothing other than tales of the past woven out of fragmentary anecdotes recalled from memory. But for human beings, the source of the information differs from person to person and cannot always be relied on, as we all know from painful experience. Naturally, the weaving includes *official procedures* for filtering each person’s information on the past. The result of long years of correction and improvement of these procedures through practical application is that everyone is sufficiently familiar with the conditions for truth that are socially agreed upon and carried out in today’s courts of law, in historical research, and in information from the media. Their foundation lies in a congruence of recollection by several parties (the agreement of testimony and elimination of background) and in a continuity conforming to the present world (material evidence and the laws of nature). One need only look to the courts and in detectives’ squad rooms, to academic conferences and classrooms dealing with cosmology and evolutionary theory, to see this played out concretely day to day.

And yet, the conditions of truth have survived in an unbroken continuity,

completely the same as they were when applied at the end of the Ice Age to conflicts over the hunt or the opposite sex, or to debates over last year's planting and harvesting. In other words, the truth conditions of stories about the past are as much a historical and social institution as the truth conditions of mathematics and the natural sciences are. "Truth" is not an a priori that has fallen from the skies; it is a construct of human society. Without passing the test of these truth conditions, no stories of the past, not even the smallest details of family squabbles and criminal investigations, would receive approval, either by the parties directly involved or by society at large; they would not be formally registered as part of the past. The idea of "the past" as an institutionalized and formalized story has not changed in the least since the ancient times of the *'Kojiki'* and the *'Nihon shoki'*. But, as often happens, this gives rise to the mistaken perception that what has been institutionalized exists, as it were, a priori and without connection to us human beings, who are granted no more than an occasional glimpse of it. This is nothing more than the illusion of a thing-in-itself or a past-in-itself.

As Kant insisted with regard to the thing-in-itself, the past-in-itself cannot be thought of in terms of experience; consequently, neither can it be imagined. It is something one can only have illusions about.

The simple truth is this: the past is nothing more than a tale of the past produced in line with the conditions of truth.

The example we began with, of a village chief praying for the success of a lion hunt that has already taken place, is a paradox when viewed in terms of the mistaken perception of a past-in-itself. At the time, however, the lion hunt had not yet become a publicly sanctioned story about the past. In other words, *it had not yet become the past*. Once the success of the lion hunt passed the conditions for truth to become an official and sanctioned past, the prayers of the kind-hearted chief were then able to be accepted by the tribe as a whole. There is nothing paradoxical at all about the chief's good will and kind-hearted intentions.

Similarly, once the fact of the plane crash becomes known, a prayer imploring that one's family members *had not been* on board is not a mere belated petition made "after the fact." It is a prayer that the official story of the past to be told will include the fact that they were not on the flight. After the answer sheets have been turned in, all the students who sat for the exam will wait nervously for the official formulation of a story in which they have earned a passing grade.

It should be clear to everyone that what these human actions and psychological states point to are not the metaphysical illusion of a past-in-itself, but the production of stories about the past. Even if we appear to accept the idea of a past-in-itself provisionally, honestly and beneath the surface, it is a constructed past. The idea of producing the past is not empty, armchair metaphysics. It is an activity and a psychology that belong to real life.

Most people will feel that the recollection of having received a phone call yesterday has to do with a real phone call, and not seriously question whether it actually existed or not. This is, in fact, a misperception. What happens is that solid confirmation that the phone call has passed the established truth conditions and undoubtedly needs to be woven into the story of *things* past is replaced with the vague illusion of a phone-call-in-itself.

Is there not a parallel to be seen today, two centuries after Kant, in material realism, the modified form of the thing-in-itself that it is believed most natural scientists subscribe to? All we can say is this: whether we are speaking of its current forms or of its past forms, realism is not as stable as it appears to be. What is stable is the *poesis* of the stories that people tell about the world.

[VM]

WORDS AND THINGS

ŌMORI Shōzō 1973, 115–19

In many ethnicities, beginning with the Japanese, words possess a spiritual power, a power by which people believed things could be called into life. This spiritual power was not just limited to the words of a God who would say, “Let there be light” in order to bring light to this world. Even the words of humans were believed to possess such power. ‘*Koto*’, the “word,” calls *koto*, the “thing” into being. This power is the ‘*kotodama*’, the “spirit of words” hidden inside the word.

This is considered a primitive belief that is not reflected in the contemporary world. However, when one thinks of the mechanisms of language, one must inevitably face once again the power of *kotodama*. Of course, I do not mean to say that words come with an inscrutable, mystical power. They do not accompany something mystical. This everybody knows. I want to give a plain explanation of this common knowledge—a knowledge that despite being commonplace, forces us to revise our notions of truth and reality.

Meaninglessness

Words are spoken and written by a speaker. They can be addressed to the speaker himself or herself (soliloquy), or they can be written to that speaker (notes). They can also be addressed to a listener or a reader. In order to understand the functions of language, let’s focus on the latter case—the case of words addressed to a listener.

Even limiting ourselves to this case, it becomes clear at a single glance that language works in an infinite variety of ways. As speakers we give orders to our

listeners, entreat them, make them a promise, report to them, explain, lecture to them, flatter them, make cynical remarks, or salute them. We insult our listeners, persuade them, scold them, get angry at them, make them happy, and make them sad. We make them listen with a song, show something to them with a shout. We calm them, humor them, encourage them, and threaten them. At times, we do not say anything but keep totally silent.

This multiplicity in the function of words corresponds to the diversity of relationships between people. To be more precise, the functions of words are not limited to the examples I have given above; they are never the same twice. Along with the change of speakers and listeners, there are changes in people's moods and intentions—all of which vary according to the place and time in which these relationships occur. And with changing circumstances, the functions of language change as well, corresponding to the individual differences occurring in the relationships between people. History does not repeat itself; it is a one-time event. In the same way that people cannot bathe twice in the water of the same river (Heraclitus), language cannot work twice with the same mechanism.

“Water, please!” It is clear that the way this request operates changes according to who the speaker and listener are, what the place is (living room, kitchen, garden, office, restaurant, pool, battlefield, the scene of a fire, and others), the time (for example, daytime, or the middle of the night), the weather (a hot day, a cold day, a stormy day), and the place where the water is found (somebody else's house, a well, a river, the water pipe). But, someone will say, is this not the simple result of how the “meaning” of the same, constant “water, please” works differently, having been put to different uses in different circumstances? I get this point: one can say that the same, constant knife cuts paper, nails, fruits, and meat differently, piercing in different ways. However, one must ask, what kind of “meaning” is the same, constant “meaning” corresponding to the same, constant knife? The knife lies on the desk with a clear weight and a precise shape even when it is at rest and no one uses it. But, what is the shape of the meaning of “water, please” when no one says it, no one uses it? Can we say that the meaning is “stowed away” inside a dictionary?

Let us consider a different example. The “same” song, for example “Life is brief,” can be sung in many different ways. It can be sung at a high pitch, a low pitch, with a different volume, by different voices, or with different rhythms. It would be impossible to sing the same song twice in exactly the same way. If someone believes that “Life is brief” has the same, constant melody, and that such a melody can be sung in different ways, I would like to ask him to sing “Life is brief.” If he argues that what remains the same and constant is not the song but the score, I would remind him that the score is a notation on how to sing the song; it is not the song. One can destroy, burn, rewrite, or erase the

score, but one cannot do the same thing with the song. Similarly, one can dance many different dances with the “same” choreography. In this case, too, the choreography is a direction in how to dance; it is not the dance itself.

If a constant “meaning” can be found in the sentence “water, please,” this would not be the “word,” or the way the word “works,” but the word’s choreography, the word’s notation. In the same way that the score does not play the piano or the violin, but someone plays them “according to the score,” the meaning of “water, please” does not do anything, does not bring any work into action; a voice and a letter work “according” to that meaning. An indication is provided that tells us what voice and what letter should be produced when one is thirsty. By acquiring this knowledge one understands the “meaning” of the spoken and written sentence, “water, please.” Like a single knife that is used differently to cut paper, fingernails, fruit, and meat, there is no one single “walk” we can use to indicate different ways of walking according to circumstances; there are only different ways of walking—slow, fast, straight, and zigzag. Similarly, there is the function of infinite varieties of “water, please”; there is no constant, fixed meaning in “water, please” that would make it work in an infinite variety of ways.

And yet, can one not say that to speak a national language means to understand the “meaning” of the expressions used in that national language, and that the “meaning” of the same expression has one “meaning” only, independently of how often the circumstances may vary?

No, this is not the case. To speak a national language is to acquire the knowledge of which *utterance* should be used in the midst of infinitely changing circumstances, and operations that change continuously. It is the same thing as, for example, acquiring the manual skill of tying a bowknot out of an infinitely changing number of strings. One ties a bow of different size and shape when using a long string, a short string, a thick and stiff string, or a thin and soft one. In the same way that there is no “set way” of singing “Life is brief” or dancing the part of a “Swan,” there is no such a thing as an identical and constant “tying method,” or a “way of moving hand and fingers.” Likewise, there is no identical and constant “meaning” in the sentence, “water, please.” Even the utterance “water, please” changes according to different circumstances and conditions: an order in a strong tone of voice, a reticent request, a supplication, a cheerful, dark, strong, dull, distinct, mumbled, resolute, or weak request. Even from a phonetic point of view one witnesses an infinite variety of differences, just like a performance that follows a single score. Accordingly, the functions of the utterance, the result of these functions, and the way this result (to get the water or to be refused) comes about, all take place in an infinite variety of ways.

Wittgenstein has emphasized that the acquisition of a language corresponds to the attainment of the “way” expressions are used. In order to explain more concretely what the acquisition of “usage” means, we should say, as I indicated

above, that it is the acquisition of utterative action (in the case of spoken language). On the other hand, the expression “water, please” in scriptive form is simply the score of utterative action. The score does not change whether the reader reads it in a variety of ways, or whether it is sung without voice (silently and in the mind), or whether it is performed in many different manners, or whether it is read silently. Moreover, in the same way that the score does not designate an identical and constant performance, an identical and constant “meaning” is not inherent in the pattern of a script. Chomsky has indicated the difference between the surface structure of typeface and the deep structure of the speaker’s intention. He thinks that the depth of the “deep structure” is only, as it were, a few centimeters. This is neither a “deep structure” nor “depth.” The functions of language are not found in a “deep structure,” a “bottom.” In other words, they are found in the workings of concrete, particular circumstances. Moreover, “meaning” is a fantastic floating of shallow “deep layers” and “surfaces,” vanishing like clouds and mist once its “bottom” is exposed to sunlight, drying the water up.

Accordingly, the “language” known as national language does not exist. A national language—what Saussure calls *langue*—is not a “language” or a “working language.” Words are various musical notes, rests, and other signs; the grammar is like the rules of a score which includes modulations and use of the pedals. We do not “use” a national language. We make utterances “according” to all rules and, at times, we write a score or an essay. This national language, which is a set of rules and regulations, is not “a way of using words,” just as the rules of baseball do not constitute a baseball game or the rules of Japanese chess are not the same as a game of chess.

“Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life?—In use it is *alive*. Is life breathed into it there?—Or is the *use* its life?”⁶⁰

[MFM]

60. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Meditations*, 432.

YUASA Yasuo 湯浅泰雄 (1925–2005)

After graduating from Tokyo University's Department of Ethics in 1949, Yuasa Yasuo went on to complete higher degrees in ethics and economics. During his final years at university he studied under Watsuji Tetsurō*, whose thought and person left an indelible mark on his thinking. Yuasa taught for several years at Yamanashi University before moving to Ōsaka University in 1974 where he lectured in the new field of Japan Studies. In 1981 he was invited to Tsukuba University where he pursued his wide interests on the far reaches of philosophical thought. Yuasa was a multidisciplinary scholar of the kind rarely met in Japanese academia. He wrote extensively on ethics, religion, mysticism, psychology, and related fields. Although he began his work in the history of Japanese modern philosophy, as the final of the passages excerpted below will show, his concerns were always larger and more existential.

Yuasa was also one of the first scholars to evaluate the importance of C. G. Jung's analytical psychology in Japanese academia, which he sought to identify in terms of a "metapsychika" as opposed to a "metaphysika." If the latter tries to go beyond external "nature" (*physis*), the former tries to delve into the ground of the human "soul" (*psyche*)." It is here that Yuasa established a bond between Jungian psychology and the traditions of the East. Inspired by Jungian psychology, Yuasa went further to argue that the body is the tangible unconscious through which we are able to integrate the consciousness and the unconscious, a view that he correlates to the theory and practice of self-cultivation in the East.

[WM]

CULTIVATION AND THEORY

YUASA Yasuo 1977, 143–6 (25–8)

What might we discover to be the philosophical uniqueness of eastern thought? One revealing characteristic is that personal 'cultivation' is presupposed in the philosophical foundation of the eastern theories. To put it simply, true knowledge cannot be obtained simply by means of theoretical thinking, but only through "bodily recognition or realization," that is, through the utilization of one's total 'mind' and body. Simply stated, this is to "learn with the body," not the brain. Cultivation is a practice that attempts, so to speak, to achieve true knowledge by means of one's total mind and body.

Of course, there are various eastern philosophies. Roughly speaking, we find personal cultivation to be stressed in the schools of Buddhism and Hinduism, both of which originated in India, as well as in Chinese Daoism. A similar ten-

gency can be found, to a certain degree, in the Confucianism of the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. Buddhist and Hindu cultivation methods originate in what is called *yoga*. Yoga's source can probably be traced to the Indus civilization prior to the Aryan invasion. It spread throughout India and developed various forms independent of the differences among the religious schools. Although Zen meditation is the best-known form of Buddhist cultivation, each Buddhist school originally had its own cultivation methods. Zen is merely one stream. In fact, since there is a great difference between India and China in their intellectual traditions, Indian cultivation forms could not really take hold in China.

Indian yoga is most essentially a system of practical, technical methods for training the mind and body and maintaining health. Its training and meditation methods are very realistic, numerous, and complicated. Yet if we approach Indian philosophy with a purely philosophical interest, it is overwhelmingly metaphysical and theoretical. For this reason, we tend to think that Indian meditation must be separate from reality, but in actuality it is not. We must not fail to recognize that at the foundation of Indian meditation is a very practical and technical view of the mind and body supported and verified by radical experience. Consequently, there is a realistic view of humanity hidden within it.

The Chinese intellectual tradition, on the other hand, does not emphasize such Indian metaphysical speculation and complicated theoretical analysis. The Chinese emphasis is the moral orientation represented by Confucianism and the spiritual attitude that attempts to grasp the essence of things straightforwardly and simply. Zen is a typical form of Buddhism influenced by the Chinese intellectual climate. Although Zen cultivation has not lost the realistic significance of training the mind and body, its goal is not technical but is the human pursuit of the true way to live, a strongly ethical sense of personal perfection. Even though there is this difference between Indian and Chinese philosophy, at the foundation of the Chinese systems like Zen, the experience of cultivation is certainly presupposed. Daoism is another case; the system of personal cultivation developed during the Tang Dynasty was established through the Buddhist influence. Although we know little of ancient Daoism, it is conceivable that it included cultivation methods, since we can find in Laozi and Zhuangzi scattered references to what seem to be meditative experiences.

But what, then, is cultivation? From the Buddhist standpoint, it is the search for '*satori*', but enlightenment cannot be attained simply by intellectual speculation or theoretical thinking. To attain it, cultivation is necessary for the discipline of mind and body. Put differently, cultivation is a method to reach the wisdom of *satori*, a passage to it. Here, we have a serious methodological issue for eastern metaphysics.

For example, the philosophy of emptiness in 'Mahayana' Buddhism is one aspect of enlightenment. Seen from the theoretical, philosophical point of view,

it is metaphysical. But the philosophy of emptiness also clarifies the true profile of Being in various beings (the 'dharmas'), so we can say it is also an ontology. If we focus on this philosophical, logical viewpoint, it probably lacks the methodological reflection we associate with western metaphysics. Generally speaking, we cannot find in the western tradition the idea that cultivation is a passage to the realm of metaphysical concern. For example, Aristotle's metaphysics is understood through purely logical thinking or intellectual speculation. This is not so for the philosophy of emptiness, however.

In Buddhist traditions, cultivation is a passage to reach the metaphysical insight of *satori*. Cultivation specifically means the discipline of the body-mind. Thus, we must examine theoretically and historically the problems concerning cultivation in order to clarify the character of eastern thought as a philosophy. To do this, it is necessary to trace the historical changes from India to China to Japan in the theories of the body as both an ideal and an actuality.

Our next task will be to trace the evolution in Japanese theories of the body. Cultivation obviously belongs to the world of religion, but it has had a broad influence on various cultural realms outside religion in Japanese intellectual history. One example that catches our attention is the arts. For instance, there is a tradition in poetic criticism, Nō dramatic theory, and the theory of the tea ceremony to suggest that artistic "discipline" is a form of cultivation. As a group, we may call these "theories of artistry." This is not only an interesting subject when seen from the theory of the body; it contains many points that are intuitively easier to understand than theoretical speculations on religion. We shall first deal with the theory of artistry, then.

The notion of cultivation in artistry is derived from Buddhism. Among Japanese Buddhists, Kūkai* and Dōgen* took cultivation to be critical, making it the central issue in their thinking and the foundation of their theoretical systems. In their writings we can glimpse the role of the body as a philosophical subject in Japanese intellectual history. Both Kūkai and Dōgen were, of course, Japanese, but Dōgen was strongly influenced spiritually by Chinese Zen. In contrast, Kūkai's philosophical temperament is extremely Indian as well as Japanese....

If a characteristic in eastern thought is that a lived experience of cultivation is the methodological route to enlightenment, the first problem is how the relationship between the mind and body is grasped within cultivation.... The mind and body are inseparable within cultivation theory, but they are still grasped as a unity betraying a dualistic tension in their relationship, that is, as that which ought to become one. Restated, this means that the very character of the dualistic mode in the relationship between the mind and body will gradually change through the process of cultivation. This change is encountered in the lived experience of the cultivators themselves. In cultivation, we should be able to clarify the meaning of such a lived experience. We can then question the meaning of

eastern theories of the body not only from the philosophical viewpoint, but also in light of the concrete, factual recognition of the correlative mechanism between the mind and body.

[TPK, NS]

META - PHYSIKA AND META - PSYCHIKA

YUASA Yasuo 1978, 268–72

After the establishment of the idea of orthodox belief, the intellectual history of the West divides into a surface current of orthodoxy and a heretical undercurrent. What we have traditionally been taught about the intellectual history of the West is the surface current of religious orthodoxy with a focus on its genealogy. In contrast, Jung was interested in the heretical heritage hidden in obscurity. The currents of Gnosticism and alchemy that he took seriously had by and large been viewed as heterodox and hence ignored in studies of intellectual history. In unearthing this sort of *shadow history* his aim was to redraw a fuller picture of western intellectual history.

I would like to speak of these two currents as *meta-physika* and *meta-psychika*. *Meta-physika*, obviously, refers to the western metaphysical tradition. *Meta-psychika*, on the other hand, is my own coinage. If *meta-physika* aims to go beyond external “nature” (*physis*), *meta-psychika* means a metaphysics that seeks to dig down to the roots of the inner soul (*psyche*) of the human. This distinction is a rough one and the terms are only meant as a convenient way to point to the question at hand.

Comparing eastern thought and western thought, Jung notes that although the metaphysics of the East cannot be taken as a “metaphysic” in the western sense, if we reconsider it as “psychology,” it takes on a new significance.⁶¹ The “metaphysical” is brought into the sphere of human experience. In the East the notion of ‘heart’ (including “mind” or *Seele*) is intrinsically metaphysical. In the West, however, this kind of idea has disappeared since the Middle Ages. Thus Jung’s claim is that since metaphysics and depth-psychology have always been inseparable in the traditions of the East, eastern metaphysics does not coincide with the ordinary sense of *meta-physika*. He cited as examples philosophical thinking grounded in methods of contemplative practice, such as we find in Buddhism and Daoism. If we follow Jung in seeing this kind of such eastern thought as “metaphysics,” it would seem more fitting to refer to it as *meta-psychika* rather than *meta-physika*. Even though the terms were meant to

61. *Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (New York: Pantheon, 1953–), 11: 475; 13: 42ff, 47ff.

contrast certain aspects of western and eastern thought, if we pursue it further we may see that within the intellectual history of the West prior to the Middle Ages, we find a current of *meta-psychika* that included metaphysics and depth-psychology as an inseparable unity.

It is commonly accepted today that the history of the metaphysics in the West begins with Aristotle's *Metaphysika*, but in fact this view only came into vogue after the Middle Ages. Even the title *Metaphysika* was not Aristotle's but originated with Andronicus of Rhodes in the first century BCE, whose arrangement of Aristotle's works placed it after (*meta-*) the *Physika* (physics or the study of nature). In this way metaphysics came to take on the character of a science that investigates the meaning of being in general, through the investigation of the modes of being in external nature. Among the ancients, Aristotle was not taken seriously in intellectual history.... It was, rather, Plato's *Timaeus* that occupied the central position in cosmology from ancient to medieval times. Only after Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century did Aristotle replace Plato as the authority in intellectual history.

Plato's cosmology... was originally inseparable from his anthropology. In Platonist thinking "form" and "matter," in addition to serving as principles which constitute the external macrocosm, also correspond to the relationship between "soul" and "flesh" in the microcosm of the human being. *Physis* meant not only *external nature* but also *internal nature*, that is, the human essence or human nature. Patristic philosophy introduced into cosmology the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, effecting a split between a Creator God and the created universe. In the case of Plato's God, who forms the world out of matter, matter had to be given in advance. Such a God also required a model (form) for giving shape to matter. God is not, therefore, a being that transcends form and matter. In philosophical terms, this means that metaphysics (the study of God) and physics (the study of nature) are not separated but belong logically to the same dimension. Even in the case of Aristotle there is no clear dimensional gap between the logic of the *Metaphysics* and the logic of the *Physics*. The gods of Greece did not transcend nature the way the Christian God was made to do, as seen in the patristic idea of "creation from nothing" which locates metaphysics and physics on distinct dimensions. This makes it impossible in principle to grasp the metaphysical mode of God's being through an empirical investigation of nature. This is the starting ideology of *meta-physika*.

In the ancient world no idea of God or the cosmos had the absolute authority they did in patristic philosophy. Among interpretations of Plato's cosmology those leaning toward pantheism, as typified in neo-Platonism, also enjoyed favor. For the neo-Platonists a divine light emanating from a supreme "One" is unevenly distributed in the myriad things of the universe, even in the lowest matter. In a subtle way this sort of cosmology comes close to the views of

the evangelist John and Gnostic thought that take the power of the *logos* (or, alternatively, of the Holy Spirit) to be at work in all things. Hence for the neo-Platonists, by discovering the soul (the seed of spirituality) within this flesh (matter) and cultivating it, one should be able to approach the dimension of the divine. In other words, if we take the term *meta-physika* to mean a crossing over (*meta*) from the side of *physis* to the other side, then the Platonist *meta-physika* originally implied a path that leads through both external and internal *physis*. The former is the path of *meta-physika* in the narrow sense of the term; the latter is the path of what we have been calling *meta-psychika*. The development of patristic philosophy and the establishment of orthodoxy served as historical turning points in the flow of western intellectual history, drawing the thinking of *meta-physika* to its dominance as a surface current. Meantime, the current of *meta-psychika* was submerged into a heretical undertow.

[JWK]

MODERN JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY

YUASA Yasuo 1970, 136–46

Does modern Japanese philosophy have anything to offer us today? Numerous scholars have studied the field from any number of angles, but we may categorize their efforts roughly as following one of two lines. First there are those who have tried to understand the thinking of philosophers from within. Assuming the posture of a disciple or a sympathizer, they offer explanatory or interpretative accounts that seek to comprehend in depth or to communicate in an accessible way what a given philosopher was thinking. We may call this the line of *internal comprehension*. The other line is made up of those who seek to evaluate the significance of the philosophers they are studying, thus assuming a posture outside of their thinking. While the types of evaluation vary, broadly speaking this approach tries to locate the significance of particular philosophies for the history of thought by considering the epochal context or social conditions within which they were composed. Much of the research conducted along this line therefore assumes the perspective of what is called the social history of thought. We may call this the line of *external critique*. I myself have taken no small amount of inspiration from each of these approaches, and yet, unscholarly as it may be, I would like to take a standpoint of my own from which to raise the question.

Simply put, my interest in modern Japanese philosophy comes down to this: What has it to say to us today? The reference to “us today” is somewhat ambiguous. To be a little more precise, it refers in the first place to persons in our own

times who have an interest in questions of philosophy or thought. But I mean more than that. For now, let us say I am thinking of *those of us* who live in this corner of the East Asian world. My reasons are as follows.

To all appearances at least, the culture of modern Japan, philosophy included, has the character of a tributary of Western European civilization. In the case of philosophy, the very concept of *philosophy* would have been incomprehensible to the premodern Japanese. That is to say, modernization and westernization were synonymous for Japan. This turn of events was not necessarily restricted to Japan but has been the common fate of the nonwestern European world since the arrival of modernity. Nehru, the former prime minister of India, once stated that he is the child of a mixed marriage between East and West. In Japan, with its advanced “modernization,” we might say that it is not just the intellectuals but the whole of society and culture that has become “mixed” or “hybridized,” so much so that the very consciousness of hybridization is fading among Japanese today. Objectively speaking though, one cannot discern any distinctly contemporary Japanese culture that has not assimilated western civilization. Our situation today is one of disunity, as if our culture lacked its own character.

Looking at the history of thought, one would have to grant the particularity of its cultural traditions as one reason for Japan’s quick success at modernization. Because premodern Japan was for so long a tributary of Chinese civilization, its resistance to alien culture was not very strong. At the very least, the sense of pride towards their own cultural traditions was not as high as it was among the Chinese or the Indians. The modern Japanese, however, possess the national consciousness and ethnic consciousness characteristic of modern nations. I doubt that there is any direct causal relationship between the formation of the nation-state in modern times and the development of modern self-consciousness as we find it among the intelligentsia. And yet they frequently do seem to go hand-in-hand in the history of thought. We see a parallel phenomenon in the West in breaking away from systems of feudal society. In the case of Japan, it is from the time of the modern era—the Edo period (1600–1868)—that national consciousness in the broad sense of the term clearly appears in the history of Japanese thought. The gradual, spontaneous advance of its growth was cut short, however. Ever since the Meiji period, under strong pressure from the nations of Western Europe, modernization was pushed to grow by leaps and bounds. Put in this position of pressure from foreign cultures, the national consciousness of the modern Japanese and the self-consciousness of intellectuals developed a kind of complex. At one extreme it appears as a conflict between adoration of the West, as seen in the motto “civilization and enlightenment,” and at the other, as a tendency toward xenophobic nationalism. This polarity would seem to point to a certain anxiety, impatience, or restlessness deep in the heart of the modern Japanese. This would make an interesting research topic

for historians of thought, but what concerns me here is the way in which such a neurotic state gets reflected in the speculative positions of philosophers. What issues do their attitudes suggest to us today?

Nishida Kitarō* once wrote:

Obviously there is much to admire and much to learn from the dazzling developments in western cultures where form belongs to being and taking form is seen as a good. But is there not something fundamental in the cultures of the East that have nurtured our ancestors for thousands of years, something beneath the surface that can see the form of the formless and hear the voice of the voiceless? I would like to attempt a philosophical grounding to the desire that drives our minds continually to seek this out. (NISHIDA Kitarō 1927, 255)

These words of Nishida express the sentiments of not a few philosophers of modern Japan. Moreover, it is worth noting from the outset that had Nishida not been Asian, had he not been from outside the Western European world, he would most certainly not have made such a statement as a *philosopher*. In other words, among the cultural traditions of Western Europe this attitude of taking self-awareness or reflection concerning the particularity of one's own culture as a motive for speculation is rather uncommon, at least since the rise of modernity. Insofar as philosophy, like science, is first and foremost a function of human rationality, it is given to pursue a truth that is clearly universal *as far as human beings are concerned*, transcending the historical differences that distinguish cultural traditions from one another. A truth that is true only for the Japanese or peoples of Asia would contradict the very concept of truth. With that in mind, Nishida's statement seems odd. Still, even as the world of philosophy and thought aims at an anthropological or humanistic universality, the fact that we are inevitably dominated and constrained by the historicity of our cultural traditions is something we cannot change.

If philosophy is the activity of thought striving for eternity, it is at the same time an unhappy burden, something like a contemporary version of piling up stones to build a Tower of Babel. On this basis, in principle one may assume two distinct attitudes with regard to one's own cultural tradition: either one rejects it or one accepts it. Whether one consciously reflects on this or dismisses such reflection as futile, one is still thinking only as an individual or a philosopher. To the extent that philosophical thought aims at universal truth I find the second standpoint the more fitting ideal: the first standpoint can serve as a stepping stone or preparatory stage for the latter. Yet, the real issue is that those of us who live in the contemporary period may be incapable of arriving at a universalist posture without first passing through the self-reflective process of the first standpoint. Our age today has yet to achieve a new outlook capable of

transcending the differences among the age-old traditions of particular civilizations around the globe. We see nothing but a repetition of chaotic exchange and conflict among civilizations. The historical conditions that the dawn of world history and the opening of modernity put into play in the Western European world has had an immense impact on the contemporary age. Even if we find a way to overcome the inner conflict voiced in Nishida's statement above, it lingers still, hidden within the hearts of those of us who belong today to the world outside that of Western Europe. In other words, we find ourselves in a situation where, unless we make some sort of decision regarding our attitude towards the modernity of Western Europe, we will be unable to make up our minds as to our own position or even our own existence.

People in the Western European world may find such a sentiment strange. Blessed by historical accident to be the locus for the rise of global modernization and unification, Western Europeans have long felt free of the obligation to reflect deeply on the fact that they are citizens of a particular cultural sphere called Western Europe. Rather, the encounter between East and West has been seen as an *encounter between an inside and an outside*. The awkwardness generated in that encounter can only inspire a profound sense that "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet..."—only then to be forgotten. But for those of us from the East, the relationship between East and West, prior to being an encounter between insiders and outsiders is first of all *our own internal encounter*, and as such is something we can neither forget nor ignore. In the fields of scientific technology and political economy such deep feelings may be regarded as part of the past, destined to fade further and further away. In the realm of religion and thought, however, things have not changed so much.

[JWK]

NAKAMURA YŪJIRŌ 中村雄二郎 (1925–)

After completing studies at Tokyo University, Nakamura Yūjirō worked for a period as a director of cultural programs for radio broadcasting before returning to studies and teaching at Meiji University, where he remained until retirement. Combining a solid journalistic sense for communicating with a critical philosophical mind, he flourished at the cutting edge of modern thought, culture, and the arts.

A critique of modern rationalism carried by theories of the body and the passions runs through such works as *The Age of Pathos* (1965), *Common Sense* (1979), *Notes on a Philosophy of Evil* (1994), and reflections on the Aum Shinrikyō cult, *Evil and Sin in Japanese Culture* (1988). In 1987 he rediscovered the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō* and attempted a “deconstruction” of his logic of ‘place’. In addition, he translated works of Bergson, Bachelard, and Minkowski.

The first selection, taken from the final chapter of his extensive and broadly argued study on the *sensus communis*, shows Nakamura reviewing his critical consideration of the vision-centered and rationalistic model of human understanding, and pointing to some of the questions that remain to be considered. The second, on the idea of pathos, develops his critical reflections on the fundamental problems of modern rationalist thought. He draws particular inspiration from his encounter with Balinese culture, where he focuses on theatrical devices aimed at bringing human frailties and evils to the fore, rather than shunting them aside or repressing them, in order to liberate and protect the members of society from them and at the same time to invigorate the culture itself.

[KN]

COMMON SENSE

NAKAMURA Yūjirō 1979, 249–62

Everyday “common sense” carries the double-meaning of ordinary, accepted opinion and higher experiential knowledge, but not just as a simple ambiguity. On the one hand, it signifies what is obvious and self-evident to anyone. On the other, it wraps us in an unassailable horizon of self-evidence that blocks our view of what is not obvious and self-evident. This horizon is not something eternal and immovable, but it does shape a certain layer of thought in terms of a given time, society, and culture. When that ground begins to shake and fragment, when it becomes overly pluralistic, we lose our sense of what is normal and are overcome by anxiety. It seems to me that at such times, like it or not, we come in touch with that obscure, non-self-evident, and unclear layer.

What shapes this horizon of self-evidence then? More than anything else, it is what phenomenology calls “intersubjective” perception. Because perception is nothing other than the working of common sense, by questioning this horizon, the close-knit bond of meaning is established with the common sense of ordinary, everyday opinion. Then again, in an age of crisis when the horizon of self-evidence is unstable, we are called on somehow to restructure the “knowledge” received from the dimension of perception.

.....

The question of common sense has to do with the way in which the five senses are integrated. In particular, for the modern world it has to do with a restructuring of the senses through a *restoration and rehabilitation of touch vis-à-vis the priority and dominance of sight*. Further, it asks after the interrelationship among all five senses, not only sight and touch but also hearing, smell, and taste. Although a number of people have touched on this partially, there has been almost no attempt to think it through systematically. This is why I thought it time to try to see my way through the problem, especially on the question of how far and in what sense sight can be said to be primary....

The primacy of sight is further sustained by the anthropological investigations based in paleontology, zoology, and cerebral physiology. (One thinks here of André Leroi-Gourhan.) The general agreement regarding the developmental relationship between the human brain and the hands in the process of biological evolution is instructive on a number of counts. One of the most important from our perspective here is that the completion of the human nervous system consists precisely in the addition to the existing nervous system of an integrating apparatus that unites the senses and allocates images and responses. Moreover the functioning of hand and tool, of face and linguistic activity both bring about symbols that express something. And it is sight that controls the pairing of the reading eye and the writing hand.

Not only that. The priority of sight in perception is also put forth in modern psychology. In general modern perceptual psychology, sight is taken to be more closely bound to the object of perception than any of the other senses and is less susceptible to influence and modification by the other senses, leading to the idea of an *integration of visual priority*. Experiments on the perception of inverted vision seem to offer decisive proof of the absolute priority of sight over the other senses.

Classical—we might say, phenomenological—investigations of the five senses by philosophers like Berkeley and Condillac promptly dismissed this idea, arguing that it is touch that teaches and guides sight. Is there no longer any value in revisiting these sorts of classical studies? If there is a point to having a second look at them, we want to know which side of the argument to come down on, or at least how to reconcile the two.

An examination of this extremely important and fundamental question from a variety of angles persuaded me to follow Katsuki Yasuji⁶² in a new classification of the senses and to understand the most fundamental integration of the senses as *somatic sensation*. More than simply the sense of touch, somatic sensation includes muscular sensation and motor sensation as well. In contrast to this somatosensory integration with its substrate-predicative integration of the senses we may speak of a subjective (in both the perceptual and the grammatical sense) integration of the senses wrought by sight. This way of thinking posits visual integration on a basis of somatosensory integration, but since the former has a subjective and the latter a predicative character, the latter is latent and difficult to grasp, which makes it susceptible to being mistaken for the former. The same can be said of aural integration, which is also subjective in nature.

The discovery and appreciation of somatosensory integration has expanded my outlook immensely. It allows a more convincing answer than the traditional choice between the priority of sight and the priority of touch. With it we understand Bergson's schematics of motion, Merleau-Ponty's schematics of the body, and Husserl's notion of kinesthesia. Each grasps, from a distinct point of view, the somatosensory integration of our living bodies as potential systems.

.....

The restoration of the somatosensory system from the autonomy of sight also involves language, natural and theoretical. Herein the restoration of the somatosensory system within language requires rethinking the positive significance of images and rescuing the character of the image as such. This is so because images are creative and bodily in virtue of their connection to the world. To restore the character of the image to language is to return language from the logos of analytic reason to the logos of common sense.

The inquiry into the nature of language from the viewpoint of common sense asks how it is understood and how it can be reconsidered, and leads us to wonder what kind of logic or clue language provides to clarify the world we live in. This brings us to the matter of "good sense" and the way it is easily confused with ordinary common sense, as both Henri Bergson and Kobayashi Hideo recognized....

Simply put, for Bergson *bon sens* is the sensibleness that governs human relationships and teaches us what is useful in life. It falls somewhere between science and instinct as an intellectual activity aimed at a truth that is always in the making, a capacity for social judgment grounded in a spirit of fairness that binds thought to action. This way of rethinking the nature of good sense in the

62. [Katsuki Yasuji (1905–1994) was a comparative neurophysiologist noted for his work on sensation in animals, particularly for his work on the auditory system of cats.]

light of classical learning both serves to open us up to the tradition of humanism and as such is richly suggestive of the nature of common sense in its more exalted meaning.

Seeing good sense as identical to higher common sense is not without its complications and problems. This is especially evident in the case of Descartes' idea of good sense, which does not always coincide with that of Bergson and indeed can be taken as synonymous with *reason*. From the viewpoint of Cartesian rationality, language also differs from the common sense view of language in both its ordinary and higher senses.... The identification of reason with mathematical rationality has by and large dominated the modern world, leading to what Whitehead has called "the retreat from common sense." But the understanding of common sense that traces its origins to Aristotle is the very opposite of ordinary common sense, which makes it extremely hard to draw a clear line connecting the two. Despite my limited resources for providing the requisite detail, I felt it necessary to try to locate the point at which the separation came about....

Fortunately, the genealogy of common sense can be gleaned from the Roman classics, particularly Cicero, and the Renaissance humanists, with rhetoric—as opposed to logic and dialectics—as the connecting link. That is to say, while logic is universal and systematic, rhetoric is concrete and practical in the sense that it assumes a particular audience or readership whom it seeks to persuade by appealing to a shared common sense. This approach to common sense by way of the emphasis given it in rhetoric from the Roman classics to the Renaissance humanists has, with the exception of Vico, largely been neglected in the West. Originally baptized in the waters of Cartesianism, Vico went on to assume a radically anti-Cartesian position, which proved crucial to the way he viewed the relationship between common sense and the rationalized idea of good sense. Somewhat later we find Shaftesbury and Thomas Reid promoting a school of "common sense" as a new way of thinking to refute skepticism in an age of crisis. In their case, however, rhetoric and common sense took on the nature of an intuition that all but eclipsed reason as a standard of judgment.

This historical review goes a long way towards clarifying Descartes' equation of good sense with reason and carries on to a rational-analytic view of language (to be specific, Chomsky-style linguistics) that proceeds by way of common sense. In other words, in addition to appreciating what Descartes was rejecting, my aim has been to rethink language in terms of modern linguistic terminology and theory, to restore the bodily (somatosensorial) system and imagist view that had been cast aside.

.....

The question of memory is one that early modern and modern thinkers have passed over lightly. As modern "knowledge" stepped forth to announce itself, it

had reasons of its own to disdain memory and retentive powers. To escape the constraints and pressures of history and liberate the individual from the control of the group, ties to the past had to be cut. It was just at such a break with the past and a new start from square one that Descartes' "method" had aimed: to lead people to a specific goal—in particular, to truth—without depending on memory or custom.... This is precisely why mathematical deduction and technology are bound together. In this sense, modernity was the age of method. As the dominance of methodological principles grew and spread, people began to feel keenly the loss of a basis for existence. We thus find it valuable today to have a second look at the question of memory. Meantime, the progress of electronic engineering in today's world has made people increasingly reliant on machines for their memory functions. These and other questions oblige us to consider seriously what memory means for the human being....

Along with the question of memory, that of time is also connected to the discussion of common sense. Indeed, on this point the importance of the pineal gland that Descartes thought to be the seat of common sense has been reprised by modern physiology and modern biochemistry as the organ that functions as a biological clock.... This led to the discovery of common sense as the sensation of basic time which in turn provides the foundations of the diurnal rhythm. This same sensation perceives the human constructed out of that basic time.

[RJJW]

THE KNOWLEDGE OF PATHOS

NAKAMURA Yūjirō 1982, 69–71

The pathos of "knowledge of pathos" is not merely a passion, that is to say, an emotion; it also points to debilities of human being like passivity, suffering, pain, and illness. In this sense, knowledge of pathos is the exact opposite of the knowledge of action founded on modern day science, whose assumptions of human strengths have come to belittle such knowledge. As persons who belong to the modern, contemporary world, we take our start from the analytical knowledge of modern day science and a mechanical view of the natural world, objectifying everything in order to learn the laws of facts and nature and gain control over them. In this way we have expanded our domain in an attempt to set up a free kingdom that will defy the inevitabilities of fate. To be sure, modern civilization has taken over the knowledge of modern science to bring about a revolutionary change in the lives of human beings on a global scale.

The effects of this knowledge on modern science and civilization have been immense. Within the sphere of human enterprise it has come to be seen as

the only lasting and unlimited development. We have come to think that the unresolved questions of today will one day be resolved by science. Modern day biology and medicine were the products of just such an active, optimistic scientific knowledge and its conviction that pain and suffering would diminish and illness would be done away with. Naturally, no one imagined it would be possible to evade mortality, but at least it was thought possible to overcome disease through medicine and hold death at bay.

In fact, things did not quite go that way. Human beings found themselves faced with the harsh retaliations of nature and reality. Nearly all of us have fallen prey to pollution and been exposed to environmental hazards. More than ever we are met with pain and suffering and the terrors of death. Every one of us without exception has been placed in a state of passivity and distress for which the modern world has left us unprepared and lacking the skills to cope.

Oriented towards manipulating things through objectification, scientific knowing comes about in conformity with the laws of causation. Along the way, a split has taken place between the seer and the seen, setting the scene for an icy confrontation. In opposition to the manipulation of the knowledge of science, the knowledge of pathos is oriented to giving meaning by “reading” what the environment and the world have to show us through symbols and cosmologies. In other words, its knowledge comes from questioning the indications, the signs, and the expressions of things in search of their deeper meaning. It provides us, literally, with a space for dealing with the various dangers that beset us. In its classical form, such knowledge has been thought of merely as myth and magic, but, in fact, the knowledge of pathos is also at work in what “experience” teaches us. Experience—and by this I mean, of course, *lived* experience—creates for us a close and intimate relation with our surroundings. The lessons of experience enable us to adapt successfully to new situations never before encountered.

In contrast to the cold eye of scientific knowledge, the knowledge of pathos is bodily and sensual. Even where sight comes into the picture, it functions with the bodily senses as a *sensus communis*. And since the body is here a living, acting body, the knowledge of pathos is tied to “performance.” More than anywhere else, what is felt and “read” through a bodily *sensus communis* has been expressed in sign, symbol, and cosmos. The many and varied characteristics of the knowledge of pathos show it to be an exceptional form of “performative knowledge.”

[IML]

Perhaps no thinker in twentieth-century Japan better represents the interface between psychology and philosophy than Kimura Bin. While maintaining his psychiatric practice and publishing widely on abnormal psychology, particularly on schizophrenia and depersonalization, his wider philosophical interests are evident from his early works. In foray after foray into the mysteries of the self—its construction and its breakdown, its awareness and its scotosis—Kimura is not an armchair philosopher but a doctor engaged in the experiences of his patients. If there is one constant theme running through his reading of twentieth-century philosophers, it is the conviction that a true phenomenology of the self cannot exclude the “other” and the *Mitsein* that opens up between self and other. In this regard, he records the powerful shock he experienced on reading Nishida Kitarō’s* “I and You” in the early 1970s, almost as if he were reading a diagnosis of the schizophrenic patients he was treating. In time he came to distinguish himself from what he saw as the dualistic tendencies in western philosophers’ treatment of the self in order to plumb more deeply the philosophies of Japan and the East—forsaking Husserl’s phenomenology of the self for Nishida Kitarō’s logic of ‘place’. In response to Heidegger’s subjectivistic notion of “being towards death” he proposed a “principle of negating death” as the foundation of the unity of self and other.

As the following excerpt will illustrate, Kimura saw the need to bridge the epistemological gap between noetic (subject-centered) and the noematic (predicate-centered) thinking by an analysis of the relationship between *mono* (thing) and ‘*koto*’ (event).

[JWH]

TIME AND SELF

KIMURA Bin 1982, 129–50

The World of Things

Wherever we are, we live surrounded by *things* [*mono*]. Our world-space is saturated with *things*. Nowhere is space without *things*. And even when we think of a conceptual void, there is the *thing* called the void.

Before me lies a *thing* called desk and a *thing* called manuscript paper, and I am writing sinographs upon it with a *thing* called a ballpoint pen. Sinographs, likewise, are also *things*. I search for a lighter in order to smoke tobacco but fail to find it. But the absence of the *thing* called lighter does not mean the emergence of a place with no *thing* at all. It simply means that the desktop where the lighter is missing is occupied by other *things*.

That *things* saturate space is not only true of the outside world. One's internal space, consciousness, is also saturated with *things*.

For example, I am now attempting to write down on paper my thoughts concerning the *thing* called *time*. I am trying to articulate the point that time itself, in fact, is *not a thing* at all. But insofar as I attempt to bring this to words, focussing upon certain concepts in order to gradually draw out its contours or logic, time—or my thoughts concerning time—takes on the appearance of a *thing* occupying my internal space.

In relation to time, what if we try thinking about speed? On its own *to be fast* is no *thing* at all. But as soon as we think of it in terms of *speed*, it immediately changes into a *thing*.

The *things* of external space are objects of our seeing. Of course, there are many things we cannot see but this is not because they are invisible in principle. It is only because our eyes are limited in ability. Likewise we speak of “seeing” in regard to the *things* of internal space. As we strain to give order to our thoughts, we see them arise.

In order to *see* some thing, whether with the external or with the internal eye, we require some distance from it. What is seen must be positioned at some distance before the eyes. That is what the Japanese word for “object” entails, both in the sense of the matter at hand and of that which stands opposed to the subject. All *things* are objects and all objects are *things*. But sometimes when viewing scenery one loses oneself in its beauty and neither the scenery nor the beauty is objectified. In such cases, where there is no distance to the scenery or its beauty, we often speak of being one with the scenery. Subject and object here are not separate. When this happens there are no *things*, whether exterior or interior, and we find ourselves drifting in a world wherein we have forgotten about *things*. After some time when subjectivity returns, distance is again established and scenery and beauty become objects. And we say that we saw something beautiful or we savor as an echo the *thing* we call beauty.

Western science has assumed since ancient times that *seeing things* objectively is its golden rule. The etymology of the word “theory” derives from the Greek word “to see” (*theoria*, *θεωρία*). In the West, “to see” thus came to mean to grasp, to comprehend. This became the fundamental posture not only of natural science that takes objective observation as its proper feature but the sciences in general, including philosophy.

For example, there is a realm of philosophy called “ontology.” Here, in essence, the question is raised as to “the meaning of being.” *To be*, by itself, is, of course, no *thing*. But if we pose this as an issue in the way of traditional ontology, for example, by asking “What is being?” or “What sort of a thing is being?,” “to be” at once turns into a *thing*. By looking at *the thing called being* from the outside, we dress it with speculations as to what it is or is not. The object of inquiry as to

“what it is” or “how it is” is always some objectified *thing*. It becomes designated as *this* thing or *that* thing and hence becomes fixed. *To be* stops being itself as soon as it is made into an object of that question of “what.” *To be* is the sort of fact we understand only by *being* it. But if we call it a *fact*, it again becomes a *thing*. We can do nothing but to say that *to be* is such a thing.

In this way, insofar as we exercise our waking consciousness we dwell within a space nestled with *things* everywhere, both within and without. And within this space, each of us is a *thing* as well. Not only our bodies are *things* but the self, its self-identity, and the minds of others, to the extent that we *see* them, all make their appearance before our eyes as *things*.

The World of Events

But if we stop viewing the world objectively, or, at least, if we try imagining what it might be like if we stopped seeing objectively, we would understand that this world is composed not only of *things*. We would understand that there is another way in which the world appears, utterly distinct from the way it appears objectively as an object. In Japanese, we call this way of appearing, “event” or *koto*.⁶³

The *event* that I am here, the *event* that the desk and manuscript papers are before me, the *event* that I am writing characters upon them, the *event* that I have for a long time been thinking about the issue of time, all of these are *events*, not *things*. My desire to smoke tobacco but failing to find a lighter was also an *event*.

The *events* that appeared in these various settings all have the character of being extremely unstable. Whatever we may do, we fail to objectify them in the same way that we can with *things*. For they have no color, shape, or size, and first and foremost we can assign them no place. The *event* of my seeing some scenery and thinking it beautiful, may seem to be occurring on the side of myself but seems also to be occurring on the side of the scenery. And yet it also seems to be occurring at a higher dimension enfolding both myself and the scenery.

Our consciousness does not seem to like this sort of instability. The reason may be that what we call “self” or “myself” or “I” is in fact not a *thing* but rather the *event* of “being myself” or “being I,” something unstable without any clear form or whereabouts. The self, by nature unstable, tries to find a spot in the world in which to stabilize itself. But the world of *events*, far from supporting it, does nothing but increasingly expose its instability. That is why the self, as

63. WATSUJI Tetsurō (1931, 524–37) was the first to undertake a philosophical investigation of the ontological difference in the Japanese language between “event” (*koto*) and “thing” (*mono*). More recently HIROMATSU Wataru (2007) has developed a discussion of the highest standards on this issue.

soon as it encounters an *event*, immediately takes distance from it and *looks at* it to change it into a *thing*.

The weak self, unable to endure its instability, refuses to acknowledge this decisive difference between *things* and *events*. It tends to think that, e.g., the *event* of an apple falling from a tree is nothing but what expresses the movement, aspect, or state of a *thing* called apple falling from a tree, and that it is simply a depiction in the form of a proposition corresponding to the naming of the *thing* as a noun. In short the tendency is to think that *thing* and *event* are simply different ways of perceiving or speaking of the same phenomenon.

A decisively significant distinction, however, is contained within that difference in the manner of seeing or speaking. When speaking nominally in terms of “an apple falling from a tree,” the person seeing it erases that fact of her being there witnessing it. Regardless of whoever else sees it, “an apple falling from a tree” is “an apple falling from a tree.” It is an objectified *thing* that can be localized at a certain place so many meters before that person without any connection to her subjectivity. In the presence of the objective, the self can hide its own existence and escapes the exposure of its instability.

By contrast the *proposition*, “an apple is falling from a tree,” clearly contains both the apple that is falling from a tree and the subjectivity experiencing that “an apple is falling from a tree.” In other words, without any subjectivity or self experiencing this in some form or shape, even if there may be a *thing* called an *apple* falling from a tree, the *event* that an apple is *falling* from a tree cannot be described. Although the *apple* is on the other side, the side of objectivity, the experience of it *falling* is on this side, the side of subjectivity. Or, if I may say so, it lies *between* objectivity and subjectivity.

We can anticipate, of course, the objection that the apple’s fall from a tree is an objective physical phenomenon with no connection to the situation of the subject observing it. But this sort of objection tacitly replaces the *event* of “falling” with a *thing* called “fall.” A fall can be *this* or *that* fall, that is to say, it is an individual phenomenon that we can postulate in objective world space. But in regard to the *event* of “falling,” we cannot posit it as *this* or *that*. If “falling” were to possess some sort of individuality, it is only by means of the individuality of the *thing* (e.g., the apple) experienced as “falling.” It does not derive from the fact of “falling” itself.

This is also related to the fact that we also use “falling” in many metaphorical senses that exceed the objective-physical meaning of a fall, i.e., the spatial transfer of a solid body from above to below. “He is losing his fame,” “The castle is being taken,” “The quality goes down,” “One is a failure,” “One is coming to one’s senses”—all of these are expressed in Japanese with the word for “fall.” All of these instances of “falling” (which are only a few of the many that could be enumerated) as *events*, are experiences of a subject. To the extent that we view

them as *events*, they are all “the same,” of which the falling of an apple from a tree is but one case. Even if the word “falling” originally denoted the fall of a solid body, in its actual use—as a living word spoken by “speaking subjects”—it is one metaphor among many others.

We see *things* with the eye. The *apple* falling from a tree or its *fall* are what we can see with the eye. But we cannot see with the eyes its “falling.” What we see, rather, is the apple and its fall. The *event* itself that “an apple is falling from a tree” is invisible to the eye in the same way that “one is failing the exam” or that “one is comprehending something”—here again, Japanese uses a word meaning “to fall”—is not visible to the eye. Though we do not see them, we certainly experience them. Even if they do not become perceptual objects in cognition, we possess a certain sensibility for experiencing them in the appropriate manner. This sensibility is a basic faculty making possible all metaphorical uses of language. It is what the ancients called *sensus communis*, common sense. However, I shall leave the discussion about *sensus communis* to another occasion.⁶⁴

The Japanese Distinctiveness of Events

This custom of expressing a subtle but decisive “ontological difference” in speaking of *events* as opposed to *things*, is distinctive of the Japanese language. There is nothing like it in western languages. (Unfortunately I am ignorant as to whether there are any other languages apart from the Japanese and the western ones that might possess this distinction.) “Happening,” “occurrence,” “circumstance,” and so on, expressed in the words *event*, *Geschehen*, *événement*, are “events” that have already been completely objectified and made into *things*. They are quite distinct from the pure and immediate “event that...” Attempts have also been made to express “event-ness” by nominalizing the subordinate conjunction of *that* or *daß*, used when one says, “(the fact or event) that... (x is...)” to form the word *thatness* or *Dassheit* and contrast it with *whatness* or *Washeit* that expresses “what it is.” (In the French language this does not work well.) “Event-ness,” however, is a concept forcefully fixed by such artificial wording. It is, after all, nothing but a washed-out fossil when viewed from the experience of “the *event* that... (x),” abundantly backed by the everyday subjectivity’s *sensus communis*.

The way of thinking that views the world or nature as a “thing” by taking a certain distance from it and observing it objectively is certainly a brilliant western innovation. Obviously, if we were to trace the steps of today’s natural

64. I have already discussed the psychopathological meaning of *sensus communis* in my book on *The Structure of Abnormality* (KIMURA Bin 1973), 25–36. See also NAKAMURA Yūjirō 1979 and 1982.

sciences in their subtlety, or of the rational worldview at their foundation, we would find them to be derived from this sort of distinctively western *way of seeing things*. It seems to me that the sensibility of the Japanese from ancient times shows a very different way of proceeding.

Obviously there is much to admire and much to learn from the dazzling developments in western cultures where form belongs to being and taking form is seen as a good. But is there not something fundamental in the cultures of the East that have nurtured our ancestors for thousands of years, something beneath the surface that can see the form of the formless and hear the voice of the voiceless? *I would like to attempt a philosophical grounding to the desire that drives our minds continually to seek this out.* (NISHIDA Kitarō 1927, 255)

What Nishida speaks of here as “the formless” or “the voiceless” is, indeed, no “thing” but rather “event.” The quiet sensibility of *sensus communis* in relation to the world of events is precisely the spirit of Japanese nature latent at “the root of eastern cultures that has nurtured our ancestors for thousands of years.”⁶⁵

Event and Word

Originally there was no distinction in the Japanese language between event (*koto*) and speech (*koto*). According to the *Iwanami Dictionary of the Ancient Japanese Language*:

In ancient society, the *koto* one had uttered (in speech), just as it is, meant *koto* (facts, circumstances). It was believed that *koto* (occurrence, act), just as it is, becomes expressed in *koto* (speech, word). Speech and event [both pronounced *koto*] were thus undifferentiated and both were grasped by the single word, *koto*.

After the Nara and Heian periods, however, they gradually became differentiated so that *koto* (speech, word) as *koto no ha* or “the leaves coming out of speech,” or more simply *kotoba* (word, language), expressing “not all of *koto* but only a mere segment,” became independent of *koto* as event or fact.

In this way *word* came to mean what expresses only a surface of the *event* proper. But today, even after the passing of so long a history, we cannot say that the division between *koto* as event and *koto* as speech is complete. The *event* that this flower is red in its entirety, of course, cannot adequately be expressed by

65. The issue of whence derives the difference between the “thing-based culture” of the West and the “event-based culture” of Japan is an extremely interesting one. However, I will not enter into the question here. I think that Watsuji Tetsurō’s theory of “climate” provides a big hint concerning this point. On this issue, see my *Between Person and Person* (KIMURA Bin 1972), 219–50.

the *words*, “This flower is red.” To that extent, these *words* express but a single portion of the world of *events* that is now present to myself, such as the *event* that this flower is red, the *event* that a red flower is before my eyes, the *event* that gazing at it I feel it to be beautiful, and so forth. But even so, it would be impossible to express or communicate the *event* that this flower is red without using the *words*, “This flower is red.” In regard to *things* we can seek verification by presenting the real thing before our eyes. By contrast we cannot exhibit *events* so as to be visible to the eyes. We have no means to comprehend them other than by speaking about them in *words* and listening to what is thus said.

Solid bodies, visible and occupying positions in external space, are not the only *things* that are displayed before the eyes and *seen* by them. The *idea* of a triangle, for example, prior to being visible in a particular triangular shape, is really no different in that it is something *seen*, even if not by means of the naked eye. Western thought, ever since the Greeks, has taken the essence of thing-events as *eidos*, i.e., *form*, to be the object of the activity of “seeing.”

Almost the same can also be said about *events*. *Events* are what are spoken and *heard* by means of *words*. This is not necessarily restricted, however, to their being spoken and heard as linguistically segmented and articulated words. As we learn from its etymology, the *word* (*kotoba*) only grasps the outermost layering of the *event* (*koto*). The essence of the *event* instead lurks where it is neither uttered nor heard by means of language. But even there we can probably still speak of “hearing.” This must have been what Nishida Kitarō* had in mind when he spoke of “hearing the voiceless voice” (NKZ 4: 6).

When we objectively theorize about “being,” we grasp it as a *thing* and *see* it *qua* object. By contrast we can never know the “fact of *being*” (“that it is”)—which never loses the character of an *event*—other than by *listening* to it as a single muted voice.

While the act of seeing things is established initially by taking a certain distance, *hearing*—whether in listening to the natural voice or the heart’s voice—arises in the midst of ourselves. We can take no distance vis-à-vis the voice we hear. We hear it from a place limitlessly close to ourselves. We stated earlier that while *things* are on the side of objectivity, *events* are on the side of subjectivity or *between* objectivity and subjectivity. Insofar as *events* are *heard* as some sort of voice, this “between” must be there where it is limitlessly near the self, where it can no longer be distinguished from the self.

Event and Time

Things occupy our internal and external space. In order to exist, external *things* must have spatial bulk, whereby they mutually exclude one another in space. No two *things* can occupy the same space at the same time.

We can say the same about internal *things*. When I conjure up an image I cannot simultaneously think of a different image. Even *things* internally represented occupy my internal space to exclude the representation of others. Even in the complicated operations of consciousness, for example, when I am thinking about time while listening to music and search for sentences that would express that thought, consciousness is constantly in motion, bringing only one of those operations into its field of focus. The other images are either erased from consciousness or, at the least, placed in the peripheral background. No two representations can occupy the central field of consciousness at the same time.

The situation is very different in the case of *events*. That I exist and that I am sitting before a desk, listening to music, thinking about time, and writing these thoughts down in sentences on manuscript paper, all of these *events*, are proceeding at the same time. As long as I do not objectify them as *things*, directing my intentional consciousness upon them, all of these *events*, without mutual exclusion, are simultaneously established through absorption into the fact that I presently here *exist*.

Of course, at the same moment, innumerable incidents are also happening somewhere, I do not know where. Perhaps somewhere someone is dying or maybe someone is being born. And even in the interior of my body, a countless variety of physiological and biochemical changes are taking place. Of these innumerable incidents, there must be many, like my body's alterations or changes in the weather, that directly influence my mood or movements of consciousness. But unless I notice them and consciously structure them into my existence, that is, into the fact that I *am here now*, these incidents or changes, do not become *events* for me. As I said earlier, for an *event* to be established as *event*, I have to be there *witnessing* it.

In regard to their mode of being, however, nothing is more unstable than these multiple *events* established as *my events*. As soon as I direct my consciousness upon them, they ceases to be pure *events* and become *things* interior to consciousness. So long as they become *things*, they occupy a spatial location within consciousness and appear only in mutual exclusion of one another. For an *event* to remain pure—even while possessing the possibility that we can at any moment become conscious of it as a *thing*—it must be positioned in a state of indecision escaping the focus of our consciousness. One might say that *events*, like elements in moments of origination, are constantly in a state of instability. That I *witness* an *event* does not mean that I focus my consciousness upon it. It means that, without being objectified, it constitutes my *now*.

While *events* do not occupy internal or external space as *things* do, they occupy my *time* in the sense that they constitute my *now*.

Of course we can still say that *things* in their own way occupy time as well. The desk that I am using, since being placed in this room, has undergone the

time span of several years. For things to age means that they have, in their own way, occupied much time. Music can be neither played nor heard without the consumption of a certain amount of time. The work of collecting my ideas about time into a single book is taking more time than I had anticipated.

But the “time” that we conceive when speaking of *things*, objectified internally or externally and occupying it, is its quantity numerically expressed, for example, in clocks and calendars. It is a spatialized time that can be measured as long or short and visible to the eye, a time objectified as a *thing*. We might say that what has been objectified as a *thing* exists within time likewise objectified as a *thing*. When thinking about the time of *things*, we are conceiving of time as actually *visible* to the eye in the form of a clock or a calendar, or, if internally, even as something *visible* to the inner eye, indeed, as a kind of a *time-representation* or an *image of time*. We are not only thinking of it in such a way; we are also measuring it.

What would a time that is not a *thing*, a time that is an *event*, mean? I can provide you with no answer for now since that is the basic inquiry of this entire work. But when I say that “*events* occupy my time” in the sense that a variety of *events* constitute my *now*, I am expressing with the word *time* something essentially different from time as a *thing* or an *object*. It appears that we use the single concept of “time” to express two utterly distinct senses. Between time as *thing* and time as *event* there is a difference in their basic nature making them incommensurable. The fundamental aim of this book is to clearly ascertain that difference.

The Symbiotic Relationship Between Thing and Event

That decisive difference in basic nature between the way *things* are and the way *events* are does not mean that as two modes of phenomena, utterly distinct in kind, they do not commingle at all in the actual world. That is, they do not appear as mutually exclusive alternatives, whereby *things* are entirely *things* without containing any *event*-like character, and *events* are always pure *events* without showing any *thingly* way of being.

As I wrote earlier, the state of a pure *event* is unstable like elements in moments of origination, and possesses the inclination to immediately stabilize itself as an object *qua thing*. The *event* of “to be” (*be-ing*) strives immediately to take on the *thingly* appearance of “being,” and the *event* that “(x)... is fast” seeks stability within our consciousness as a *thing* called “speed.” Our consciousness exists primarily for the sake of discovering *things*. We can thus say that all events, no matter what sort as long as they have been discovered by consciousness, will take on the appearance of a *thing*. In that sense *events* transcend consciousness. In principle it is impossible to arrest, by means of intentional

consciousness, the purely immaculate *event*-like way of being that is unaccompanied by any *thingly* embellishment.

Events are expressed by means of *words*. But strictly speaking, whatever *event* has been expressed by *words* is no longer a pure *event*. Although the *word* “falling” speaks of the *event* of falling, from our side it would be almost impossible to comprehend from it the meaning of “falling” without evoking some image. And yet what takes up the appearance of an image is no longer a pure *event*.

Think of the operation that makes *events* into *words*. *Things* of the external world possess names and if we know them we can easily name them. By contrast it is not always easy to speak with *words* about formless *events*. Everyone has the experience of being at a loss for words when painfully knowing what one wants to say.

One frequently encounters such difficulty, for example, when translating from a foreign language into Japanese. It is often the case that the more one understands the meaning of a word or a phrase of the foreign language—the *event* that it expresses—the more one is troubled by the inability to find the appropriate Japanese. One is haunted by this difficulty whenever one seeks to transfer a living foreign language into a living Japanese idiom, to say nothing of computer-like translations that mechanically transpose words and phrases with the help of a dictionary. No matter which *word* one chooses, one notices a gap between the *event* that the *word* originally signifies and the *event* that one is there trying to express. Put in reverse this implies a dense settling of *events* into the living *words* we commonly use. In trying to forcibly speak what had never been uttered by the *words* of a particular language, one cannot help but exercise a certain violence upon those *words*. In that sense the work of translating is an unnatural activity that constantly alienates *words* from *events*.

Words, while themselves being *things*, allow lively *events* to settle into them. Therein we can speak of a certain symbiotic relationship between *things* and *events*. What utilizes this symbiotic relationship to the fullest extent is most certainly the linguistic art we call “poetry.” The point where poetry essentially differs from regular prose is that poetry attempts to vividly express the world of *events* without taking as its aim the transmission of information concerning *things*. It does this even as it employs *things* called words and in many cases speaks of all sorts of *things*.

Old pond!
Frog jumps in,
Water's sound.

This well-known haiku of Bashō, in terms of form, does not contain anything beyond the description of several *things*. All that it depicts is the sound of water as a frog jumps into an old pond. In terms of prose structure this is no differ-

ent from “an apple falling from a tree.” In fact, if we should attempt to translate this directly, word-for-word, into a foreign language, it would turn into a bland report about the world of *things*.

Certainly no Japanese would read this haiku as a mere report about the world of *things*. In it is concealed an *event*. It may be an *event* happening in the vicinity of the sound of the water of the old pond into which the frog jumped. Or it may be an *event* transpiring in Bashō’s mind. Or perhaps it is most appropriate to say that it is an *event* occurring in between the sound and Bashō. Whatever the case, some *event* drifted into Bashō’s midst. And in his attempt to express that *event* with *words*, Bashō poetizes: “Old pond! Frog jumps in, Water’s sound.”

Even if we try explaining with other words the *event* that this haiku speaks, it would most likely be impossible. Even if we directly transpose it into a foreign language, we would certainly be unable to recreate the same *event*. The image of *things* such as the old pond, the frog, the water’s sound; the image that inevitably transforms the *event* of jumping-in into a *thing*; the image composed by phonetic features, such as pronunciation and rhythm, and obtained by juxtaposing these *words*; and the synthesis of such *thingly* images, allow us to clearly register, from their background, the world of pure *events*. We can clearly hear, within our midst, the world of pure *events* as a muted voice consonant with the haiku’s sound.

We find this symbiotic relationship between *things* and *events* not only in cases of linguistic art such as haiku and poetry. Anything that we can call a work of art, be it painting or music, opens up the world of *events* through expressive material that are *things*. This is not only true of art. Any kind of human expressive act has the structure of registering *events* in accordance with *things*. Countenance would be an example. We read the mind of others from their facial expressions. Facial movements existing in the dimension of *things* express one’s inward thoughts that are *events*. As one theory of dramatology claims, by composing our facial expressions in a certain way we can also move our hearts in correspondence to that expression. As one pretends to cry, one actually becomes sad. *Events* appear in *things*, *things* express *events*, and *events* can be read from *things*.

The Absence of Events in Depersonalization

What we generally regard as vehicles of expression, such as the face or gestures, words or works of art, are not the only things possessing countenances. The table placed before me, the pen I grip, each sinograph that I write, also have countenances of their own. While being *things*, they constantly exhibit a world of *events* of some sort. That this desk is too narrow is one *event*. Another *event* is that this small desk, along with the many essays I have written on it, is

set into my history. And before anything else, this desk's actually *existing* before me and my touching it with both elbows also belong to the world of *events*. This *thing* called desk, in a certain sense, expresses these various *events*. When we perceive a desk, we not only perceive its mere *thingly* attributes, for example, its size or shape or temperature, but constantly register, at the same time, the world of *events* existing behind it.

This fact is so self-evident that we rarely recognize it in the day-to-day living that provides us with our material. When we look at a desk, we do not think that, aside from its visual or tactile perceptual image, we are also registering, for example, the desk's sense of reality or its enveloping mood. We are never conscious of this sense of reality or mood unless we direct our attention to it.

There is a certain neurosis, however, whereby this sensibility for self-evident *events* completely disappears. Nothing is stranger than this condition, for we discover in it not a single impediment to the patient's intelligence, behavior, or perception on the level of *things*. Nor do we find in it any symptoms of illusion or delusion as in schizophrenia. For this reason researchers since ancient times have been fascinated with it. In psychiatry, we call this peculiar condition "depersonalization" (*dépersonnalisation*).⁶⁶

We call it *depersonalization* for the following reasons. In it not only are lost sensibilities such as the sense of reality or actuality concerning one's own body or thing-events of the external world, but also the senses of solidity, gravity, and self-belonging. First and foremost the claim is made of an acute experience of the disappearance of one's own *self* or its complete alteration, the loss of emotions or of personality.

The patient, for example, fails to comprehend that whatever he sees really *is* there. He cannot sense its reality even though its size or shape has not changed. Looking at the scenery outside a window, he can recognize a pine tree, a roof, and the sky, but is unable to comprehend how they constitute a single coherent scene. When looking at the thermostat he can state what temperature it is but does not understand whether it is hot or cold. Neither can he sense the seasons nor feel any human emotions. The patient claims the experience of becoming an emotionless robot, unable to comprehend the feelings of others, seeing everyone as the same person, being unable to notice their individuality, losing his own individuality, having no mental activity, failing to comprehend what it means to be himself, having no sense—no matter what he is doing—that it is he who is doing it, not comprehending that he is here, not understanding the meanings of "here" and "there," having no sense of spatial expanse, finding no

66. On depersonalization see, for example, *The Psychopathology of Self-Awareness (Collected Writings of Kimura Bin 1: 383–90)* and *Self-Between-Time (1: 20–4)*.

distinction between far and near, and having the sensation that everything is juxtaposed upon a single plane.

This condition often begins abruptly and in almost all cases endures for several years or even decades. We have no knowledge at all of the mechanism in the nervous system that gives rise to this peculiar condition. But we might conceive of a connection in light of psycho-pathology between the feeling, persisting over long periods, of no longer being able to endure a painful reality and this sickly sense of the loss of reality that, following it, suddenly begins.

Obviously, what is lacking in depersonalization is the sensibility for the world of *events*. One's sensibility for *events* that had abundantly supported one's perception of *things* in the world when one is healthy suddenly disappears and the world loses its countenance. Patients suffering from depersonalization, almost unanimously, claim "the disappearance of oneself" or "the incomprehension of what it means to be oneself." This clearly shows that what we call "self" or "one-self" is, in fact, not a *thing* but consists in the *event* of being oneself.

Of the experiences that patients of depersonalization often speak about, of particular interest for us is their distinctive experience of time. One patient states, "Time is flowing in a very strange way. Time has been torn asunder and does not proceed at all. Innumerable *nows*, unconnected and piecemeal, appear only in shambles, as now, now, now, now, without regularity or coherence." Another patient states, "If I look at a clock, I know what time it is. But I have no realization that time is passing by." And another patient expresses the same experience by saying that "*the gap between moments of time* has disappeared."

This sort of anomalous experience of time can be obtained only from a limited number of patients who have a certain level of intelligence and capacity for expression. But as we attempt to think through the nature of time, nothing is more suggestive.

Juxtaposing the various patients' expressions, we find no impediment at all in the faculty of reading the hours from a clock, of numerically comprehending the passing of time, or of judging some movement or change as fast or slow. They still retain the concepts of past-present-future and are *intellectually* fully aware that time flows from the future to the past. Nevertheless the patient is unable to join, in light of *time*, the present impression with the next one. If there were two occurrences, each having happened at distinct positions of the clock's hand, the patient can say *how many minutes later* the second one occurred. One may be unable to tie them together with any sense that *time* in the meantime *has passed by*, but one's words about the disappearance of "*the gap between moments of time*" must be an attempt to express this situation.

Patients of depersonalization perceive the various *things* in the surrounding world and within themselves in the same way they do when healthy. On every occasion there is a perceptual impression happening at the temporal point of

now. In that sense the patient has not lost his perception of *now*. But this sort of *now* is something like a limit point caught between the future and the past, without any temporal duration, and not remaining at the same locale even for an instant. Each *now* is immediately succeeded by the next. And because their succession emerging in this way is composed of these innumerable *nows*—each a momentary point—it is always discontinuous.

By contrast, in our healthy everyday life we never experience “the unit of time”—the *now*—as a point running around in dazzling frequency without halting even for a moment. Instead it is the reverse: we usually experience the *now* as a state of rest, stable and fulfilled with abundant content. While certainly the *now* is caught between the future and the past, because it permits our stability as an expansive spread we can imagine time’s continuity as without rift.

The “now” that I had in mind a little while ago, when I wrote that our *now* is constituted by *things*, is the *now* as this kind of an abundant spread. The *now* as an *event* produces no rift between the past and the future. Or rather, put in terms of our natural experience, we come up with images of the future and of the past only when we unfold its spread in the two directions of “from now” and “till now.” The *now* is the *between* of the future and the past that secretes them, the *from now* and the *till now*. It is not that there first exist the future and the past and only subsequently the *now* becomes caught between them. The *now* as the *between* creates the future and the past. In this way the *now* as *event* becomes the source of the entire flow of time. Time is generated from “the gap between moments of time.”

For patients of depersonalization who have lost the world of *events*, the *now* in the sense of *between* does not obtain. What the patient who tells us, “Innumerable *nows*, unconnected and piecemeal, simply appear in shambles, as now, now, now, now, without regularity or coherence,” really means is, in fact, this non-establishment of the *now*. The “now” that the patient speaks of is nothing but the discontinuous succession of transient points *qua things*. For that reason, “time has been torn asunder and does not proceed at all.” It is an illusion to think that transient *nows* pass away without stopping for an instant because time proceeds forward. Our experience that time flows in continuity from the future to the past is rather generated from the fact that the abundant spread of the *now*, while possessing polarity in the two directions of *from now* and *till now*, remains at our foundation.

Dōgen* says in the chapter on “The Existential Moment” in the *Shōbōgenzō*:

You should not conceptualize a moment as something that flies by, nor study *flying by* merely as the capacity of a moment. If moments could be fully defined by the capacity to fly by, they would be separate in space. (DŌGEN 1240A, 191)

I think that we can consider the “time” that he speaks of here as what we have been discussing in terms of the *now*. For the future to fly away into the past is not the only function of the *now*. If we understand the *now*, only in that way as flying by, gaps would appear between each *now* and the discontinuous time experienced by patients of depersonalization would emerge. Dōgen goes on:

To sum it up: the entirety of existences in the entirety of the world are particular moments that follow each other. Because they are existential moments, they are also the moments of my existence.

Everything existing in this universe, in the *event* that it *is*, continues as the *now* of each. And even the *self* in its *be-ing* is *now* since *to be*, as it is, *is now*.

Those suffering from depersonalization has lost their *self*, their *sense of being*, and *time*. By turning our eyes from the world of *things* to the world of *events*, we can understand this condition as an expression of a single fundamental obstacle without having to use any complicated explanation. The self is an *event*, being is also an *event*, and time is an *event* as well. In our present work I would like to continue the pursuit of this examination of time as *event*.

Be that as it may, the concept of “time” that we use everyday is too strongly contaminated by the way of thinking in terms of *things*. In order to purify the concept of time as *event*, we need, first and deeply, to consider time as *thing*.

[JWK]

HIROMATSU Wataru 廣松 渉 (1933–1994)

Hiromatsu Wataru obtained his doctorate in philosophy from Tokyo University and went on to teach philosophy there for many years. He is well known for his novel interpretation of Marx's concept of reification. In particular, he believed that Georg Lukács's treatment of this concept presupposed a duality between subject and object, which Hiromatsu believed was misleading. Hence in his own philosophical work, he constantly attempts to show how objects or phenomena are always already mediated. In the selection included below we see how he constantly shows how so-called objective phenomena are mediated by the subjects and thus appear to lead to a multiplicity. However, if each phenomenon merely splits into a number of different subjective viewpoints, coherent communication would be impossible. At this point, Hiromatsu introduces the mediation of a type of ideal subject, which is a type of socially mediated subject that is anonymous, perhaps similar to Heidegger's concept of *das Man*, but free of some of the pejorative connotations of Heidegger's idea of "the they." Instead, Hiromatsu invokes a type of generalized subject to show how communication and reference are possible. His analysis of the "two-limbed" structure of subjectivity is then later integrated with that of the objectively given historical world to form a fuller, "four-limbed" view of the structure of what he calls a "collective subject."

Apart from his own philosophical work, in 1980 Hiromatsu published a book-length critique of the Kyoto School in what has since become a classic work, *On Overcoming Modernity*. In this book he vehemently criticizes the participants in the famous 1942 roundtable discussion and connects Japanese visions of Asianism with expansionary politics in Manchuria. Later, in 1994, he published a piece in the *Asahi Shinbun* praising Asianism as an ideal for future leftists, surprising readers who had known him as a Marxist critic of Japanese wartime ideology.

[VM]

THE SUBJECTIVE DUALITY OF PHENOMENA

HIROMATSU Wataru 1991, 51–60

Phenomena "for Someone"

For phenomena to be phenomena, they must be phenomena *for* someone. To say that I now have a pen in my hand implies something that is "for me." When a child sees a cow and says "doggie," for the child the phenomenon is a dog.

There are also cases in which a phenomenon can be doubly attributed, as, for example, the "sadness of a child" crying in the next room. The sadness is

(for me) “an immediate given,” but at the same time, it is a sadness for the child itself. Or again, a scene like children chasing a ball shows how “one” phenomenon” (the ball) can be attributed multiply to many children and to me.

For the time being I will set aside here questions such as whether my way of being and that of the children are, in fact, the same. The immediate and persistent problem is one of phenomenal “facts.”

Now, when we speak of phenomenal facts, it is not merely that each phenomenon is always a phenomenon *for someone*, or even that in many cases it can be a phenomenon for me, but that it can be so for you or for him or for anyone at all. This point requires a bit more reflection. For example, when I see a child take a cow for a “doggie,” the cow becomes a dog for the child but not for me. Nonetheless, if in some sense I cannot grasp the cow as a dog, I will be incapable of understanding that the child has “mistaken” the cow for a dog. My ability to recognize the child’s mistake depends on my ability to grasp some sense in which the cow is a doggie. To this extent, the “cow as doggie” certainly has a twofold attribution. But here the “I” and the “child” are not merely parallel, as is the case with the many children chasing after a single ball.

What we have here is rather a doubling that we may speak of as a self-splitting form of self-integration. For myself, the cow remains a cow and not a doggie. But insofar as I am able to understand the words of the child, that “I” is a kind of substitute for the child, and for that “I” the cow indeed appears as a doggie. To simplify things, we may speak of two “I’s”—“I” as I myself and “I” as the child—that in some sense are separate “I’s” and yet at the same time are one and the same “I.”

This condition of a self-splitting self-integration is most evident in linguistic intercourse, but this is hardly an exceptional case. We need only think of the basic setting in which the joys and pains of an “other” are transferred sympathetically in a “direct ‘mind’ to mind transmission.” The self-splitting self-integration is rather a structural potential of phenomenal conscious in general. Thus the person whom a phenomenon is “for,” the so-called “subject,” displays a twofold structure of “someone as someone.” By this means, a phenomenon that cannot actually be given individually to individuals is nonetheless able to be given to several people. In ordinary parlance, we say that people possess “knowledge” that has been transmitted. The fact is this: the “world” that people presently possess as a phenomenal world only comes about in anticipation of this kind of “transmission.”

At first glance, this seems perfectly understandable, but just what *is* this transmission of knowledge? And what of previous knowledge, which clearly—even if we distinguish it from presupposition—conditions later knowledge? What kind of structure is *it* based on?...

Even if we say that knowledge is transmitted, this does not mean that the

“contents of consciousness” of one person are carried over to the consciousness of another person, as if moving items from one box to another. Essentially, transmission does not mean evoking in the consciousness of another the same mental image one has in one’s own mind.

We may note in passing that there are also cases of clear understanding that take place without being accompanied by any mental image at all. The kind of conscious contents or expression we refer to as mental images are not an essential factor for transmission. Moreover, even granting that previous knowledge conditions later conscious activity, it is not that there is any conscious *tabula rasa* or wax tablet that can be etched on, or a box called “consciousness” in which knowledge and ideas bounce off one another and combine with one another.

To say knowledge is transmitted means only that *how* one person grasps a given “datum” as something and *how* another person grasps it *as* something are the same. The pattern by which that *something* is grasped, or if you will, by which consciousness is made to work, becomes stable and fixed, with the result that (leaving aside the biological and physical mechanisms involved) when new data are encountered, they can be grasped by the same pattern. We may think of the phenomenon of consciousness that is conditioned by previously existing knowledge as entailing such a structure of consciousness and being based on it.

Let us return to our earlier hypothetical example, the child who takes the cow for a doggie. If the child is told that it is not a “doggie” but a “cow,” the child would, to borrow the jargon of French sociology, be “coerced” into seeing it as a “cow” “through the harsh punishment of being mocked.” Initially, it may be possible to go no further than the split between the consciousness of the child and the “knowledge” of the adult wondering how to characterize that consciousness. But in the end, an assimilation takes place: of its own accord, the child, spontaneously and naturally, comes to grasp the datum as a “cow.” The child takes the way in which *people* grasp something and makes it its own, assimilating itself to them. That is, the way things are grasped, or the *way conscious activity is made manifest*, turns into a collective subjectivity.

We Japanese actually *hear* a clock go “kachi-kachi” and a rooster crow “kokekokkō.” It is almost impossible for people with no knowledge of English to hear “tick-tock” or “cock-a-doodle-doo.” From even this one example we can understand how already at the level of hearing sounds one’s way of being conscious of a datum as *something* has become a collective subjectivity, and how consciousness of data in a form other than that collectively subjective *something* is all but impossible to achieve.

In short, the subject “for” whom the phenomenal world opens up, does so in the two-limbed, twofold structure of “someone as someone.”

Being Someone

What is this “someone as someone”? That is, what is the nature of this *someone*, this “subject” that enters the scene as the one whom phenomena are “for”?

To begin with, this *someone* appears as a particular person, as we saw in the case of the “child” above. But when it comes to going along with the opinions of our friends or worrying about what people think, *someone* takes on the sense of an unspecified plurality of persons. Leaving aside cases that involve status and roles such as behaving like a father or expressing oneself like a professor, there are times when one acts like a “general linguistic subject of the Japanese language” or a “universal subject of judgment,” as when one corrects someone else’s speech: “In Japanese we say...”; or one frames a proposition of universal attribution: “A is B.” There are also statements like, “You are mistaken about his thought,” in which *someone* appears in a manifold or “nested” structure. Consequently, the question of who (or what) *someone* is cannot be judged once and for all. In fact, when it comes to discussing the self-formation of the subject as a collective subjectivity, there is no way to avoid specifying gradations of distinction and function.

I will leave proper treatment of this question for later, limiting myself now to a few remarks on the existential nature of the collective subject.

As particular individuals, even in cases where you and I or he and I participate in a shared phenomenon, both sides are determined by *actual* conditions of existence beyond a mere I-in-you or I-in-him. This is even clearer in those cases where *someone* refers to an unspecified plurality; in cases where *someone* refers to a universal subject of judgment, the “ideal” nature of its existence is undeniable.

Say a pine tree is visible from the window. The pine tree is not simply a personal opinion, but something that holds true for anyone. It carries, in and of itself, a “demand for universal applicability.” When we speak of what is “universally” so “for everyone”—that is, of what I am, of myself, conscious of from the perspective of “everyone”—*someone* is not a particular person. It is indifferent as to men and women, young and old, and has nothing to do with the life and death of individual persons. At the same time it must be a “non-particular, algebraically functional, trans-temporal, trans-spatial” ideal *someone* that holds true for *anyone*.

But this ideal *someone* is not *something* with the objective, conceptual “meaning” of a “human being” that can be posited as that which you and I have in common. Obviously there are cases where I, you, she, and so forth are present as “objects,” but in the present context, there is always an ideal *someone* in the sense of a “subject” who is conscious of a given datum as *something other*.

The Ideal “Someone”

There is no need to labor the point that this ideal *someone* is not separate from individual “subjects” and does not exist in some “metaphysical world.” As was suggested earlier, to the extent that people are subjects, they subsist in general and of themselves, as well as for us, as singular instances of an ideal subject. Only in this way does the ideal *someone* have an actual existence “in the flesh.”

The reality of the real subject—to the extent that the ideal *someone* subsists as an instance in the flesh—is determined rather by its indifference. For example, an instructor of a foreign language is a “teacher” for her students insofar as she is fluent and a qualified “subject” of the foreign *langue*. Individual and personal differences are of no more than secondary importance.

This is most evident in the case of a shaman. None of her individual characteristics make any difference. The only meaning she has is as a “locus” for a divine oracle to take flesh. There are other situations, of course, where the significance of real determinations do play a central role, where the appearance of an ideal *someone* does not mean that those real determinations simply drop out of the picture altogether. Even so, insofar as a subject appears in consciousness as *someone*, it is as an ideal *someone* that the subject is able to assume responsibility for its central consciousness.

On further reflection, the situation detailed above concerning the appearance of the “other” can also be applied to oneself. We are conscious of a layer often spoken of as “me as me” or “me as someone,” but generally when we face the phenomenal world, there is no “me as me.” Whether we should call this the level of *das Man*, of the “universal subject of representation,” or of the “universal subject of judgment” is beside the point here. We may also leave for later an elucidation of any ideological conditions involved. In facing the phenomenal world, we immediately and of ourselves *suppose* that we are viewing the world from the perspective of some kind of universal subjectivity.

We say that there is a pen here, that it is three o'clock now, or that that tree over there looks small but it is actually large, and so forth. None of this is simply data given for “me as myself.” We suppose it as universally applicable “fact” that holds true for others as well. Things that are *only* for “me as me” are generally discarded. That a phenomenon is *something* means that it is for a “me that is more than me.” Thus the “I” as a kind of *someone* takes precedence over the simple “I.”

There is probably no need to pile up more words here. The so-called “subject” *for whom* the phenomenal world open up possesses, at a minimum, the structure of a two-limbed “someone as someone.” But more than that, in placing the accent on the ideal element, it subsists as a self-split self-integration.

My initial proposal here has been to confirm that the “subject” aspect is located in a twofold structure of the real and the ideal, and that the subject aspect also subsists as *something more*.

[VM]

SAKABE Megumi 坂部 恵 (1936–2009)

Sakabe Megumi did his undergraduate and doctoral studies in philosophy at Tokyo University. After lecturing at Kokugakuin University and Tokyo City University, he returned to his alma mater where he held a post until his retirement in 1997. Sakabe has distinguished himself among his contemporaries by the extraordinary breadth of his erudition, which encompasses a profound understanding of the western philosophical tradition (including several important figures neglected by most contemporary philosophers) as well as a broad appreciation of traditional Japanese arts, aesthetics, and philosophy. These concerns are reflected in monographs on individual thinkers (Kant, Watsuji Tetsurō*, Kuki Shūzō*) and on modern intellectual history, including his original and influential study on modern Japanese philosophy, *A Hermeneutics of the Mask* (1976).

In the essay extracted below, Sakabe sets himself within the context of the co-constitution of the self and others through the medium of language in order to outline how the distinctively western notion of “the subject” has been treated in twentieth-century Japanese philosophy, which derives from a tradition in which the notion is absent or else only minimally adumbrated. He compares the thought of Nishida Kitarō*, where the self emerges from an “expressive world” prior to any separation of self from other, with Watsuji’s more anthropocentric emphasis on inter-subjective expression. He then turns to linguistics, and Tokieda Motoki’s “language process” theory, which envisages “an emerging of the grammatical subject from the predicate nucleus of the sentence.” Sakabe shows that none of this is fully comprehensible without an appreciation of the way in which linguistic studies during the Edo period, under the sway of Motoori Norinaga*, drew direct inspiration from the practices of composing and interpreting poetry. He ends by arguing for a re-appropriation of such studies to inspire more creative thought in Japanese philosophers by restoring the central role of the imagination.

[GP]

THE PROBLEM OF THE SUBJECT

SAKABE Megumi 1987, 23–46

From the Meiji period down to today, the question of how to absorb the impact of western philosophy, to assimilate it on the basis of ancient Japanese traditions of thought, and then to apply it to the current situation in modern Japan, has been a pressing and ultimately inevitable concern in the rapid, often flustered, process of Japan’s “modernization.”

To begin with, numerous difficulties beset the task of expressing ideas stem-

ming from the western philosophical tradition in modern Japanese. To borrow the technical vocabulary of linguistics: at the levels of lexical, syntactical, and especially semantic theory, Japanese and the languages of Western Europe are separated by major and ineluctable differences, as is well known. In fact, in translating the specialized vocabulary of western philosophy, people for the most part draw on Buddhist and Confucian terms, or adapt them for their purpose. Even if people are not aware of it, this way of proceeding of itself gives rise to slippages of meaning that derive from differences between the intellectual traditions of the West and those of the East. Furthermore, as I will touch on later, differences on the syntactical level in turn work to create still wider slippages at the semantic level. For this reason, and because of these various slippages in the practice of thinking, philosophical thought in Japan since the Meiji period has been in constant danger of falling into a semantic vacuum under the ideological halo of the authority of newly imported western modes of thought.

Moreover, as a natural result, these kinds of slippages have opened up a significant breach between the technical vocabulary of Japanese philosophy, and indeed its language in general, and the language of daily life. This tendency obviously works to exacerbate the above-mentioned danger of philosophical language's falling into a semantic vacuum. Even to this day, the more the language of Japanese philosophy becomes so incomprehensible as to surpass the understanding of ordinary lay people, the less it can be said to have liberated itself from the slide into a semantic vacuum and from the danger of losing its pragmatic effectiveness in the realm of everyday discourse.

At the same time, there is no denying that within the tradition of modern Japanese philosophy there have been figures like Watsuji Tetsurō and Kuki Shūzō who sought to actualize a philosophical thinking rooted in a truly living Japanese language, through being fully aware of the slippages and dangers mentioned above and so bridging the resultant breach. Nevertheless, and unfortunately, it seems clear to me that such figures are the exception rather than the rule. In general, the pressures from western ideas introduced from abroad have been so strong as to make it extremely difficult to be sufficiently aware of such slippages and dangers, and to secure the autonomy of thinking in one's native language.

Since Japanese philosophy has had to operate under such unavoidable circumstances for a little over a century, questions of "the subject" have presented a special difficulty for Japanese thinkers. As is well known, this idea—a key concept in western philosophy since Descartes—has been implicated in one of the largest and most prominent slippages separating western from Japanese thinking. To explain this, one might provisionally give the following reasons.

First, the dualism of subject and object, or in other words the concept of a thinking subject that stands in opposition to objects in the sense they are

understood in modern natural science (the *res extensa* of Descartes), is by and large alien to traditional Japanese modes of thought, which are sometimes distinguished by a strong tendency toward pantheism and even animism.

Second, the concept of an autonomous individual subject possessed of the kinds of fundamental and inalienable rights that took shape in modern civil societies of the West under the influence of Stoicism and Christianity is likewise fundamentally different from what is found in traditional Japanese thought. This is because, despite an ancient tradition of thought shaped by Daoist and Buddhist influences, according to which one secures autonomy by withdrawing from the world, the idea of the autonomous individual subject was never to any significant degree assimilated into Japanese society. It is also because in Japan, even since modern times, intersubjective or interpersonal relationships are to some extent cast in the mold of the kind of “unitive sociality” frequently said to belong to the deep (or primordial) strata of the human psyche, and these also tend to blur the boundaries that demarcate the self as subject from others as subjects.

Putting all of this together: it is not uncommon to hear arguments to the effect that the Japanese do not seem to be able to gain an adequate understanding of Descartes’ philosophy, or even modern western Cartesian philosophies in general. Against this I think I can offer a counter-argument and bring the whole discussion back to its starting point, although I cannot discuss the question in detail. When what is called “Cartesian subjectivism” is located within the broader picture of the development of the western philosophical tradition, it actually appears in certain contexts as an exception. It is after all very easy to line up examples within the modern tradition of philosophers such as Malebranche and Maine de Biran who have a strong “anti-Cartesian” bent, and incline toward a neo-Platonic “unitive mysticism” in the broad sense.

In any event, to return to the question of Japanese thought: what is certain is that, from the Meiji period up to the time of the Second World War, people have tried to deepen their own understanding of the intersubjective or interpersonal world, while often critically confronting the western philosophical tradition of “subjectivism”—and in some cases from a basis in the Zen tradition’s idea of ‘nothingness’. As a well-known example, I need only mention the names of Nishida Kitarō* and Watsuji Tetsurō*.

In the contemplative undertakings of such figures, one can see how a certain aspect of traditional Japanese thought is still clearly alive and working, despite the decisive influence of western philosophy on them. This aspect is the tendency to pay special attention to the relationships of “interpenetration” and “transposition” that obtain between humans and nature, or between subject and object. In thinking about language, this aspect refers to a tendency to take seriously the way that individual words are always transcending themselves in

the direction of new (metaphoric) meanings, within the entirety of the concrete context in which each word is always located.

In postwar Japan the so-called debate over subjectivity was conducted in several areas. Some people, taking existentialism into account, engaged in discussions of the subject's mode of being, especially in the context of political reform. Others tried to bring in the philosophy of intersubjectivity of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and others. Still others adopted structuralist thinking with its strong tone of anti-Cartesianism (in many cases merely as a new intellectual fashion). However, I rather doubt whether there has been any decisive development of thought concerning the subject, beyond what had already been attained in the prewar period. There have been some movements recently to reexamine topics in prewar Japanese philosophy, and I personally hope for some results from these in the future.

In view of the above series of circumstances surrounding the problem of "subjectivity" in modern Japan, as well as the distinctive nature of Japanese thinking, I would like to discuss the following questions: (a) how has the problem of the subject been treated in modern Japan? (b) what are the distinctive features of these treatments? and (c) what problems still remain to be solved? I shall consider these questions with respect to (1) philosophy, (2) linguistics or linguistic theory, and (3) the history of ideas.

Watsuji and Nishida

In order to think about the location of the problem of the subject in modern Japanese thought, I shall first look at (1) Watsuji Tetsurō's interpretation of Kant, followed by (2) Nishida Kitarō's ideas concerning the 'place', or "mask," where the subject forms or finds itself. On the basis of that, I shall (3) briefly summarize the special characteristics of the thinking of both Watsuji and Nishida; and lastly, by comparing such special characteristics, I shall (4) consider the so-called "ontological" or "poetical" status of the subject in Japan, not just after the Meiji period but going back further to the middle of the Edo period.

(1) Interpreting Kant's account of the role of space and time with respect to their function in transcendental apperception, Watsuji writes as follows:

Originally the unity of the forms of time and space is not just a case of the unity of mind and body. In summary, the outer phenomenon is a phenomenon of both space and time, whereas the inner object is a phenomenon of time alone. In this sense time "is the formal *a priori* condition of all phenomena whatsoever" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B50). The fact that the object, whether internal or external, is represented already stands under the condition of time. In this sense all things are representations in time and space, and there

can be no such thing as a representation in space alone. Thus all things have a dual nature of internal and external. *Self-awareness is possible in all things. Therefore all things must be included within personality. However, as I have already mentioned, such an idea of personality cannot exist for Kant.* Kant is especially concerned, among representations in time and space, with what is synthesized in time alone, in other words with bodies connected with mind, and he emphasizes that such representations in time and space in this sense are internally one, embracing the dual aspects of internal and external. Thus a transcendental personality comes to include the body within itself when it becomes aware of itself in such a unique representation. So what becomes the content of the personality is simply the body. (WTZ 9: 350)

It is obvious that Watsuji has here gone beyond the concept of the modern western subject to an idea of the cosmic intermeshing of humans and things in full awareness, by drawing on the Asian or, more specifically, the Buddhist traditions.

(2) In this interpretation of the subject as understood by Kant, Watsuji is influenced, though without his mentioning it, not just by Asian or Japanese thought (and Zen Buddhism in particular), but more specifically by Nishida's philosophy. In Nishida we find a well-articulated logic concerning the cosmic connections within which the formation of the subject takes place:

The entire self is encompassed by the world of expression. If we can say that this, too, is consciousness, then we can also say that our true self exists in expressive consciousness. However, it is not that the functioning of expression brings our self out from the dark and into the light, but it is rather that our self was not in the dark from the beginning. Speaking from an absolute standpoint, self-determination is self-closure. Just as one is able to see the light by blocking it, one sees oneself by blocking the light of the self. (NKZ 4: 79–80)

Our personality must itself be a deep self-contradiction. We live only insofar as we hear the voice of the absolute person at the foundation of the world of reality through negating our very selves.... There is nothing that we ought to will outside of this world of reality. The willow becomes green, the flower becomes red, the mountain is a mountain, water is water. (NKZ 6: 333)

One sees an image of oneself by using whatever things one encounters in the world as a mirror. Linguistically speaking, an event before the separation of subject from object, or the "thing" as *energeia*, reveals itself by way of the "predicate." One first encounters the appearance of visible things, by making the same, one, fundamental and invisible place, or locus, the starting point. After that, one awakens to one's own self, which reflects itself in those things. In the series of reflections that appear under "the aspect of the grammatical subject," in the visible place that embraces many layers and aspects, one sees one's own

figure repeatedly and thereby reaches the cosmic awakening of the self that is called self-awakening.

This is the “expressive world,” or the “expressive world” that expresses the inexpressible self, the self that is absolutely impossible to express directly, and the root of the self and world, symbolically reflecting the “predicate aspect” that is invisible as itself.

(3) By taking as basic the idea of the derivative nature of the grammatical subject by comparison with the predicate, Nishida at least implicitly leaves free space to think the merging of subject and object, or their mutual interpenetration. He thereby secures the possibility for the subject to see itself symbolically in things, or in the mirror of events (by way of words expressing them, or the predicate), as well as the possibility of thinking an implicit turn of the subject toward its objective (visible) world.

Here things repeatedly give birth to and create (*poiein*) subjects, and thereby relate to the subject’s “poetical” or “productive” realm, which enables it to attain its cosmo-ontological rooting in the field of “nothingness.”

This kind of vertical dimension of the transformational emergence of the subject cannot be accommodated within the framework of the so-called Cartesian subject, which stands face-to-face with objects. This dimension involves a dialectical movement whereby subject and object intermesh and transform into each other in such a way as to attain self-awakening. In this sense it somewhat resembles the dimension of *mimesis* in Aristotle, where the subject repeatedly transforms and transcends itself by the mirror effect known as imitative re-emergence through others.

In his later years Nishida came to regard the dimension of the *poiesis* of the subject as crucially important. He finally reached the position that, insofar as the subject goes along with the movement of the vertical direction to transcend itself toward the foundation of the cosmos, where words are symbolically expressed by way of visible things, it can achieve unity with the world, or rather with the cosmos through the world, by way of the subject’s unfolding and spreading itself out through the operation of the symbolical power of imagination. At this pinnacle of his thought, he is firmly connected with the tradition prevalent since the mediaeval period of the symbolic poetical power of imagination, which involves the self-awakening of the subject using the mirror known as the objective world as a medium, as well as the implicit transformation or mutual intersecting among productive subjects, as seen in the case of linked poetry or *renga*. This is how Nishida situated the problem of the subject vertically in the space of this kind of symbolical or creative power of the imagination.

Whereas Nishida sunk his thinking into the vertical dimension by considering the cosmic and symbolic rooting of the subject in the transcendent predicate-aspect by way of its transposition into *language*, Watsuji’s thinking

extended the subject in a horizontal direction toward a place of intersubjectivity (the human being as “the between” in a personal relationship).

By analyzing the implications of terms such as “human being” and “Being,” Watsuji brought into relief an understanding that is implicitly contained in the thinking of the Japanese language, whereby the sphere of the intersubjective precedes the individual subject and functions as its indispensable constitutive factor. The fact that the word “*hito*” means both human beings in general and other humans in particular can be taken to mean that the so-called subject contains within itself a dual structure of self and other. (Watsuji calls our attention here to the fact that words in modern western languages denoting personality derive from the Latin *persona*, which means “mask.”)

What is interesting is that Watsuji has undertaken a detailed investigation into the linguisticization of the intersubjective sphere:

A verbal statement is *the spoken expression of human existence*. When the human being makes statements about things it is expressing its own existence. Therefore, a statement is informed by a “(there) is.” For example, “There is s” means that a human being, while making a statement about s, is verbally expressing the fact that a human being is there with s. Therefore, in the making of statements, human existence is already given in advance. Making statements is a matter of verbally expressing this existence by extending it. This extended field is divided into various words, and such words are thereby *connected*. To put it the other way round: before connecting there is separation, and before such separating there is the existence to be stated. (Wtz 9: 149)

4. However, if one follows Watsuji’s logic here with regard to the expression of the intersubjective sphere by language, it is impossible to secure the transformation of the subject by way of the symbolic mirror of things or words, or the space in which transposition operates freely, as was possible in Nishida. This is because in the case of Nishida the subject emerges directly and without mediation from the predicate-aspect that is its foundation, and can thereby freely intersect and associate with all things in the universe, as well as all words; while in the case of Watsuji, the sphere of intersubjectivity (or, rather, interpersonal-ity) is closed off from the sphere of things and words, and it is thereby prevented from obtaining a clue to its self-awakening by transcending itself toward that sphere.

As we have seen, Watsuji does talk sometimes of the possibility of self-awakening by using all things within the world as triggering opportunities. Nevertheless, it seems that when one is captivated by the logic of “the human” (or, rather, of anthropocentrism) it seems almost impossible to extricate oneself from that and attain a logic of free symbolic transformation or transposition. Such circumstances seem to have imbued Watsuji’s thinking after a certain

period with a tendency, in spite of his positive interest since his youth in the arts and cultural history, to limit itself to the field of ethics, and to make it difficult for him methodologically to free himself up for the symbolical transposition of the subject. As his sense of cosmic rooting through the symbolic power of imagination became more tenuous during the period of transnationalism in the Second World War, this seems to have led naturally to Watsuji's growing commitment to a fanatical ultranationalism reminiscent of Motoori Norinaga's* Native Studies (far more so than in Nishida's case).

Instead of moving toward a free symbolic transformation or transposition of the subject, Watsuji could not help idolizing a particular national group by his tendency to restrict the field of ethics through the logic peculiar to "human" thinking, and to make the self-expression of that very group into its own subject, or a fetish of intersubjectivity inhabited by the self.

After the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, Watsuji tried to modify the orbit of his ethical system away from a monocentrism borrowed from Hegel (which could be said to be the ultimate pinnacle of subjectivism) as well as from Norinaga, toward a Herder-style cultural polycentrism. However, even with this modification Watsuji cannot be said to have made the breakthrough that could take his ethical system in an aesthetic, poetical, and symbolic direction. It was in his last years, after he had published his major works on ethics or the history of Japanese ethical thought, that Watsuji rediscovered the time lost during his youth and even his childhood, and returned to the world of "the creativity of the Muromachi period" as seen, for example, in the old ballad dramas (of Bunraku theater) or the legendary tales of the same period.

Tokieda Motoki

There is a linguistic or grammatical theory in modern Japan that is worth paying careful attention to, especially in connection with the modern subject: namely, the "language process theory" of Tokieda Motoki (1900–1967). The importance of his theory from our perspective can be provisionally summarized in the following three points:

(1) This theory demonstrates the structural uniqueness (at least comparatively) of the Japanese language, by borrowing the structural framework of grammatical investigation from so-called "old Japanese language studies" before western linguistics was imported to Japan. In view of the predicate's primary position and the subject's secondary position in the Japanese sentence, the result obtained here and the conclusion that Nishida reached through his philosophical examination coincidentally indicate the same unique structure of thinking in the Japanese language or Japan.

(2) Tokieda develops his linguistic theory through critical confrontation with

western linguistic theories, and especially Saussure's, and it therefore seems worthwhile considering it in comparison with various contemporary linguistic theories (such as language-action theory, communications theory, case grammar theory, and so forth).

(3) Tokieda himself examines the sources of his own theory and has presented a history of Japanese language studies based on a detailed account of the development of linguistic theory in Japan. This gives us an important clue about how to evaluate the awakening of linguistic consciousness in Japan, or the functioning of language in linguistics and hermeneutics, after the Kamakura and Muromachi periods.

By noting the fact that the grammatical subject can often be omitted in the Japanese sentence, and borrowing the structural model of Suzuki Akira (1764–1837), a grammarian of the mid-Edo period, Tokieda developed a theory of the “predicate-centred structure” of the sentence. According to this, the basic structure of the Japanese sentence consists of words and linking elements, and can generally be analyzed as a structure of nested boxes.

In this nested-boxes model the focal point of the meaning is the main predicate, which normally comes at the end of the sentence (or, more precisely, the main predicate plus the main linking element, which may be a “zero-symbol”). As compared to this central predicative part, the location of the so-called grammatical subject is of secondary importance. Tokieda explains the relationship between these two as an emerging of the grammatical subject from the predicative nucleus of the sentence.

I assume there is no need to explain formally this kind of analysis of sentence structure, which is somewhat reminiscent of contemporary case grammar theory. It is also similar to Nishida's ideas about the way the (thinking and creative) self emerges from the transcendent predicate aspect. One could say that Tokieda's predicate-like nucleus corresponds structurally to what we might provisionally call the dynamic diagram of the basic framework with respect to the transformation of the subject.

While assigning the main role in describing the structure of the Japanese language to grammar study, Tokieda develops his own theory of general linguistics called “language process theory.” According to this theory, language should not be considered as a system of objectified symbols, as Saussure maintains (as Tokieda understands him), but rather as a process of communication among subjects who speak.

Aside from his inadequate understanding of Saussure's theory, which may have derived from the availability of Saussure's publications at the time (only *Lectures in General Linguistics*), we might list the following points as possible shortcomings of Tokieda's theory.

(a) From the perspective of today's language-action theory, despite his atten-

tion to the “process” aspect of language, Tokieda’s theory still retains traces of “errors from descriptivism”—in other words, it still allows opportunities for the reification of the speaking subject and the process itself, and thus cannot successfully account for the dimension of “performative utterance.” Nor can it sufficiently clarify the unique nature of poetic language, which belongs to a different dimension from that of normal linguistic activity.

(b) As an inevitable consequence of the above-mentioned idolization of the (speaking) subject and the fetishization of the process, Tokieda’s theory does not succeed in integrating the multi-layered structure of the subject itself or, more importantly, the symbolical transposition of the speaking or creating subject.

By the way, Tokieda has presented, though his book is not so large, a substantial history of Japanese language studies. He outlines the development of linguistic theory since the Kamakura period as a series of inquiries into the origins of Japanese grammar. He thus shows the ways in which his linguistics is indebted to the tradition of Japanese grammar studies, or more broadly to hermeneutics, and also the ways in which it diverges from that tradition. What is noteworthy here is that Tokieda emphasizes that the study of grammar, which constitutes the major part of Japanese hermeneutics, is by no means an autonomous realm of study like modern natural science, but has rather always been associated with the practice of poetry and the interpreting of ancient texts.

Tokieda repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the fact that, in the tradition of “old Japanese language studies,” and especially in Norinaga, who was a famous scholar of Native Studies and one of its originators, grammar was studied in close connection with the interpretation of ancient poems and the norms of poetry making.

Tokieda calls attention to the fact that the term “words and linkings,” the key concept of his linguistic theory, goes back to *A Selective Outline of Te-ni-ha* which is reputed to have been a work by Fujiwara no Teika, the famous medieval *waka* poet, and also to the fact that the decisive role of the linking elements *te*, *ni*, and *ha*, in the Japanese sentence becomes evident through an investigation of the “cut-syllable” in linked poetry. Tokieda is fond of citing the following haiku from the work:

Words are like temples and shrines,
the *te-ni-ha* resemble solemnity.

The linkings in this context have a somewhat ornamental feeling or suggest a dynamic diagram. Thinking along such lines one could regard the linkings as being something like the most condensed form of the predicate in the context of Nishida’s ideas about the transcendent predicate aspect.

We might say then, borrowing the terminology of present-day semiotics,

that we can confirm the characterization of grammatical investigation in the tradition of Japanese thinking as being “phraseological” or “performative.” This is because grammatical investigation was always regarded as practical instruction in making poems and interpreting classical texts, and so grammar and hermeneutics were always closely connected to poetico-hermeneutical investigations.

Tokieda certainly retained the model of Japanese sentence structure developed in traditional grammar study. At the same time, he broke with the tradition concerning the role of practical instructions for poetry making or hermeneutics. Under the influence of the objectivism of modern science, Tokieda’s theory—and indeed Japanese linguistics in general since the Meiji period—lost its close connection with traditional inquiries into poetics, poetic composition, and hermeneutics. If we can find a way to restore this lost connection between linguistics on the one hand, and poetics and hermeneutics on the other, this could prove to be a most effective tool for integrating the speaking and thinking subject into the linguistic practice of contemporary Japan in general.

Native Studies and Hybrid Culture

In the foregoing I referred twice to Motoori Norinaga, once as a precursor of Watsuji Tetsurō in being a thinker involved with both cultural ethnocentrism and transnationalism, and again as a precursor of Tokieda Motoki as one of the creators of Japanese grammar studies. But in contrast with Tokieda, Norinaga was someone who consciously retained the original deep connections between the practice of grammar study (or, more broadly, hermeneutics) and poetic composition and other forms of linguistic activity. These two aspects that are visible in the one person of Norinaga seem to constitute an opposition between elements that are close to being incompatible. The first aspect has to do with fanatical fetishism, while the second advocates the free transposition of the power of imagination by way of the mirror of the poetry-making of old. From this perspective we encounter a Norinaga who seems like a god with two masks or faces.

This suggests that we must conduct our investigation by tracing our theme back not only to thinkers since the Meiji period but at least as far as Norinaga. In other words, the problem of the circumstance in which the subject is placed can be framed as follows: how words, which were once the living mirror, or the dramatic stage, of the symbolic transformation of the subject became empty fetishes lacking meaning, eventuating in a narcissistic fetishization of the subject and even violence or death (as seen in the case of Mishima Yukio).

Since this is not the place to go into the details of this kind of “archaeological” investigation of the subject and its crisis in modern Japan, I shall simply give a

rough outline of the important points of the argument. As Maruyama Masao* demonstrated in his well-known book on the history of Japanese political ideas, we cannot deny that Norinaga's Native Studies, in parallel with Ogyū Sorai's* studies of China, while keeping a certain distance from the ruling ideology of the Tokugawa system, to some extent pointed the way to the subject of the social reformation that aimed at the development of the modern nation-state. However, we also cannot deny that this came at the cost of the metaphorical transformation or transposition of the subject by way of the mirror of words or of different cultures. Norinaga's hermeneutical or grammatical research into the ancient literature of Japan was no doubt very fruitful, but it nevertheless came to involve a fanatical fetishistic purism or ethnocentrism, and because this was inherent in his research it was unable to bear further fruit, at least with respect to the layered aspects of culture.

Of supreme importance for Norinaga was the practice of composing *waka* as a way of deepening one's understanding of ancient literature and of participating in that world, and he himself composed numerous *waka* almost every day. But when it comes to the quality of those *waka*, leaving aside the ideological meaning inherent in them, the majority of them were merely second- or third-rate, especially in contrast with the richness of his hermeneutics. These *waka* are incapable of being a mirror in which the subject freely transforms and transposes the self, but can be nothing more than a meaningless fetish by way of which the subject tries in vain, narcissistically or even hysterically, to grasp the evidence of its own existence. Generally speaking, it seems that the *waka* composed by the Native Studies School since Norinaga have been equally plagued by this kind of defect or poor quality. Especially in the Native Studies School toward the end of the Edo period this tendency toward idolization and sterility became more and more pronounced (though this is not the place to discuss the *waka* composition in the far-right school of a much later period).

In any case what appears to be undeniable is this: that the subject of linguistic practice in Japan was already becoming susceptible to a certain rigidification in Norinaga's time (the mid-Edo period). In this period the subject in linguistic practice or communicative action began to fetishize itself and to lose its freedom of metaphorical transposition by way of the mirror of words (and of different cultures). This may be due in some measure to the fact that people began to lose their orientation toward productive creation and mythopoetic imagination, which were far more vital in the Muromachi period, as evidenced in linked poetry or 'Nō' drama.

Owing to this kind of idolization of the subject, or words, or the vain idling of the power of imagination and words, linguistic practice in the Native Studies School could never escape a kind of sterility. For example, Fujitani Mitsue* was able on the one hand to present an extremely elaborate theory regarding

the transposition of the poetic subject, but on the other hand the *waka* he composed were quite sterile and his interpretations of ancient *waka* remarkably stereotypical. Nor is there any evidence that his elaborate theory of *waka* and of the *waka*-composing subject actually provided any productive stimulus to contemporary *waka*-composers.

From the perspective of the practice of poetic composition, it seems that whereas the Native Studies of the Edo period was stuck in a kind of cul-de-sac, various other fields of linguistic practice in the broad sense were able to realize the freedom of the metaphorical transposition by way of the mirror of words mainly via the circuit of parodization. And so it was through mostly ignoring the serious spirit of Native Studies that linked poetry transformed itself into *haikai*, *waka* into “wild *waka* poetry”, and Nō drama into Kabuki theater.

What we should note here is that this kind of detour of parodization was the other side of the coin from a lively interest in different cultures, and that this interest in different cultures, being far from purism and ethnocentrism, by contrast positively affirms what we might call the hybrid character of culture. For example, we may recall that the full maturation of composing poetry in Chinese in the late Edo period, or the poetic compositions of Buson, were predicated on a multilayered “code” of literature that was rooted in various traditions both domestic and foreign, so that they required a corresponding decoding.

In this way the practice of linguistic-poetic composition at the end of the Edo period, and indeed of culture in the broad sense, on one hand clearly manifests symptoms of rigidification and sterility, and on the other evidences a full ripening or even symptoms of decadence. We might also note that when the Japanese suddenly began adopting western culture in the Meiji period, this came right at the point where the cycle of maturation and rigidification was about to complete itself. Under the rule of lower class samurai warriors of the past, who lacked both cultural distinction and sophistication, the spirit of dead seriousness was unexpectedly blessed with a stay of execution. However, in spite of that, or rather for that very reason, the practice of linguistic and especially poetic composition in Japan was obliged to undergo a painful struggle, in a blind search for new developments of (poetic) language after this period.

The danger of straying into a cul-de-sac and idolizing words and the subject of linguistic practice had always been there, and the fully ripened cultural practice since the Edo period had great difficulty finding its place in a culture influenced by the spirit of (classic) modern science, which by its nature is unfamiliar with such things as free transposition of the power of imagination. (This is probably why the work of figures like Kuki Shūzō* and Nagai Kafū, who found the basis of their own thinking and sensibility in the spirit of the decadence of nineteenth-century Edo Japan, takes on shades of irony when we look at them in their own context.)

Nor can philosophical thinking be divorced from this kind of critical circumstance. For example, Nishida's thought, which is extremely difficult to comprehend, and his style, which is deadly serious to the point of being suffocating, are emblematic of the vast distance that needs to be traversed in order to return to the foundation of the tradition of productive compositional or imaginative power in Japan.

On what kind of basis of linguistic or poetic compositional practice, on what kind of practice that in general has to do with community, would it then be possible in contemporary Japan to develop a truly free and productive subjectivity or mutual subjectivity?

[GB, AS]

FUJITA Masakatsu 藤田正勝 (1949–)

After finishing his undergraduate and doctoral course work at Kyoto University in 1978, Fujita Masakatsu spent a number of years in Bochum, Germany, where he earned a doctorate in 1982 with a dissertation on the early Hegel's philosophy of religion. After returning to Japan, Fujita continued his work on German idealism, while also increasingly turning his attention to modern Japanese philosophy, Nishida Kitarō* in particular. In addition to two monographs on Nishida's thought, Fujita has edited and contributed to numerous volumes, among them *The Philosophy of the Kyoto School* and *Japanese Philosophy in the World*. He is also a founding member of the "Forum on the History of Japanese Philosophy" and chief editor of its journal *Japanese Philosophy*, which began publication in 2000.

Fujita serves as the inaugural chair of the Department of the History of Japanese Philosophy at Kyoto University, which was established in 1996 as the only department in the country ever to specialize in Japanese philosophy. Under his leadership the primary focus of the department has been the formation and development of post-Meiji philosophy, in the course of which Japanese thinkers encountered and deeply engaged with western philosophy. At the same time, he has recognized the important role that the intellectual and cultural traditions of East Asia played, and will continue to play, in the formation of Japanese philosophy. This dual focus aims to maintain the legacy of Nishida Kitarō and the other philosophers associated with the Kyoto School while opening it to new horizons. These concerns are reflected in the following selection, where Fujita takes up the question of the sense and significance of Japanese philosophy.

[BWD]

THE QUESTION OF JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY

FUJITA Masakatsu 2000, 3–19

No sooner do we try to make an issue of "Japanese philosophy" than we run into several vexing problems. When a volume called *Japanese Philosophy* was added to the *Iwanami Lectures in Philosophy* in 1969, the editors, Furuta Hikaru and Ikimatsu Keizō, noted in their preface that they encountered a variety of controversial issues, starting with the very meaning of the term "Japanese philosophy." It is likely that one of the problems they saw appeared in a statement made by a contributor to the volume, Hashimoto Mineo:

If there is something misleading or dubious about the expressions "Japanese philosophy" and "Japanese metaphysics," it is that the word "Japanese" seems out of place. As we all know, "philosophy" is a discipline new to Japan that

came from the West in the Meiji era, a discipline that above all must in essence be universal. If “Japanese” is meant to emphasize something particular, exclusive, or even unique about philosophy in Japan, then the expression “Japanese philosophy” is a contradiction in terms. (HASHIMOTO Mineo 1969, 53)

If Hashimoto’s claim was meant to remind us of a history of nationalistic propaganda, promoting some “Japanism” or Japanistic philosophy, or of a trend to repeat this history, then it is persuasive enough. After all, we cannot be indifferent to the fact that such language was used to pave the way to war.

And yet there is another problem, fundamentally different from the issue of nationalism, with considering it a contradiction in terms to modify “philosophy” with the adjective “Japanese.” Certainly philosophy since its inception has rejected mythological views and ways of thinking in pursuit of “true knowledge” and “universal knowledge.” Indeed, philosophy *is* the search for universal principles. That philosophy searches for universal principles, however, does not mean that it is free of the limitations of the language it makes use of. Our thinking takes shape in the framework of our culture and traditions. Slippages in the meaning of words as well as cultural disparities in the ways of understanding their accumulated meanings undoubtedly affect the ways that the question of “true knowledge” is raised and answered. It is not without reason that we make distinctions between Greek philosophy, German philosophy, and Anglo-American philosophy, for example, or ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy. The mere use of the expression “Japanese philosophy” does not of itself constitute a contradiction in terms.

Aside from the question whether it is proper to modify philosophy with the adjective “Japanese,” it is possible to question whether philosophy ever really existed in Japan before its import from the West. Up to now a great many people have answered no, while others have argued to the contrary, as the Overview to Modern Academic Philosophy in this volume illustrates. The question persists as one still relevant problem concerning the expression, “Japanese philosophy.”

Another problem concerns the issue of the originality of Japanese philosophical thinking. Has it done no more than transmit and explicate foreign thought, as scholars such as Basil Hall Chamberlain contended? Writing in 1890, Chamberlain, who lived in Japan over three and a half decades, wrote that from his experience:

The Japanese have never had a philosophy of their own. Formerly they bowed down before the shrine of Confucius or of Wang Yangming. They now bow down before the shrine of Herbert Spencer or of Nietzsche. Their philosophers (so-called) have been mere expositors of imported ideas.

In a later edition, he added the comment:

The young professors who now are... founding a new school of thought known under the name of “culturalism” do little but repeat the ideas thought out by European philosophers, just as their fathers repeated Chinese ideas.⁶⁷

Karl Löwith was of like mind. Fleeing to Japan in 1936 to escape Nazi persecution, he taught at Tōhoku University in Sendai and while there published *European Nihilism*. In the Afterword to his readers in Japan Löwith uses a clever metaphor to state his views. Japanese philosophers, he writes, are like people living in a two-story house, filling shelves on the second floor with volumes and volumes of treatises on philosophers from the Greeks to the present day, while on the first floor they go on thinking and feeling like Japanese as usual. There is no staircase in sight that connects to the things that came from abroad (Karl LÖWITH 1948, 29–30). For Löwith, the frame of mind of such Japanese philosophers was obviously distinct from the “critical spirit” of European thinkers. He drove home the point that Japanese philosophers lacked the spirit that takes the alien things it encounters as distinct from indigenous things, and by comparing them is able to analyze things already there and let them evolve.

No doubt Löwith's point does have its merits, but the claim that the path Japanese philosophy took after the Meiji era completely lacked a tradition of criticism, and creative work based on it, is rather one-sided. Starting with Nishida Kitarō,* Tanabe Hajime,* Nishitani Keiji,* and others, we can find signs of an original thinking that, with a footing in eastern traditions, critically confronted western philosophy. And this thinking gradually evoked a great deal of interest from outside Japan.

Returning to the Source

One of the philosophers who has shown a deep interest in the thought of Nishida and Nishitani is Otto Pöggeler (1928–), professor emeritus of the University of Bochum in Germany, known for his studies of Hegel and Heidegger. When Nishitani's *Religion and Nothingness* was published in German translation in 1982, Pöggeler lost no time in taking up the book in one of his seminars. He came to Japan twice, and on the occasion of a visit in 1994 gave a lecture entitled “Ways from the West to Nishida and Nishitani” in Nishida's birthplace, Unoke in Ishikawa Prefecture. In that lecture Pöggeler acts as a partner in a dialogue that needs to take place between western philosophy and the philosophy of Nishida and Nishitani, and stresses the importance of this dialogue. Yet at the same time Pöggeler speaks of Japanese philosophers as being rather different in character from European philosophers. To wit, he

67. Basil Hall Chamberlain, *Things Japanese: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan* (Berkeley; Stone bridge Classics, 2007), 399.

says that European philosophers get the initially rather odd impression that the thinking of Japanese philosophers is strongly linked to religious traditions. Considering the situation in Europe where philosophy sought first of all to distinguish itself from religion, it seems quite natural to have this impression. But Pöggeler also says that one is not to think that what is understood by the terms “philosophy” and “religion” in Japan and in Europe is exactly the same, as closely related as their meanings are. Nishitani’s thinking, for example, is not a philosophy that easily lapses into pure reflection, or an ethics that simply issues into norms of behavior. It may be aimed toward religion, but the problems it deals with never call for a reversion to some traditional form of religion or its restoration. Rather, Pöggeler thinks, it means “holistic return to the source of life.” There is a big difference between religion in this sense and “religion” as understood in the West. Yet it is not what is called “philosophy” either. This was the strange impression that Pöggeler said he initially had in reading Nishida and Nishitani.⁶⁸

If, as Pöggeler remarks, the thinking of Japanese philosophers, in their attempt to return to the source of life, does not fit into the European categories of “religion” and “philosophy,” we may ask whether this implies a real limitation to their thinking. Is it the case that it lacks a “critical spirit” that takes the alien things it encounters as distinct from indigenous things, and by comparing them is able to analyze itself and evolve from there?

When Nishida Kitarō speaks of “pure experience,” for example, his intent is clearly to confront the western philosophy that would grasp all matters within a presupposed subject-object framework. The insight underlying the doctrine of pure experience is that the subject-object schema is nothing more than a “relative form” constructed once our immediate experience (the immediate presence of reality) is analyzed or broken down into parts. It is evident that the intent of Nishida’s doctrine of pure experience is to take a look at something prior to the construction of this “relative form.” Similarly, when Nishida explains the pure experience of seeing color or hearing sound as “prior to the addition of any judgment about what this color or this sound is” (NKZ 1: 34, 9), he is engaging in a critique of the traditional philosophical view of language according to which it is words that impart clarity to our muddled thoughts, and it is words that instantiate truth. By using the words “pure experience” Nishida is able to point to experience before it is modulated by words, that is, to the original amplitude that experience has before words diminish it. In its attempt to problematize the

68. Published as “Westliche Wege zu Nishida und Nishitani,” in Georg Stenger and Margarete Röhrig, eds., *Philosophie der Struktur. “Fahrzeug” der Zukunft?* (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 1995), 95–108.

very framework underlying the kind of knowing so thoroughly investigated by western philosophy, Nishida's thinking was radical to the utmost.

Knowing and Not Knowing in Eastern Thought

I would like to make two points regarding what has been said so far. First, we can already find in traditional eastern thought attempts that see a limitation in trying to grasp matters within a framework premised on "knowing." We find instead attempts to return to the roots of such knowing. The opening chapter of the *Laozi*, for example, says, "The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth; the named is the mother of all things." That is to say, naming things, comparing them and making distinctions is, to put it in a word, knowing itself, the foundation of our world, the mother that raises all things as her children. But the words of Laozi attempt to say that things that are named, or things that maintain the world of named things or that make this world possible, are originally nameless. Knowing is seen from the vantage point of what is prior to knowing, of what Laozi occasionally puts in the negative or refers to as the mysterious "dark" or 'nothingness'.

In Buddhism, too, we find a negation of the endeavor to grasp truth through knowing or in its framework. Case 19 of the 'kōan' collection *Mumonkan* or *Gateless Barrier*, for example, tells us that the 'Way' (meaning 'buddha nature' or our original mind) lies outside of both knowing and not knowing:

Zhaozhou asks Nanquan, "What is the Way?" "Ordinary mind is the Way," Nanquan answers. "Then should we direct ourselves toward it or not?" "If you try to direct yourself toward it, you run counter to it." "But if we do not try, how can we know that it is the Way?" Nanquan replies, "The Way does not belong to knowing or to not-knowing. Knowing is delusion; not-knowing is a blank. If you truly attain to the Way of no doubt, it is like the great void, so vast and boundless. How, then, can there be right and wrong in the Way?" At these words Zhaozhou was awakened.

Try to get a handle on the Way by knowing it, and it slips away. The known is no more than a fantasy, yet simply not knowing also falls short of self-awakening. In Zen one seeks to go beyond knowing or discriminating.

Nishida quotes Laozi in his 1934 essay, "The Forms of Culture of Classical East and West, seen from a Metaphysical Standpoint," and cites the *Mumonkan* in his final essay, "The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview," most likely in a manner not unrelated to the way he problematized the subject-object framework of knowing, and to the traditions of eastern thought we have discussed here. To be sure, it was not Nishida's intention simply to "repeat" tradition, as Chamberlain put it. While it is true that he is carrying on tradition, we may also say that he is persistently and critically confronting western philosophy

from a standpoint that made an issue of experience prior to the discrimination between subject and object.

The second point I would like to make is that Nishida's venture has something in common with the aim of many contemporary thinkers. In various ways contemporary philosophy has turned its attention to matters that philosophy heretofore remained blind to because of how its gaze was fixed. Jacques Derrida, for example, resisted the "logocentrism" and the "metaphysics of presence" of European philosophy, and sought to turn our attention to matters disparaged within that history and thrust into its background. This was an endeavor to problematize the "outside" of philosophy in tension with what was included "inside" it. In a conversation with Henri Ronsse, Derrida put it this way:

To "deconstruct" philosophy, thus, would be to think—in the most faithful, interior way—the structured genealogy of philosophy's concepts, but at the same time to determine—from a certain exterior that is unqualifiable or unnameable by philosophy—what this history has been able to dissimulate or forbid, making itself into a history by means of this somewhere motivated repression.⁶⁹

In a similar vein, the physical chemist and philosopher of science, Michael Polanyi, drew attention to the nonlinguistic knowledge or, as he called it, the tacit knowing that lies behind knowledge expressed in words. He gave several examples: the tacit perception involved in an experiment in which the subject with a word on the tip of his tongue received an electric shock and then unconsciously avoided uttering that word; the experiential knowledge at work when someone drives a car; and the knowledge of a skilled physician who from her experience is able to give an accurate diagnosis on the spot. There are a great many such cases of what Polanyi understands as tacit knowledge, and all draw attention to the free-form, nonlinguistic knowing in the background of objective knowledge expressible in words.⁷⁰

Nishitani Keiji's critique is also deeply concerned with the fact that this level of knowledge has been ignored in modern thought. In an essay, "On Practice," for example, Nishitani points out that the early-modern and modern eras "have shut out the level of knowledge in which the investigation of objects and the self-investigation of the subject form an undivided whole. "With regard to such knowledge, Nishitani speaks of "a knowing that combines into one the two directions, outward and inward, in distinction from the objective knowledge of the sciences that is directed solely outward." Comprehending things in this

69. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 6.

70. Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 8, 20.

manner of knowing means not only grasping objective things but at the same time knowing the self and thereby transforming oneself from the inside out. Nishitani notes that this knowing is always connected to the body, that is to action, and thus constitutes a “self-knowledge of the whole body-mind” (NKZ 20: 54).

Along these lines it is apparent that Nishida’s and Nishitani’s thinking attempts to question knowledge, not from within its own framework but from outside, from the very ground of that knowledge. As opposed to a philosophy that fundamentally means the working of knowledge, in other words, the founding of knowledge from its own standpoint, their thinking is an endeavor to tackle the same issue from the ground up, putting into question knowledge or the framework of knowledge itself.

Philosophy as Dialogue with the Other

Let us return to Pöggeler’s lecture once more. As we mentioned, rather than avoiding or rejecting Nishida’s and Nishitani’s thinking on account of its initially odd-seeming and alien character, Pöggeler recognizes that it is precisely this character that makes their thinking relevant for dialogue. It is precisely because the other is other that engaging in dialogue is so important. Pöggeler emphasizes the significance of the kind of dialogue that continually acknowledges the otherness of the other.

When we raise the question of “Japanese philosophy,” isn’t what counts not some contradiction in terms but rather a dialogue that proceeds from a recognition of such otherness? The expression *Japanese philosophy* is not meant to localize philosophy; rather it can be, and should be, understood as philosophy opened to a space of dialogue. The adjective “Japanese,” in other words, can be meant not to occlude our view but to open it to a space held in common. This leads us to the insight that Nishida Kitarō drove home when he raised the question of “Japanese culture.” “It will not do to esteem only Japanese things or the particularity of Japan in the world. True culture does not lie therein,” Nishida wrote (NKZ 13: 12). What he was pointing out is that Japanese culture is entering a global arena where it is defined by its place in the space of the entire world. The cultures of the East and those of the West, “by discovering deeper and stronger foundations than they had before, are both being cast in a new light” (NKZ 9: 91). Creative dialogue between sides alien to one another becomes possible only within such illumination.

Heidegger was someone deeply interested in the thinking of the East. He often spoke to companions of the affinity of his thinking with the thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi, and after the war when he began his work anew, he actually ventured a translation of *Laozi* into German together with a Chinese acquaint-

tance (unfortunately the endeavor was abandoned). Yet in one fundamental respect there is a big difference between Heidegger's attitude toward eastern thought and Pöggeler's.

In a conversation with *Der Spiegel* magazine in 1966, Heidegger looked back at the matter of his Nazi collaboration particularly while he was rector of Freiburg University from 1933 to 1934. (At his request, publication of the interview was withheld until after his death in 1976.) The interview ranged from the question of his support of National Socialism to the problem of technology linked to it. Heidegger understood the essence of technology—which was barely touched on in the course of the conversation—in terms of what he called *Gestell*. In the particular sense in which Heidegger uses this word, *Gestell* signifies the condition in which all things, including human beings, are forced into an all-encompassing linkage where their place is defined by utility. For Heidegger, the problem involving technology lies not merely in the destructive power that can bring about the ruin of all humankind (think of nuclear bombs, for example). Rather it consists mainly in the fact that things of all sorts are drawn into this *Gestell* or frame and come to be seen solely in connection with their utility. To put it differently, humans have been uprooted from the place—Heidegger uses expressions like “the earth” and “the homeland”—where they originally found their roots, and have become rootless weeds.

In the *Spiegel* interview Heidegger brings up something touched on in an earlier conversation with Hisamatsu Shin'ichi. In considering how the problem of technology can be overcome, he elaborates that he does not hold out any great hope that would come from a hasty reception of Zen Buddhism or other “eastern experiences of the world.” In his view, overcoming is possible only from out of the place where the problem arose, that is, only out of Europe. “Thinking is transformed only through a thinking that has the same origin and disposition,” Heidegger says.⁷¹

Pöggeler on the other hand rejects the idea that technology is localized, and emphasizes its universality. He tries to think through the problem it involves within a dialogue between East and West. It seems that Pöggeler, as well as philosophers like Heinrich Rombach who likewise have shown a deep interest in the thought of Nishida and Nishitani, belong to the generation after Heidegger. Are we not looking for just the kind of dialogue that Pöggeler and Rombach would conduct between East and West, that is, “an encounter with the other that allows its otherness”? What is important is that, in professing universality, the dialogue not end up merely chasing after the philosophy of foreign lands.

71. *Antwort, Martin Heidegger im Gespräch*, Günther Neske and Emil Kettering, eds. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1988), 107.

Learning to think for oneself, autonomously, by way of a positive dialogue that is not only aware of the particularities and the limitations of Japanese culture and thought, but also ascertains how various philosophical problems are addressed in different cultures and traditions—which of course are themselves each a particular—is this not what ultimately counts? When we modify “philosophy” with the adjective “Japanese,” we wish to place it within the range of a dialogue with the other, a dialogue that recognizes the otherness of the other.

[JCM]

Culture and Identity

Fukansai Habian

Mori Arimasa

Yagi Seiichi

Chūōkōron Discussions

Overcoming Modernity: A Symposium

Takeuchi Yoshimi

Karatani Kōjin

Culture and Identity Overview

Obviously there is much to admire and much to learn from the dazzling developments in western cultures where form belongs to being and taking form is seen as a good. But is there not something fundamental in the cultures of the East that have nurtured our ancestors for thousands of years, something beneath the surface that can see the form of the formless and hear the voice of the voiceless? I would like to attempt a philosophical grounding to the desire that drives our minds continually to seek this out. (NISHIDA Kitarō 1927, 255).

Ever since Socrates accepted the Delphic oracle's challenge to "know thyself," the issue of personal identity has been part of the western philosophical repertoire. That issue typically broke down into two fundamental questions. The first was one of individual identity: who am I? The second was one of universal identity: what characterizes our humanity? Only in recent history has the West added questions of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identity: for example, what does it mean to be French Canadian? Three circumstances have supported this rather new enterprise. The first is the rise of the social sciences, especially cultural anthropology, sociology, and linguistics. Next is the birth of nation-states and their search for ideological rationales for defining and uniting their people. And third, most recently, we have the philosophical reflection within identity politics and related academic studies of race, gender, ethnicity, colonialism, sexual orientation, and class. Into this mix we could also add questions about shared spiritual identity, especially as a cultural foundation for various social, political, and cultural institutions. Globalization and pluralism have heightened this interest in our personal identities as including a "we" that is more general than the individual "I," but more specific than the universal "humanity."

In modern Japan, we find a similar focus on the cultural or social character of personal identity. The present-day interest in this issue stems, in part, from conditions much like the western ones just mentioned. Japan began building its modern nation-state in the latter part of the nineteenth century and, about the same time, it introduced most western disciplines, including the social sciences,

into its universities. As Japanese intellectuals began to travel the globe, beginning in the latter nineteenth century, their feelings of otherness heightened an interest in reflecting on what makes Japan so different from the societies of Europe and North America. This concern for cultural identity subsequently intensified as it became interwoven with the militarist and jingoistic agendas of the late-nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries. In these respects, it is easy to see the causes for the Japanese interest in cultural identity as, if not the same, at least parallel to some recent western developments.

This is not the whole story, however, and we would run the risk of missing the deeper significance of these issues were we to treat them much as we would treat the parallel western phenomena. The Japanese case differs from the western in at least three ways. First, the interest in what it means to be Japanese has been more persistent and intense than we find in most western countries. In fact, since the 1980s, an intellectual movement or field has coalesced around the term *nihonjinron* or “theorizing Japaneseness,” a phenomenon engaging intellectuals and academics from various backgrounds and with a multitude of agendas. Some are flagrantly political, hoping to resurrect a belief in Japanese uniqueness and superiority submerged and repressed in Japan since 1945. Others engage the issues chiefly to debunk precisely the assumptions underlying that political agenda. They often attack the very idea of Japanese uniqueness, at least as a claim that Japan is more unique than any other culture. Thus, both the political right and left are part of the fray. Still others are more academically motivated, arguing for the need in Japan for an academic field of Japanese Studies analogous to, for instance, American Studies in the United States. These proponents argue for a more politically neutral interdisciplinary study of Japanese history, culture, language, and society. In the 1970s, when there were scores of programs in Japanese studies in Europe and the United States, there was not a single one in any major Japanese university, except for special programs aimed at foreigners studying in Japan. In sum: Japan’s interest today in cultural identity is complex. It engages disparate personalities, agendas, and scholarly perspectives.

A second notable difference between the modern Japanese and western treatments of cultural identity is how, in the Japanese case, it has attracted the analysis of some of the country’s most renowned thinkers. To appreciate their efforts, we need to understand the issue of cultural identity as a legitimate philosophical concern in its own right, independent of the social and historical forces we have been discussing. For many modern Japanese philosophers, the traditional western treatment of personal identity as reducible to discrete individual and universal identities is more than an interesting fact of western intellectual history; it also reveals a serious flaw in almost all traditional western philosophical anthropologies. Put starkly, these Japanese philosophers argue that western

philosophy has gotten it wrong in the very way it frames the question of “who am I?” This is a startling claim and, when well argued, worthy of the attention of thoughtful philosophers everywhere.

What exactly, according to these Japanese philosophers, is lacking in the typical western philosophical anthropologies? The answer varies among the individual philosophers, but one general theme recurs: between our universal humanity and our individual personality lies an equally important third dimension—our cultural identity. In it are the historical, linguistic, social, ethnic, political, spiritual, and moral facets of our being. The social sciences cover some of these, but the task of exploring the more humanistic issues falls to the philosophers. Yet, western philosophies typically either overlook this dimension entirely or reduce its significance to something tacked onto our individuality. We find this orientation at work when a philosopher says individuals get enculturated into their society; individuals contract socially to form a state; moral education leads the person from egoistic individualism to social interrelatedness; individuals are influenced by their external social, political, and historical conditions; and so on. Many modern Japanese philosophers have puzzled over this western tendency to compose the social and cultural out of the individual. After all, we do not come into this world as individuals; we are born familial—our survival as newborns depends on others. And the nature of those families varies in important ways across cultures. No individuals assemble to create the state, but rather, we are born into a state. And, again, the ideals and polity of the state vary from one country to the next. Even when people radically change or overthrow that state, the movement to do so begins within it. Nor is there an individual teacher who simply verbally communicates values to the unformed individual student. Instead, the child and teacher, from the very beginning, live out an inculturated relationship. Therefore, many Japanese philosophers argue the cultural is not added to the preexisting individual. Instead, the individual emerges as a particular distillation of the culturally embedded experience. To a great extent, the culture defines what *individuality* means. As Nishida Kitarō* put it famously in his *An Inquiry into the Good*:

It is not that there being the individual, there is experience; but rather that there being experience, there is the individual. The individual's experience is no more than a special province within experience at large. (NKZ 1: 24)

After Japanese philosophers had honed in on the problematic of western philosophical anthropologies, they asked a further question. They wondered how so many western philosophers could miss so obvious a point. On this issue, their analyses diverged. Some, like Tanabe Hajime* saw a flaw in logic: standard western logic allowed only universals and particulars, but left out the mediate dimension—the specific. Nishida Kitarō, by contrast, thought it a side effect of

the western tendency to see self-consciousness as the agent of an ego, instead of seeing the ego as a product of self-consciousness. Still others, such as Watsuji Tetsurō*, focused more on the flawed philosophical anthropology that ignored the ethical “betweenness of person and person” as essential to personal identity. Although the differences among the Japanese philosophers are not trivial, they share the goal of developing a corrective on the western understanding of cultural identity.

That such different Japanese thinkers could share common intuitions about the problem of identity itself suggests the existence of a cultural identity, a common framework within which their philosophies took form. This brings us to our third point of difference between the contemporary Japanese concern with cultural identity and that same concern in the West. The question, “What does it mean to be Japanese?” is not, like parallel questions in the West, a historically recent reflection. Japanese thinkers have periodically raised this question almost from the beginning of their recorded history. One likely reason is geographical. On one hand, as an isolated archipelago some one hundred miles from the East Asian mainland at its nearest point, Japan was not successfully invaded until 1945. Nor, until the modern period, did it ever significantly extend its boundaries beyond the archipelago. Because of its location, therefore, Japan enjoyed an extraordinarily long period of cultural autonomy. On the other hand, there have also been periods of intensive interaction with the outside world. With Korea and China, it did so intermittently since prehistoric times. With the West, the interaction was mainly in the sixteenth century, and then again, since the mid-nineteenth century. Therefore, although isolated enough to protect its sovereignty, Japan was by no means cut off from outside cultural influences. This granted the country’s intellectuals both the opportunity to reflect on such external influences as well as the luxury to debate and choose which elements should become part of Japanese culture and which rejected.

Given those unusual geographical and historical circumstances, it is not surprising that the Japanese have been so self-conscious about their cultural identity through the centuries. Most reflection on the meaning of Japaneseness has not been philosophical, of course, but it has often framed or influenced philosophical thinking. Thus a general question—for example, “how does language work?”—may lead to asking the specific question—“how does the Japanese language work?” Further, given its contacts with ideas and values of foreign cultures, it was perhaps unavoidable that Japanese thinkers would reflect on what is Chinese about China, Korean about Korea, western about the West, as well as Japanese about Japan. This heritage of analyzing cultural identity was, by this historical process, already well established in Japan long before the modern Japanese philosophers began their ruminations. It is understandable, then, that those thinkers would be stunned by the relative lack of interest

in this issue by the major philosophers of the West. So, they turned their own formidable skills to analyzing how and why this occurred and what new type of philosophizing might emerge from the interaction between western and Japanese philosophy.

By the process just explained, Japanese thinkers may link a variety of general questions about human identity to questions about specifically Japanese identity. Thus, a general philosophical inquiry into the nature of art can lead to particular questions about what is Japanese in Japanese art. General discussions of political theory can develop into a focus on distinctively Japanese forms of polity. A universal discussion of the relation between language and reality typically includes comments about the nature of the Japanese language in particular. How does the Japanese language link with reality to form truth? What is the Japanese relation between humanity and nature? And so forth.

A western reader might find this Japanese stress on its own cultural context to be frustratingly ethnocentric. Yet, from the Japanese point of view, it is the western tradition that is ethnocentric. Blind to the cultural milieu of thought and reflection, the western philosophers are susceptible to take what is true of their art, politics, or language to be universally valid for all art, politics, and language. In this section, we will look at a cluster of three of these components of Japanese identity: linguistic, political, and religious. These are not meant, of course, to be exhaustive of cultural identity. Gender issues, for example, are equally important and are addressed in a separate chapter of the *Sourcebook*. Nor can this brief section possibly do justice to the complexity in even just these three areas.

Yet, the domains of language, religion, and politics interact in interesting ways within the Japanese cultural tradition. Certainly, the interaction of religion and politics is a topic well known to western reflection, but the addition of language into the mix is perhaps not so common. Yet, in East Asia, we find at least as far back as Confucius the claim that if we use words correctly, the state will harmoniously run itself. In the case of religion and language, the prominence of esoteric Buddhism's mantric theories and the identification of Shinto values with ancient Japanese words in modern ideology both attest to a long-standing link between ideas religious and linguistic.

Although, as we will see, the three areas of language, politics, and religion are not always discrete in Japanese intellectual history, initially at least we will treat them separately. Moreover, not every writer discussed here is necessarily philosophical, but philosophers seldom think in a vacuum. Ideas and themes often come to them from a variety of historical and cultural situations. So, we want to begin with that broader cultural perspective. Let us first examine the linguistic dimension of Japanese identity.

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

In the history of any country, thinkers will commonly turn their attention at some point to the medium of philosophical expression: language. Probably the first philosopher to do this rigorously in Japan was Kūkai*. Many philosophical traditions worldwide think of language as an external connector linking speaker to listener, writer to reader, thinker to world. Kūkai associated that view of language as referring to reality with the *exoteric* way of thinking, knowing, and expressing. More profound, he claimed, was the *esoteric* modality. In his model, language does not so much *refer to* reality, but instead, *confers with* it. Seeing the foundation of language as voice and of voice as vibration, his view of language—based in the mantra—emphasized that voiced language is true or false depending on how well it resonates with the rhythms or vibrations in things. Thus, mantras or “truth words” are sounds that harmonize with reality. This theory was by no means Kūkai’s own. He learned it in China while studying with his esoteric Buddhist master and the idea ultimately traces back to the mantra traditions of India. For Kūkai, it should be noted, this was explicitly a general theory of language and had no particular relevance to anything distinctive in the Japanese language. However, as subsequent Japanese thinkers began to reflect more specifically on their own native language, they drew on this basic model of conference rather than reference, vocalization rather than literacy, and language as participating in a situation rather than pointing to an independently existing reality.

If the important distinction for Kūkai was exoteric versus esoteric language, in Japanese culture at large the distinction between Chinese and Japanese began to assume increasing importance. To understand this distinction and the issues it raised, let us consider some basic ways the two languages functioned in Japanese history. Before contact with the mainland, the Japanese had no writing system. When Chinese entered the country, therefore, most intellectuals and members of the social elite simply learned Chinese as the vehicle for writing and reading. Thus, Chinese served for literacy while Japanese continued to have an oral use that could not be written. The first serious attempts to develop a writing system for Japanese began only at the outset of the eighth century and a fully functional and reasonably expeditious system did not appear until the beginning of the next century. Since Chinese was the only orthography known to the Japanese, they developed a writing system using Chinese characters or sinographs for basic meanings and highly abridged parts of these characters (*kana*) to serve phonetic functions. The latter were critical because Chinese does not inflect its verbs, which in Japanese designate not only tense but also affect and the relative social status between speaker and listener. Furthermore, Japanese uses postpositional particles (the so-called *te-ni-o-ha*) to serve not

only a function similar to English prepositions and case distinctions, but also to reflect the attitude of the speaker.

The result of this writing process is that even in reading a modern Japanese sentence, one can visually have the impression that what is borrowed from Chinese is usually written with sinographs and what is native to Japan is usually written in *kana*. This would be as if in English we wrote Anglo-Saxon-derived words in one font and those from Latin or Greek in another, even within the same sentence. This gives some Japanese the feeling (not supported by modern scientific linguistics) that their ordinary language is really two languages, one derived from Chinese and the other from an indigenous language. The latter is sometimes considered remnants of the ancient Japanese Yamato people, and some scholars throughout history have attempted to reconstruct that ancient language of Yamato words. At various points in Japanese history, philosophers have made much of this purported distinction. Significantly, when they bifurcate the Japanese language into two sublanguages—the borrowed and the native—it is the latter that most directly represents what Kūkai extolled as the spiritually profound aspects of human expression: sound, affect, and responsiveness within context.

An early site for discussing the power and importance of purportedly native Japanese words was in the poetic tradition. For more than thirteen centuries, Japanese poetry has been composed in either Chinese or Japanese. As this separation became canonized in formal anthologies separating the two, a special aesthetic developed around what is distinctive about using the “ancient Japanese” poetic language. For example, in his *Essentials of Poetic Composition*, Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241) gave the following advice (including the parenthetical annotations) to aspiring poets:

In the expression of the emotions, originality merits the first consideration. (That is, one should look for sentiments unsung by others and sing them.) The words used, however, should be old ones. (The vocabulary should be restricted to words used by the masters of the *Three Anthologies*:¹ the same words are proper for all poets, whether ancient or modern.)... The style should imitate the great poems of the masters of former times.... One should impregnate one’s mind with a constant study of the forms of expression in ancient poetry.... There are no teachers of Japanese poetry. But they who take the old poems as their teachers, steep their minds in the old style and learn their words from the masters of former times—who of them will fail to write poetry? (FUJIWARA no Teika, 1222, 493–4 [203–4])

The Native Studies movement, beginning in the early eighteenth century,

1. [The reference is to a collection of ancient and medieval Japanese poetry.]

brought a philological lens to these issues, trying to articulate more clearly what distinguishes Japanese from the other languages they knew. A founder of the movement, Kamo no Mabuchi* (1697–1769), responded to a critic:

The same person went on, “This country, though, has no writing of its own. Instead, we use Chinese characters and through these are able to know about everything.” My response was that first of all, it goes without saying that China is a troublesome and poorly governed country. To give a specific example, there are the characters in the form of pictures. When we look at the characters that someone has put forth as just the ones necessary for ordinary use, they amount to some 38,000. To describe a single flower, for example, one needs to use different characters for blooming, scattering, pistil, plant, stem, and more than ten other things. Moreover, there are characters that are used in the name of a specific country or place, or for a particular type of plant, but are used nowhere else. Could people remember so many characters even if they tried? Sometimes people make mistakes with characters, and sometimes the characters change over time, leading to disputes over their usage; they are burdensome and useless.

In India, though, using fifty characters, they have written and passed down over five thousand volumes of Buddhist texts.... There seem to have been some kind of characters in our Imperial Land as well, but after the introduction of Chinese characters, this original writing sunk wrongly into obscurity, and now only the ancient words remain. Although these words are not the same as the fifty sounds of India, they are based on the same principle in that fifty sounds suffice to express all things.... In Holland they have twenty-five characters, in this country there are fifty, and, in general, characters are like this in all countries. Only China concocted a cumbersome system, so things are disorderly there and everything is troublesome.... It is unspeakably foolish not to recognize how despicable this development was and to think only that Chinese characters are something splendid. (KAMO no Mabuchi 1765, 12–13 [247–8])

Acting on such assumptions, Mabuchi tried to reconstruct the voiced ancient Japanese language by studying the oldest recorded texts written in Japanese, especially the poems preserved in the eighth-century compilation, *Man'yōshū*. His student Motoori Norinaga* (1730–1801) was even more fervent in trying to recover the ancient language. His lifetime fixation on the enterprise sprung from the idea that, through the language and the ancient texts, he could somehow re-engage the “ancient ‘Way’” of the Japanese before Chinese elements entered the culture. Although he went beyond his master in this enterprise, he felt his work was a logical extension of what Mabuchi had taught:

Mabuchi said that if you wish to learn the ancient Way, then you should first study the poetry of ancient times, and compose poems in the ancient style.

Then you should study the writings of ancient times, write prose in that style, thoroughly learning the ancient terminology, and then carefully read '*Kojiki*' and '*Nihon shoki*'. If you are ignorant of ancient terminology, you will not comprehend the thought of ancient times; and if you do not know the thought of ancient times, you cannot know the ancient Way. This was his principle and he consistently taught it to me. (MOTOORI Norinaga 1798, 17 [475])

The Native Studies obsession with the special quality of the ancient Japanese language became increasingly intermixed with the nationalistic and racialized rhetoric of the militarist agenda in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It became an ideological premise of Japanese ethnocentrism that the “original” Japanese language was the language of the deities, that the words contained a spirit of their own called '*kotodama*' and that their sounds in turn resonated with the spirit of the ancient Japanese people. By this route, the Japanese language itself, especially in its reconstructed ancient form, became inextricably associated with Japanese identity, becoming an ideological pillar supporting the modern Japanese nation-state. The following is a short excerpt from an infamous document issued by the Ministry of Education in 1937 called *Fundamentals of the Kokutai*. Over two million copies were printed and used as the focus of schoolroom lessons, community discussion groups, and cited at various public affairs. Although given a Yamato-language reading, many of the terms—“true words,” “spirit of words,” the accord among “thought/word/deed,”—are all reminiscent of Kūkai’s discussion of esoteric language. In that respect, the analysis of language had come full circle, except for one critical difference. Whereas Kūkai applied his theory to language in general, the *Fundamentals* valorized specifically the Japanese language, treating it as unique.

Our nation’s ideology of *kotodama* has its basis in this fact; words that are not liable to be put into practice are shunned and not uttered. This is the sincerity of the human heart. *Kotodama* means language that is filled with sincerity, and such language possesses mighty movement. In other words, it possesses limitless power and is comprehensible everywhere without limitation. This is what is meant in the *Man’yōshū* by Japan’s being “a land to which *kotodama* brings good fortune...” Thus, sincerity is found in the fundamental principle of the word able to become the deed. There is no room for self in sincerity. All of oneself must be cast aside in speech, for it is in the deed and in the deed alone that sincerity is to be found, and there only that sincerity shines forth. (from Roy Andrew MILLER 1982, 133–4)

The close link between the Japanese language and Japanese identity has often been held so firmly that one might wonder whether anyone but a Japanese could or should learn the language. And if foreigners were to learn Japanese, why and how should they be taught? In 1978 a new organization, with the back-

ing of the Japanese Ministry of Education, addressed this issue. It was called the “Scholarly Association for Education in the Language of Japan.” The word for “language of Japan” (*nihongo*) is used when teaching the language to foreigners and is distinguished from “the language of our country” (*kokugo*) when the language is taught to native Japanese. The latter term is used for “Japanese” in Japanese-Japanese dictionaries, for example. To inaugurate the new organization, Suzuki Takao (1926–), one of the most prominent linguists in Japan, delivered the keynote address “Why Teach the Language of Japan to Foreigners?” He tried to explain why he believed the intrinsic values of the Japanese language would be important for non-Japanese:

What I really want to say is that, in actual fact, the time is now already past when we Japanese should remain passive, and simply continue to teach our language to the foreigners because they implore us to do so. Rather, I wish to advance toward the conclusion that it is in truth a misfortune for any member of the human race to go to the grave ignorant of the Japanese language—this is the concept that we hope to spread among foreigners....

The nation of Japan... is one in which religious ideology has always been quite shallow. We Japanese have been a docile race. We have not developed ideologies or principles that explicitly define things in definite terms. We have lacked a messianic urge, the ideological strength to spread our ideas aggressively in other countries. For us Japanese now to found a new religion, something that we could spread throughout the entire world, would be a task requiring enormous time; nor are the other usual possibilities for extending our influence abroad any more feasible. What we must do, therefore, is to make a religion of the language of Japan. We must think of the Japanese language as the Language of Japan Creed, and spread this new religion of the language of Japan throughout the nations of the earth. (from Roy Andrew MILLER 1982, 255, 290)

Of course, not all Japanese who esteem their native tongue share Suzuki’s evangelical zeal to proselytize the “Language of Japan Creed.” Still, many Japanese literary figures with knowledge of western languages have expressed what they think is special about their native tongue. A typical example is the following passage comparing Japanese and English by the eminent essayist and novelist, Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1886–1965).

In the English manner of writing, the meaning becomes clear, but at the same time it becomes limited and shallow.... We Japanese do not make such useless effort, but use those words which allow sufficient leeway to suggest various things, and supplement the rest with sensible elements such as tones, appearance of letters, rhythms, etc.... of the sentence.... The sentence of the westerner tries to restrict its meaning as narrowly and detailed as possible

and does not allow the smallest shadow, so that there is no room at all for the imagination of the reader. (cited in KAWASHIMA Takeyoshi 1967, 263)

What literary figures saw as a virtue of their language has not always been so highly valued by Japanese with philosophical or scientific interests, however. Consider the case of the philosopher and Buddhism scholar, Nakamura Hajime* (1911–1999). As a comparative historian of thought across cultures, Nakamura was curious about why certain kinds of logical thinking did not develop very well in Japan, even when introduced from outside.

As often pointed out by linguists, the forms of Japanese sentences stress emotive over cognitive factors. Japanese expressions are more oriented to sensitive and emotive nuances than logical exactness. Without expressing precisely and accurately the various modes of being, Japanese is satisfied with merely vague, typological expressions. Nouns have no clear distinction between singular and plural, nor a distinction between genders. No articles are used and verbs do not distinguish person or number. In these respects, Japanese resembles Chinese.

But what is different from classical Chinese, giving Japanese its distinctive atmosphere, is the so-called *te-ni-o-ha*, the postpositional particles. Corresponding to case declensions or prepositions in other languages, these particles not only express cognitive, logical relations, but also, to some degree, delicate nuances of emotion. Appearing amidst all kinds of words and sentences, just because of their logical ambiguity, these auxiliary parts of speech emphasize some specific meaning, evoke our attention to some subjective aspects of things, distinguish subtleties of feeling, or express rich overtones of meaning. Japanese also has an abundance of auxiliary verbs whose complex usage shows the language is peculiarly sensitive in its grasp of emotion.

The original Japanese language, as clearly revealed in its classical literature, had a rich vocabulary of words denoting aesthetic or emotional states of mind, but notably lacked a vocabulary denoting intellectual or inferential thought processes. Its words, for the most part, were concrete and intuitive without the easy ability to construct abstract nouns.... When Buddhism and Confucianism came to Japan and philosophical thinking developed, the vocabulary for philosophical thought was entirely Chinese, written the same way, but pronounced differently....

Now, western philosophical ideas are widespread in Japan, but they are expressed mostly in words coined by connecting two Chinese characters, which are then, by convention, made to correspond to the traditional Occidental concepts. The words *gainen* and *risei*, for instance, are the present-day Japanese terms for “concept” (*Begriff*) and “reason” (*Vernunft*). Sometimes such philosophical words are constructions of even three or four Chinese characters. The native, archaic Japanese language has never been able to serve as a medium for expressing philosophical concepts.... In contrast, although

their medieval clerics did their philosophical thinking in Latin, in modern times, the Germans constructed their philosophical systems by means of the German language alone. This change can be traced back even to Eckhart in the Middle Ages. Yet, even now, no one in Japan expresses philosophy in purely original Japanese words. We are, therefore, forced to conclude that Japanese has not been as fit for philosophical thinking as Sanskrit or Greek was or as German seems to be. (NAKAMURA Hajime 1964, 531–3)

Nakamura was no linguistic determinist, however, and he believed that if the Japanese, in order to adapt better to contemporary technological and philosophical circumstances, wanted to modify their language, they certainly could do so. In 1967 he wrote the following:

Of course, one cannot deny the possibility that one actually can express oneself as clearly in Japanese as in any other language. I understand there is a theory of language that stresses the cultural conditioning of thought-patterns rather than linguistic determinism. Certainly, the Japanese *esprit* should not be overlooked in this regard....

The Japanese people can develop logic if they seriously try to do so in the right way.... It is important that the Japanese as a nation develop the skills and linguistic tools for logically precise thinking. We cannot predict what will happen in the future, but industrialization is progressing very rapidly in today's Japan. Yet, that does not seem to be changing the above-mentioned features of the language very much or very easily.... It is perhaps natural that the Japanese do not want to lose their traditional aesthetic and empirical attitude. (NAKAMURA Hajime 1967, 191, 195)

Not only philosophers, but scientists as well, have pointed out difficulties of abstract thinking in a Japanese cultural and linguistic context as well as the Japanese hesitation to fundamentally change the situation. As Yukawa Hideki (1907–1981) wrote in 1959, ten years after receiving his Nobel Prize in physics:

The Japanese mentality is, in most cases, unfit for abstract thinking and takes interest merely in tangible things. This is the origin of the Japanese excellence in technical art and the fine arts. The unconscious recognition of their own defect in abstraction seems to drive the Japanese to the uncritical adoration and the unconditional adoption of the religious and philosophical systems brought in from the outside. Such a task is relatively easy for the high-level Japanese intellect. But, in these systems, only the elements familiar to the Japanese clime are assimilated, and the unfamiliar ones are left unappreciated. Thus, existing conditions remain untouched and unchanged, ensuring the conspicuous stability of traditional elements. The abstract mode of thinking will continue to be foreign to the Japanese. And to them any rational system of thought, generally speaking, will not be more than something mystical, satisfying their intellectual curiosity. (YUKAWA Hideki 1959, 56–7)

Given the Japanese resistance to changing their language and style of thinking, if Japanese philosophers followed Nakamura's advice and pushed their native language to make it more suitable to theoretical and abstract thinking, would that language still seem "Japanese" to most people? This is the issue at stake in the following little exchange. Kobayashi Hideo (1902–1983) was one of Japan's most famous literary critics and a founder of the influential magazine *Literary World*. Nishitani Keiji* (1900–1990) was a disciple of Nishida and a prominent Kyoto School philosopher in his own right.

Kobayashi: For example, your paper and that of Yoshimitsu² are most difficult to understand. To put it in the extreme, they have none of the sensuality of the Japanese language. We have the sense that Japanese philosophers really care very little for the fact that fate has given them a native language to write in. However conscientious and logical one's expression, it seems to me that beyond merely using the traditional Japanese language, the style should possess the flavor that only a Japanese can give it. This is something that those of us in literature are always conscious of in our work.... But on this point the philosophers are extremely nonchalant. I do not see any way for reviving the philosophy in Japan as truly Japanese philosophy if this problem is not surmounted. What do you think about this?

.....

Nishitani: For those engaged in philosophy... it is extraordinarily difficult to step into a current flowing from the West and express ourselves with only our given Japanese language. One must not force things on the language, but at the same time one must be able to make oneself understood, and this means trying to express ourselves naturally in Japanese by forging a new language. Really, there is no time to bother writing in a way that the general Japanese readers can easily understand. To be frank, we feel as if we are writing for western intellectuals, but at the same time we want to take our thought further than westerners have been able to go. More important than worrying about whether we are making ourselves understood is breaking through the deadlocks that people over there have landed themselves in. For the present, I do not see any other way to forge ahead. (OM, 230, 248)

Another Kyoto School philosopher, Ueda Shizuteru* (1926–), sheds further light on this issue of language and philosophizing. The first wave of Japanese philosophers in the modern era read widely in philosophy, often in multiple languages. Ueda's generation, however, included some who not only read west-

2. [Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko (1904–1945) was a prominent Catholic philosopher known for his outline of Catholic ethics and his diffusion of the thought of Augustine and medieval scholasticism.]

ern languages, but also wrote in them. In Ueda's case this led him to think about how philosophizing assumes linguistic form in different languages.

Writing in German was by far less natural for me than writing in Japanese. It made me discipline myself to look carefully at a given matter, thinking it through until I could express it at my level of German. That is, I had to analyze it into its component parts in order to express it in a way that was different from, but not inferior to, how I would say it in Japanese. For me, this was more a matter of training myself in how to look at things than it was a matter of training myself in German. In later years, I would have many occasions to write in German, but when doing so, I first let the matter at hand be situated in a position *between* Japanese and German (as a kind of *Vor-sache*...). Then it could be expressed clearly in German or in Japanese, depending on which language I was writing in. This is not to say that what became clear in German always coincided with what became clear in Japanese. They could at times be different, but not completely different. Though each in its own way achieved a clarity, there remained a surplus in the intervening space of the *Vor-sache*. It was there that the clarities of German and the clarities of Japanese reverberate against one another and intermingle. (UEDA Shizuteru 2001, 386–7)

In our discussion of the linguistic dimension of Japanese identity, we have already seen extensive overlaps with our two other main topics: politics and religion. Let us turn now to the former.

POLITICAL IDENTITY

Being Japanese means, at least in part, being a member of the Japanese state. In considering how Japanese political identity evolved, we will focus on a few key moments in that development. We cannot here do a detailed survey of the whole history of Japanese political thought, but we can highlight some representative ideas of special interest to Japanese political philosophy.

A logical place to begin is with the *Seventeen-Article Constitution*, the full text of which appears in the Prelude to this volume. Associated with the legends surrounding the iconic figure of Prince Shōtoku (574–622), tradition dates it at 604. Many scholars today doubt both the authorship and the date. Yet, even if the attributions are wrong, the Japanese did not question their truth from the early eighth century until just recently. So, throughout almost all their history, the Japanese have considered the *Constitution* to be the political foundation of Japan. The document itself is not conspicuously philosophical, but it does draw on the two intellectual traditions most important to the Chinese Sui Dynasty of the time: Confucianism and Buddhism. Its primary value for later Japanese political thought is the way it interlaced Confucian ideals of society and gov-

ernance with Buddhist devotion and psychology. In drawing on two traditions instead of one, it served as a syncretistic paradigm for justifying state polity.

Shōtoku and his aunt, the empress Suiko, came to power through a series of wars and political assassinations among various kinship groups, many of immigrant origin. The *Constitution* urged “harmony” among the factions. The means for doing this was to recognize a central authority, to nurture Confucian-inspired modes of appropriate behavior, and to advocate Buddhist introspection for controlling emotions and quieting the ego.

The *Constitution* lacked any direct reference to the tradition of heavenly deities or *kami* as the source of the imperial family. Yet, that association was probably already part of the mythic heritage. In any case, by the early eighth century, the two chronicles, *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, standardized the mythic narratives of creation. They explained that the celestial deities created Japan, and that the sun goddess, ‘Amaterasu’, is the ancestral source of the imperial family. We see this interpretation developed fully, for example, in the medieval *Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns* (1339–1343) by the medieval scholar and political figure, Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354). He went beyond merely claiming the imperial line’s descent from the celestial deities. He also claimed the sun goddess would ensure that the imperial succession, despite historical anomalies, would prevail in its purity.

It has simply been my intent to discuss some of the principles behind the fact that there has been no disruption of the legitimate line of imperial succession from the time of the age of the gods. Our country is the divine land, and thus the succession has been followed in accordance with the will of Amaterasu Ōmikami. Nevertheless, when sovereigns within that succession have made errors, their reigns have been brief. Although the succession invariably returns to its direct course, there have been temporary aberrations. These aberrations, however, have always been the fault of the individual sovereigns themselves and have not occurred because of any failing in divine aid. (KITABATAKE Chikafusa 1343, 124 [173])

The Edo or Tokugawa period (1600–1868) experienced a revitalized form of Confucian thought, importing from the continent new or renewed Confucian ideals for governance. The new theories left one idea untouched, however: the mythic, divine family model continued to justify the reign of the imperial dynasty. In contrast with China, the Japanese Confucians did not hold imperial rule subject to a higher principle, the ‘will of heaven’. Without that stipulation, there could never be a philosophical justification for overthrowing the imperial family and establishing a new dynasty. Yet this prohibition against deposing the sovereign did not give the emperor absolute power. In fact, with only a few short-lived exceptions, from at least the late ninth century, the Japanese emperor

did not rule, but merely reigned. When the Tokugawa shōgun assumed political control in the seventeenth century, they took pains to maintain the conceit that they were governing on behalf of the emperor, asserting that they were merely attending to the mundane affairs not befitting the dignity of his august majesty. Regardless of who was actually ruling the country, however, a clear political ideology for the state would still have its uses. The issue was no longer justifying the imperial line, but instead, developing a rationale for how best to rule. The Tokugawa Confucian philosophers rose to the occasion. A key concept for them was that the state should follow the Way as defined by the classic virtues of the Confucian tradition going back to the ancient Chinese sage kings. As Ogyū Sorai* (1666–1728) wrote:

The Way is a comprehensive name. It refers to everything that the early kings established, especially the rites, music, penal laws, and administrative institutions. The Way embraces and designates them all. There is not something called “the Way” apart from their rites, music, penal laws, and system of government. The Way can, therefore, be called a comprehensive term. (OGYŪ Sorai 1737A, 41–2 [172–3])

The Native Studies political philosophers agreed with the Confucians that the foundation of the state should be the ancient Way. For them, however, it certainly could not be the foreign way of the ancient Chinese sage kings. Japan was a divine nation and its Way was that of the Shinto deities and the rule of their descendants, the imperial family. In this political model, we find Shinto thought trying to dominate the Chinese-based philosophies by co-opting their key political term “the Way,” Way and redefining “heaven” to mean the realm of the celestial deities. For the Native Studies political philosophers, the “Way” was not that of Daoist naturalism nor Confucian sagely virtues. Rather, it was the “ancient Way” of the Japanese from the age of the deities at the dawn of creation. Motoori Norinaga summarizes this point as follows:

What is the Way? It is not the Way that arises spontaneously in nature. Neither is the Way man-made. It came about by the awesome spirit of the god Takami-musubi. The Way was begun by the ancestral gods Izanagi and Izanami. The Way was inherited and maintained by the sun goddess, who then transmitted it. This is why it is called the Way of the gods. (MOTOORI Norinaga 1771, 57 [35–6])

Rather than pitting these two traditions against each other, some philosophers of the later Mito School at the end of the eighteenth century forged a synthesis of sorts. Aizawa Seishisai (1782–1863), for example, argued that revering the emperor would, firstly, ensure Amaterasu’s blessings on the state. Gratitude toward those blessings would, in turn, spontaneously produce the

Confucian virtues—such as loyalty and ‘filial piety’—needed for a harmonious state. Should we ever lose our way, Aizawa believed that appreciatively basking in the divine illumination of the sun, the goddess Amaterasu, would be enough to bring us back to the correct path.

Thus, I have dared to propose what the country should rely on. The first section deals with our ‘*kokutai*’, in which connection I call attention to the establishment of our nation by the loyalty and filial piety of our divine forebears....

.....

When the heavenly progenetrix, the sun goddess Amaterasu, handed down the divine regalia, she took the treasured mirror and, giving her benediction, said: “Looking at this is like looking at me.” Bearing this in mind, countless generations have revered the mirror as the divine embodiment of the heavenly progenetrix. Her holy son and divine grandson looked into the treasured mirror and saw in it a reflection. What they saw was the body bequeathed to them by the heavenly progenetrix. And looking at it was like looking at her. Thus, while reverently worshipping her, they could not help feeling an intimate communion between the gods and men. Consequently, how could they not but revere their ancestors, express their filial devotion, respect their own persons [as something held in trust], and cultivate their own virtue? Even so, as the love between parent and child deepens, the quintessence of the debt of gratitude becomes fully manifest....

But how is it that these superlative teachings are preserved without being propagated in words, and how is it that the people practice them daily without being conscious of them? Because the heavenly progenetrix resides in heaven and beams majestically on the earth below, so heaven’s descendant below manifests to the utmost his sincerity and reverence in order to repay his debt to the heavenly ancestor. Religion and government being one, all the heavenly functions that the sovereign undertakes and all the works that he performs as the representative of heaven are means of serving the heavenly forebear. By revering the ancestor and reigning over the people, the sovereign becomes one with heaven. Therefore, that his line should endure as long as heaven endures is a natural consequence of the order of things. (AIZAWA Seishisai 1825, 10, 18, 20 [622–4])

The synthesis of Shinto and Confucianism envisioned by thinkers like Aizawa helped support the successful movement to overthrow the shōgun and restore imperial rule in 1868. In Aizawa’s passage we find reference to the *kokutai*—the “state’s body” or “country’s essence”—a philosophical term that would be increasingly important in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The term may refer to a form of polity (which some claim is unique to Japan, others not), to the person of the emperor himself, or to the (Japanese) people collectively

as having a national identity. Fukuzawa Yukichi* (1835–1901) at one point even said it was the Japanese equivalent to what the West calls “nationalism.”

We will examine this concept in more detail below. First, let us take up another controversial point in Aizawa’s analysis: the theory that “religion and government are one.” The issue became crucial with the approval of the first modern Japanese constitution, the Meiji Constitution of 1889. The first three articles affirm the unbroken line of emperors “for ages eternal” and state that the emperor is “sacred and inviolable.” Controversy arose around the interpretation of the fourth, fifth, and sixth articles:

Article 4. The Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercises them, according to the provisions of the present Constitution.

Article 5. The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet.

Article 6. The Emperor gives sanction to laws, and orders them to be promulgated and executed.

To some monarchists, this sounded too democratic and western. It seemed to imply that the emperor must submit to the constitution and to elected officials, rather than be himself the ground out of which the constitution and all law arises. A political activist, Kita Ikki (1883–1937) vehemently opposed this reading, lashing out at the insinuation of democracy into divine rule. In 1919 he wrote the following.

There is no scientific basis whatsoever for the belief of the democracies that a state governed by representatives voted in by the electorate is superior to a state with a system of government by a particular person. Every nation has its own national spirit and history.... The “democracy” of Americans derives from the very unsophisticated theory of the time, which held that society can come into being through a voluntary contract based on the free will of individuals; these people, emigrating from each European country as individuals, established communities and built a country. But their theory of the divine right of voters is a half-witted philosophy that arose in opposition to the theory of the divine right of kings at that time.

Now Japan certainly was not founded in this way, and there has never been a period in which Japan was dominated by a half-witted philosophy. Suffice it to say that the system whereby the head of state has to struggle for election by a long-winded self-advertisement and by exposing himself to ridicule like a low-class actor seems a very strange custom to the Japanese people, who have been brought up in the belief that silence is golden and modesty is a virtue. (KITA Ikki 1919, 294 [963])

Kita believed the emperor should take full control of government, dissolve

the Diet (Parliament), and launch a socialist revolution on behalf of the farmers and impoverished workers. In short: Kita was both an imperial loyalist and a socialist. He was above all a man of action and joined an attempted coup d'état in 1936. The rebels stormed the imperial palace, killing several political leaders. Although he and his accomplices claimed to be acting to restore the true power of the emperor, the emperor did not appreciate the assassination of his advisers and Kita was executed.

Contrary to Kita's hopes, the coup strengthened the militarists' control of the country in the name of national security. Ideologically, the meaning of *kokutai* became an issue of increasing ideological focus and a rallying cry of the nationalists and ethnocentrists. In 1937, the Ministry of Education issued the previously quoted "Fundamental Principles of the *Kokutai*" (*Kokutai no hongī*). With regard to the issues at hand, it said:

Our country is established with the emperor, who is a descendant of Amaterasu Ōmikami, at its center, as our ancestors as well as we ourselves constantly have beheld in the emperor the fountainhead of her life and activities. For this reason, to serve the emperor and to receive the emperor's great august will as our own is the rationale of making our historical "life" live in the present; and on this is based the morality of the people.

Loyalty means to revere the emperor as our pivot and to follow him implicitly. By implicit obedience is meant casting ourselves aside and serving the emperor intently. To walk this Way of loyalty is the sole Way in which we subjects may "live" and the fountainhead of all energy. Hence, offering our lives for the sake of the emperor does not mean so-called self-sacrifice but the casting aside of our little selves to live under his august grace and the enhancing of the genuine life of the people of a state. (Ministry of Education 1937, 34–5 [80])

Most discussion about national identity during this period was more tentative and unabashedly political, rather than philosophical. Yet, given the importance of the concepts and the pressures of the time, it is not surprising that many of Japan's more renowned philosophers weighed in on the issues and, indeed, were often asked to do so by the media and by official national organizations. Two of the most prominent philosophers to be involved were Inoue Tetsujirō* (1855–1944) and Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945). We start with the former. Inoue was the most famous philosopher in Japan around the turn of the twentieth century. When the *Imperial Rescript on Education* appeared in 1890, it established the official state ideology for the education of children. Children should revere the divine origins of the imperial line and of the Japanese nation. Furthermore, teachers should instill in their pupils not only a sense of respect and gratitude, but also the Confucian virtues of loyalty, filial piety, and courage. If this occurred, a sense of harmony would prevail over the land. Inoue wrote

the following endorsement of the document. In it, we find him trying to justify a unique place for Japan on the world scene of his time.

In the world today, Europe and America are, of course, great powers, and all the countries settled by the Europeans have prospered as well. Now only the countries of the East are capable of competing with the progress of these nations. Yet India, Egypt, Burma, and Annam have already lost their independence; Siam, Tibet, and Korea are extremely weak and will find it difficult to establish their autonomy. Thus in the Orient today, Japan and China alone have an independence stable enough to vie with the western powers for its rights. But China clings to the classics and lacks the spirit of progress. Only in Japan does the idea of progress flourish, and Japan has it within its means to anticipate a glorious civilization in the future.

Japan, however, is a small country. Since there are now those that swallow countries with impunity, we must consider the whole world our enemy. Although we should always endeavor to conduct friendly relations with the western powers, foreign enemies are watching for any lapse on our part.... We can rely only on our forty million fellow countrymen. Thus, any true Japanese must have a sense of public duty by which he values his life as lightly as dust, advances spiritedly, and is ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of the nation. We must encourage this spirit before an emergency occurs.... The purpose of the *Rescript* is to strengthen the basis of the nation by cultivating the virtues of filial piety and fraternal love, loyalty, and sincerity and to prepare for any emergency by nurturing the spirit of collective patriotism. If all Japanese establish themselves by these principles, we can be assured of uniting the hearts of the people. (INOUE Tetsujirō, 1890, 2-3 [781-2])

As the founder of the famous Kyoto School of philosophy, Nishida Kitarō was the most famous philosopher of modern Japan. As an intellectual icon in his own time, in his later years, he was drawn into political philosophy and the debates over the meaning of *kokutai*. He hoped to bring philosophical insight to clarifying its true relation to morality, nation, and the global developments in his historical period. His theory of the *kokutai* is perhaps the most philosophically sophisticated of any thinker from the time. Developed when an ill-advised phrase could land one in jail for lese majesty, Nishida sheathed the edge of his argument by using the terms the militarists expected: “nation,” “world historical mission,” “imperial,” “East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere,” and so forth. Therefore, a superficial reading might lead one to believe Nishida had thoroughly bought in to the right-wing ideology. Any astute reader familiar with philosophical discourse will find something else, however. If one follows his whole argument, one finds Nishida defining and linking his terms in a way that undermines many basic principles of that ideology. He rejects the claim that it is historical fact that Japan was founded by the deities; he rejects the idea

that the theory of the *kokutai* applies to Japan and its emperor alone; he rejects the assertion that the Japanese are a nation because of blood or race; he rejects subjugating the individual to the state; and so forth.

Yet, Nishida's project is primarily constructive, not negative. He believes that any notion of the state cut off from all religious roots will lose its moral compass. If that happens, the people—as both individuals and as a nation—will be incapable of seeing themselves as agents in world history. In short: they will lose a sense of national mission. To achieve global harmony, each nation must find its own role developed from its own history. Nishida's model is obviously not born of the individualism fundamental to liberal democracy. That does not mean it simply falls in line with the official state ideology of Japan, however. Nishida envisions the idea of the *kokutai* as a new model, one that can grow organically out of the Japanese experience but can also grow in a different way in other nations.

To glimpse how he does this, let us follow the steps of his argument as developed in his most important statement on the subject, his 1944 essay, "Theorizing the *Kokutai*." He begins with a general statement of his philosophical anthropology: human beings are both biological and historical beings and the nation must take the creative interplay between the two as the basis for its development.

As human beings we are born in the historical world, we work in it, and we die in it. We might also say that we are born from the biological world and go on to die in it.... The biological world is not something outside the historical world. And even if we refer to it as the material world, it still is not something apart from the historical world. Present-day quantum mechanics seems to confirm this. Ours is a creative world and the self comes to birth as one of its creative elements.... A race of people is not, of course, something simply biological. It is a formative power of the historical world, something specific within the broader historical world. Each race of people bears its own mission in the formation of the historical world; if not, it cannot be called a people.... As a correlation of the particular and the whole, a people is a creator of eternal values. This is the form in which a society of one people becomes a nation... and a people formed into a nation becomes a source of morality. For we human beings are born as creative elements of a creative world.... Viewed in terms of abstract logic, the individual and the whole are always correlatives engaged in a constant struggle. Otherwise they would only be using one another. From the standpoint of historical creation, however, the individual and the whole form an immediate unity. The more the two correlatives become one, the greater the creativity. (NISHIDA Kitarō 1944, 192–3)

Next, Nishida discusses the link between the historical development of a nation and myth. He explicitly states that a national myth is a human product

developed by the self-conscious awareness of a people as a means to being a “historical-formative” force.

History can be said to have begun from myth. Sociologists like Émile Durkheim claim that primitive societies began religiously. This is not to say that historical societies arise mystically or emerged through some kind of transcendent agency. A historical society, as a mutual determination of subject and environment, in which the subject shapes the environment and the environment the subject, is always a world in which a given form takes its own shape in a movement from the created to the creating. The “historical subject” here is none other than a people, and “religious” refers to this kind of historical, living, formative activity. (195)

With that explanation, Nishida can now define what he means by *kokutai*, which he does without specific reference to Japan. A *kokutai* is a model in which the people see themselves as agents forming their own “world” or worldview.

Therefore, a people takes on individuality when it goes beyond a mere biological race and comes to the awareness of being a single world, that is, when it becomes historically formative. Such an individuality means that it is historically formative and bears a historical mission. This individuality of a nation is what constitutes a *kokutai*. (197)

Nishida then explains Japan as a *kokutai* and its use of myth to discover itself as people who form themselves in history as a nation.

Only in the historical emergence of our country, with its founding myth of the birth of the nation and its self-determination of an absolute present as a transcendence-in-immanence and immanence-in-transcendence, did the *kokutai* achieve self-awareness as a nation that entails a morality.... Within our country’s *kokutai*, the imperial household is the beginning and end of the world.... (201)

The final question is where the rest of the world, especially the western world, fits into Nishida’s model. In thinking of a state with a religious base, one might imagine that the West had a *kokutai* model in the Middle Ages. Nishida claims it did not, because western thought had made a gap between church and state based on transcendence and immanence. Yet, just because the *kokutai* model did not develop in the West, there is no theoretical reason it could not have. For Nishida, the *kokutai* is a *model* of polity, just as liberal democracy or the medieval divine right theory are *models* of polity. Because of Japan’s historical circumstances, the *kokutai* model may, for now, be distinctive to Japan. It then becomes Japan’s historical role to exemplify and philosophically develop this alternative model of polity. Historical events have placed Japan in the world situation in such a way that its nonwestern model of the state is suddenly vis-

ible to the whole world. Nishida believes this can be conducive to rethinking national identities in a new world order incorporating eastern and western ideas for the first time in world history.

For a certain period during the Middle Ages, the nations of the West looked like a Christian empire. Transcendence and immanence, the one and the many, belonging to a particular racial people and being Christian stood in opposition. An abstract morality had to be introduced to justify the state. There could not develop the idea of a holy nation that we have in our country, where we see a self-transcending world taking shape within the formation of a people, a transcendence-in-immanence and immanence-in-transcendence.... Strictly speaking, the *kokutai* may be said to exist only in our country. But it is not only a question of taking pride in having something particular like a *kokutai*; we must also pay attention to and clarify its world-historical profundity. And this has to be elucidated to the world in practice and in theory. For ours is a time of a world awareness when the essence of the “nation” has to be made clear as indeed a normative form of human activity in the formation of a historical world. In this way a new world order will be constructed. (202)

We can see that the idea of the *kokutai* is a concept that permeates the boundaries between political and religious identity. This brings us into our third philosophical theme about Japanese identity: the dimension of religion. From what we have seen so far, it is no surprise that this is also a site of contention and debate in Japanese history.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

As we have seen in our previous discussions, religion has strong links to linguistic and political identity in Japan. In the seventh century, the Shōtoku Constitution's second article tried to establish Buddhism as both state religion and a model for personal spirituality. In the eighth century, the narratives of the imperial divine descent were formalized and recorded as the basis for imperial rule. Although there was some political conflict among clans that supported one spiritual tradition over the other, for the most part, there was relatively little philosophical argument across the traditions. A saying attributed to Prince Shōtoku was that the roots of the tree are Shinto, the trunk Confucian, and the fruit Buddhist. Although there were different ways to interpret the saying, the point is that syncretism of some sort was the norm during the Heian and much of the medieval period.

This is not to say there were not occasional disruptions in this norm. For example, the founder of ‘Shin Buddhism’, Shinran* (1173–1263) was at times

tolerant of Shinto, but at other times, saw folk religious practices as manifestations that we are in the degenerate age of the Buddha's teachings ('*mappō*'). For example, in his *Hymns of the Dharma Ages*, he wrote:

As a mark of increase in the five defilements,
All monks and lay people of this age
Behave outwardly like followers of the Buddhist teaching,
But in their inner thoughts, believe in non-buddhist paths.

How lamentable it is that monks and lay people
Select "fortunate times" and "auspicious days,"
And paying homage to gods of the heavens and earth,
Engage in divination and rituals of worship. (SHINRAN 1258A, 528 [422])

Also, in the Kamakura period competing Buddhist groups commonly leveled criticism against other groups. Nichiren* (1222–1282), for example, blamed all sorts of calamities on the fact that the Japanese had lost their reverence for the *Lotus Sutra* and had turned to other spiritual traditions.

In recent years, there have been unusual disturbances in the heavens, strange occurrences on earth, famine and pestilence, all affecting every corner of the empire and spreading throughout the land. Oxen and horses lie dead in the streets, and the bones of the stricken crowd the highways. Over half the population has already been carried off by death, and there is hardly a single person who does not grieve.

All the while some put their whole faith in the "sharp sword" of the Buddha Amida and intone the name of this lord of the Western Land.... There are those who follow the esoteric teachings of the 'Shingon' School and conduct rituals in which they fill five jars with water, and others who devote themselves entirely to seated meditation and try to perceive the emptiness of all phenomena as clearly as the moon....

But despite all these efforts, they merely exhaust themselves in vain. Famine and epidemics rage more fiercely than ever, beggars are everywhere in sight, and scenes of death fill our eyes. Corpses pile up in mounds like observation platforms, and dead bodies lie side by side like planks on a bridge....

I have pondered the matter carefully with what limited resources I possess, and have looked a little at the scriptures for an answer. The people of today all turn their backs upon what is right; to a person, they give their allegiance to evil. This is the reason that the benevolent deities have abandoned the nation and departed together, that sages leave and do not return. And in their stead devils and demons come, and disasters and calamities occur. (NICHIREN 1260, 17 [6–7])

In the Tokugawa period, as we have mentioned earlier, Confucian and Shinto thinkers argued the meaning of the Way as the correct foundation for Japanese

society and politics. As the competition among the spiritual systems increased, the rhetoric became increasingly harsh and *ad hominem*. Much of the polemic turned on the ideal of purity: identifying which tradition and which interpretation of that tradition was the least defiled by the interaction with external, polluted lines of thought. The following passage from the influential Confucian Itō Jinsai* (1627–1705) is particularly illustrative. In it, he criticizes the later Chinese Confucians for accepting the wrong-headed argumentative techniques of Indian Buddhism. Because they did so, their arguments against Buddhism accepted the rules of Buddhist argumentation and, as a result, only strengthened the latter, further distorting the true Confucian way of the ancient sages.

Siddhartha Gautama's Buddhism entered China from abroad and soon spread across the realm. It flourished during the Sui and Tang dynasties and was still causing an uproar in the Song. The next wave of Confucians angrily rejected Buddhism, sharply distinguishing Buddha's doctrines from their own. They struggled against Buddhism until their energies were spent. But the more they attacked it, the greater it became. The more they rejected its tenets, the more popular it became. Confucians could not extinguish its flames because in combating them, they stooped to use, as the Buddhists use, empty words rather than the moral virtues taught by Yao, Shun, and Confucius.

When the Way and virtue flourish, debate subsides. When the Way and virtue decline, debate and argument abound. When they flourish, the Way and virtue grow more distant. The rise of debate, argument, and rhetoric thus marks the pinnacle of a degenerate age. At the heights of such empty polemics, we arrive at the very extremes of Zen Buddhism! Nothing is further from morality, more distant from daily life, and more lacking in benefits to society and the state than Zen. (Itō Jinsai 1705, 111–12 [253])

The entrance of Christianity via Catholic missionaries in the sixteenth century gave the Buddhists, Confucians, and Shinto a common target. After a slew of polemics back and forth, Christianity was subsequently officially banned from Japan in the early seventeenth century and did not return until the latter part of the nineteenth century when the government lifted its prohibitions. A good example of such anti-Christian polemic is that of the samurai warrior turned Zen Buddhist, Suzuki Shōsan* (1579–1655):

According to the Christian teachings, “The great Buddha named Deus is the Lord of heaven and earth and is the one Buddha, self-sufficient in all things. He is the creator of heaven and earth and of the myriad phenomena. This Buddha made his entry into the world one thousand six hundred years ago, . . . saving all sentient beings. His name is Jesus Christ. That other lands do not know him, worshipping instead the worthless Amida and Shaka, is the depth of stupidity.” Thus they claim, as I have heard.

To counter, I reply: “If Deus is the Lord of heaven and earth, and if he cre-

ated the terrestrial domain and the myriad phenomena, then why has this Deus until now left abandoned a boundless number of countries without making an appearance? Ever since heaven and earth were opened up, the buddhas of the three worlds in alternating appearance have endeavored to save all sentient beings, for how many thousands and tens of thousands of years!... If Deus were truly the Lord of heaven and earth, then it has been great inattention on his part to permit mere attendant buddhas to take over country upon country which he personally created, and allow them to spread their teachings and endeavor to save all sentient beings, from the opening up of heaven and earth down to the present day....

And then there is the story that Jesus Christus upon making his appearance was suspended upon a cross by unenlightened fools of this lower world. Is one to call this the Lord of heaven and earth? Is anything more bereft of reason? This Christian sect will not recognize the existence of the one Buddha of 'original enlightenment' and 'thusness'. They have falsely misappropriated one Buddha to venerate, and have come to this country to spread perniciousness and devilry. They shall not escape heaven's punishment for this offence! But many are the unenlightened who fail to see through their clumsy claims, who revere their teachings and even cast away their lives for them. Is this not a disgrace upon our country? Notorious even in foreign lands, lamentable indeed! (SUZUKI Shōsan 1662, 131-2 [377-8])

Not all Tokugawa thinkers participated in the ideological warfare of one spiritual tradition against the other. Some explicitly tried to return to the old tripartite harmony of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. In this following passage, we find the practical perspective of Ninomiya Sontoku* (1787-1856), one of the intellectuals who epitomized the standpoint of the townspeople, especially the newly risen merchant class.

For a long time I have been thinking about the question: what does Shinto teach, what are its weak points and what its strong points? I have been thinking of these matters in regard to Confucianism and Buddhism, too. And I have come to the conclusion that each of these doctrines has its own merits as well as defects....

Now, to mention what each of these doctrines chiefly aims at, Shinto shows the way of founding a state, Confucianism that of governing it, and Buddhism that of ruling one's mind. I do not put undue value on what is high-toned. Nor do I discard what is familiar and lowly. In framing my teaching, I have adopted the essence of each of these three doctrines. By "essence," I mean what is useful to mankind. By adopting what is useful and rejecting what is not, I have built up a teaching, which I have called the teaching of returning virtue for virtue. It is the best in this world. Jokingly, I call my teaching the peerless pill containing the essences of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Its virtues are so extensive that they cannot be enumerated. Use it for the administration

of a country: it will cure it of all diseases leading to decline and fall. Use it for the management of a household: it will cure it of all diseases causing poverty and misery.... Take it and other troubles that make one unhappy, such as poverty, extravagance, dissipation, abandonment, and laziness, will disappear. (NINOMIYA Sontoku 1893, 196–7, [92–5])

With the reopening of Japan to the West in the mid-nineteenth century, Christian missionaries returned, Orthodox Catholic and Protestant as well as Roman Catholic. Initially, attacks on the Christians were restrained, presumably because of fear of European and American retaliation. Buddhism was not so protected. State Shinto ideology was on the rise. As we saw in our discussion of political identity, the Mito School had created an amalgam of Shinto narratives about the divine basis of the imperial succession and Confucian-like virtues. Buddhism was left standing alone: not protected by the West and not having a place in the new state ideology. As one ordinary Shin Buddhist priest, Ryūon (1800–1885) lamented:

Just who are these enemies that surround us on all sides? Foremost are the bigoted Confucian scholars intent on slandering the 'buddha dharma'; second are the so-called Shinto scholars who attempt to use the ancient books to advance theories that purportedly explain the ways and traditions of antiquity; third are the astronomers, who insist upon a spherical earth and revolving planets; finally there are the Christians who have gradually made their way into our ports from across the sea. These are our enemies. (cited in James E. KETELAAR, 1990, 14)

As matters progressed, the attacks on Buddhism became no longer just ideological, but also physical. Before 1868, Buddhist temple property had been interlaced with Shinto shrines, but the government bifurcated such complexes and Buddhist priests were not allowed in the newly cordoned-off Shinto precincts. Moreover, the state ceased all official financial support of Buddhism. Then the anti-Buddhist sentiment took to the streets. Gangs of thugs roamed neighborhoods at night, destroying Buddhist images. They took the philosophical ideology of State Shinto as their justification for violence. As one student from the time explained his own activities:

The reason we established the “unity of rites and rule” as was practiced in Emperor Jinmu’s [prehistoric] time was in order to eliminate Buddhism.... Nativist scholars were the most ardent anti-Buddhists, and the Hirata School, frequently citing the *Essay on the Two Enemies of the Kami* from Hirata’s *Shutsujō shōgo*, was among the most active.... We students would go through town every day smashing every roadside Jizō or other Buddhist statues we could find. If even one were missed, it was a great disgrace to us. Fire, being a danger in the city, was not used to destroy pagodas and temple buildings, but

we did our best in burning Buddhist artifacts. (cited in James E. KETELAAR, 1990, 33)

A different challenge developed for the Japanese who converted to Christianity. To many Japanese, Christianity had intrinsic links to European ideas and values: individualism, scientism, and imperialist expansionism. This made the patriotism and loyalty of Japanese Christian converts suspect in many sectors of Japanese society, especially those interested in developing a nation-state based on the State Shinto ideology. One of the boldest Japanese Christian responses to this situation was by Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930). According to his own account, while studying in the United States, he realized that Japan did not have to become western to become Christian. Contrary to Suzuki Shōsan’s argument about the absence of the supposedly universal Christian God in Japanese history, Uchimura countered that the universal God had been acting invisibly throughout Japan’s great cultural accomplishments. He conceived of a universal God who allowed the divine presence to be experienced differently in each nation. It is as if he had anticipated the Kyoto School insistence that the level of cultural or national identity is as fundamental as either the universal or individual. In the course of a lengthy account of his road to Christian faith, written in English, Uchimura remarks:

Much impressed by the thought that God’s providence must be in my nation. If all good gifts are from Him, then some of the laudable characters of my countrymen must be also from on high. We must try to serve our God and the world with gifts and boons peculiar to ourselves. God does not want our national characters attained by the discipline of twenty centuries to be wholly supplanted by American and European ideas. The beauty of Christianity is that it can sanctify all the peculiar traits which God gave to each nation. A blessed and encouraging thought that *J- too is God’s nation*. (UCHIMURA Kanzō 1895, 124)

After returning to Japan from his studies abroad, Uchimura became a leader in the Japanese Christian “non-Church” (*mukyōkai*) movement. The goal was to develop a distinctively Japanese form of Christianity based in small bible study groups without metaphysical dogma or western church-like institutions. One of his motivations was to emphasize the positive values of Christian living instead of the accusatory moralizing all around him in Japan at the time. He called that emphasis on moral judgmentalism “the moral cave.” Uchimura argued that Confucian morality was being used in a way that did not actually increase moral behavior:

We Japanese in particular are a people brought up in a moral cave. It was so in the past and is still so today. The moral air in society is the thickest... and thus

moral laws are the principal measure for judging everything and everybody. Loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and righteousness—the four cardinal Confucian virtues—are the keynotes of education at home and in the schools. This is proof, superficial though it be, that morals hold the highest place in our society.... *Morals are extremely powerful for defining us people as evildoers, but on every other point, they are perfectly powerless....* Today our society stands at the brink of moral bankruptcy. Well now, could this all be the result of moral cultivation? Yes, it is. Morals are not equipped with the power to carry themselves out. Therefore, cultivation in morality alone does not give people the strength to avoid evil.... *The fruits of moral education lie in an awakening to one's own wrongdoings and those of others....* In other words, moral cultivation does not raise people's moral level in the least; it only sharpens their moral judgment towards themselves and others. (UCHIMURA Kanzō, 1922, 159–63)

As a prominent Christian who stood staunchly in his commitments to his faith despite increasing pressure to fall in line with the new state ideology, Uchimura was often ostracized and made the target of right-wing political criticism. His response was his famous affirmation of the “two Js,” affirming that he could have an identity as both a Japanese and a Christian follower of Jesus. His statement was one of the most explicit articulations of how national identity and religious identity could exist independently without diminishing one's commitment to either.

I love two Js and no third; one is Jesus, and the other Japan.

I do not know which I love more, Jesus or Japan.

I am hated by my countrymen for Jesus' sake as a *yaso*³ and I am disliked by foreign missionaries for Japan's sake as national and narrow....

Jesus and Japan; my faith is not a circle with one center; it is an ellipse with two centers. My heart and mind revolve around the two dear names. And I know that one strengthens the other; Jesus strengthens and purifies my love for Japan; and Japan clarifies and objectivizes my love for Jesus. Were it not for the two, I would become a mere dreamer, a fanatic, an amorphous universal man.

Jesus makes me a world-man, a friend of humanity; Japan makes me a lover of my country, and through it binds me firmly to the terrestrial globe. I am neither too narrow nor too broad by loving the two at the same time. O Jesus, thou art the sun of my soul, the savior dear; I have given my all to thee! (UCHIMURA Kanzō 1926, 53–4)

To be inscribed upon my tomb
For Japan;

3. [An old transcription of the name of Jesus, used here to refer also to Christians.]

4. [These words were written in his Bible, in English.]

Japan for the World;
 The World for Christ;
 And all for God.⁴

Given these religious and political difficulties of the 1930s and 1940s, some prominent Japanese intellectuals, especially those who dealt with the philosophy of religion, tried to neutralize some of the friction among Japanese religious traditions. For many modern Japanese philosophers, particularly those of the Kyoto School, Buddhist ideas were central to much of their thinking. As we have seen, however, the State Shinto ideology of the political right-wing had expressly tried to exclude Buddhism from their ideal of Japanese identity.

In the following passage, Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962), perhaps the most prominent philosopher of the Kyoto School after Nishida, addressed this problem in his 1939 talk to students at Kyoto University. Wanting to bring Buddhist ideas into the discussion of Japanese identity, he claimed that Japanese Buddhism was not a foreign religion. To do this, he felt he had to make the startling claim that Japanese Buddhism itself somehow derives from the *kokutai*. Upon Buddhism's entering Japan and becoming part of its culture, the Japanese *kokutai* purportedly transformed Indian and Chinese Buddhism into something new, something uniquely Japanese. The ideas of the Japanized Buddhism, Tanabe claimed, would be helpful in forging a new age, based in both science and Japanese spirituality.

The Japanese nation is not just a racial unity. It contains a principle according to which individuals spontaneously elevate the closed and racial unity to an open standpoint including all of humanity. This principle is honorably embodied in the emperor and is actualized through the support and devotion that the rulers and the ruled give the emperor. Accordingly, this truth is able to absorb even ideas arrived at in other countries into the spirit of the Japanese *kokutai*. Indeed Buddhism, whose distinctive ideas were important in India and China, lacks the strength there that it has in Japan today, so that it is only through the unique developments of Japanese Buddhism that it survives today. The same can be said of the practical ideas of Confucianism that developed in China. Thus Buddhism and Confucianism have lost their vitality in their homelands only to come truly to life in Japan. By the same token, Japan has been able to absorb the technical and scientific culture of the West that India and China have yet to embrace to any degree. I would further note that Mahayana Buddhism with its mindset of negation-in-affirmation is able to take in the antinomies of science that a standpoint of Christian theism is incapable of embracing....

I am neither a "Buddhist believer" nor a person with any connections to Buddhism, but it seems to me that Japanese Buddhism, which became Japanese through the idea of a Japanese *kokutai*, contains a spirit directed towards

the construction of a new age. I further believe that a religious spirit linked to science and vitalizing science is the foundation for the construction of a new age.... This will require an adventurous temper. Even in the case of physics, which is said to represent the most highly refined form of contemporary knowledge, there is absolutely no perfectly certain knowledge. What makes action action is that it contains an element of contingency and adventure. The knowledge that guides action cannot but be uncertain; knowledge also requires acting on belief. In this sense, the founding principle for the construction of a new age is manifest within the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism in its Japanized form, which is why the construction of East Asia that Japan is guiding is so significant for world history. (TANABE Hajime 1940, 166–7)

Of course, not all Buddhist thinkers would endorse Tanabe's understanding of the relation between Buddhism and the war effort. In 1943, as the outcome of the war was becoming clearer, D. T. Suzuki*, who spent most of his life introducing Zen Buddhism to the West, saw hope in what Buddhism could bring to the postwar situation in an essay on the world mission of Mahayana Buddhism:

The utilitarianism around which one facet of western culture is constructed is not always aimed at practical benefits. We should not lose sight of elements in it that include the wider world or display a religious character. In many cases the primitive way of thinking based on shared sentiments that goes under the name “Japanese” is in fact being challenged by this world-oriented utilitarianism as well as by scientific thought and technology. On the surface, consciousness of being “Japanese” is fitted out with a whole battle line of what look to be rational arguments, but behind the scenes a *‘prajñā’* logic of affirmation-in-negation is at work. In other words, our problem today is how to negate what is “Japanese” in order to recover the true form of what it means to be Japanese. Put in geographical terms, our intellectual preoccupation today consists in this fact: the attempt to leave this Japanese archipelago in order to take on a continental lifestyle more in tune with the world runs up against our inability to clearly understand at an intellectual, conscious level what such a leap entails. During the Kamakura period we experienced a sudden intellectual leap in the logic of negation or affirmation-in-negation. Today we face the same thing again. During the Kamakura period the leap was by and large forced on people unconsciously, but today we face it consciously and need to overcome the crisis through conscious reflection. This is the point to which our growth as Japanese has brought us. In a certain sense those who urge us to revert to the unconsciousness of a primitive people have a point, even if it is an entirely myopic one. (SUZUKI Daisetsu 1943, 422–3)

The postwar period brought ambivalence rather than clarity to many issues of Japanese religious identity. The following selection is by Umehara Takeshi (1925–), a public intellectual and cultural critic trained in philosophy at Kyoto

University. Taken from his book, *The Concept of Hell*, Umehara ruminates on whether the message of the Buddha can have any relevance to the modern technological world.

Confronted by this grandly serene world of the Buddha, some may respond with an excess of envy. The Buddha dwelt in a tranquil understanding that renounced desire, and we will admit that he was happy. But was that happiness not simply subjective, simply illusion? Civilization seems to follow a different path from the Buddha, for it emphasizes the affirmation of desire and the creation of means to satisfy it. The Buddha saw things through a distorting lens; his insight inverted the truth. He may have found the path to tranquility and peace, but was it not ultimately just an escape from civilization, and even from humanity? The Buddha himself may have been liberated from suffering, but what about the masses? To preach the renunciation of desire to the starving masses is to affirm barbarism and condone discrimination. One should not exhort those who have no food to renounce their desire for food; one must feed them. Is not the “wisdom” of the Buddha simply the truth stood on its head?...

It is true enough that the insights of the Buddha run directly counter to the commonsense values of people living in a technological society. Yet, as we have seen above, our modern society is not the first to cast doubt on the wisdom of the Buddha’s complete renunciation of desire. The ‘Mahayana’ tradition was founded on a critical analysis of the renunciation theory. The founders of Mahayana felt it was necessary to reaffirm desire, to recapture the meaning and significance of the present world and civilization for human life. This was the motivation for their inquiries.

Skeptics may respond that they do not find in Mahayana the understanding that would allow us to change the world in which we live. And indeed one does not find the practical applications we may glean from Bacon, Dewey, and Marx. Nonetheless, as the world suffers through war and insurrection caused by human ambition and greed, one cannot help but question whether a simple affirmation of raw human desire and the conflicts engendered by it will ever resolve the chaos of the modern world. The modern world was created by the unreflective will for power of the West. We are now caught up in the historical tragedy thus created. This is a time when we must carefully reassess the nature and extent of human desire itself. Without such considered reflection, there will be nothing to prevent this world from being transformed into a living hell. (UMEHARA Takeshi 1967B, 46–7 [57–8])

With this general overview of how language, politics, and religion have each played a role in influencing the understanding of Japanese cultural and national identity, we now turn to some longer selections. In them we will find echoes of many of the ideas just surveyed. For these selections, however, we have made no attempt to group them under one or another of the three categories. In

some cases, that could be done, but in others, two or three of the strands are so tightly interwoven that it would be counterproductive to do so. However, they might be classified, we feel that they represent interesting takes on the issue of Japanese identity and that they resonate well with the themes we have been examining.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

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[TPK]

FUKANSAI Habian 不干齋巴鼻庵 (1565?-1621?)

Fukansai Habian, a native of the Kyoto area, received his early education in a Zen temple, where he was trained in East Asian systems of thought. In his late teens he converted to Christianity and in 1586 entered the Society of Jesus as a candidate for the priesthood. By 1592, he was teaching Japanese literature to his fellow postulants at the Jesuit college of Amakusa. That same year he published an adaptation of the *Tale of Heike* into colloquial Japanese. The book is printed in Roman letters and the author's preface is signed "Fucan Fabian," the name by which he is known in western-language studies.

Fabian was a splendid rhetorician. He made his mark as a redoubtable apologist for Christianity with the 1605 *Myōtei Dialogue*, a work of substantial intellectual content as well as considerable literary merit. In the first of its three parts, Fabian sought to expose the vacuity of Buddhism; in the second, he endeavored to refute Confucianism and Shinto; in the third, he exalted Christianity. The treatise takes the form of a colloquy between two women, the Christian recluse Yūtei and the young widow Myōshū, who has lost the desire to live in this world and fervently seeks the right path to the afterlife. Confused by the approaches of traditional Japanese religion, Myōshū finds, with Yūtei's expert guidance, the sure prospect of salvation in the novel faith, Christianity.

By 1608, however, Fabian had turned his back on the Jesuits—out of disgust, he maintained, at the general pattern of discrimination that he perceived within the Society against its Japanese members; his particular grievance was the missionaries' refusal to ordain him a priest. By 1620, Fabian had joined the ranks of the persecutors of Christianity. That year, he published the antichristian tract *Deus Destroyed*, which is in essence a self-refutation, as it carefully rebuts the very same arguments that he had put forward with great flair in the *Myōtei Dialogue*. The rhetoric was the same; only the conclusions were different.

[JE]

DEUS DEFENDED

FUKANSAI Habian 1605, 145-7, 149-50, 157-8

Yūtei: Up to this point I have described the purport of Buddhism and Shinto for what it is. I am happy to see you recognize that both are pernicious doctrines—you have a sharp wit and an open mind, so that you have listened well to reason. But perhaps what I have said will spread to the ears of the obstinate and the prejudiced. When what they cherish as mysterious is exposed as shallow, they will hate me and berate me, as well they might. Let them! I do not

care. My purpose is to reveal the truth. So what should I regret? What should I repent? And even if they kill me! But all this is hardly worth pursuing further.

Well, then, what is the truth? It is the Kirishitan⁵ teaching, our religion. How true, how all-encompassing are the teachings of this religion! With all of heaven and earth for paper and the myriad grasses and trees for pens, with the Western Ocean for an inkwell—even then, how could mere writing ever exhaust all its profundity?... For me to try explaining even one of its truths would be like the infant's picking up a shell to measure out the blue ocean. Still, as the saying goes, someone with a penny is master of the penniless. So let me tell you just a little bit, by way of an elementary foundation....

The first among the many things that I should tell you initially is this: Learn to know the one true savior, who is the lord over peace and tranquility in the present life and over a good repose in the life to come. Second, learn to know what is the entity that must be saved. Third, learn of the destinations of those who are saved and those who are not saved. Fourth, it is of ultimate importance to understand what is the way to salvation and, conversely, what might cause one not to be saved. I shall therefore explain the truth of these matters....

There is no true Lord other than the one *Deus* taught by the Kirishitan religion. But what manner of Lord is the one called *Deus*? He is the creator of heaven and earth and of the myriad phenomena....

Yūtei: ... To consider the human condition overall, it is no different from that of marionettes attached to the end of a string by a puppeteer who controls all their posturing and gesticulations, though we cannot see from where. So there are those, depending on the person, who until yesterday thrived in prosperity—their power and the glory of their achievements seemingly overspreading the realm—but today, in contrast, have not even a place to rest their bodies. And then there are those who used to squat along the roadside with their sleeves outspread, as though hoping to gather in the dust raised by the tired old nags passing by—but now their time has come, and all of a sudden theirs is a house of fame and fortune. Some of them ascend to the summit of magnificence, advancing to high office and rank, and even being included among those permitted access to the inner palace.

These vicissitudes can never be explained by saying that the one was brought about by a superior intelligence and the other by an inferior wit. What, then, is the explanation? Many are the wise that languish and many the foolish that prosper. Clearly, there exists the one Lord who governs their fate. In the Kirishitan parlance, this Lord is called by the name *Deus*....

Buddhists, pretending to know it all, claim that everything arose naturally

5. [The Japanese transliteration of the Portuguese word *cristão* which was used to designate the religion of the Roman Catholic missionaries and its believers.]

of itself, not as the result of anyone's purposeful action. Is this not a terrible delusion? Shintoists halfheartedly posit something called 'kami', whom they supplicate to sway their destinies, but this is... more mistaken than taking fish eyes for pearls. Not for them to know the true Lord! Therefore our Kirishitan religion calls on all: Throw away those fish eyes! Worship and adore the true Lord *Deus*, who can be compared only to the most priceless of jewels!

.....

Yūtei: Things with shape and form, no matter how large they may be, cannot possibly be limitless. Nothing is as large as heaven and earth; nevertheless, having a form, they also have a measure. If there were a measure to the holy substance of *Deus*, then he could not be *Deus*. Therefore he is not burdened with form. This we call *spiritual sustância*, true substance without shape or form. True substance means not void, and not void means the following.

This substance is the wellspring of measureless and boundless wisdom—we call him *sapientíssimo*. He is *misericordíssimo*—the wellspring of measureless mercy and compassion. He is *justíssimo*—the Lord of universal law and righteousness. He lacks none of all the virtues and myriad qualities. There is no insufficiency or deficiency in him—not even so much as a rabbit's hair at autumn's moulting. And, therefore, he is called true substance, not void. The scriptures also call him *omnipotente*, the Lord self-sufficient in all things. Since all is within his power, he thus created and made appear heaven and earth and the myriad phenomena out of a state where not one thing existed.

.....

Myōshū: All things in heaven and on earth have two aspects: object and 'principle'. Object may be defined by using the following analogy: Willows are green, flowers are red, and that is their external appearance; pines are straight, bushes are crooked, and that is the body which appertains to them. By "principle" is meant the internal nature that is inherent in things, although if we were to smash the trees to pieces and look, we would see neither green nor red. And therefore "object" is associated with the state of specific character, and principle is equivalent to the nature.

Accordingly, one may further describe these two by way of an analogy. The water in a bamboo pipe is the principle nature. But then this water solidifies and turns into snow or ice—now think of this as the state of specific character. Snow and ice are distinctions of the object state; but, melting, they are merely the same water in a valley stream. Similarly, there are provisional distinctions in the object state of the myriad elements—birds are not beasts, and grasses are not trees. But when the object state is destroyed, all returns to the same principle nature. And this is also called the true state of the one 'thusness' without distinctions.

In Confucianism there are also two categories posited: nature and 'genera-

tive force'. There are no distinctions in the nature, but with respect to generative force there are four levels—the true, the penetrant, the slanted, and the clogged. Therefore, according to their combination, what results may be human but may also be a horse or a cow. That there are differences of dull or sharp among humans is not caused by differences in the nature but by distinctions in the endowment of generative force.... How could there be an individual and differentiated nature for each and every thing! Because there is the one nature, regardless of the external object state, it is said that by their nature heaven and earth have the same root, that the myriad things have the same substance.

Yūtei: ... This is a statement founded on ignorance of the fact that, as I told you before, there is the one creator of heaven and earth and of the myriad phenomena. Once you have understood the fact that there is a creator of all things, you will never entertain such doubts.

[JE]

DEUS DESTROYED

FUKANSAI Habian 1620, 6–10 (261–7)

For those initially entering the Deus sect there is a seven-step gate to the doctrine. And the sum of the first step is as follows. In the myriad phenomena of heaven and earth we recognize a masterful creator; in the unflinching change of the seasons, we recognize their regulator. To use an analogy: When we see a palace, we realize that there was a skilled carpenter who built it; when we see that there are house laws within a family and the family is governed according to their intention, we realize that the family must certainly have a household head. Such realization is the universal rule. Therefore, since there was a time of desolate emptiness when heaven did not exist and earth did not exist and nothing existed, then the fact that heaven and earth emerged; that the sun, the moon, and the stars shed their light in the heavens, manifestly rising in the east and setting in the west at their appointed time; that the thousand grasses and the myriad trees grow on earth, their blossoms flowering and scattering and their leaves sprouting and falling in their appointed season—this would be impossible without the existence of a masterful creator. This masterful creator we call *Đ*.⁶ That is what they say.

To counter, I reply: What is so amazing about this? What schools fail to discuss this? It is stated:

6. [The original text uses a Gothic *D* to indicate *Deus*, the European name of the Christian God, distinguishing it from *Daiusu*, the transcription in Sino-Japanese characters for “the adherents of *Deus*.”]

There was something before heaven and earth:
 The shapeless original desolateness;
 It acts as the lord of the myriad phenomena,
 It does not wane in accordance with the four seasons.⁷

And also:

Heaven does not speak;
 Yet the four seasons run their course thereby,
 The hundred creatures, each after its kind,
 Are born thereby. (*Analects* XVII.19)

Moreover, Buddhists discuss this in terms of the process of origination, continuation, destruction, and void; and in Shinto the age of the *kami* is divided between the seven gods of heaven and the five gods of earth. And the first of the seven gods of heaven are the three: Kunitokotachi no mikoto, Kunisazuchi no mikoto, and Toyokumunu no mikoto; they are the ones who opened up heaven and earth. The lord who always rises to the land's government: this is the meaning of the worshipful name Kunitokotachi no mikoto. Why then do the adherents of Deus tediously insist on this claim, as though they were the only ones who knew the lord who opened up heaven and earth? Lots of verbiage, but little substance! The debate lost, they shall leave dumbfounded.

The adherents of Deus claim: 德 is *infinito*—without beginning or end. He is *spiritual sustância*—true substance without material shape. He is *omnipotente*—all is in his power. He is *sapientíssimo*—the wellspring of wisdom without superior. He is *justíssimo*—the wellspring of universal law. He is *miserordíssimo*—the wellspring of universal mercy and universal compassion. Aside from all this, he is the wellspring of all good and every quality. Since the buddhas and the gods are all human beings, they are not endowed with the above-mentioned properties. Since they are subject to the process of 'birth-and-death', how can they be said to be the creators of heaven and earth?

To counter, I reply: To regard the buddhas and the gods as merely human is but the wicked view of ignorant men, a supposition truly befitting the adherents of Deus. The buddhas all possess the 'three bodies': the 'dharma-body', the reward body, and the accommodative body. The 'Tathāgata' in the accommodative-transformed body did undergo the eight states of his earthly life⁸ for the salvation of all sentient beings and as an expedient means of liberating them. However, the Tathāgata in the dharma-body is the original Buddha eternally

7. [A standard Zen verse used to describe the unchanging 'buddha-nature' of all things. See also *Laozi* 25.]

8. [The stages of the Buddha's life, beginning with his descent from heaven into his mother's womb and ending with his passage into nirvāna.]

existing from beginningless and boundless *'kalpas'*. Inexpressible in words, not to be grasped by means of such terms as “good” or “evil,” he is the true Buddha of the dharma-body of the ‘dharma-nature’. And so the scriptures also say:

Constant remains the Tathāgata;
There is in him no change. (T 12, 522)

Those who consider the Tathāgata as merely human are unenlightened fools. And those who say that the gods, too, are human beings are as ignorant as they.

How awesome! The gods in their origins are manifestations of buddhas. For instance, the deity Tenman Daijizaiten in his original state is the all-merciful, all-compassionate ‘Kannon’. But when in subdued brilliance Kannon mingled with this world of dust, he appeared in the person of Grand Minister Sugawara. Manifesting his traces at Kitano, he is celebrated as the God Protector of the Hundred Kings. To what deity of a grand shrine or royal mausoleum does this principle not apply? Let us, further, take up Kunitokotachi no mikoto, who was a god before heaven and earth were opened up and before even one human existed. How could you ever say that he, too, is a human being? Don’t dare say it, don’t dare say it! Accept as understood what you can understand, admit that you fail to understand what you have not understood. Even the great sage Confucius spoke about the gods as follows:

They cause the people of the realm
To fast and be purified and wear
Their finest clothing;
Thereby to carry out religious ritual.
In mighty overflow, they are above
And on the right
And on the left as well. (*Mean* XVI.3)

The blind man does not fear the snake, people say. And so the adherents of Deus babble on, unmindful of the fate they invite upon themselves. O horror of horrors! Their tongues shall indeed be ripped out!

Japan is the land of the gods. Owing to the eastward advance of the buddhadharma, it may also be called the land of the buddhas. That being so, then the adherents of Deus who pile abuse on the buddhas and the gods must still in this world suffer the punishment of the buddhas and the gods, without even the chance to await the other world; they cannot escape this fate by turning on their heels. There is no time or need to enumerate examples among the nameless. But look! Look at Ōtomo Sōrin of Bungo.⁹ In the days when Sōrin was devoted

9. [The Ōtomo family had been a power in Kyushu from the end of the twelfth century. Sōrin was a protector of the Jesuit missionaries.]

to the buddhas and the gods, he brandished his power over all of Kyushu and the glory of his name spread throughout the four seas. But after he became an adherent of Deus, the fortunes of war suddenly turned against him. With his son and heir Yoshimune he fell upon Hyūga to fight the Shimazu, suffered a defeat at Mimikawa, and barely managed to flee home, deserted by all and in desperate straits. After that his house gradually fell to ruin; so prosperous, so flourishing for many generations, the family is practically extinct today. Are any offspring left, or not?—such is the sad state of the house at present.

Konishi Settsu no Kami, too, was a ringleader of the adherents of Deus. Because of that he lost the protection of the buddhas and the gods, joined Mitsunari's atrocious rebellion, wound up being dragged on public display along the streets, and was beheaded. One and all, his relatives were eradicated; he left no survivors.

Takayama Ukon also was a pillar of the Deus sect; but where are his descendants now? Akashi Kamon, too, became an adherent of Deus, brought ruin on his house, and lost his life.¹⁰ Then there was the family of Kikyōya Juan in the capital and the house of Higoroya in Sennan no Tsu. Though merchants, they became prominent benefactors of the Deus sect. Most members of these families were not blessed with a peaceful death but finished miserably. Where are their descendants now?

These stories are clearly known to all. And yet, even having heard these facts, they still claim that the buddhas and the gods are human beings! Granted that Shakyā, the World-Honored One, assumed the state of Incarnation with the great King Śuddhodana for his father and the Lady Māyā for his mother and that he entered 'nirvāṇa' in Crane Forest; and granted that Hachiman Dai-bosatsu was born with Emperor Chūai for his father and Empress Jingū for his mother. On this basis, apparently, the adherents of Deus conclude that they are human beings. In that case, what about the main deity of the Deus sect, Jesus Cristo? He was born with Joseph for his father and Santa Maria for his mother. This hits the definition of "human being" spot on! Our side is not the one that makes a human out to be the lord of heaven and earth.

The adherents of Deus claim: Since the causal stage¹¹ of Jesus Cristo naturally is that of a human being and in this is no different from the gods' trace manifestation or the buddhas' causal stage, let us mutually set aside the subject for the time being. Since the gods' original state is that of buddhas, it shall not enter the discussion. But let us see to a comparison between the dharma-body of the dharma-nature and ㊦.

10. [Akashi Kamon, a ranking samurai baptized João, was a captain of troops that battled the Tokugawa in 1600 and 1614–1615.]

11. [The stage at which one is engaged in discipline to become a bodhisattva.]

☯, as stated above, is the wellspring of all good and every quality. But the dharma-nature is defined as having no knowledge and no quality. If that be so, then how is it possible from a position of no knowledge and no quality (*mu-chi, mu-toku*) to create heaven and earth and the myriad phenomena? Further, if the original wellspring does not possess knowledge and quality, then how could it be that prudence and discrimination exist in us today?

To counter, I reply: The adherents of Deus do not understand the truth. Hearing that the dharma-nature possesses no knowledge and no quality, they consider this impossible and reject it. Hearing that ☯ possesses knowledge and quality, they consider this possible and accept it. Just wait! I will explain the truth to you! To start with, the word 'mu' is inscrutable.

The word *mu* is an iron barrier
 Ten-million-fold!
 Who can pierce through this word
 And penetrate to the other side?¹²

Mu therefore is one word that the likes of the adherents of Deus can never understand. All right, then! Let us proceed. Take the expression literally: no knowledge and no quality. Now, this indeed is the absolute truth. But that ☯ possesses knowledge and quality is a proposition that cannot easily be ascertained. Generally, where intelligence is present it is impossible to avoid hate, love, dislike, and favor. But hate, love, dislike, and favor are human feelings. If ☯ is possessed of hate and love, he is unworthy of consideration in the same breath. But I shall explain the reasons for this at a later point.

The dharma-nature is like the ocean
 Transcending attributes such as "good" or "evil." (T 12, 1035)

How absolutely true this is!

They also boast that their ☯ possesses quality. This is but the talk of fools incapable of slicing a hair's breadth off their layers of delusion.

Superior quality is not to claim quality;
 This is wherein quality lies. (*Laozi* 38)

But this is said even of humans; so to say that ☯ possesses this or that quality makes him full of deficiencies. Let me cite the three terms of Laozi: *minute* (no form), *rarefied* (no sound), and *smooth* (no shape). "These three cannot be further inquired into" (*Laozi* 14). It is indeed proper to term these three concepts—invisible, inaudible, intangible—inexpressible in words and untransmissible in writing.

12. [Compare this verse to the introductory verse of the *Mumonkan*.]

☯ possesses wisdom and discrimination and therefore surpasses the dharma-nature, you claim. The very idea! I can't help laughing out loud! The pure and undisturbed original mind is something you can never understand.

The adherents of Deus also claim: If the original wellspring does not possess knowledge and quality, then where did the prudence existing in humans and the properties inherent in the myriad phenomena come from? Observing such a nature of things, one concludes that it would be impossible if the original wellspring were not endowed with knowledge and quality.

To counter, I reply: Willows are green, flowers are red; this is but the order of nature. Crush the willow roots and see: there is no green. Smash to pieces the flowering tree and see: there is no red. And yet this is the essence of nature manifest.

The mountain cherry of Yoshino
Bears blossoms every year.
Split up the tree and see:
Do you find flowers?

For something not at the base of the root to be found at the tip of the branch is but the usual order of things.

Dao produced the One.
The One produced the two.
The two produced the three.
And the three produced the
Ten thousand things. (*Laozi 42*)

All the following stem from the original wellspring of the pure and undisturbed original mind: *yin* and *yang* were born; the pure and turbid, dynamic and quiescent generative force came to exist; heaven, earth, and man together produced the myriad things; we possess prudence and discrimination; the birds fly about and sing, and the beasts run about and roar; the grasses and the trees blossom forth and wither away. All these comply with the doubly variant pure and turbid, dynamic and quiescent material force. From antiquity to the present day, not one of the thousand sages and ten thousand worthies has failed to affirm the truth of this process. The adherents of Deus are not the ones to surpass Confucius or excel Laozi. I shall sever the creeping tendrils of their sophistry, the tangled vines of their contentious argument!

[JE]

MORI Arimasa 森 有正 (1911–1976)

Mori Arimasa was baptized a Christian at the age of two and tutored in French from the age of six, and by his early teens had been exposed to English, Latin, and classical Greek as well. He graduated from the department of philosophy in Tokyo Imperial University in 1938 with a thesis on Pascal. In the following years, he published a number of translations and essays, mainly on Pascal and Descartes, and held teaching posts at Tokyo Women's Christian University and later at Tokyo University. After the wartime ban on study abroad was lifted, he went to Paris where he decided to remain, tendering his resignation to Tokyo University in 1952. While in France he lectured on Japanese language and literature, returning frequently in later years to Japan as a guest lecturer. He passed away in Paris shortly after deciding to return permanently to Japan and assume a post at the International Christian University.

The excerpts that follow are taken from a series of lectures delivered in 1970 and 1971 at that university and later gathered together in a work entitled *Experience and Thought*. Here Mori lays out his theory of the distinctive quality of the Japanese language and its reflection of human relationships in Japanese social structures and modes of thought. He does this by showing how the concluding verb in a sentence is “inflected” without being conjugated according to grammatical person. Although the dense but somewhat repetitive style of his prose has been tightened up here in translation, it was precisely his at once provocative and readable style of philosophizing that endeared him to later generations of young Japanese struggling to adjust to the mindset and linguistic barriers of life abroad and, in the process, deepening their affection for the peculiarities of their own culture.

[JWH]

EXPERIENCE, THOUGHT, LANGUAGE

MORI Arimasa 1972, 84–106

In Japanese, polite or honorific language holds an important and specially privileged place. Indeed, it is in this particular aspect that the actual social life of the Japanese and their linguistic space come into intimate contact and provide an emotive quality that makes the essentially Japanese structure of society flow directly into (or subtly “slip into”) honorific language. In this way the community relationships in Japanese society are faithfully reproduced in the language.

Honorific language is not just one dimension of Japanese. It is rooted in the *innermost recesses of the mechanisms* of the language. The various degrees of

positive and negative expression give concrete vitality to the linguistic expression that has seeped deep into the social hierarchy of the community and determined its usage. Given this situation, “neutral” forms of expression are rather an exception for the language....

As a rule, Japanese linguistic expression adds postpositional terms between major elements of a sentence and (particularly in contemporary usage) concludes the whole with a verbal inflection. Since these inflections add a subjective determination concerning the party to whom the statement as a whole is being addressed, they are first person in nature. For example, the word *is* in the sentence “this is a book” serves as a functional inflection in Japanese and appears at the end of the sentence, where it can take the basic forms *desu*, *da*, or the more polite *de gozaimasu*. I have indicated that the choice reflects a first-person decision, but matters are not quite so simple. Grammatically speaking, there is no second or third person involved, but neither is it quite right to speak of the statement as “impersonal.” What we have here is a prime example in the language of what I call the “slipping in of reality.” In the “bipolarity” set up by the speaker and the one spoken to, it seems to me we can see a reflection of social hierarchies. Not that the main content of the sentence “this (is) a book” becomes different in the process, but that the relationship between the two persons is manifest in the choice of inflection at the same time as meaning is communicated as to whether the content is affirmed, negated, or otherwise asserted. Here the one spoken to is not an independent recipient but is located within the consciousness of the speaker, so that the coexistence of the two forms part of the meaning. It is on this basis that varieties of nuance having to do with probability, doubt, and the like can be added to the basic forms of inflection indicated above. In the case of the interrogative form, for example, the sentence may not express so much doubt as the courtesy of leaving the listener room for judgment. In this way, the concluding inflection—either on its own as a “functional suffix” or in combination with a main verb—states a subjective relationship of the one speaking to the statement being made, and at the same time uses a framework of one “you” vis-à-vis another.

In general, conversations are considered to take place between an “I” and a “you,” but since there is always an exchange of roles taking place, “I” become a “you” for the “you” I am speaking to even as that “you” becomes an “I.” But the Japanese inflection comprises both movements at the same time, giving it a bipolar quality: the relationship set up is essentially between a “you” and a “you”.... Such is the mechanism built into the structure of the language....

In Japanese, even sentences where a nominative is set up provisionally in the third-person, the statement itself is enveloped in a “you-you” structure, as can be seen from the postpositions and verbal inflection (not to be confused with the simple auxiliary verb) that accompany all sorts of statements. For this reason,

Japanese possesses the essentially enclosed quality of a bipolar relationship, making it a *closed* conversational language, in contrast to the open, transcendent languages of Europe where, even in the case of conversation, the second person is invariably transformed into the first person and third person....

It may be an oversimplification to refer to *Japanese* relationships as taking a “bipolar” form, yet I do not mean to suggest something merely subjective, intuitive, or arbitrary, but only to insist that there is an “objectivity” to be extracted from the living Japanese language. Since thinking and experience—and especially thinking—are supposed to carry universal value, talk of “Japanese thought and experience” may appear to be nonsense. Fortunately, I believe it can be shown through an appreciation of “language” that, at least at certain stages, this is not necessarily so....

In propositional statements the grammatical subject is objectified in the third person, and the speaking subject passes judgment concerning it... Here the words themselves are the ideas that carry the meaning within themselves, and there must be absolutely no “slipping of reality” into the words. When that happens, intellect is no longer capable of doing its work, but is swayed by “emotion” stemming from contact with reality and eventually brought to a halt. “Intellect”... is the name we give to the subject working with ideas in this way. This kind of propositional quality marks the fundamental character of European grammar. The Japanese language, where the “slipping in of reality” is part and parcel of the language, as well as the experience it incorporates, are *by and large* fatal for thought....

A judgment is made by a particular subject, and in that sense it no longer matters that it is made in the first person because the judgment is in the third person. “I think that A is B” may be spoken in the first person, but for the Japanese there is no escaping the “you-you” relationship carried by the inflection suffixed to the word *is*.... The fact that in the formulation the first and third persons are transcended and fused dialectically needs somehow to be taken into account as an important ingredient in “thought.” Without it the questions of truthfulness and universality or systematic organization, so indispensable to thinking, would not arise. Otherwise, too, the public nature or possibility of general argument, progress, and development would be forfeited at the expense of the secretive communication achieved between “you-and-you.” Everything would be eternally repeated over and over again from the beginning. Maruyama Masao attributed the lack of a continuous development of thought in our country’s history to the fact that as a problem passes from one age to the next, it does not undergo a process of deepening. However, it seems to me that we have to look for the reason behind this in the tendency in that sort of experience.

.....

My starting point is not the “experience” of an abstractly conceived individual

but the “experience” of the Japanese—an approach that is more direct and essentially primary. Reflection on the Japanese language gives us a concrete thread to see this idea through.... My goal throughout is to show, subjectively, how I as an individual can focus attention on the process by which this “experience” gets purified into “thought”; and objectively, how it triggers in all human beings a process that leads to having one’s own “thoughts” and then turning around and being stimulated by them. In other words, it is a question of our capacity as individuals to take responsibility for our own actions, *whatever the circumstances*. In the final analysis we are always “humans”.... We talk about thought and experience, we argue about philosophy, but these things are always rooted within the individual. And all the problems that drag us along in their wake—relations to a group, a society, or to other nations—by their nature and scope always transcend individuals and their abilities....

My starting point, then, was “experience” but it was necessary for me to find a definition of it within myself. Chronologically speaking, things went in the reverse order. In the course of my life in Paris I became clearly aware of *something* within me and it included the need to give it a name. Two terms came to mind: experience and self. But there was no need to search for either of them.... Either both of them are *already* present or they are absolutely *absent*.... Both hide their forms profoundly. It is much the same as with “God”: once encountered, there is no need to continue searching.... Thus the attempt to make transparent to oneself *something* already present can be called self-criticism. Its high-water mark—or depths—are what can be called “experience” or “thought.” At its most profound, it is “wisdom” and when systematized according to certain conventions, “philosophy.”

Still, I found I was not able to start from “experience.” It was “my” experience, not an abstract “my,” but *mine as a Japanese*. This stipulation of the most *immediate* “me” finally came down to the fact that my experience took place within the Japanese language....

What marks the concreteness of Japanese experience is the “you-you” relationship. This may be an idea that is *thought*, but it is not just something *thought up* in that it is clearly expressed in the very way the Japanese language works. The “you” is, of course, a “you” for an “I,” but it is no less important that this “I” is also a “you” for that “you.” To say that the “I” is already a “you” for another “you” is no mere game of cat’s cradle; it is the source and reason behind all “sentiment.”

.....

The bipolar or second-person form of relationships is a phenomenon found widely in human relationships and is based on the human tendency to invade the relationships between the first-person and third-person that lurk in sentiments essentially opaque to us. But in the case of the Japanese, the bipolar

relationship is not a question of an instrumental tactic; it is the very structure of experience and as such carries a particular meaning. The structure of the language makes this clear. The bipolarity is *directly* connected to the language by being built into its grammar by means of vocabulary, inflections, verbs, and the like. Or rather, as witnessed by the grammar of honorific language, it is the normal state of the Japanese, an exception to the rule in European languages where first-third person relationships are acknowledged to be the norm....

By nature the “sentiment” that drives the immediate form of human relationships takes the form of a first-third person relationship, of which second-person relationships are a particular transformation subsumed within it. What is particular about Japanese “experience” is that the second-person relationship appears as something normal, not as a transformation....

When we consider the first person and the second person, the second person can be of two types: a partner, namely, a second person who can always be changed into a third person, and a first person who is always a second person to another second person but can always return to the first person. The first person is a conscious subject and normally stands in tension to a third person (even though the third person is a covert subject turned outwards and hence belongs to the same conscious state). This tension is clearly not physiological or psychological, but *a matter of will*....

I consider the bipolar relationship to be an escape from the element of *Angst* that forms an essential part of the first-third person relationship.... Within the bipolar form everything changes completely. Each partner becomes a “you” for the other, and since each can claim it as “my” relationship, there begins an unending interchange of “affections” or of comfort and anxiety.... Indeed, one-self and the other are always first persons that can always become third persons to one another, which is indeed often the case when peace of mind is transfigured into apprehension, comfort into anxiety. What is more, the first-person “self” carries within its own existence the source of anxiety in confronting the other....

Now, insofar as this problem of first and second person has to do with the question of how to communicate thought and experience, one may question whether it has to do with the content or substance of thought and experience at all. Take the example of translating Pascal, Descartes, or Kant from French or German into Japanese. Is there no essential difference involved in laying out the thought of these philosophers? It is hard to answer with a yes or no. Indeed, the same question can be asked within Japanese. In saying “this is a book,” there is obviously some difference in human social relations entailed in choosing a Japanese suffix to inflect the simple word “is,” but surely this does not affect the “reality” of the book that is being talked about. If we say the same sentence

standing, sitting, or kneeling down, the content would appear to remain the same....

In terms of abstract grammar, “this is a book” can be converted to read “A is B,” but as the content of A and B changes this will not always necessarily be the case. Accordingly we cannot cut the content of the words off from their form.... There is something here in front of me that I can have a look at and touch, something I call a “book.” This name, by which this thing that can be grasped perceptually and measured is called, is itself a matter of convention.... Or to say “this book has two hundred pages” is a matter of its length... that remains fixed and univocal, no matter in what language it is spoken.... It is an object of perception whose measurements can be determined but whose name depends on the time and place it is spoken—it is an object of ordinary “science.” As such it may be expressed more accurately through a system of symbols, but even so, such symbols are obviously propositions that are defined, analyzed, and regulated by words and thus take the form of the third person....

In the case of the human sciences or social sciences, the original sense of the terms “science” and “experience” gets complicated... and in a sense, even though everything may be considered an object of “experience,” it has to be recognized there are elements mixed in the whole that require a quite different method and approach. In this sense, science and its objects are included in “experience,” but in a distinct sense, and are limited by methods that are “impersonal” and require the grammatical form of the third person to be rendered in the appropriate symbols....

At this point we may clarify the distinction between “experience” and “lived experience.” *Experience* is something that as such is open to different realms, whereas *lived experience* on the contrary is closed to other realms; it is restricted to the self-evidence of one’s own experience. More generally put, lived experience always sets up a “bipolarity” (which is one form of self-evidence)....

[JWH]

YAGI Seiichi 八木誠一 (1932-)

Yagi Seiichi was born in Yokohama to a prominent Christian family in the “No-church” tradition of Uchimura Kanzō. Yagi studied New Testament at Tokyo University and the University of Göttingen, completing his doctoral studies at Kyushu University in 1967. Prior to his retirement as professor emeritus of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, he held posts at a number of universities around Japan, in addition to being invited as a guest lecturer in Hamburg and Bern, where he received an honorary doctorate in 2000. Trained as a biblical scholar and influenced by the demythologizing theories of Rudolf Bultmann and the thinking of Takizawa Katsumi*, Yagi’s early publications were in New Testament studies, but from the time of his 1975 book on *Points of Contact between Buddhism and Christianity* his interests focused increasingly on the philosophical foundations of interreligious thought. Both through his own numerous publications and his active support of the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies from its beginnings in 1982, he came to be recognized as a major representative of Buddhist-Christian dialogue in Japan.

In recent years Yagi has attempted to work out a philosophy of religion using a symbolic logic he created under the inspiration of Nishida Kitarō’s* logic of ‘place’. The following selections, drawn from his earlier work, show him blending Buddhist theories of knowledge with a Christian theology of love into a single coherent statement about religion as overcoming ego-centered existence in order to realize a truer, deeper Self. It is from this standpoint that he finds at both the doctrinal and practical levels a fundamental coherence running from Pauline theology through Shinran’s Pure Land teachings on the Vow to Zen’s focus on self-awakening.

[TPK]

INTERRELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

YAGI Seiichi 1978, 1–11; 1988, 115–17

Egoism

Egoism is the mode of life in which the ego, ignoring its original relationship with the transcendent and with other selves, projects itself in a way it finds desirable. It endeavors to realize this projection and to impose it not only on others, but also on reality itself. That is, it not only attempts to rule over others and to have them acknowledge the projection, but it interprets the reality so that the very reality, as interpreted, justifies the self-projection as well. For instance, the egoist who cannot endure any authority above himself will deny the existence of God as the ruler. By contrast, the egoist who seeks his security

dependent on an almighty as his patron, invents such a God. Thus, the egoist constantly produces illusions.

To realize the desired state of the ego, the egoist must, first of all, make his existence secure. For this purpose, he seeks wealth and property. Second, he must know where in the structure of reality he is located. He seeks to have useful knowledge of empirical reality, so that the realization of his self-image may become possible. Third, he wants power because he needs it for his self-realization. Fourth, the state of the ego which he wants to realize must have the desired content. This content is not just the fulfillment of the ego's desires; it must seem brilliant, something worthy of admiration, both to himself and others.

It is not necessarily egoistic for people to make a life for themselves, to develop their potential, and accomplish great things. These can be the outcome of realizing an authentic existence, results which the self did not seek intentionally. Egoism consists in a person's *intentionally* desiring these results and doing so apart from one's relation to others and to the transcendent. Further, when attaining his desired self-realization, the egoist, like Narcissus, falls in love with his own brilliant figure.... In this case it is clear that the egoist objectifies himself and gazes at his objectified figure, concentrating all his interest upon it.... This way of understanding is fundamentally the same as the way of thinking by which the discriminating intellect grasps reality.

Discriminating Intellect

The discriminating intellect separates object from subject, analyzes the reality into entities, and explains the diversity of the objective reality from the combination of the substantial entities. Change is explained from the causal and teleological point of view. Now what happens when we understand ourselves with the discriminating intellect? We objectify ourselves; we separate ourselves from one another; we regard the objectified self as the true Self, something existing only through itself. When the self applies causal thinking to human relationships, it can exploit personal relations to serve its own self-realization. It is clear now that this way of thinking can be united with egoism and egoistic self-realization. The discriminating intellect as such is by no means egoism. But egoism comes to exist with the help of the discriminating intellect.

Christian Love

Love overcomes this mode of egoistic self-realization, this picturing of a self desirable to oneself, striving to realize it, and forcing others to acknowledge it. This love, this *agape*, is not created by the human self. It is the work, the expression, of life itself as determined through the fundamental structure of human existence. Conversely, the fundamental structure of human existence

is revealed in love. It comes to light when we love each other in *agape* and, in this sense, it is not brought to light by objective cognition. We cannot confirm others' love for us through objective observation. When we love, we understand what love is and, at the same time, we understand the nature of the human self that becomes what it should be as the subject and object of love. This way of knowing is called "Self-awareness."

This Self-awareness is not the cognition by which the self objectifies itself and observes itself. In that case, the content of the Self as the nonobjectifiable subject is not manifest to the subject. True Self-awareness is the mode of cognition in which the subject becomes "revealed" to itself; the content of the subject is experienced and revealed when it acts as subject. It is like knowing what freedom is by acting as a free subject. Still, love's understanding is not only such Self-awareness; it is also a *believing* knowledge. One who loves becomes aware of the fact that love does not issue from the ego as such, but from a depth transcending the ego. It issues from a Self that is a unity of divine and human activity (or "Christ," as in Gal. 2: 19–20). But we cannot observe as an objective fact how love comes from the transcendent. Therefore, we believe and know that love originated in the transcendent. It comes from the depth that is even deeper than the fundamental structure or self of human existence. Yet, love, in its working, is conditioned by this structure.

The nature of human existence is manifest in love: the self consists of the self and the ego that is aware of the self, but the self is not what it is only through itself. I am I in relation to Thou ("Im Anfang ist Beziehung," as Martin Buber says). In this sense, the self is not a substantial entity that exists by and *through* itself. It is rather a pole. Generally speaking, the pole is what it is only in relation to other poles. Like the two poles of a magnet, one pole is different from, even opposed to, the other in nature, yet one cannot exist apart from the other. In love, it becomes clear that the human self is a pole in personal relations....

The one who loves knows and believes that the work of God is the ground of love and sees the realization of the will of God in the formation of the community of love. He has the vision of its realization and participates in it. The act of love thus becomes an event by the work of the transcendent and through the free decision of the one who participates in it. Now the subject of this free decision is the act of a person in historical reality here and now. So, it is also the subject of the discriminating intellect of the ego. Love makes use of the discriminating intellect and then the discriminating intellect becomes the work of love. This order cannot be reversed. When we consider the structure of the religious self, we must make clear that very self (self-ego) is the expression of the work of God and at the same time the subject of the discriminating intellect. Insofar as it is the subject of the discriminating intellect, however, it is always possible that the discriminating intellect will develop an egoistic care for itself.

It can overlook that the self in its deepest nature is the expression of the work of God “in” the Self.

Integration

The relationship between the poles we call “integration.” A typical instance of integration is the community of saints as the “body of Christ.” Generally speaking, integration is the system which consists of plural individuals. Each of them is independent; each does not depend on the others, nor is it ruled over by them unilaterally. On the other hand, none of them can be what it is apart from others. Each has its meaning mediated by, and in relation to, the others. Namely, the individual in integration is, according to our term, a “pole.” And these poles are united as a whole into one system.

As an analogy for integration, consider music. Music consists of many sounds, each of which has its own individuality. Yet, each musical sound is what it is in relation to the whole and to other sounds, that is, each tone is determined through this relation. The sounds together make up one system. Because the musical sound is thus what it is in relation to others and to the whole, each sound conceives, reflects the others and the whole in it. If we do not perceive this, we do not understand the music. Just as music takes shape “in the heart” of a person, integration comes about “in” God (1 John 4: 7ff). God is understood in this context as the “field of integrating power”...

Enlightenment in Buddhism

Reality as it is understood in our daily lives, the reality we believe we know well, is by no means reality as it is. Rather, it is the world conceived by the discriminating intellect. It is a highly artificial, secondary reality pressed into the frame of the discriminating intellect and therefore conditioned socially and historically. In this context, “the facts” mean in this context the objective facts common to everyone. The essence of things is understood to be their self-identity. Reality is analyzed into substances as its fundamental constituents. Diversity is explained as the combination of entities and change as the operation of causal law. Human beings objectify themselves and regard the objectified self as true Self: something substantial, something that is what it is only by and through itself. This understanding of reality and the self is easily united with egoism. When this happens, the combination constantly produces delusions in one’s understanding of reality.

According to Buddhism, however, this understanding of reality is not ultimate. A more “primary” reality may be manifest to us, one that eradicates the frame of the discriminating intellect. Our grasp of reality is then freed from objectification, conceptualization, and substantialization. In this way, reality

shows itself to us in its aspect before it is set into the frame of the discriminating intellect. At this moment, it is revealed that subject and object are neither different nor identical. It is true that subject is subject and not object, that object is object and not subject. But really, there is no object apart from subject and vice versa. Subject and object are neither one nor two. Reality shows itself in its immediacy before it is fit into the frame of the discriminating intellect, before it is mediated by conceptualization.

THE VOW OF LIFE

YAGI Seiichi 1988, 115–17

In egoism, the direct self-affirmation of the ego and the discriminating intellect are bound together. Together with the discriminating intellect, the ego understands itself as the mere ego. Meanwhile, the mere ego, in order to be able to affirm itself, outlines a world over which it has control through the discriminating intellect. The self-affirmation of the mere ego, however, dissolves—indeed dies—in a faith in a savior. Such faith also leads to the overcoming of the differentiating intellect. The overcoming of the mere ego, however, also occurs in enlightenment (awakening) and this brings with it the dissolution of the self-affirmation of the mere ego. Therefore, in both cases the bond between egoism and the discriminating intellect is broken, so that the Self reveals itself as the true subject of the self.

The result of faith in both Christianity and 'Pure Land' Buddhism is the giving up of the ego's self-affirmation through and of itself. The one who relinquishes the self cannot remain outside this giving and so must be relinquished as well. The one who relinquishes becomes aware that the self is the final subject. In this way, the entire human is affirmed, borne by transcendence. That is the meaning of 'other-power' (the powerful action of the other, that is, of 'Amida') in Pure Land Buddhism. "Now it is no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20) is another expression of the same realization of the self. With this, the partiality of self-existence is lifted: "That I exist" means that I have died and Christ (in the case of Pure Land Buddhism, Amida) lives in me. Now the sole domination of the ego and the discriminating intellect with its language of thoroughgoing partiality is at an end.... Enlightenment means to understand oneself to be in the circle of existing beings, to comprehend oneself... so that the person is understood as one pole whose counter-pole is always the "object," the "thou" whom the person constantly encounters....

However—strange as it may sound—this entails a reconciliation of the ego with its own body and its own corporeality. The body is not always oriented in a friendly fashion toward the mere ego, not even for the "enjoying" ego that

accompanies the discriminating intellect. Often it offers resistance. When the ego attempts through its will to make use of the body and dominate it, the body resists. In the measure in which the ego, with its abstract will, wishes to dominate itself it degrades its body to mere flesh, which then puts up all the more resistance. Therefore, overcoming the mere ego—which takes place in faith, but also in enlightenment—leads to reconciliation with the body. The human person understands oneself, then, as no longer an abstract spirit (or reason or will), but rather as Life.

In fact, “Life” is a fundamental word in both the New Testament and in Pure Land Buddhism. For Paul, the body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16). In Buddhism, salvation or authenticity for the human being is... never understood as the separation or liberation of the psyche (whose essence consists of thinking) from the body. For Buddhism... Life manifests itself in the body as that which “wills” to form a circle of existing beings. Moreover, it does so in such a way that the individual—in order to develop its own possibilities, one’s own individuality—is at once a pole in the circle, while the circle integrates every individual into itself.

We may call this “will” of Life, which is based on its fundamental orientation, the “vow of Life.” “Vow” is, of course, a term fundamental to Pure Land Buddhism. According to it, Amida Buddha took the vow to found his Pure Land, where every confessing believer who calls the name of the Amida will go after death and attain enlightenment through him. In Pure Land Buddhism, Amida’s vow is something powerful, realizing itself in such a way that humans can trust in it. The notion of “vow” is closely related in meaning to the Hebrew Bible concept of *emeth* as “that which realizes itself on the basis of the will of God....”

The self is where the vow of Life manifests itself and is revealed. When it does, the vow of Life becomes the vow of the particular human being concerned.... Human life is that life which is conscious of itself, which understands itself, ... that life in which Life brings its essence to light. Life and light belong together. Christ, but also the Amida, are both eternal Life and light, the ground of the self-enlightening Life of the individual human person.... Light without Life is an abstraction, and Life without light is demonic, transformed into a dark drive. Life and light cannot dispense with each other. Here we see how philosophy and religion assume each other.

Further, enlightenment or awakening is absolutely necessary. Transcendence works upon the human being at every moment. However, insofar as a human being is not aware of this, no conscious “willing,” in the sense of the vow of Life, can arise in that person.... Only when one awakens to the vow of Life effected by transcendence will it become one’s own vow. Self-understanding, awakening to the Self, is the necessary condition for authentic Life....

[LS]

Chūōkōron Discussions (1941–1942)

Between November 1941 and November 1942, four second-generation professors of the Kyoto School famously discussed the theme “Japan and the Standpoint of World History.” Their discussions appeared in the journal *Chūōkōron* shortly after they occurred and in 1943 came out as a popular academic book, *A World-Historical Standpoint and Japan*. Kōsaka Masaaki* (1900–1969) was Director of the Institute for the Humanities at the Kyoto University, where Kōyama Iwao* (1905–1993) and Nishitani Keiji* (1900–1990) were teaching in the philosophy department, and Suzuki Shigetaka (1907–1988) was lecturing on western history. These four met originally at the behest of the Japanese Navy in the hope of creating an intellectual base for turning public opinion against the Japanese Army’s expansionist aspirations. Unfortunately, when the first discussion appeared in print, the attack on Pearl Harbor had already occurred and the editors decided to delete all negative references to Tōjō Hideki’s militarism.

The first discussions considered the significance of the fact that modern world history was no longer simply the actions of Europe towards the rest of the world. For the first time in modern history, there was a major national agency in global affairs outside Europe and the United States. The participants explored philosophical issues arising from this new context. These included: conflicting models of polity, a world order based on multiple centers of national agency, the need for every East Asian nation’s self-determination, and the hope for each nation’s tapping its own “moral energy” to define its own role in the new global context. What was needed, the participants agreed, is a philosophy of world history not based in abstract Hegelian ideas but emerging from actual world affairs, from what they called the “world-historical standpoint.”

The second round of discussions took place when the Pacific War was well underway and the Japanese military was still advancing, especially into East Asia. The four philosophers wondered how to make this activity into something other than a Japanese version of the imperialist expansionism typical of the old world order. How could one philosophically reformulate the “East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere” so that it could follow the ideals outlined in the first discussions? Paradoxically, the participants argued, for example, that Japan had to conquer China to preserve China’s own potential for self-determination. They agreed that only a united China free of European partitioning could, with Japan’s protection, find its own national “moral energy.” That would be its best opportunity to find its own vocation within the new world-historical moment.

By the time of the third round of discussions, Japan’s military fortunes had begun to reverse. The devastating defeat at Midway in June 1942 meant Japan would increasingly find itself in a defensive posture, losing its proactive agency in world history. In desperation, the participants realized the only option was “all-out war.”

In contrast to a “total war” that militarizes all physical resources, an “all-out war” involves all aspects of the people and nation, including their spiritual and intellectual capacities. The hope voiced in the discussions is that not just Japan alone, but the entire East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere, inspired by Japanese “moral energy,” would rise to demand an ideological change in global politics. This change would eventually allow each nation to tap its own moral agency and to define its own world mission in a new multi-centered world order.

The series of discussions had begun with an idealistic vision of a new philosophy of world history, one arising directly from concrete global events. The participants had believed a new philosophy could inaugurate a new and better way of understanding the “world.” The irony is that by the end of the discussions, it was precisely those concrete global events that had overtaken their philosophizing. The participants found themselves using their intellectual skills to rationalize Japanese actions that their own original philosophy had intended to repudiate.

[TPK]

FIRST SESSION: 26 NOVEMBER 1941

CK 1943, 6-8, 11-12, 14, 18-20, 24-6, 30-4, 42-4, 82, 92-102, 106-9, 126

*Kōsaka Masaaki**: ... Philosophy is more than the academic discipline of laying the ground for what already exists. It takes a further step as the scholarly discipline that gives an orientation to things in historical transition. It is the discipline of orientation. But does not the orientation of world history look different viewed from the East and from the West? Is there not a basic difference in the way the world is conceived? In short, the question for me is how the world is thought about. From the viewpoint of the Europeans, as Suzuki said, it is a matter of the crisis of Europe, but from our viewpoint things are a bit different than they are for westerners. The very way the world is seen and thought about is somehow different. We must give careful thought to just what the world is.

*Kōyama Iwao**: The world history that the Europeans are thinking of and the one that we think of do differ quite a lot.

Kōsaka: I have the sense that there are differences....

Kōyama: There should be. In a real sense, it is we Japanese who are more deeply touched by the question of world history than the Europeans. And I think this is only right. I am not referring here to a subjective conception of the Japanese but to something that has roots in the history of the world itself. That is how I see it.

Kōsaka, Suzuki Shigetaka: Agreed.

Kōyama: I don't really know anyone other than the Japanese who take the

problem of the philosophy of world history seriously, though somewhat earlier people like Spengler spoke of the rise and decline of the West.

Suzuki: Really a kind of Japanese revolutionary world consciousness....

Kōyama: For example, there is a German historian named Brandenburg who wrote a book called *Europe and the World*, in which he claims that true world history only begins in the twentieth century. For with the twentieth century came concern with things like the gradual resistance to Europe by the world outside of Europe, and the traditional idea of Europe as ruling the world was no longer so simple a matter. Nations outside of Europe—like Japan and Arabia and other colonial regions—stopped doing what Europe told them to do. It has come to the point that when international alliances are formed, all parties, at least formally, have equal rights. What he is arguing is that Europe has become a world and that very recently the real world has started to come into its own. If I remember correctly, he looks back at past history from this vantage point and finds it to consist of relationships within the European cultural sphere, the East Asian cultural sphere, and the West Asian cultural sphere....

.....

*Nishitani Keiji**: For the Europeans, the problems of Asia were not something that keenly affected them personally. Not in the way the problems of Europe affected us, I mean. This is the difference. While to Europe, Asia was seen as no more than raw materials for their own activities, for us the problem was how to cope effectively with Europe's activeness. Seen in terms of an I-thou relationship, Europe's position was one of an exclusive "I." Thus in Europe it is a matter of crisis consciousness and in Japan of a new world order. So if present-day Japan thinks about world history and the philosophy of world history in a new sense, I think it goes back to this kind of distinction.

.....

Suzuki: French nationalism is a Latinism or Occidentalism that identifies European tradition proper with the Latin peoples. This relegates Germany... and Russia to the sort of "pseudo-orientalism" we see in Europe. Then what of Asian consciousness? In the case of Japan and China and ethnic movements in India, the greater part of the driving force is made up of Asians with a European education. Far from a resurrection of a classical Asia, it is a kind of pseudo-orientalism which, in a word, is what we have to attack today....

.....

Kōyama: So to be in Europe means to be caught up in the crisis of European consciousness.... But this is different from what we mean by consciousness of world history.

Nishitani: That is not so surprising. There is an awful ignorance of the East. Academic specialists are different, but people in general feel Asia to be somehow far away, while for us, Europe is right near at hand.

.....

Nishitani: That isn't all. The other half of it is that besides defending themselves, there seems to be at bottom a sense among the Europeans that they themselves will give to the world, to put it kindly, some kind of new order. Put in radical terms, the idea that only the Aryan race is *kulturschaffend* while the Japanese remain at a lower, *kulturtragend* level, is to some extent a good way of expressing the general European sentiment of superiority. That, and their feeling of respect for the Japanese. There is a kind of anxiety of what the Japanese in their shrewdness might be up to. I say that in jest, but something like this also comes into the picture.

Suzuki: ... A kind of protectionism against the vague apprehension that non-European peoples might raise their heads, all the while refusing to shake off the idea that their own culture is the best.

Kōyama: Yes, the European consciousness of the Chinese.

Nishitani: That is why East Asian culture is considered to be at a lower level. It is true that those who really study the culture of East Asia admit that these are the only cultures really to rival those of Europe. I have often come across this, but only among those who understand. People in general are not that way. On this point, the distinction between the culturally creative and the culturally retentive is well suited to expressing the views of the general populace.

.....

Kōyama: That being so, we are left with the extremely difficult problem of superior and inferior civilizations..., but in order for there to be a consciousness of the fact that civilizations that are different can also be outstanding, does there not have to be a force working outside of civilization? Consciousness of the value of civilizations as superior or inferior seems to have come to Japan along with the conception of overpowering by economic and military strength, as Japan was overpowered after the end of the feudal period....

Nishitani: I think there is a point to that. The fact that in matters of military armament and the economy Japan has been able to hold its own seems to me a matter of character. In contrast, if we can imagine, for example, the mindset of people around the time of the Meiji Restoration, the feeling that western culture gave was, as we say today, of something "scientific," in the broad sense... as in the case of astronomy and medicine and the like, most of which came from the Chinese but with Europe was adjusted to fit the actual facts. Call it positivism, call it scientific in the broad sense of the term, this was the sense that people had. It was the same with literature. Why does European literature catch on with us? Because there is something positivistic to it (to take the term in its broad sense), because it seeks for human life or psychology and what have you in a form that accords with the facts, because in the broad sense it tries to ask after things positivistically. In other words, even in literature there is a sense of the

quest for “truth.” This inspired confidence that things were really that way, that the facts were as they were stated. To that extent it was a powerful cause.

.....

Suzuki: The East has a rational spirit but not a positivistic one. In a word, the East is metaphysical.

Kōyama: A metaphysical rationalism but not a positivistic one. We don’t often associate the two.

Suzuki: For example, we measured the heavens and eclipses but lacked the mathematical formulas to ground our measurements; or in medicine, we had experience with clinical examinations, but the basis was a metaphysical theory of five elements and six ‘*ki*’, or *yin-yang*, but not biology or anatomy. This was not a question of a failure of academic development but of a distinct cultural temperament.

Kōsaka: One can distinguish the positive from the metaphysical here, but at bottom I feel that logic is different in the East and in the West. For even in China there is a Chinese-style positivism.

Suzuki: You would go as far as that, would you?

Kōsaka: Nowadays, history books written by Europeans, compared with those written by Chinese, seem to me to differ in their mode of composition. Looking at what the Europeans do, it is fairly clear to the reader that a variety of themes are being developed one after the other. But open a Chinese history book and one finds very little development of themes; the flow is interrupted from one moment to the next. As one moves from one age to the next or one dynasty to the next, there are breaks and thematic exposition is uncommon. A fundamental principle is laid out and in terms of that principle all kinds of materials are lined up one after the other. This is often the case. But the ongoing development of the principle itself is relatively rare. For example, the principle of the five elements of wind, fire, earth, metal, and water is given; and from there east, south, middle, west, and north, or spring, summer, fall, and winter, or again anger, joy, thought, gentleness, and fear are made to correspond to it. Or the three colors of black, white, and red are made to correspond to the transition between three dynasties. In such cases, even if one grants the connections among the given elements, it is not clear why they should correspond to the directions, and only with a relation of correspondence or application, while relationships of development or deduction are wanting. This is discontinuous and has no continuous development. The Chinese have an interest in finding this kind of connection that fits well with a fundamental principle, and think that when this kind of application is possible, then understanding is possible. This seems to be the Chinese style of logic.

Nishitani: It’s contradictory, isn’t it?

Kōsaka: And that's why there's no progress. There is no deepening, only application. So, temporally speaking, it becomes contradictory.

Kōyama: I find the notion of developmental progress a particularity of European modernity. It would seem that Japan also lacks a notion of developmental progress. Around the middle of the Heian period the idea of the degenerate age of 'mappō' was current and it was thought that Japan was in decline. In particular, in the world of the samurai families Japan went bad, and so the notion of mappō came to be embraced by the aristocracy. The warrior class felt that their own world lacked an idea of history with development and progress. The idea of reviving the past emerges around the Edo period, but this is not a concept of a modern world eager to develop by progressing beyond the medieval.

Nishitani: That is the way it is in the West. Traditionally, assuming a religious standpoint has meant that the past can be revived at any time. But what is needed at present is a standpoint of religion that will embrace a modern notion of progress or pragmatic idealism, and yet resist becoming an idealistic religion.

Suzuki: I am by and large in agreement with Kōyama... that there is an ancient world in the East that was a world of true greatness, but however great the ancient world, whatever the level of its achievement, whose heights in no way pale in comparison with Europe but even exceed it at times, it is not the modern age. There is a splendid ancient world in the East that does not have a modern age. The fact that Japan has this modernity evokes a new era in the East, which is something very much world-historical. I find myself in agreement with Kōsaka here.

Kōyama: There is a tendency to imagine something primitive when one hears the term "ancient world," but in Japan it is not the case that the ancient world had only a primitive culture....

.....

Kōyama: ... The fascination of today's youth with Pascal and Montaigne is more than just a fad; it is an expression of the same modern spiritual anguish. They are captivated by a depth of interiority largely different from what our ancestors knew. But this does not suffice to escape the inner split and suffocation. The problem is extremely difficult. There is nothing in the depths of the historical spirit of the people to mediate what is deepest in the individual soul.... History of itself is not constituted on the basis of the individual soul of any single person. It is a question of species, of a people. Cannot the problems that beset the individual soul be resolved better by putting them in the context of the history of a people? This is the way questions are resolved from a standpoint of historicism. This is what it means to bring oriental 'nothingness' to life within history....

Kōsaka: ... The Chinese way of recording history and the European way, as

was said, differ, but this is based on differences in historical consciousness. If one looks at it more closely, in the West and China, in China and Japan, there are differences in the way history moves. The dynamics are different. This is the basis. In Japan, one does not find the kind of severe oppositional conflict one sees in the West, but there is a reformational, developmental dynamic. Is there not a difference here with China? There are differences in the way history moves in the East and in the West.

Suzuki: I feel the same. Even in the way history moves, it seems to me there are laws to be found in the East completely different from those manifest in the western idea of “development”...

.....

Kōsaka: The idea of the world is said to contradict the idea of the nation, but this is never the case. Far from being antinational, the world is national, and there is no reason at all to see this as contradictory. In the case of the three states of Korea, Buddhism ultimately became a Buddhism of national stability. Japan and the three kingdoms of Korea¹³ both thought of Buddhism in this way and, from there, grew antagonistic towards one another.

Nishitani: I wonder if there is not a wider issue. If relations between Japan, the three Korean kingdoms, and China—or what was in effect “the world” for Japan at the time—are also part of Japan’s history, the reason is that they were recognized as such from the viewpoint of Japan. But for Europe, in addition to German history and British history, there was also European history, and that history begins from Egypt and Greece. That is to say, it was a *European* world history. Is it not therefore a matter of the utmost importance to cultivate a historical outlook for an East Asian history that comprises Japan, the three Korean kingdoms, China, and the rest as one “world”?...

.....

Suzuki: Someone brought up earlier the question of philosophy’s leadership at the present time and mentioned how the age of scientific specialization, the way of thinking about things we find in the sciences in the nineteenth century, has reached its limits. The way businessmen think about economics or lawyers about the law—namely thinking about things within the context of a contract—has taken the idea of contractual agreement about as far as it can go. There is talk of a real reformation but there is no world outlook strong enough to direct it and see it through. So the reform is simply going along on its own or yielding to a narrow-minded subjective outlook. In any case, breaking through the limits requires philosophy. As I noted yesterday evening, perhaps ideas that at

13. [Ancient Korea developed into tribal states that gave birth to the three kingdoms of Koguryō, Paekche, and Silla during the first four centuries of the Common Era.]

first sound as if they were something artificially tacked on—like philosophical politics, philosophical war, and philosophical economics—are the most real for our times.

Kōyama: Traditionally the word *philosophy* has meant something special, something high-flown and splendid. For example, philosophy of law or philosophy of economics seemed no more than the *flatus linguae* of methodology or epistemology stuck onto the practice of law and economics like a stick grafted onto bamboo. If this situation is not rectified, philosophy can hardly take a leadership role for law and economics as a real philosophy of economics and law. It seems to me that in refusing to be something “grafted on,” philosophy now needs to attach itself directly to the fundamental divisions of the sciences. What one would hope for above all is that the points of contact would gradually increase.

.....

Kōsaka: The fact is, people think of philosophy as cut off from real life. They have forgotten that they carry a philosophy within themselves.... But a new philosophy, one with leadership, a revolutionary philosophy, is being founded today by looking critically at historicism. To speak of leadership or reform from the standpoint of philosophy may only be the substitution of a new image of the world for an old one. This is why investigating historicism is the right way to go. A new world is being shaped to replace the old East and the old West. More than a new image of the world, a new strength is emerging. And now that the idea of the world as divided into a western world and an eastern world is itself being broken down by a re-examination of historicism on all sides, an absolute wellspring, if you will an ‘absolute nothingness’, seems to be emerging from the foundations and coming into view. This makes it possible to do away with a simple historicism, but it also helps make a philosophy with meaning for the sciences more concrete. I think philosophy needs to be mediated by historical reality....

Suzuki: It seems to me that if awareness of world history is not sharpened, the efforts of historicism cannot get off the ground. One thinks in terms of a philosophy of world history, but there is also the study of world history. These are different matters but not unrelated. The study of world history needs philosophical motifs that are able to get beyond the limits of what history could do in the past.... As I said earlier, the philosophy we need must be keenly alert to reality, and may at first appear to be a superfluous appendage. This is because it asks after principles. Ours is an age in search of principles. At the same time, the danger today is the tendency to put too much weight on creativity and change, to the determinant of reflection on the clarity already achieved. This seems to me a danger for scholarship. Granted the need for novelty, this must not obscure what the past has made clear to us. On the one hand, it is the task of

scholarship to make what is already clear still more clear, and this is something important for any time and age; it doesn't change. On the other hand, with this in mind, it is extremely important to preserve the spirit of scholarship...

Kōyama: Obviously I do not really mean to argue the point with Suzuki, but I do not like the idea of putting too much weight on the idea that all people are in some sense philosophers. Philosophers are not without their faults, but there are cases where those in the sciences make crude philosophers.

Suzuki: I am trying to say that there is a need to preserve what is clear in the critique.

Nishitani: I wish that people in the sciences would do more philosophy, even if they do it idiosyncratically—more people from within the various specializations of the sciences. One does not expect the results to be polished at first, but the longer it goes on and the more the two sides draw closer together, surely the two sides will improve as a result.

Kōyama: That would be a healthy development.

Nishitani: And then the two need to criticize each other. If not, they grow self-complacent with each other...

Kōyama: I see the philosophy of world history as different from what it was in Hegel's time in the sense that it is necessarily mediated by the study of world history. Otherwise the philosophy of world history would turn into straight metaphysical speculation.

Suzuki: In that case it would hardly have any connection at all with the standpoint of the study of world history. The kind of philosophy of world history that has recently become an issue is not such a metaphysics but something deeply related to us here. And yet, the "method" is different...

Kōyama: There is no doubt that philosophy and the sciences have to be in contact with each other, but we must give serious thought to the form that that contact takes. From time to time, I get the impression that there is a kind of unspoken absolute trust in philosophy, but this is odd. Such absolute trust only shows that one does not know what philosophy is. For example, I am occasionally pressured to come up quickly with a Japanese philosophy. Whatever this "Japanese philosophy" turns out to be, the idea is that it would immediately spawn a "Japanese economics" and a "Japanese constitutional law" and all sorts of other Japanese academic fields. This way of thinking is around, but I find it extremely non-philosophical. It amounts to thinking that merely by locating the universals, the particulars will fly out on their own. The idea needs reforming. If something comes about as a result of some principle from the noble heights of Japanese philosophy, those who do not know philosophy will flock to it. But this is not philosophy. Nishitani made the point earlier that principles must always be sought from within the sciences, and that only from there may one enter the realm of philosophy. I wish those who are engaged in the sciences would see

this more clearly. I am uncomfortable with the shallow expectations of those who trust philosophy like a little hammer that can bang things into shape. For such people, all of one's own responsibilities can be laid on the shoulders of the philosophers. The principles of the sciences need always to be pursued. In this way thorny problems of principle that are encountered along the way can be worked out from the standpoint of the sciences. This is the point at which genuine philosophy comes into the picture.

.....

Kōsaka: ...What moves history, not just today but always, is moral strength. Does not such strength become a political principle at turning points? It seems to me that what Japan's youth needs today is more, much more, *moralische Energie*, a healthy sense of morality and a fresh vitality.... The vitality of a people is decisive not only for matters of culture, which is obvious, but for facing up to world history....

Kōyama: As soon as one mentions the word "war," it is immediately thought to entail something immoral, as if war and ethics were eternally disconnected from one another. This is an entirely formalistic idea of ethics. But that only shows how far real moral energy has already dried up. As Ranke and others have said, moral energy is present in the midst of war....

.....

Kōsaka: On this point, as unpopular as it is, it seems to me that Gobineau¹⁴ is worth considering. To be sure, I am uncomfortable with the idea that an Aryan race, defined by a purity of the blood and "race," is innately world-dominant. And yet, there is something interesting in thinking about tribe or race as one of the foundations of world history. Gobineau tries to explain the rise and fall of culture in terms of the purity of the blood of the race that carries that culture, arguing that when the blood is contaminated, the vital energy of a race is sapped. If one interprets the idea of purity of blood subjectively, substituting *moralische Energie* for it, then I don't think the idea is entirely without merit.

Kōyama: For me, the subject of moral energy is the countryman. The idea of a "people" comes from nineteenth-century cultural history, but today, whatever the history of the past be, there is no world-historical strength in a "people." In the true sense of the term, the key that resolves everything is that of the "countryman." Moral energy is neither individual morality nor personal morality, nor

14. [Joseph Arthur Gobineau (1816–1882), a French diplomat and reactionary thinker whose ideas had considerable influence on the Nazis, argued that culture was the creation of race and that racial mixture would only cause chaos. The idea of *moralische Energie* concentrated in nations and cultures rather than in "blood" was proposed by Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886).]

does it have to do with how clean the blood is. Is not moral energy the core of what is concentrated in cultural, political “countrymen” today?

Kōsaka: I agree. If a people is no more than simply a people, it doesn’t amount to much. When a people has subjectivity, it must take on the meaning of a nation of countrymen. A people without subjectivity or self-determination, that is to say, a people that are not countrymen is powerless. To make the point, a group like the American Indians do not represent a people that is really independent, since they have been absorbed into the people of another nation. Is this not ultimately the case with the Jewish people as well? In this sense, I believe that the subject of world history is the people of a nation.

Suzuki: In terms of life energy, can one speak of the age of a people? Is it possible to think in terms of a people being young or old, of being a living thing or an organism?

Nishitani: I find that academically unacceptable. That’s not the question.... It is rather whether we can completely ignore the question of purity of blood. It is said that the Italians of today have African blood in them.

Suzuki: That is what the famous anthropologist Sergi is studying. He said that there is considerable mixture of blood, including African blood.

Nishitani: Looking at the Italians, one senses this.... The ancient Romans seem to have been of very different stock. Just what influence this mixture of blood makes is a difficult question. In general, there are cases where new blood is a good thing, and cases where it is not. But I feel the whole issue is a complicated one.

Kōsaka: Think of it this way. When blood is mixed in—as in the case of Spain, or Hungary, where there is a good deal of mixture—the mixing takes place at the point where cultures intermingle. Moreover, it is not at the core of the different cultures that the commingling takes place, but at the periphery where a culture is spreading out. If that is so, you can’t even speak of a mixing of culture. The intermingling of blood does not weaken a culture. From the start such intermingling is going on at the outer extremes of a cultural sphere, and therefore the culture in question is, of course, also present at those outer extremes; it is not pure. In the same way, to speak of the youth of a people is not merely to speak of its blood. One may even say that age should be measured in terms of a culture’s creativity. As I said before, it is another thing to see this as moral energy, but I myself am not comfortable with approaching the question merely in terms of purity of blood as Gobineau does.

Kōyama: I have given some thought to this question as well, but have not yet made up my mind on it. Blood is not something that can be decided by its superiority or inferiority, by the strength or weakness of the blood alone. Is not blood something that lives or dies according to how it is directed, that is, according to principles outside of blood itself? Where blood relations are the

same, one may think that this is a cause for peace, but such is not, in fact, the case. Blood contends with blood. It is said that otherness begins among siblings, or that an outsider close at hand is more important than a relative far away. Is not blood something that can be turned in any direction? Does not the way in which the relationship actually works matter more than the relationship? So I have the sense that the deciding factors lie outside of blood.

.....

Kōsaka: ...Where is the center of the world in the midst of today's turmoil? Of course, economic and military strength are important, but these need a principle based on a new *moralische Energie*. The direction of world history hangs on becoming moral. Do not those who succeed in creating it become the leaders of world history? In this sense, Japan is being called on by the world to discover such a principle. I have the sense that it is being pushed from behind to bear this burden of historical necessity.

[JWH]

SECOND SESSION: 4 MARCH 1942

CK 1943, 158-61, 166-8, 184-7, 193, 204-5, 211-13, 237-40, 256, 262-3

Nishitani: ...The fundamental characteristic of a world-historical people, to take the case of Japan today, is that it is historically aware of itself. In a sense, up until now, even with the Greeks and Romans, a people became a world-historical people out of historical necessity but not out of self-awareness, that is, not out of a practical, constructive consciousness aimed at setting up a new order in the world. Such a consciousness was present among the ancient Israelites, but they were rather alienated from the realities of history. There was no self-awareness that came from the ground of the historical world; it was handed down from heaven on high. But at present, for the standpoint of what can be called a world-historical people, the self-awareness of historical necessity just referred to, on the one hand, and an ethics or the awareness of a practical, constructive subject, on the other, come together. This is the character of a world-historical people in our times. The Romans and the Germanic peoples were, of course, world-historical peoples, but they lacked self-awareness of being a world-historical people, a constructive consciousness towards the world. But Japan has taken a constructive position and thus has come to a self-awareness of world history. This strikes me as something very singular.

Kōsaka: I agree. World-historical peoples of long ago only extended their self into the world at large, without the self-awareness to acknowledge the existence of other subjects or to reform the world order. Therein lies the difference.

Nishitani: I would like to return to the question of moral energy. The primary issue is the concrete form that the ethical or moral dimension (moral energy) takes in East Asia. This is fundamental, and is also, I think, tied to the resolution of the China incident. I mean, the most basic issue is the “China consciousness” of the Chinese, the consciousness of always being the center of East Asia, and of Japan as having been educated through the grace of Chinese culture. In such a situation, the main thing is somehow to make them see and to realize that Japan is now the leader in the construction of the Greater East Asia of today, and must be the leader as a matter of historical necessity.... This would run counter to the Middle Kingdom consciousness of the Chinese, but the road that China itself must take is to make its people realize the fact that China itself did not end up partitioned among the colonizing countries is ultimately due to the strengthening of Japan and the efforts it has made. It must call its people to an awareness of world history, to make them leave aside their Middle Kingdom consciousness and cooperate with Japan in the construction of Greater East Asia. This would make it possible to think of a kind of manifestation of moral energy in Greater East Asia. Japan’s contemporary role of leadership relies basically on Japan’s moral energy. It was Japan’s moral energy that prevented the colonization of China. To take a world-historical standpoint and achieve historical consciousness of that depth means both that Japan itself recognize its own place historically and that this recognition carry over to the consciousness of the Chinese. In so doing, a new burst of moral energy in Greater East Asia can become a rudimentary force for the construction of Greater East Asia.

.....

Nishitani: There’s another thing we should keep in mind here, too. The Chinese probably consider Japan’s increased strength to be the result of the culture and technology it has taken in from Europe, so that in the end Japan’s strength is Europe’s strength. Someone has said that study in Europe is gold-plated and studying in Japan is silver-plated. The origins of Japan’s modern culture are in European culture, and therefore if one can come directly into contact with European culture, there is no need for Japan. This is the sense that underlies the kind of contempt that Japan is subjected to. In the last analysis it is probably a feeling that long ago Chinese culture made Japan strong and nowadays European culture is doing it, so that ultimately Japan’s strength comes from outside. And this accounts for why Europe is placed on a level higher than Japan. This lack of understanding ...

Kōyama: This is the most fundamental misunderstanding on the part of the Chinese.

Nishitani: As Kōyama says, the fact that Japan was able to take in Europe’s culture and technology voluntarily is due to the moral energy of the race. This is an important point. Culture and technology are great in themselves, but

because there was a spirit of confidence to take them in willingly, Japan was able to digest European culture in a very short time—and that is greater still. This is what the Chinese have failed to understand about the Japanese. It is of the highest importance that we get them to swallow it...

I am reminded of my sea voyage to Europe. A Filipino from Shanghai told me that he was highly envious of Japan, that Filipinos must take in more of western culture if they want their country to become like Japan. I remember thinking to myself at the time that things are not so simple. Japan's spirit has been refined through a long historical process. Before the arrival of European culture, Japan was possessed of an extremely high intellectual culture of its own, and an extremely vital energy was at work. Since that is lacking in the Philippines, even if they take in the same European culture, the results would be very different.

Kōsaka: I agree. Imitation is one thing and subjectivity is another.

.....

Nishitani: The special place of Japan in East Asia that Suzuki spoke of is most important. The relations of England and the United States with China ultimately stop at economic interests; for Japan, relations go beyond the economic to include the assurance of continued existence. And it is there that the meaning of self-defense comes directly into the picture. The failure of England and America to understand this special economic-and-defensive position of Japan is a world-historical issue. There is a kind of gap between nations that support the old world order and nations that are trying to shape the new world order, a gap that is related to consciousness of history and of the historical "world." This is why the former are unable to understand the latter.

In any case, in addition to the economic and defense elements just mentioned, I wonder if we cannot also try to connect the question of a people. I wrote something on this once to the effect that every country trying to construct a new order—be it Germany or Italy or Japan—is grounded consciously in race. This being so, we have to ask why they should choose a racial position. The answer lies, I think, in the fact that they were backward countries. In order for these nations to assert the continuation of their own existence in this world, it is necessary for them to become tight-knit countries internally. So they turned to the idea of being a "people" for a bond. Thus in the case of both Italy and Germany, when they each formed into a unified nation, the nation took shape as a peoples' movement, in the form of an awareness of racial spirit—that is, by standing on the ground of unity as a people. The meaning of Japan's Meiji restoration lay in the reorganization of a nation on the basis of its "people" as such. This is the meaning of the disbanding of the clans and the abolition of social classes, that is, of the demolition of feudal society. Even the movement to "revere the emperor, repel the barbarians" was an attempt by Japan to become self-aware of itself as a single, unified people.

All of this is part of the development of those countries into modern states, and this situation runs like a thread right up to the present. That is, for a people to be able to step anew into the midst of an established world order and maintain positive continuity with itself, it needs moral energy. Only then can a nation take shape on the basis of its people. In so doing, the nation may be said to be a manifestation of the moral energy of its people as such. Thus, as bad as the terms “nation-centered” and “nationalism” sound to the democratic ear, they are actually of great moral significance. But it is a morality of moral energy, not a formal morality as such. Furthermore, such a moral quality becomes visible only when it can uphold a nation within history. If it is grasped merely as a pure legal concept or in some other “academic” form, the moral energy is drained. In any case, when a nation with moral energy grounded in this kind of racial unity is impeded from developing within the established world order, a movement to tear down the old order necessarily arises. This, as Suzuki said, is what broke out on the occasion of the formation of the economic block of the British empire: a movement to construct a new order for the world and a wider sphere. Thus, in the construction of a new and wider sphere, a self-sustaining economy and a national defense to secure survival in a more basic sense are joined as one, and at their root is the moral energy to direct construction, the moral energy of a nation grounded on a people in the sense mentioned earlier. This is also where the call for a new world order comes from. There are national elements at the root of economic and defense elements, and these racial elements appear with moral significance as moral energy. This is the stage we are at now. It is what I have called a “world ethic”... Of course, if such a world ethic really takes a further step, it will come to the position of affirming nationality by denying it.

.....

Kōsaka: What Nishitani calls a “world ethic” rightly becomes concrete in the form of a “world-historical ought” (I am not sure this is the right term) that serves as an ethic for the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

.....

Nishitani: I wonder if the problem isn't here: the basic difference from the traditional colonial policies of Europe and America—as with England in Malaya, Holland in the Dutch East Indies, and America in the Philippines—is that while, to some degree, they secured a comfortable life for the local inhabitants, under that umbrella they exploited the people. As is often said, it was a kind of opium policy. In the case of Japan, while this was not entirely absent, when compared with Europe and America, the fundamental issue in the Greater East Asian Sphere is rather a human problem. For example, the individual peoples and nations that make up Europe have reached a very high standard of living. But in Greater East Asia, it is more or less only Japan that has reached such a high level, while the other peoples remain for the most part at a low level. A

racial self-consciousness is needed to educate them and pull them out of this. It is Japan's calling within the Greater East Asian Sphere to empower the region to bear the burden spontaneously and subjectively. On this point, the attitude of Japan towards the various peoples of the Greater East Asian Sphere ought to have a fundamentally different spirit from that of the attitude of Europe and America. On the one hand, it must open the eyes of the various peoples to racial self-awareness and transform it into a power of voluntary active participation; and on the other, Japan must continue to maintain the position of leadership in the process. While these two aspects are interrelated, on the surface they seem to contain a contradiction. The fundamental question is how to enable a reconciliation of this contradiction.

.....

Kōsaka: In any case, to respond to the present demand of world history means constructing an ethic.... In contrast to an individual and person-centered ethics, an interracial ethic between peoples is needed. Earlier ideas of racial or national ethics were limited to questions internal to a country and its people, and did not include attitudes toward other countries and peoples....

Nishitani: In terms of Greater East Asia, what is called for within Japan is an ethics that is neither individual nor totalitarian, but rather one that sublates the two. For instance, in recognizing the independence of a people, that people's independence must mean something very different from what it has meant in the past. Independence in the midst of Greater East Asia must mean an independence of solidarity that bears joint responsibility for coexistence within that sphere, a radical independence as a subject, and at the same time a radical co-responsibility that grows up from the ground of independence. Therein lies the problem of ethics.

.....

Nishitani: Does this not bring us back to the earlier question of moral energy? Japan is currently charged with the role of leadership in Greater East Asia, and for this the moral energy we spoke of earlier is fundamental. The source of this moral energy can be thought to spring from several places, but basically it comes down to what we may call with Kōyama the *Genossenschaft*, or at any rate the working of the spirit of the household in its essential meaning, which is particularly strong and vital throughout Japan and its unique national structure. To repeat, when there is self-awareness of unity as a people and this becomes the cornerstone of the nation, the nation itself can be seen as a manifestation of moral energy. At the same time, there is a sense in which one can speak of a household spirit at work in nation. For example, the return of administrative authority to the emperor in the Meiji restoration is a clear display of that household spirit for which there is nothing comparable in foreign countries. In that splendid reform the moral energy of the Japanese people once again came

to light, working through the reforms to become a driving force for strengthening the country. Present-day Japan's leadership in Greater East Asia, therefore, hinges on that same moral energy.

Incidentally, the idea of present-day Japan's leadership is to transmit its own moral energy to various peoples within the Greater East Asian Sphere in such a way that they can discover the same thing in their own backgrounds and become aware of their subjectivity as a people. The idea is to nurture those peoples by transmitting to them Japan's fundamental moving force of moral energy so that it can work within themselves. This is the new mode in which moral energy will work in the future; this is its leap to a new development. It is the self-nurturing of Japan's own moral energy. Of course, this has a fundamentally moral meaning, but at the same time it has a political meaning in the sense that it contains a political necessity rooted in reality. To repeat what I said earlier, the distinctive task of the Greater East Asian sphere lies in the fundamental matter of human development. Without it, the Greater East Asian sphere cannot be maintained and the continued existence of Japan itself cannot really be maintained. In this sense, both the ethical element and the political necessities of the moment come together in human development through the preaching of moral energy.

Therefore, even when a particular people is given its independence, it cannot be a mere independence. If there is not an ongoing change in the spiritual content of a people that has been made independent, nothing will come of it. If they become suddenly arrogant, aloof, and self-complacent after independence, then independence has done them harm. Thus, along with the granting of independence, the former spirit of the people must undergo a process of change. This change of spirit belongs fundamentally to moral energy. Hence, the root of the ethics of the Greater East Asian sphere consists of transmitting Japan's moral energy to each of the peoples, elevating them to a high spiritual level where they can cooperate with Japan and where upright interracial relations can be constructed. This is what upholding the Greater East Asian Sphere means for me. The foundation is in its morality and its energy. Looked at this way, the country's internal moral quality that Kōsaka spoke of, on the one hand, and the widespread moral quality of a new East Asian order and a new world order, on the other, represent both a leap and yet a continuity.

.....

Kōsaka: We need to think about a new form of being Japanese. But how...?

Suzuki: At the very least, it cannot be only a "Japanese" form of being Japanese that for a time was given so much emphasis.

.....

Nishitani: I would like to say something here. It is completely off the subject, but Japan's population is too small for the construction of the Greater East Asian Sphere. Some years hence, the population of Japan will need to grow to

over one hundred million, and this is the problem. At that point, is it not possible to turn those among the peoples of the Greater East Asian Sphere with superior qualities into something like “half-” Japanese? The Chinese people or the people of Thailand, as peoples with their own history and culture, have a kind of brotherhood that inhibits such a transformation in their case. Or again, people like the Filipinos who have no culture of their own but have so far fed off of America’s culture are perhaps the most difficult to handle. On the other hand, people that have no historical culture of their own but are possessed of superior qualities, such as the Malays, I’m not sure, but I mean quite superior ...

Suzuki: Perhaps the Indonesians.

Nishitani: Yes, or at least one hears that they have really superior qualities. Haushofer calls the Malays an “aristocratic people” or *Adelvolk*.¹⁵ It is said the Japanese also have Malay blood in them. With good reason, the Japanese are a “master people,” a *Herrenvolk*. Anyway, I am thinking that it is not impossible to take such a race or the Filipino Moros (this is second-hand information, but the Moros are said to be good also)—races of high quality—and from their early years educate them and turn them into half-Japanese. For example, I have heard that if one educates the Takasago of Taiwan, they become indistinguishable from the Japanese. Is that so? I mean that they would become half-Japanese in the sense of being educated until spiritually they are exactly the same as the Japanese. This would be one measure to counter the small numbers of Japanese, and at the same time would call forth from them their self-awareness as a people as well as their moral energy. I have been thinking of this as one possible plan. It is no more than the fantasy of a complete amateur, but ...

[JWH]

THIRD SESSION: 24 NOVEMBER 1942

CK 1943, 337–8, 358–9

Nishitani: From this all-out war of the Co-Prosperity Sphere—as I said in our earlier roundtable—the Japanification of certain peoples within the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, a thoroughgoing Japanification through education, is not a mere fantasy. Kōsaka also noted in this *Philosophy of Peoples* that it is a people that makes history, but at the same time, that it is history that makes a people. A people is something that percolates on the periphery, as it were, fusing and assimilating with other things in the historical process. To take

15. [The German philosopher Karl Haushofer (1869–1946) served as one of Hitler’s theorists on geopolitics.]

the case of Korea, though it probably doesn't apply in other cases, the general idea of the "Korean people" up to now is too rigid and inflexible to be adequate any more. The standpoint that considers individual established "peoples" as something fixed has generated ideas like racial self-determination. But in a situation like ours today, where Korea has been subjected to Japanese military inscription and where what is spoken of as the "Korean people" has entered into Japan in a completely subjective form, that is where they have become subjectively Japanese, their small concept of "people" that has up until now been thought of as something fixed seems to have fused into a large notion. In some sense the Yamato people and the Korean people can be said to have become one people. Moreover, certain elements from southern peoples—as with the Takasago who have been educated as Japanese—have been added in. Is this not the way it will go?

In any case, at present we are being called, both in Japan and Korea, to think of a "people" in broader terms....

.....

Nishitani: From this viewpoint, the word "prosperity" in the phrase "Co-Prosperity Sphere" needs clear definition.

Kōyama: I understand it to mean "upholding moral honor together."

Nishitani: "Honor"?

Kōyama: Yes, in the sense of self-esteem, a moral pride, or even glory.

Nishitani: I see. The English translate it with terms like "co-prosperity," but to dilute the richness of the sinograph to "prosperity" is to reduce it to what one finds in the American value system. There is an especially strong danger that the economic aspect is given great weight. Economic power is playing an extremely important role in the present war, and the economic development of the Co-Prosperity Sphere is also a matter of great weight. Yet we must think beyond American values. For this is an ethical dimension....

[JWH]

Overcoming Modernity: A Symposium (1942)

A trio of literary critics from the magazine *Literary World*—Kawakami Tetsutarō, Kobayashi Hideo, and Kamei Katsuichirō—organized a symposium in 1942 to discuss “Overcoming Modernity.” In July, they gathered a group of thirteen leading intellectuals from various fields including literary criticism, history, physics, music, and philosophy. They had no clear agenda, either political or intellectual. Mainly, they wanted to explore what “modernity” means: its roots in Europe, its impact on Japan, and its meaning for the future. They did not come to the meeting nor leave it with any consensus on how, or even whether Japan should “overcome” or otherwise prevail against modernity. Their papers appeared in the September and October issues of the magazine and a year later were collected into a book.

The selections below are from five of the participants: Kamei Katsuichirō (1907–1966), a symposium organizer and literary critic who was at the time studying Japanese romanticism; Shimomura Toratarō* (1902–1995) and Nishitani Keiji* (1900–1990), philosophers with ties to the Kyoto School; Moroi Saburō (1903–1977), a music theorist and composer; and Kobayashi Hideo (1902–1983), another organizer of the symposium as well as a major literary critic and a co-founder of the magazine. The passages are centered on some of the opening presentations around which the discussions took place, with only a small sampling of the actual discussions. As will be clear, the theme of “overcoming modernity” provided a common ground on which those openly sympathetic to the war effort, those cautiously critical, and those who simply maintained their silence could agree: that just as Europe would have to find its way beyond the problems created by modernity, so, too, will Japan, whose difficulties are multiplied by the fact that modernity was by and large imported and did not grow naturally out of the history and culture of Japan or its Asian neighbors.

[TPK]

DETOXIFYING CULTURE

OM 1943, 5–6, 15–17

Kamei Katsuichirō: In the name of a “battle of ideas,” two clichés are pitted against one another: a hero known as “the Japanese spirit” and a villain known as “foreign ideas...” The villain falls and the hero is showered with applause. This is the puppet-show fantasy that is being drummed into the psychology of ordinary people..., a feeble spirit enchanted by a display of bravery....

From the day we took over the latest western culture called “modernity,” the

greatest enemy, it seems to me, has been the lifestyle of a civilization that slowly and deeply violates the mind, spawning all sorts of illusions and chatter, and flitting about in every direction.

.....

The war we are engaged in at this moment is aimed outwardly at the destruction of the British and American forces. Internally, it is a kind of basic therapy aimed at curing the psychological malaise brought about by modern culture. These are the two aspects of the “holy war”; in the absence of either, the war effort would be hamstrung. To win the battle against the poisoning of culture is something that is not possible even in the short span of a century. Fortunately, we are emerging as military victors in East Asia, but is it not dangerous to suppose that this immediately spells victory against the poisoning of the culture we hope to rescue? This is the sort of delusion I wish to steel myself against....

Against the background of the present war, another war is taking place. We see it in the pressure of a civilization moving relentlessly ahead by an apparently natural force of persuasion; we see it in our trust in the machine and all the maladies and debilities of the spirit brought in its wake; and we see it in the self-destructive behavior of people who have lost all sense of moderation. It is not certain whether we will perish in this fight or be saved. But at least as we count our visible victories in the war, let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that this deeper war, hidden to the eyes, is a mere fantasy.

The illusion of “peace” that victors often carry around with them glosses over this abyssal war.... Behind the mask of “peace” the poison of civilization spreads. More frightening than war is peace.... The present disturbances are a war in the name of that abyssal war. In those battlefields the rise or fall of the Japanese people will depend on the clarity of their insight to drive away all delusions and on the eradicable fearlessness of their belief. Rather a war of kings than the peace of slaves!

[JWH]

DEMECHANIZING THE SPIRIT

OM 1943, 114–16

*Shimomura Toratarō**: Another platitude is that in the modern age’s creation of machinery, it is the humans who have become slaves to the machines. As if enslavement only began there. Even before the invention of machines, people were slaves in a different sense and indeed in many more ways. The machine was originally a way to free people from the slavery of work. Today we are still at an early stage of this process and hardly at its end. Not only

that, the enslavement of people to machines is not basically the responsibility of the machines, but rather of the institutional systems that run them and hence, in the final analysis, of the human spirit. The machine is a creation of the mind and the forging of a machine itself represents at first a triumph of the spirit. Is not the real question how to see that victory through to the end?...

If nature is necessity, then mind and spirit are essentially freedom. The priority of mind over nature is axiomatic..., but the problem is with the character of freedom.... The wisdom of the ancients consisted of the quest to follow nature by refining the mind, which is none other than subjective freedom. Modern philosophy produced “objective idealism,” but its transformation into an “idealism of objective freedom” marks the true culmination of the self-awareness of the modern spirit shaping modern science. The experimental method of modern science is a method that seeks to bring to light things that do not exist naturally or within nature—a mindset it shares with magic. The knowledge it aims at is not the intuition of essential forms, but the development of nature’s potential. Modern machines are one result. It is not simply a matter of the application or use of nature, but of restructuring, or making over, nature. What results from this modern process of creation is not a simple subjective freedom from nature, but a truly *objective* freedom. For the first time, objective idealism has been given a basis for becoming concrete reality....

The problem here, of course, is the notion of “soul.” One mark of Christian thought is its view of the soul as basically internal. In contrast, the new ‘mind’ or spirit is something external. In antiquity, the soul was something “spiritual” set against the body. But today the *mere* body no longer exists. Today, the body is an organism that uses machines for its organs. The tragedy of the modern age is that the old soul can no longer keep up with this “new body.” A new metaphysics is needed for this new ‘body-mind’. The body today is at once gigantic and delicate. It can no longer be gauged on the yardstick of ancient psychology with its talk of inner awareness and personal disciplines. It requires a political, social, even a national measure—or perhaps better, a new theology.

[JWH]

AN ETHIC OF SUBJECTIVE NOTHINGNESS

OM 1943, 22–9, 32–3

*Nishitani Keiji**: What kind of religiosity will it take to give things like culture, history, and ethics—all of which entail a complete affirmation of the human—the freedom to pursue their own standpoint, while at the same time ensuring equal freedom of activity for the sciences, whose standpoint is one of

indifference to the human? And then to take the further step of unifying the two standpoints?... The answer lies in the reconstruction of an ethic based on religiosity....

When we take away the body as a physical unit and the self-consciousness that we usually call *mind*, it would seem that nothing remains. So it seems. But at the point where nothing remains, in fact, something does remain. Or rather, it is only here that the one and only thing that can in no way be objectified and is therefore incapable of creeping into the scientific field appears: namely, the standpoint of true subjectivity that is within us as subjects. We may call this the standpoint of subjective 'nothingness'.... What is usually called "self" is thought of as some kind of substantial "being," like a thing. But true subjectivity lies on the other side of things and mind; it shows up in their negation as a "dropping off of body and mind," as a negation of the conscious self, as a "no-self" or "no-mind" that eradicates the petty ego.... When one transcends the self and awakens to the true self, there is no cutting oneself off from the body and its natural world, or from the mind and its cultural world.... This is not the working of a conscious self, but of a subject-in-nothingness....

In this way, the absolute negation of all things, including culture and science, is converted directly into an absolute affirmation. The subject that creates culture or engages in science has not yet attained self-awareness in the standpoint of subjective nothingness. This standpoint, from its position of transcendence, has to become immanent in the subject that creates culture or engages in science as a true subjectivity....

Obviously, this is distinctive to oriental religiosity. I believe that only this oriental religiosity is in a position to find a way through the difficulties straining the relationship between culture and science. Oriental liberalism alone... is an authentic liberalism.

Becoming aware of the standpoint of subjective nothingness is by its nature extremely difficult. On the other side of the coin, though, its way is a very, very real one. That is to say, it is a way that can be trod in all the activities of daily life or, to be more specific, a way that applies to efforts expended in all kinds of workplaces. Today we are really living as a single people, for which the nation must suppress the arbitrary freedoms of the individual. This is an unavoidable requisite if the nation is to subsist. In this regard, profound problems have beset the relationship between the individual and the nation in the modern West....

And why should the nation have to require its people to serve in a workplace that abolishes private concerns? Obviously, to reinforce as much as possible the internal integration of the nation, which in turn is necessary if the nation is to concentrate all its strength as a single unity and proceed with renewed energy..., a moral energy that constitutes the ethical essence of national existence....

Now, at a time when moral energy has to be manifested from the core of a

nation's life through the mutual correlation of a global religiosity and a national ethic, the possibility of doing so gives great importance to the traditional spirit within the life of a nation. Aside from Japan there is no country, not even in the East, where eastern religiosity has been bound closely enough to national ethics to become the cornerstone of the nation and tap its primal energies.

.....

The immediate task facing our country, it hardly needs saying, is the establishment of a new world order and a Greater East Asia.... But just as obviously, a Greater East Asia does not mean the acquisition of colonial territories, and a new world order must be a just order. In a sense, this is a matter of historical necessity and it is Japan's to bear. The historical necessity is that we are the only country to have developed the strength of a European country and to have been driven to a showdown with the Anglo-Saxon domination of Asia....

Moral energy is a concentration and strengthening of the nation as a community of people.... But if it is only that, it has no connection to a world ethic, and in certain circumstances can be linked to injustices such as making other peoples and nations objects of colonization, or serving the personal grudges of a nation. In our country today, the moral energy driving national ethics must at the same time directly energize a world ethic. Its character is a mutual entailment of nation-in-world and world-in-nation.

[JWH]

DEROMANTICIZING MUSIC

OM 1943, 38, 40-1, 50-1, 213

Moroi Saburō: For some time now, I have been concerned with the problem of how to overcome modern music, how to rescue music from the art of sensory stimulation, and how to restore it as an art of the spirit. That concern has not changed in the least up to the present day.

In essence, romanticism, the matrix of modern music, ... sets up the individual as the highest principle by elevating subjectivity and igniting individualism. The whole is known through the individual, and the height of the art lies in the moment of expression in which individuality catches fire and sets sparks flying in all directions. Through a penetrating expression of anthropocentrism, this kind of exaltation of subjectivity goes hand in hand with a respect for individuality that is only one step away from excess. Individuality is bound by nothing and carries itself with dignity in the continuing desire for perfect freedom—the highest ideal of romanticism. Geniuses and masters come to the fore as idols of this ideal.... And since romantic music yearns to express reverie

and fantasy, illusions becomes its defining trait... At present, romanticism and modernism are in essence no different: modernism has come to be seen as the latest stage in romanticism.

.....

Obviously overcoming modernity will mean something different for us than it will for Europe. But since our modernity took shape under the strong influence of western culture, what happens there can hardly be a matter of indifference to us. It would be mistaken to think otherwise. It is the same as the correlative connection between the Great East Asian War and the war in Europe.

.....

In European music, the feeling of “song” is fundamental and is what is most enjoyed by the audience.... The art of the East, it seems to me, is based on “narration.” That is why I like to listen to narrative music... and feel the mind of the composer sink in through what is spoken.

[JWH]

DEMYTHIFYING WESTERN LITERATURE

OM 1943, 217–18

Kobayashi Hideo: It is said that since the Meiji era, Japan has been assimilating western civilization as a process of opening and civilizing the mind. And yet, from that time on Japanese literary figures have not been part of the process. Clearly Japanese literary figures have been so thoroughly educated against a background of modern western literature that it has been absolutely unthinkable for them to look at that literature from a distance. The problem is, only recently have we started to reflect on what form this influence has taken.... When we finally got around to taking a first step in the direction of healthy reflection and research, a political crisis arose: some kind of “Japanese principle” had to be identified. This put us in a rather difficult position. We might even say that this difficulty has led to convening these present discussions.

Among modern literary figures, Dostoevsky strikes me as the most richly problematic. A little research has shown me how as a writer he suffered one misunderstanding after the next. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy were received enthusiastically in Japan, but no one stopped to think why the Japanese distorted them so arbitrarily and whimsically. To this day, every effort has been made to twist Dostoevsky and adjust him to the modern literary trends of Japan. I have learned a great deal by patiently examining the path he follows in prying social revolutions open to reveal the people of Russia and their God.... Dostoevsky did not give expression to modern Russian society or the Russia of the nine-

teenth century. Rather, he was someone who fought against those things and won. His works are a declaration of that victory....

People rail against western individualism and rationalism, but is it not important to see how the literary masterpieces of the West fought those very things and overcame them? All the fuss comes from the shallow historical view that an age of individualism produces a literature of individualism. Western modernity is a tragedy, which is why there are such splendid tragedians. Japan's modern age, in the rush to imitate it, is a comedy, but the only comedians of note are in the theater. However deeply one examines the social and historical circumstances that go into the production of a given literature, one can only see the dregs and rubbles that the great literary figures overcame or discarded; one cannot grasp their victorious spirit. We speak within modernity of overcoming modernity, but surely persons of excellence in *any* age try to overcome their age and thereby discover meaning in life.

The closer one looks, the more obvious it becomes that the view of history that has had such a strong influence over us thus far is in need of fundamental change. The modern view of history, roughly put, concerns itself with theories of historical change. It seems to me that it is also possible to have a theory about what does *not* change in history. In mechanics, for example, if the theory of changes in force is said to be dynamic, there are other theories of mutual balancing forces that can be thought of as static. Is it not the weakness of modern men and women to be swept along by the dynamic of historical forces while remaining oblivious to the static forces of history? Of course, it is my enduring affection for the literary arts that leads me to this way of thinking, which is why I see literature and the arts as always taking the form of harmony or order—not transforming power but equalizing it. Is it not a great blessing to possess the harmony and order achieved by those writers who, permanently at odds with their age, have struck a balance between the opposing forces? In this sense, we may speak of certain artists as having conquered their age. Masterpieces do not kowtow to their times, but neither do they flee it. Theirs is a kind of state of static tension....

Nishitani: Your view of history as containing change yet with something that does not change is how we presently think about history. Yet, are these two aspects separate from each other or are they always conjoined? If the latter, then what is called eternal in the literary world is always a product of history. The great writers, for example, may break free of their age, but they always transcend history from within history; in superseding history they are all the more deeply rooted in it.... We may speak of the “eternal,” but never apart from history.

[JWH]

TAKEUCHI Yoshimi 竹内好 (1910–1977)

Takeuchi Yoshimi is remembered in Japan today as one of the leading intellectuals of the postwar period in his dual capacity as China scholar and literary-social critic. He enrolled in the Chinese literature department at Tokyo Imperial University in 1931 and the following year visited mainland China, where he developed what would be a lasting and profound passion for Chinese literature and culture. With a small group of friends, including the novelist Takeda Taijun, Takeuchi helped form the Chinese Literature Research Society and published a small journal. After completing university in 1937, Takeuchi returned to China for another two years. Proclaiming his support for the Greater East Asia War after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, he was drafted in 1943 and sent back to China, where he served until the war's end. Returning to a defeated Japan, Takeuchi resumed his writing and translating activities and took up a teaching post at Keiō University and later at Tokyo Metropolitan University. Although he refused an invitation to join the Japan Communist Party, he did become affiliated in 1953 with the leftist-leaning Institute of the Science of Thought, whose members included the philosopher and social critic Tsurumi Shunsuke and the political scientist Maruyama Masao*. In 1960 Takeuchi resigned from his teaching position at Tokyo Metropolitan University in protest against the forced ratification of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty.

The passages included here reveal Takeuchi's thinking about the problem of modernity, particularly in the context of East-West relations. The first, from an essay published just three years after Japan's defeat, explains the need to rethink modernity in terms of a richer understanding of the historical dynamics between East and West. The second excerpt analyzes the hidden assumptions that prevented the Overcoming Modernity Symposium from coming to grips with the true problem of modernity, while the final selection suggests how this issue should be treated in the future.

[RFC]

THE NATURE OF MODERNITY

TAKEUCHI Yoshimi 1948, 129–33 (53–6)

It must first be recognized that oriental modernity is the result of European coercion, or something derived from that result. Because the term “modernity” designates a historical era, it would be confusing not to use this word in a historical sense. Civil society existed in the Orient from long ago, prior to the invasion by Europe. The genealogy of bourgeois literature can be traced back to the Song period (and perhaps even to the Tang period). Par-

ticularly at the time of the Ming dynasty, civil rights had in certain respects extended to the point where bourgeois literature was able to forge a type of free man that was virtually akin to the Renaissance man. (Ming bourgeois literature had a profound influence on Japanese Edo-period literature.) Nonetheless, it cannot be said that this bourgeois literature is immediately related to the literature of today. While present-day literature undeniably stands upon this legacy, it in a sense also began by rejecting that legacy. Or rather, what allowed the legacy of bourgeois literature to be recognized *qua* legacy, that is to say, what made tradition into tradition, was a certain self-consciousness. The direct moment that produced this self-consciousness was the invasion of Europe.

When Europe brought over to the Orient its modes of production, social institutions, and the human consciousness that accompanies these, new things were born in the Orient that had never previously existed. Although Europe did not bring these to the Orient in order to give birth to those new things (today, of course, the situation is different), that was the result. I do not know if the European invasion of the Orient was based upon the will of capital, a speculative spirit of adventure, the Puritan spirit of pioneering, or yet another instinct for self-expansion. In any event, it is certain that there existed in Europe something fundamental that supported this instinct, making the invasion of the Orient inevitable. Perhaps this something has been deeply intertwined with the essence of what is called “modernity.”

Modernity is the self-recognition of Europe as seen within history, that regarding of itself as distinct from the feudalistic, which Europe gained in the process of liberating itself from the feudal (a process that involved the emergence of free capital in the realm of production and the formation of personality *qua* autonomous and equal individuals with respect to human beings). Therefore, it can be said that Europe is first possible only in this history, and that history itself is possible only in this Europe. History is not an empty form of time. It includes an infinite number of instants in which one struggles against obstacles so that the self may be itself, without which both the self and history would be lost. Simply being Europe does not make Europe Europe. The various facts of history teach that Europe barely maintains itself through the tension of its incessant self-renewals. That fundamental thesis of the spirit of modernity that states that “the doubting self cannot be doubted” is undeniably rooted in a psychology of people who are located (who have located themselves) in such a situation as this.

Let us acknowledge that it is Europe’s essential self-expansiveness (leaving aside the question of what the true form of that self-expansiveness is) that, on the one hand, revealed itself in the movement to invade the Orient, and on the other, produced its unlikely child, the United States. This is the manifestation of the movement of European self-preservation. Europe’s capital seeks to expand

markets while its missionaries are committed to expanding the kingdom of God. Through incessant tension, Europeans attempt to be their own selves. This constant activity to be their own selves makes it impossible for them to simply stop at themselves. They must risk the danger of losing the self in order for the self to be itself. Once liberated, people cannot return to their originally closed shells; they can only preserve themselves within activity. This is precisely what is called the "spirit of capitalism." It grasps the self in the course of its expansion through time and space. The notion of progress, and hence the idea of historicism, first came into being in modern Europe. These were never placed in question until the end of the nineteenth century.

In order for Europe to be Europe, it was forced to invade the Orient. This was Europe's inevitable destiny, which accompanied its self-liberation. Its self was confirmed inversely by encountering the heterogeneous. Although Europe's longing for the Orient existed from long ago (or rather, Europe itself was originally a kind of mixture), the movement that took the form of invasion occurred only with modernity. Europe's invasion of the Orient resulted in the phenomenon of oriental capitalism, and this signified the equivalence between European self-preservation and self-expansion. For Europe this was accordingly conceptualized as the progress of world history and the triumph of reason. The form of invasion was first conquest, followed by demands for the opening of markets and the transformation to such things as guarantees of human rights and freedom of religious belief, loans, economic assistance, and support for educational and liberation movements. These very transformations symbolized the progress of the spirit of rationalism. From within this movement were born the distinctive characteristics of modernity: a spirit of advancement that aims at the infinite approach toward greater perfection; the positivism, empiricism, and idealism that supports this spirit; and quantitative science that regards everything as homogeneous.

It was natural that in the eyes of Europe, for which everything is homogeneous, the movement of European self-realization was regarded in terms of such objective principles as the influx of higher culture into lower cultures, the assimilation of such lower cultures, or the natural adjustment of the gaps between historical stages. The European invasion of the Orient produced resistance there, a resistance that was, of course, reflected in Europe itself. Yet even this could not change the thoroughgoing rationalist conviction that all things can ultimately be objectified and extracted. Resistance was calculated, and it was clear that through resistance the Orient was destined to increasingly Europeanize. Oriental resistance was merely the essential element that made world history all the more complete.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century a qualitative change occurred within the movement of European self-realization. This change was perhaps

related to oriental resistance, for it occurred when Europe's invasion of the Orient was nearly complete. The internal contradictions that prompted Europe to its self-expansion came to be recognized. At the same time that world history was approaching its completion with the comprehension of the Orient, the contradictions of this history surfaced through the mediation of the heterogeneity contained in the Orient. It was recognized that the contradictions that led to progress were the same contradictions that prevented progress, and when this realization occurred, European unity vanished from within. The chief causes of European dissolution can be seen from various sides. The result of this dissolution, however, was the emergence from within Europe of three worlds that opposed Europe at the same time that they opposed one another. The contradictions of capital (i.e., the material base) led to the negation of capital itself, as manifested by resistance in Russia. The New World, which was previously a colony of Europe, exceeded the European principle by gaining its independence. It then opposed Europe by becoming ultra-European. And third is oriental resistance: through its continued resistance, the Orient appears to have produced non-European things that are mediated by, while at the same time exceeding, the European.

Oriental resistance was reflected in Europe. Nothing can escape Europe's eyes insofar as it exists within the *framework* of modernity. At each crisis in which Europe becomes conscious of its internal contradictions, those things that rise to the surface of its consciousness are always recollections of the Orient that exists latently within it. Europe's nostalgia for the Orient is one of its contradictions, and it is forced to think this Orient the more explicit these contradictions become. Orientalists have always existed, but they were never more apparent than during the crisis known as the *fin de siècle*. This is the crisis of European dissolution, which has continued up to the present day. Although Europe has understood the Orient, it seems to have felt that something remains that cannot be fully comprehended. This is something like the root of European anxiety. I have a feeling that it might be the continued resistance of the Orient which provokes that anxiety.

[RFC]

OVERCOMING MODERNITY

TAKEUCHI Yoshimi 1959, 3-4, 24-5, 33-4, 64-7 (103-4, 118, 124-5, 145-7)

“Overcoming modernity” was one of the catchwords that took hold of Japanese intellectuals during the war. Or perhaps it was one of the *magic words*. “Overcoming modernity” served as a symbol that was associated with

the “Greater East Asian War.” Hence even now—that is to say, now when the name “Greater East Asian War” has been changed to “Pacific War”—the words “overcoming modernity” are bound up with dark memories. The generation of intellectuals over the age of thirty cannot hear or say these words without having mixed feelings.

.....

In its proper sense, “overcoming modernity” refers to the symposium that was carried in the September and October 1942 issues of the journal *Literary World*. With this publication, the words “overcoming modernity” became fixed as a symbol.... And yet, there was a diversity of intellectual tendencies among the participants: Japanists were present alongside rationalists, and each offered their own views on the question of “overcoming modernity.” In the end, it was never explained what “overcoming modernity” was. The symposium simply ended with the mutual recognition of intellectual differences....

But we must understand resistance and submission in light of the concrete situation. Thus even in the case of the Overcoming Modernity Symposium*, which appears so unsightly today, it seems to me that there is still something to be saved.... Resistance has several stages, as does submission. To discard the idea of “overcoming modernity” by identifying it with its legend would be to abandon those problems that we might still succeed in addressing today, and this would act against the formation of tradition. I think we should reclaim the legacy of these ideas with the greatest breadth possible.

.....

The Greater East Asian War was at once a war of colonial invasion and a war against imperialism. Although these two aspects were united in fact, they must be separated logically.... The Greater East Asian War clearly contained a double structure, one that stemmed from modern Japan’s tradition of war, beginning with the plan to invade Korea. This double structure involved the demand for leadership in East Asia on the one hand, and a goal of world domination by driving out the West on the other. These two aspects were at once complementary and contradictory. For while East Asian leadership was theoretically grounded upon the European principle of opposition between the advanced nations and backward nations, this was opposed in principle by Asian decolonization, which saw Japanese imperialism as equivalent to western imperialism. Japan’s “Asian leadership” had to be based on this latter Asian principle in order to gain recognition from the West, but because Japan had itself abandoned this principle, it had no real basis of solidarity with Asia. Japan advocated Asia on the one hand and the West on the other. This impossibility produced a constant tension, with the result that the war spread beyond all bounds without any resolution in sight.

.....

In sum, the Overcoming Modernity Symposium marked the final attempt at forming thought, an attempt, however, that failed. Such formation of thought would at least take as its point of departure the aim of transforming the logic of total war. It failed in that it ended in the destruction of thought.

In a way, the Overcoming Modernity Symposium represented a condensed version of the aporias of modern Japanese history. Faced with the urgent task of interpreting the idea of eternal warfare at a time of total war, the symposium marked the explosion of such traditional oppositions as those of reactionism and restoration, reverence for the emperor and exclusion of foreigners, isolationism and the opening of the country, ultranationalism and “civilization and enlightenment,” and East and West. It was thus correct to raise these issues at the time, all the more because they aroused the concern of the intelligentsia. That the symposium produced such poor results is unrelated to the raising of these issues itself, but rather stems from the symposium’s failure to dissolve the war’s double nature, that is to say, its failure to objectify the aporias of modern Japanese history *qua* aporias. Hence it was impossible to produce a strong thinking subject who could exploit Yasuda’s¹⁶ destructive force toward other ends. These important aporias thus vanished into thin air, and the symposium became nothing more than a published commentary on official wartime thought. Combined with the postwar atrophy, the disappearance of these aporias prepared the intellectual ground for Japan’s colonization.

.....

The disappearance of the aporias of modern Japanese history with the defeat has allowed the state of intellectual ruin to freeze over. Creativity of thought is now hardly possible. If we are to restore creativity to thought, we must unfreeze this state of ruin and rethink these aporias. In order to do this, we must... resolve the irresolvable question of the “China Incident.” If all the energy invested in the war had been wasted and there were no possibility of inheriting it today, then any intellectual formation through tradition would also be impossible. The problem facing Japan today is not the dominance of “myths,” but rather the fact that the quasi-intelligence that could not overcome “myths” has been rehabilitated, and not “single-handedly.” Surely the “modernists” and “Japanists” have today come together to make of the future an unprecedented utopian era of ‘Enlightenment’ that we shall applaud and rejoice: “present-day Japan is truly a civilized and enlightened Japan,” and this is a “fortunate and joyous situation” (Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Autobiography*). The volume edited by the Japanese Culture Forum entitled *Tradition and Change in Japanese Culture* is proof of this. Such

16. [Yasuda Yojūrō (1910–1981), a literary critic, was one of those invited to the symposium on “Overcoming Modernity,” but declined for reasons unknown.]

national duties as claiming a position of leadership in Asia and “overcoming” western modernity are in principle opposed to each other. Equating Japan with the West revives the former duty and abandons the latter. This represents a deviation from tradition and is not a true resolution. For the Japanese Culture Forum, the aporias of modern Japanese history do not exist. “In our hearts we refuse the bad company of Asia and the East” (Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Escape from Asia”). According to these new proponents of “civilization and enlightenment,” however, Fukuzawa’s facts were mistaken in that Japan was never part of Asia. It thus follows that the notion of “national independence” over which he labored is meaningless, which in turn means that there has been no history since the Meiji Restoration. Ironically, the Japanese romantics’ aim of destroying ideas has in this way been accomplished in the opposite direction.

[RFC]

JAPAN AND ASIA

TAKEUCHI Yoshimi 1961, 113–14 (164–5)

The main point about Japan’s modernization is that it was introduced from without on a western model. Chinese modernization, in contrast, was forged on the basis of its own ethnic-national characteristics, and this is what allowed China to modernize more purely. Given that Japan and China here represent distinct cultural types, could one then say the same thing about distinct human or individual types? This question then went on to focus upon the problem of postwar education in Japan, suggesting that the American educational system had, in fact, been smuggled in under the name of democracy. Like democracy as a whole in Japan, the many incongruous elements visible in education today were seen as proof of the failure of this move. Was it thus wise to introduce democratic laws here, as such democracy is premised upon a notion of the western individual? Shouldn’t Japan rather stop pursuing the West and ground itself on Asian principles?

These are important questions, ones that I have made the theme of all my work. Yet my thinking is slightly different. I do not make distinctions on the basis of human or individual types, for I would like to believe that men are everywhere the same. While such things as skin color and facial features are different, I would like to think that men are substantively the same, even in their historicity. Modern societies are thus the same around the world, and we must recognize that these societies produce the same type of people. Likewise, cultural values are everywhere the same. But these values do not float in the air; rather, they become real by permeating man’s life and ideas. In the process by which such cultural values as freedom and equality spread from the West,

however, they were sustained by colonial invasion—or accompanied by military force (Tagore) or by imperialism (Marxism). The problem is that these values themselves thus came to be weakened as a result. For instance, although equality might exist in Europe, one glance at the history of Europe's colonial exploitation in Asia and Africa reveals that equality has not been attained by all. It is extremely difficult to imagine that Europe would be capable of effecting such global equality, and nowhere is this better understood than in Asia. Oriental poets have grasped this point intuitively, as can be seen in Tagore and Lu Xun.¹⁷ These poets felt that it is their role to achieve such global equality. Such ideas as Arnold Toynbee's are currently fashionable, in which the Orient's resistance against western invasion is said to lead to the homogenization of the world, but here as well one can discern the limits of the West. Asians today would disagree with this view. Rather, the Orient must re-embrace the West, it must change the West itself in order to realize the latter's outstanding cultural values on a greater scale. Such a rollback of culture or values would create universality. The Orient must change the West in order to further elevate those universal values that the West itself produced. This is the main problem facing East-West relations today, and it is at once a political and cultural issue. The Japanese must grasp this idea as well.

When this rollback takes place, we must have our own cultural values. And yet perhaps these values do not already exist, in substantive form. Rather I suspect that they are possible as method, that is to say, as the process of the subject's self-formation. This I have called "Asia as Method," and yet it is impossible to definitively state what this might mean.

[RFC]

17. [Lu Xun (1881–1936) was one of the pioneers of modern Chinese literature.]

KARATANI Kōjin 柄谷行人 (1941–)

The writings of Karatani Kōjin, like those of many other literary critics today, cross disciplinary boundaries and challenge the presuppositions of academic philosophy. Educated in economics and English literature at Tokyo University, Karatani has exerted an influence far beyond his native land and original fields of training. At Yale University in the mid-1970s he worked alongside Paul de Man and Fredric Jameson on problems associated with formalism and structuralism. His *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx* (2003) was a seminal work for thinkers like Slavoj Žižek who practice philosophy as cultural criticism. Teaching at Columbia University since 1990 and occasionally at Cornell and UCLA, and lecturing throughout Europe, he has produced trenchant critiques of capitalism, fresh interpretations of Marx, and novel adaptations of Lacan that take shape against the often silent background of a Japanese intellectual heritage. Some titles deliberately belittle any explicit appeal to things Japanese, such as his 1997 article, “Japan is Interesting Because it is Not Interesting,” and his co-authored work of 1979, *Overcoming Kobayashi Hideo*, which alludes to the Overcoming Modernity Symposium* of 1942. In *Architecture as Metaphor* (1995), Karatani associates western philosophy’s search for foundations with a will to architectonic thinking that he finds absent in Japan. In the reflections below on Derrida’s relegation of phonocentrism to the West, however, he argues that the same phenomenon characterized Native Studies in Japan, and is inscribed in the ideas of a Japanese language, race, and nation.

[JCM]

NATIONALISM AND ÉCRITURE

KARATANI Kōjin 1992, 81–91 (17–25)

The phonocentrism of Japan’s eighteenth-century nativist scholars contains within it a political struggle against the domination of Chinese “culture,” or a bourgeois critique of the samurai system since Chinese philosophy was the official ideology of the Tokugawa ‘shogunate’. In an effort to find a Japanese that preceded Chinese characters, as well as the “ancient way” that would correspond to it, nativist scholars looked to works written between the seventh and eleventh centuries such as the ‘*Man’yōshū*’, the ‘*Kojiki*’, and the *Tale of Genji*. But they totally lost sight of the fact that such *écriture* did not begin as an effort to record speech, but rather as an attempt to translate written Chinese into Japanese.

When Dante wrote in the vernacular, he did not directly transpose contemporary spoken language into writing. From the various idioms (Saussure) existing all over Italy, he selected one. It is not because he selected the standard idiom, but rather because he wrote in the vernacular as a form of translating Latin, that his *écriture* later became the standard *écriture*. That act relegated the other idioms to the status of dialect. The same can be said in the cases of French and German. The vernacular was written so as to “resemble” Latin and Greek as much as possible. In the case of France, for instance, the Académie Française was established in 1635 for the purpose of “giving a clear set of rules to the national language, making it pure, eloquent, and capable of handling the arts and academic disciplines.” It is wrong to think of this as a reformation of the French language, however. As I said above, “French” did not exist as a spoken language; it was simply that written “French” later became the spoken language. “French” as *écriture* existed as a translation of Latin, which is precisely why it became a language “capable of handling the arts and academic disciplines.” It is for this reason that Descartes wrote in both French and Latin, and that his French became the norm. Latin, a single idiom of the Italian provinces, became a language “capable of handling the arts and academic disciplines” because of its development as a translation of Greek written documents, a process in which the Greeks themselves participated.

The same is true of ancient Japanese. Contrary to a widespread and foolish misconception, Chinese characters are not simply ideographic, but also contain a phonetic element. Thus, among the many races within the Chinese character culture sphere there were various attempts to employ Chinese characters as phonetic signs (*kana*). Yet Japan was ultimately the only country to absorb Chinese characters into its *écriture*. Other neighboring states either abandoned Chinese characters or, like modern-day Korea (North and South), are currently in the process of abandoning them. In the case of Korea, for instance, Chinese characters were adopted just as they were spoken (albeit their pronunciation was Koreanized). And Chinese characters were the dominant form of *écriture*—even though the phonetic *hangul* alphabet was invented in the fifteenth century, it was hardly used. In Japan, by contrast, Chinese characters were also read with Japanese meanings and pronunciations (*kun*). This kind of *écriture*, known as the mixture of Chinese characters with *kana* phonetic signs (*kanji-kana konkō*), can already be found in the eighth-century *Kojiki*. Contrary to the opinions of nativist scholars, the language of the *Kojiki* did not transpose the contemporary vernacular into writing; rather, it was a translation into the vernacular based on the official history of the ‘*Nihon shoki*’, written entirely in Chinese characters, which had been attempted earlier. The Chinese characters employed phonetically at this time were soon abbreviated into a syllabary known as *kana*. Needless to say, at that time and thereafter Chinese characters existed as “true

letters” (*ma-na*, in opposition to *ka-na*, literally “provisional letters”). Because of this, *écriture* in the *kana* syllabary is called “women’s writing.” In fact, this *écriture* gave birth to a great deal of women’s literature after the tenth century. Nevertheless, Japanese *écriture* is fundamentally the combined usage of Chinese characters and the *kana* syllabary.

The nativist scholars perceived the true “spirit of Yamato” in the literature by women written purely in the *kana* syllabary. To be sure, Murasaki Shikibu excludes Chinese words from the *Tale of Genji* in a highly conscious manner. In a court which operated under the *ritsuryō*¹⁸ political and legal system introduced from China, and which had also been permeated by Buddhism, Chinese words must have been used on a daily basis. During this era, writing in Chinese was also the only “shared language” that had any currency beyond the limits of the Kyoto court. Norinaga perceives a criticism of “Chinese ideology” in Murasaki Shikibu’s rejection of that language. But let us return to the example of Dante: as one reason for choosing to write in the vernacular, he asserts that Latin “is not the appropriate language for love.” In that sense, we can say that the language of poetry and prose fiction (*monogatari*) rejected Chinese words because those genres dealt principally with “love.” But the reason that the *Genji* was widely read even in its own time was not simply because it was written in the vernacular. Murasaki Shikibu was perfectly capable of reading and writing Chinese; even if she intentionally excluded Chinese words from her writing, her work nevertheless normalized the Yamato (Japanese) language as *écriture*. That *écriture* probably has little to do with the vernacular language being spoken in Kyoto at the time. However, the *écriture* of women’s court literature, limited to the theme of love or the relations between the sexes, would not have currency in other areas. At that time and ever since, the mainstream of Japan’s *écriture* has been the mixture of Chinese characters and the *kana* syllabary.

Within the phonocentrism of nativist scholars who criticized this mixture lies a romantic, aesthetic line of thought that aims to privilege emotion and mood above that which is moral or intellectual. Although this phenomenon has nothing to do with the West, it nonetheless runs parallel to the western trend. It is a “modern” line of thought, as it were. This nativist philology was rejected from the Meiji period onward. Japan’s modern philology begins with the introduction of nineteenth-century western historical linguistics. It consisted in a mechanical application of western grammar to the agglutinative language of Japanese. On the one hand, this project is natural-scientistic; on the other hand, it is statist. With the introduction of Saussure in the 1920s there was a minor

18. [A system of centralized patrimonial rule based on Confucian principles and introduced into Japan in the early seventh century.]

change in terminology, but the discipline itself remained fundamentally the same—it simply became possible, for instance, to refer to Japanese (the language of the Japanese nation-state) as *langue*.

This is the context within which Tokieda Motoki consistently criticized Saussure. Needless to say, the Saussure he criticized was nothing more than the notion of Saussure generally accepted at the time. In spite of the title of his major work, *A Study of the National Language* (1941), Tokieda there rejects the view that Japanese is the language of the nation-state or the language of the race. One reason for his stance lies in the fact that he was a professor at Keijō Imperial University in the Japanese colony of Korea. Within the Japanese empire that subsumed the different races and languages of Taiwan, Korea, Okinawa, and the Ainu, the language of the Japanese would have to be treated as something separate from race and nation-state. At the same time, Japanese would have to be severed from the culture attendant upon it. In short, Tokieda had an understanding of the multilingual situation that made him an exception in Japan. At the same time, he tried to trace his steps back to the nativists and particularly to the theory of language developed by Motoori Norinaga's* disciple, Suzuki Akira. At a glance, this appears to be nationalism. Yet it is the scholars of "national language studies" who were, in fact, romantic and nationalistic. Tokieda simply criticized the application of western grammar to Japanese (which, for instance, led to a useless discussion of the "subject" in Japanese) and sought a universal theory which could explain Japanese as well.

Against Saussure, who rejected the romantic subject, Tokieda laid the charges of being natural-scientific, analytical, and structuralist. He furthermore perceived in Saussure not only nineteenth-century linguistics but also "western metaphysics." However, as I have already said, this is merely a misunderstanding. Tokieda criticizes Saussure by saying, "Language can never exist apart from the subject." This criticism may apply to pre-Saussurian historical linguistics or to the Durkheim line of sociology, but it is inappropriate to Saussure himself. Saussure emphasizes the fact that linguistics always begins with the "speaking subject." Within that context, *langue* is something discovered after the fact, not something which exists objectively. He simply points to the fact that, so long as an understanding of meaning exists between two or more people, *langue* exists therein. Thus the phoneme, as that which discerns meaning, is differentiated from material speech. Of crucial importance is the form (difference) that discerns meaning. Accordingly, the external difference of speech and writing are not the issue. Language is ever and always value (difference).

Nevertheless, as Jakobson pointed out, we cannot deny the co-presence of a certain nineteenth-century "naturalism" in the *Course on General Linguistics* compiled by Saussure's students. Jakobson brings in Husserl's phenomenology and produces structure through "phenomenological reduction," as it were. Such

is structuralism in the strict sense of the word. Thus, as in the case of Derrida, poststructuralism begins with an internal critique of this kind of phenomenology. In relation to this, we should note the fact that Tokieda's criticism of Saussure frequently quotes from Husserl. Moreover, although he never quoted him, Tokieda took the work of Nishida Kitarō* as the basis for his argument. As a case in point, Tokieda's "subject" is not the Cartesian thinking subject, but rather Nishida's "subjective 'emptiness'" or "subject as emptiness."

It is within this context that Tokieda embraces the analyses of Motoori Norinaga* and Suzuki Akira. Suzuki demonstrated the distinction between "words" (*shi*), which have a signifying semantic content, and "linking elements" (*ji*) such as particles (*joshi*) and auxiliary verbs (*jodōshi*) which, though having no such content, manifest an affective value. Nativist scholars compare these particles to a string that holds the jewels (words) together. In other words, they correspond to the copula in Indo-European languages. Based on this distinction, Tokieda interprets words as objective expression, and linking elements as subjective expression. He thereby considered that, in opposition to writing in western languages, in which the subject and predicate are like two poles supported by the verb "to be," writing in Japanese is unified by the fact that the "words" (objective expression) are always enveloped in "linking elements" (subjective expression).

Yet when we consider the fact that Tokieda not only criticized western linguistics but even attempted to criticize the "western thought" that lay behind it, we clearly perceive the influence of Nishida's philosophy. Recently Nakamura Yūjirō* has read Nishida Kitarō as the "deconstruction" of western philosophy, invoking Tokieda's linguistics:

Deserving of attention is the fact that Nishida's pursuit of a "logic of 'place'" unexpectedly illuminates the "logic of Japanese." It is even more noteworthy in that Nishida himself has not proposed any argument in direct relation to the Japanese language. It is Tokieda Motoki's theory of Japanese grammar that alerts us to the fact that Nishida's "logic of place" is an embodiment of the "logic of Japanese."

What especially connects Tokieda's "language process theory" to Nishida's "logic of place" is the concept of "topos" as the foundation for the function of language. According to Tokieda, "topos" is not unrelated to physical place (space), but it also includes the contents that fill up space. At the same time, it also includes the "stance, mood, and emotion of the subject that inclines toward" the matter and scenery that fill up space. Thus, "topos is neither a purely objective world, nor a function of purely subjective inclination, but rather a world integrated by the nominative case." Our concrete experience of language cannot be apprehended anywhere except in this "topos." (NAKAMURA Yūjirō 1987, 199–200)

This kind of understanding reads the situation backwards. Tokieda was reading Nishida from the very start. And his *Study of the National Language* (1941) was written in the same context as the Overcoming Modernity Symposium* (1942). The “logic of Japanese” discussed by Nakamura is ahistorical and deceptive. Tokieda’s distinction between words and linking elements, or the claim that words are enveloped by linking elements, was not elicited solely by the fact that Japanese syntax is determined by the sentence-ending. If such were the case, why didn’t the same concept emerge from other Altaic languages which possess the same syntax? The answer is simple. The distinction between words and linking elements is rooted in the Japanese *écriture* in which Chinese characters and the *kana* syllabary are used together. Those parts which correspond to concepts are inscribed in Chinese characters, and those which correspond to particles and auxiliary verbs are inscribed in *kana* syllabic symbols. This distinction itself is based on a historical convention in *écriture*. In actuality, the “logic of Japanese” is based on this history.

This is furthermore related to a historical problem which is not unique to Japanese *écriture*, but has arisen everywhere in the wake of Romanticism. In Japanese, a certain kind of emotion/mood which does not become a concept is discovered in the particles written in the *kana* syllabary as “string for the jewels.” In western languages, as typified by Heidegger, that element is found in the verb “to be.” This verb is a copula not in the sense that it signifies equivalence, but rather because it “copulates” ideas, so to speak. What Heidegger called “the loss of being” meant the reduction of “being” to a simple, logical copula. Thus his emphasis on “being” is nothing but an emphasis on “emotion/mood” as an originating source in opposition to ideas. But, in fact, this is a form of thought which emerged in the wake of Romanticism, wherein lies a common thread with the Japanese nativist scholars’ critique of “Chinese ideology.” In other words, it is a critique of Latinization that traces its own roots back to ancient Greece.

Heidegger’s existentialism is enunciated within a history of philosophy based on western grammar, but it is rooted in a highly modern problem. In the context of Japanese, the argument did not take the form of existentialism. In a sense, Nishida took Buddhist philosophy as his base, and spoke in such ontological terms as “being as ‘nothingness.’” But in fact those terms were connected to late eighteenth-century nativist thought. In other words, this was already a modern form of thinking. Of course, Heidegger and Nishida are different, but this must not be reduced to the difference between western and eastern thought. Just as Heidegger joined the Nazis, Nishida had a political function as an ideologue for the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere.”

At this point it is necessary for us to reconsider the fact that Tokieda severed

“Japanese” from race and state. He wrote thus at a time when the Japanese empire was expanding from Taiwan and Korea throughout all of East Asia:

If, in fact, the domain of the national language and the domain of the Japanese state and the Japanese race were in perfect correspondence, then there would be no problem whatsoever with defining the national language as that language which is used by the Japanese race and put into practice in the Japanese state; but one look at the relationships between state, race, and language today clearly shows that to define the national language thus is never anything more than a matter of convenience. (TOKIEDA Motoki 1940, 3–4)

When Tokieda severed Japanese from race and state, he was conscious of a situation in which Japanese would spread throughout “Greater East Asia” as the dominant standard language. That, in itself, is a political consciousness.

Of course, Tokieda was not an imperialist. In fact, he publicly denounced the sort of “national language strategy” which sought to enforce the use of Japanese as a standard language in Korea down to the pronunciation of family and given names. Furthermore, he rejected the notion of extracting Japanese culture and philosophy from the Japanese language. After the war, while scholars of the Kyoto School had to revise their work either publicly or in stealth, he was able to publish *A Study of the National Language* without making any revisions whatsoever. Indeed, after the war his works were published unaltered, and revisions were also unnecessary. This circumstance does not, however, set Tokieda apart from the advocates of “overcoming modernity.” For all of the latter were also criticizing imperialism, and if we look at their work in formalist terms, as Nakamura Yūjirō has done, then they still bear reading even today. The problem is that in so doing we turn their political context into an abstraction. By severing Japanese from race and state, Tokieda simultaneously ended up turning the politics of language into a complete abstraction.

[IL]

Samurai Thought

Samurai Thought Overview

The question of whether there is such a thing as samurai philosophy, and if so, what it might consist of, is one of the more complex issues in Japanese intellectual history. This is primarily due to developments that occurred during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which are still inextricably linked to current discussions of the question. From the 1890s onward, a romanticized image of the samurai emerged, motivated by cultural and political currents at the time. The major lasting effect of this idealization was the idea that “warrior thought” represented an independent and relatively homogeneous intellectual tradition that defined the content of this samurai philosophy. In this context, samurai thought was generally viewed as a practical ethical philosophy that was closely tied to the unique role of the samurai class and yet was also seen to provide prescriptive moral norms that could be applied to all members of society. The impact of these modern developments has been so considerable as to make it virtually impossible to discuss the subject without referring to them, as they were responsible for shaping many of the images of samurai thought that prevail today. This is especially true of the widely recognized concept of *'bushidō'*, or the “Way of the warrior,” which was actually largely created and defined around the turn of the twentieth century when the term itself first came into widespread use.

Samurai thought was much more diverse than most modern interpretations would indicate, but this was obscured by the approach taken by many modern writers on the subject, who relied on the works of a select handful of samurai to define their view. In addition, the ideas that would allow warrior thought to be defined as an independent tradition differ considerably from those that are featured most prominently in modern discussions on the subject. The texts selected in the pages that follow are intended to convey this diversity and help set the writings of samurai alongside their modern interpretations. The selected documents also reveal conceptual threads that were present throughout the evolution of samurai thinking, threads which were heavily indebted to Confucian political philosophy.

Two of the leading exponents of *bushidō* in modern Japan were Nitobe Inazō (1862–1933) and Inoue Tetsujirō (1855–1944). Nitobe was a prominent Christian who received an American-style education, primarily in English, and his most influential writings were also composed in that language. Nitobe's promotion of *bushidō* was motivated by a desire to explain Japanese culture to a western audience, although he freely admitted to Japanese audiences that he was not especially knowledgeable with regard to the subject. In contrast, Inoue was at the center of the Japanese academic establishment as a professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University. His voluminous writings on *bushidō* attempted to create a nationalistic cultural basis for the political and educational system of the time. Although many of his works came into disrepute after the end of World War II due to their nationalistic nature, he remained the dominant figure in *bushidō* discourse from the turn of the century until his death in 1944. The following short passages from the writings of Nitobe and Inoue, published within two years of each other at the turn of the century, present some of their earliest outlines of *bushidō*. Nitobe opens his work *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* in these terms:

Chivalry is a flower no less indigenous to the soil of Japan than its emblem, the cherry blossom; nor is it a dried-up specimen of an antique virtue preserved in the herbarium of our history. It is still a living object of power and beauty among us; and if it assumes no tangible shape or form, it none the less scents the moral atmosphere, and makes us aware that we are still under its potent spell....

The Japanese word which I have roughly rendered chivalry, is, in the original, more expressive than horsemanship. *Bu-shi-dō* means literally military-knight-ways—the ways which fighting nobles should observe in their daily life as well as in their vocation; in a word, the “precepts of knighthood,” the *noblesse oblige* of the warrior class....

Bushidō, then, is the code of moral principles which the knights were required or instructed to observe. It is not a written code; at best it consists of a few maxims handed down from mouth to mouth or coming from the pen of some well-known warrior or savant. More frequently it is a code unuttered and unwritten, possessing all the more the powerful sanction of veritable deed, and of a law written on the fleshly tablets of the heart. (NITOBE Inazō 1899, 1, 3–5)

Inoue's explanation is hardly less patriotic in tone:

To say that *bushidō* is an ethic consisting of things that were traditionally practiced by our country's warriors gives, I think, a general meaning of *bushidō*....

And if one were to identify the content of this thing called *bushidō*, its primary principle ultimately comes down to the spirit of the Japanese race....

However, *bushidō* developed gradually, aided by Confucianism and Buddhism, and in this way gradually came to be perfected. Because of this, in its fully finished form *bushidō* is the product of a harmonized fusion of the three teachings of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

.....

It is not possible to say with accuracy in what age *bushidō* arose.... If one goes further and further back, it is possible to discover some of the principles of *bushidō* already in the tales of the Japanese gods.... The Japanese race has a spirit that primarily respects the martial, and it must be said that this is the source of *bushidō*. In other words, it would certainly be safe to say that *bushidō* has existed since ancient times. (INOUE Tetsujirō, 1901, 2-4, 7-8)

DEATH AND LOYALTY

Two prominent ideas in modern discussions of samurai thought have been the attitude of Japanese warriors towards death and loyalty. Both were idealized significantly in the early twentieth century, in official documents as well as in popular literature, and they continue to shape current images of the warrior class. The virtues of absolute loyalty to the emperor and nation, and the readiness to lay down one's life for them, became central tenets of prewar propaganda directed at both the military and civilians, and featured prominently in popular nationalistic culture. Although these ideals were strongly rejected immediately after 1945, they were picked up by certain elements again in the latter half of the twentieth century so that to this day they continue to shape the image of samurai thought.

Notions of Death

One of the aspects most frequently associated with samurai philosophy is the way of dealing with death. As a universal and inescapable part of human experience, death has been a central issue in philosophies of all times and places. In the case of the samurai, however, their very profession dictated that they would, in all likelihood, have to deal with death far more frequently and directly than the rest of Japanese society, let alone philosophers in other traditions. A stoic approach to death is thus one of the traits most commonly attributed to samurai thought. In reality, however, writers on warrior thought have had widely divergent ideas on the subject. Some, like Suzuki Shōsan*, were apprehensive of death, and many others did not deal with the subject in great depth. This was largely due to the fact that most writings on warrior morality were composed during an age of relative peace, and death by unnatural causes was a fairly remote possibility.

Still, there were several thinkers who took death as the foundation of their thought. They include Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659–1719) and Daidōji Yūzan (1639–1730), whose works are referenced most frequently by modern interpreters of samurai views of death, and were used in propaganda and education in the years before 1945. Even after the end of the war, Yamamoto and Daidōji's writings continued to attract a certain interest in Japan and abroad, Mishima Yukio (1925–1970) being their most famous promoter. Prewar interpretations of samurai thought often emphasized the ideal of self-sacrifice. However, as Mishima argued a few years before his dramatic suicide in 1970 by disembowelment, what at first appears to be suicidal striving towards death may actually be a philosophy of life.

Consider, first of all, the following passage from the *Hagakure* of Yamamoto Tsunetomo:

The way of the warrior is discovering death. If there are two possible choices, just resolve the issue quickly by choosing death. There is no real need for details. Steel your nerves and proceed. Though your goals may not be met, to disparage such action as being a dog's death is the haughty martial way of the metropolitan areas. If there are two possible choices, meeting one's goal is not important. We prefer to live, and on the whole, what we prefer has good reason. However, if one misses one's goal and continues to live, he is a coward. This is a difficult distinction. If one dies without meeting one's goal, it is a dog's death and unsettling, but it will not be shameful. This is the strength of the martial way. Every morning and evening, one should die again, and when one has entered a state in which one is constantly living in a body that is already dead, one will grasp the freedom of the martial way. One will be able to fulfill the duties of his position without error throughout his life. (YAMAMOTO Tsunetomo 1716, 220)

Daidōji Yūzan writes in his work for novices:

A warrior is one who, from the time he picks up his chopsticks to enjoy his boiled rice cakes on New Year's morn until the evening of the last day of the year, keeps death constantly in mind and makes it his first and true intention every day and every night. If one can keep death constantly on one's mind, one will fulfill the two ways of loyalty and 'filial piety', one will avoid all disasters and calamities, one's body will be without disease or ailment throughout a long life, and one's very character will be positively reformed. All these things are results of this virtue.

Specifically, human life in general can be compared to the evening dew or morning frost—it is a very brief and fragile thing. This being said, it is especially precarious to live the life of a warrior. People want to be able to live a long life, to serve their lord forever, and also to take care of their parents. These have long been regarded as righteous acts, but things happen so that

they fail to serve their lord and neglect their filial obligations to their parents. If one can just stand prepared to serve, aware that one is alive today and that what lies in store for tomorrow is unknown, then whether one is receiving instructions from his lord or revering the faces of his parents, one knows that it could be for the last time. Conscious of this feeling, one will not fail to fulfill one's true intentions towards his lord and his parents. In this way, the two ways of loyalty and filial piety are said to be reconciled. (DAIDŌJI Yūzan 1834, 299–300)

In our own times, Mishima interprets the meaning of the *Hagakure* in more contemporary language:

In modern society the meaning of death is constantly being forgotten. No, it is not forgotten; rather, the subject is avoided.... We simply do not like to speak about death. We do not like to extract from death its beneficial elements and try to put them to work for us. We always try to direct our gaze toward the bright landmark, the forward-facing landmark, the landmark of life. And we try our best not to refer to the power by which death gradually eats away our lives. This outlook indicates a process by which our rational humanism, while constantly performing the function of turning the eyes of modern man toward the brightness of freedom and progress, wipes the problem of death from the level of consciousness, pushing it deeper and deeper into the subconscious, turning the death impulse by this repression to an ever more dangerous, explosive, ever more concentrated, inner-directed impulse. We are ignoring the fact that bringing death to the level of consciousness is an important element of mental health. (MISHIMA Yukio 1967, 67–8 [28–9])

The Nature of Loyalty

The concept of loyalty is one most commonly associated with the samurai, and was strongly emphasized in modern *bushidō* interpretations. In the Meiji period, loyalty was redirected from lord and feudal domain to the emperor and the nation, and in the process came to be applied to all Japanese citizens and given a more absolute character. Samurai ideas of loyalty, however, were considerably more nuanced, depending as they did on temporal, geographical, social, and ideological factors. Broadly speaking, two types of warrior loyalty can be distinguished.

First, there is a reciprocal, even contractual, understanding of loyalty, which dominated the periods of warfare prior to 1600. This pragmatic interpretation contends that both lords and retainers have either material or moral responsibilities towards one another, and that transgressions by either party would result in damage to or severance of the relationship. A second type of loyalty, which came to be espoused more prominently by certain samurai during the peace of

the Tokugawa era, is a unidirectional relationship based on the retainer's demonstration of absolute loyalty to his lord, regardless of the situation.

Furthermore, there were samurai thinkers who held views that incorporated both of these concepts, or neither, and the following excerpts are indicative of the diversity of thought regarding the nature of loyalty. Yamaga Sokō* (1622–1685) has this to say in his *Essential Records of the Sagely Teachings*:

Loyalty is planning for others with no consideration of oneself. 'Sincerity' is being honest and genuine, without deceit. Loyalty is without selfishness, and sincerity is without deceit. Loyalty is demonstrated in the mind, and sincerity is demonstrated in affairs. With loyalty one acts for one's lord and elders, and with sincerity one interacts with one's friends. The teachings of the sages exist in loyalty and sincerity.

Reciprocity means not doing unto others what one would not desire to have done to oneself. Loyalty is being selfless towards things and affairs, and consideration is governing people through empathy for them. (YAMAGA Sokō 1665A, 20)

The *Hagakure* puts it this way:

There is a famous saying by Yamazaki Kurando, that "a retainer who sees too much is bad." It does not suit a retainer to fix his mind on matters of reason or correctness, such as what is loyal or disloyal, what is righteous or not righteous, or what is proper or improper. If one is devoted to service, forgetting reason and forgetting his own self, and places greatest importance on his lord without consideration for secondary or tertiary matters, everything will become clear and settled. This will make one a competent martial retainer. By being excessively devoted to service and placing utmost importance on one's lord, it is possible that one will make mistakes, but this is the truly desirable approach. Although it is said that excess is bad in all things, if one is a retainer, excessive devotion to one's service that results in mistakes is actually an expression of true desire. People who look at things through reason will generally become hung up on minor details, and live their lives in vain. This is regrettable. In fact, we only have one life. It is best to do without secondary or tertiary matters. It is bad for one thing to become two. One should discard everything, and to the utmost focus pure spiritual concentration on service. Repeated lofty reasonings about the nature of loyalty and righteousness are detestable. (YAMAMOTO Tsunetomo 1716, 268)

ESSENTIALS OF SAMURAI THOUGHT

Despite the emphasis on death and loyalty in modern interpretations, on the whole, samurai thought was marked by great diversity of opinion. There were also important concepts that appear in the discourse of virtually all

commentators on warrior ethics. We may single out two of them, both of which are related to political philosophies arising from the unique role of Edo-period samurai as a ruling elite of warrior-administrators. The first is an awareness by samurai that they were members of a unique social class; the second is the belief that there is a necessity to maintain a balance between civil and military virtues. Interpretations of these two streams of thought varied considerably, depending on the individual and the time and place in which they were writing, but most writers on warrior ethics and thought made sure to address them.

Samurai Class Awareness

The notion that samurai were different from, and generally superior to, other classes of society is common in accounts of warrior ethics. Views regarding the nature of this uniqueness and its attendant responsibilities and privileges vary, but the fundamental awareness of belonging to an elite class was essentially universal. However, since this uniformity of thought was largely dictated by the political structure of the time, official abolition of the class system and emphasis on greater social equality in the Meiji period meant that this current of warrior thought came to be largely neglected and even rejected.

The following excerpt from Yamaga Sokō's *Conversations* is one of the most cogent defenses for the political order of the time.

The tasks of a samurai are to reflect on his person, to find a lord and do his best in service, to interact with his companions in a trustworthy and warm manner, and to be mindful of his position while making duty his focus. In addition, he will not be able to avoid involvement in parent-child, sibling, and spousal relationships. Without these, there could be no proper human morality among all other people under heaven. The tasks of farmers, artisans, and merchants do not allow free time, which means that they are not always able to care for these relationships and fulfill the 'Way'. A samurai puts aside the tasks of the farmers, artisans, and merchants to make the Way his exclusive duty. In addition, if ever a person who is improper with regard to human morality appears among the three common classes, the samurai quickly punishes them, thus safeguarding true heavenly morality on earth. It should not happen that a samurai knows the virtues of letters and arms but fails to use them. Thus, formally, a samurai will prepare himself in the use of swords, lances, bows, and horses, while inwardly he will exert himself in the relationships of lord-vassal, friend-friend, parent-child, brother-brother, and husband-wife. In his mind, he pursues the civility of letters, while outwardly he is prepared martially. The three common classes make him their teacher and honor him, and by following his teachings come to know what is essential and what is insignificant....

Therefore, it can be said that the essence of the samurai consists in understanding his task and function. (YAMAGA Sokō 1665B, 32-3)

A Balance between Civil and Martial Virtues

In addition to discussions of class awareness, the most common theme in samurai discourse is the idea that the life and actions of a warrior must strike a balance between martial qualities and civil qualities such as culture, literacy, and scholarship. This balance between “arms” and “letters” changed throughout Japanese history, with the emphasis often shifting to the virtue that commentators felt was being neglected in their day. While letters were more important to writers addressing the experienced warriors of the seventeenth century, the focus tended to shift to arms in the late Edo period, when commentators lamented the perceived “softening” of the samurai class. Ultimately, however, most samurai thinkers who considered the subject stressed the necessity of maintaining a healthy balance between the two, as can be seen in the following excerpts from the beginning and end of the Edo period.

Nakae Tōju* (1608–1648), in a work devoted to the distinction between arms and letters, draws on Confucian principles to explain himself:

It was asked: if one says that letters and arms are like the two wheels of a cart or the two wings of a bird, then are letters and arms like two colors? Otherwise, what kind of things can be said about letters and arms?

The master replied: common explanations of letters and arms show a great lack of knowledge. To ordinary people, reading verse, composing poetry, mastering literature, having a gentle disposition, and becoming refined are considered “letters.” Learning and knowing mounted archery, military drill, and strategy, and having a stern and fierce disposition are considered “arms.” These are merely things that are similar or dissimilar. Originally, letters and arms were a single virtue, and not a thing that could be separated. Just as all of creation is one force yet there is a distinction between *yin* and *yang*, if the intuition of human nature is a single virtue that can be distinguished into letters and arms, then letters without arms is not true letters, and arms without letters are not true arms. Just as *yin* is the root of *yang*, and *yang* is the root of *yin*, letters are the root of arms, and arms are the root of letters. With heaven as the warp, and earth as the woof, ruling all countries under heaven well and correcting the way of the ‘five relationships’ is called letters. If there are people who do not fear the ‘will of heaven’, have malicious intent and are without the Way, and also obstruct letters and arms, then punishing them and/or going to war and subjugating them before unifying and ruling all-under-Heaven is called arms....

If the martial Way is needed for implementing the way of letters, then letters are the root of the martial Way. If the force of the martial Way is used to rule with the Way of letters, then the root of the Way of letters is arms. In addition, everything must always be in accordance with both letters and arms. “Letters” means correctly practicing the way of filial piety, brotherliness, loyalty, and

sincerity. “Arms” means striving to eliminate things that obstruct filial piety, brotherliness, loyalty, and sincerity. (NAKAE Tōju 1651, 246–7)

A century and a half later, Yokoi Shōnan (1809–1869) bore witness to the continuation of this way of thinking:

Everyone professes that letters and arms are the key to the way of ruling the country, which is the profession of the samurai. However, those who point to letters today refer to arts that have been transmitted from ancient times through the Chinese classics and histories. For the most part, these people are carried along in a stream of vacuous reasoning about broad subjects, and in extreme cases they merely memorize texts. Those who speak of arms ride horses and practice the arts of swordsmanship. They discuss meanings and say clever things without seriousness, or are impressed by the most violent blows. In extreme cases, they even engage in competitions. As a result, scholars look at the carelessness and roughness of military men and despise their lack of usefulness, while military men mock the haughtiness and effeminate manner of the scholars, as well as their inability to endure hardship. The two groups are irreconcilable. The ruling structure has changed and brought about contradictions that show the beginning of conflict. This has become a common evil throughout the Japanese nation and is the result of a failure to clarify the nature of the Way of the samurai...

To know what true letters and true arms are, one can turn to ancient works. The “Counsels of Great Yu” of the *Book of History* acclaims the virtues of Emperor Shun as sagely, divine, martial, and lettered. These are the true principles of arms and letters. At the time, there were no traditional texts to be learned or martial skills to be mastered. The act of expressing these sagely virtues—described as ‘humaneness’, ‘righteousness’, strength, and gentleness—was referred to as “letters and arms.” These things originated from moral principles and obviously these were in no way related to skills or arts. Later, they split and became two paths. To bring them together again is to return to their noble and ancient meaning.

.....

If one desires to realize the way of loyalty and filial piety, and seeks the order of things on the basis of moral principles, letters will show the correct way. Arms have to do with calming one’s mind and steeling one’s courage through experimenting in techniques and undertaking ventures. Although the nature of the ventures is no different today, there is a great difference between throwing oneself into techniques to calm the mind and experimenting with techniques after having cultivated the mind. To make a comparison, today’s letters and arms are like trying to make the water at the mouth of a river clear while ignoring its muddy source. If one does not understand the true source, it is only natural that one will not benefit in times of order or in times of chaos. (YOKOI Shōnan 1860, 458, 463)

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

HURST, G. Cameron III. "Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal," *Philosophy East and West* 40/4 (1990): 511–27.

IKEGAMI, Eiko. *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

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[OB]

Women Philosophers

Yosano Akiko
Hiratsuka Raichō
Yamakawa Kikue

Women Philosophers Overview

Throughout most of Japan's history, only a small number of women who had distinguished themselves in literature were able to express their ideas publicly. Not even the increased educational opportunities and the birth of specialized journals dedicated to women's issues that came with the Meiji Restoration of 1868 were any match for the deeply male view of women as domestic "property" unsuited to intellectual inquiry. We see this reflected in Fukuzawa Yukichi's* plea to his compatriots in 1899:

In the Imperial Restoration of thirty years ago people did away with the oppression of the feudal Tokugawa regime.... Had people hesitated at the time for fear of disturbing the peace, we Japanese would still be wallowing under the feudal caste system today. Therefore, to have women claim their legitimate rights and to create equality between men and women would be like discarding the old feudal regime and establishing the new constitutional system of the Meiji government. People were daring enough in the political revolution. I cannot see why they should not be the same in a social revolution. (FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1899, 263-4 [195])

The many women who struggled against their disadvantaged position in society to serve as "public intellectuals" did so believing that a betterment of their circumstances would come only through studying and cultivating their ability to think rationally and write coherently. With Japan's emergence from two centuries of isolation, wave after wave of western ways of thinking washed ashore, carrying with them stories of the intellectual, spiritual, and social struggles of women abroad. Such western feminists as Mary Wollstonecraft, Olive Schreiner, Ellen Key, and Charlotte Gilman soon became familiar names to the Japanese women intellectuals, as did the writings on women's issues by John Stuart Mill, Leo Tolstoy, August Bebel, Lester Ward, and others. But, as Hiratsuka Raichō* and women who joined with her to found the "Bluestocking" circle in 1911 knew only too well, for Japanese women themselves, "literature" remained their only avenue for expressing publicly what they thought about all of this. Reflecting back on the history of their journal *Seitō*, she recalls:

Their expectations for education betrayed, held down by the feudalistic family system, many women found that the only path left open to them was literature. And by expressing themselves through words, they had begun to awaken to their inner selves and to question their lack of self-awareness and individuality and their parasitic dependence on men. Young women today cannot imagine the degree to which young women at that time were drawn to literature. *Seitō* provided a new venue, and that, I believe, explains its great appeal. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1971, 1: 340 [163–4])

Within the limited forum accorded them, these women struggled to find ways to articulate their situation. Theirs was a new beginning, born out of their existential concrete situations and not of an attempt to juggle connections with an established body of philosophical texts. Today the works of Japanese women philosophers are included in anthologies of their specialized field of study, such as Leibniz studies or Thomistic philosophy. But the origins and development of women's philosophy in modern Japan resist classification in the familiar categories of epistemology, metaphysics, logic, aesthetics, and ethics. Theirs was a "philosophy in the making" and needs to be read as such. As Nishida Kitarō* might have said, they were in transition "from the created to the creating," leaving behind them *resources* for future introduction into philosophical forums. At the same time, these women posed a radical challenge to the traditional boundaries of "rational thinking" and cannot be dismissed as a mere "proto-philosophy."

Takahashi Fumi (1901–1945) was the first woman to graduate in philosophy from Tōhoku Imperial University. She studied abroad under Heidegger and others and became well enough versed in German to translate two essays of her uncle, Nishida Kitarō. Unfortunately, the career of this promising young woman was cut short by tuberculosis. With a few exceptions, those who, like Takahashi, were fortunate enough to be educated abroad or at one of the three Imperial Universities that accepted female students (Tōhoku, Hokkaido, and Kyushu), had to wait until 1947 to study philosophy formally. The first generation of such women is only now reaching retirement age. In an important sense, their careers stand on the shoulders of figures like Yosano Akiko*, Hiratsuka Raichō, and Yamakawa Kikue*, whose writings extracted in the pages that follow may often seem far removed from contemporary thinking on women's questions, let alone the whole range of classical philosophy East and West to which Japanese women have contributed. For example, Sakaguchi Fumi (1933–), who did doctoral studies at the University of Munich and made important contributions to medieval studies at Tōhoku University, reflected in hindsight on the "structures of discrimination" under which her generation was obliged to work:

Those who discriminate are almost always unaware of the fact. For those who are being discriminated against, this lack of awareness on the part of the

discriminators is terribly and undeniably real, like a solid and impenetrable wall or a dagger poised over one's chest. The relationship between the two is completely asymmetrical, as I believe it is in all cases of discrimination.

What makes it worse is that the voice of the discriminator echoes around inside the minds of the victimized since both have grown up and live in the same culture and society... As long as one turns a blind eye to the material, social, and psychological conditions that influence human beings, it is easy to attribute all sorts of "incapacities" to women and think of them as belonging to the "essential reality" of women. There is also a certain convenience for the discriminator to have an "inferior" near at hand.

Women of my generation were raised on such essentialist ideas, though I must say, it is by no means limited to women's issues or to the situation in Japan. When it comes to judging the capacities of women, there does not seem to be much difference between the more advanced countries and the less advanced. My friend Anna, who gave a guest lecture at a university in Germany at the end of the 1980s, told of a female student who came up to her after her talk and exclaimed, "Today, for the first time, I realized that women, too, can engage in Asian Studies." I had to laugh, but the fact is, this perception continues to prevail around the world... The problems of discrimination for reasons of race or class or caste are the same ones women encounter.

Sakaguchi goes on to remark that exposure to sexual discrimination has equipped women better to transcend cultural differences:

In fact, there are many women like Anna who have found a way in their personal lives to transcend the barriers that divide East and West. I suppose the reason is that the cultural divide between East and West is not as great as the divide that runs through a sexist culture, penetrating to the very core of our being and devastating the lives of women as "professional" and as "private" persons. It is a barrier that is visible only to women because women have not been given the chance to voice their real experiences. In the past, women tended to look at themselves through the eyes of men, filtering their image of themselves through literature and philosophies created by men. The situation is gradually changing, but the kind of pain Anna felt is still there for many professional women. (SAKAGUCHI Fumi 1996, 4-7)

RELIGION, IDEOLOGY, AND WOMEN

The history of Japanese religious thinking shows a characteristic ambivalence towards women, a mixture of reverence and disdain found the world over. On the positive side, one of the most remarkable features of the native Japanese religiosity typified in Shinto is its direct affirmation of the power

of feminine spirituality. Mythology gives the central place to the sun goddess, Amaterasu, and the role of a woman's body in bearing children is honored in rites of harvest and matrimony. Without this positive Shinto ethos of protecting women, it would be difficult to explain why archaic Chinese notions of the inferiority of women did not take root in ancient Japan as they did among many of its East Asian neighbors.

For all the aspersions cast against Buddhism for its attitude toward women, in Japan it contributed significantly to the intellectual development and spiritual emancipation of women and in some measure provided women with a framework to express their own distinct view of the world. Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 973–1014), the celebrated author of *The Tale of Genji*, appeals to Buddhist ideas to ground her profound observations on human psychology and to sustain her own relentless questioning and resistance to the fatalism and determinism that the law of karmic causality seemed to inspire.

In one passage she uses language that reflects the Tendai Buddhist categories of 'emptiness', the provisional, and the middle way between them, to justify reading and writing tales of fiction. The creation of the art of fiction was a major contribution of Heian-period women to Japanese culture, and in the following passage Murasaki's protagonist, Prince Genji, at first displays a rather Confucian attitude of utter disdain toward it. But then he begins to see it in terms reminiscent of Tendai philosophy, suggesting that while reality is "empty" of substance, and qualities such as "good and bad" are empty in themselves, nevertheless our tales give them expedient provisional expression, and readers are asked to exercise the hermeneutical principle of a balance between non-substantial reality and its provisionally realistic expression. Genji, finding his adopted daughter enthralled by some tales, at first comments:

"Oh no, this will never do! Women are obviously born to be duped without a murmur of protest. There is hardly a word of truth in all this, as you know perfectly well, but there you are caught up in fables, taking them quite seriously and writing away without a thought for your tangled hair in this stiflingly warm rain!"

Then, gently chided by the lady for presenting the view of someone "accustomed to telling lies," Genji replies:

"I have been very rude to speak so ill to you of tales!... It is tales that contain the truly rewarding particulars!... Not that tales accurately describe any particular person, rather, the telling begins when all those things the teller longs to have pass on to future generations—whatever there is about the way people live their lives, for better or for worse, that is a sight to see or a wonder to hear—overflow the teller's heart. To put someone in a good light one brings out the good only, and to please other people one favors the oddly wicked, but

none of this, good or bad, is removed from life as we know it. Tales are not told the same way in the other realm, and even in our own the old and new ways are, of course, not the same, but although one may distinguish between the deep and the shallow, it is wrong always to dismiss what one finds in tales as false.

“There is talk of ‘expedient means’ also in the teaching that the Buddha in his great goodness left us, and many passages of the scriptures are all too likely to seem inconsistent and so to raise doubts in the minds of those who lack understanding, but in the end they have only a single message, and the gap between enlightenment and the passions is, after all, no wider than the gap that in tales sets off the good from the bad. To put it nicely, there is nothing that does not have its own value.” He mounted a very fine defense of tales. [MURASAKI Shikibu N.D., ch. 25 (461)]

Arguably the greatest Japanese Buddhist philosopher, Dōgen* (1200–1253), is known to have encouraged women to practice Zen, having as much right as men to do so:

What is so exalted about a man? Space is space; the four elements are the four elements; the five aggregates are the five aggregates. For a woman it is the same thing. In acquiring the ‘dharma’, all acquire the dharma equally. All should pay homage to and hold in esteem one who has acquired the dharma. Do not make an issue of whether it is a man or a woman. This is the most wondrous law of the ‘buddha-dharma’.

Though more progressive than many of his contemporaries, Dōgen’s attitude toward women by no means measures up to today’s standards. Still, far from simply ignoring women, he took them as disciples, an act whose symbolism was not lost among the aristocratic families from whose midst he had risen. Commenting in the same text on the practice of barring women from monastic compounds, for example, he writes:

Furthermore, there is something laughable here in Japan: places called “restricted realms” or “training halls for the practice of Mahayana” that do not allow nuns or lay women to enter. This evil custom has been handed down over a long time, and no one has ever questioned it. (DŌGEN 1240D, 250, 254)

As Chinese meditation masters immigrated to Japan toward the end of the Song dynasty, the doors were opened still wider to women practitioners. The nun Mugai Nyodai (1223–1298), whose enlightenment was authenticated by one of these eminent Chan masters, founded nunneries in Kyoto where aristocratic women and imperial princesses were welcomed into the monastic life. This practice continued on through the Tokugawa period, producing sizeable numbers of women disciples, both lay and monastic. While none of them distin-

guished herself as a scholar or thinker, some of their biographies are recorded in the late nineteenth-century *Treasured Biographies of Recent Zen Monastics*. It comes as no surprise, then, that overall the positive influence of Zen on early feminist thinkers like Raichō, whose enlightenment was verified by two different masters, overshadows their criticisms of it.

Confucianism presents an entirely different case. Its fixation on the innate moral and intellectual inferiority of women to men, though slow to take root in ancient Japan, eventually came to play a crucial role in the formation of Japan's social conscience. Neo-Confucianism was the mainstream ideology during the Edo period. The feudal class system was supported by the *The Great Learning for Women*, a work attributed to Kaibara Ekken* that promoted "submission and obedience" as the ideal for women. Even after the Restoration, for most of society the idea of "feminine docility" remained as transparent as the air they breathed, paving the way for the Meiji government to pursue its agenda of turning Japan into a military-industrial nation. It was in this context that Fukuzawa Yukichi, convinced of the absolute equality of the sexes, spoke out against Confucian education, "because the more one teaches it the more restricted women become. It is nothing but a philosophy to oppress the mind and, in the process, destroy the physical body, too" (FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1885, 4 [7]). Fourteen years later, in his *Critique of The Great Learning for Women*, he was still warning women to be on their guard against its insidious teachings and encouraging them instead to "cultivate self-respect and defend their rights." Critical of the hypocrisy of "gentlemen and enlightened men of civilization," he accused them of hiding "under the protective sleeves of that rotten doctrine of Confucianism and deceiving civilized society. Their cowardice is either to be pitied or laughed at" (FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1899, 284, 311 [215, 241]). Despite these efforts, echoed among women's circles with increasing frequency, it was not until after Japan's defeat in World War II that this Confucian bias would come to its end.

Christianity had the good fortune to enter Japan after having outgrown much of its one-sided prejudice against women. Among the missionaries who entered the country following the Meiji government's lifting of the ban against Christianity in 1873 were many who encouraged women to seek an improvement of their lot. Its morality of love was a welcome relief to those who had suffered under the ethic of conformity. Tsuda Umeko (1864–1929), for example, was one of five young girls dispatched for study to the United States by the Meiji government in 1871 in order that they might return to take on the responsibility of raising the educational standards for Japanese women. While abroad, she became fluent in English and also embraced Christianity. As a frequent spokesperson at international events, she argued the superiority of western Christian ethics to the traditional ethics of Japan in the same breath as she encouraged "independ-

dent work and independent thinking” ideals that were the cornerstone of the Women’s English College she founded.

In the midst of this moral disorientation of the ruling elite of Japan—on the one hand pressured to carry on its old ways, and on the other pressured to embrace the new—one challenge stood out above all others: to stand shoulder to shoulder with the West as a modern nation. The impact of this predicament on the changing perception of women was to prove devastating.

With the transition from the Tokugawa ‘shogunate’ to the Meiji government, Japan rushed to stabilize its place among the nations of the world and preserve its imperial tradition by setting itself up as a constitutional monarchy. Meantime, the spread of western colonial and military power in Asia prompted the Japanese government to fortify itself, and this entailed a highly centralized system of education. One after the other, leading political figures turned away from the euphoria of liberal ideas to tighten the government’s grip on the ordinary citizenry, and the flickering hopes of emancipation for women were quickly extinguished. Slogans like “loyalty to the emperor, love of country” and “good wife, wise mother” went hand in hand. Young women’s educational opportunities were severely restricted and they were encouraged to give birth to as many babies as possible to increase the nation’s population. By the mid-1930s, the voices of original and independent thinking had been all but suppressed and the women’s movements fell into limbo.

This situation was obviously fraught with contradictions. Modern egalitarian ideas and social philosophies were widely translated and studied, cutting through the traditional social fabric and value systems to feed the emerging consciousness of women, even as political realities made their implementation increasingly impossible. This led some, like Fukuda Hideko (1865–1927), to turn to radical Marxist ideas. In 1913 she wrote an essay for Raichō’s journal, boldly claiming:

Under what condition, then, will we be liberated? No matter what others may say or argue, I believe a complete and satisfactory liberation will not take place until a thoroughgoing communist system is firmly established. This holds true for men as well as women. On the day a communist system is implemented, as a matter of course, love and marriage will also be free. (cited in HIRATSUKA Raichō 1971, 2: 434 [206])

Despite the state’s overt turn to militarism, which came to a head in the late 1930s, the influence of Marxist ideas did not wane. Among women in the thick of this transition empowered by the social agenda was Yamakawa Kikue, whose native intelligence and critical theoretical training afforded her a broad and objective global perspective. The following passage from a 1931 essay entitled

“Gunshots in Manchuria,” for example, is aimed at encouraging women to rise up against the warmongering ways of their fellow countrymen:

A movement drawing on the peaceful instincts of women to prevent war is child’s play in a time of peace. Women may love peace and hate war, but the collective social upbringing that urges them to sacrifice for the common good of the society they belong to, and for the sake of what they believe to be just, runs deep. It leads them to forfeit their personal well-being and personal feelings. No society is without this readiness of women to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the fatherland. The same passion they devote to raising their children makes them willing to offer those children up, without regret, at the altar of Mars for “justice and the common good.” Their uncritical, instinctive stirrings of maternal love and their devotion to a peaceful family life dispose them to sacrifice for the well-being of the group. (YAMAKAWA Kikue 1931, 12–13)

In the end, Yamakawa’s fears were well grounded, as many Japanese women ended up supporting the nationalistic agenda and the colonial ambitions as “mothers behind the guns.”

Also to be mentioned in this connection is Miyamoto (née Nakajō) Yuriko (1899–1951), a prolific writer and social critic. As wife of the future chairman of the Japanese Communist Party, which the government police regarded as dangerous because of its rejection of the emperor system, she was repeatedly arrested and incarcerated, only to return to the limelight after 1945 as one of Japan’s foremost women opinion leaders. During the early days of the postwar occupation, militaristic ideologies, ultra-nationalism, and state-sponsored Shinto were all swiftly dismantled. Officially, discrimination against women was abolished as part of the democratizing agenda of the occupying powers. Almost overnight women’s social standing before the law was transformed. Universal suffrage was put into effect and institutions of higher education began to accept female students.

MOTHERHOOD AND WOMAN’S BODY

With the exception of Kūkai*, who saw sexuality as a fundamental human reality and made it an entrance point for Buddhist practice, male philosophers have tended to deal with the body as something abstract and sexless, and hence to approach it primarily from an epistemological or ontological point of view. Nishida Kitarō, Watsuji Tetsurō*, and Yuasa Yasuo* are all examples of this way of thinking. For female philosophers, the ownership of the body and the significance of motherhood were an integral part of their thinking, and the

body an essential aspect of their identity as women. Raichō's resistance to the value that traditional morals place on a woman's virginity typifies the kind of concern that is all but absent from writings of male philosophers and religious thinkers:

Japanese women had long been a possession of men, and this idea was cultivated through the ages so that chastity has become an instinct for women. The emotion to overemphasize women's unconditional chastity is deeply and blindly rooted in the sentiment of women, who had been subjected to the influences of Buddhism, Confucianism, and *'bushidō'*. And this sentiment is still strongly at work. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1916, 164)

Women's consciousness of the body's importance for how one thinks was quick to take hold. But the central question was: Am I first a human being and only secondarily female, or should I always see myself as a female human being? This restoration of gender to women's self-identity underlay the lively debate over the "protection of motherhood" that took place late in the first decade of the twentieth century. On the one hand, there is Yosano Akiko, who agreed with the South African feminist Olive Schreiner (1855–1920) in championing the primacy of awakening to one's equality as a "human being," and on that basis laying claim to equal opportunities for work, higher education, and financial independence.

On the other hand, there is Raichō, influenced by the Swedish feminist Ellen Key (1849–1926) to declare that the highest and most sacred role of women as a sexed body was motherhood, and that mothers should be protected and provided social welfare. Critics of Yosano pointed to her idealistic fixation on the power of the individual, while critics of Raichō complained that she put too much emphasis on mothering. Yamakawa Kikue chimed in on the debate, reiterating her insistence on reform of the social system from capitalism to socialism, but not making much of a contribution regarding the meaning and role of the sexed body.

For Yosano, the poet and writer, the life of artistic creation was of the foremost importance, and as a creator, she considered herself a human being first, and then a woman. Critical of views privileging motherhood, she reflected on her own experience of becoming a mother:

It was not an absolute event in my life. I am a mother, but I am also the wife of a man, a friend to my friends, a member of the global human race, and a Japanese subject. I am also a human being who engages in thinking, composes poetry, writes manuscripts, provides food and clothing, and carries out all sorts of mental and physical activities. I make it a point of concentrating wholeheartedly on whatever task I'm performing at any given moment for as long as time permits.

I do not live by my maternal instincts alone. Even when I may appear to be exercising those instincts, I am conscious of the activities I am presently sacrificing; they continue to hover around me like countless stars revolving about the star on which my gaze is fixed for the moment.... It would take a great number of words to name all the centers that occupy my life: motherhood, friendship, wife, work, art, country, world.... What would be the point to naming them all? The fact is, these centers are all relative and numerous, coming and going continually. My life is one dynamic flux. (YOSANO Akiko 1916, 199–200)

Ten years later, on hearing news of the passing of Ellen Key, Yosano reiterated her objections:

I was sad to see Key emphasize motherhood as women's mission in life. It seemed to me biased and wrongheaded. The idea might be novel in Europe, especially for middle-class women who had come to neglect the education of their children in the pursuit of personal enjoyments or for those countries that have been forced to build nurseries and child-care centers for poor women. But for us Japanese, born in a male-chauvinist country where women had traditionally been locked inside the house and confined to the role of caretaker for their husband, their children, and the kitchen, Key's idea seemed an old-fashioned idea dressed up in new arguments.... Every aspect of my life is real for me. None of it is a means to an end or mere expedience.... To follow Key's line of reasoning, does not romantic love end up a means to becoming a mother, so that motherhood ends up being the highest good?

.....

I myself am a mother of more than ten.... Some of my colleagues began to promote Key's arguments for motherhood, but the reason I did not go along was that, just as men do not live out of their paternal instincts alone, so, too, women should live their lives as fully as possible, and not make everything a means to a single end. For me, motherhood was a natural course to take. I have a hard time accepting young women who hold a job just until they get married; this strikes me as insincere in the extreme. (YOSANO Akiko 1926, 389–92)

In contrast, Raichō came to form her view on the female body through her personal crisis of losing her self-identity as a contemplative author and becoming a mother. During her pregnancy she agonized over two contradicting forces: one instinct for self-preservation and another for altruism and self-sacrifice. She candidly confessed her inner struggle in a letter of 1915:

I used to be biased against the life of women as members of the female "sex" and to feel hatred and contempt for men as members of the male sex. Clearly this blocked my way to a correct understanding of women's conditions and prevented me from formulating women's issues in a helpful manner.

For a long time “romantic love” meant no more to me than a strong curiosity about the opposite sex. In hindsight I have to ask myself how I could have committed such outrageous things just to satisfy my curiosity!... How could I have known that this curiosity was but the harbinger of true feelings of love? My love for O taught me this. As my love deepened, I felt driven to enter a common life with him, and eventually I moved in with him. Romantic love became something solemn and significant that I had to look at with completely different eyes. I had to think long and hard about what it means to live as a woman and what value there is for a women to live a life of love.... In the process I came to see the need to *liberate women not only as human persons but also as sexed women*. This was a totally new philosophical problem for me. My guide and moral support at the time, my source of ideas and hints as to how to proceed was a book by Ellen Key. During these two years of living with O, I have slowly awakened to myself as a mature, integrated woman. At the same time, my life of love conflicted with my inner life—with my eagerness to work and with the cry of my soul for solitude.

And now, I find myself pregnant, faced with the prospect of giving birth to a baby and raising it. Ellen Key has written that the most significant conflict in the lives of European women is... that between “soul life” and “family life.” This is a problem that Japanese women also face at present....

Recently, I came to recognize that the desire to have my own baby and to be a mother are both latent in me, but that these desires have been covered over by other desires.... How could I deny a baby, which is the creation of love—of that love that I affirmed when I entered into a life of love?... In this way, the idea of aborting the fetus vanished completely from my mind. Although I am filled with fears and anxieties, along with an immense sense of responsibility, as I approach this unfamiliar world step by step, I am also beginning to experience a certain attachment, unexpected hope, and even joy. Not only that, the bond between my beloved and me has gotten deeper, more sincere, and our commitment to each other has strengthened. This is when I began reading Ellen Key’s *The Renaissance of Motherhood*. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1915C, 49–51)

Raichō also believed in the corollary for women to be liberated as sexed bodies—the liberation of men as sexed bodies:

I affirmed my romantic love initially in order to assert my individual identity and develop it. But love rooted in self-affirmation and self-development turned out to be a gateway to the love of others, the other side of life. In no time, the whole panorama of love of the other unfolded in front of me, first through the love I bore my lover, and then through my love for my child. I ended up experiencing all sorts of contradictions in my life, but I can no longer dismiss them as merely “life’s contradictions.” I have rather come to think of them as gateways that open out into a wider, larger, and deeper life. And

the real harmonization of these two orientations may well be the subtle and ultimate flavor of life itself. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1917, 274–5)

[YM]

A WOMEN'S PHILOSOPHY OF AWARENESS

Gender as a Philosophical Category

When it comes to gender, Asian cultures in general are marked by great fluidity. We often find femininity widely used as a cultural category distinct from biological sexuality. When talking about gender in Japan, therefore, we need always to keep the diversity of usage in mind, lest we uniformly impose modern dualistic notions of gender on femininity where they do not really belong. As a cultural category by and large independent of the duality of the sexes, femininity has held an essential place in Japan's cultural self-understanding.

Before taking up particular women thinkers, we may take a brief look at the general place of femininity in Japanese culture. This is crucial, given that the modern idea of gender with its strict and systematic dichotomy of the sexes is a modern invention where Japan is concerned. If we are to understand its place in premodern Japan, we need to disassociate the meaning of femininity from questions of biological and social dualism.

As a cultural category in Japan, femininity clearly holds sway over masculinity. It is not enough to consider femininity as a principle on a par with masculinity, analogous to *yin* and *yang*. Ichikawa Tazumaro, in his *Maga no hire*, criticized Motoori Norinaga* on precisely this point, and insisted that the two are not interdependent but rather altogether different principles: "Men and women are men and women, the sun and moon are the sun and moon, water and fire are water and fire, just as they appear to the eye" (ICHIKAWA Tazumaro 1780).

Femininity belongs first and foremost to Japanese aesthetics, as notions like *taoyame-buri* (delicate elegance), '*yūgen*' (graceful subtlety), and '*iki*' (chic) indicate. It is hardly surprising to find a strong tradition of women's poetry in Japanese literature. In modern times, Orikuchi Shinobu* (1887–1953) was particularly important in revitalizing the tradition of feminine poetry. Baba Akiko (1928–) tries to recover the lost premodern tradition of female poetry by tracing its origins to the poems of Princess Sotoori in the '*Kojiki*'. She refers to an introduction to the *Collection of Japanese-language Poetry Ancient and Recent* (ca. 905), where the feminine style is compared to a simple woman who "appears just as she is, without the show of power that might preoccupy a woman of the nobility." Baba demonstrates how this tradition of female poetry was marked by a principle of polyphony, giving voice to a manifold interiority. Women's poetry

is an expression of a complex emotional dynamic that draws on poetic tools of indirect depiction. To be sure, this is an image of femininity borrowed from a traditional way of considering woman's nature, but as a cultural category it was widely adopted without reference to women. In the Japanese context femininity needs to be seen primarily as a principle of polyphony.

The tradition of the culture of femininity is not limited to poetry or literature, however. Sakabe Megumi* explores the philosophical implications of this culture of femininity and sees in it the ground of the Japanese idea of the subject. He emphasizes the dynamic crossover in the relation between masculinity and femininity, citing the Shining Prince Genji as "a typical example of a hero with 'delicate elegance.'" The reversibility of gender is clearly one of the basic elements of Japanese culture, suggesting a use of femininity completely different from that of sexual dichotomy. This, in turn, suggests that the modern concept of the "subject," with its individualistic overtones and its clear distinction between the sexes, is largely alien to traditional Japanese modes of thought. It is for this reason that Sakabe recommends approaching the Japanese "subject" as a polyphonic phenomenon.

Gender and Japanese Modernization

These reversible gender relations disappeared in the course of Japan's modernization. Like modernization almost everywhere, the direction of the process in Japan was strongly dominated by masculinity. It is interesting to note how the ruling powers invented modern gender dualism by disassociating modernity from more traditional images of gender. As convenient as this was for speeding up the social adjustment to modernization, it was obviously an idea imported from the West.

The modern notion of gender in general has two defining characteristics: it is naturalistic and dualistic. It is naturalistic because it is based on the biological determination of sexuality, it is a naturalistic category; it is dualistic in that it creates two completely distinct gender identities. The modern notion of gender is thus able to function as a driving force supporting dualistic thinking. This explains why modernization necessarily entailed the destruction of traditional polyphonic gender and why the introduction of modern gender was seen as an index of successful modernization.

This may also help to explain why the "women's question" was one of the most popular topics among Meiji intellectuals and the philosophers of the "national morals" project, a nationwide program of moral education based on the problematic 1890 *Imperial Rescript on Education*. No doubt this project set the ideological background to military nationalism in prewar Japan.

A number of intellectuals of the Japanese 'Enlightenment', like Fukuzawa

Yukichi* and Mori Arinori (1847–1889), devoted considerable attention in their writings to the “women’s question.” On the surface, their texts leave a surprisingly liberal impression. They denounce existing patterns of discrimination in Japanese society and emphasize the equality between men and women. Fukuzawa criticizes traditional polygamy, for example, by insisting:

Men and women are alike in that both are born as human beings. And inasmuch as each has an indispensable role to play in society, one cannot escape from being a man or a woman. In all times and places, a woman is as much a human being as a man is. (FUKUZAWA Yukichi 1876, 151)

Fukuzawa saw the introduction of modern western monogamy as one way to secure this equality. Other liberal authors joined Fukuzawa in calling on Japanese women to liberate themselves from the restrictions of the traditional family system with its underlying Confucian ideology. It is important to note that this liberal gender discourse focused on discrimination against women within the family, and reduced the whole of the women’s issue to the domain of the “household.” Characteristically enough, these writers did not pay any attention to the social and political problems of women, among them the absence of political equality. Their liberal discourse served to limit women’s issues to the family and to brand women’s “liberation” as a revolt against the traditional structure of family morals. A critical reading of these Enlightenment intellectuals shows how, at this very early stage of modernization, an effective transformation of traditional gender into modern gender was coming about, a transformation that had a powerful influence on the self-understanding of Japanese feminists as modern women. Beneath the outward trappings of liberal thinking, a political system was being put in place that would exclude women from political decisions and activities.

Recent gender studies have analyzed this paradoxical role of gender in the process of Japanese modernization and pointed to a strain of “orientalism” in Japan as the background (*see* SEKIGUCHI Sumiko 2007). The modern idea of gender understood women always in relation to Confucianism. Viewed as a backward social group, “women” were defined in terms of their ties to traditional Confucian family morals. “Woman” thus became a symbol of the backward state of Asian traditions as such, so that femininity could be called on to legitimate the creation of a “Greater East Asian Empire.” Remarkably, all the major intellectual figures of the Japanese cultural awakening, as well as political activists like Ueki Emori (1857–1892), saw the “women’s question” as a problem of Confucian family values. Equally amazing is how quickly Japanese bourgeois women at the time adopted this view as their own.

It is little wonder, then, that in the very different discourse of “national morality” that flourished in the 1920s and 1930s, femininity became central

once again in two ways. On the one hand, in order to legitimate the superiority of Japan, the myth of Japan's founding goddess Amaterasu was evoked to show the superiority of Shinto over Confucianism and Buddhism. On the other hand, Japanese women were held up as examples of a backward social group trapped in a repressive Confucian ethic. The transformation of traditional gender into modern gender was in great part determined by this amalgam of orientalism and sexism. It was a rapid and powerful process of destruction.

Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962) was one of the few modern intellectuals still able to sense the presence of a strong female power in premodern Japanese society. His book, *The Way Things Were before Cotton* (1938), is a valuable source of information on the female power that Japanese women gained by dropping out of the normal framework of the community, as well as on the cross-border existence that social exclusion made possible. Here again, we see femininity at work as a principle of polyphony, albeit one that was to be extinguished in the process of modernization and colonization.

Jin Jungwon's impressive study on the virtue of being a "good wife and wise mother" has detailed the invention of "feminine virtues" were invented in the 1890s in Japan, and then around 1905 in China and Korea under the influence of Japan, while traditional feminine values disappeared from the scene (JIN Jungwon 2006). Feminine values had been something that reached beyond mere social norms, and indeed seemed to have had a social and cultural power that enabled them to transcend normal social differences. But these were replaced by modern "feminine virtues" like that of "good wife and wise mother" that served to tether women to the realm of home and children. The concept of "feminine virtues" itself is a remarkable modern invention, based on the idea of the autonomous modern subject as well as on the vague image of traditional femininity. This transformation of traditional gender into modern gender-dualism not only kept Japanese women from being active in the official political domain, but also had serious consequences for the development of Japanese feminism as a social movement. Japanese feminism has lost its meaningful connection to its own history of "femininity," and with it, to polyphonic modes of thought.

Original, Unborrowed Thinking

What, then, does "women's thought"—which is wider than merely what women themselves have said and thought—consist of, and where do we locate it in the modern intellectual history of Japan? Two differentiations stand out, one from the side of philosophical studies by men, the other from the side of western feminists. Modern Japanese philosophy, even in the case of Nishida Kitarō and Watsuji Tetsurō, has aimed at a fusion of East and West grounded in the cultivation of western philosophy. Women thinkers are not part of this

current. Rather, they have tried to think out of their own experience and reality. The starting point of women thinkers has been the rejection of borrowed thought and an insight into “the contradiction of a conceded liberation.”

Japan’s modernization was borrowed. Rather than something developed internally, in large part it followed a western model. Modern Japanese philosophy is no different. Its chief enterprise has been the adoption of philosophical ideas from Europe and the United States. In particular, beginning from the 1920s, the neo-Kantianism and phenomenology prevalent in Europe at the time also flourished in Japan. Philosophy was not “thinking for oneself.” It was a part of western culture, and especially in the case of professional philosophers at the Imperial Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, learning the latest theories from the West amounted by and large to mastering “technical knowledge”—a kind of intellectual game.

Women thinkers reacted very critically to modern Japanese philosophy’s habit of “borrowing.” Yosano Akiko, for example, disparaged it head-on as a “frigid study of philosophical problems” that avoided “pressing fundamental questions.” This is not to say that women thinkers were disinterested in western philosophy. Yamakawa Kikue’s study of Marxist thought is an example of a woman who threw herself into the study of western philosophy despite the limited intellectual resources available to her. Yosano and Hiratsuka Raichō read Rousseau and Nietzsche. Others, like Takamure Itsue (1894–1964), the pioneer of women’s history, quoted Plato, Kant, and Schopenhauer. But most women thinkers, unlike their male counterparts, did not study western philosophy as such. For them, it was more an aid for understanding their own problems. They keenly felt a need to do their own thinking rather than rely on something borrowed. Thus, while representative thinkers like Raichō, Yosano, and Yamakawa took their lead from the ideas of Ellen Key and were influenced by feminist writers and activists of Europe and the United States, they never abandoned the commitment to thinking through their own questions in their own way. For them, the failure to “think for oneself” would turn whatever freedom and liberation they would gain into another form of servitude.

Enlightened thinking on women’s liberation shows up early on in the modernization period. Interestingly enough, although Raichō and Yosano were drawn to Rousseau and Nietzsche, they did not acknowledge the pioneering efforts of figures like Fukuzawa Yukichi in this regard. Why so? As we saw, modern ideas on the emancipation of women began in early Meiji with critiques of social mores ranging from Confucian views of the family to clichés about honoring men and despising women. Even as these ideas remained embedded in social institutions and dominated the process of change, the ideal of liberating women was also embraced early on as part of modernization and westernization.

Looking at early Meiji ideas of the emancipation of women, two character-

istics stand out. First, the outspoken advocates were in fact men. And second, their aim was liberation from a Confucian past. Thus, what was said of “women’s liberation” did not represent the ideas of women for themselves. Women were the objects of liberation and men were its subjects. Further, many male intellectuals did not understand women’s liberation as belonging to the wider problem of an independent society but projected it onto a resistance against the “Confucian past.” Hence, it became a question of freedom from the East, emblematic of the drive to “escape the East for the West.”

Early Meiji concerns with women’s liberation are distinctive in that not only enlightened thinkers but even reactionary nationalists pressing for a “national morality,” like the philosopher Inoue Tetsujirō,* addressed the question. Inoue, an acknowledged authority on the *Imperial Rescript on Education*, followed the modern approach of the western countries to insist forcefully on an end to the “enslavement of women.” Thus already by mid-Meiji a strong period of resistance set in as the liberation of women shifted from an academic question to a concrete social issue.

The closer “liberation” got to reality, the more enlightened debate on the question retreated into the shadows. In exchange, the debate over “discrimination” flourished as women began to find their voice. Among those proclaiming the equality of men and women was Gotō Fusa,¹ who published a tract around 1885 called *New Ideas on Unequal Rights for Men and Women*. During this period of reaction, early enlightened women thinkers did little more than borrow ideas from Europe and the United States to inform women of how powerless they were. Beginning from the adoption of liberationist thinking as part of the process of westernization and passing through the debates on equality during the period of counter-reaction, feminist thought came to maturity during the Taishō era. Here, at long last, women like Raichō, Yosano, and Yamakawa were able to voice their own thinking. These three figures belong to an age that had experienced the dangers of borrowed liberationist thinking. They shared the felt need to think with their own feelings and words, even as they learned from the West. As long as the goal of liberation was western feminism and “equality with men,” it would be a conceded liberty, something borrowed from men. This contradiction was to be the starting point of modern Japanese women’s thinking.

Philosophies of Self-Awareness

Japan’s women thinkers understood liberation as different from standing on a par with the West or with men. In pursuing the possibilities of a

1. [It is not clear whether Gotō Fusa was a woman or a man writing under a woman’s name, nor when or where the tract was actually published.]

liberationist thinking different from that of western feminists, they inaugurated women's thought. Raichō, for example, clarified in her own way the meaning of "liberation" by working from a methodological distinction between "freedom of lifestyle" and "personal freedom." The feminism she saw in Europe and the United States was a movement for equal rights for men and women: "an immediate demand for the legal, political, economic, and employment rights or freedoms" in order to "possess the freedom to enjoy the same life as men" (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1920, 160).

This, says Raichō, is nothing more than a social movement to secure freedom of lifestyle. In contrast, what she and others sought was a personal freedom, by which she understood a twofold "self-possession." First, it entailed taking hold of oneself as an individual, disentangled from the social restraints that inhibit freedom of lifestyle. For Raichō there was a second self-possession truer than that of securing equal rights for men and women, namely, the stage at which one can be more. This is the personal freedom she exhorts with the cry, "Woman, be a true woman!"

Yosano issued a warning against teaming up to borrow the ideas that men were proclaiming: "The question of the emancipation of modern women arises not as something women themselves speak up about, but rather as something arising from certain elite men, who think they are freeing their wives when in fact they are merely debating about it." For Yosano, Japanese men knew nothing of true liberation. Theirs was no more than liberation by concession. "Were not the men of Japan first liberated like everyone else by the *Charter Oath*² and proclamation of the constitution?", she asks to invoke what she calls "being treated like a women twice over." Women, she suggests, suffer from the double spell of being women and being "women oppressed by men who themselves do not know freedom." She sees the discrimination against women in Japan as resulting from men who themselves have become like women by succumbing to the West, only to turn around and oppress women. Her idea was quickly picked up by those pressing for equal rights for men and women.

Aside from the social activist Yamakawa Kikue, Raichō, Yosano, and Takamura all gave precedence to "women's awakening" over social reform. In this sense, women's thought may be classified as a "philosophy of self-awareness." In Raichō's words, "Instead of simply demanding freedom and independence and rights in the outward things of life—or rather, *before* those demands are made—women have to return to themselves, awaken to their own dignity, seek emancipation within so as to secure freedom in their inward, spiritual parts."

2. [The *Charter Oath*, a document promulgated in 1868 on the occasion of Emperor Meiji's ascension to the imperial throne, set the course for Japan's modernization. In it, the class divisions of feudal Japan were abolished in favor of equality for all under the law.]

Prior to feminism as a social movement, she stressed the need for a women's philosophy of "the inner self." By this she meant a spiritual movement aimed "first of all at securing a sense of self for Japanese women, who by and large lacked one at the time" (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1920, 160).

Yosano, while continuing to argue for the needs of economic independence for women, also stressed the importance of thinking. "I believe the most noble thing a person can do," she writes, "is to think and conceive ideas. Having ideas is the freest, most enjoyable thing there is.... Only after one has thought, do meaning and value come to life in one's work." And elsewhere she goes on: "Based on my own convictions, I want to encourage ordinary women to think. As women, our renunciation of thought has gone on long enough. We have been no more than arms and legs and mouths—without a brain of our own" (YOSANO Akiko 1911, 16).

Gender Distinctions in Question

Behind this focus of women thinkers on "awakening" lay a philosophical approach to gender and sex distinctions. Raichō initially considered gender distinction a category fixed in the lower levels of consciousness but absent in higher consciousness of the true self: "In both men and women, gender differentiation is concentrated in the middle or lower strata of the psyche where it forms part of the provisional self that needs to become conscious so that it can fade away and die. It is not possible at the higher, more conscious strata of the psyche, in the eternal, undying true self."

Unless the true self is realized, there is no way to overcome the inhibitions that block gender distinctions from becoming conscious. "Weakness of character! This really shows us what women are. And men, too." Those who define themselves within the parameters of gender distinctions have yet to find their path to liberation.

So what is this true freedom and emancipation I seek? Obviously, it is something that inspires hidden genius and helps bring great and hidden talent to the surface.... When we have been set loose, we discover latent genius.... It means becoming a "no-self." (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1911, 16, 25 [158–9])

In the debate on women's chastity, Yosano also takes the view that gender distinction is no more than a relative category. Demanded only of women as the "child-bearing" sex, it genderizes morality by seeing chastity as a "feminine virtue." In the same vein, she interprets the nature of human morality as fundamentally a "rule of life." As a poet, Yosano understood "rule" to include not only regulations and mandates but also the "rhythm" of life. Thus she debunked the concept of chastity itself as "immoral":

People's morality does not lie somewhere up in the sky but in the serious, real, and spirited things of life. Morality is the rule of human life, the real marching song. It must be life's musical score and plan. (YOSANO Akiko 1915, 431)

Starting from this idea of ethics as the rhythm of life, she considered the very concept of a "universal morality" to be anti-moral. In the effort to set out a common morality for everyone, it ignored the ethic of life's own rhythms. Life is about change: "Life continues to bear fruit in and out of season. Novelty is the true countenance of life.... Our ethical views must also be in habitual transition. The quest of eternal truth is as foolish as gluing down the bridges on a *koto* harp." Or again:

In my view there is not only no eternal truth, but not even a common truth for all people. By failing to heed the inconvenient fact that the quest for a fixed truth traversing time and space does not fit the reality of human life, was not the world of the past filled with anxiety, skepticism, and dejection? Have not philosophy and religion and morality as we have known them lost their authority for our times? (YOSANO Akiko 1915, 432)

For Yosano, gender distinction is one more item in the list of regulations devised by a heteronomous morality that has forgotten the "true countenance of life." It has left people stuck in the mud and unable to move, fallen into the most dangerous position of yielding to the "extinction of the will to life." Freedom needs to be accompanied by intelligent performance:

True life is simply performance. Unless performance is at once free and intelligent, it will fail. I do not mean a failure measured against the social standards of success or the lack of success, but the extinction of the individual will to life. I mean arriving at a point where self-introspection invites resentment for being incomplete and unfulfilled. (YOSANO Akiko 1915, 433)

This is similar to how Raichō, under the influence of Zen, had early relegated the category of gender distinctions to the "lower strata of the self." Similarly, Yosano, speaking within the context of Heian literature and from the perspective of the rhythms of life, claims that infusing gender distinctions into morality is indeed an abuse of women's morality, one that fosters resentment within the self. There could be no doubt that for both of them gender distinctions were not a matter of biology but of social and cultural categories.

Yamakawa's case is somewhat different. In 1919 she published an important essay on the question entitled "To Our Sisters in the Working Class." Addressing the deplorable conditions under which women were put to work in the early years of Japan's turn to capitalism, she sees gender as "a distinction generated by the exploiting class." She is referring not to the biological fact of women being

daughters or mothers but to the curious confusion over “femininity” and the disgust it brings with it.

When I looked at those young women, I always felt a sense of surprise akin to fear. Like scrawny, homeless dogs their shabby figures—twelve or thirteen years old, to judge from their height—moved about hesitantly to the point one could hardly think them human and with faces that could only belong to a woman of thirty. (YAMAKAWA Kikue 1919, 248)

Yamakawa’s observations speak to how gender, as a tool of exploitation, had robbed women not only of their rights but of their human appearance. These young girls, their bodies arrested in the natural process of development, the years of their youth torn away from them, seemed to her “a mixed breed of human and machine and animal.” And yet, despite it all, they exhibited a raw sense of womanhood befitting women more than twice their age.

Yamakawa communicated her profound anger at the miserable state into which these mill girls had been dragged by their gender, all but despairing at the plight of women workers. At the same time, like Raichō and Yosano she did not lose hope in her own inner strength:

And yet, are we simply to collapse into despair?... No. No! As a Japanese woman, I cannot lose my faith in the strength of the women of Japan. I cannot give up believing in the future. (YAMAKAWA Kikue 1919, 253)

The Debate on Motherhood

There is another sense in which it seems only natural that Japan’s women thinkers should have been drawn to a “philosophy of self-awareness.” For Ueda Shizuteru* “self-awareness,” unlike self-consciousness, means that the “self,” located in a particular place, opens out into the “non-self,” and illuminated by that expansion of its place, comes to know itself. Taken in this sense, gender distinction can be seen as a fundamental difference whose structure is that of a self opening out into non-self. One’s own sex always opens out into the “other sex.” But for Japanese women thinkers the “non-self” to which their existence opens was not men; neither was it western feminists. Both Japanese men and western feminists, as different as their standpoints are, constitute “a presence that cannot be self-liberating.” In this context it is helpful to recall the philosophical meaning of the “debate over motherhood” (1918–1919), considered to be the most famous debate in the history of modern Japanese feminism. Beginning with Raichō, what opened Japanese women to the “non-self” was their own body, a body that belongs to “motherhood.” Through the accumulated experience of pregnancy, birth, and child-rearing, thinkers like Raichō and Yosano discovered the philosophical meaning of motherhood. For Raichō,

motherhood was an experience of the fundamental powerlessness of human existence.

Impotent and powerless in my own strengths, there was nothing I could do. I was really beyond the reach of anyone's help in this world but my own, pitiful and forlorn self. (HIRATSUKA Raichō 1917, 268)

This encounter with the “other” provided Raichō with a glimpse into the lives of the socially weak. In contrast, Yosano saw the experience of childbirth as basically “a matter of life and death,” an experience of ultimate values:

Men have nothing to do with the event of birth wherein we stake our very life; they are of no use in it. This is a great role that women always and everywhere bear alone. As important as the nation is, whatever one may say about scholarship or war, I cannot imagine any great task surpassing that of a woman giving birth. (YOSANO Akiko 1911, 3)

For modern militarist nations, the highest human good is to give one's life for one's country. In contrast to that scale of values, Yosano's description of the experience of motherhood in birth represents it as an event in which one stakes one's life no less than in sacrifice for one's country, an event that tolls a philosophy of birth loud and clear against a philosophy of death. The fierce “debate over motherhood” that waged between Raichō and Yosano was to prove a decisive stimulus for modern Japanese women thinkers to break new ground in a “philosophy of motherhood.” The debate is not to be taken simply as a political discussion over the patronage of motherhood. It has rather to be seen as an attempt to think through the experience of motherhood. And this attempt, in turn, opens up a dimension of ontological ethics that conceives of the female body as the primary ethical body, each bound structurally to the other.

Takamure Itsue, whom Raichō called “my philosophical daughter,” took a further step towards an ethics of the female body by describing the natural process of nursing. The female body is structured to give birth to and nurse new life. Women live unconsciously with this body opened primarily to the other. At the same time, Takamure described the tragic split between the ethical body of women and established social rules (TAKAMURE Itsue 1930). Her wider message is clear: it is not the female body that is to be moralized. Society itself must be moralized.

[kis]

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YOSANO Akiko 与謝野晶子 (1878–1942)

Yosano Akiko (née Hō Shō), poet, social critic, and educator, lived a rich and many-sided life. The wife of the poet Yosano Tekkan and mother of eleven children, she published fifteen volumes of collected commentaries on social issues, twenty-one volumes of collected poems, a novel, and a collection of children's stories, in addition to translating important Japanese classics into the modern idiom.

Although widely known for her passionate poetry, Yosano evolved into a public intellectual and opinion leader. She encouraged women to look for their identity beyond motherhood, to achieve financial independence and train their minds, and ultimately to realize their own liberation through some form of creative work. These ideas are reflected in the passages excerpted below.

She drew inspiration from women writers of the Heian period like Ono no Komachi, Izumi Shikibu, and Murasaki Shikibu, and tried to combine what she saw as their freer, romantic sensitivity with the morality of modern monogamy. At the same time as her fascination with medieval aristocratic society and affection for the emperor inhibited her criticism of the post-Meiji imperial system and its political structures, it protected her from the attacks of the ultranationalists.

Her awareness of social issues was piqued by a five-month stay in Europe in 1912. She was received in the literary circles of Paris as Japan's leading poet, and in a journal interview spoke frankly of what she saw as the challenges facing French feminism. She later cofounded a school, Bunka Gakuin, where she used her own textbooks, dissatisfied with those sanctioned by the government.

[YM]

WOMEN AND THINKING

YOSANO Akiko 1911, 13–18

Doing and working are mechanical and secondary things. They have no value in themselves and occupy no more than the lower neural centers. The most precious thing for humans is to think and imagine. To imagine is the most free and most sublime thing. Our capacity for imagination allows us to understand, design, create, criticize, self-reflect, synthesize, and so forth. When we act on the basis of what we think, our work gains in significance and value. Humans are different from animals and machines precisely because of this capacity to think. The difference between being civilized and uncivilized is also a function of the development of this capacity to think or the lack thereof.

The reason I began with so obvious a remark is that the Japanese, and especially Japanese women, are remarkably wanting in this area. I call attention to

this fact as a matter that demands serious reflection from all of us. For instance, men work hard for material gain; they are driven by the desire to acquire money. Enterprises of all sorts have arisen, profiting a large number of capitalists and putting a large portion of the population to work. But there are only a few who actually stop to think about the basic question of why we need money and what the money is for. The majority of workers simply move their limbs blindly in order to earn a bit of it. As a consequence, economic wealth does not serve the most useful things of life, but is only accumulated and exchanged for goods or for superficial, pretentious, and harmful pursuits. There is no shame in resorting to whatever means, even criminal and unethical, to accumulate and exchange money. Economic theories, sociological studies, entrepreneurial ethics—it all ends up being an empty academic exercise with no application to actual life.

Take another example, the recent Russo-Japanese War, which cost both sides a large number of lives and heavy expenditures. Most Japanese men only see the final victory. Few of them think deeply and objectively about the significance of the war or the sacrifices it entailed; few stop to ask whether the beautiful name “war” did not in truth amount to anything more than an exercise in brutality, a far cry from the guiding ideals of a civilized world. In the days of despotic or theocratic rule, we had only to subjugate ourselves to a minority of leaders and powerful persons, following their orders mechanically. But today, when we enjoy freedom of thought and speech, it runs counter to the demands of civilization for individuals not to exercise their rights.

Widespread among government officials, educators, and parents today is the tendency to denigrate “thinking” to a rank below “working,” or to consider thinking and working to be incompatible, or even to dismiss “thinking” as harmful. It is troubling to realize how deeply rooted this kind of barbarous mentality is among the Japanese, ignoring the Charter Oath of Emperor Meiji who pledged to “seek knowledge far and wide throughout the world”...

Those who know the pleasure of meditation and quiet thinking are blessed indeed. The discipline to think about even small things seriously steers us away from merely emotional reactions. It opens the eye of wisdom to help us reflect on ourselves, criticize our actions, and sharpen our capacity for understanding. In so doing, our thoughts, emotions, and actions become integrated and missteps are reduced. Understanding ourselves, we are also able to understand others and accommodate them. We develop social awareness and skills. In a word, contrary to all the fears and worries of the conservatives, “thinking” creates a deeply ethical person.

Based on my own convictions, I want to encourage ordinary women to think. As women, our renunciation of thought has gone on long enough. We have been no more than arms and legs and mouths—without a brain of our own....

Recently the question of the liberation of women has come to the fore. It was not the women who initiated the discussion but rather a group of men who took an academic interest in the question, all the while opposed to the actual liberation of their own wives and daughters. They felt sorry for women and thought it would be good for them to have a decent education. None of this attracted much attention among the women themselves. Of late a counter-reaction to this view has arisen with many men now proclaiming that women's training should be in the practical matters, such as sewing and embroidering, and not in higher education. Women, they say, should be educated to become docile creatures. The reason they give for their opposition to women's higher education is the movement in England, where women's suffrage has become a matter of some urgency. Japanese men consider women their property, and servants, and become enraged when the subject of women's liberation is brought up. Is it not an irony that these men actually gained their independence as human beings only with the proclamation of the Charter Oath following the Meiji Restoration and the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution? It is laughable to see Japanese men forget their joy at liberation, suppress the liberation of women, and revert back to old misogynist ideas.... But Japanese middle-class women are not even aware of these issues that stare them in the face.

It is up to women to wake up and deal with the problem of women's liberation, regardless of what men say. If we are not to accept the old-fashioned position of "glorified maid-servants," middle-class women must take the lead by opening their eyes, reforming themselves, and securing the necessary qualifications to solve women's issues. What is urgently needed here is for women to become thinking women, women with brains, in addition to being working women.

[YM]

FREEDOM TO BE A FULL PERSON

YOSANO Akiko 1915, 438–41; 1918, 317–20

My Personal Journey

Until the age of twenty I grew up in the depressing melancholy and boredom of an old household that made me timid. During the day, I was responsible for the ins and outs of the family business. At night I would slip out of my parent's sight to read books on the sly, consoling myself with the world of fantasy they opened up. In time I wearied of these bookish fantasies and began to yearn to be a free individual. Through a series of remarkable coincidences, I found the courage to all but put my life on the line to grab hold of the freedom to love and break away from the old-fashioned family that had held me in its

cage. And as if through another miracle, I found that I was able to express my thoughts in words. So it was some ten years ago that I gained the threefold freedom to love, to be ethical, and to engage in artistic pursuits.

Since that time I have become aware of the need for the freedom of others. My dearest wish was to elevate women from their lowly status to a position of equality with men. But I was not without my illusions and misconceptions. It seemed to me then that the rare geniuses and free thinkers I met as heroines in European novels could set the goal and serve as a standard for our efforts at achieving emancipation and equal status with men. Though I never expressed it, I even felt a secret urge to resist the violent suppression of men.

After a long period of inner reflection, I realized that the reason women's status had fallen so low was not merely the heartless domination of men. At some point women's brains had stopped evolving. I do not consider women by nature inferior to men. Witness the women geniuses who appear from time to time. But there is no getting around the fact that women's intuitive powers, past and present, have been shallow, their reasoning dull, and their will power feeble. Given all this, how could women stand up as men's equals?

I came to be convinced that for women's status to be elevated, we women have to come to the realization among ourselves of our current ignorance and weakness of character. This is what I have been writing about for the past four or five years in the attempt to reach out to women readers with my ideas. But beyond that and most important, I have tried to discipline myself as far as possible in order to respond to my thirst for knowledge and my desire for creative activity.

Taking a hint from the talented women of the Heian period, I have advocated the economic independence of women. For this reason, I not only extended my sympathy to professional women, but also was happy to see an increase in the number of jobs for women and in the number of educated women starting to respond to these new opportunities. For my part, I have also struggled to support my entire family through my work.

Before departing on a recent trip to Europe, I had merely been drifting through life in a narrow corner of the world. My heart longed to see a "world" wider than "Japan." When I was travelling around Europe, people everywhere treated me as a representative of Japanese women—a very special welcome that made me feel both truly appreciative of being a Japanese woman in the public forum and at the same time ever so humble. My heart returned home to Japan from the "world." I learned that of all countries, it is Japan that I love most. I learned that in addition to loving myself I must love this land where my fellow Japanese live. The experience taught me that there is no clash between a heart that loves Japan and a heart that loves the world. Since my return, my interests and attention have turned more to controversial ideas and concrete issues than

to artistic matters.... This dim-witted person took many detours, but at long last I am prepared to dedicate my passion to the homeland.

The Three Sides of Life

My aim is consciously to effect a unity among the three sides of life: as a private individual, as a citizen of a country, and as a member of the wider world. All of us are constantly living in a unity of these three, but I would like to build a life for myself that is clearly conscious of this fact. The reason lies in a desire for happiness and well-being in life. This desire is a powerful instinct and is supported by another—the drive to be rational....

The reason we want to make a happy life for ourselves is that our lives have not been very fulfilling so far and have left us dissatisfied. And the reason for the dissatisfaction is that the three aspects of life—individual, national, and global—contradict one another, clash, and fall apart. What is beneficial to the life of an individual may be harmful to the life of the nation, and what may be beneficial to the life of the nation may be harmful to one's life as a global citizen. This is the contradiction we find ourselves in. For instance, war not only kills individuals and disrupts the safety of individual lives, it also disturbs world peace. This is so obvious, and yet even in our own day, when global culture is thought to have progressed, a cruel World War has been raging for the past several years. Behind it stands an antiquated mode of thought that gives too much weight to the life of a people and allows the state, as representative of a people, to sacrifice the individual and the global dimensions of our existence....

When we eat, sleep, read, and work, we do so as private individuals and are not conscious of our country or the wider world. When we file our taxes or strive for a universal suffrage, we do so as members of our country. Our private lives may stand in the immediate background, but we do not always think of ourselves as citizens of the global world. When we engage in academic studies and artistic pursuits, and indulge in the appreciation of knowledge and art, we are living the life of the global human race that transcends race, borders, and national history. At such times, our attention is not directed to the gain and loss of individuals or of any particular people. This is something clear to all of us. We move naturally and seamlessly from one realm to another. As the need arises, the individual, national, or global aspect becomes central and our lives take on one dominant hue or the other.... The more conscious we are of the demand for unity among the three, the harder we must strive to realize it.

For example, in war it is the peoples and their representatives, that is, countries, that fight one another. History shows that victory rarely results in an increase in happiness or well-being for individuals or humanity at large....

The World War being waged at present is an extension of muscular force, a throwback to an age of barbarism that does not benefit the lives of the peoples engaged in it. The violence it works on the lives of individuals and the disruptions it causes to global peace bring no increase in happiness to individual citizens anywhere. Only by harmonizing the three aspects of our existence and fusing them together can we hope to bring human life to its fullness....

How can we achieve such a unity consciously? If we are to eradicate contradictions, clashes, and collapses, we need to focus on common elements that enhance human well-being and discard the rest. In particular, the first common element is love. Economics, academics, the arts, and natural sciences—all these things can contribute to the happiness of the global population by benefitting individuals and nations.... But for this to happen, we need a global cooperation based on love. Call it philanthropy, humanitarianism, or what you will: we must act to bring about mutual love and assistance among human beings.

[YM]

CONDITIONS FOR REFORM

YOSANO Akiko 1919, 201–2, 207–15

The meaning of reform is both very ancient and very new. Human existence is a process in the making that has undergone one reform after another ever since the birth of culture in prehistoric times. By skillfully taking control of the process, men came to develop their identities and, over several millennia, to establish a culture biased in its male standards. Meanwhile, the women stagnated and were left behind. In the infant stages of human history, when animal instincts wielded considerable power—the age of muscular strength that was extended into weaponry and further transformed into authority—there is no denying the fact that women were repressed by men and made subordinate to them. The result was severely deadening and distorting for the development of women's personalities—like queen bees reduced to their reproductive functions, powerless and deformed creatures incapable of anything else.... This dismissal of half of humanity was a misfortune not only for women but for the whole of the human race.

Things are turning around now and the women of the world are waking up. "Reform" today means the transformation of *all* of humanity, women and men. The question is how best to proceed with the reform.

The first condition of reform is what I call *the principle of ego development*. Instead of suppressing the personality by bending it in a certain direction, we should let it unfold and expand freely in all directions, as much as it wants and

as much as it can stand. The inherent capacities of the human personality are unlimited.... Women, especially, are an unopened treasure chest....

The second fundamental condition of reform is establishing *the principle of culture* as the ideal of human life.... An awakening to culture is crucial for opening the “eyes” or the “soul” to the principle of ego development.

.....

The third condition of reform is *the principle of the equality of men and women*, and the fourth, *the principle of classless solidarity in taking responsibility for humanity at large*. I have spoken often of the third, but let me just add that gender difference has nothing to do with inferiority or superiority. Sexual discrimination is never a reason for determining the rights and duties of persons to participate in cultural life. The fourth condition may be seen as a natural consequence of the first three. When it comes to the creation of cultural life, all human beings bear the responsibility to act in solidarity. As women, we desire an equal share in this responsibility.

.....

The fifth and final condition of reform is *the principle of work for everyone*.... From the time I was a little girl, there were those whom I admired for their spirit of work, while I could not repress my disgust at the laziness of those who lacked that spirit. I believe the day must come when everyone without exception will work.... From the standpoint of the principle of work for everyone, I desire that every sort of occupation and profession be open to women as well, and that they be given the opportunity for the higher education needed to prepare themselves. The reason I have been so insistent on the importance of learning and financial independence for women is precisely that I want to see this desire all the way through to its realization.

.....

It is true that in present-day Japan women have been given opportunities to be professionals, instead of remaining cooped up in the kitchen or bedroom. But the fact is, the range of professions open to women has been restricted by sexual discrimination.... If women were free to choose their professions based on their aptitudes and intellectual gifts, and if we were to encourage women to compete freely for their profession of choice, Japan would not be stuck in the miserable state in which, as Yamakawa Kikue* has pointed out, the one or two women scientists we have are honored as rarities.

.....

These, in rough outline, are what I see as the five fundamental conditions for the improvement of the status of women in Japan. They also serve as a basis for improving the situation of men in Japan. Far from such vague ideals as “wise mother and good wife” or the “protection of motherhood,” ... these conditions amount to the sort of thoroughgoing individualism, personalism, and human-

ism in which all persons can enjoy life equally and harmoniously, without bias or inequality.

[YM]

A POET'S MIND

YOSANO Akiko 1931, 296–302, 305–8

Because my initial motivation for writing poetry was to indulge in the self-satisfaction of fulfilling my wish to sing my emotions with words, if I can compose a poem that pleases me, the purpose of composition is already achieved. There is nothing else that I seek from it. From olden times, many 'waka' poets and haiku masters, particularly the men, were driven by a spirit of competition. Eager to earn themselves worldly praise and a place of honor in the literary hall of fame, they prided themselves on outdoing others. I cannot twist my mind and heart the way such specialists do. From the experience of having entered earnestly into the deep concentration of composition, there is no room in my mind for thoughts of fame. When one's mood is colored by thoughts of fame, it loses its purity.

I therefore continue to think of myself as the same “beginner” I was when I began writing poems many years ago. Even now, I am sometimes overcome by doubts as to my poetic gifts and worry that I may be too ignorant to write poetry. But once I find my way back to the mind of the novice, these doubts fall away on their own. I try to open my inner eye to fresh emotions by taking in human feelings, by gazing at the colors of mountains and rivers, by letting flowers and plants and trees manifest themselves—by approaching the poem as if for the first time. I cannot abide reliving yesterday's feelings today.

Poets of the Heian period like Ki no Tsurayuki and Fujiwara no Kintō,³ comported themselves as great masters of poetry, but their poems lack warmth. The narrow-minded conceit of being a “great master” kept them from exposing their stark-naked humanity or from writing freely, without reservations.... In contrast we have “free artists” like Murasaki Shikibu, Sei Shōnagon, and Izumi Shikibu.⁴ These women were not prisoners of their own conceit but simply wrote poems and essays because they wanted to. As a result, their work leaves plenty of room for drawing the reader into the embrace of their intimate sense of humanity....

3. [Ki no Tsurayuki (872–945) and Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041) were celebrated classical poets belonging to the court aristocracy of the Heian period.]

4. [Sei Shōnagon (966–1017) was a lady of the court and author of the famous *Pillow Book*. Izumi Shikibu (fl. 1000) was perhaps the most accomplished poet of the mid-Heian period.]

My attitude at the time of composition must be completely grounded in my “real feelings.” By this I do not mean some prosaic commonsensical emotion that can be expressed in conversation or quickly put to paper.... I mean a very particular emotion that belongs to the realm of poetic feeling, something that enables me as a writer to leap over the conventional and come in contact with new joys or sorrows previously unknown, an excitement that shakes my life out of the ordinary and everyday.

.....

Like a painter contemplating the composition of a canvas, I toil over how to “turn my words” poetically. To be sure, when inspiration abounds, words come to me like fish jumping out of the water. At such times the composition is effortless. When such is not the case, I have to strain, filling the page black with words, writing and erasing until my words come to just the right “music.” In these *douleurs de l'enfantement* lies the hidden pleasure known to the poet alone.

I speak of composing music with words because *waka* is a kind of music. It is neither an academic essay nor a magazine article. It uses very few words to express many feelings musically. To search a *waka* for an idea, a philosophy, or a current ideology is as misguided as it would be to look for these things in a piece of music. What is more, *waka* does not simply state raw, naked poetic feelings; it is a kind of music that speaks directly to human sentiment. To turn the poetic emotion into the right music, one needs to choose the right words and then create a melody out of them. For each new emotion, a new piece of music has to be composed.

To accomplish this, one must understand the tone and flavor of each word, as well as the musical effect brought about by their combination. In the same way that painters fret over the purity of their colors, the thickness of the pigment on the face of the canvas, and the quality of the finished work, poets invest the same care in their work. A poem can never rest content with merely communicating a certain meaning the way a prose composition can.

The poetry of Japan has a particularly short form unlike any other in the world. Not only does it not allow for a single word or sound in excess, it seeks to eliminate explanation as far as possible, so that a clean and subtle combination of words can make a scent float off a flower or tinge a mountain mist the color of the rising sun, allowing these intangible images to yield a clear and definite contour of feeling.

.....

It has been my experience that when I set to compose poetry my “love” is broadened and refined. Moreover, my interest in “beauty” is elevated and enriched. Weeds and flowers I had not noticed before, fallen leaves, pebbles and stones, withered trees—in such things I discover interesting lines and angles, colors, delicacy, and other kinds of beauty that had escaped my attention. And

then there arises in me a feeling of love towards these things; I feel an intimacy with them as if they could share with me the joys and sorrows of life.... To the cold eye of rationality all this may sound like so much silly emotion, but most of the time we live immersed in this kind of sentiment, not in reason....

Through writing poems I feel a deepening of love and sympathy to people, as well as to nature. I find I am able to view their merits and demerits, their beauty and ugliness, with tolerance and respect. This is why from ancient times art, religion, and ethics have come together, ultimately, in nature. The fact that the Japanese deities composed poetry, or that the Greek myths and others have muses and gods of beauty, are signs of profound aesthetic appreciation.

Scholarship, which relies chiefly on reason, also enhances human life, but arts make our feelings transparent and as such wash our life clean in a more direct way. If one has only to read another's artistic expression to be emancipated from the narrow and oppressive world of the "useful," how much more so when one actually experiences the joys and trials of creativity!...

[YM]

HIRATSUKA Raichō 平塚らいてう (1886–1971)



Hiratsuka Raichō (née Hiratsuka Haru) is Japan's most celebrated feminist activist of modern times. She began her public career in 1911 with the organization of Seitō (The Bluestocking Society), a literary movement that announced the birth of the women's liberation movement in Japan. A fierce individualism coupled with the self-effacing practice of Zen meditation combined to sustain her engagement in women's questions throughout her adult life. During the first decade of the twentieth century, she stood up for women's right to genuine romantic love. She herself fell in love with Okumura Hiroshi, a painter five years her junior, and, in defiance of a prewar civil code that deprived married women of their individual rights, entered into a common-law living arrangement with him, proudly registering their two children as "illegitimate." After throwing herself into the debate over "motherhood" with Yosano Akiko* and others, she turned to social issues in the 1920s and founded the Women's League with the aim of demanding equal status with men in matters of the law and political participation. In the 1930s, she turned to the cooperative movement, which she considered the logical, grass-roots path to social reform. She kept silent during World War II, preferring to till the soil as a simple farmer, but resumed her activist career in the postwar period. Focusing her efforts on promoting world peace, she formed the Japan Federation of Women's Organizations in 1953 and helped establish the New Japan Women's Association in 1962. The passages below reflect the breadth of concern and the depth of commitment in this beautiful and elegant woman whose fiery spirit helped shape the consciousness of twentieth-century Japan.

[YM]

TWO MANIFESTOS

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1911, 14–18 (157–9), 22–6; 1920, 159, 164–5, 169

The Foundation of Seitō, the Bluestocking Society

In the beginning, woman was truly the sun. An authentic person.
Now she is the moon, a wan and sickly moon, dependent on another, reflecting another's brilliance.

Seitō herewith announces its birth.

Created by the brains and hands of Japanese women today, it raises its cry like a newborn child....

Passion is the power of prayer. The power of will. The power of Zen meditation. The power of the way of the gods. Passion, in other words, is the power of spiritual concentration....

Each and every woman possesses hidden genius, the potential for genius. And I have no doubt that this potential will soon become a reality. It would be deplorable, indeed, if this tremendous potential were to remain untapped and unfulfilled for lack of spiritual concentration....

Freedom, liberation! The pleas for women's freedom and liberation have been murmured for years. But what do they mean? Haven't both freedom and liberation been terribly misunderstood? The term "women's liberation" alone covers a multitude of ideas. And even supposing that women are liberated from external pressure and constraints, given access to so-called higher education, allowed to work in a wide range of occupations, given the vote, released from the confines of home, the custody of parents and husbands, and allowed to lead a so-called independent life, will they achieve freedom and liberation? To be sure, these conditions and opportunities will enable them to achieve true freedom and liberation, but they are no more than experiments, the means, and not the goal. Nor do they constitute the ideal....

Only when we cut ourselves loose from the self, will we reveal our genius. For the sake of our hidden genius, we must sacrifice this self....

Our savior is the genius within us. We no longer seek our savior in temples or churches, in the Buddha or God.

We no longer wait for divine revelation. By our own efforts, we shall lay bare the secrets of nature within us. We shall be our own divine revelation. We do not seek miracles or yearn for the realm of mystery and wonder in some far-off place. By our own efforts, we shall lay bare the secrets of nature within us. We shall be our own miracles, our own mysteries....

Let us devote ourselves unceasingly to fervent prayer, to spiritual concentration. Let us continue our efforts to the very end, until that day our hidden genius is born, until that day the hidden sun shines forth....

Woman will no longer be the moon. On that day, she will be the sun as she was in the beginning. An authentic person.

[TC]

The Foundation of the Women's League

As I am about to write the preface to the *Women's League*, I cannot help but recall my youthful essay that began with the line: "In the beginning women were the sun," published exactly ten years ago in the journal *Seitō*....

My thoughts and my personal life then and now, as well as the women's world and women's issues then and today, are vastly different. The feminist movement

has taken big strides and changed considerably in the last decade.... Rather than demand legal, political, and economic freedom, as western feminist movements have done, we focused on awakening the spiritual freedom and spiritual independence of women.... In that sense, one could call it a kind of spiritual (or religious) movement, but not yet a social movement.

We have now advanced from self-awareness as human beings to self-awareness as women. The feminist position that centers on the self in the narrowly individual sense is already out of date.... The focus of feminist thought has shifted from equality of the sexes, equal rights, and opportunity, to issues that concern both men and women (that is to say, love and marriage), motherhood, and children. In other words, feminism has shifted from the individual to the group, from self-interest to altruism....

The procreation of children, that is, a woman's work of love as a mother in the home, has hitherto been dismissed by men and by women themselves. Now this work has once again acquired a sacred and valuable social and moral significance in the hearts of women. The heaven-ordained role of women is to be mothers. The work of mothers is not merely to bear and raise children, but to bear good children and raise them intelligently....

For the sake of humanity, they must go beyond reproducing the species to improving its quality. Therein lies the social significance of women and mothers. The ultimate goal of the most advanced women's movement is to demand a woman's right to love and to have children so that she may improve humankind, radically restructure society, through love and marriage, through bearing and educating children....

In the past, we called for the end of sexual discrimination and demanded equal rights as human beings.... Now, as women, we call for rights that enable us to fulfill our rights and obligations as mothers. At the inception of the women's movement, we tended to see female suffrage as an end in itself and as a way to bring about political equality. Now we see it as a right that can be effectively exercised for a certain purpose, namely, reforming society so that women, as women, may carry out their work of love.

[YM]

THE RISE OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1915A, 106–16

It was through the influence of Rousseau's philosophy and the spirit of the French Revolution that European women slowly began to wake up and to pursue women's issues on various fronts and in various ways. By the end of the eighteenth century serious works had been published by progressive men and

women, such as the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* by Olympe de Gouges, *Original Greatness of Women* by Thomas Thorild, and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* by Mary Wollstonecraft. From the end of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century, such talented women as Madame de Staël and Georges Sand advocated the rights of romantic love as against the kind of loveless marriages performed in churches or by the state that forbade divorce. In Germany Rahal Varnhagen, a forerunner of the new woman, was already active. I believe it was sometime around 1850 that the famous book by Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, was published.⁵ From the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, Charlotte Gilman in North America, Olive Schreiner in South Africa, and Ellen Key in Sweden took the lead, each championing her unique views. At the same time, in the literary world authors like Ibsen brought women's issues to the attention of the public, kindling in women's hearts dreams of a different way of life. Women's issues were not merely discussed at the level of theory and abstract concepts; they also gave birth to movements. Prompted by their inner instinct, as well as by external necessity, women took up the difficult struggle. The result was a significant improvement in their social and economic status as well as an expansion of their legal and political rights.

The nineteenth century is rightly called the century of women in Europe and North America, since it was women's issues that defined the period. Some would even say that the women's century is already a thing of the past and that we are already in the century of the children. Be that as it may, what was the situation of women in Japan at the time?

The Meiji Restoration belonged to the men, and to a small number of young men at that. The simple if courageous attempts of these newly enlightened leaders to import western civilization into every aspect of culture and organization were barely more than a superficial, uncoordinated, and partial imitation. Yet they succeeded in creating a quick and ready-made civilization. At that time, women—the other half of the country—were also to some extent stimulated by the ethos of the day. Some were moved by the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement to enter into politics. Others, swept up in Itagaki Taisuke's enthusiasm for equal rights with men but not yet awakened to themselves as women, rashly imitated the behavior of men. Around 1894 or 1895, beginning with Higuchi Ichiyō, young talented women appeared in the literary world, but here again they did little more than imitate men to show that women, too, were able to write novels on a par with them. To be sure, some women wrote about their own experiences and feelings in order to vent the suffering and despair of the

5. [In fact, it was published in 1869.]

life they had resigned themselves to. But what was lacking in this writing was a fighting spirit to undo this state of affairs and better it through new ideals. Still caught in the traditional morality, customs, education, and other social structures, they were unable to wake up from the slumber of their resignation and break through their passive and subordinate position as weak creatures.

The first women activists in Japan were Imai Utako and Endō Kiyoko.... We may also mention Fukuda Hideko, who published the journal *Women of the World* and introduced a socialist view of women. Some years later, Yosano Akiko* began to voice a moderate and commonsense view of women, advocating the equal treatment of men and women. Scholars of western thought drew attention to works on women's issues.... But these efforts did not succeed in creating the kind of social movement that would make men stand up and take notice of women's issues or reflect on themselves. Japanese society at large carried on with the ideal of women as "good wife and wise mother" and made it the sole focus of girls' education.

Still, Japanese women did not remain asleep long. On the surface, Japanese society looked calm and peaceful, but the spirit of the new age—the new ideas born of modern civilization—were seeping into the minds of middle-class young women, silently but surely maturing in the recesses of their souls.

Some young women were influenced by the naturalist movement that dominated the Japanese literary world. Some were influenced by the trend of individualism. Some were stimulated by new types of women depicted in modern literature. But some, who had lived as daughters, wives, students, teachers, and professionals under the weight of old traditions restricting them in society and at home, where women were ignored, looked down upon, and treated like slaves, began to harbor doubts in the face of the ceaseless barrage of insults, lies, contradictions, and conflict. They began to reflect on themselves and slowly to face the question of self-identity. They realized that their youthful vitality and individual dignity were being trampled on and crushed by their surroundings. They longed to become free to live their own lives as independent and authentic individuals. Everything they had been told by their parents, by their husbands and teachers, their elder friends, religionists, moralists, and educators began to sow in them seeds of contempt and dissatisfaction. They could not suppress a cry of resistance against the old figures of authority.

The only thing that kept young women from voicing their true thoughts and emotions was the submissive education that had forced patience on them in the name of "femininity" and "modesty."

Around the end of the Meiji period, I collaborated with a number of like-minded friends in the bold initiative of publishing the journal *Seitō* as a sign of our passionate sincerity to express ourselves publicly. No doubt, what we had to say was rather naive and our thoughts were not yet developed in a coherent

manner. I would even say that at first every hint of philosophical content was overshadowed by uncontrollable outbursts of as yet vague aspirations....

To put it simply and succinctly, our article of faith was this: Women are human beings as much as men are; we, too, have souls. Therefore, women should be given the opportunity of a higher education and should be allowed freedom and independence of thought and emotion so that they can gain a basic inner enlightenment and outwardly attain the economic, social, political, and legal rights that follow from inner liberation. We were of one mind in condemning the lamentable condition of women past and present, raising awareness of our state, and longing for a new life as liberated women.

Just what is this “new life” that we were seeking? What kind of religious, moral, educational, political, and legal systems would it require? How would the sexes relate? What economic structure is suited to such a new life? We did not have a clue as to how to make this “new life” concrete, nor did we have any practical steps for bringing it about. In fact, we did not even have a clear concept to guide us, let alone the mental composure to engage in deep thinking or research. In a word, the “new life” floated around us like a phantom. Intellectually, we were still children and dreamy-eyed poets.

For all our shortcomings, and as juvenile, ignorant, biased, inconsistent, and shallow as our initial attempt may have been, I do not believe we were mistaken in identifying the starting point as interior liberation, only from there to dismantle the traditional conventions and structures in order to replace them with a new system based on the authentic wishes and personal dignity of women. In the true sense of the word, we were the first to sponsor the women’s movement in Japan.

How did Japanese society react to these small but significant steps? Far from magnanimously. Some were initially intrigued and curious about our efforts, viewing us calmly and with stiff smiles. But as we moved ahead, they began to insult us and make fun of us, and in time their derision grew to criticism, attacks, and a virtual storm of slander and abuse. In the end, the authorities turned to censoring our activities as a disturbance of moral order, labeling us purveyors of dangerous ideas.

But the spirit of an age is not something to be suppressed. Notwithstanding the fact that male intellectuals rejected our efforts as a feminine vanity that offends the traditional virtues of Japanese women, word reached us of more and more young women who, dissatisfied with the traditional demands of marriage and dreaming of independence, had left home for the capital city to pursue an interest in learning or the arts, women disgusted with the idea of ending up in an arranged marriage merely to secure material stability.

In 1913 and 1914 a number of newspapers and magazines took up the question of the “women’s movement” and people from various fields entered the debate

about the “new woman.” And so the word spread around Japan, but at the same time a false image grew about us and we came to be seen as merely following the vulgar fashion of the day. Thus the public sensation surrounding women’s issues was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it made the general public aware of women’s issues, but on the other it incited dirty attacks, accusations, and deliberate misunderstandings. A disproportionate amount of time and energy was spent defending ourselves from such aggressions.

The whole experience made us more adamant in our resolve, but it also made us want to turn away from the public eye to reflect on ourselves and further cultivate our thinking. We made efforts to put our ideas down in writing, which meant first breaking away from the largely incompatible environments in which we found ourselves. For example, some of us moved out of our parent’s households, which were a symbol of outdated ideas and social structures, and began to live independently. Some experienced romantic love and, claiming such love as our right, entered freely into marriage or lived together. Some of us gave birth to children—creations of love. As a consequence, our thinking gained in substance; we began to deal with concrete problems of daily life and, as a natural result, to take up the question of sexuality, which had been overlooked, neglected, and at times even denied. (In its early phase, the women’s movement tended to deny femininity and tried to make women more like men. This was a reaction against the fact that for too long the focus had been too much on sexuality: the sexual life was thought to be the whole of a woman’s life. Curiously, this was the case in the history of women’s movements in the West as well.)

We gradually began to realize that our liberation is not to be *from* our “female sex” but *as* an authentic “female sex.” Our promotion of women’s rights is not simply for us as human beings but as a *female sex*. In my case, this conviction was reinforced by a chance encounter with the philosophy of Ellen Key where love is seen as the central issue of the women’s movement....

During the past four years *Seitō* served as a representative of the first stage of women’s issues in our country: the iconoclastic phase of the movement. But now we face the question of how to construct a new life for women, and this means identifying new spiritual, moral, ethical, and legal realities for women. This is the second phase of the movement, a positive and studied phase of construction. This phase brought us to far more complex and challenging questions such as... the actual conflict between the “soul life” and “family life” for women, that is, the question of how to resolve the contradiction between rights as humans and rights as persons of the female sex. In the first, iconoclastic phase of opposing tradition, we needed only passion, courage, and the spirit of sacrifice. Today we need to exercise intelligence and wisdom. In addition to pointing out the problems, we need actually to resolve them in the concrete. This will require a certain grasp of scientific knowledge related to the whole

spectrum of human life present and past, in areas such as biology, anthropology, sociology, and economics.

It will also benefit us to examine the struggles that leaders of women's movements in other countries have undergone and to study their guiding philosophical principles. It is not that we wish merely to mimic movements of the West, but rather that we can see them as a source of inspiration in suggesting new paths to forge....

[YM]

NEITHER CAPITALISM NOR MARXISM

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1930, 173–80

The Women's Front is the second Seitō, signaling a transition from individual awakening to social awakening.... Twenty years ago, Japanese capitalism was still in its initial stages. I was fortunate to be born to a middle-class family and with the financial support of my parents was able to receive upper-level schooling. In my twenties I became aware of the bourgeois idea of individualism. Unable to stand by idly, I joined forces with a small number of friends to launch the magazine *Seitō*, in which we proclaimed respect for the individual, the self-transformation of women, and the like. Longing for the autonomy and freedom of women as human beings, we stood up publicly against male despotism and the feudalistic system that kept women subjugated.

Although one of the pioneering women's liberation movements, Seitō was rather abstract in its goals and did not venture far beyond the confines of an intellectual literary movement. The criticisms and ridicule it prompted from the still-powerful feudalistic forces were beyond our expectations and it seemed our movement was suffocating under mountains of misunderstanding. But the seeds sewn by the Seitō movement actually took root in the hearts of young women across Japan, gave them hope, and began to bud and flower in courageous action.

.....

In the decade following the publication of *Seitō*, Japanese capitalism made great strides, thanks to the First World War in Europe. Today, Japanese women are working and make up a significant part of the labor force.... In the summer of 1919, I travelled around silk factories and textile mills to observe the actual working conditions of women. How wretched were the scenes I saw and the stories I heard!... I was deeply moved and felt obliged to leave the self-satisfied literary movement for one of solidarity and action.... In 1920, we founded the New Women's Association. By then, I was no longer a daughter protected by the

wealth of my parents. I was a destitute mother of two, trying to earn a living and perpetually worried about how to make ends meet. I was also tormented with the problem of motherhood and the need to become a career woman.

.....

Since the founding of the New Women's Association, another decade has passed. And what a decade of change it was! As Japanese capitalism matured, its cruel and poisonous aspects came to light. Many Japanese workers lost their jobs and could not find work; small and medium-sized industries collapsed and the intellectuals were at an impasse. A dark shadow was creeping up behind the gaiety of urban culture.... I began to think that, as women and as members of the working class, we needed to fundamentally restructure the economic system in which a handful of capitalists were monopolizing the wealth, exploiting the masses of laborers, and submitting them to unredeemable misery....

I found the Marxist socialist movement uncongenial in its methods and its ideals of social structure... and was, therefore, more attracted to the movement towards cooperatives slowly coming to birth all over the world—both because they were down to earth and because they sought to undermine modern capitalism. Although aware of class distinctions, the cooperative movement did not excite the combative male instincts to engage in the radicalization of class struggle or to wrench power from the hands of the capitalists through a power struggle. Its aims were closer to women, to the ordinary humble life of the consumer in the kitchen, as was its spirit of mutual aid. Through peaceful and yet concrete practical means, the movement clearly and effectively erodes the capitalist organizations while it works towards building a new society of cooperation and self-government. As such, it seemed most suited to the life and temperament of women.

[YM]

THOUGHTS AT THE END OF THE WAR

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1948, 42-4

The present revolution that is taking place amid the sacrifices following the defeat in the war is a great and wonderful revolution—something the Japanese people have not known in the past. With one blow of the axe it has cut through the roots of the long years of subjugation women have suffered. Women are swiftly being emancipated from all sorts of limitations and restrictions. One cannot but be overjoyed at all of this....

I believe that now is precisely the time for liberated Japanese women to recover the original vision of the feminist movement and become conscious

of their primary dignity as human beings. We are not dolls or robots or female animals. Our true identity is noble and divine; it harbors infinite life and its capacities know no bounds. Each of us women needs to know this truth through self-examination. The quest for inner divinity may sound difficult in the extreme, but that is far from the case. We were merely unaware of our original divinity and only needed to rediscover it. You may feel that you are weak and ignorant, but if you delve deep enough within yourself in all earnestness, you will always arrive at God (the divine reality that is the origin of the universe itself). This is what it means to become self-aware.

This self-awareness will give us insight into the profound significance of the principle of the dignity of persons and the equality of every Japanese citizen, the principles on which democracy rests. It will help restore the self-confidence, courage, and passion that seem to be lacking in today's women. True unshakable self-confidence, untiring courage, and sustained passion are rooted in infinite divine power. The day will come when Japanese women, liberated in self-awareness, will overcome, step by step, the unfavorable conditions of the present and harvest the brilliant fruits of emancipation. In 1911, when I was twenty-six, I lamented: "In the beginning, woman was truly the sun. An authentic person. Now she is the moon, a wan and sickly moon, dependent on another, reflecting another's brilliance." Today, thirty-seven years later, I can cry out full of joy: "From the bottom of the emancipated Japanese women's heart, a great sun rises. Behold! The day has come."

[YM]

THE VALUE OF VIRGINITY

HIRATSUKA Raichō 1915B, 53–60

Although the question of the value of virginity belongs to the larger issue of chastity, it has unique aspects of its own.... Conventional wisdom has it that virginity is something to be cherished, that purity and innocence are precious, and that girls must not throw away their virginity lightly. As such, virginity has been a cornerstone of female morality since ancient times.... Just why this is so has not been questioned. The only arguments are circular: virginity should not be devalued because it is absolutely valuable. Its inherent value has not been thought through.

The question, then, is why conventional morality unconditionally condemns women who lose their virginity outside of marriage.... Rather than engage in generalities about whether or not virginity is important, we need to rephrase the question to ask: How long is it meaningful for a virgin to keep her virgin-

ity? Because virginity is an integral part of the sexual life of a woman, of her station in life, and of her level of maturity, it is a highly personal matter. Pressed for a general answer to the question, I can only say, "A virgin should preserve her virginity, which is hers to keep as she wishes, until the best time to lose it comes around. To throw it away at the wrong time is a waste, but so is not to lose it at the right moment." In terms of the inner life, the most fitting time to lose one's virginity is when sensual desires arise out of a romantic love grounded in a spiritual attraction to the beloved, when the union of two persons can be felt intimately and deeply.... From a wider perspective, the loss of virginity for a woman means achieving a fuller, healthier development of her sexual life beyond the virginal state, one that further enriches the whole of life and increases her vitality....

Female chastity consists of holding on to virginity as long as necessary and then letting it go at the right time. In this way virginity takes on great value. The most essential questions for women are whether or not they are able to pursue romantic love, which is so central to women's existence; whether or not they can develop a healthy and natural sexual life, which also belongs to the core of women's existence; and whether or not they can achieve happiness in life. In this sense, it is only natural for women to defend their virginity when it is threatened with violence. It is something that belongs to the individual, who must proclaim her rights to her own life and must respect the desires of a healthy individuality. Apart from this essential and sexual aspect of virginity, I see no value in virginity or any fundamental reason to consider it valuable.

How do women usually lose their virginity? How many of them lose it at the most suitable time? In most cases, women's virginity has been treated like a "thing" bound to custom or external circumstances. Although by right virginity belongs to the individual, most women have no choice but to follow the social mores and give it up when told to. The loss of virginity in formally arranged marriages, which today's society endorses and conventional morality champions, seems to me often something ugly, even criminal. For a woman to forfeit her virginity for security in life, as a temporary escape, out of simple vanity, or for the sake of her parents or family, is a crime. Even in a romance, if a woman gives herself to her beloved without feeling sexual desire herself but only in order to be loved, this, too, is a crime, albeit a romantic one. Of course, we cannot be blind to the reality of women who are forced by poverty to barter their virginity. But what makes their actions more sinful than that of women losing their virginity in a loveless marriage?

I long for the day when the feudal system of arranging marriages is done away with and the loss of virginity can take place in a genuine marriage.

[YM]

YAMAKAWA Kikue 山川菊栄 (1890–1980)

Yamakawa Kikue (née Morita Kikue), a committed socialist, was one of the most influential opinion leaders and social activists of the twentieth century. Stimulated by firsthand experience of the conditions of the “mill girls,” she strived both in her writings and through participation in social movements to improve the position of women and to heighten awareness of social injustices. Yamakawa is also known for her publication of an oral history of women from lower-class samurai in late Tokugawa Japan. An open debate with Itō Noe, a member of the Bluestocking Society, concerning the abolition of legalized prostitution launched her into the public domain. Unlike Itō, who considered prostitution a necessary evil, Yamakawa criticized it a shameful legacy of the feudalistic past. Subsequently, she acted as an arbiter between Yosano Akiko* and Hiratsuka Raichō* in their discussions on “motherhood,” arguing for the more basic need to transform the economic system from “bourgeois capitalism” to socialism.

In 1921 Yamakawa banded with other like-minded women to organize the first socialist group, the Red Wave Society. Through this group, and others she was instrumental in founding, she took it upon herself to bridge the gap between intellectuals and working women, as the following selection will testify. Along this line she made proposals to socialist parties on such matters as the abolition of the patriarchal household system, paid leave for pregnant women, and the establishment of nurseries in the workplace. An avid advocate of planned parenthood, she insisted on women’s right to decide when to bear children. Having had to change her family name twice, once to insure the succession of her maternal lineage and again at marriage, she was an early advocate of the right of women to keep their maiden names. After World War II, she was appointed the first director of the Labor Ministry’s Bureau for Women and Minors.

[YM]

AN INQUIRY INTO FEMINISM

YAMAKAWA Kikue 1928, 167–74

The Significance of Women’s Culture

“Feminist culture” and “women’s culture” are terms we often hear these days. For those of us who regard culture as a product of the historical development of human society—whether ancient culture based on slavery economics, feudal society based on serf economics, modern capitalist culture based on wage-enslavement, or a future culture based on socialist economics—a male culture created by men and a female culture created by women are both

inconceivable. There has never been a society that developed without engaging people of both sexes, and in that sense, all cultures have the quality of constantly representing a specific time and society. Hence there never can be any gender culture that represents and is led exclusively by one gender. True, with the rise of private ownership of property human societies stratified into classes, and a few members who became the center of the ruling class took control of culture and education, not to mention political and economic authority. It was for them and through them that a system was established to maintain a status of relations in which women, who, together with all the oppressed, were as a rule deprived of political and social power, and were not allowed freely and actively to participate in the creation and enjoyment of culture.

Of course, within the ruling class there were women who were educated to a certain extent, but that was for the pleasure of their male masters. It had nothing to do with the personal development of women as individuals or with granting them a place in the life of society. This is no less true in the case of men who belonged to the wider class of the ordinary and oppressed. Their education needs to be contrasted with the learning of academics in order to appreciate how education and training are a salient feature of the men of the ruling class, enabling them to maintain control and leadership within a society. The men of the oppressed class, like women, were given only as much morality and education as would fortify the foundations for the improvement of the ruling class and the optimization of its privileges. For this reason, the practice of referring to the culture of upper-class society as male-centered is not really accurate. It was not composed of *all* males but only of a limited number of males who held managerial dominion. What has been called “male-centered culture” should more properly be referred to as “ruling-class culture.”

This way of thinking completely changed with the arrival of the age of capitalism and the role of women as independent and vital members of production. Women today are independent constituents of the economy who seek legal and political recognition of their new position in society, and along with that, equality in education and employment. What is referred to as “feminist culture” entails the demands of the autonomous women’s movements that arose in response to the changing economic position of women. It is a culture of women standing on their own, freely constructing a cultural establishment for themselves.

Rather than companions or subsidiaries, women are the peers of men. They take an independent stance and it is only proper that they should work diligently towards the construction of an autonomous culture. It is as much a duty as it is a right for women, as human beings and as individual members of society, to seek what it is only natural for them to expect.

However fundamentally just this demand may be, whether present-day

society will actually recognize the purely legal equality of women is another question altogether. Actually, among men there are no legal provisions for discrimination or restrictions in rights in such areas as politics, education, and employment. But given disparities of economic status, these universal rights are formally the privilege of a select few in society, which is tantamount to the majority being banned from their exercise. For the great majority of the people, when, due to their ignorance and poverty, the capacity to be concerned with and understand anything beyond the immediate issues of life has been taken away; when freedom of speech and the right to public assembly and to hold public office have been arbitrarily restricted; when free access to education and employment have ended up being determined by economic conditions; in other words, when the exercise of rights has been reduced to financial power and all liberties made subservient to it, it is obvious that liberty and equality are labels whose meaning is diluted or illusory.

Among men, *formal* equality does not in the least diminish inequality *in fact*. Nor should we hesitate to add that in the case of women, mere equality in name is altogether powerless to change their position. After the World War, there was a nominal reform of the position of women. The right to participate in government and the freedom of education and employment became the rule in civilized countries. But with the onslaught of capitalism and the sacrifices imposed on the proletarian class, women were beset with one hardship after the other, and suffered still more than men because of the weakened unity of their class. As ever longer workdays, declining wages, unemployment, and the suppression of labor unions became a worldwide phenomena, the misery of the have-nots and their enslavement seemed to know no end. Like the men, whose political franchise was powerless to check these developments, women were no match for the growing tyranny of capital.

The process gained momentum domestically with the utter oppression and exploitation of the proletariat class and the increasing power of capitalism. On the international level, this meant an increase in the exploitation of ethnic minorities. And throughout it all, there was the gut feeling of an impending imperialist war, as the peaceful development and creative culture of humanity as a whole was being mercilessly overrun and destroyed by the course of events. When facts such as these are faced, the question of the actual meaning of "feminist culture" comes into its own. To speak of women's liberation and the creation of a new culture without reference to the profound dispute with capitalism itself and the concomitant ruin of life and culture is, in fact, to cooperate with the brutal capitalist government that makes these things impossible and indeed is nothing more than an impediment to social progress and the liberation of women. Apart from the liberation of humankind itself, there can be no liberation of women. Women can have no unique culture of their own independent

of the culture of all humanity. To preach “feminist culture” while ignoring the profound struggle with the politico-economic factors that inhibit the creation of a culture by and for the human race amounts, in fact, to feminist cooperation with a capitalist culture based on oppression and exploitation, and intended for the class of the privileged few. Clearly, to preach a “feminist culture” that grants an equal share and participation only to the small class of privileged women at the center of capitalism may seem progressive at first glance, but it harbors a reactionary element within. It can never amount to more than a shallow and weak expression of feminism.

International Peace and the Feminist

In response to the exclusion of women from public life within a capitalist system of economics, it is the feminists who embrace the dream of the radical reconstruction, through participation in public activities, of a human government, morality, and lifestyle—one that restores all public rights. We do not regard the differences between men and women a major factor compared to the essential characteristics that unite us in being human. We understand that, just as men are subject to the social environment, so, too, are women swayed by their environment. On the surface it may seem that men control the forces moving society. But in point of fact, the more fundamental power lies in the social conditions that move the way we think. It is for this reason that women’s liberation, and at the same time that of all humanity, should not be directed at men as opponents in the struggle. We must turn our attention to the social conditions that control their thinking. As long as there is no change in these conditions, women will never attain more than what current government and economics allow them when they assume the same position as men; for when the same societal conditions prevail, the same results will emerge. At present, in countries where feminist political rights and other conditions for the liberation of women have been realized, women ministers of state, department heads, legislators, and professors are on the increase. At the same time, ninety percent of the world’s population lives in deprivation and suffering, trapped in processes that enslave them.

As the facts attest, the results are everywhere the same. To male chauvinists, women are to be looked down on because of their gender; to feminists, women are to be held in esteem because of it. They believe that, based on the same societal conditions, what men could not attain, women, because of their sex, are trying to attain selflessly. There is no scientific evidence for this. They believe that their own hopes will be unconditionally and subjectively actualized just as they are. We need to think of women as every bit as much human beings as men. Thus what has not been possible for men is not possible for women

either; what was inevitable for men is no less inevitable for women, and there is no reason to believe that gender will make a difference. Women are not gods, neither are they demons. They are, quite simply, human beings just as men are. If it is a mistake to think of women as inferior to men, it is no less a mistake to think of them as superior.

Believing that women love peace, some seek world peace within women's unity. But that belief is an abstraction, a propositional generalization unsubstantiated and without scientific basis, all but lacking foundation in actual, concrete observation. In general and in the abstract, humanity—or men—cannot be said to favor the unconditional end of warfare. As a rule, when it comes to loving peace more than war, we cannot even consider men inferior to women. The real issue does not lie in abstractions or general rules. The point is rather what attitude to have and what recourse to take in the face of the wars going on at present.

Before the war, feminists of the world spread propaganda advancing women's political franchise as a means to secure world peace. But when it came to responding to the imminent perils of war and military proliferation, they dared utter hardly a word of protest. Not surprisingly, after the Great War began, they did not reject the most brutal imperialist governments and their most brutal weapons of invasion. Were not the most loyal supporters of Lloyd George and his demonic, blood-thirsty cry, "Fight until the last drop of blood is spilled, seize the enemy's last stand," Emily Pankhurst and her followers?

No sacrifice was too great for waging the war. The lives of twenty million children were lost, husbands were wrenched from their wives, children torn away from their mothers, and humane civilization wiped out. And was it not the feminists, the very spokespersons of "feminist culture," who served as lackeys for capitalism? Those who cried out, "Stop the war," "Peace now," "Peace without compromise or reparation," and "War against war" were not the feminists but the international proletarian class, were they not? What brought war to an end? The confused feminists? No, it was the power of the Russo-German proletariat class that buried the imperialist government in its own country.

And now, hour by hour, the danger of a second world war draws ever closer. With the China problem at its center, this danger looms large before our very eyes in the skies of the Far East. Faced with these events, what effort will spokespersons for "feminist culture" expend to prevent war? Is there even one among the group advocating the rise of women's status, or within the proletarian class, to raise a voice of dissent against troop deployments that provoke the crisis of world war?

The small-minded women's magazines have the leisure to discuss reform, only to cover up an indifference to the far greater problem of four hundred million lives in China and seventy million in Japan currently being threatened. If

it is only a simple indifference, it is hard enough to redeem the ignorance and lack of self-awareness this implies. But if the cover-up is conscious, then it is a deliberate sabotage of the prospects for international peace, which is all the harder to redeem.

Faced with these prospects, the Pacific Rim International Women's Conference that is about to open must, like it or not, and for as long as a voice for international peace can be transmitted, make the complete repudiation of China's troop deployment its central issue; otherwise, everything else will be meaningless. Women of the various countries of the Pacific Rim, do not make it your primary goal to collaborate with the women of China to achieve the people's liberation! To approve of China's brazenly imperialist actions at the same time as you talk of world peace is a betrayal of the cause of peace and an aid to the oppression and plundering of four hundred million of our neighbors in the name of women. This is an almost unpardonable international crime. Whether harbingers of peace or lackeys of imperialism, the essential nature of the Pan-Pacific Women's League is for each delegate to discover for herself.

[RF]

Aesthetics

Kamo no Chōmei

Zeami Motokiyo

Ōnishi Yoshinori

Izutsu Toyoko

Aesthetics Overview

As Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762) indicates at the beginning of his treatise *Aesthetica*, “Aesthetics (theory of the liberal arts, doctrine of inferior knowledge, art of beautiful thinking, art of analogous reasoning) is the science of sensible knowledge” (1750, 17). This is the opening statement of a work that is considered to be the genealogical moment in the creation of aesthetics as an autonomous philosophical field—a creation prompted by the need to rescue the senses from the primacy of reason. The association of feelings (*aisthesis*) with the fallacious world of experience has a long history that goes back to Plato’s mistrust of the senses. The latter gave access to a reality whose essences could only be found in the reflection of transcendental forms, or ideas. The senses and their cosmetic apparatuses (including the rhetorical world of poets) came to be enslaved to a mind (or dialectical *logos*) that the philosopher applied to the study of knowledge (the ultimate good). Baumgarten was faced with the challenge of formulating a theory of sensibility in which the body could stand shoulder to shoulder with the mind—a “science of sensuous cognition” investing the sensible world with the perfection of logic. No matter how hard the philosopher tried to elevate the status of the senses, these could not escape the destiny of remaining “an inferior form of knowledge” grounded in the *analogon rationis* (conformity to the principle of reason).

When Nishi Amane* introduced the field of aesthetics to Japan in his 1877 work, *The Theory of Aesthetics*, and applied it to the organization of what could be called “the arts” in Japan, he was faced with the problematics of accepting the basic Cartesian *a priori* that “I think, therefore I am” (*cogito, ergo sum*). Descartes did not deny the importance that passions and feelings have in the life of human beings, as his 1649 treatise on *The Passions of the Soul* attests. The motto does indicate, however, that one cannot rely on the passions in order to understand them. Instead, one must analyze them with the rationality of the geometer whose tools of inquiry—mind and reason—need to be free and independent from the object of their exploration. For Descartes, to think is definitely not to feel, even if, as Pascal reminded him, “the heart has its reasons, which reason

cannot know.” Considering the fact that in premodern and early modern Japan most of what is currently considered aesthetic speculation was made by poets and artisans, *cogito, ergo sum* was not very well suited for beginning a treatise on aesthetics. This is already clear from its Japanese translation. The verb used to translate *cogito—omou*—does not correspond to the English *think* or the French *penser* in that it includes a strong element of pathos. Etymologically, it can be related to the words “hide” and “surface” (ŌNO Susumu 1974, 249), suggesting that *omou* originally meant keeping inside feelings such as anxiety, hatred, hope, love, expectations, and so on, without allowing them to surface. The act of *omou* takes place in the heart (*'kokoro*), which is the driving force behind the externalization of the feelings pent up in the process of “thinking.” In this sense, *kokoro* appears originally to have referred to the disclosure of one’s inner thoughts and feelings. In other words, the Japanese translation of “I think, therefore I am” actually means that my existence can only be explained by my *omou*, that is to say, my yearning for something or somebody, my hopes that something will happen, my distress over a secret anxiety, my realization that something is taking place at the bottom of my heart. The element of pathos in the verb *omou* allows Japanese to speak of “thinking inside the heart,” something that would be a contradiction in terms for those who identify thought with the mind and feeling with the heart. Note the following remark in Ki no Tsurayuki’s (868?–945?) Preface to the first imperial anthology of poetry in the Yamato language, the *Kokinshū* (*Ancient and Modern Songs*, 905): “Since people fill this world with many actions, they express with words what they think in their hearts according to what they see and what they hear.” Thus when it comes to Japanese discussions of knowledge and perception, it may be more accurate to begin from the motto, *sentio, ergo sum* (*I feel, therefore I am*).

It is only fitting that the selection of writings in the following pages on topics related to aesthetics in Japan culminates in a discussion of the concept of *kokoro*, which, as readers learn from Izutsu Toyoko*, is variously translated as either “heart” or “mind.” In Tsurayuki’s version of *kokoro* a variety of subjective events take place, such as the thinking of thoughts and the feeling of emotions. However, these thoughts and emotions do not find verbal articulation unless they are “entrusted to what a person sees and what a person hears.” In other words, only metaphors can provide the inner self with an exit into the world—metaphors which in the *Kokinshū* are mainly drawn from nature (“the voice of the warbler singing among the blossoms, and the voice of the frog dwelling inside the water”). As readers of the *Kokinshū* immediately realize, were it not for the scanty information we have about the poems included in the collection, it would be impossible to trace the object of poetic expression back to any specific subjectivity. The poet’s calculated attempt to defer expression to a background that is foregrounded in natural images (scattering cherry blossoms

and falling maple leaves) has led Izutsu Toyoko to deny that Tsurayuki ever used the word *kokoro* to indicate any particular state of subjectivity. She argues that only in the poetry of the Shinkokin period (1205), and especially in Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), did *kokoro* become genuine subjectivity transcending the transience of phenomenal experiences. This transformation in the notion of *kokoro* followed the impact that the philosophy of Tendai Buddhism, especially the concept of the “experience of self-illumination,” had on the construction of the subject in medieval Japan. Thus, *kokoro* became a “state of mind.” By stressing the unindividualized state of mind which he called “no-mind,” Teika argued that the products of the *kokoro* originate spontaneously without ever being controlled by any conscious endeavor. Consequently, Teika considered a poetic masterpiece to be the result of a process of spontaneity in which the *omoi* spontaneously arises from the *kokoro* and spontaneously flows into words (*kotoba*). Teika drew many of these insights from his father Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204), whose poetic treatise of 1197, *Poetic Styles Past and Present*, was deeply infused with ideas coming from the philosophy of Zhiyi’s (538–597) *Great Calming and Contemplation*.

Debates on the conflict between reason and feelings became very popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when members of the Native Studies School confronted the rationalism of neo-Confucianism, whose adherence to social obligations (*giri*) clashed with the reality of human passions (*ninjō*). Hori Keizan (1688–1757), the author of *Things that Cannot be Fully Expressed in Words* (1742), argued that the pursuit of ‘humaneness’ expounded in Confucius’ *Analects* could not be realized without an understanding of human feelings. Keizan’s pupil, Motoori Norinaga* attempted in his major treatise on poetry, *My Personal View of Poetry* (1763), to reconcile the act of knowing with the act of feeling (*mono no aware*) in an age that was becoming increasingly suspicious of the irrationality of the unknown (such as the products of gut feelings and the unconscious). Ideas from the western Enlightenment were finding their way to Japan through scientific publications and the presence of a few western scientists. To be legitimate as a focus in the prevailing circumstances, the realm of feelings had to find rational justifications or, at least, had to be explained in light of “knowledge.” Accordingly, Norinaga felt the need to explain the paradox of “knowing *mono no aware*” (or “knowing the feelings of things”). He was deeply committed to this task because of the evidence that he felt could be found in classical texts such as Ki no Tsurayuki’s Preface with reference to the idea of “thinking inside the heart”—an expression that for Norinaga meant thoughts deeply grounded in the co-rationality of feelings. The reader will find an essay on the transience of dichotomies such as reason and feelings by one of Japan’s major twentieth-century literary critics, Kobayashi Hideo (1902–1983), who dedicated the final years of his life to an in-depth study of Norinaga.

Kokoro, which constitutes a major element in discussions of premodern Japanese poetics, cannot be considered aside from its expression in words (*kotoba*), as Tsurayuki stated in his famous Preface: “The poetry in Yamato language is the togetherness of numberless words that take the human heart as their seed” (SNKS 19: 11). Discussions on language became of paramount importance among Native Studies scholars, as the essay on *kotodama* (the spirit of words) by Fujitani Mitsue* demonstrates. Belief in the performative action of language is reflected in the fear and reverence that one felt for language for its alleged ability to transform a *statement* into an actual *thing* (the sinographs for both are pronounced *koto*). In modern times, the philosopher Ōmori Shōzō* has discussed this topic in a powerful essay of 1973 entitled “An Essay on the Spirit of Language.” Without lending any credence to the belief that words come with any specific power, Ōmori reminds readers of the power that words have to move people, and, consequently, to move them to take action in the world. He emphasizes the bodily being of language that touches people, acting on them with its “gestural” power. By inspiring actions that change the world, language indeed has the power to transform environments.

With the introduction of aesthetics to Japan in the late eighteenth century, the vocabulary that poets had used for centuries in their poetic treatises was put to the use of aesthetic discourses. If we accept the statement by Kobayashi Hideo that until the Meiji period (1868–1912) in Japan there were beautiful cherry blossoms but no idea of beauty, we might even argue that “beauty” in the aesthetic sense of the word was discovered in Japan only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Yanabu Akira (1928–), a leading Japanese scholar of translation theory, mentions six key concepts taken from the Japanese world of poetry that scholars have repeatedly singled out since the Meiji period to be commensurable with the idea of beauty: *hana* or flower, ‘*yūgen*’ or grace (both of which were developed by the playwright Zeami*), ‘*wabi*’ or simplicity, characteristic of the art of the tea-master Rikyū (1522–1591), *fūga* or elegance and *sabi* or artlessness (both of which sustained the poetics of the haiku master Matsuo Bashō, 1644–1694), and *mono no aware* or the pathos of things (a notion introduced by Norinaga) (YANABU Akira 1982, 69).

Yūgen, a key concept in Japanese poetics, found its *locus classicus* in the definition given by the poet Kamo no Chōmei* in the chapter on “The Style of *Uta*” from his *Nameless Treatise* of 1211 to 1216. There Chōmei links the *yūgen* style to the modern poetry of the *New Collection of Ancient and Modern Times* dating from 1205. He writes that *yūgen* is what words cannot convey and poetic form cannot adequately catch; it is the absence of color and sound, and yet it has the power to move the human soul as well as gods and spirits; it is suffering in silence rather than the exposure of one’s grief; it is a view hampered by mist. The silence of dusk in autumn became the privileged site for *yūgen*. One finds

similar ideas in the section on “mystery and depth” from Shōtetsu’s (1381–1459) poetic treatise *Conversations with Shōtetsu* (1450), in which the poet tries to revamp the poetic style of Fujiwara no Teika during the age of linked poetry or *renga*.

The court nobility of the Heian period (794–1185) was the model for the “style of *yūgen*,” which the playwright Zeami considered to be “the highest ideal of perfection in many arts.” ‘Nō’ actors were required to master this style in their performances, as Zeami pointed out in his treatise *A Mirror to the Flower* (1424). The actor must look like a dignified nobleman whose *yūgen* assures him proper respect; he must reproduce the grace of the nobleman’s speech and action. Even when impersonating a fearsome demon, the actor must strive to preserve a graceful appearance in order to be able to manifest the “*yūgen* of a demon’s role.” The greatest danger for an actor is to appear vulgar on stage—a vulgarity that disappears once he has entered the realm of *yūgen*. In other words, *yūgen* is the reproduction on stage of a world long gone, and of a world that the poetics of *yūgen* had helped to create. For a further philosophical discussion of Nō theater one may turn to the essay on Nō and the body by Zeami’s son-in-law and legitimate artistic heir, Konparu Zenchiku (1405–1468?), partially extracted here.

When in the early twentieth century Japanese scholars confronted the issue of the cultural aspect of formation of the nation—see the selection on nationalism and aesthetics by Umehara Takeshi (1925–)—the *yūgen* style became one of the most promising candidates for inclusion in aesthetic explanations of Japan. With the philosopher Ōnishi Yoshinori*, *yūgen* became one of the leading aesthetic categories that contemporary and later scholars of Japanese thought and Japanese literature would use to explain the sensitivity and sensibility of the Japanese nation. *Yūgen* became part of an “ethnic aesthetic consciousness” that Ōnishi purported to uncover by analyzing *waka* poetry in terms of the relationship between intuition (*Anschauung*) and affection (*Rührung*).

In the 1930s, when the use of aesthetic categories reached their peak in Japan through the work of Ōnishi, the very notion of an aesthetic category was already suspicious in Europe because of the reduction of particularity to the alleged universality of specific aesthetic concepts. However, in the hands of the gifted philosopher Kuki Shūzō*, the use of the category of ‘*iki*’ (*chic*) shone brilliantly, as demonstrated in his 1930 work, *The Structure of “Iki.”* The intricate relationships of grace and clumsiness, distinction and vulgarity, the subdued and the showy, the astringent and the sweet, all of which he worked out with geometric precision in his well-known hexahedron, bring to the fore a variety of tensions between opposite sexes, between I and you, between self and nature. Although Kuki could not resolve the problem of apriorism that is inherent in the very nature of an aesthetic category, and that inevitably tied *iki* to issues of

ethnicity, his intellectual tour-de-force is quite impressive. In more recent times philosophers have pursued the analysis of aesthetic categories, devising their own versions, as in the case of Ōhashi Ryōsuke's* analysis of *kire* or “cuts.”

The following selection also includes essays by major Japanese thinkers on a variety of arts, such as the way of tea by Hisamatsu Shin'ichi*, a Zen Buddhist scholar with close ties to several key figures of the Kyoto School* of philosophy. The essay on *wabi* by Izutsu Toyoko contributes further insights into the philosophical implications of the tea ceremony. Nishitani Keiji*, a prominent member of the Kyoto School, is represented with an essay on the art of flower arrangement (*ikebana*). Finally, calligraphy is discussed in an excerpt from the work of Morita Shiryū (1912–1998), an admirer of Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, and an active participant in the dialogue between American abstract expressionists and Japanese calligraphers.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

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[MFM]

CALM CONTEMPLATION

FUJIWARA no Shunzei 1197, 273; (90-1)

How far in the distant past lie the origins of the transmission of the Japanese 'uta'! Beginning from the age of the gods, the world expressed through the *waka* since the time this land of islands developed its skill with words has spread naturally across the life of the human spirit. The poetic expression it has used has enriched the mind and will never wither away. As the preface to the *Kokinshū* has it, because all sorts of *uta* have blossomed from the seeds of the human heart, whether visiting the flowers of spring or gazing on the colors of fall, had there been no *uta*, no one would have noticed the kind of original beauty we meet in the color and fragrance of a flower. Indeed, how would it have been possible to think of the essence of beauty? For this reason, generations of emperors have not overlooked these poems and there has never been a want of people from many different families competing for their appreciation. Therefore today, as of old, texts that clarify points of doubt concerning what is variously called the form of the *uta*, or its essence, conventional epithets, and so on, or the locus of its composition, or reading, or its ritual and mode of composition and language and the like, have been recorded in many houses vying with each other, so that even though it is the same content that is being thought about, there are numerous variations to be found in the world. And yet, distinguishing between what is good in the posture of such *uta* and what is bad is altogether difficult to explain and there seem to be few capable of doing so.

The *Mohe zhiguan* of the Tendai School opens with these words by Guanding:¹ "Calming and contemplation has in itself a clarity and tranquility beyond anything known to earlier generations."

Now, if we pay attention to this at the outset, a dimension of infinite depth as well as profound meaning will be discovered. It will be like listening to something sublime and exalted while trying to understand the poetic sensibility—its fine points, weak points, and its depths. This is to say that things that otherwise are incapable of being expressed in words will be understood precisely when they are likened to calming and contemplation.

It is worthy of note that in the text of the *Mohe zhiguan* the very first thing related is the process of transmission of the holy 'dharma' of the Buddha—that is, the way it was handed down from one man to another. The great enlightened one, 'Shakyamuni', transmitted it to Kāśyapa who, in turn, passed it on to Ānanda; so it went from master to disciple down through twenty-three persons. When we hear about this process of the transmission of the holy dharma, we

1. [Guanding (561–632) was the amanuensis of Zhiyi (538–597), the author of the *Mohe zhiguan* or *Great Calming and Contemplation*.]

cannot have anything but great reverence for it. But in a similar way we cannot but be impressed by the fact that our own Japanese verse-form, the *uta*, has from antiquity been handed down to us in precisely the same fashion—taking the shape of a series of anthologies, a sequence that began with the *Man'yōshū* and then continued on through its successors, the *Kokinshū*, the *Gosenshū*, the *Shūishū*, and so on.

But someone might charge that, whereas in the case of the *Mohe zhiguan* it is a matter of transmitting the deep truth by holy men known as the “golden-mouthed ones,” what I have brought up for consideration is nothing more than those verbal games known as “floating phrases and fictive utterances.” However, quite to the contrary, it is exactly here that the profundity of things is demonstrated. This is because there exists a reciprocal flow of meaning between such things and the way of Buddhism, a way that maintains the interdependence of all things. This is found in the teaching that “Enlightenment is nowhere other than in the worldly passions.” Again, it is as in that passage of the *Lotus Sutra* that says: “The Bodhisattva Mahāsattva interprets even the secular classics... to show how they can benefit life and can be reconciled with the perfect Buddhist dharma.”

The matter is explained as follows in the *Samantabhadra bodhisattva sūtra*:

Of one thing it is said “that is bad,” and of another it is said “that is good.” But there is nothing inherent in things that make them good or bad. For each thing’s “self” is empty.

Thus, for all these reasons I can now for the record state that the Japanese lyric called the *uta* has a dimension of depth, one that has affinity with the three stages of truth in Tendai, namely, the void, the provisional, and the middle.

[WRL, JWH]

HUMAN FEELINGS

HORI Keizan 1742, 199–202

I am very much aware of the role of human feelings in accepting admonition, as I am sensitive to its vital importance in governing. Understanding human feelings is close to the teachings of the sages. It is almost considered laudable nowadays for Confucian scholars to be far removed from human feelings and to know very little of this world. I consider it a great mistake for ordinary people to think of the scholar as someone special and extraordinary. It is impossible for a Confucian scholar to fulfill his task of reading the ancient classics and holy texts without having a better understanding of human nature than the general public does.

Nevertheless, for the scholar, understanding human feelings means becoming dismissive of others, puffing themselves up in the belief that they are something special, wise persons above the vulgar ways of the world and set apart from commoners. As a result, people come to frown on the scholars and ridicule them with spite for their lack of understanding of this world and politics. They dismiss them as useless, even when it comes to understanding the complexities of Confucian literature. Such Confucians are like pots calling the kettle black; they are best left alone. Some, including those respected in society, even go so far as to say that Confucian scholars are fools. And modern day feudal lords have come to look on scholars with such contempt, as lower than warriors.

From of old the Han emperors disdained Confucian scholars for their incomplete understanding of texts and saw them as useless and estranged from human feelings. The feudal lords of today find them unworthy of even the warrior class. And all of this because the scholars display themselves as incompetent and the ordinary people are too illiterate to know any better.

The practitioners of Confucianism blame it all on the illiteracy of commoners. Monks who have left the world, hermits who live in the mountains in seclusion, artists like poets and writers, masters of archery and horse-driving, doctors, and the like are oblivious to the world and devoted so single-mindedly to their work that nothing in nature or society can distract them. As a result, they distinguish themselves and achieve uncommon excellence. If the work of the Confucian scholar is to know the 'five relations', to read the ancient texts of the sages and saints and ponder their true meaning of things, to discipline oneself to the power of governing the nation, how is he to carry out his duty without an understanding of human feelings? How can one seek the five relations at a distance from ordinary society?

Confucius said, "One cannot herd with birds and beasts. If I am not to be a man among other men, than what am I to be?" (*Analects* xviii.6). These "other men" are none other than the people of this world. There is no other way to preach the teaching concerning the five relations completely without understanding their feelings. Buddhist monks leave this world, abandoning their place in these worldly relationships in order to establish their teachings. But if the teachings of the sage are meant for the people of the world, even Buddhist doctrines are a way for ordinary people and the humblest way of all—namely, the way of the Confucian scholar—should be none other than to seek that which is highest in the teachings of the sages.

Now if the highest of all is what the *Analects* call the pursuit of 'humaneness', this humaneness is the core of human beings and there is no way to seek it except through understanding human feelings. To know or understand human nature, a scholar should begin by allowing humaneness to guide the way. One must know of what Confucius speaks when he says:

“You want to turn your own merits to account; then help others to turn theirs to account—in fact, the ability to take one’s own feelings as a guide—that is the sort of thing that lies in the direction of humaneness” (*Analects* VI.28).

Without understanding human feelings, how can one compare one’s own situation with that of another? This comparison is thoughtfulness. Thoughtfulness is a method for seeking humaneness. Thus understanding human feelings is knowing a way to be thoughtful of others.

[IML]

MONO NO AWARE

MOTOORI Norinaga* 1763, 99–100 (172–4)

Someone asked me the following question: What do you mean by the expression “to know ‘*mono no aware*’?”

I answered: In the preface to the *Kokinshū* we find the following passage: “The poetry of Yamato has one ‘heart’ as seed and myriad words as leaves. This *kokoro* is the one that knows *mono no aware*.” The preface continues, “Because of their many actions people who live in the world express what they think in their hearts by entrusting their feelings to what they see and what they hear.” The heart that is mentioned in the sentence “they think in their hearts” is also the heart that knows *mono no aware*. The “one heart” mentioned in the first sentence of the preface is a general concept; the “thinking heart” mentioned in the second is a concrete explanation of the meaning of the general concept. We find another example of what “to know *mono no aware*” means in the following statement from the Chinese preface to the *Kokinshū*: “Their thoughts are easily swayed, their moods alternate between sorrow and happiness.”

The reason all the sentences above are examples of what “to know *mono no aware*” means is that every living creature in the world possesses a feeling *kokoro*. When there is a heart, by coming in contact with things, one necessarily thinks. Therefore, every single living creature possesses the ability to sing. Because human beings, among all living creatures, excel over a myriad of beings, when they think straight and with a clear heart, their thoughts become exceedingly deep. Moreover, humans are more exposed to deeds and actions than animals are. Since they deal with so many things in real life, their thoughts are all the more numerous. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to think that humans can live without songs. When we ask the question why human thoughts are so deep, I can only say that it is because they know *mono no aware*. Whenever one performs an action, each time one comes in contact with this action, one’s heart is moved and unable to stand still. To be moved means to have a

variety of sentiments, such as to be happy at one moment and sad at the next; to be angry, or joyful, or delightedly interested, or terribly worried, or full of love and hatred, or longing for someone, or being disgusted. In other words, the heart is moved because it knows *mono no aware*.

Let me give you a few examples of what it means to be moved because of knowledge of *mono no aware*. When one encounters something for which one should be happy and have happy thoughts, one's happiness derives from the undemanding essence of that very thing about which one should feel happy. Likewise, when one encounters something to be sad about and has sad thoughts, one's sadness derives from the understanding of the essence of that very thing about which one should feel sad. Therefore, "to know *mono no aware*" is to discern the nature of happiness or sadness while experiencing the world. When we do not understand the nature of things, there is no feeling thought in our hearts, since we are neither happy nor sad. Without feeling thoughts, *uta* do not come about.

Thus, to the extent that every living creature has the ability to discern the nature of things, albeit in different degrees, and has the knowledge of being either joyful or sad, they all have songs in themselves. In understanding the nature of things there is a difference between deep and shallow among living creatures. Since in animals the level of understanding is shallow, it seems that, compared to humans, they do not have the ability to discern things. Being superior to things, human beings have a good understanding of the nature of these things and know how to be moved by them (*mono no aware*). Even among human beings there are deep thinkers and shallow thinkers. Compared to those who have a deep understanding of *mono no aware* someone might seem to be completely ignorant of it. Because of the enormous difference between these two kinds of people, the number of those who lack knowledge of *mono no aware* tends to be large. As a matter of fact, we cannot say that they lack knowledge of *mono no aware*. The difference is one of degree between deep and shallow. And so, a song originates from the depth of one's knowledge of *mono no aware*.

The above is an outline of the meaning of "knowing *mono no aware*." If I need to be more detailed about it, I would say that an exact definition of knowing *mono no aware* is "to be stirred by external things." Although in common usage "to be stirred" applies only to good feelings, this is not in fact the case. Even dictionaries explain the character for "sentiment" with the gloss "to be moved."... This means to be moved by any sort of feelings while experiencing external reality. In our country, however, "to be stirred" only applies to pleasant feelings.... To be moved by all sorts of feelings, and to be able to have deep thoughts, whether one is happy or sad, are all examples of "being stirred." Therefore, "to be stirred" is none other than the knowledge of *mono no aware*.

[MFM]

TRANSCIENCY

KOBAYASHI Hideo 1942, 17–19

At a shrine of Mt Hiei, a young court lady disguised herself as a priestess. In the middle of the night, after everyone had retired, she beat out clear raps on a drum before the shrine of Jūzenji, singing with perfect lucidity of heart: “Let it be as it may. Please, please....”

After persistent questioning, she explained, “When the transience of ‘sam-saric’ existence fills my mind, I say: Let the two things of this world be as they may. Please bring me to the world beyond!” (TON’A 1333, 40)

When I first read these words from *Short Sayings of the Great Teachers*, I was struck by how well written they were, and since then they have stayed with me. The other day I went to Mt Hiei, and as I was strolling about among the greenery and stone walls of the Sannō Gongen shrine,² this short passage suddenly came to mind, its phrases cutting a path through my mind as if I were tracing the fine lines of an old image from one of those imperfectly preserved scrolls. It was my first such experience and left me so moved that I kept thinking about that incredible sensation all the while I was eating a bowl of buckwheat noodles in Sakamoto. Even today I cannot help wondering just what it was I had felt and what was going through my mind back then. Of course, it was no more than a frivolous hallucination and it would have been easy enough to brush it off as such. But why has this convenient explanation left me so unconvinced that I find myself now, pen in hand, without a clear idea of how to proceed?

Short Sayings of the Great Teachers was probably one of Yoshida Kenkō’s favorite works and indeed could be set within his own *Essays in Idleness* without suffering in the least from the comparison. With that same passage before me, these are the kind of trivial thoughts I find myself caught up in. Not that I don’t still believe it to be a kind of classic, but where did the beauty that had so stirred me go to? Maybe it has not vanished and is still right in front of my eyes. Perhaps my mental and physical capacity for grasping it has faded and I am without the means to recall it. These childish doubts leave me disoriented, as if caught in a maze, and I offer no particular resistance. I cannot find anything essentially questionable about this “aesthetics in the bud,” and yet in such a state I cannot make my way to an aesthetics.

Truth be told, I was not daydreaming. As my gaze was fixed on the way the foliage glimmered in the sun and the moss attached itself to the stone walls, so vivid was the passage that I could clearly trace it in my mind. I spared myself

2. [Sannō Gongen is a complex containing seven Shinto shrines, one of which honors the Jūzenji, ten illustrious monks who served the royal court during the Heian period.]

unnecessary thoughts. I will never know what state of my mind or what conditions of nature gave rise to that moment. Not only did I not know, I feel it may even be a bit foolish to even presume to know. I was only trying to reminisce about a time that had left me fully satisfied. It was a moment so brimming with proof of my very existence that I was able to take in each and every detail with clarity. Of course, the memory has dimmed since then, but at the time it must have been fresh in my mind. A memory of what? The Kamakura era? Perhaps. At least that is the sense I have of it.

I used to think it nearly impossible to really avoid thinking about new ways of viewing or interpreting history. New ideas would assail me with all their charms, each of them at first glance appealing. But the more I looked at history, the more its unmoving, resolute form became apparent. There is something not easily given to collapse under new interpretations, something not quite so malleable or fragile to the touch. This led me to view history as more beautiful than ever. The kind of theory Mori Ōgai advanced in his last years regarding historical evidence is absurd. In his attempt to confirm the colossal piles of data, he must have finally hit on the soul of history. Reading his *Commentary on the Kojiki*, I felt something similar. Motoori Norinaga's* most forceful idea was that only things that resist interpretation and remain unchanged are beautiful. I thought to myself one day: this must be the best kept secret in the flurry of modern-day theories. On another occasion the idea came to mind suddenly and I remember bringing it up with Kawabata Yasunari,³ who happened to be standing nearby at the time. He laughed without saying a word. "Living things like human beings," I went on, "are pretty useless. When have they ever understood anything they say or do about themselves or others? There is not much worth admiring or observing there. Deceased human beings are something else altogether. Why do things become so clear and straightforward afterwards? Things really begin to take on a human form. It makes me wonder if living human beings might not be a kind of animal in the process of becoming human."

I was fairly satisfied with this idea of humans as a kind of animal, though the thought had not progressed any further. Only the dead appear in history where only the dominant features of humans appear in their unmoving, beautiful form. Those who say that everything turns into a beautiful memory with the passage of time have not understood what they are saying. It is not a matter of our tendency to embellish the past. It is only that with the past we are freed from unnecessary memories. Memories save us from being just another kind of animal. It is enough simply to store recollections. We need to recall memories

3. [Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972) was a celebrated novelist and the first Japanese author to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.]

from the past. Many historians stop at the animal state, perhaps because they so fill their minds with recollections that they can no longer remember.

To recall something well is extremely difficult. Still, I consider it the sole most effective way to escape the anemic idea of time—to me, the greatest illusion of our time—as little more than something that reaches from the past towards the future. There are moments of success. This world may be a transient place, but not in the sense of Buddhist teachings. Transiency is the animal classification that humans at all times and places are placed in. People today lack the understanding of transiency that some newlywed wife somewhere in the Kamakura period had. They have lost sight of permanence.

[IML]

KOTODAMA

FUJITANI Mitsue* 1811, 212–13

Hidden inside words, their '*kotodama*' is the thing that produces the wondrousness of action. In the divine poem by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro in Book 13 of the *Man'yōshū* we read:

The land of Yamato,
The land called Shikishima,
Is a land
Helped by *kotodama*:
May you be fortunate! [13: 3254]

When I think about this poem I realize that when there is *tama* or “spirit” in a word this spirit by itself helps me think, to make myself understood by deities and people, and to obtain a wonderful fortune. These are all effects brought about by the poetry of our country. In the preface to the *Kokinshū* we read that songs “move heaven and earth without any effort.” In other words, the wondrous phenomenon of *kotodama* leads to the expression of things that are beyond the control of human beings. If I had to explain what this spirit is, I would say that it is the power which somehow consoles a heartless heart through the composition of poetry, by realizing the difficult task of producing the fulfillment of proper timing—knowing when desires should not become actions.

When a poem is born from such a heart, the inevitability of timing and the inevitability of the heartless heart come to rest in the word of their own accord, becoming spirit. The result is completely different from the one achieved when composing a poem with the purpose of satisfying one's desires. The difference is the same as the difference between words with spirit and without spirit; or

the difference between the purpose of making a poem for fulfilling good timing, or for satisfying one's desires. The spontaneously arising of a perfect fit between two things in life is always something active in producing unforeseen, wondrous events.

For example, to make a fire is to combine the stone and the metal so that in the process the fire comes out by itself. And yet things do not get burned because of the stone or because of the metal. It is precisely because of what takes place between these two that the wondrous events of burning and of illuminating darkness come about. Let me make another example. Rice wine comes into being spontaneously when rice and water are combined. And yet, one does not become drunk by drinking water or by eating rice. It is simply by bringing the two together that the wondrous events of making people drunk and making their blood circulate take place. Therefore, even in poetry the spirit comes out from the combination of public body and private heart. Poetry must bring about the wondrous action of conveying feelings even when the path of language comes to an end. This only arises from a mind that tries not to destroy good timing because of desires. Therefore, one must absolutely make sure not to act upon one's desires.

[MFM]

MYSTERY AND DEPTH

SHŌTETSU 1450, 224-5 (150-2)

No sooner do they bloom,
 Than the cherry blossoms scatter—
 The fleeting dream
 Of a night that takes away all doubt
 About the white clouds on the peak.

This is a poem in the style of mystery and depth. Mystery and depth is something that is in the heart but is not expressed in words. The moon veiled in thin clouds, or the bright foliage on the mountains concealed by autumn mists—such poetic conceptions are regarded as having the effect of mystery and depth. But if one asks in which particular feature the mystery and depth are to be found, it is difficult to specify exactly. A person who failed to comprehend this fact would argue that the moon is at its most enchanting when it is glittering brightly in a clear sky with not a cloud in sight. But with mystery and depth it is impossible to say just what it is that is enchanting or lovely.

The lines “The fleeting dream / Of a night that takes away all doubt” allude to a poem in *The Tale of Genji*. Meeting with Fujitsubo, Genji recites:

Though now we meet,
 Few have been our nights of love,
 Few our trysts to come.
 Would I might make my wretched being
 Melt into this fleeting dream.

This poem, too, is in the style of mystery and depth. By the lines “Though now we meet, / Few have been our nights of love, / Few our trysts to come—” he means that it has been extremely difficult for them to meet from the very beginning, and in the future it will be almost impossible. So he says, “Few have been our nights of love, / Few our trysts to come.” If instead of awaking from this dream it were to remain a dream forever, then he would simply melt away into the dream. By “dream” he means their present meeting. So he says he wishes he might simply melt away into this dream in which he has seen his beloved.

Fujitsubo’s reply:

Out in the world
 Still they would talk of my shame—
 Even if I myself,
 Wretched beyond all compare,
 Should vanish in an endless dream.

Fujitsubo is Genji’s stepmother. Nevertheless, this love affair has come about between them, and so she says that even if her wretched being vanished away in a dream, her shameful name would remain behind, to be bandied about in court gossip. She has composed her poem skillfully, picking up the lines in Genji’s poem, “Would I might make my wretched being / Melt into this fleeting dream!” In my poem, by the lines “No sooner do they bloom / Than the cherry blossoms scatter— / The fleeting dream” I mean that no sooner do the cherry blossoms seem to come into bloom than in a single night they are already scattered and gone. When one gazes out the next morning, no longer can the clouds be mistaken for cherry blossoms, and so I said, “Of a night that takes away all doubt / About the white clouds on the peak.” By “the fleeting dream” I mean the time it takes for the blossoms to bloom and fall.

[RB]

NŌ AND THE BODY

KONPARU Zenchiku 1455, 197–204 (24–31)

In the way of our family’s profession of ‘*sarugaku*’, the body exhibits extreme beauty, and the voice produces melodic patterns. In these activities, the performer is not aware of specific arm movements, nor of where to place his

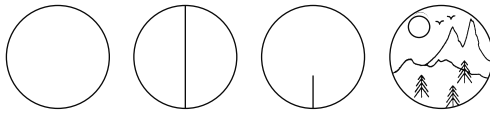
feet; is this not a wondrous function that is fundamentally without subjective control and objective awareness? Thus, the art provisionally assumes the form of six circles and one dewdrop....

The first circle, the Circle of Longevity, is the fundamental source of the '*yūgen*' of song and dance. It is the vessel in which deep feelings develop upon viewing a performer's movement and listening to his singing. Due to its round, perfect nature and eternal life span, it is called the Circle of Longevity....

In the second circle, the Circle of Height, this single point rises, becoming spirit; breadth and height appear, and clear singing is born. This is the unsurpassed, highest fruition of feeling....

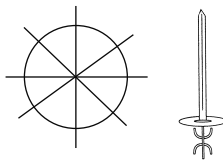
In the third circle, the Circle of Abiding, the short line's position is the peaceful place where all roles take shape and vital performance is produced....

In the fourth circle, the Circle of Forms, the various forms of heaven and earth, all things in creation, are at peace....



Fifth is the Circle of Breaking. When the inexhaustibly varying shapes of the ten directions of heaven and earth are produced, they are originally born within this circle. However, since they temporarily break its round form, I have named it the Circle of Breaking....

The sixth circle, the Circle of Emptiness, is the rank of no-master and no-form; coming back to the beginning, again one returns to the original Circle of Longevity....



This One Dewdrop does not fall into dualistic views of "emptiness" and "form"; it is free existence, unobstructed by a single speck of dust. Thus it takes the shape of the sword of 'dharma-nature'.

[AHT]

NATIONALISM AND AESTHETICS

UMEHARA Takeshi 1967B, 130–9

In treating Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902) as a representative of Meiji nationalist aesthetics and its fundamental vision of value, we find among the cornerstones of his value system an objectivism and theory of sentiment based on a literary theory of essentialism on the one hand, and on the other hand, theories of emphasis and creativity described from the perspective of Shiki's own historical situation. Obviously Shiki is not always on the mark and harbors serious misunderstandings of Japan's literary tradition.... We must therefore rethink his aesthetics and the Meiji nationalist spirit.

A dog got up after a long nap to find itself lying in the midst of ferocious animals. Tigers, panthers, lions, and other beasts took kindly to the dog, perfunctorily extending a hand in friendship and keeping one another in check, all the while hiding the ill will in their hearts. The dog noticed that his friends the goats and rabbits had been killed by the beasts and felt uneasy at the thought of his own vulnerability in their presence. The dog was filled with terror at the only options that seemed open to him: either be killed by the beasts or avoid being killed by turning into a ferocious beast himself. But the question was moot and he had no choice but to opt for the latter. He needed to persuade himself that his inmost nature was as fierce as the wolves who were believed to be his ancestors. And so he adjusted to his surroundings by trying to recapture the wolf within and rely on it to save himself.

The parable can help us understand the meaning of Shiki's aesthetics, which is far removed from a proper comprehension of tradition and can only be seen as an intentional misunderstanding of it. Because there was no way but to become a great power and survive among the mighty nations about it, Japan naturally focused on the strong side of its own culture and history. Meiji nationalism picked and chose from tradition in view of its historical situation to establish the identity of Japan. The secret of Shiki's aesthetics and of Meiji nationalism must be sought in a will to self-misunderstanding born of a deep instinct to survive.

This false self-image indeed served its historical purpose for a time. We successfully escaped the historical crisis of attack by the beasts by convincing ourselves that we, too, were beasts. One's true nature is often unconsciously replaced by attributes it wrongly considers essential, and indeed certain kinds of intentional self-misunderstanding seem to be required for the creation of something new. There is no doubt that some creativity was wrought in our history on the basis of a conscious misrepresentation of ourselves.

We now find ourselves at a point when the results of self-misunderstanding are clearly more negative than positive. What has happened to our poetry

today? Has not the modern *tanka*⁴ that began with Shiki's theory of realism and emphasis dried up all of its feeling, intonation, and creative energy, leaving it in a state of exhaustion? Do we not need to reconsider those theories and come up with new ways of explaining poetry? I am afraid that the history of culture in our country has failed to produce an adequate perspective from which to get a complete picture of Japanese culture. The history of culture inherited from Shiki's conscious self-misrepresentation has not been identified as the source of the failure of his aesthetic theory, despite all the attention given it by Watsuji Tetsurō.* For my part, I am persuaded that we have reached the time for shaking free of the self-imposed bondage of this sort of history in order to rethink Japanese culture from a new perspective.

We must seek disenchantment from the misrepresentations of history. It is not only that our enfeebled culture could do with a strong dose of castor oil; the historical situation that produced this false image we have of ourselves has since grown stale. The time of the tigers, panthers, and lions has all but passed away. At least on the face of it, not even the fiercest of the beasts can any longer satisfy themselves with eating others around them. It is time for all animals to live freely. Our historical task today is to find a new and unique style of life, not through the imitation of European imperialism but by creating, with our own hands, a new way of life for the nation.

To do this, we need a new aesthetics, one suited to the demands of history, liberated from the historical fallacies of Meiji nationalism, and drawing on traditional principles for life in a new world.

In no previous age has Europe reflected so deeply on its principles for living. Formerly no intellectual in Europe doubted the idea of the well-deserved superiority of European culture, but today its leading intelligentsia have begun to raise serious questions in this regard. Heidegger and Sartre may be called the greatest skeptics of European culture. Whereas Sartre focused his attention on Europe's political principles, Heidegger grappled with the ontological issues underpinning European civilization. Heidegger saw the problem as a crisis that affects the nature of European culture too deeply for the simple espousal of communism to resolve, while Sartre saw capitalism as the mother of the crisis.

In Heidegger's view, Europe is a civilization of the will, which for him is the equivalent of reason inasmuch as modern European epistemology sees everything as objects located in consciousness. Put the other way around, everything that exists is placed in front of the self as objects of consciousness. For Heidegger this approach of modern philosophy eventually leads to the idea of domination, that is, to the notion that human beings can assert their will to

4. [A short Japanese poem composed in lines of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables.]

control everything. This will to control stands behind modern reason, serving everything up to the ego. Therein lies the essence of modern western technological civilization.

Heidegger's philosophy is, of course, too difficult to detail here. But there is one point that bears noting with regard to Shiki's aesthetics, namely, that the principle of European civilization had to be understood as belonging both to will and to reason. As mentioned earlier, Shiki emphasized sensitivity and strong feeling. Both of these, which he combines, also represent basic European principles. Shiki's insistence on the importance of sensation and realism corresponds to the European spirit of science and technology, and his strong sense of will is reflected in the will to control hidden within European civilization. This readily leads us to conclude that Shiki's theories are actually western and different from Japanese ways of thinking, and that his interpretation of tradition is no more than an adaptation of modern western principles to Japanese tradition.

In Heidegger's opinion, the contemporary world can no longer take the standpoint of the controlling will. The principle of will aimed at egoistic control of all things has brought European civilization to its present state of isolation and impotence and to the crisis of its own demise. He insists that there is no other escape from the crisis than to reestablish its lost relationship with existence itself, to break away from the ego-centered view of the world in which everything is an object for consciousness, to secure a proper understanding of the place of human beings in the world, and to restore a sense of intimacy with existence.

By and large, it must be said, Heidegger's idea is a reasonable diagnosis of the current malaise of European civilization, though his remedies leave much to be desired. European civilization is bound hand and foot to its will to dominate, as typified by the use of scientific technology to establish control over the natural world. It follows as a matter of course that control over nature should extend to dominion over human beings. Armed with the idea of humans controlling nature, the control of humans by humans is brought to completion.

Today's world is bursting with resistance to this European will to dominate. People who have not been treated with dignity blame it on the fallacies of European humanism. The will to resist grows stronger by the day, matching the strength of the will to dominate. But I wonder if we should embrace the will to resist unconditionally. Insofar as it is set up as a counterwill, who is to guarantee that the ultimate conflict of wills will not end up destroying the world? The will to resist can all too easily forget its original goals and turn into a new will to dominate. In spite of these fears, it is to be hoped that Heidegger's call to "leave the standpoint of will" can ring prophetically and earn the consent of the majority in the not too distant future.

In these circumstances, we must cease interpreting our traditions by way of

European principles and seek a response to the historical crisis from within our native soil. What suggestions has our aesthetic tradition to offer? Allow me to lay down the sword of judgment for a moment and take up that question by way of conclusion.

I have argued that Japanese poetry is unique in viewing nature as symbols of the 'mind'. May we assume these symbols to be the same as those found in French symbolical poetry? Is the mind so easily captured? Are images from nature metaphors or symbols? So far I have let those questions go unanswered, but I would like now to consider them briefly and leave more detailed investigation for a later occasion. In my view the symbols of Japanese poetry are different from those of French symbolical poetry. In Japan we have the conviction, as a kind of backdrop to our worldview, that the mind that is symbolized and the nature that provides the symbols are in essence one and the same. Since humans and nature are manifestations of the same life, we have an implicit belief that the human psyche, however complex, is always expressed in natural form.

Shinto is, above all, the worship of nature in its purity. The meaning of its age-old worship of the '*kami*'—older than emperor worship—lies in the purification and strengthening of the mind through admiration of the pure power of nature. Mention should also be made of esoteric Buddhism, which played a most important role in the Japanization of Buddhism. 'Dainichi' Nyorai, the principal image of esoteric Buddhism, is unlike other buddhas in that its essence is meant to correspond to nature itself. Through the worship of nature, Buddhism was joined to Shinto and gave us a syncretism that, until recently, has formed the basis of Japanese religion. It is easy to see the dominant idea of nature and the human flowing together in the single stream of life reflected in various aspects of Japan's culture such as *haiku*, Nō drama, and painting. This same intellectual current can be seen even in the modern Japanese novel.

The worldview in which living beings can be seen to represent everything that exists since all things share in the same life is reflected in a deep reverence for that inexpressible reality that gives rise to life. But we have come to devalue this as a mere vestige of primitive religion known as "animism."

Materialism and idealism are already accorded the right of reasonable ways of thinking about reality. For the former, the principle of existence is located in dead matter and this forms the core of our understanding of things. For the latter, spirit, formerly considered only to have been given by God to man, is extended to all beings. It is, therefore, reasonable to validate a third idea, that the whole of existence rests on life itself and that all things can be appraised in the light of that life. European intellectual history is defined by the opposition of matter and spirit. But does not this conflict in turn rely on an ontology with its own principle of selection? In a crisis as serious as that facing European civilization, does it not fall on us to heed the call to a highly primitive, and

therefore highly radical ontology? Shall we call those deluded who, ear to the ground, listen to the deep rumblings of the earth for the logos of existence in the crisis of contemporary civilization? Perhaps, aware of the crisis in contemporary civilization, we need to discern whether they be merely deceived or truly thoughtful. It is not easy to say.

[TK]

IKI

KUKI Shūzō* 1930, 7–14 (13–18)

How is the phenomenon of *iki* structured? How can we make clear the structure of *iki* and grasp its being? There is no doubt that *iki* has a certain meaning; neither is there any question that *iki* exists as a word in the Japanese language. Can we then state that the word *iki* is found universally in all languages? We must first look into this question; and if it turns out that what is meant by *iki* exists only in the Japanese language, then it follows that *iki* bears a specific ethnicity. If that is the case, what methodological approach should we take to treat this meaning, with its specific ethnicity, or, alternatively, its specific cultural nature? Before we embark on an analysis of the structure of *iki*, we must answer some preliminary questions.

Let us begin by asking what general relationship language has to an ethnic group. What relationship binds a meaning in language and its belonging to an ethnic group? The question of whether the meaning of a cultural phenomenon is captured cannot by any means make useless the question of whether meaning exists. On the contrary, we venture to say that the question of “being” is often more fundamental. We must therefore start with what is concretely given, and that is “ourselves” and the collection of our selves that we call an “ethnic group.” When a mode of being of an ethnic group is central to that ethnic group, it reveals itself as a “meaning” that is made accessible through “language.” For that reason, a meaning or a language represents none other than the manifestation of an ethnic group’s past and present modes of being and, hence, is self-revealing of a particular historical culture. Thus the relationship between meaning and language, on the one hand, and the existence of an ethnic group’s consciousness, on the other, is not that the former come together to constitute the latter but that the “being” of an ethnic group, supported by experience, creates meaning and language. The relation between these two structures is not a mechanical one, in which parts take precedence over the whole, but an organic one, in which the whole determines its parts. For this reason, a particular meaning or language of a particular ethnic group cannot help but manifest its specific

colorings of the experience of that ethnic group, as the expression of the being of that group.

Of course, meaning and language attached to so-called natural phenomena have a certain universality. That universality is, however, never absolute. For instance, if we compare the French *ciel* or *bois* to the English *sky* and *wood* and the German *Himmel* and *Wald*, the meanings of these words are not necessarily identical. This is a fact that anyone who has lived in one of these countries would readily comprehend. The meanings of the words *ciel* in *Le ciel est triste et beau*, and *sky* in *What shapes of sky or plain?* and *Himmel* in *Der bestirnte Himmel über mir* are all constrained by the people and their land in specific ways. If words describing natural phenomena already differ in this way among languages, we cannot hope to find precise counterparts in one language for words describing specific social phenomena in other languages. For instance, the two Greek words *πόλις* and *ἑταίρα* differ in meaning from the French *ville* and *courtisane*. Even if both terms share the same etymological origin, their actual uses in different languages exhibit distinct meanings. Or again, the meanings of the Latin *caesar* and the German *Kaiser* are clearly different.

The same can be said of meaning and language having to do with abstractions. Even when a specific mode of being of one ethnic group reveals the kernel of that ethnic group through meaning and language, it is obvious that a certain meaning and language may not exist for another ethnic group when it does not possess that same experience at its core. For instance, the meaning of *esprit* reflects the personality and the entirety of the history of the French people. The meaning of this word and the French language presuppose the existence of the French people, and if we were to look for a word with the same meaning in the languages of other ethnic groups, we would not find it. *Geist* is ordinarily substituted for *esprit* in German, but the specific meaning of *Geist* as expressed in Hegel's use of it is distinct from that of the French term. The word *geistreich* does not have the exact semantic shading that *esprit* does. If it did, it would be only in a case in which *geistreich* was intentionally used to translate *esprit*. In such cases, the word has been forced to take on yet another shade of meaning in addition to its original meaning. This would then be a case of introducing a new, different meaning into a language. The people did not create the new meaning organically; it was brought in artificially from abroad. None of the English words *spirit*, *intelligence*, or *wit* is equivalent in meaning to *esprit*. The first two are too specific, while the latter seems excessive in meaning. Another example is the German word *Sehnsucht*, "longing, yearning," a word to which the German people gave birth and to which they possess an organic relation. *Sehnsucht* conveys the feeling of longing for a bright, happy world, harbored by the people who were disturbed by a melancholy climate and military conflicts. This longing to escape to the land where lemon flowers bloom is not a mere nostalgia

for Mignon. It is rather an earnest longing of Germans as a whole for the bright south of Germany in general. It is a longing for flight “away into distant futures which no dream had yet seen, into hotter souths than artists ever dreamed of, where gods in their dances are ashamed of all clothes” and what Nietzsche calls *flügelbrausende Sehnsucht*, both equally held dear by all German people. The penchant for agonizing longing eventually gives rise to metaphysical sentiments that constitute the presupposition that underlies the world of *noumenon*. The English *longing* or the French *langueur, soupir, désir*, and the like cannot capture all the nuances of *Sehnsucht*....

The Japanese word *iki* is one with meaning that is rich in ethnic flavor. Suppose we look for synonyms in European languages. First, in English and German all words similar in meaning to *iki* are borrowings from French. If that is the case, can we find a counterpart for *iki* in that language? Let us begin with *chic*. This word is borrowed by both English and German from French, and it is often translated into Japanese as *iki*. There are essentially two theories as to the etymology of this word. One holds that *chic* is an abbreviation of *chicane*, which refers to being adept at the “intricate trickery” that wreaks havoc with court cases. The other holds that the original form of *chic* is *schick*, a word from the German *schicken*, and that, like *geschickt*, *schick* meant “skillful” in various matters, moving closer to that of *élégant* when imported into French and used to describe aesthetic taste. Later, *chic* in its new sense was borrowed by German from French. If we ask what this word means at present, it is by no means as specific as *iki*. The semantic extension of *chic* is much wider. It subsumes both meanings of *iki* and *jōhin* (elegant, high class) as equally important elements of its meaning, and it can also express *senkō* (delicateness, skillfulness) and *takuetsu* (excellent taste) as opposed to *yabo* (boorish) and *gehin* (crude, low class).

Then there is *coquet*. This word comes from *coq* and describes what happens when a cock is surrounded by a number of hens. It, therefore, corresponds to the Japanese *bitaiteki*. The word *coquettish* carries the same sense in English and German. In eighteenth-century Germany, the word *Fängerei* was proposed to replace *coquetterie* but it never gained currency. This very “French” word does indeed capture one of the many facets of *iki*. But unless we add additional definitions to the meaning of *coquetterie*, it cannot encompass the entire range of meanings of *iki*. Depending on how these defining elements are combined, however, it could come to *gehin* (crude, low class) or *amai* (sweet, undisciplined). Carmen singing the *Habanera* and bewitching Don José is indeed *coquetterie*, but it is definitely not *iki*.

.....

Of course, it is not impossible to search for words having similar meanings to *iki* in western culture and, through formal abstraction, find some common elements among them. If we wish to understand cultural existence as the mode

of being of an ethnic group, however, this is not the correct methodological approach. Even if we were to engage in what is referred to as “ideation” in a domain of the possible by freely making changes to a phenomenon, the nature of which is ethnically and historically determined, we would only end up with general abstract concepts in which that phenomenon is no more than a part. The important thing to bear in mind in the understanding of a cultural mode of being is that one must grasp it in its living form, just as it is and without altering its actual concreteness. Bergson notes that when we recall the past on smelling a rose, it is not that the fragrance triggers the memory. Rather, we smell in the fragrance the memory of the past. Immutable objects, such as the fragrance of roses, or, equivalently, general concepts that are universal for all people, do not exist in reality. Rather, there are individual fragrances having differing olfactory contents. According to Bergson, explaining experience by means of the combination of a general object, such as the fragrance of roses, and a specific object, such as a memory, would be much like trying to produce sounds specific to a language by arranging letters of the alphabet commonly used in many languages.

Attempting to use formal abstraction to find a common ground for *iki* and similar phenomena in western cultures is much like this. Every time we attempt such a methodological examination for understanding the phenomenon of *iki*, the very question of *universalia* arises. Basing his opinion on the idea that general concepts do exist, Anselm upheld the orthodox belief that the Trinity was, after all, the manifestation of one God. In contrast, Roscelin, resorting to the nominalist view that general concepts are mere names, asserted that the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost represented three distinct Gods, a position for which he was roundly criticized as a proponent of tritheism. If we are to understand *iki*, we must find a nominalist solution to this problem of *universalia*—and, therefore, also resign ourselves to being branded heretics. In other words, we cannot attempt to “intuit the essence” of *iki*, that is, treat it as a specific concept and attempt to discover abstract universals among general concepts that subsume *iki*. The understanding of *iki* as an experience of meaning must be a concrete, factual, and specific “comprehension of being.” Before questioning the *essentia* of *iki*, we should instead question first its *existentia*. In short, a study of *iki* cannot be “eidetic”; it needs to be “hermeneutic.”

What structure does *iki* have as its meaning that is experienced concretely by an ethnic group? We must first comprehend the mode of being of *iki* that obtains as a *phenomenon of consciousness* and then reach the understanding of the mode of being of *iki* that has taken shape as *objective expression*. If we ignore the former or confuse the order of examination between the former and the latter, our attempt to understand *iki* will end in failure. In fact, scholars attempting to clarify *iki* have nearly always made this mistake. Because they

begin by analyzing objective expressions of *iki* and then go on to isolate its general characteristics, they have failed to grasp the ethnic specificity of *iki*, even in the area of objective expression. Further, having obtained an understanding of objective expression, they erroneously assume that they have also grasped the phenomenon of consciousness behind it. As a result, explanations of *iki* as a phenomenon of consciousness have tended to be abstract and eidetic, and scholars have not been able to explain concretely and hermeneutically its mode of being in its ethnic and historical reality. We must set out on an opposite path and begin with an examination of the concrete phenomenon of consciousness.

[NH]

CUTTING

ŌHASHI Ryōsuke* 1986, 87–92

Cutting and Time

When things in nature “dry up,” their life fades and they lose their form. This usually indicates a move towards ugliness, but in the “dry” Japanese garden it is transformed in the direction of beauty.

We get a glimpse of the secret to this in Zeami’s* “flower.” The fullness of the flower appears in its fading. The *fullness* takes place at the exaltation of life, at the point where its vitality is most vivid. But it is precisely here that life covers over a tendency that is an essential part of all life. In the fullness of its life, death is forgotten, eclipsing an aspect of life that is always a possibility. Paradoxically, if beauty is a rationalization of the state of the flower in its fullness of life, one aspect of that very fullness is missing, much the same as the blinding rays block the sun from our vision. The blazing light of the noonday sun only becomes visible, as if in a double exposure, when the brilliance dims at sunset.

The dryness of the Japanese garden is like the evening shade already overlaid on the noonday sun, “cutting” the naturalness of the sun at high noon to display the brilliance within but otherwise hidden from view. Slipping through the dryness of the mountains and streams, the “cut and continuity” of light and darkness, of life and death, that make up the landscape becomes visible for the first time.

Something fundamental comes to light in the structure of this cutting: the element of time. Time is present in the fullness and the fading of the flower, in the blaze and the setting of the noonday sun. Insofar as the drying up of a tree implies its aging, it also entails the length of time.

To better understand this element of time, we may consider a verse of the poet Bashō:

A dried salmon
and a pilgrim's gauntness
in midwinter cold.⁵

Bashō is said to have been tormented by the composition of this poem, “wrenching his guts day after day.” This is expressed in the lining up of the three images of a shriveled up, *drying* salmon, the *emaciated* and shabbily dressed figure of the monk Kūya, and the *chill* of the Kyoto cold. Each depicts the chiseling away of the flesh and the warm glow of life. Nothing of beauty is left here. The cold seems to seep into the inward parts of one who mulls over the verses. A mere seventeen syllables, and yet how splendidly they convey this cold and the sense of tightening up! Dried, emaciated, and chilled—the natural wane of life carried along in a tenor of beauty.

The dried salmon, the monk Kūya, and the midwinter cold, each portray its own “time” and do not simply signal life in nature coming to the end of its time. As the flesh of the shriveled salmon withers, it enters the time of a dried salmon and takes on a new life. The monk Kūya who “eats” the dried salmon is himself emaciated, but awake in the ‘*sāmadhi*’ of reciting the name of the Buddha, he is living the life of one reinvigorated continually in the life of the Buddha. And the cold that wraps its arms around both monk and salmon points to the fullness of time as the year draws to a close and everything is about to be given new life. Each is creating its own temporal world. It is not a maturing through the natural flow of time but rather a taking leave of time. Obviously the dried salmon and the emaciated monk, but also the enveloping cold, represent the “chill” of the weal and woe of human lives that have their own seasons. We see Bashō, too, wrapped in the same “cold” as he slaves away at the seventeen syllables all beginning in the Japanese original with the sound “k.” He strains to give the dried salmon, the gaunt figure of Kūya, and the midwinter cold each its own world, each of them cut off from yet continuous with the others to give the whole its aesthetic character.

“Cutting” is, first of all, an interruption of the natural mode of life, a break in the activity of nature’s time. Through it, time is not only cut off; it matures into a new mode of being.

Ikebana

Ikebana provides us another way to model the life of the natural world just as it is. *Ikebana* begins literally with a “cutting.” Flowers are not brought into a room in their natural state, but are “brought to life” in the art

5. [Translation adjusted from Makoto UEDA 1991, 306. The reference is to the holy monk Kūya (903–972).]

through cutting. Obviously flowers in their natural state need to be trimmed before they are set in a vase, but this of itself does not constitute *ikebana*. Its art lies rather in a shaping that depends entirely on the way they are cut.

Over forty years ago, Nishitani Keiji* remarked that *ikebana* is “severing the very life of nature.... While the life of nature has temporality as part of its essence, it goes against and conceals that essence. The flower with its roots cut has, in one stroke, returned to its original, essential fate in time.” How does nature “go against” its own essence? If I am not mistaken, life, like time, is fated to dissolve away and yet tends to resist time and maintain itself in existence. The will to exist is essential to existence, and never more than at the peak of life. Yet it is precisely there that the eventual loss of vitality through time is most concealed. In *ikebana*, “cutting” the flower off from its roots in the fullness of life is to cut it off from the resistance to time that is the mark of that fullness. Through this “cut,” its natural life in time appears together with the temporality that is hidden there.

The idea of severing natural life to bring it back later is not limited to visual models. It shows up in the shaping of language as well:

A dried salmon
and a pilgrim's gauntness
in midwinter cold.

The structure of the haiku itself is defined by cutting the verse into lines of five, seven, and five syllables. The linear progression of descriptive language is drawn back into a relationship of antiphony between the composer and the setting, thus cutting through the linear movement. Bashō's haiku takes the three distinct moments of time—the dried salmon, the gaunt figure of the monk Kūya, and the midwinter—and cuts them to locate time each in its own syllabic line. In this way each of the three times plays antiphonally against the others to melt into the “time” that the poet himself is suffering. His Japanese takes the ordinary conjunction “and” and employs it disjunctively to break one line from the line that follows. This “cutting word” also serves to break the natural flow of time so that the original temporality of natural life can be brought into relief.

[IML]

THE WAY OF TEA

HISAMATSU Shin'ichi* 1962, 139–44

The mysterious essence of the Way of Tea lies in its profound but subtle logic. In this sense, its essence may be called esoteric, as reflected in this passage from Sengcan's *Verses on Faith in Mind*:

If the mysterious principle is not known
Efforts to calm the mind are useless

Or again, in the *Record of Linji* we read:

The real and the temporal, the secular and the sacred, cannot attach a name to this person. Followers of the 'Way', grasp and use, but never name—this is called the “mysterious principle.” [*Rinzairoku* 1.12]

What is the meaning of the first saying on knowing “the mysterious principle”? It is truly important for the soul to find peace and achieve tranquility, but one cannot attain true peace if one is fixated on the idea that this is the ultimate state of mind and merely labors to bring it about. True peace is the ground of activity itself, where tranquility, movement, and stillness work as one. The more one concentrates intently on what lies at the ground, the more does one recede from it. It is a mysterious principle that can never be fixed. Not knowing this principle, one retreats from it by clinging to it; in seeking the working of the ground one distances oneself from it. Such efforts are pointless.

And what of the injunction in the *Rinzairoku* against attaching names? Read in the light of the preceding text which speaks of “entering into the secular and the sacred, the pure and the defiled,” the mysterious principle means not standing still at the borderlines of discrimination between the fool and the sage, the pure and the impure, the true and the conventional, but moving freely from one side to the other. Names do not come into the picture at all, since naming inhibits one's freedom of movement.

In general this mysterious essence may be thought of as something profound but subtle, and as such beyond the reach of language and speculation. The opening lines of the *Laozi* speak of what is “more profound than the profound, the gateway of all subtleties.” Once again, the reference is to what transcends words and reasoning, something that words fail because it is free of language. We may, therefore, refer to the mysterious principle of the Way of Tea as a *spirit* or *vital essence* that is present before it begins to take form.

Considered this way, the mysterious principle may be referred to as an “essence,” but not in the sense of something that can be an object of academic knowledge. It has rather to be thought of in terms of a vital essence that is capable of expressing itself. To take the true essence of Tea as a matter of objective knowledge is to forfeit its connection to the expressive subject that appears throughout the phenomenon of Tea. Its essence has to be seen as a vital knowing, a *knowing at work*. And since we can conceive of a subject at work in working knowledge, the working knowledge and the subject at work must be seen as a unit. In other words, the one at work is at work *within* the knowledge and that knowledge must be something that appears through the actual working.

We may call such knowledge subjective in contrast to objective knowledge. The knowledge and the subject are one, not two. From the point of the subject, we may speak of a '*prajñā*' subject. This is vital knowing at work. From the point of view of the activity of work, we may speak of the subject variously as expressive, formative, and creative.

To adopt an ancient Chinese phrase still used in Japan today, this kind of subjective knowledge or *prajñā* subject is spoken of as the "fundamental law." By this is meant an ultimate, working law within which subjectivity is located, so that the working subject and the rule are completely one and not two. I would also express it as an "extreme awareness" or, in more ordinary Japanese, as a kind of "feel." Such terms are often used in describing the arts, and while the Way of Tea is commonly associated with the arts, there is something in it that surpasses the arts, something that terms like "feel" and "extreme awareness" do not exhaust....

Where subjective knowledge or the *prajñā* subject are at work as the mysterious essence of the Way of Tea, knowledge and law must be at one in the subject, who, as such, must always work in accord with the rules of Tea. The Way of Tea is unthinkable without conformity to its rules. Following the rules ordinarily implies conforming to a law that lies essentially outside of the subject. Not so with Tea. Here the subject is free and autonomous to work as it will, and yet must do so in full compliance with the rules of Tea. As for the subject, the rules of Tea emerge from the autonomous, free activity of the subject itself. We may speak of a fundamental subjectivity arising out of the rules. The subject is not something obediently following a heteronomous law, but is itself a natural outcome of the rules. Because the law does not lie "outside," there is no question of being bound or controlled by the rules. Rather, autonomous and free activity *becomes* the law so that conformity of the law occurs naturally. For this reason, such a subject is forever breaking away from the rules to work freely.

This kind of conformity between the working subject and the rules should not be confused with the gradual training of a subject to conform to an external set of rules with the aim of eliminating infractions and achieving complete legitimacy in all one's actions. At first glance, the idea of a unity of activity and the working subject in which activity conforms to the rules and the rules are not separated from their practice would seem to be very similar to the working of the subject as "mysterious essence." It is not, and the reason is that in the former case the subject cannot step away from the rules and as a result cannot change them, let alone create new ones. This is where training and discipline generally come to their end without any hope of reaching the mysterious essence. In training and discipline, one begins by following certain rules and practicing them with the initial aim of becoming one with the rules. There is nothing wrong with this as such, but it is altogether mistaken to assume that

there is no other goal involved. The ultimate aim in practice and discipline is not conformity to rules but the interiorizing of particular rules and the acquisition of the subjective freedom to create rules oneself. Consider the celebrated words of Confucius: “At seventy, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right” (*Analects* II.4). If the meaning is that one has been so well trained to conform to the rules that one no longer breaks them, it is a far cry from reaching the essence. It is not a matter of quantity but of quality. In the achievement of the essence, there is a similar unity between the working subject and the rules, but the nature of this “unity” is completely different.

When it comes to the essence, conformity to the law must be grounded in a spontaneous, transcendent working that surpasses laws and regulations. Thus the subject at work is a *legal* subject who makes the rules in the very act of working. Such a subject can never be bound by the rules because the rules are fashioned from the subject’s own free action. Accordingly, it is not that the subject conforms to the rules but rather that the rules are pledged to conform to the subject. Only in this way can the subject, unhampered by the rules of the past, *continually create new rules*.

[IML]

I K E B A N A

NISHITANI Keiji 1953, 212–16 (33–5)

I once read a newspaper article to the effect that the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre was interested in the Japanese art of *ikebana*. The article was a brief one and did not give the reasons for his interest, but I felt I had some idea why. I recalled the impression I myself had upon seeing *ikebana* with new eyes when I returned from study in Europe ten years or so ago.

My study abroad lasted only two and a half years, but when the time came to return home I had become accustomed to life in Europe. And so, upon my return I looked on many things with a foreigner’s eye. Being in such a state of mind, I was particularly struck by the beauty of *ikebana* in houses I visited. No matter how accustomed we may be to seeing something, after not seeing it for a while, our curiosity is reawakened and we are made to see it anew. This is a common enough occurrence, but on occasion one’s eyes may remain open in amazement. Seeing *ikebana* again was one such experience for me.

While in Europe I had gone to see as many works of art as I could, not only in the large cities but in small towns and villages as well. There I found art made with techniques handed down for many generations. It had a genuine refine-

ment and sense of composure. But I realized in *ikebana* something entirely different from the whole ethos of European art.

The beauty expressed in *ikebana* is created from the start solely for that moment. Such art changes with the seasons and reveals its beauty only for the few days after the flowers and branches have been cut. It is by its very nature something temporary and improvised. Its essential beauty lies precisely in its being transitory and timely. It is a beauty that embraces time, a beauty that is manifest out of the impermanency of time itself. People who arrange flowers understand this. The pleasure that comes from creating such beauty may even lie in proportion to its temporal character. It certainly is a unique feeling.

Of course it is true that all art has some kind of life expectancy. Even the great Cologne cathedral and Saint Peter's, like all things in this world, will one day perish. And yet buildings, sculpture, paintings, and so forth, are all made to withstand this thing we call time. Ignoring the changes wrought by time and desiring to remain no matter what, these works of art express a will to endure. Perhaps this desire or will to endure is concealed in the artist's urge to create which is why we find it reflected in the work of art.

Ikebana and the mind of the artist reflected in it are of a completely different character. Instead of trying to deny time from within the midst of time, *ikebana* moves along in time without the slightest gap. It is like the legend of Qiannu⁶ sick in bed and at the same time gone away, or like breathing naturally during *zazen*: inhaling and exhaling become as one, so that one thoroughly identifies with one's own existence in time.

The entire art of *ikebana* is already included in the cutting and arranging of the flowers, leaves, and branches. The difference between *ikebana* and other plastic arts is not simply that with *ikebana* the artist works with materials just as they are found in nature. That is merely a superficial difference. The essential difference lies in the cutting of the flowers and branches.

A tree or grass growing naturally out of the ground also exhibits a mode of being that tries to deny time while in the midst of it. It resists the gravitational pull within itself toward cessation, as if it were trying to get ahead of time, continually going beyond itself, forging ahead of itself. But it cannot transcend time in this way because its existence is in time to begin with. In trying to deny time or get ahead of time, the tree or grass is itself a temporal existence continually undergoing change. It is alive and has its existence in its very effort to deny time even though it is within time. Its existential possibility is realized in the gravitational field. It is fighting a losing battle within itself. The tree or grass gives

6. [A Tang dynasty legend tells of a young women, Qiannu, who runs off with her lover while her body remains at home, sick and in bed.]

itself to the sunlight, rain, and wind, to the nutrients and insects in the soil. This giving is also a part of its struggle to live—all of which is nothing other than a way of trying to deny time.

Not only trees and grass naturally growing out of the earth are like this. The same is true of people and all of life in nature. Plato said that all living things seek eternity in this changing world through procreation, but even here we can see the same attempt to deny time from within the midst of time. The life of the artist and the artistic urge to create mentioned above belong to the same life as things in nature. Art belongs to the world of human culture and as such differs from simple nature, but still, the life in art has its source in the life of nature. It was Goethe who realized that artistic creativity is based on natural productivity, that it is alive and the same as all life, and that its essence is the will or desire to deny time while in the midst of it,

Ikebana is a severing of this very life of nature. Flowers in the field or garden pollinate in order to procreate. This is part of the natural will or desire of life. The arranged flower has had this will or desire cut off. It is rather in the world of death, poised in death as it were. It has become severed from time-negating life and entered time as something momentary.

Although the life of nature contains temporality as part of its essence, it resists and conceals that essence. Nature exists as if it were trying to slip away from time. In contrast, the flower with its roots cut has, in one stroke, returned to its original, essential fate in time. This is not the life of a flower in nature. The flower cannot do this by itself. It is only due to human caprice that the flower is turned against its natural will or desire. The flower is thus made to stand poised in its hidden essence in order to reveal that essence.

All things in the world are essentially rootless and without fixed abode. In putting down roots they conceal their own rootlessness from themselves. Having their roots cut off drives home the fact that their essential existence is rootless. Being taken from the world of life to the world of death is a kind of transcendence for the flower as well. The flower thus poised in death is cut off from its time in life to exist as if in a timeless present, its present existence having become a moment outside of life-and-death. The flower set in this transcendent moment gets anchored down. Breaking through the surface of time, it becomes a moment in eternity.

Its life severed, the death of the flower is a nothingness whose existential potential is cut off. It is no mere natural death. Flowers that die naturally simply wither and decay; arranged flowers must be thrown away before they wither. The death of the flower that has been cut while alive transcends the life of nature and transcends time to stand in the new life of the moment. Such nothingness gains the new existential possibility of being a moment of eternity in time.

When someone arranges flowers in the alcove to occupy a certain space, they

may or may not be aware of all this. As long as the flower occupies that space, it is as if it were emerging out of nothingness, from the empty space lingering around the solemnity of the flower. The atmosphere in the alcove and in the entire room comes to take on a certain tautness and dignity, as if the room were electrically charged with the flower's presence. The surrounding area is cleared by its serenity and by the surety with which it occupies that space. The flower itself neither knows this nor intends it. Its "clearing" of the surroundings is a response from its place within nothingness. This, in fact, is why it is necessary to have a place like the alcove for *ikebana*. The flower belongs there; that is its proper place. A chill lingers about its imperturbable calm, evokes eternity in total silence, as if the flower had severed its every attachment to life, almost like someone who has given up the reason to live.

I have been talking about the character of beauty in *ikebana*. As something completely momentary, it is also improvisational. The beauty of *ikebana* changes with the seasons and with the temporal existence of living plants. The beauty of *ikebana* vanishes after a few short days and yet is easily recreated. Such beauty is ephemeral and yet it is as if its very transience had been transformed into a beauty of a higher order. As we said, the essence of turning the plant into art lies in its cutting. Through it the emptiness that lies hidden in the depths of the plant is unveiled. It may even be said that in its very emptiness the place is a manifestation of eternity in time. This momentariness of a higher order expresses eternity. Finitude, though thoroughly finite, becomes a symbol of eternity. Time, though thoroughly temporal, becomes an eternal moment. With the activity of cutting, emptiness is disclosed in the depths of existence and the eternal moment is realized.

With this realization one enters a completely different dimension that distinguishes two kinds of art. One is an art immediately in life, the other an art alive in death. That is, one kind of art seeks eternity by denying temporality, and the other tries to unveil eternity by becoming radically temporal. The former arises out of the natural will or desire of life; the latter arises out of an emptiness that has severed that natural will or desire.

[JMS]

CALLIGRAPHY

MORITA Shiryū 1970, 124–5

At birth I am thrust into a world of things and words without willing it myself, without being able to choose a place with no things and no words. Once born, I cannot but live, here and now, in connection to things and words.

I derive my life, my very being, from things, and things derive their being from me. The very fact that I am alive means that I am fundamentally and essentially this kind of being.

If I now live by picking up a brush to compose a work, this brush is not simply a brush. From the start, it is a thing from which my life and my being emerge. The brush is a brush by being a thing that lets me be, here and now; without it I would not be. Nowhere is there simply an I, a self by itself; there is only this self here and now, living by way of the brush. The brush likewise exists here and now only as a brush from which I derive my life. Because there is no self by itself and no brush by itself, no relationship comes about between some prior “me” and some prior “brush.” Rather, we must say that what exists is a whole we may call “I and my brush.” The one, inseparable whole lives here and now, and that is the very substance of my being a calligrapher here and now.

Let us call this single totality *place*. Now this does not simply mean a total arrived at by adding a brush to a self. It means that where there is no brush there is no calligrapher, and where there is no calligrapher there is no brush. In the sense that I and my brush exist nowhere but in a place, we can say that I and my brush are born in a place and that a place gives birth to us. At first glance “I and my brush” may look like a link that just happens to be there, but in fact no greater necessity occurs, for there the very foundation of our existence is revealed.

The nature of this single totality or place cannot be determined solely in terms of the calligrapher by herself or of the brush by itself. It is not a matter of the total sum of the two, nor can it be found by looking for their common denominator. A place has its own principle and that determines its nature. As a calligrapher, my living is impossible outside a place that lives. For me to live, a place is brought to life. This place achieves its own unity and brings to life its own autonomous principle. My writing, my living here and now, is the work of the place being unified, the place called “I and my brush.” Only in the moment I and the brush truly become one, does it really happen that “I do calligraphy.”

If I as a tangible, finite human being stand over against a tangible, finite brush, then I and the brush mutually restrict one another and cannot become one. This shell called “I” must split open, this hull must fall off, for the self to be released into a world that is formless and infinite. The self, released and unified with a place, becomes the totality of “I and my brush.”

Accordingly, there are two aspects to the “here and now” of doing calligraphy:

1. In the unity of the place, I and the brush are one. I am the brush, the brush is me. I am not something restricted by the brush.
2. I am not I (but rather this place), and therefore I am I. The brush is

not a brush (but rather is this place), and therefore it is a brush. As a calligrapher I transcend myself and am released from myself; this liberation continues to work within me. I am no longer restricted by my self. This is where I can truly become myself.

Freedom itself is this condition whereby I am restricted neither by myself nor by the brush. In other words, the achievement of freedom is what the place fundamentally calls for. It is a place oriented toward freedom, and freedom is achieved only in such a place. What brings me into being, here and now, is this place; place is what gives me freedom and lets me be my true self. To say that without the brush there is no self means that without it I have no freedom. Without this brush I cannot truly become myself. Here and now the brush is the “I” that (as place) I am not. This way of seeing takes the brush not as some thing outside me, not something confined to an external tool. Rather, it lets me see myself in the brush and lets it live therein. This matter is no mere desire on my part. It must point to the fact that “I and my brush” exist here and now, that here and now I am alive.

[JCM]

KAMO no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1155–1216)

Kamo no Chōmei was born the son of Nagatsugu, superintendent of the Lower Kamo Shrine, one of the most influential Shinto shrines in Japan. Unable to succeed his father to the prestigious post, Chōmei enjoyed the patronage of Takamatsu In, the daughter of Emperor Toba and consort of Emperor Nijō. He had a respectable poetic career as a member of the Rokujō School of poetry and was invited to participate in numerous poetry contests. In 1201 he became a member of Emperor Go-Toba's Bureau of Poetry, but his association with the court was short-lived. Although deeply devoted to traditional culture, he had a strong distaste for the social conventions of the day, for which he blamed the decline in artistic achievement. These views are reflected in the following selection of questions and answers from his students. As Chōmei himself recalls in his well-known work, *A Ten-Foot Square Hut*, at age fifty he decided to abandon his house and home to become a recluse. He spent the last years of his life in solitary seclusion, first in Ōhara at the foot of Mt Hiei and later in Hino, south of Kyoto.

An exceptionally gifted poet and poetic theorist, Chōmei is credited with a collection of stories known as the *Awakening of Faith* as well as the compilation of *The Nameless Treatise* which traces the evolution of poetic styles.

[MFM]

THE STYLE OF UTA KAMO no Chōmei 1212, 82–8 (404–9)

Question: The opinion of the contemporary poets with regard to the style of the *uta* is divided into two sections. Those who favor the style of the middle period regard the *uta* of our days as perfunctory. They deride and ridicule it, calling it the “Dharma School.” On the other hand, those who adhere to modern forms loathe the style of the middle period, calling it vulgar and pointless. This controversy seems to develop into something like a religious debate that never reaches a conclusion. For the immature student it must be disconcerting to look for a valid standard. How should we take this?

Answer: As this is a matter of bitter controversy among the great authorities, how should a conclusion be easily reached? However, this has a bearing on our understanding of the mores of society, our grasp of the movement of the moon and the stars, and our speculations about the nature of the deities, so I will try to do the best I can, even if much remains doubtful, and you may exercise your own judgment concerning it. Generally speaking, it seems to me unreasonable to think of this matter as composed of two opposing elements, like water and

fire. The style of poetry changes with the times. In olden times the number of syllables in a poem was not fixed; words poured forth without restraint and according to the poet's feelings. From the time of the poem known as *Izumo yaegaki*, five lines of thirty syllables have been made the rule. It seems that until the time of the *Man'yōshū*, poets expressed only their own intimate feelings and did not lay much stress on selection where form and diction were concerned. When the *Kokinshū* was compiled not so long ago, "formal aspect and content" were added and the style became differentiated. For the *Gosenshū*, which suffered from a lack of good poems due to the fact that it was compiled shortly after the *Kokinshū* had used up all the good poems, the selection was made with a view to the content rather than the form.

From the time of the *Shūishū* onwards, the style came quite close to our situation, and poems expressing ideas without reserve in pure and simple form were regarded as good. After this, at the time of the *Goshūishū*, the style became somewhat softer and the old styles fell into oblivion. One old master told me that the older people of that age probably were unable to accept this change, and that what they called "*Goshūi*-form" was a matter of great distress to them. In the *Kin'yōshū* there were many superficial poems laboriously aimed at attracting attention. The *Shikashū* and *Senzaishū* on the whole adhere to the style of the *Goshūi*. This is how poetry has been transmitted to us from ancient times. Thus it has been a long time since the *Shūishū* initiated the one generally accepted style of *uta*. As a result, the creative forces have gradually been exhausted. From one generation to the next words came to lose their freshness and so the discipline decayed with the passage of time.

In the olden times interest was aroused by comparing the cherry blossoms with the clouds and associating moon with ice and maple leaves with brocade, but now all this has been said and we have to detect in clouds a variety of types, find something new to associate with ice, look for an unusual idea with brocade. Because the poets are struggling with this task and devoted a great deal of effort and thought to it, it has become difficult to create a truly interesting atmosphere. Even on those occasions when it is achieved, the results seem vulgar and out of proportion in the vain attempt to match the old poems. Needless to say, when we come to the matter of words, these, too, have been entirely exhausted. There are no more new words, no striking phrases. Things have gone so far that, unless we are dealing with an unusually fine poem, we can easily predict the fourth and fifth line of a poem after reading only the first part of it. At this point our generation, realizing that the styles of poetry exploited from age to age have become stale, has returned to the old styles and studied the form of '*yūgen*'. This came as a shock to those who had been following the line of the middle period, and they expressed their contempt and scorn.

But there is only one true purpose to poetry, and this accounts for the fact

that talented poets and good poems of both groups find appreciation. For instance, creations of people like Kiyosuke, Yorimasa, Shunè, and Tōren⁷ would not easily be discarded by anyone even today. As for poems composed in the contemporary style, if they are well done, the critics will be silent. Bad poems, though, are bad, whatever the style may be. If an ordinary poem of the middle period is set side by side with some of our day, it is as if a plain, unadorned face were standing among people with perfect makeup. Of the contemporary poems, too, those which are not well finished are either completely incomprehensible or odious in the extreme. So you should not attach yourself too fervently to any one side.

Question: Would it be false to think that the modern style is a new creation?

Answer: There is no point in this argument. Something may be a new creation without necessarily being inferior. In China, literary styles, though limited in number, have changed from generation to generation. It seems to me that in this country, small as it is, people are over-anxious and inclined to the folly that things should not differ from the way they were in olden times. Now, as the *uta* in particular expresses popular concerns and is meant to sound pleasant, what could be better than that people of all times should use and enjoy it? After all, these are not skills that have been worked out just now, but reach way back to the *Man'yōshū*.

This kind of argument is typical among those who are unsure in their appreciation of the *Kokinshū*. In that anthology one finds a variety of styles, and it is from the *Kokinshū* that the poetic styles of the middle period as well as the present *yūgen* style developed. Even if the present forms should become exhausted and we should enter a new period, an anthology like the *Kokinshū*, which has taken everything into its collection, including even comic poems, will probably not be surpassed. When people reject our contemporary style, regarding it simply as obsolete, it means that they are unable to disengage themselves from the poetic forms of the middle period.

Question: Which of the two styles provides more facilities for the composition of poetry in general and for the accomplishment of good poems in particular?

Answer: The style of the middle period is easier to learn, but good poems are harder to achieve through it. This is because the words have become stale and therefore the atmosphere is all-important. The contemporary style is difficult to learn, but once you have mastered it, composing is easy, because the style is new and therefore both form and content can be interesting.

Question: If, as you have just pointed out, good poems are good and bad poems are bad in any case, then why do scholars each champion their own and

7. [These are all major twelfth-century poets.]

contend with each other? And how are we to distinguish the inferior from the superior?

Answer: Is it necessary to decide? What is important is that you recognize a good poem as such, irrespective of its authorship. In this connection there is a statement of the lay priest Jakuren:⁸

There is an easy way to put an end to these conflicts. As an example I refer to the learning of calligraphy, where the saying goes that it is easy to imitate the ideographs of someone inferior, but hard to get close to the handwriting of someone superior. Thus, if I were to advise people like Lord Suetsune or the monk Kenshō to compose poems in my way, they would labor at it for days and still not be able to do it. But if I wanted to compose like them, all I would need is to moisten my brush and just keep writing. And that would be all there is to it.

I don't know what other people might think, but as for me, when I was attending poetry contests in which many partisans of the style of the middle period were assembled, the poems that reached my ears were very rarely above my capacity for creating an atmosphere. I sometimes had the feeling that my poem was weaker than those preceding it, but there was none I could not have thought out myself. When I served at a palace meeting, however, every single participant presented poems that were far above me and it inspired me with awe to think that this discipline really knew no boundaries of time and scope.

Thus mastery in this style surely comes after one who has the requisite skill has entered the realm of virtuosity and actually reached the summit. Even they, on a bad day, make very bad poems. How ridiculous, then, that those who have not yet refined their sensibilities and have not reached the summit, suppose themselves capable of approximating this style by random guesswork. It is as if a lowly woman, thinking that it is the makeup that counts, were to smear powder carelessly all over her face. Those people do not create anything of themselves, but just pick up words that others have used occasionally in poetry and try to approximate the appearance of their models. Phrases like "loneliness and dew," "wind is blowing and night gets well on," "the depth of the heart," "to be deeply moved," "the dawn of the moon," "the evening with a breeze," and "the home country in spring" may have been good when first created, but after being reproduced in a second version, the result is nothing more than the meaningless mimicry of someone else's distinctive habits of speech. Or again, one might test oneself in a poem of obscure content but overflowing with feeling, until finally realizing that the thread has been lost and nothing remains but nonsense. This

8. [Jakuren is the Buddhist name taken by Fujiwara no Sadanaga (1139–1202) after he took on the life of an itinerant monk and poet.]

kind of poem is not within the realm of *yūgen*, but ought to be classified as *dharmā-uta*.

Question: I have followed your line of explanation so far, but when it comes to the so-called style of *yūgen*, I find it very difficult to know just how to go about it. I would like you to teach me.

Answer: All aspects of form in poetry are difficult to understand. Although the old collections of oral traditions and guides to composition offer instruction to readers on difficult points and by leading them along, when it comes to formal matters there is nothing of precision to be found. This is particularly true of the style of *yūgen*, whose very name is enough to cause confusion. Since I do not understand it very well myself, I am at a loss as to how to describe it in a satisfactory manner, but according to the views of those who have penetrated into the realm of *yūgen*, the importance lies in the “left over,” which is not stated in words and an atmosphere that is not revealed through the form of the poem. When the content rests on a sound basis and the diction excels in lavish beauty, these other virtues will be supplied naturally.

On an autumn evening, for example, there is no color in the sky and no sound, and although we cannot give a definite reason for it, we are somehow moved to tears. A person lacking in sensitivity finds nothing particular in such a sight, but just admires the cherry blossoms and scarlet autumn leaves that are visible to the eye. Or it may be likened to the looks and bearings of a fine lady who has a certain grievance, but rather than express it in words suffers secretly and gives only a faint clue as to her situation. This makes a stronger appeal to compassion than if she were to exhaust her vocabulary with complaints and make a display of herself, wringing out her sleeves. Now how could a child make sense of this simply by observing her appearance and bearing, unless the meaning were explained in detail in proper words?

From these two analogies it should be evident that this is a matter impossible to understand for people of little sensibility and shallow of heart. Again I would like to compare this style to the speech of a lovely child, awkward and without clear perception, but lovable in all its helplessness and worth listening to. How can such things be easily learned or stated precisely in words? You can only comprehend them for yourself. Again, if you look at the autumn hills through a rift in the mist, you catch only a glimpse, and, unsatisfied, try to figure out freely in your imagination how pleasing it might be to see the whole of those scarlet leaves—this is almost better than seeing it clearly. Fully to display your feelings in words by saying of the moon that it is bright, or by praising the cherry blossoms, declaring that they are pretty—what is so difficult about that?

Wherein lies the virtue of the *uta*, which is to be more than an ordinary statement? Only when many ideas are compressed into a single word, when without displaying it you exhaust your mind in all its depth and you imagine the imper-

ceptible, when commonplace things are used to display beauty and in an idea is developed a naive style to the limit—only then, when thinking does not lead anywhere and when words have become inadequate, should you express your feelings by this method, which has the capacity to move heaven and earth and the power to touch the gods and spirits.

[HK]

ZEAMI Motokiyo 世阿弥元清 (1363–1443)

Born into a family of *'sarugaku'* performers in the Nara basin, Zeami was trained in performance and playwriting by his father Kan'ami. Kan'ami's successes in Kyoto gave Zeami the opportunity to learn about classical Japanese *waka* and to acquire a competence in the most popular poetic genre of his day, linked verse or *renga*. As a young man Zeami also learned about Chinese and Japanese legends and Buddhist doctrine, chiefly at Daigo-ji. When Kan'ami died in 1384, the leadership of his troupe was passed to his son, who seems to have built on his father's successes in the capital, particularly through the patronage of the shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu.

In 1400, Zeami began to compose accounts of his training and to write down reflections on a wide range of matters related to acting. He continued writing throughout his life, producing a remarkable body of work on performance, including material on how to gain patrons, how to write plays, how to portray various characters on the stage, how to train young actors, and how to make aesthetic judgments about performance. He also wrote thirty or forty important plays of his own and established formal conventions for acting that led to the highly refined and canonical dramatic form we know today as Nō drama.

Zeami was acquainted with some of the leading lights of the Buddhism of his day, among them Kiyō Hōshū (1321–1464). Although devotional Buddhism was an obvious source for thematic material in his plays, his intellectual world spoke the language of Zen, and the influence of Zen is apparent in his work on aesthetics and training, as hinted at in the following selection. He was exiled to the isle of Sado in the last years of his long life by Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshinori, but may have returned to the capital at the very end of his life.

[TH]

KNOWING THE FLOWER

ZEAMI Motokiyo 1428, 186 (207–8); 1424, 97–8, 100–1, 87–8
(112–13, 115–16, 102–3); 1418, 61–2 (70–1); 1420, 117–18 (136)

Interest

I have compared the perception of interest to a flower. This entails the perception of freshness. To push this understanding to its greatest limit is what I mean by knowing the flower... Now then, a flower is interesting in that it blooms and is fresh in that it scatters. Someone once asked, “What is the essence of impermanence?” The answer: “The scattering of blossoms, the falling of leaves.” Again, he asked, “What is eternal and incorruptible?” The answer:

“The scattering of blossoms, the falling of leaves, and so on and so on.” There is no fixed intent in the spontaneous visual perception of interest. Nevertheless, what provokes interest is regarded as evidence of skill in all the arts, and one who has long-term control over such interest is called an accomplished master of great repute. For that reason, the actor who maintains such interest through long experience appears to resemble the eternity of scattering blossoms and falling leaves. Then again, though, there are also actors who display a more generic kind of flower.... Among both actors and audience, each possesses his own mental and visual sensibility.

Yūgen

The expression of ‘*yūgen*’ is accounted the greatest achievement in many vocations and endeavors. In this art particularly, the expression of *yūgen* is considered foremost. In a general sense, it is something you can see, and members of the audience take particular delight in it, but an actor with *yūgen* is not all that easy to find. This is because few truly know the savor of *yūgen*. When that is the case, no actor crosses into its realm.

Now then, I wonder what sort of place we speak of when we talk about the realm of *yūgen*. First, we look to various classes of people with regard to their appearance in public, to find that the demeanor of aristocrats shows exalted rank and a manner of appearance different from others; is this, then, what we call the rank of *yūgen*? If so, then the basic style of *yūgen* is a beautiful and gentle style. The display of a tranquil and collected personal style is *yūgen* in an individual’s demeanor. Similarly, if you observe with great care how elegant the spoken usages of nobles and courtiers are and learn to speak gently and elegantly, even in the most casually uttered expressions from your mouth, that will be *yūgen* in speech. Or again, with regard to singing, when the melody comes down beautifully and sounds graceful, that must be *yūgen* in singing. If the dance is thoroughly internalized, the individual demeanor beautiful in its style, quietly manifested, and interesting in the high points, that then must be *yūgen* in the dance. Or again, with regard to dramatic imitation, when the palpable quality inherent in the three modes⁹ is beautifully realized, this must be accounted as *yūgen*. Or with a display of anger in representing a demon, even though you may carry your body with a certain forcefulness, if you do not forget about visual beauty, endeavor to “move ten parts of the mind,” and “vigorously move the body while stomping the feet with restraint” so as to present yourself with beauty in your individual demeanor, that, then, should amount to the *yūgen* of a demon.

9. [The aged mode, the woman’s mode, and the martial mode.]

Turn your mind to the clearest possible apprehension of these several objects, and in making yourself into one of them, do not depart from *yūgen*, no matter what the station of the object of your imitation. Whether highborn lady or maidservant, man or woman, priest or layman, bumpkin or lout, even beggar or pariah, they should, every one, be made to appear as if they were carrying a spray of blossoms. They should elicit acclaim: “What beautiful blossoms,” no matter the difference in their social stations, for the flower of performance is the same for everyone. This flower comes from individual demeanor. What displays the attitude beautifully is the mind. The mind of which I speak must understand that the seed of *yūgen* comes from clearly discerning the underlying principles—studying poetics so that the words possess *yūgen*, studying the proper standards of expression in dress so that the attitude possesses *yūgen*—from having a specific sense of what is beautiful, even though the object of imitation may vary.

Attaining No-Mind

In their critiques, members of the audience often say that the places where nothing is done are interesting. This is a secret stratagem of the actor. Now the Two Arts,¹⁰ the different types of stage business, and varieties of dramatic imitation, all are techniques performed with the body. The gap between is where, as they say, nothing is done. When you consider why it is that this gap where nothing is done should be interesting, you will find that this is because of an underlying disposition by which the mind bridges the gap. It is a frame of mind in which you maintain your intent and do not loosen your concentration in the gaps where you’ve stopped dancing the dance, in the places where you’ve stopped singing the music, in the gaps between all types of speech and dramatic imitation, and so on. This internal excitement diffuses outward and creates interest. However, should it be apparent to others that you have adopted this frame of mind, that is no good. If it becomes apparent, then it is likely to turn into a dramatic technique in itself. Then it is no longer “doing nothing.” At the rank of no-mind, one bridges the gaps between what comes before and after with such a stratagem, so that one’s intent is even hidden from oneself. This, then, is “Binding the Many Arts with a Single Intent”:

Life and death, come and go: marionettes in a puppet show.
If a single string should snap, tumble, tumble, down they go.

This is a comparison with the situation of a person trapped in the karmic cycle of life and death. The manipulation of a marionette on a stage may pro-

10. [Singing and dance.]

duce various visual effects, but the puppet doesn't actually move on its own. It functions because of the strings used to manipulate it. The sense, then, is that if a string should break, it all will collapse into a heap. In 'sarugaku' as well, dramatic imitation is a kind of puppetry. The intent is that the puppeteer hold the performance together. The intent should not be visible to the audience. If it is, then it's as if they could see the puppet's strings. You should make every effort that your intent serves as the strings binding the many arts of performance without the audience seeing them. If you can do this, then your performance will have life.

In the most general terms, you should not limit this to the actual occasion of performance. Day after day, night after night, whether coming or going, sitting up or lying down, you should not forget about this intent; you should bind your experiences together with a resolute mind. If you employ your creativity in this way without negligence, your performance will improve evermore.

Focus

They say, moreover, that dance has five precepts. First is the Precept on Gesture; second, the Precept on Dance; third, the Precept on Mutual Implication; fourth, the Precept on Gestural Focus; and fifth, the Precept of Focus on Dance.

The Precept on Gesture refers to the mastery of a course of performance in which the dance is to be danced within the contours of *jo-ha-kyū*,¹¹ from the praying hands posture to the movement of all five limbs and the extension and drawing back of the arms.

Although gesture is, of course, a part of the dance, in the *Precept on Dance*, it's not a question of the hands and feet. Instead, visual grace is the matter of concern, and one conveys an impression without relying on a particular gesture or style. Metaphorically, you should evoke the impression of a bird flying along in the wind. This is the Precept on Dance.

The Precept on Mutual Implication results from the addition of dance to the aforementioned Precept on Gesture within the contours *jo-ha-kyū*. Performing the gestures is an effect of pattern, and performing the dance is an effect of no pattern. When you have harmonized the patterned and unpatterned activities into mutual implication, you will have it: the vision is complete. This is the expressive domain in which one perceives interest. To perform the dance having grasped these two courses is called the Precept on Mutual Implication.

11. [*Jo-ha-kyū*, a term borrowed from court music, refers to the three stages of a play: the "preface" or opening, the "break" or change in body movement and theme, and "fast" or climax. Zeami applies the pattern not only to the various elements of drama but to all things that exist in time.]

The Precept on Gestural Focus entails the following: once the patterned and unpatterned are harmonized in mutual implication, they create an effect of expressive concentration in which the gestures become the substance and the dance is the instance. To apprehend things in this way is termed the Precept on Gestural Focus.

The Precept of Focus on Dance is the effect of expressive concentration in which one makes the dance the substance and gesture the instance. This is beyond form.

If we compare these in a general way with the forms of the Three Modes, I suppose that the Man's Mode might correspond to the knowledge of gestural focus. The Woman's Mode would probably be better with the knowledge of focus on dance. Let me say it yet again: you have to adjust the character of the performance to accord with the object of dramatic imitation.

Also in Dance, we say: eyes ahead, mind behind. That is, "look to the front with your eyes; put your mind to the back." This is the cognitive manifestation in your manner of expression on the basis of the aforementioned knowledge of dance. As seen by the audience, your attitude is a vision apart from your own, but what your own eyes see is your own vision. It is not a Vantage from Vision Apart. To see with the Vantage from Vision Apart is, in effect, to see with the same mind as the audience does. At that time, you achieve a vantage on your own attitude. If you can clearly see yourself, you also will see what is to your right and left, what is before you, and what is behind. Although you already know about seeing in front and to the right and left, have you failed so far to see your attitude from the back? Unless you perceive how you look from the back, you will be unable to tell what is vulgar in your attitude. For this reason, you need to present a graceful form through your entire body by seeing from the Vantage from Vision Apart, taking on the same vision as the audience and learning how you look in places where you cannot yourself see. Isn't this what it means to speak of putting your mind to the back? I'll say it over and over again: achieve the clearest possible Vantage from Vision Apart; be aware that the eye cannot see itself; and gain a sound vantage on left, right, front, and back. With your own two eyes, you shall see your proof in attaining to *yūgen* in dance, with the flower brought into form, the jewel into grasp.

Secrecy

"When you keep it secret, it's the flower. Unless you keep it secret, it cannot be the flower." That's it. To understand this distinction is a flower of crucial importance.

That is, in the houses of the various artistic vocations, the assertion by a given house that something is a matter of secrecy has a great effect, specifically

because it is kept secret. For that reason, when these secrets are made known, they are not things of particularly great consequence. But the person who admits they are nothing of great consequence does so because he doesn't really understand the great utility of secrets.

For instance, if everyone knew that the flower is merely what is fresh, as these oral instructions explain, then, before an audience of people who would be expecting to see something fresh, even if you were to perform something fresh, they would not likely perceive it in their minds as particularly fresh and exciting. It becomes the flower for the actor precisely because the viewers do not know that it is the flower. Instead, the viewers just see the actor and think that he is surprisingly interesting, and the fact that they are not conscious of this as the flower in itself becomes the actor's flower. To just this extent, then, the plan to evoke unexpected excitement in people's minds—this is the flower...

Not only should you not reveal secrets, but you should not even be identified as someone who knows such secrets. When you end up having your intent known to someone else, then, provided your rival is not negligent but alert, it will warn him to be wary. When your rival is not wary, it still should be easy for you to prevail against him. Is it not, in fact, a great effect of the principle of freshness to be able to win, having lulled your rival into neglectfulness? For that reason, you gain a lifelong mastery of the flower when you keep others from knowing something because it is a family secret. When you keep it secret, it's the flower. Unless you keep it secret, it cannot be the flower.

The ultimate is knowing the flower of cause and consequence. Everything is dependent on cause and consequence. The many things that one learns in the art as a beginner and thereafter are the cause. Performing with expertise and gaining fame are the consequence. When, therefore, you are indifferent to cause (in your training, that is), it will also become impossible to realize.

Also, you must respect the occasion. If last year all was at its peak, this year, you should be aware that there may be no flower. Each brief moment may be either male time or female time. No matter what you may do, if there are good times in performance, then there are certain to be bad times as well. This is a cause and consequence over which you have no power.

Substance and Instance

You must know about substance and instance in performance. It is as if substance were the flower and instance its fragrance. Or as if they were the moon and its reflection. If you have fully understood the substance, then its instance will appear of its own accord.

Now, on seeing a performance, those who know see with the mind, and those who don't know see with the eyes. What you see with the mind is substance.

What you see with the eyes is instance. As a consequence, beginners see the instance and imitate it. In effect, this amounts to imitating without knowing the principle of instance. There is good reason not to imitate the instance. Those who know performance because they see with the mind imitate the substance. In imitating the substance well, the instance is present. Those who don't know, imitate the instance under the impression that it is a manner of expression that can be brought into effect, and they fail to realize that if you imitate the instance, it becomes the substance. Since this is not really the substance of a performance, there is, in the end, no substance and no instance either, so the spirit of the performance goes to pieces. This sort of thing is called a performance with neither rhyme nor reason.

When we talk about substance and instance, we have a pair. When there is no substance, there also can be no instance. It follows that since instance is not a thing in itself, it contains nothing to take as an object of imitation, so there is no way you can get substance by taking this nothing as something that can be imitated. What I mean by knowing this is to be aware, through your understanding that instance is resident in substance and that they are not separate things, that there is no principle by which something that is not there can be imitated; this is, in effect, to know performance. Thus, since there is no principle by which you can imitate instance, you should not imitate it. You must understand that imitating substance is not separate from imitating instance. I'll say it again and again: if you confidently grasp the principle of what happens to substance when you imitate instance, then you will become an actor who has a clear understanding of the distinction between substance and instance. Someone has said, "What you want to imitate is the expert; what is not about to be imitated is the expert." If so, then I wonder whether imitation might be a matter of instance and real resemblance a matter of substance.

[TH]

ŌNISHI Yoshinori 大西克禮 (1888–1959)

Ōnishi Yoshinori taught aesthetics at the University of Tokyo from 1922 until his retirement in 1949. As his voluminous writings reflect, he specialized in German aesthetics from the Romantics through Kant to twentieth-century phenomenology. Ōnishi applied his knowledge of western philosophy to the elucidation of key concepts in Japanese aesthetics and poetics that had been debated and discussed for centuries by Japanese poets and theorists. His life work is reflected in a two-volume work on *Aesthetics*, the first volume of which deals with the West while the second, published posthumously the following year, takes up the analysis of key Japanese aesthetic categories. His 1939 work on *Yūgen and Aware* fills out his argument that the two concepts may be seen as counterparts to the notion of interiority in the West. In the following extract, we see him summarize the “conceptual” traits of ‘*yūgen*’, only in the end to challenge their adequacy to explain the way it actually functions in poetry.

[MFM]

YŪ GEN

ŌNISHI Yoshinori 1939, 85–91

I would now like to single out some of the elements that are contained in the meaning of ‘*yūgen*’. To begin with, the notion of *yūgen*, even in its most generalized explanation, remains *hidden* or *covert*, lacking clarity of appearance, as if there were something in it closed in on itself. This important element is no doubt suggested already by the characters used to transcribe the word. Like “the thin covering of clouds over the moon” and “the mountain mist hanging on autumn leaves” of which Shōtetsu writes, there is a sense of something delicately blocking the way to direct perception.

From there, a second meaning emerges as a matter of course, a kind of *dimness* or *haze* or *faintness*. To miss the intent here is to think of things under “a bright and cloudless sky, everything the face of delight.” But these traits of *yūgen* rise aesthetically beyond these effects to create a special meaning. And the sense of dread and discomfort towards what is hidden there in the dark is completely missing. Rather, attention is drawn to a kind of gentleness, restraint, and softness that stands opposed to what is exposed, immediate, and sharply defined. At the same time, there arises here a sense of the presence of an indistinct landscape, like “dew lingering all about the flowers of spring” or like the words Teika chose for his assessment of the Miyagawa poetry contest, “the heart of the

matter, lightly¹²—a sense of elegance and greatness that does not exert reason for too much clarity.

A third and no less very closely related element in the meaning is the sense of *stillness* that accompanies what is dimly hidden within the general notion of *yūgen*. But along with this sense is an indication of a state of mind that reaches sentiments of beauty as well, as when one is absorbed in the tearful feelings of abandon to the colorless, voiceless sky of an autumn evening of which Kamo no Chōmei* speaks, or “a lonely thatched dwelling in a late-autumn shower” that Shunzei¹³ praised for its poetic spirit of *yūgen*, or the fleeting sight of snipes flying out of a swamp in an autumn nightfall.

The fourth sense of *yūgen* is what is called *profundity*, a sense of “depth and distance.” This element is, of course, related to the foregoing, but even in general notions of *yūgen* it does not have to do with mere temporal or spatial distance. There is a particular, spiritual meaning here, as in the case of a profound and abstruse idea like the “deep and mysterious buddha-dharma” (*Rinzairoku* 1.18). We may consider part of *yūgen* the corresponding sentiments of beauty that have been given particular emphasis by those like Shōtetsu and Shinkei,¹⁴ what is often referred to in theories of poetry as “depth of heart,” or as Teika and others put it, “having heart.”

In the fifth place, and directly related to the above meaning, I would point to an aspect of *completeness*. The contents of things with *yūgen* are not simply hidden, dim, and difficult to understand. They hold a concentration, as it were, of something infinitely great, a coagulation of an *inhaltsschwere Fülle*. I believe that here, in virtue of this and the previously enumerated characteristics, we come to the essence. As Konparu Zenchiku* has said in his *Essentials for Attaining the Way*: “For the most part, *yūgen* is misunderstood. There are those who understand *yūgen* as embellishment, affectation, or weak irresolution, but this is not the case.” Moreover, in this sense do not the sinographs for *yūgen* make it possible to distinguish it from related words with *yū* such as “delicate,” “pitch-dark,” and “impenetrable”? In any case, as I see this sense of *yūgen*, particularly in the case when it is treated as simply a formal concept, the limited nature of the idea is occasionally overlooked, resulting in distortions. To be sure, this aspect of completeness—insofar as it refers to the completeness of the “content” as opposed to the “form” of the art—has already been given ample treatment in

12. [The reference is to Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), remembered as a master poet and calligrapher of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods.]

13. [Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1202), author of the imperial poetic anthology *The Thousand-Year Collection*, is noted for favoring the *yūgen* style of poetry.]

14. [Shinkei (1406–1475), a Tendai monk of the Muromachi period and composer of *renga* or collaborative poetry in the tradition of Shōtetsu.]

Japanese poetic theory. This is an example of what Tameie has written regarding poetry: “Though one uses few words, if the meaning is profound, a great many things can be heard in them; the poem is also good for chanting.”¹⁵ Yet from the viewpoint of aesthetic meaning, what we have been calling the aspect of completeness should be associated, of course, with something extremely great, weighty, and powerful, with what is lofty and sublime. We may suppose that even the simple conceptualization of styles since the time of Teika, including those of “grandeur and elevation,” “distant white,” and “demon-quelling,” as long as they do not contradict any of the other meanings of *yūgen*, are not necessarily impossible as aesthetic categories to embrace the idea. Consider the following poem of Ietaka:¹⁶ “In the tops of the shore pines, aged by the wind and worn out by the moon—the lone cry of a crane.” Shōtetsu judged the poem to be in the style of “stout and strong verse,” adding that “it is not a poem in the *yūgen* style.” It seems to me that Shōtetsu’s idea of *yūgen* here is overly confined. Viewed from the praise that Shunzei accorded *yūgen* in the “Rowing out” poem at the Hirota Shrine poetry contest, the “Naniwa Bay” poem at the Shiragi Shrine contest, and again in the “Wind blowing” poem of Emperor Go-Toba,¹⁷ this poem of Ietaka is not that far wide of the mark.

A sixth element that goes into the meaning of *yūgen* ties in with the previous five, adding what may be thought of as a sense of the *mystical* or *supernatural*. As a religious and philosophical concept, it is only natural that *yūgen* have these traits, but this mystical and metaphysical sense is also perceived at the level of aesthetic consciousness, where it seems to effect a distinctively emotional orientation. It is the meaning of this orientation to the emotions that I wish to draw attention to here, not to any religious ideas or concepts that happen to serve as material for poetry. Regarding the poem “A wall of water flowing on and leaving behind its tracks, from Miyagawa and the end of livelihood” read at the Miyagawa poetry contest, Teika judged it “far from beautiful, vulgar, and verging on *yūgen*.” The kind of aesthetic sense of *yūgen* we are speaking of here is absent in this poem and in poems of the Jichin¹⁸ contest that often make mention of the heart of Buddhist teachings. In the ascetic sense, these are cases in which of mysticism is fused with a *Naturgefühl*, giving rise to a sort of deep,

15. [The citation is from *The Style of Poetic Composition* written by Fujiwara no Tameie (1198–1275).]

16. [Fujiwara no Ietaka (1158–1257), the Kamakura-period *waka* poet, was a student of Fujiwara no Shunzei.]

17. [Gotoba (1180–1230), the eighty-second emperor of Japan, was noted for his artistic skills as musician, painter, and poet.]

18. [Jichin is the posthumous name of Jien (1155–1225), a famous Tendai monk and poet of the Kamakura period.]

inner “cosmic feeling.” This kind of mystical-cosmic feeling seeps out of its own accord in poetry that expresses in the simplest form the fleeting aesthetic excitement at the coincidence, as it were, of the human soul and the whole of nature. This is always present, to one degree or another, in things like Saigyō’s¹⁹ emotion at the sight of the crane rising up out of the swamp, Shunzei’s sensation of the autumn wind in the cry of a quail in the deep grass, and Chōmei’s tearful sentimentalism as he stared at the autumn sky at dusk. In somewhat different form, we may mention the appearance of the mystical and supernatural in the legend of a goddess from the Fuzan hills referred to in an appended explanation of the *yūgen* style in the *Foolish Secret Notes*,²⁰ which develops this in another direction, in what may seem rather grandiose fashion.

Finally, a seventh element in the meaning of *yūgen*, which is very close to the first two elements, but unlike mere hiddenness or dimness, has rather to do with an *irrational, unexplainable, or subtle* quality. As part of the general meaning of the notion of *yūgen*, it is directly related to the qualities of profundity and completeness. It points to a “wondrous resignation to a deep charm” that disengages the dimension of verbal explanation. Put in terms of aesthetic sense, it refers to a mysterious aesthetic mood, difficult to explain and put in words but something like what Shōtetsu was fond of referring to in his explanations of *yūgen* with expressions like “wandering away from home” or “faintly in the distance.” This “suggestiveness” is essentially a development of this final element. Apart from the immediate sentiment of a poem, there is a faint and distant humor that cannot be expressed in words but sways along with the poem. Considered in terms of a *Wirkungsaesthetik*, and especially in the case of the distinctive art of the *waka*, this element is obviously the most important for the beauty of *yūgen*. As we have seen before, in the poetic theory of the Middle Ages, the rhetoric of *yūgen*, even as an evaluative concept, frequently put the emphasis on this aspect, although there it was restricted to the particular elegance of the mood. It was from there that the distinctive formal concept came about.

As I see it, in the aesthetic concept of *yūgen* we never have more than a partial meaning, so that to lean too heavily on these elements of meaning inevitably ends up distorting somewhat the overall concept.

[JWH]

19. [Saigyō (1118–1190), a monk and close friend of Teika, wrote poetry combining high Buddhist ideals with a love of nature.]

20. [A poetic treatise from the late Kamakura period spuriously attributed to Teika.]

IZUTSU Toyoko 井筒豊子 (1925–)

After graduating from the Tokyo University's Department of Arts and Letters in 1952, Izutsu Toyoko (alias Toyo) married the celebrated philosopher and orientalist Izutsu Toshihiko,* with whom she collaborated closely until his death in 1993. A gifted writer in her own right, she published translations, essays, and short stories, as well as a lengthy study on late-Heian and medieval Japanese *waka* as a “cognitive field,” for a volume edited by Yuasa Yasuo.* She is best known outside of Japan for a work she composed jointly with her husband in English, and which was later translated into German, on the fundamentals of Japanese aesthetics. The following excerpts on the key aesthetic notions of *kokoro* and *wabi* are taken from her portion of that volume.

[JWH]

KOKORO

IZUTSU Toyoko 1981A, 5–11

The two negative conditions of ‘*waka*’—the unusual brevity of its form and the profusion of rhetorical techniques, which also happen to be most essential and fundamental to its formal structure—might appear to present a formidable hindrance to a spontaneous, syntactic evolvement of the poetic sentence. When, however, they are properly integrated into the context of the idiosyncratic constitution of the poetic sentence, that is, into the “semantic” configuration of its component units, they are at once transformed, just as they are, into something of a positive nature.

The implication of this fact is that the whole linguistic structure of *waka* is from the outset so schemed as to put great emphasis on the aspect of articulation, and developing it almost exclusively, to the detriment of its other, syntactic, aspect.

As a matter of fact, what seemed to be functioning as a formidable hindrance in regard to the syntactic makeup of *waka*, is found to be actually functioning as a definitely positive factor in its aspect of semantic articulation.

Waka, in other words, tries to create a linguistic “field,” an associative network of semantic articulations, that is, a nontemporal “space” of semantic saturation, instead of a linear, temporal succession of words, a syntactic flow that is utilized merely as a coagulative basis of the poetic sentence.

The *waka* poet seems to go against the intrinsic nature of language; by means of words, he tries to create a synchronic “field,” a spatial expanse. Instead of a temporal succession of words, in which each succeeding word goes on oblit-

erating, as it were, the foregoing word, *waka* aims at bringing about a global view of a whole, in which the words used are observable all at once—which is impossible except within the framework of extremely short poems like *waka* (31 syllables) and *haiku* (17 syllables). Such a global view of a whole constitutes what we mean by a “field.” In a field thus constituted, time may be said to be standing still or even to be annihilated in the sense that the meanings of all words are simultaneously present in a single sphere.

In relation to this poetic-linguistic field, the various rhetorical devices peculiar to *waka* naturally contribute towards bringing the saturation of semantic articulation to fullness, producing thus an atemporal aesthetic equilibrium or plenitude in the field.

This field-making consciousness in the art of *waka* exhibits a sudden upsurge in the later periods of the development of *waka*, particularly in the Shinkokin period of the early thirteenth century, of which Lord Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241)... was a representative poet and theoretician of poetry.

We recognize in the field-making consciousness here in question a strong and tenacious propensity toward transcending the linguistic framework, namely the syntactic restrictions imposed upon the poetic expression of the mind and even upon the inner linguistic activity of the poet.

The structure of the field-making consciousness, being essentially of a non-temporal nature, would seem to be compatible with the recognition and keen awareness of the pre-phenomenal mind as the creative ground (*kokoro*) that has been cultivated mainly through a rigorous and critical observation on the part of the *waka* poets through generations, of the creative process involving a linguistic activity both internal and external.

In the classical theory of *waka*, we have such technical key terms as mind (*kokoro*), word, posture, and tonal flow. These last two may be said to refer primarily to the already externalized state of the poetic expression of *waka*. *Posture*, a word whose visual connotation might seem to be rather unusual in a theory of poetry, nevertheless designates most appropriately in this particular context the special aspect of the nontemporal harmony, i.e., the synchronic unity of the semantic associations, which corresponds to the above-mentioned linguistic field as well as to the field of image-saturation based on semantic associations, whereas *tonal flow* naturally refers to the temporal aspect, that is, the successive, linear development of a poetic sentence as a syntactic and tonal unity.

Thus, while posture and tonal flow relate to the externalized state of *waka*, ‘*kokoro*’ and word are functionally incorporated into the organic whole of the creative consciousness itself of *waka*. The intricacy of the relationship between *kokoro* and word has an especially fundamental significance with regard to the inner structure of the creative consciousness of *waka*. We begin our inquiry into

this problem by analyzing the structure of *kokoro* as the inner creative ground of the *waka* poet.

Ki no Tsurayuki (875–946), in a celebrated preface to the *Kokinshū*, presents his view on *waka* by saying that *kokoro*, stimulated by external things and events, produces various thoughts that the poet expresses through describing in words the sensible things and events as they are seen and heard. This seemingly insignificant point has since caused many debates and discussions among Japanese poets and scholars, and seems to have potentially opened up into a theoretical and—in its own peculiar way—systematic development of the structural awareness of the inner creative phenomenon in the poetic art of *waka*.

The way Tsurayuki refers to *kokoro* suggests that it is not to be understood as a particular state of subjectivity or as a consciousness that has already been activated to artistic creativity. Rather, it is structurally posited by Tsurayuki as the ground not merely of poetic creation but of all psychological and cognitive activities or experiences of the subject. The implication is that *kokoro* is taken to be a sort of psychic potentiality or dynamic of the subject to be activated—when stirred and stimulated by the external things and events—to function by manifesting itself as thinking (including images and ideas) and feeling.

In this narrow, technical sense, *kokoro* may be said to be a particular domain of inner subjectivity, namely the domain of the not-yet-activated that is prior to all functional manifestations. In its broad sense, however, *kokoro* signifies the whole domain of inner subjectivity, covering both the not-yet-activated and the already-activated; it is both the ground and the manifestation in images, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

At an earlier stage, *kokoro* in its narrow sense, although presupposed and recognized as the structural basis of thoughts and feelings, did not yet exhibit its genuine significance in the creative actuality of *waka*. It was in the later stage of the historical development of *waka* poetry, particularly in the Shinkokin period, that the position occupied by the *kokoro* in this sense reached its apogee, and acquired such predominance that it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that it all but revolutionized the very idea of *waka*, down to its inner disposition and scheme.

For Teika, *kokoro* in its narrow sense is no longer a mere structural presupposition as it was in the thought of Tsurayuki. It is now a living and genuine subjectivity, a state of subjective equilibrium which transcends the transiency of the psychological sphere of phenomenal commotion, and which can neither be an object of cognitive activity of any sort, nor of any activity based on linguistic-psychological articulation. It is the subjective plenitude of self-illuminating awareness, an idea in which we may, with good reason, recognize traces of the spiritual experience particular to the discipline of contemplation known as

the “experience of self-illumination,” an idea central in the *Mohe zhiguan*²¹ of Tiantai Buddhism.

The *kokoro*, thus animated and enriched by the experience of self-illuminating awareness, comes to be recognized and identified as the highest point in the analogical (or hierarchic) structure of the mind, the creative subjectivity of the *waka* poet. Thus, in the poetic theory of *waka* in the period of Lord Teika, the focal point of poetic consciousness moves, we might say, from a stage of actual poetic-linguistic expression to the prior stage of *kokoro* in its narrow sense as a “state of mind.” This state of mind is intrinsically connected with the process of expression only in the sense that the fermentative act of expression takes place there and potentially determines the way it will be verbalized.

In this connection we must remind ourselves of the fact that *kokoro* in its narrow sense as a state of mind is primarily a peculiar mental domain transcending all phenomena relating to inner language. As soon as it finds itself articulated phenomenally or articulated linguistically, it can no longer remain *kokoro*. Losing its essence it necessarily turns into thinking or feeling. Thus the main question that arises here regarding the structure of the *kokoro*-word relationship has to do with the peculiar scope of the linguistic domain itself, that is to say, how far it actually extends.

It is a structural feature peculiar to poetic art in general, and to *waka* poetry in particular, that an expression intended by creative consciousness may be actualized externally without any drastic transformation, since both the intended (the inner form of language) and the expressed (the externalized and actualized form of expression) belong to the same domain of semantic-syntactic articulation. This fact plays a particularly decisive role in *waka*, whose final phase of the process of creative externalization, the phase in which inner language is transformed into a series of phonetic sounds forming thirty-one syllables or written characters, is extremely short, almost instantaneous.

In this way we may see in the creative consciousness of the poet a kind of organic continuity between external language and internal language. This fact seems to have significantly affected the basic constitution of the theory of *waka* poetry as conceived of by *waka* poets themselves who, by nature, are remarkably language-conscious.

Once an organic continuity is established between the external and the internal, the sphere of internal linguistic articulation cannot but be represented as extending itself as far as the very borderline marking off the domain of all linguistic articulation from the translinguistic or *kokoro* in its narrow sense, so

21. [One of the major texts of Zhiyi (538–597), founder of the Tiantai. It deals with the theory and practice of Buddhist meditation.]

that the sphere of internal linguistic articulation will be found, in fact, to cover the whole of the phenomenal activity of *kokoro*... As a result, the domain of internal language coincides with “consciousness” in its entirety, including not only images, ideas, and thoughts, but even creative intention and the like.

It is worth noting at this juncture that the emergence of thoughts (that is, the syntactic units of inner semantic articulation, as well as images and ideas) from *kokoro* is supposed to be absolutely spontaneous and inevitably dependent on, or inseparably connected to, one’s state of mind. For, as we have observed earlier, the relationship between *kokoro* as not-yet-activated and *kokoro* as already-activated is by nature a relationship between the originating and the originated. Teika attaches pivotal significance to this fact in his theory of poetry. For him, thinking, in its creative authenticity as directly, uncontrollably, and spontaneously induced by the state of mind, should constitute the potential content to be verbalized aesthetically and poetically.

We must not overlook the implication here that authentic thinking—the phenomenal activity that originates directly and spontaneously in the *kokoro* as state of mind—is structured in such a way that it is beyond manipulation in its own domain. Consequently, as the potential content of poetic-aesthetic verbalization, thinking cannot and should not be controlled by any conscious endeavor or exertion in the dimension of thought itself. Rather, the control needs to be exercised through the rectification of the *kokoro*, which itself lies beyond all conscious activity, that is, at the level of inner semantic-syntactic articulation. Should one try to manage and control thinking in the dimension of thought, inner linguistic articulations would be hurried or end up in confusion, the very thing that Teika reviles strongly in his treatise as a kind of pseudo-creativity, as “vain cogitations devoid of” *kokoro*.

WABI

IZUTSU Toyoko 1981B, 48–52

The word ‘*wabi*’, before being established as an aesthetic technical term peculiar to the Way of Tea, had already been in use apparently for centuries. In classical literature, *waka* for instance, it is often used to describe or express a state of destitution, deprivation, dispossession, forlornness, desolation, distress, languishing, and so on, indicating a strong emotional saturation of the subjective aspect of the mind with a possible tinge of poetic elegance.

The word *wabi* in the Way of Tea has an antecedent counterpart, *suki*. In contrast to and against the background of this word *suki*, the word *wabi* seems to have developed into a technical term within the field of the “art” of

tea-drinking—which was the earlier phase of the development of the Way of Tea—assuming particular ethical-aesthetic connotations in the first stage of its development and metaphysical connotations in the latter stages.

The word *suki* originally meant “artistic ardor,” a particular subjective attitude in one’s lifestyle that gives disproportionate preponderance to aesthetic sense and sensibility over the pragmatic sense of utility. Such an attitude necessarily produces for itself a particular artistic, non-pragmatic value system that has two possible directions to develop: one leading to aesthetic indulgence in the exuberance and profusion of external expressions, the other leading to an aesthetic idealism having an essential compatibility with the metaphysical-ethical austerity of a hermit. The former, in fact, came to represent the idea of *suki* in its narrow sense, while the latter inspired a particular kind of “aesthetic asceticism” essentially related to the connotation of the term *wabi* in the art of tea.

Within the art of tea-drinking, *suki* in the narrow sense of aesthetic indulgence took on the special meaning of the artistic attitude of one whose taste is so refined that it is not content until it possesses a complete collection of sophisticated art-objects to be used as tea-utensils. This type of aesthetic indulgence during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries followed closely the decorous authenticity of courtly aesthetic refinement. However, as we can easily imagine, it was quite incompatible with the peculiar inner elaboration of the ethical-aesthetic asceticism that had been highly cultivated among the aristocratic hermits and the monks of Zen and other Buddhist schools. These latter manifested in their *waka* poetry and essays feelings of aversion to the external and purely positive approach to the aesthetic values, considering it superficial and crude. For example, the beauty of nature as a positive aesthetic value, they thought, was not to be appreciated at the momentary height of its full actualization so much as in its transient process of subsiding, or even in its vestiges of its disappearance. They went so far as to identify the state of *wabi* in its ordinary, non-technical sense with human existential reality, finding therein a genuine refuge for ethical-aesthetic contentment.

The remarkable thing is that these persons not only gave verbal expression to their understanding of *wabi* as an aesthetic idea in poems and essays, but they eventually discovered an unusual way to express this peculiar understanding of the idea of *wabi*, giving it an aesthetic supremacy, and incorporating it perfectly into the sensory structure of a spiritual-visual art, namely the Way of Tea. Furthermore, in the Way of Tea, *wabi* was no longer a mere idea indicating aesthetic asceticism. Rather, *wabi*, at the culmination of its development, came to constitute the highest aesthetic-ethical value, providing the Way of Tea with a solid metaphysical background....

The metaphysics of *wabi*, according to tea devotees, is said to have been given a poetic expression in the following celebrated two *waka* poems, by Teika and

Ietaka respectively. The two poems were incorporated into the text itself of the *Record of Nanbō* along with a brief comment by Rikyū.²² They are considered by Rikyū to be symbolically expressive of the two different structural aspects of the metaphysical-aesthetic spirit of *wabi*.

All around, no flowers in bloom
 Nor maple leaves in glare,
 A solitary fisherman's hut alone
 On the twilight shore
 In this autumn eve.

To the yearning seekers of blossoms
 With pride, would I offer
 A delight of the eye,
 The green from under the snow
 In a mountain village in springtide!

Commenting on the first of these poems, Rikyū uses the phrase “realm of not a single thing” or “state of nonpossession,” one of the most characteristic terms of Zen metaphysics. It clearly shows his recognition in the poem of an aspect of the highest realization of *wabi*, namely, the subjective-objective state of Zen contemplation in which neither the objects of the phenomenal world nor the active functions of conscious articulation are to be found. Nonetheless, every single object that has once been phenomenally articulated is still assumed to be there, even after it has been completely eliminated, yielding a form of inner metaphysical articulation in the realm of non-articulation.

Thus the first poem, if we are to follow Rikyū's interpretation, seems to suggest the process of the metaphysical “involution” of phenomenally articulated things and events toward ‘nothingness’ or the unarticulated whole. The inner landscape of the contemplative subject aspiring to the realm of nothingness is here presented in a symbolic way. Things and events, once articulated phenomenally, go on to efface themselves, one after another, from the contemplative field by gradually turning their own articulations in the phenomenal dimension of being to the pre-phenomenal state of nothingness. But the reminiscence of the flowers and maple leaves whose phenomenal existence has been verbally articulated and then negated, are still there in the poem, albeit in a negative form, as so many inner articulations of the field.

In this poetic field only a solitary hut remains positively articulated in the

22. [Fujiwara no Ietaka (1158–1257) compiled the *Shinkokinshū* together with Fujiwara no Teika. Rikyū is the familiar title of Sen Sōeki (1522–1591), founder of the Sen School of the Tea Ceremony. The *Record of Nanbō* (*Nanbōroku*) is a later account clarifying the ideas of Rikyū.]

twilight faintness of the scene, as if half diffused into it, suggesting an inner abode of a hermit, the locus of his contemplative awareness.

As for the second poem, it discloses its metaphysical significance only when it is understood in relation to the first. In contrast to the metaphysical “returning” or involution of all things toward nothingness of the first poem, the second seems to refer to a metaphysical “evolution” from nothingness. As all phenomenal articulations subside and completely disappear, the negative process of involution comes to an end. Only then does the spontaneously expressive process of metaphysical evolution begin to set itself in action.

In this contemplative experience, phenomenal articulation is often symbolically represented by a single dot on the totally blank surface of a perfect circle. Rikyū, as an artist, sees the convergence of the primal phenomenal articulation of metaphysical reality and its primordial expressions in the poetic image of spring shoots in their vivacious green appearing sparsely here and there from under the snow-covered ground.

Bioethics

Bioethics Overview

In spring of 1771, a small group of Japanese doctors gathered to perform an autopsy on the cadaver of an executed fifty-year old woman criminal known as the Green Tea Hag, with a copy of a recently acquired Dutch work on anatomy lying open on the table before them. One of their number, Sugita Genpaku (1733–1817), who was later to translate that book, recalls:

Comparing the things we saw with the pictures in the Dutch book, we were amazed at their perfect agreement.... The Shōgun's official doctors... had beheld dissections seven or eight times before, but always what they saw was different from what had been taught in the past thousand years, and their puzzle had never been solved. They said they had been making sketches every time they saw something that struck them as strange. On this basis, I suppose, they had written that perhaps the Chinese and the Japanese were different in their internal structures. This I had read.

After the dissection was over, we were tempted to examine the forms of the bones too, and picked up some of the sun bleached bones scattered around the ground. We found that they were nothing like those described in the old books, but were exactly as represented in the Dutch book. We were completely amazed....

On our way home, three of us... talked of what a startling revelation we had seen that day. We felt ashamed of ourselves for having come this far in our lives without being aware of our own ignorance. How presumptuous on our part to have served our lordships and pretended to carry our duties as official doctors when we were totally without knowledge of the true makeup of our bodies which should be the foundation of the art of healing!

Sugita and his colleagues in Edo (present-day Tokyo) banded together to pursue the matter, forming the core of what would come to be known as *rangaku* or 'Dutch learning'. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds:

We came to realize what wrong ideas we had been fettered to for many long years in the past. Having those misconceptions shaken off one by one, we were

impatiently looking forward to another appointed day for study like women and children anxiously awaiting the dawn of a festival day.

Regarding his struggles with translating the Dutch text, he recalls his initial plan to imitate the Chinese translations of the Buddhist sutras in order to introduce the new ideas with a solid basis in tradition. In the end he abandoned the plan:

I wanted to make the translation entirely with the old Chinese terminology, but I soon found that there was quite a difference in the concept of naming between the Dutch and the Chinese, and I was often puzzled for the lack of a definite rule. After considering from all angles, I decided that as this was after all an attempt to make myself the ancestor of a new learning, at any rate I would make my writing plain and easy. With this as the basic rule, I sometimes tried to find an appropriate Japanese word for translation, sometimes created a new word, sometimes transcribed the Dutch sound in Japanese. Trying this and trying that, I groped for various means day and night. Putting my heart and soul in the task, I rewrote the manuscript eleven times... and it took me almost four years before it was completed. (SUGITA Genpaku 1815, 35–6, 43, 51 [30–2, 38, 47])

This scene would be played out again and again in the Meiji era as Japan found itself exposed to a tidal wave of ideas and scientific advances from the West against which its reliance on the authority of its own traditions left it largely unprepared to defend itself. Not without considerable strife did the strong undercurrent of moral sensitivities and cultural values passed down over centuries—what Maruyama Masao* has called the *basso ostinato*—manage to retain its role in the formation of modern Japan.

Nevertheless, problems at the intersection of science and culture were rather slow to find their place in Japanese philosophy. Perhaps more than any other current of western philosophy, the logical positivism and analytic thought introduced in the postwar period was remarkable for its reluctance to engage the prescientific philosophical resources of Japan. During the final two decades of the last century, this situation has begun to change, and a major stimulus has been the rise of ethical questions surrounding the effects of science and technology on everyday life. Debates about everything from the abuse of the environment to the potentials of genetic manipulation have made it impossible for philosophy to treat science in the abstract. The questions are too varied and volatile to capture in brief, but a closer look at the question of brain death should help single out the kind of issues in bioethics that oblige philosophy in Japan to draw on its native resources.

The Japanese Challenge to a Universal Bioethics

Recent Japanese thought has shown itself sensitive to aspects of bioethics that have received little attention in western circles and has made progress in uncovering the particularity of certain assumptions tacitly assumed to be universal. No doubt a great deal of the “orthodox” bioethics imported from the West is applicable to Japan and has played a significant role in framing questions and shaping debate. At the same time, the distinct way in which the discussion has progressed suggests a number of insights Japan has to offer the West and the rest of the world.

Bioethics in the broad sense of the term—ethics for medical professionals—already existed in premodern Japan, where it had developed under the influence of Buddhism and Confucianism. One thinks, for example, of Kaibara Ekken*, a physician of the early Tokugawa Era and a neo-Confucian scholar who formulated ethical guidelines for medical experts. Medicine, he insisted, is the art of practicing ‘humaneness’ and physicians are to take benevolent care of their patients’ welfare. This way of thinking survives as an ideal for medical practice in Japan, leading at times to a certain paternalism towards patients.

In the current sense of the term, bioethics dates roughly from the translation of V. R. Potter’s *Bioethics* into Japanese in 1974, a work whose heavy emphasis on environmental ethics failed to attract much attention. Indeed, in the early years only a handful of pioneers, among them Takemi Tarō and Kimura Rihito, were quick to embrace the cause of contemporary bioethics.

It was only after the mid-1980s that bioethics was established as a discipline in Japan. Scholars at Chiba University translated a number of works published by the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University and the Hastings Center. A Japanese Association for Bioethics was established in 1987 and other academic associations of medicine and ethics began to turn to bioethical questions. Around this time the Japanese term for bioethics came into use in the mass media, reflecting a growing moral concern with the rapid advancement of biomedical technology.

As an academic discipline, therefore, bioethics reached Japan initially through the translation and study of western research. The mainstream of bioethicists has taken these ideas over into the Japanese context by assuming the general validity of western, and especially North American, moral principles. A quick glance at standard textbooks in the field shows the dominant role played by western ideas like autonomy and self-determination.

Naturally, the Japanese language carries with it its own cultural background, so that imported terminology inevitably takes on its own connotations. For example, Kimura, aware of the characteristic trust in the physician’s authority, associates the idea of “relational autonomy” with “making autonomous

decisions in a relationship striving for harmony.” Nevertheless, the established terminology is largely regarded as a local adaptation of an allegedly universal ethic, which occasionally runs into obstacles when applying universal ideas to the particularities of the Japanese situation. At the same time, ideas like “self-determination” and “informed consent” have made headway in overcoming the authoritarian, paternalistic custom of Japanese medical care, although it must be said that in a case like cancer not a few doctors in Japan are still reluctant to inform patients about the truth of their condition.

By and large, academic bioethicists have yet to face questions of cultural bias squarely, but remain committed to the individualist and utilitarian principles that lie at the core of western bioethics. Seldom do they reflect on the validity of those principles within the broader reaches of their own ethical tradition, let alone ask what this may have to say for bioethics in general.

In any important sense, to understand the way bioethical questions have sunk roots in Japan, one has to look to significant and influential discussions that have been going on outside established academic circles. Here the participants are not professionally trained medical experts or specialists in bioethics, but journalists, historians of science, cultural anthropologists, and philosophers. Although their discourses may carry little weight in formally defined bioethical controversies, they enjoy considerable influence on public opinion and often bring unique insight to what more “orthodox” approaches have overlooked. This is particularly clear in the debate over “brain death” that broke out in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Debate over Brain Death

Japan first gave legal sanction to organ transplants from brain-dead patients in 1997 through the enactment of an Organ Transplant Law. The campaign for the adoption of this new medical technology sparked a heated nationwide debate on the ethical problems involved in the process. In the end, the law stipulated two strict provisions that make transplantation somewhat difficult: the consent of the patient through a certified donor’s card and the consent of the patient’s family. In comparison with western countries, the number of voluntary donors in Japan is small, and as a result only a few transplants have been carried out. This reflects a deep-seated resistance both to accepting brain death as a sufficient criterion for death and to inserting organs from the dead into the living.

For the majority of Europeans and North Americans, the technology of organ transplantation from the brain-dead does not seem to have met with much moral resistance. “Harvesting” organs from a brain-dead body is seen as something good rather than a matter for ethical debate. There are exceptions,

of course. In 1974 the eminent German-born philosopher Hans Jonas criticized the Harvard Committee's redefinition of death as brain death. He warned against the danger of socially sanctioned murder and brought to light the latent utilitarian mode of thought behind transplanting organs from alleged cadavers. His admonitions were little heeded in North America, but in Japan he has been widely read and his arguments treated seriously. As William LaFleur has noted, there is a remarkable coincidence between Jonas's views and those of Japanese critics of brain death, as was evident in the spirited debates that took place during the 1980s and 1990s. More recently, even utilitarian philosophers like Peter Singer, whose works are read in Japan, have raised questions about the consequences of defining death as a brain event.

Part of the reason for the resistance in Japan is circumstantial. In 1968 Wada Takeo of the Sapporo Medical College performed Japan's first heart transplant. He was roundly criticized for his dubious judgment regarding the death of the donor and accused of engaging in illegal human experimentation. The case provoked a public outcry against the uncontrolled advance of medical technology, galvanizing the two sides in the debate over brain death and organ transplants. But feelings run much deeper than this one instance. From the mid-1980s, after an ad hoc committee of the Ministry of Health and Welfare proposed the brain-death criteria and the Japanese Transplantation Society insisted on the need to authorize the transplanting of organs in Japan, a number of influential journalists and scholars stepped up to express their skepticism over equating *human* death with *brain* death. The critics did not prevail and the criterion was finally accepted. Nonetheless, these debates merit closer examination as a reflection of neglected dimensions that have to do as much with Japanese culture as with the supposed universal validity of the principles involved.

Cultural Assumptions about Life, Death, and the Body

For some Japanese critics of organ transplantation, the philosophical assumptions behind the technology are alien to the traditional view of life and death in Japan. In the early stages of brain death controversy, the historian of science Yonemoto Shōhei took a pioneering role in pointing out the importance of the "cultural factor." The dominance of a mechanistic worldview in the West, he argued, allowed the human body to be seen as an object whose organs are mechanical parts that can be replaced as the need arises:

In the case of organ transplants and brain death, what is brought into question is the very framework of modern science that undergirds the logic of the arguments. For instance, the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act of the United States, a law set up for the donation of organs, at times speaks of the practice of transplanting organs as if it were "spare parts surgery." This reflects the

western mechanical view of the body in which organs become exchangeable parts. In contrast, the Japanese tend to carry deep within them a sense that the personality of the individual resides in all parts of the body.

One Japanese mother, who offered the liver of her brain-dead child, exclaimed, "I did not think of my child as dead but as fit and living inside of someone else's body." In the western context, this way of speaking would be classified as exceptional and taken as no more than poetic anthropomorphism, but in Japan transplant surgery uses this way of speaking as a logic of self-persuasion. It may come as a surprise, but this is probably the key to promoting organ transplants in Japan. [YONEMOTO Shōhei 1985, 200]

The popular critic, Umehara Takeshi, joined the cultural resistance. At first advocating the mainstream opinion as a member of the Prime Minister's special committee on brain death, which had voiced its unanimous support for the redefinition of death as brain death, he grew increasingly skeptical. In a critical essay, Umehara identified the philosophical assumptions behind the technology of organ transplantation from the brain-dead person as based in pragmatism and a Cartesian mind-body dualism. He argued that altering the definition of death discloses the more pragmatic motive of facilitating organ transplants. Consistent with Jonas's criticisms, he insisted that such concerns should not be allowed to outweigh historical traditions concerning the criterion of death. But it is the latent Cartesianism of western modes of thought that bore the brunt of his attack:

Descartes believes that it was not some kind of spirit that moves the world of matter but something mechanical that could be analyzed according to the laws of mathematics and physics. Modern medicine takes its start from this Cartesian mechanism. Internal medicine consists of analyzing the mechanical laws of the human body, identifying the cause of a disease, and working a cure through medication or therapy; surgery consists of restoring the functions of this piece of machinery we call the body by cutting away the malignant parts. If surgery may be called the crown jewel of modern medicine, organ transplantation, the interchange of internal organs among humans, represents the inevitable conclusion to what began with Descartes. Transplants and brain death are thus jointly warranted by Cartesian philosophy. Transplants are at once the clearest index of the mechanical view of the human at the root of modern medicine and its glorious culmination. What is more, if thinking is the most distinctively human activity we have, the brain-dead person who has completely lost the capacity to think must obviously be considered dead. Descartes' philosophy stands like an imposing wall to block us off from our simple common sense recognition that brain death is not death....

Modern European society gave birth to a science that views nature as something to be known objectively. The effectiveness of scientific knowledge lay in its technological application to the control of nature. Modern medicine has

been inclined to go along with this preferential option, or bias, for technology. In its extreme form, this way of thinking leads to pragmatism. The objectivity of truth has ceased to be a problem; the only thing at issue is the results. To such a mindset, death may be determined by the failure of the heart or the brain, but taking the brain as the measure is preferable because it is convenient for organ transplantation and serves the advance of medicine.

.....

To equate death with brain death theoretically amounts, in the final analysis, to denying the presence of life where there is no capacity to think, effectively excluding animals and plants. Does this mean that from the start plants are living things that exist in a state of brain death simply because they are not fitted out with a cerebral cortex? The awe for life must become a principle for a new philosophy, but I fear the idea of such awe is lacking among those promoting brain death in the name of transplants.

Obviously, it is not enough to criticize Descartes. At some point, I will undertake a thoroughgoing critique of my own, but since the matter at hand is brain death, the Cartesian philosophy that lies at the ground of western common sense is seriously defective in its notion of life. True, it has produced the magnificence of the modern world, but in the face of our current crisis we need to insist on overcoming the philosophic dualism that has advanced the destruction of the natural world, and to insist that it is not always correct to equate death with brain death. [UMEHARA Takeshi 1992, 223-4, 228]

The basis of Umehara's view of Japanese culture is a kind of animism deriving from Shinto and the Japanese form of Buddhism, where life is seen to pervade the whole of the natural world, the human body included. Japan's "life" philosophy, he goes on, should serve as a bulwark against the unregulated advance of modern technological civilization. Ueda Kenji*, the Shinto scholar and proponent of a "Shinto theology," had taken a broadly similar position several years earlier.

The cultural anthropologist Namihira Emiko pinpoints the traditional Japanese view of the body, stressing that the Japanese language makes a clear distinction between a "corpse" and a mere "cadaver." Whereas the latter is a body as a lifeless object, the former preserves a certain level of personal relationship with the bereaved, and in particular with the immediate family. In this connection she alludes to a commonly observed custom in which family members gather up the broken body of one who has fallen victim to a disaster or serious accident:

Corpses are not really capable of expressing their own will, and yet they assert themselves to the living as if they had wishes and desires and rights that they wanted fulfilled. A "corpse" differs from "cadaver" in its relationship to the living. The sense of loss and longing on the part of the bereaved's friends and

relatives is not the whole picture. The deceased who has taken the shape of a “corpse” to those left behind seems to make demands of its own.

.....

Part of the reason it is hard to find donors for organ transplants in Japan today is clear. The process of confirming death depends on the determination of relatives and family, and it is thus considered best to secure the approval of as many immediate relatives as possible. For one thing, many potential donors die suddenly in accidents, leaving too short an interval between brain death and the death of the organs to gather together the family. For another, there is a belief that the condition of the “corpse” affects the state of happiness or unhappiness of the soul after death, and this in turn is tied to the ancestral beliefs according to which the state of the dead affects close relatives left behind. This is why Japanese dislike the idea of inflicting wounds on a dead body. [NAMIHIRA Emiko 1990, 51, 66]

The reason many Japanese are disturbed at seeing the body of a deceased member of their intimate family treated mechanically as a “thing” to be handled, disassembled, or disposed of is that they continue to feel a certain personal connection to the body. The idea of releasing all control to transplant technology is something emotionally and culturally repugnant. Not incidentally, this attachment is reflected in the distinctive Japanese use of the term *hotoke* (literally, “buddha”) to refer to the dead body or the deceased. This usage reflects the special attachment of Japanese to the dead that exists both before and after cremation and burial.

Brain Death and Human Relations

Other arguments advanced against the idea of brain death are based on a relational view of human beings. Here the attempt is to uncover the individualist bias behind the idea of brain death, one that reduces death to an event that belongs exclusively to the deceased. In the Japanese context, death is seen rather as an event occurring within a broader interpersonal field in which family members play a major role.

For example, the journalist Nakajima Michi gathered extensive data on the feelings of family members towards the brain-dead in contrast to the heart-dead:

On losing a loved one, the skin of the deceased becomes cold to the touch and should make it immediately apparent that heart failure is something different. Moment by moment the body cools down and stiffens, leaving one with the sensation that life cannot return. Precisely because it is a death anyone can recognize, it should be taken seriously at a social, cultural, and legal level. In brain death, there is no such sensation of death.

.....

It is said to be wonderful that organs that would otherwise end up as ashes can be of use to someone else. But imagine that one morning your child runs out of the house full of energy only to be struck down by a car and be proclaimed brain dead. You stand at the bedside with your child laid out, its skin still warm. Would you really start thinking about your child ending up in any case as ashes? The idea that what will end up as ashes might be useful to someone makes the human body into a kind of resource, a thing. Does not this intellectualizing merely reinforce the reification of the brain-dead human body as a thing? [NAKAJIMA Michi 1992, 274, 276]

Nakajima criticizes brain death as “invisible” since it denies the family a role in acknowledging the death. In this way, she tries to solicit greater awareness of the relational environment of death. Others have taken this up at a more theoretical level. The bioethicist Morioka Masahiro is one of them. He proposes understanding brain death as a phenomenon of human relationships:

I prefer to speak of brain death as a locus of inter-human relationships centered on “one in whom the brain has ceased to function.” Brain death is not just something going on in the brain of a particular individual; it takes place as a human relationship with those who surround that person. We need to inquire into the “locus of brain death.” In other words, the essence of brain death is to be sought in the connections between people. The internal cerebral examination of “one in whom the brain has ceased to function” is one aspect of this—brain death in the eyes of the doctor. [MORIOKA Masahiro 1989, 9]

Kimura Bin*, an eminent psychiatrist and philosopher whose ideas were influenced in part by Watsuji Tetsurō*, is widely known for his analysis of the “betweenness” that grounds the individual essentially in a field of interpersonal relationships (and later is expanded to include living organisms in general). Kimura makes two arguments, the first casting doubt on the ethics of “using” bodies, and the second questioning the assumption that brain death is a private event:

From the start I have made clear my opposition to the idea of using organ transplants as a premise for brain death on the simple grounds that it is ethically unacceptable to await the death of a person in order to make it serve some other purpose.

.....

Particularly in the case of the death of an immediate relative or very close friend, given the objective matter of an actual body having vanished from their midst, each of the other members of the community to which the deceased belonged needs to complete a certain internal “process of mourning” and this requires considerable time. To promote this process of mourning, the community performs a certain formal ritual with a magical significance.

What the argument in favor of brain death overlooks is that death is not

merely the event of a certain individual who has died. Or again, the life and “living” that necessarily include death is not a matter only for individual “living things.”

.....

When the “death of an individual” is defined merely in reliance on theories of medicine and natural science as “brain death,” once a decision is made on this basis as to the “moment of death,” the artificial act of removing organs from the “corpse” can be carried out. For the members of the community, is not this forcible evocation of actual death a violent, unnatural event amounting to murder? [KIMURA Bin 1992, 274, 276–8, 284]

Inspired by Kimura, Komatsu Yoshihiko, a historian of science, has introduced the idea of “resonant death” into the brain-death controversy. Alluding to the “tame death” in medieval Europe that Philippe Ariès has studied, and to Proust’s description of death as an “intimate absence,” Komatsu writes:

In the western Middle Ages we see an idea of death that did not focus on the point of death but on a temporal flow with a reach that could expand to embrace others as well. In this way, death was not reduced to just the event of dying. People lived with death in a kind of bond. Like a vibrating string evoking a series of resonances to make a single sound, one person’s dying was shared with those in the surroundings to make a single death. This “resonating death” was altogether different in nature from the “individually confined death” of today in which death is reduced to the event of dying and thought to belong only to the one actually facing death.

.....

Death has not been usurped by medical science. Viewed historically, death was not originally something lodged within our bodies as our own possession. Rather, medicine has given birth to a new kind of death, transplanting it to the inside of our bodies.

.....

The “right to decide on one’s own death” breaks the bonds of resonance in which death subsists, so that the unique death that comes about in the relationship between the uniqueness of the one dying and the uniqueness of others is left without a subject; particular deaths are swallowed up into an inorganic, universalized death. [KOMATSU Yoshihiko 1996, 180–1, 205, 221]

Washida Kiyokazu, an advocate of “clinical philosophy” in Japan, argues that organ-transplant technology is a direct result of the “commercialization of life” that pervades modern society and sees the body as private property:

Death is not an “alienation” in which one’s individuality is lost but a *loss of relationship*. One is sealed off tightly as an individual within an imaginary body, blocking all passage to other bodies.... Does not the body only really exist as an “inter-body” in relationship with other bodies? Is not an immediate

and internal relationship with oneself, “in my own body,” an impossibility from the start? These are questions not only for life but also for death.

.....

The question of whether to think of organ transplantation as an exchange of body parts or an exchange of existences is by no means settled. At least we can say that one idea has come into question: considering the body as “property” belonging to someone—since property is exchangeable, this idea is used to justify organ transplants after “brain death.” [WASHIDA Kiyokazu 1998, 90, 105]

The comparative philosopher Yuasa Yasuo*, the last of the direct disciples of Watsuji Tetsurō, not only examines the Cartesian premise behind organ transplantation technology, but also points out the utilitarian tendency of American bioethics. He proposes complementing it with an ethic of “betweenness” to preserve the interpersonal dimension of the event of death:

Leaving aside for the moment strict legal terminology, contemporary medical technology considers brain death to define human death and hence views the dead body as “matter.” The idea anything can be done to matter without offending morality would seem to be foundational for contemporary bioethics. It rests on the view that the organs of the human body are like automobile parts and that its functions can be explained as the assembly of those parts. That is, organ transplantation is treated the same as the recycling technology that takes still usable parts from scrapped cars and reuses them. In the United States today the attempt to deal in reusable organs and other body components is said to be a growing business. In contrast, recipients of heart transplants have begun to complain recently of visions of their dead donors, and have drawn attention to cases where the character and temperament of the donor is taken over.

The most serious ideological issue facing medical ethics at present has to do with the problem of how to think about “death.” The assumption behind the technology of organ transplants is that “death” of itself is without meaning. The corpse of a deceased donor is like any other material object; there is no human character left in it. This way of thinking rests on the premise that death is a meaningless event for human beings. For science “death” may be an empty concept, but for human reflection it is of the utmost importance.

When it comes to the meaning of human death, it is the experience of the death of someone close to us that invites us to think deeply about the matter. The deaths of third parties, as recorded for instance in the figures for traffic fatalities, do not generally affect us. But when we experience the death of one with whom we share betweenness, such as a child, a spouse, or a lifelong friend, we are pressed to think about the meaning of those human lives.... Modern philosophy begins from the ego-consciousness of the first person. If we take this theory as something absolute, the “other” seen as a third person

is essentially a body seen as an objective, material thing; only the “I” is recognized as a person. If one carries this logic to its conclusion, the death of a human being is ultimately no more than the death of an “other” and is not worth considering in connection with one’s own death. When it comes to death, is it too much to say that this is the thinking behind modern medical treatment? [YUASA Yasuo 2001, 63–4, 67]

Opinion leaders like those cited above have labored to bring the dimension of human interpersonal relations into the debate on brain death. Indeed, Morioka Masahiro is one of those who would claim that in the characteristically Japanese attitude to death, the feelings of the family towards the one who is dying cannot be eclipsed by the sheltered, privatized feelings of the one facing death. To this end, he has suggested introducing what he calls “human-relationship oriented approaches to brain death” as a permanent feature of the debate in Japan.

Thus the leading figures in Japan’s brain-death controversy have focused on two elements: metaphysical views concerning life, death, and the body, and the relationship of the dying person with immediate family and friends. The different background and traditions that Japanese participants bring to the debate have helped shed light on the cultural specificity of tacit assumptions behind brain death and organ transplants, and therefore offer their western counterparts a chance to reflect on hidden complexities of the questions involved.

Putting “Japanese Bioethics” in Context

It is simple-minded and misleading to insist that all the elements in the bioethical standpoint discussed above are unique to Japan. For one thing, the Japanese mind is far from monolithic. Generalizations claiming that “the Japanese are animist and relationship-oriented” traffic in the sort of cultural essentialism that is only possible by closing an eye to the diversity of opinion everywhere in evidence among the Japanese. The fact is, a considerable mass of present-day Japanese have become comfortable with the kind of individualist values imported along with much of western culture. In bioethics, too, individualist principles have gained considerable sympathy among professional ethicists and the public at large. It is fair to say that the mainstream of Japanese society is oriented more to the acceptance of advances in medical technology than to their rejection. If there ever was a time in which the slogan “The westerners say yes, the Japanese say no” was accurate, it is certainly no longer so.

Furthermore, stress on the “uniqueness” of Japanese bioethics can all too easily lead to a flare up in nationalistic tendencies still smouldering in certain circles. There is no denying the fact that bioethics and biomedicine, like so much of modern civilization, were not home-grown but came from “without.”

That the Japanese should strive for their position distinct from that of Europe and the United States only stands to reason. This “argument via the cultural factor,” Morioka notes, fuels closed, nationalistic sentiments that only distract ethical debate from the careful, rational reflection they require. On the contrary, recognition of cultural diversity within the country and its individual citizens helps keep the debate open and avoid the dual pitfalls of blind acceptance and blind rejection.

Cultural essentialism impedes the interchange of ideas on bioethics in two ways. On the one hand, it disposes people to ignore achievements made in bioethical discussions elsewhere in the world. In this regard, Japan is still afflicted with any number of conventions in medical care that are deleterious to patients—the authoritarian and paternalistic attitudes of physicians among them—and could benefit from serious discussion of the values of self-determination and autonomy championed abroad. The fixation on producing a “Japanese” bioethical response to each and every question only postpones progress toward the needed improvements.

On the other hand, if bioethical discussion in Japan is reduced to mere local flavor added to a “global” phenomenon, bioethics as a whole loses out. The degree of bias veiled by a “global standard” can be enormous, both because it privileges dominant cultures that control the standards and because it creates the impression that a universal ethic can be forged without due attention to the full range of particularities. To the extent Japan and the West do not learn from each other, bioethics suffers on both sides of the divide. And to take the next logical step, the same can be said of what Japan has yet to learn from its neighboring Asian cultures and their ethical traditions.

That said, arguments like those of Umehara, notwithstanding complaints of its nationalistic bent, do contain a needed and radical criticism of modern technological civilization with its instrumental and mechanistic mindset. Nor can this criticism be divorced from the fact that the Japanese people, with their nonwestern tradition of thought, are more given to detect such problems and worry about them.

As for the relational aspect of death, there is no need to appeal to traditional Japanese values to insist that human beings require both an individual and an interpersonal dimension to be complete. On the contrary, Japanese insistence on this point should lead western ethicists to recover what the marriage of individualist ethics to biomedical technology has tended to devalue. Here we should not overlook the fact that not a few critics of brain death have drawn inspiration from non-Japanese sources. Komatsu, for example, developed his idea of “resonant death” from the history of the European Middle Ages, and Washida was inspired by the French philosophers Gabriel Marcel and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, neither of them relying on traditional Japanese thinkers.

Relational ethics worked out in East Asian societies like that of Japan, meantime, can make a similar claim on the attention of those outside of their native cultural sphere. The philosopher Imamichi Tomonobu, who for many years has been engaged in the debate on global value systems, endorses the fusing of traditional, western individualist approaches to ethics with the more collectivist approach found in East-Asian cultures:

In this modern sphere of human life during the second half of the twentieth century many ethical phenomena have arisen which cannot be resolved through the traditional ethics established for a natural society. For example, in traditional ethics individual identity has always been considered higher and more important than collective identity.

.....

The subject of decision-making in a technological society is normally not an individual person, but a committee. Hence in techno-ethics we must think about the moral meaning and ontological structure of the committee as a collective identity with respect to its power to make decisions. This is a new dimension of postcultural society and we must consider what the *topos* of responsibility of such a collective identity is. The theme of identity must be developed in terms of this most modern problem of consciousness.

.....

One of the ethical dangers inherent in eastern forms of collectivism is a psychological resignation of individual morality. In place of the harm from egoism there arises in the East harm from *nosism*, that is, looking for the benefit of the group. This is very efficient for team work, but it presupposes the defeat of another team. Moreover, the principle of eastern collective identity is domesticism, which has the danger of inclining to nationalism. This, however, is not primitive collectivism under which individuality is dominated through one and the same ideology. It is a functional collectivism, that is to say it is free from the ideology or religion of each member; what matters is the ability of the member to contribute to the function of the group. Hence, there is no spiritual identity, but there is effective functional identity. [IMAMICHI Tomonobu 1998, 14–15, 17]

As a developed country where people enjoy the fruits of modern economic and technological progress, including biomedicine, Japan cannot avoid the serious ethical problems this progress has left in its wake. In its efforts to introduce a “nonwestern” response into the discussion, Japanese bioethicists are opening an intercultural dialogue that can have wide-reaching importance, and for this it needs to draw on its own philosophical resources even as it continues to assimilate those from abroad.

→ See also pages 546–9.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

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Reference Material

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Glossary

The following Glossary includes only technical terms that are not direct Japanese translations of standard western philosophical terms. These terms are flagged in the text with raised brackets (‘ ’) on their first appearance in each chapter. Unless otherwise indicated, foreign terms are Japanese. The numbers enclosed in parentheses refer to the pages on which the term in question appears. Many of these terms have multiple uses across traditions and through time. The definitions here are limited to meanings most relevant to the use of the terms in the selections found in the *Sourcebook*.

absolute nothingness 絶対無 (J. *zettai mu*) → nothingness

Amaterasu 天照. The sun goddess in the Shinto pantheon of celestial ‘*kami*’; considered the ancestor of the Japanese imperial family. (7, 327, 379, 459, 477–9, 483–5, 496, 510–12, 514, 529, 540–1, 909–10, 1019–21, 1023, 1118, 1129)

Amida 阿弥陀 (S. *Amitābha*, *Amitāyus*). A particular buddha associated with the ‘Pure Land’ of Perfect Bliss in the west. (10–11, 49, 75–79, 237, 239–240, 242–45, 248–9, 251, 253–60, 273–4, 278–80, 283–5, 295–6, 331, 531, 597, 630, 667, 748–9, 785, 790, 852, 854–6, 1028–9, 1057–8)

Amitābha → Amida

Avalokiteśvara → Kannon

birth-and-death → samsara

bodhi-mind 菩提心 (S. *bodhicitta*, J. *bodaishin*). The aspiration for *bodhi* or enlightenment. (220, 245)

bodhisattva 菩薩 (J. *bosatsu*). One who aspires to *bodhi* or enlightenment. In the context of ‘Mahayana’ Buddhism as practiced in Japan, any Buddhist who believes in the Mahayana scriptures and cultivates practices described therein. It also refers to celestial beings whose compassion for suffering sentient beings makes them the object of Mahayana Buddhist devotion, contemplation, and supplication. (53, 56–7, 69–72, 74, 76, 82, 85, 96, 100, 104, 106, 108–9, 178, 180, 193, 205–6, 219, 228, 237, 243, 256–7, 273, 275, 279–82, 622, 630, 760, 793, 1044, 1174)

body-mind 身心 (J. *shinjin*). The human individual as a whole, a unity of the physical and mental. (20, 28, 47, 51, 145–6, 162, 852–3, 855, 945, 999, 1080)

bright virtue 明德 (J. *meitoku*). Sometimes called “luminous virtue,” a Confucian term for virtue as it is brilliantly displayed for all to see. Also used politically in the sense of manifesting the kind of virtue that might transform not only the self, but society and the entire world. (211, 301, 303, 313–16, 322–3, 329, 340, 378, 436–8)

buddha-dharma → Buddha’s truth

buddhahood. The state of awakening attained by or exemplified in a buddha. It denotes completion of the path and is used as a synonym for complete enlightenment. (46–8, 53, 59–61, 63, 67, 69, 74, 78, 81, 86, 88–90, 92, 94, 96–8, 100–3, 168–9, 172, 186, 196, 198–200, 237, 242, 252, 255–6, 258, 260, 323, 331, 424, 686, 852)

buddha-mind 仏心 (J. *busshin*). In Zen, one’s original nature or state of enlightenment. (190, 195–201, 418, 420, 436, 438)

buddha-nature 仏性 (J. *busshō*). The potential for ‘buddhahood’; the innate presence of the seed of buddhahood. (90, 92–5, 101–3, 139, 167, 182, 185, 195–6, 198, 202, 207–9, 223, 238, 254, 257, 730, 1042)

Buddha’s teachings → Buddha’s truth

Buddha’s truth 仏法 (J. *buppō*). Literally, the buddha-dharma. The term refers to the teachings of the Buddha as opposed to the teachings of other masters, and at times was used to identify the Buddhist religion as a whole. Also commonly used to represent the true way of living and perceiving reality. (160–1, 855)

bushidō 武士道. A term often used anachronistically to mean the Way of the samurai or Way of the warrior. (14, 289, 374, 567, 708, 829, 851, 1103–15, 1107, 1112, 1123, 1245)

compassion 慈悲 (S. *karuṇā*, J. *jīhi*). The Buddhist virtue that disposes one toward the liberation of others. Often paired with ‘*prajñā*’ or wisdom. Strictly speaking, it is the second of “four immeasurable states of mind” (S. *catvāri apramāṇāni*, J. *shimuryōshin* 四無量心): benevolence (S. *maitrī*, J. *jī* 慈), compassion (S. *karuṇā*, J. *hi* 悲), co-rejoicing (S. *muditā*, J. *ki* 喜), and detached impartiality (S. *upekṣā*, J. *sha* 捨). (45, 61, 106, 123–4, 180, 185–6, 188, 192–3, 238–239, 241, 245, 251, 258, 267, 269, 272, 299–301, 303, 305, 309, 317, 344, 353–5, 364, 397, 431, 525, 531, 771, 792–796, 798, 851–6, 1040, 1042, 1207)

Consciousness-only → Yogācāra

cultivation 修行 (J. *shugyō*). One of a cluster of terms that can also be translated as “practice” or “praxis,” the activity of learning by way of bodily engagement and mental attention. Closely related terms include *gyō* 行 and *keiko* 稽古. (70, 79, 236, 251, 298, 265, 325, 375, 411, 418–20, 422–4, 426, 428, 447–8, 452, 545, 589–91, 627, 856, 943–5, 1033, 1130)

daimoku 題目. The title of a text. In Nichiren Buddhism, it refers to an invocation of praise to the name of the *Lotus Sutra*, pronounced 'namu-myōhō-*renge-kyō*'. (87)

daimyō 大名. A vassal of the shōgun in early-modern Japan who ruled as a lord over a hereditary domain. (12, 190, 206, 298, 318, 335, 360, 470, 523, 932-4)

Dainichi 大日 (S. *Mahāvairocana*). The Great Sun Buddha, expounder of the esoteric teachings, whose body is thought to be the entire universe. The central buddha of the 'Shingon' School. (51-2, 56, 63, 65, 75-79, 458, 1187)

dependent origination → *pratītya-samutpāda*

dhāraṇī 總持 (J. *darani*). The Sanskrit Buddhist term for mnemonic incantations, usually of phrases from sutras whose sounds are considered a powerful means for producing desirable effects of all sorts, from protecting one from the attack of a poisonous snake to helping focus one's concentration in order to attain '*samādhi*'. (58-9)

dharma 法 (J. *hō*). In Sanskrit literature, generally the norm or criterion of human actions; hence the translation *law*. In India it was also used to designate the religious or philosophical teachings of a recognized authority. In Buddhism, specifically, it refers to the truth as taught by the Buddha; also, depending on the context, it may mean phenomenon, thing, or constituent of reality. (*passim*)

dharma-body 法身 / **dharma-Buddha** 法仏 (S. *dharmakāya*, J. *hosshin/hōbutsu*). A 'Mahayana' Buddhist conception of an unmanifested essence of truth, "embodied" in the teachings of the buddha. This idea later evolved in certain schools to include the notions of truth or reality as embodied in the form of cosmic buddhas such as 'Dainichi'. (51-2, 54-9, 63, 73-4, 93, 97, 102, 256-7, 401, 666, 771, 885, 1042-4)

dharmadhātu 法界 (J. *hokkai*). The Sanskrit Buddhist term for the realm of reality, referring sometimes to the physical universe of time, space, and all phenomena, and hence equivalent to "phenomenal world." It can also refer to reality as known only by an enlightened being or buddha. Typical of the rhetoric of the '*Kegon*' *Sutra*. → *dhatu*. (114, 720)

Dharmākara 法藏 (J. *Hōzō*). The name of the individual monk who, through assiduous practice, became 'Amida' Buddha in the myth of the 'Pure Land' tradition. The salvific vows of Amida were made by Dharmākara the man as promises for the future, but enacted by Amida the buddha in the present. (237, 256-7, 273, 275, 790)

dharma-nature → *dharmatā*

dharma realm → *dharmadhātu*

dharmatā 法性 · 法爾 (J. *hosshō, hōni*). Literally "dharma-ness" or "dharma-

nature,” a Buddhist term for true reality, usually in reference to concrete phenomena. (285, 771)

dhātu 界 (J. *kai*). The Sanskrit Buddhist term for a realm, also translated as world, element, or sacred locale. (103, 121)

dhāyāna 禪 · 禪定 (J. *zen*, *zenjō*). In Indian Buddhism a trance state achieved through meditative practices; in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism a general term for various types of meditation. The Chinese name of the Zen School, “Chan,” is derived from the Chinese transliteration of *dhāyāna* 禪那, pronounced *chan-na*. (143, 204–5)

Dutch studies 蘭学 (J. *rangaku*). The study of western disciplines, languages, and material culture during the Edo or Tokugawa Era (1600–1868), so called because the Dutch were the principal transmitters of western culture in this period, and Dutch the language most often learned. (531, 554–5)

empty, emptiness 空 (S. *śūnya*, *śūnyatā*; J. *kū*). A term that refers to the central ‘Mahayana’ teaching that all beings are empty of or lacking permanent, independent existence or substantial ‘self-nature’. Consistent with the image suggested by the sinograph for “sky” as well as the use of this sinograph to represent the Sanskrit term *śūnya* or *śūnyatā*, the term emptiness is often used as a variant for *mu* or ‘nothingness’ in its Buddhist sense. (62, 67–70, 72, 83, 85, 106, 108, 110, 114–15, 152, 158, 172, 176–7, 184, 187, 205, 208, 211, 213, 222–3, 280, 293, 295, 314, 330, 351–2, 356, 405, 435, 609, 626, 642–3, 687, 714, 716, 719–20, 726–9, 740–1, 750–2, 756–7, 776, 782, 792, 794, 822, 944–5, 1028, 1041, 1097, 1118, 1183, 1200)

Enlightenment, the 文明開化 (J. *bunmei kaika*). The movement among Japanese intellectuals and government officials of the early Meiji Period (1868–1912) that advanced modernization and the adoption of western values, customs, and military policies. (559, 574, 583, 1090, 1127–8)

expedient means 方便 (S. *upāya*, J. *hōben*). The skillful means adapted by the Buddha to teach according to the varying capacities of his audience. An important theme in many ‘Mahayana’ sutras. (68, 108, 220, 237, 256, 422, 560, 578, 684, 771, 1042, 1119)

filial piety 孝 (J. *kō*). The sort of respect and love children should show their parents. The very beginning of virtue and ethical relationships for many Confucians. (14, 185, 315, 318–19, 321, 356, 361, 363, 385, 388, 392, 414, 433, 474, 488, 506, 529–30, 534, 631–635, 1021, 1023–4, 1033, 1106–7, 1110–11)

final stage of the dharma → *mappō*

five constant virtues 五常德 (J. *gojō toku*). In the Confucian tradition, the virtues of ‘humaneness’, ‘righteousness’, ‘propriety’, ‘wisdom’, and trustworthiness. (301, 303, 418)

five relations, five relationships 五倫 (J. *gorin*). In the Confucian tradition, the

five cardinal relations in which harmony is to be preserved: between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, and friend and friend. (301, 303, 308, 319, 411, 861–2, 1110)

Flower Garland Sutra → Kegon

Fudō Myōō 不動明王. (S. *Acalanātha*). A deity of fire and wisdom and a wrathful enemy of evil; one of the chief protectors venerated in esoteric Buddhism. (598)

gatha 偈・伽陀 (J. *ge, kada*). A verse, often used to restate a section of a sutra written in prose. (686)

generative force → *ki*

gods → *kami*

(go)honzon (ご)本尊. The central object of reverence on a Buddhist altar. In the Nichiren tradition, this term refers specifically to the mandala drawn by Nichiren himself on wood or paper and representing the universe and its mystic law. (88)

great matter 一大事 (J. *ichi daiji*). The ultimate reason that a buddha appears in the world: to bring all beings to awakening. In Zen, the most important matter of life and death that should be the focus of the practitioner's efforts. In 'Pure Land' Buddhism, it indicates death and beyond. (138, 174, 183, 186, 206, 208–9)

Great Vehicle → Mahayana

heart (*kokoro*) → mind

Hinayana 小乘 (J. *shōjō*). A polemical term meaning Small Vehicle, as contrasted with the Great Vehicle of 'Mahayana'; used as a pejorative term for all Buddhist schools that refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the Mahayana canon. (53, 58, 67–9, 74, 90, 171, 206, 243, 854)

Hossō 法相. The Japanese branch of the 'Yogācāra' School of Buddhism whose name comes from the analysis of the characteristics of perception. In Japan the school was also noted for its development of logic and techniques of formal debate. (46, 68, 93)

Huayan → Kegon

humaneness 仁 (J. *jin*). The Confucian virtue of empathy, emphasizing consideration of others as oneself. Ogyū Sorai defines humaneness in more political and utilitarian terms, as the virtue of rulers that provides for the prosperity and stability of all. (184, 212, 300, 305, 308–9, 312, 315–16, 322, 325, 329, 336, 339–41, 344, 353, 356–7, 361, 367, 369–71, 377, 396–7, 406, 419, 429, 433, 438, 448, 473, 525, 531, 581, 587, 1111, 1169, 1175–6, 1233)

iki いき・粋. The aesthetic ideal, characteristic of Edo-era urban culture, of subtly sensual beauty in dress and behavior. *Iki* is a key notion in the phi-

osophy of Kuki Shūzō, who defined it as a kind of detached but still daring coquettishness, and considered it a sign of cultural difference from the West. (829, 926, 1126, 1171–2, 1188, 1190–2)

Indra's net 因陀羅網 (J. *Indara mō*). An analogy in the *Kegon Sutra* of the nature of reality, in which the jewel at each interstice of a net covering the cosmos reflects not only the entire cosmos but also every other jewel in the net, so that each reflected image contains all the others in an infinite series of reflections. A metaphor for the interconnectedness of all beings. (61, 77, 82)

inverse correlation 逆対応 (J. *gyaku taiō*). A technical term in Nishida Kitarō's philosophy indicating the manner of self-negation in which God as absolute being and the relative, finite self interrelate; a kind of 'self-identity of absolute contradictories', but not a symmetrical relation. (646, 662–4, 666–7, 787, 902, 905–6)

investigation of all things 格物 (J. *kakubutsu*, C. *gewu*). A term reflecting the emphasis in Zhu Xi and later neo-Confucianism on understanding the reality of human nature and the world at large through comprehension of the 'principle' and the 'ki' that compose them. The notion fostered a quasi-scientific approach to the world which helped Japanese educated in neo-Confucianism to come to terms with western science and its approaches to the human and the physical worlds. (337, 569)

jōri 条理. In the thought of Miura Baien, a unique and intricate system of opposing pairs meant to capture the linguistic and metaphysical structure of reality in a more compelling way than the usual *yin-yang* dichotomy. Integral to *jōri* is seeing unity in opposites. (13, 441–5)

kalpa. In Indian mythology, an immense period of time. (108, 152, 209, 258, 480, 624, 1043)

kami 神. The term is used in two distinct but overlapping senses. First, it refers to deities or gods of all kinds, ranging from superior beings of cosmic dimensions to local spirits. The realm of the *kami* defies classification, but important variants include the *kami* of classical myth (as in the '*Kojiki*' and '*Nihon shoki*'), the *kami* of shrines, wrathful *kami* dangerous to humans, and the spirits of deceased ancestors or heroes.

A second and more abstract sense refers to a sacred essence found in the world or in the human heart. This *kami* essence has been variously conceptualized not only by Shinto thinkers but also by Buddhists and neo-Confucians. (5, 7–9, 43, 187, 300, 326–8, 377–8, 419, 431–3, 457–62, 467, 472, 474, 477, 479–82, 485–6, 489–92, 494, 497, 499–501, 503–8, 510–16, 520–1, 523–5, 529, 532, 536, 540–6, 548–9, 886, 1019, 1031, 1040, 1042, 1044, 1187)

Kannon 觀音 (C. *Guanyin*, S. *Avalokiteśvara*). An abbreviation for Kanzeon (觀世音), the 'bodhisattva' of 'compassion', whose name means "perceiver of the sounds" of suffering beings in the world. One of a number of celestial

bodhisattvas not based on a historical person but representing religious ideals that became the object of reverence and prayers, the cult to Kannon is the most pervasive in Asia. (180, 630, 1043)

karma 業 (J. *gō*). Action. In Buddhism, the force of mental, verbal, and physical acts insofar as they produce morally good, bad, or neutral effects and lead to rebirth in ‘samsara’. (45, 47, 63, 67–8, 74, 77, 79, 95, 125, 127, 153–4, 158, 165, 170, 173, 181, 186, 190, 192, 197–8, 210, 237, 239, 245–7, 250–1, 257–61, 279, 294, 470, 490, 526, 688, 755, 835, 841, 852–3, 854–5, 882, 1118, 1211)

kata 型. Generally, *form* in the sense of a pattern of style (as in ‘*waka*’) or of action and movement (as in theatrical arts, martial arts, and the traditional “ways” of tea ceremony, floral arrangement, and so forth). A *kata* exemplifies or epitomizes a particular action or behavior. (930–5)

Kegon 華嚴 (C. *Huayan*). A school of Buddhism originating in China and based on the *Flower Garland* (also referred to as the *Avatamsaka*, *Kegon*, or *Huayan*) *Sutra*, known for its grand expositions on the interconnectivity of all things. Along with the Tiantai school, it counts as one of the two great philosophical traditions of Chinese Buddhism. Transmitted to Japan, it was one of the six schools of Nara Buddhism, headquartered at Tōdaiji. (45, 71–2, 79, 81, 126, 882–4)

ki 気 (C. *qi*). The generative force that is the transformative stuff of all that exists in an unending process of becoming. (12, 295–6, 304–5, 307, 310–14, 321, 323, 330, 341–5, 348–9, 351, 353–5, 360, 364, 367–71, 387, 390–2, 402, 405, 416–20, 425–7, 442, 444–6, 500, 505, 507, 534–5, 555, 708, 1063, 1145, 1168–9)

kōan 公案 (C. *gong’an*). A question or passage, typically from a Zen text, given to test the depth of experience of practitioners, who must present their answer or understanding to the Zen master. (30, 136, 142, 144, 151, 153, 158, 163, 176, 178, 192, 202–3, 206–10, 213, 293, 666, 736, 779, 885, 997)

Kojiki 古事記. *The Record of Ancient Matters*, the oldest extant record in Japan, dating from about 712. Written in a hybrid language, it contains the oldest texts written in Japanese. (7, 14, 457, 459–62, 465, 472, 479, 483, 493–4, 496, 498, 500–1, 507, 511, 516, 524–5, 546, 549, 596, 908, 910, 923, 925, 938, 1013, 1019, 1093–4, 1126, 1179)

kokoro → mind

kokutai 国体. Literally, “the country’s body or essence.” This term came into use in the late eighteenth century as a name for Japan’s imperial polity, and at times, as a title for the emperor himself. Political thinkers have offered a variety of interpretations throughout the modern period, some claiming it is a sacred form of rulership necessarily unique to Japan, others suggesting it should be interpreted as a type of polity—like constitutional monarchy, democracy, or communism—that, theoretically at least, need not be

specifically linked to any one country such as Japan. (567, 804–5, 886, 1013, 1021, 1023–7, 1034)

koto こと・事・言. A broad term that can mean things, events, states of affairs, and even words (*kotoba*); more philosophically, signifies the nondistinction that lies behind differences between subjective name and objective thing, and between sense and reference. Sometimes contrasted with *mono* or *thing* in the sense of an external object in the world. (497, 729, 766–7, 939, 958, 960, 963–4, 1134, 1170)

kotodama 言霊. Literally, the spirit of words, the belief that the indigenous language harbors in its voiced sounds a sacred power to manifest things and affect the course of all things in the world. (5, 20, 457, 461, 493–5, 497–505, 576, 936, 939, 1013, 1170, 1180)

kū → emptiness

latter day of the Law → *mappō*

learning 学 (J. *gaku*). A broad Confucian term that can designate learning, education, a specific set of teachings, or a school of philosophy identified with a particular teaching or philosopher. *Gaku* as learning and study serves as the primary means for self-cultivation and perfection as a sage. Through learning, people can preserve their original human nature, or recover it if it is lost. (7, 13, 26, 46, 55, 117, 135, 182, 184, 212, 289, 291–2, 296–9, 305–6, 313, 318–23, 325, 327, 329–31, 335–9, 343, 351, 355, 357, 360–1, 363, 365–7, 374–378, 382, 396, 400, 402, 406, 411, 418, 432–3, 436, 438, 447–8, 451, 458, 461, 469, 474, 484, 492, 502, 509–10, 517–19, 521, 523, 528–30, 532, 536, 554, 556, 558–9, 562, 565, 567–70, 572–3, 587, 589, 594, 599, 602, 604–5, 684, 733, 792, 908, 926, 955, 1000, 1013, 1110, 1120, 1130, 1144, 1153, 1160, 1206, 1213, 1231–2)

Lord above 上帝. (C. *Shangdi*, J. *Jōtei*). The high deity of ancient Shang-dynasty China. Ogyū Sorai uses the term as the equivalent of heaven, but understands it anthropomorphically as the spirits of the five ancient sage emperors, rather than as ‘principle’, the rationalistic interpretation favored by some neo-Confucians. (320–1, 398)

Mahāvairocana → Dainichi

Mahayana 大乘 (S. *Mahāyāna*, J. *daijō*). The self-ascribed name meaning “the superior path” within Buddhism that was brought to China and Japan from Kashmir, and that emphasizes ‘bodhisattva’ practices, the enlightenment of all beings, faith, the nonseparation of ‘nirvāṇa’ and ‘samsara’, ‘emptiness’, and the use of symbolic representations of truth and understanding. Contrasted with what it calls ‘Hinayana’. In Japan, all the major Buddhist schools and philosophical developments are Mahayana in origin. (11, 47–8, 51, 53, 55–6, 58, 68, 74, 90, 92, 94, 126–7, 135–6, 168, 192, 204, 208, 236, 243, 245, 250, 258, 260, 273–4, 280–1, 293, 562, 642, 685, 719–20, 733, 751–2, 756–7, 765, 777, 792, 794–5, 825, 875, 883, 926, 944, 1034–6, 1119)

Maitreya 弥勒 (J. *Miroku*). The future buddha, predicted to appear when Buddhism disappears completely from the world as we know it. (78–9, 98, 256)

Man'yōshū 万葉集. The earliest collection of Japanese poetry, consisting of 'waka' composed in the early seventh century and up through the mid-eighth century, as well as some Chinese poems and other short compositions in Chinese. (459, 466, 472, 493, 502, 513, 515, 536, 697, 886, 910, 923, 926, 1012–13, 1093, 1174, 1180, 1204–5)

mappō 末法. The “final age of the dharma,” a reference to the last era of Buddhism in the world before the teaching disappears; derived from some scriptural predictions of the historical decline of belief and practice of the religion and, as a result, of society. (10–11, 44, 49, 89, 123, 232, 247–8, 1028, 1064)

mean 中 (J. *chū*). Originally from the ancient Chinese “Doctrine of the Mean”; in neo-Confucianism the state of one's 'mind' before the appearance of the feelings. For Ogyū Sorai, the simple virtues of 'filial piety', deference, loyalty, and fidelity that are neither too lofty nor too simplistic for anyone. (337, 355, 376, 399–400, 404)

merit transfer → transference of merit

middle way, middle (1) 中道 (J. *chūdō*). A general Buddhist term denoting moderation and used in a variety of ways, such as the rejection of the extremes of self-mortification or self-indulgence, the extremes of moral consequence as immutable or illusory, and so forth.

(2) 中論 (J. *chūron*). Nāgārjuna's teaching that phenomena cannot be defined by categories such as existence or nonexistence, cessation or permanence, sameness or diversity, etc.

(3) 中 (J. *chū*). the 'Tendai' notion of the middle between the descriptions of phenomena as empty and as provisional or temporary.

(53, 55, 71, 97, 100, 102, 108, 115, 302, 530, 740, 1118, 1174, 1178)

mind ころ・心 (J. *kokoro, shin*). In its native Japanese sense (*kokoro*), it is a comprehensive term for the cognitive, affective, imaginative, and appetitive faculties, or, alternatively, the field of responsiveness in which they function. Hence, it is sometimes translated as “heart.” The sinograph 心, which was also used in China to translate the Buddhist Sanskrit term *citta*, is translated here as “mind,” “thought,” “consciousness,” or “mind-and-heart,” the latter emphasizing the affective aspect. Confucians in particular viewed it as the active human faculty enabling people to understand themselves and commune cognitively and emotionally with the 'Way' as it is manifest in human society and the world. (*passim*)

moment of thought → thought-moment

mono no aware もののあはれ. Broadly, the feeling or pathos of things; an aesthetic ideal cultivated in the courtly culture of the Heian era (794–1185)

and championed by Motoori Norinaga as the deeply felt awareness of the ephemeral beauty of things, natural and human. (898, 1169–70, 1176–7)

Mt Sumeru 須弥山 (J. *Shumisen*). In Indian cosmology, the mountain that stands at the center of this world, at times used to represent the center of each one of countless worlds. A symbol for the center of a vast universe in which buddhas can appear. (153, 206)

mu 無 → nothingness

namu-Amida-Butsu 南無阿弥陀仏. → *nenbutsu*

namu-myōhō-rengēkyō 南無妙法蓮華經. The invocation of the title of the *Lotus Sutra*, a principal practice in Nichiren Buddhism believed to evoke the essence of the Sutra's teaching and to lead one to 'buddhahood' especially in a degenerate age. → *mappō* (86, 524)

nenbutsu 念仏. The invocation of the name of 'Amida' Buddha, both as verbal utterance and mental focus, practiced to achieve rebirth in the 'Pure Land'; the formula *namu-Amida-Butsu*. (11, 49, 81, 86, 183, 190, 193, 198, 237–239, 242–248, 253, 255–256, 258–259, 280, 598, 748–749, 852, 855)

Nihon shoki 日本書紀 (or *Nihongi* 日本紀). The *Chronicles of Japan*, dating from about 720 and composed entirely in Chinese, was considered the official, court-approved records describing events from the mythic age of the *kami* to the reign of the Empress Jitō in the eighth century. (7, 413, 457, 459, 462, 472, 478–80, 483, 493–4, 496, 516, 910–11, 923, 925, 938, 1013, 1019, 1094)

nirvāṇa 涅槃 (J. *nehan*). The release from suffering or 'samsara'; the ultimate goal of Buddhist belief and practice, sometimes equated with enlightenment or awakening. (30, 45–6, 69, 91–5, 105–6, 108–10, 122, 132, 160, 204, 208, 217, 219–20, 223, 230–1, 237–8, 254–7, 292, 294, 353, 452, 623, 685, 756, 847, 1042, 1044)

Nō 能. A form of dramatic art characterized by ritualistic action and solemn music, in which the actors play the role of intermediaries between the human world and the supernatural. (178, 186–7, 434, 934, 945, 990–1, 1171, 1182–3, 1187, 1209)

no-mind 無心 (J. *mushin*). In Buddhism, especially Zen, the quality or state of awareness devoid of the grasping or desiring mind; the '*samādhi*' in which active thought no longer operates. (181–2, 186, 188, 223–4, 283, 917, 930, 1081, 1169, 1211)

nonfinite 無極 (J. *mukyoku*). A neo-Confucian term, also translated as "ultimate" in the expression "the ultimate of nonbeing and yet also the 'supreme ultimate'." In its positive sense, the nonfinite refers to the infinite source of potential becoming within the world of creative transformation. (363, 367, 369)

not-doing 無為 (C. *wu-wei*, J. *mui*). Often considered a Daoist notion, in its Confucian usage, it means the need not to do anything that might be con-

trary to moral relations with others. In Buddhist texts, most notably Zen, the term refers to an unrestricted, unattached spontaneity or creativity that displays the enlightened ability to engage things in an unforced, even effortless way. (332)

nothingness 無 (J. *mu*). In Buddhism, nothingness can refer to the nonexistence of things, or to the absence of self-substantial reality in things. Kyoto School philosophers typically use the term “absolute nothingness” in several different senses, to designate (1) the openness or open ground of all things, in contrast to a metaphysical ultimate ground or principle based in being; (2) the creative and generative nontemporal origin of all things; (3) a distinction from the “relative nothingness” that is defined in correlation to “being.” → absolute nothingness

In neo-Confucian texts, the term designates the clear and open nature of the mind unclouded by selfish desires, passions, or erroneous thoughts. Jinsai rejected any suggestion that notions like nothingness and ‘emptiness’ had a place in Confucian discussions. (28–9, 69, 115, 139, 187, 191, 193, 221–4, 226, 231, 283, 314, 330–1, 351–2, 355, 369, 554, 607–9, 625, 641–3, 645–6, 652, 654–9, 661, 667, 670, 674, 676–8, 680–2, 687, 694, 708, 713–15, 719, 721, 725–6, 733–7, 741, 750, 752, 758, 763, 776, 778, 789, 796, 802, 808–9, 811–14, 824, 827–8, 830–1, 848–9, 882–4, 887–9, 899–902, 904–5, 930, 981, 984, 995, 997, 1064, 1066, 1080–1, 1098, 1199–1200, 1226–7)

Nyorai 如来 → Tathāgata

one great matter → great matter

One Vehicle 一乘 (S. *ekayāna*, J. *ichijō*). The supreme teaching that carries all beings to enlightenment. The term occurs in a great many sutras but most famously in the *Lotus Sutra*, where it points to the underlying unity of the vehicles of the ‘śrāvakas’, ‘pratyekabuddhas’, and ‘bodhisattvas’, each taught through ‘expedient means’ and according to the capacity of the practitioner. (58, 177, 205)

ordinary people 小人 (J. *shōjin*). A Confucian term referring to people who are small in terms of their ethical priorities and vision for humanity. Contrast with ‘refined person’. (10, 38, 66–7, 122, 138, 145, 149, 167, 176, 191, 193, 245, 252, 256, 264, 281, 300, 334, 339, 345, 358, 368, 373, 394–5, 399, 403, 447, 503–4, 507, 623, 741, 1078, 1110, 1174–5)

original enlightenment 本覺 (J. *hongaku*). The idea that all sentient beings (and indeed all things) have the potential to become enlightened, or that they are already buddhas just as they are. Sometimes translated as “innate awakening” or “inherent enlightenment.” (11, 41, 49–50, 65, 70, 92–5, 102–3, 1030)

other-power 他力 (J. *tariki*). The power beyond oneself that spiritually comes to one’s aid. Usually conceived of as the power of a buddha or ‘bodhisattva’, especially ‘Amida’ Buddha, that one relies on to reach ‘nirvāṇa’. Contrast

with 'self-power'. (49, 214, 218, 220, 239–40, 245, 252, 258–9, 262, 264, 266, 268, 270–2, 279, 642, 690, 1057)

perfections 波羅蜜 (S. *pāramitā*, J. *haramitsu*). The six (or sometimes ten) virtues—generosity, morality, patience, diligence, meditation, and wisdom—cultivated by a 'bodhisattva'. → *prajñapāramitā* (53, 84, 100, 105, 108, 204)

phenomenal realm, world → *dharmadhātu*

place 場所 (J. *basho*). Sometimes translated as *topos*, *basho* is a technical term in Nishida Kitarō's philosophy that designates the context within which various phenomena, as well as epistemological constructs to explain phenomena, must be placed to render them intelligible and distinguishable from others of like kind. In contrast to the philosophical notion of a ground or sufficient reason for things, the notion of place relates things to each other and to the conceptual space that defines or determines them, both temporally and materially. A series of increasingly concrete and inclusive *basho* leads to the ultimate *basho* of 'nothingness'. (27, 110, 643, 646–59, 664, 667, 670, 680–1, 692, 708, 738, 740–2, 765–6, 768, 792, 797–8, 825, 865, 883–4, 887, 952, 958, 982, 1053, 1097)

prajñā 般若 (J. *hannya*). The Sanskrit Buddhist term for the wisdom that discerns truth, be it ontological truth such as the 'emptiness' of things, or epistemological truths conducive to awakening, such as descriptions of the makeup of reality. Considered as requisite for enlightenment or as the very functioning of enlightenment, *prajñā* is often associated with *karuṇā*, 'compassion', or with *śīla*, moral conduct, and 'dhyāna', meditation, to form the "three kinds of learning." (104–6, 136, 214–17, 219, 222, 883, 916, 1035, 1196)

prajñapāramitā 般若波羅蜜多 (J. *hannya haramitta*). Also known as the "perfection of wisdom," the name refers to a group of about two dozen 'Mahayana' sutras characterized by the philosophy of radical deconstruction or 'emptiness' and a logic of negation. (663)

pratītya-samutpāda 緣起·因緣 (J. *engi, innen*). Dependent origination or conditioned co-production. The theory common to all Buddhist traditions that all things arise and desist interdependently in a network of mutual conditions or non-substantial causes. (103, 121, 124, 917–18)

pratyekabuddha 緣覺·獨覺·辟支仏 (J. *engaku, dokkaku, byakushi butsu*). One who achieves partial awakening through one's own efforts without the aid of a teacher. Typically these persons live outside religious communities and are criticized in 'Mahayana' Buddhism for their lack of participation in society, both monastic and lay. (106)

principal object of veneration → *gohonzon*

principle 理 (J. *ri*). In neo-Confucianism, the rational and ethical order of all things. While unitary in its goodness, principle manifests itself throughout

the diverse universe. Because principle is considered as a unity, when people understand their human nature, they also understand the nature of all things. In 'Kegon' and related Buddhist theories, principle generally refers either to reality in its most fundamental ontological form as 'suchness' or to an underlying pattern to which phenomena conform. (81-3, 213, 295, 300, 303-13, 315-16, 336, 338-40, 343-6, 348-9, 352-3, 356-7, 360, 364-5, 367, 369-73, 374, 393-4, 397, 399-401, 404-5, 408-10, 433, 448-52, 472-4, 480-2, 485-6, 490-1, 497, 569, 576, 584-7, 708, 822, 827, 836, 887-8, 891, 1040)

propriety 礼 (J. *rei*). The Confucian virtue of proper and respectful behavior, especially within the 'five relations'. (6, 37, 66, 184, 300, 308, 315-16, 337, 340, 344, 353, 356-7, 369-70, 377, 384, 388, 488)

Pure Land 淨土 (J. *jōdo*). A world imagined to be beyond karma (thus beyond desire and suffering). The pure land can arise temporarily within the mind during meditation, or be a permanent state of being made blissful and beautiful by the presence of a buddha. Most commonly used in Japan to refer to the particular pure land created by 'Amida' Buddha into which the faithful are reborn, it is sometimes taken to be here and now. This pure land had become the dominant postmortem destination in Japan by at least the seventeenth century, if not earlier, allowing people to defer their pursuit of awakening until the next life. (49, 75-6, 78-9, 81, 92, 97-8, 198, 200, 204, 231-2, 237-9, 243-7, 252-61, 280, 284, 295-6, 527, 748-9, 852, 855, 1058)

Pure Land Buddhism refers to beliefs and practices that take the realization of the Pure Land of Amida Buddha as the immediate religious goal: for some as an authoritative pathway to 'nirvāṇa', for others as the embodiment of nirvāṇa itself. The Pure Land sects are those religious institutions devoted exclusively to this form of Buddhism. → Shin Buddhism (235-79 *et passim*)

qua → *soku-hi*

refined person 君子 (J. *kunshi*). Literally, the son of a ruler, the Confucian notion of the "gentleman" that questioned the privileges associated with hereditary birth. Confucius used the term to refer to one who had engaged in self-cultivation and so came to possess the kind of character otherwise associated with people of high birth in positions of power. Thus, a noble person deserving of respect. (299, 324, 329, 337-8, 343, 372, 394, 408-9, 555-6)

reverence 敬 (J. *kei*). A Confucian term denoting a deep respect for some object or person; also translated as seriousness. For many neo-Confucians, the state of mind achieved through quiet-sitting. (88, 207, 270, 301, 321, 324-5, 361, 363, 365, 374, 376, 381-2, 388, 392, 399, 401, 405, 414, 457, 464, 470, 485, 510, 521, 549, 578, 580, 594, 1021, 1028, 1090, 1117, 1170, 1174, 1187)

ri 理 → principle

righteousness 義 (J. *gi*). What is right; our understanding of what is right as opposed to wrong. (66, 184-5, 300, 307, 309-10, 312, 315-16, 321, 324, 329, 331, 339,

341, 344, 353–354, 356–9, 377, 379, 385, 390, 419, 429, 474, 490, 498, 527–31, 534–5, 587, 855, 905, 1033, 1040, 1108, 1111)

rūpa 色 (J. *shiki*). A general Sanskrit term for any physical element or material form in general; but when used to indicate the “*rūpa*” realm (*rūpaloka*), it denotes a realm of existence for spiritually advanced beings who perceive the physical world but feel no desire or repulsion toward it. Because the sinograph can also mean “color,” the esoteric Buddhist tradition sometimes links the ritual use of colors with the meaning of *rūpa*. (224)

samādhi 三昧 (J. *sanmai*). The Sanskrit Buddhist term for a state of deep calm and concentration or meditative absorption. There are many different types of *samādhi*, and many are named to distinguish one from another. Sometimes referred to as “trance states,” these are difficult to achieve and when achieved are thought to mark specific attainments along the path to final liberation. → self-enjoying *samādhi* (59, 106, 168, 173, 187, 198, 203–4, 212, 375, 688)

Samantabhadra 普賢菩薩 (J. *Fugen bosatsu*). The ‘bodhisattva’ of universal intelligence and kindness who symbolizes truth and practice and often appears beside images of Shakyamuni Buddha along with the bodhisattva of ‘wisdom’, Mañjuśrī. Believed to have the power to lengthen people’s lives. (72, 82, 98, 1174)

samsara 生死 (J. *shōji*). The endless cycle of birth and death characterized by suffering. In ‘Mahayana’ Buddhism, often understood to be undivided from ‘nirvāṇa’. (45, 47, 94, 168, 204, 219–20, 230, 246, 258–9, 279, 294–5, 756.)

sarugaku 猿楽. Dramatic arts performed in ancient Japan that became a precursor of ‘Nō’ theater. Literally, “monkey music.” (1182, 1209, 1212)

satori 悟り. Literally, “realization.” A term for awakening or enlightenment frequently used in Zen literature. (192, 944–5)

self-enjoying *samādhi* 自受用三昧 (J. *jijuyū zanmai*). The ‘*samādhi*’ in which one enjoys and makes use of awakening in oneself. It is sometimes contrasted with “other-enjoying *samādhi*” to distinguish *samādhi* for one’s own sake or for one’s own enjoyment of the fruits of enlightenment from *samādhi* for the sake of others. (688)

self-identity of absolute contradiction 絶対矛盾の自己同一 (J. *zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu*). Also translated as “self-identity of absolute contradictories,” a technical term in Nishida Kitarō’s philosophy that expresses the manner in which things exist and interrelate as unities of opposites, taken loosely as contradictories such as the many and the one, and in which the opposites are held together as correlatives without being sublated into a higher unity. (646, 662, 741–2, 797, 876, 884–5, 902, 904, 906)

self-nature 自性 (J. *jishō*). A term with both a negative and a positive meaning, depending on the context. (1) Sometimes also translated as “own-nature”

(S. *svabhāva*), the idea, considered illusory in Buddhism, that things have a nature of their own, ontologically independent of other things; hence the Buddhist contention that “all things (‘dharma’) are empty of self-nature.”

(2) In Zen texts, synonymous with one’s “original nature” (本性 J. *honshō*) or ‘buddha-nature’, and inclusive of all phenomena “just as they are,” in their ‘suchness’. (60–1, 108, 207, 222, 226)

self-power 自力 (J. *jiriki*). A somewhat polemical term that means to depend solely on the power of one’s own efforts to attain enlightenment. Contrasts with ‘other-power’. (45, 215, 217, 237, 243, 249–51, 256–257, 262, 264, 272, 275, 277, 688)

semblance dharma 像法 (J. *zōhō*). The second of three periods denoting a decline in the efficacy of the Buddha’s teaching after his death. Descriptions vary, but a frequent scheme in East Asia has the first age of the “correct dharma,” lasting 500 years, during which the teaching was correctly practiced and enlightenment often attained, followed by the second age, lasting about 1000 years, when the teachings are merely imitated without being understood, and finally by a degenerate age (→ *mappō*) lasting some 10,000 years in which the teaching was corrupted and enlightenment rarely if ever attained. The scheme was important for most Japanese ‘Tendai’, ‘Pure Land’ and Nichiren Buddhists, but largely ignored by Zen. (261, 273)

seppuku 切腹. Ritual suicide by disembowelment. Synonymous with *hara-kiri* 腹切. (379)

Shakyamuni. The historical figure born in India some 2,500 years ago who came to be known as the Buddha or “awakened one” and who founded the Buddhist tradition. Mythically, each era has its own buddha, and Shakyamuni is the buddha for ours. And though there are many buddhas, Shakyamuni is the most common voice heard in scriptures when the ‘dharma’ is preached in the first person. (44, 53, 55, 58, 78, 90, 96, 98, 103, 160, 162, 185, 188, 237–8, 240, 256, 273–6, 301–2, 320, 397, 417–18, 420, 422, 428–9, 432–3, 435, 508, 517, 531, 533, 535, 609, 627–8, 630, 923, 1173)

Shin (Pure Land) Buddhism. The commonly used western name for the religious and intellectual tradition of what is called Jōdo Shinshū (浄土真宗) or simply Shinshū (真宗) in Japanese. A form of ‘Pure Land’ Buddhism, this group takes Shinran as its founder, and with all its branches combined, forms the largest religious organization in Japan today. → Pure Land (*passim*)

shingaku 心学. Literally, the “learning of mind.” The investigation of the heart and mind by way of reflection on oneself. In particular, the teachings of Ishida Baigan based on Zhu Xi’s philosophy but incorporating Zen Buddhist teachings and advocating the equality of all social classes. (183, 411, 436)

Shingon 真言. A school of Buddhism based on ‘Vajrayana’ or esoteric teachings and practices, organized and established by Kūkai and historically centered

both at Mt Kōya and the Kyoto temple of Tō-ji. The word “Shingon” literally means “truth words” and is a common translation for *mantra*. Kūkai taught that enlightenment was possible within this life through concentrated meditation using specific physical, verbal, and mental practices. (8–10, 45, 47–9, 51–2, 59, 61–2, 64, 73, 75, 79, 81, 104, 163, 450, 532, 765, 1028)

shinjin → trusting faith

Shinto incarnations of the Buddha 本地垂迹 (J. *honjisuijaku*). The theory that Shinto ‘*kami*’ are local manifestations of buddhas or other Buddhist figures; popular from the seventh century until it was banned in 1868 by the Meiji government. (432)

shogunate (from 將軍, *shōgun*). Also called *bakufu* 幕府 or “tent government,” a term for any of the military governments ruling Japan most of the time between 1192 and 1867, in contrast to the civil government under a figure-head emperor in Kyoto. (9, 12, 14, 135, 137–8, 163, 304, 335, 347, 379–80, 382, 385, 387, 457, 463, 488, 523, 583, 589, 933, 1093, 1121)

sincerity 信·誠 (J. *shin*, *makoto*). In Confucian thought, the virtue of truthfulness, defined classically in both ethical and metaphysical terms as “the ‘Way of heaven.’” To attain sincerity is “the Way of humanity.” Sometimes translated as trust or trustworthiness. In Native Studies’ poetics and Shinto doctrine, the genuineness expressed in the direct, pure response to the way things are. In Buddhism the former of the two sinographs can often mean “faith.” → trusting faith. (66, 211, 238, 246, 252, 274, 300–1, 308, 310, 321, 324, 332, 355–6, 362–3, 390, 392, 459, 474, 530, 594, 719, 1013, 1021, 1024, 1108, 1111, 1152)

sive → *soku-hi*

soku-hi 即非. A notoriously difficult term to render in English, *soku* (variously rendered in this volume as “-*qua*-, -*sive*-, and -*in*-) is a copulative commonly used to link two contrary or contradictory terms in such a way as to indicate that one immediately implies or contains the other, but at the same time negates (*hi*) their identity in the ordinary sense. Frequently found in the form A *soku* B, B *soku* A to stress the reciprocity of the relationship between the terms. (215, 642, 662, 685, 728, 782, 883, 899–900, 902, 905–6)

Son of Heaven 天子 (J. *tenshi*). A Chinese title for the emperor. (301, 320, 377, 379, 382, 388, 392)

spirit of words → *kotodama*

śrāvaka 声聞 (J. *shōmon*). Literally, a “listener,” a polemical term in ‘Mahayana’ for those who have heard the Buddha’s preaching but reject the Mahayana teachings and goals as heretical. The śrāvaka is contrasted with the ‘bodhisattva’, who is a champion of the Mahayana perspective. The term has at times been used by Mahayanists to refer to ‘Hinayana’ monks in general. (106)

suchness, thusness 真如, 如實 (S. *tathatā*, J. *shinnyo*, *nyojitsu*). The true form of things. Primarily a 'Mahayana' expression, the term indicates both an absolute reality inherent in phenomenal forms, and their essential 'emptiness'. (28, 62, 64, 68, 71-2, 82, 84, 97-103, 144, 148-9, 151, 211, 257, 284, 530, 726, 761, 781-2, 822, 827, 1030, 1040)

sudden enlightenment 頓悟 (J. *tongo*). The teaching that enlightenment is achieved directly, without mediation and without (or in spite of) any anticipation or intention. Characteristic of all schools of Zen. (686)

śūnyatā, *śunya* → emptiness

supreme ultimate 太極 (J. *taikyoku*). In neo-Confucianism the term designates the state of undifferentiated, infinite potentiality and the highest principle that accounts for all that exists, also expressed as "the ultimate of nonbeing" (*mukyoku* 無極). (295, 304, 307, 310, 321, 330, 345, 363, 367, 369, 374, 378, 534)

Tathāgata 如来 (J. *Nyorai*). A Sanskrit epithet of the Buddha; literally, (the person who has) "thus come"; hence, one who has followed the path to completion. (66-7, 72, 74, 82, 93, 109, 121, 169, 216, 209, 219-20, 251-7, 271, 274, 278-9, 281-2, 284-5, 302, 401, 748, 787-8, 790, 854, 1042-3)

tathāgatagarbha 如来藏 (J. *nyoraizō*). Literally, the womb (or embryo) of a 'Tathāgata'. → buddha-nature (48, 915-16)

tathatā → suchness

temperament 氣質 (J. *kishitsu*). A Confucian term referring to the generative force (*'ki'*) and substantive qualities (*shitsu*) of a person. In its sense as the nature of a person's physical disposition, the term is often contrasted with "the original nature of a person." (304, 313, 337, 343, 353, 358, 383, 400, 402, 408)

Tendai 天台 (C. Tiantai). A school of Buddhism originating in China and identified with the *Lotus Sutra*. Founded in Japan by Saichō, it mingled with esoteric Buddhism and Zen practices, contributed to the ideas of 'original enlightenment' and the 'buddhahood' of inanimate beings, and provided the training ground of great reformers of Kamakura Buddhism like Hōnen, Shinran, Dōgen, and Nichiren. (8-10, 45-46, 48, 50, 70, 79, 86, 90, 92-5, 101, 110, 112, 115-16, 126, 136, 141, 163, 181, 205, 238, 242, 302, 450, 533, 740, 822, 1118, 1169, 1173-4, 1217-18)

tetsugaku 哲学. The standard modern Japanese translation of *philosophy*. (15, 17, 19-21, 289, 297, 555-8, 560-3, 567, 569, 571)

thought-moment 一念 (J. *ichinen*). In Buddhism, this term can refer either to the focus of contemplation or to the realization of enlightenment in a single thought. More generally, the shortest possible time span, namely, the time it takes a single thought to occur. (100, 254)

three bodies 三身 (S. *trikāya*, J. *sanjin*). The three modes of embodying or manifesting the truth that the Buddha teaches, respectively, the 'dharma body';

the celestial or reward body (S. *sambhogakāya*), in which 'buddhahood' is manifest in ideal forms such as 'Amida'; and the apparent or accommodative body (*nirmāṇakāya*), in which buddhahood is manifest in diverse, concrete forms such as the historical buddha, Shakyamuni. (52, 69, 1042)

three worlds 三界 (J. *sangai*). In Buddhist thought, the world of desire, the world of form, and the world of the formless. (60, 84, 108, 110, 114, 185, 222, 450, 911, 1030, 1088)

Thus Come One → Tathāgata

thusness → suchness

torii 鳥居. The distinctive gate, particularly in front of or along paths near a Shinto shrine, indicating entrance into a sacred space. (413-4)

transference of merit 廻向・回向 (S. *pariṇāma/pariṇāmanā*, J. *ekō*). The belief in Buddhism that the karmic benefits gained through practice and ritual can be transferred to a future religious goal for oneself, for another, or for the deceased. (672)

trusting faith 信心 (J. *shinjin*). The mind that believes. Sometimes translated simply as "faith" or as the "entrusting heart or mind," a common expression for both faith and belief in Buddhist sutras, often used in Japanese 'Pure Land' discourse along with its synonym *anjin* (安心). In the Pure Land tradition, it denotes a religious attainment tantamount to enlightenment or liberation, and some scholars leave it untranslated. (11, 219-20, 250, 252, 256-7)

truth word → Shingon

unborn 無生 (J. *mushō*). Bankei Yōtaku's teaching of an absolute principle within all sentient beings indicating their "non-arising and non-disappearing nature." Rather than refer to something eternal and undying, it signifies the inherent sacredness of what transcends the world of being and becoming. Similar to the doctrine of 'buddha nature'. (70, 138, 145, 174, 195-6, 198-201, 217, 418, 420, 436-8, 496)

unhindered reason, things → unobstructed penetration of thing and thing

unobstructed penetration of thing and thing 事事無碍 (J. *jiji muge*). The "interpenetration" of all things in each other. According to the 'Kegon' tradition, this is the highest level of wisdom, whereby one sees the phenomenal world as not merely objects inseparable from the principles that cause them to operate they way they do (called "non-obstruction of principle and thing") but as objects that are themselves permeating other objects. In other words, grasping the wholeness of reality. (729-32, 886)

uta 歌. The Japanese word for a song or poem. (466, 1170, 1173-4, 1177, 1203-5, 1207)

Vairocana → Dainichi

vajra 金剛 (J. *kongō*). A Sanskrit word meaning both diamond and thunderbolt, often used metaphorically in Buddhism to symbolize what is adamant or indestructible. As an adjective, it suggests both radiance and cutting through self-imposed delusion; as a noun in esoteric discourse, it is the name of a three- or five-pronged metal implement used in rituals to symbolize power. (53, 56, 73, 79, 84, 121, 220)

Vajrayana 金剛乘 (S. *Vajrayāna*, J. *kongōjō*). Also known as Tantric Buddhism, Vajrayana is a late development within Indian 'Mahayana' Buddhism that is best known for its innovations in praxis rather than doctrine. It uses the individual's imagination to imbue linguistic and visual symbols with religious significance in ritual, often drawing on ancient Indian religious traditions that had been previously rejected in Buddhism. In Japan it is the basis for the development of the esoteric dimensions found in 'Shingon' and 'Tendai'. (47, 51)

vijñāna 識 (J. *shiki*). A general Sanskrit term for consciousness, sometimes more specifically meaning discernment, sometimes more ambiguously translated as 'mind'. (215)

void 虚 (J. *kyo*). In Confucianism, along with "emptiness," "nothingness" or "a state of vacancy," a term indicating the limitless, infinite nature of potential becoming. When used negatively, the term is a denunciation of the utter hollowness of Buddhist metaphysics. (68, 222–5, 298–9, 307, 312, 318, 320, 330–331, 351, 356–7, 458, 716–18, 727–8, 958, 997, 1040, 1042, 1174)

wabi 侘. An aesthetic ideal cultivated in tea ceremony and Japanese poetry that celebrates unaffected simplicity and austerity. (1170, 1172, 1220, 1224–6)

waka 和歌. A general term for poetry written in native Japanese, in contrast to *kanshi* or verse composed in Chinese. Also used more specifically to denote a genre of terse, lyrical verse of 5 lines in 31 syllables, distinguished from haiku and linked verse or *renga*, as well as from modern free verse. (11, 457–60, 466, 493, 537, 988, 990–1, 1145–6, 1171, 1173, 1209, 1218–25)

Way 道 (C. *dao*; J. *dō*, *michi*). A comprehensive term found throughout East Asian traditions to designate the order of all things to which one should accord, the way things truly are, and alternately, the path to realize truth. In Buddhism, "attaining the Way" is used to mean enlightenment. (*passim*)

Way of the warrior, samurai → *bushidō*

will of heaven 天命 (J. *tenmei*). The mandate or decrees of heaven, the good aspects of creation that had heaven's sanction and ought to be followed by humanity. Their purported violation was sometimes used as a rationale for overthrowing an imperial dynasty in China. Sometimes translated as the "mandate of heaven." (307, 312, 332, 343, 351–2, 387, 395, 401, 409–10, 415, 423, 452, 474, 490–1, 531, 533, 579, 1019, 1110)

- wisdom** 智 (J. *chi*). In Confucianism, the virtue of comprehending the 'Way'. In Buddhism, synonymous with '*prajñā*'. (*passim*)
- yakṣa** 夜叉 (J. *yasha*). In Buddhist mythology, one of eight kinds of nonhumans or demigods. *Yakṣa* generally are demons in Indian mythology, but in a Buddhist context they have been converted to benevolent spirits that protect the religion. (88)
- Yogācāra** 唯識 (J. *yuishiki*). A major 'Mahayana' School of Indian Buddhism that contributed sophisticated theories of consciousness, including the teaching that our ordinary, desire-driven perception and cognition construct illusory objects whose true nature emerges when consciousness is purified. Yogācāra also made important contributions to Indian Buddhist logic and epistemology. (55, 90, 94, 127, 273, 280–1)
- yomi** 黄泉. In Japanese mythology, the underworld for the dead. In some cases, as in Hirata Atsutane, associated with the moon. The sinographs literally mean "yellow springs," an allusion to Chinese mythology. (462, 480, 510–16, 518–19, 521, 910–11)
- yūgen** 幽玄. The aesthetic ideal of suggesting the graceful subtlety and mysterious depth, beyond human grasp, of words, emotions, or things. (1126, 1170–1, 1183, 1204–1205, 7, 1210–11, 1213, 1216–19)
- zange** 懺悔. A Buddhist term for repentance, confession, or penitence. In Tanabe Hajime's postwar philosophy it was used as a Japanese equivalent of *metanoia* to signify the change of heart critical of unquestioned confidence in rationality and self-will, and advocating a reliance on a power beyond the comprehension of the ordinary, ego-centered self. (687)
- zazen** 坐禪. Seated meditation, the primary form of practice in the Zen tradition. (11, 136, 141–3, 163, 171–3, 176, 186–9, 193, 375, 584, 1198)

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The following list contains all the original sources and, where applicable, English translations of material included in the *Sourcebook*. In some instances alternative translations have also been indicated. The dates to the left refer to the original date of publication or composition, or their nearest approximation. Bibliographic information specific to the introductions and historical overviews is contained at the end of each entry and is not repeated here.

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Chronology

JAPANESE ERA	FIGURE	MAIN CITATION	CHINESE DYNASTY
Kofun 古墳 300-710	Prince Shōtoku 聖德太子 (574?-622?)	35-9	Tang 唐 618-907
	Saichō 最澄 (767-822)	95-7	
	Kūkai 空海 (774-835)	51-74	
Nara 奈良 710-794	Tokuitsu 德一 (781?-842?)	93-4	Song 宋 960-1279
	Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (868?-945?)	1168-9	
Heian 平安 794-1185	Ryōgen 良源 (912-985)	101-2	
	Genshin 源信 (942-1017)	97-101	
	Kakuun 覚運 (953-1007)	101-2	
	Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (973-1014)	1118-19	
	Kakuban 覚鑊 (1095-1143)	75-80	
	Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114-1204)	1173-4	
	Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212)	242-8	
Kamakura 鎌倉 1185-1333	Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1155-1216)	1203-8	
	Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241)	1169	
	Myōe 明恵 (1173-1232)	81-5	
Muromachi 室町 1333-1568	Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1263)	249-61	
	Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253)	141-62	
Momoyama 桃山 1568-1600	Nichiren 日蓮 (1222-1282)	86-91	Yuan 元 1264-1368
	Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275-1351)	163-71	
	Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293-1354)	1019	Ming 明 1368-1644
	Zeami Motokiyo 世阿弥元清 (1363-1443)	1209-15	
	Shōtetsu 正徹 (1381-1459)	1181-2	
	Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394-1481)	172-7	
	Konparu Zenchiku 金春禪竹 (1405-1468?)	1182-3	
	Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561-1619)	298-303	
	Fukansai Habian 不干斎巴鼻庵 (1565-1621)	1038-46	
	Takuan Sōhō 沢庵宗彭 (1573-1645)	178-82	
Edo 江戸 [Tokugawa 徳川] 1600-1868	Suzuki Shōsan 鈴木正三 (1579-1655)	183-9	
	Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583-1657)	304-17	
	Shidō Bunan 至道無難 (1603-1676)	190-4	
	Nakae Tōju 中江藤樹 (1608-1648)	318-23	
	Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇斎 (1618-1682)	324-8	
	Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619-1691)	329-34	

JAPANESE ERA	FIGURE	MAIN CITATION	CHINESE DYNASTY
Edo 江戸 [Tokugawa 徳川] 1600–1868	Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行 (1622–1685)	335–46	Ming 明 1368–1644
	Bankei Yōtaku 盤珪永琢 (1622–1693)	195–201	
	Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋 (1627–1705)	347–59	
	Kaibara Ekken 貝原益軒 (1630–1714)	360–73	
	Daidōji Yūzan 大道寺友山 (1639–1730)	1106	
	Satō Naokata 佐藤直方 (1650–1719)	374–80	
	Asami Keisai 淺見綱齋 (1652–1711)	381–6	
	Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725)	387–92	
	Yamamoto Tsunetomo 山本常朝 (1659–1719)	1106	
	Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728)	393–410	
	Ishida Baigan 石田梅岩 (1685–1744)	411–15	
	Hakuin Ekaku 白隱慧鶴 (1685–1768)	202–10	
	Hori Keizan 堀 景山 (1688–1757)	1174–6	
	Kamo no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵 (1697–1769)	466–71	
	Andō Shōeki 安藤昌益 (1703–1762)	416–29	
	Tominaga Nakamoto 富永仲基 (1715–1746)	430–5	
	Teshima Toan 手島堵庵 (1718–1786)	436–40	
	Jiun Sonja 慈雲尊者 (1718–1804)	104–9	
	Miura Baien 三浦梅園 (1723–1789)	441–6	
	Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801)	472–92	
	Sugita Genpaku 杉田玄白 (1733–1817)	1231–2	
	Fujitani Mitsue 富士谷御杖 (1768–1823)	493–508	
	Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843)	509–22	
	Aizawa Seishisai 会沢正志齋 (1782–1863)	1020–2	
	Ninomiya Sontoku 二宮尊德 (1787–1856)	447–53	
	Ōkuni Takamasa 大國隆正 (1792–1871)	523–35	
	Higuchi Ryūon 樋口龍温 (1800–1885)	1031	
Takano Chōei 高野長英 (1804–1850)	554–5		
Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠 (1809–1869)	1111		
Imakita Kōsen 今北洪川 (1816–1892)	211–13		
Nishimura Shigeki 西村茂樹 (1828–1902)	559		
Nishi Amane 西周 (1829–1897)	583–8		
Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835–1901)	589–603		
Katō Hiroyuki 加藤弘之 (1836–1916)	566–7		
Nakae Chōmin 中江兆民 (1847–1901)	604–10		
Torio Koyata 鳥尾小彌太 (1847–1905)	578		
Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855–1944)	611–18		
Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919)	619–30		
Miyake Setsurei 三宅雪嶺 (1860–1945)	562–3		
Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三 (1861–1930)	1032–3		
Okakura Tenshin 岡倉天心 (1862–1913)	566		
Nitobe Inazō 新渡戸稻造 (1862–1933)	1104		
MODERN PERIOD			Qing 清 1644–1911
Meiji 明治 1868–1912			

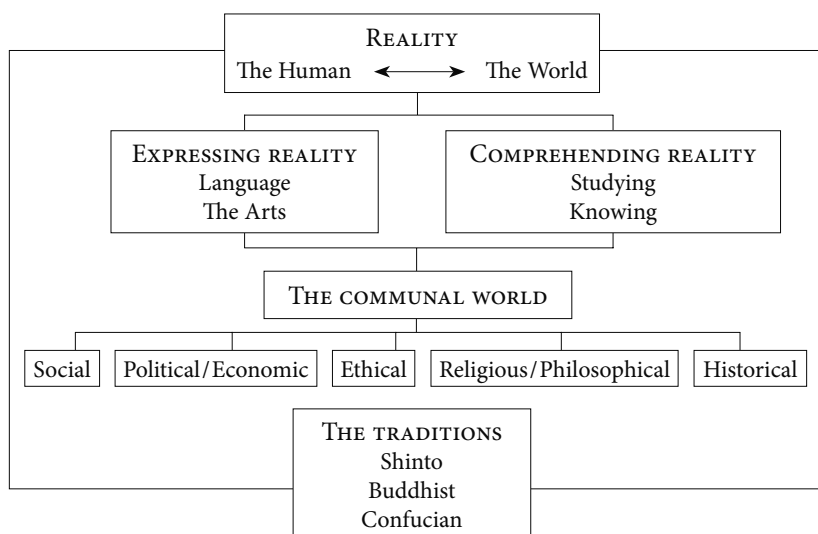
JAPANESE ERA	FIGURE	MAIN CITATION	CHINESE DYNASTY
Meiji 明治 1868–1912	Kiyozawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903)	262–72	Qing 清 1644–1911
	Ōnishi Hajime 大西 祝 (1864–1900)	631–5	
	Fukuda Hideko 福田英子 (1865–1927)	1121	
	Tanaka Kiichi 田中喜一 (1867–1932)	565	
	Hattori Unokichi 服部宇之吉 (1867–1939)	579–80	
	Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945)	646–69	
	Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙 (1870–1966)	214–20	
	Kuwaki Gen'yoku 桑木巖翼 (1874–1946)	566–8	
	Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男 (1875–1962)	1129	
	Soga Ryōjin 曾我量深 (1875–1971)	273–9	
Taishō 大正 1912–1926	Hatano Seiichi 波多野精一 (1877–1950)	808–15	
	Yosano Akiko 与謝野晶子 (1878–1942)	1138–47	
	Kita Ikki 北 一輝 (1883–1937)	1022	
	Abe Jirō 阿部次郎 (1883–1959)	816–21	
	Tanabe Hajime 田辺 元 (1885–1962)	670–91	
	Takahashi Satomi 高橋里美 (1886–1964)	822–8	
	Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 谷崎潤一郎 (1886–1965)	1014	
	Hiratsuka Raichō 平塚らいてう (1886–1971)	1148–58	
	Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887–1953)	536–42	
	Kuki Shūzō 九鬼周造 (1888–1941)	829–49	
	Ōnishi Yoshinori 大西克礼 (1888–1959)	1216–19	
	Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960)	850–69	
	Hisamatsu Shin'ichi 久松真一 (1889–1980)	221–6	
	Mutai Risaku 務台理作 (1890–1974)	692–701	
	Yamakawa Kikue 山川菊栄 (1890–1980)	1159–64	
	Miyake Gōichi 三宅剛一 (1895–1982)	870–6	
	Miki Kiyoshi 三木 清 (1897–1945)	702–7	
	Miyamoto Yuriko 宮本百合子 (1899–1951)	1122	
	Tosaka Jun 戸坂 潤 (1900–1945)	877–81	
	Shōwa 昭和 1926–1989	Kōsaka Masaaki 高坂正顕 (1900–1969)	708–12
Yasuda Rijin 安田理深 (1900–1982)		280–5	
Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治 (1900–1990)		713–32	
Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄 (1902–1983)		1178–80	
Ichikawa Hakugen 市川白弦 (1902–1986)		882–9	
Imanishi Kinji 今西錦司 (1902–1992)		890–4	
Shimomura Toratarō 下村寅太郎 (1902–1995)		733–7	
Ishizu Teruji 石津照璽 (1903–1972)		110–16	
Karaki Junzō 唐木順三 (1904–1980)		227–32	
Kōyama Iwao 高山岩男 (1905–1993)		738–43	
	Funayama Shin'ichi 船山信一 (1907–1994)	895–901	
	Takizawa Katsumi 滝沢克己 (1909–1984)	902–6	
	Takeuchi Yoshimi 竹内 好 (1910–1977)	1085–92	

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Shōwa 昭和 1926–1989	Mori Arimasa 森有正 (1911–1976)	1047–52
	Morita Shiryū 森田子龍 (1912–1998)	1200–2
	Nakamura Hajime 中村元 (1912–1999)	117–24
	Takeuchi Yoshinori 武内義範 (1913–2002)	744–9
	Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎 (1913–2002)	907–12
	Izutsu Toshihiko 井筒俊彦 (1914–1993)	913–21
	Maruyama Masao 丸山真男 (1914–1996)	922–9
	Tamaki Kōshirō 玉城康四郎 (1915–1999)	125–32
	Abe Masao 阿部正雄 (1915–2006)	750–7
	Minamoto Ryōen 源了圓 (1920–)	930–5
	Ōmori Shōzō 大森莊藏 (1921–1997)	936–42
	Tsujimura Kōichi 辻村公一 (1922–2010)	758–64
	Imamichi Tomonobu 今道友信 (1922–)	1244
	Mishima Yukio 三島由紀夫 (1925–1970)	1107
	Yuasa Yasuo 湯浅泰雄 (1925–2005)	943–51
	Nakamura Yūjirō 中村雄二郎 (1925–)	952–7
	Izutsu Toyoko 井筒豊子 (1925–)	1220–7
	Umehara Takeshi 梅原猛 (1925–)	1184–8
	Ueda Shizuteru 上田閑照 (1926–)	765–84
	Ueda Kenji 上田賢治 (1927–2003)	543–9
	Yanabu Akira 柳父章 (1928–)	1170
	Kimura Bin 木村敏 (1931–)	958–72
	Nakajima Michi 中島みち (1931–)	1238–9
	Yagi Seiichi 八木誠一 (1932–)	1053–8
	Hiromatsu Wataru 廣松涉 (1933–1994)	973–8
	Sakaguchi Fumi 坂口フミ (1933–)	1116–17
	Kimura Rihito 木村利人 (1934–)	1233
Sakabe Megumi 坂部恵 (1936–2009)	979–92	
Hase Shōtō 長谷正當 (1937–)	785–91	
Heisei 平成 1989–	Karatani Kōjin 柄谷行人 (1941–)	1093–9
	Namihira Emiko 波平恵美子 (1942–)	1237–8
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Thematic Index

The Thematic Index invites us to explore topics in Japanese philosophy without privileging western philosophical categories. For example, the diagram of its organization below shows no discrete self apart from the world because most Japanese philosophers consider the two to be abstractions from a single continuous reality. From that starting point, they typically recognize two ways to engage that reality: through expression and comprehension. Just as the potter and the geologist engage clay in sophisticated but dramatically different ways, Japanese ethics requires both artistic responsiveness and epistemic analysis to do justice to the fullness of the communal world. In dealing with these issues, each of the principal philosophical traditions of Japan seeks to encompass the entire dynamic represented in the diagram.

To further explore these topics in their own vocabulary, the Thematic Index includes related items from the Glossary. The Glossary lists all page references where the terms in question can be found.



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GLOSSARY: birth-and-death, body-mind, buddha-mind, buddha-nature, five relations, *kata*, original enlightenment, other-power, self-nature, self-power, temperament, *tathāgatagarbha*, unborn, *yomi*

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GLOSSARY: *bushidō*, *iki*, *gatha*, *kata*, *koto*, *kotodama*, *Man'yōshū*, *mono mo aware*, *Nō*, *sarugaku*, *uta*, *wabi*, *waka*, *yūgen*

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GLOSSARY: bodhisattva, buddhahood, cultivation, *daimoku*, *dhyāna*, expedient means, great matter, Hinayana, investigation of all things, *kōan*, learning, Mahayana, mind, *nenbutsu*, no–mind, place, pratyekabuddha, refined person, reverence, *samādhi*, *satori*, self–enjoying *samādhi*, *śrāvaka*, *shingaku*, sudden enlightenment, Tathāgata, thought–moment, *vajra*, Vajrayana, Way, wisdom, *Yogācāra*, *zange*, *zazen*

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GLOSSARY: buddha-mind, Buddha's truth, *dharmadhātu*, Dutch Studies, Enlightenment, inverse correlation, investigation of all things, *jōri*, learning, middle way, mind, no-mind, nothingness, *prajñā*, *prajñāpāramitā*, self-identity of absolute contradiction, *soku-hi*, *vijñāna*, wisdom

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GLOSSARY: *bushidō*, five relations, ordinary people, *shingaku*

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GLOSSARY: Amaterasu, daimyō, *kokutai*, ordinary people, shogunate, Son of Heaven, will of heaven

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GLOSSARY: bright virtue, <i>bushidō</i> , compassion, filial piety, five constant virtues, humaneness, karma, middle way, not-doing, ordinary people, perfections, propriety, refined person, reverence, righteousness, <i>shingaku</i> , sincerity, transference of merit, <i>zange</i>	
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GLOSSARY: Amaterasu, *kami*, *Kojiki*, *kokoro*, *kokutai*, *kotodama*, *Nihon shoki*, Shinto incarnations of the Buddha, *torii*, *uta*, *waka*, Way, *yomi*

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GLOSSARY: bodhi-mind, buddha-mind, buddha-nature, Buddha's truth, compassion, dharma, dharma-body, *dharmadhātu*, *dharmatā*, empty, expedient means, Hossō, Indra's net, karma, Kegon, *mappō*, middle way, mind, no-mind, nothingness, not-doing, original enlightenment, other-power, *prajñā*, *prajñāpāramitā*, *pratītya-samutpāda*, principle, samsara, self-nature, self-power, Shingon, Shinto incarnations of the Buddha, *soku-hi*, suchness, *tathāgatagarbha*, Tendai, thought-moment, three bodies, three worlds, trusting faith, unborn, unobstructed penetration of thing and thing, *vijñāna*, Way, wisdom, Yogācāra, *zange*

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GLOSSARY: bright virtue, filial piety, five constant virtues, five relations, humaneness, investigation of all things, *jōri*, *ki*, learning, Lord above, mean, mind, nonfinite, nothingness, not-doing, ordinary people, principle, propriety, refined person, reverence, righteousness, *shingaku*, sincerity, Son of Heaven, supreme ultimate, temperament, void, Way, will of heaven, wisdom

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