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In addition to the present book, his works include studies of Yasuo Ochi (*Shinpi no yoru no tabi*; 2011) and the philosopher Akiko Ikeda (*Ikeda Akiko fumetsu no tetsugaku*; 2013), as well as those on the writings of two highly influential introducers of Japan to the West, Christian thinker Kanzō Uchimura (*Uchimura Kanzō o yomu*; 2012) and Tenshin Okakura, author of *The Book of Tea* (*Okakura Tenshin "Cha no hon" o yomu*; 2013). Other works deal with grief and the relation of the living to the dead (*Tamashii ni fureru: Daishinsai to ikite iru shisha and Shisha to no taiwa*; 2012).

He is also the editor of the collected essays of Toshihiko Izutsu (*Yomu to kaku: Izutsu Toshihiko essei shū*; 2009) and those of Yasuo Ochi on literary critic Hideo Kobayashi (*Kobayashi Hideo: Ochi Yasuo zensakuhin*; 2010).

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Toshihiko Izutsu  
and the Philosophy of WORD:  
In Search of the Spiritual Orient

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Toshihiko Izutsu  
and the Philosophy of WORD:  
In Search of the Spiritual Orient

*by* EISUKE WAKAMATSU  
*Translated by* Jean Connell Hoff



LTCB International Library Trust/International House of Japan

## Transliteration of Foreign Words

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With regard to Chinese personal names, we have followed the local custom of placing the family name first. Japanese names, however, are presented in Western order, with family name last.

Transliteration of words from other languages, for the most part, follows the usage adopted by Toshihiko Izutsu.

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To my late wife  
Keiko  
(1960–2010)



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## Preface to the English Edition

THE YEAR 2014 MARKS the centenary of the birth of Toshihiko Izutsu, one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. In his case, there is no need to add the qualifier “Japanese.” His ideas transcend national borders and are universally loved and accepted.

Last year was the twentieth anniversary of Izutsu’s death. Today his writings are gaining more readers in Japan than they did even at the time they were written. The on-going publication of his complete Japanese works, begun last year in Japan, has met with a warm reception from many readers not only in the field of philosophy. Artists, opinion makers and ordinary people, not to mention specialists in literature, religion, linguistics, anthropology and ethnography, are attempting to find new meaning in Izutsu’s words that will cut through the confusion of the times. In this respect, Izutsu calls to mind Henri Bergson, who after his death would come to enjoy even wider influence than ever before outside his special field.

Toshihiko Izutsu did not start out as a philosopher. The age he lived in made him one. The person whom he called his “one and only mentor” in his entire life was the poet Junzaburō Nishiwaki, who was on close terms with T.S. Eliot. The reason I mentioned Bergson’s name earlier is not simply because the trajectories of their influence overlap but because poetry and a pure, transcendental experience underlie the metaphysics of both men. Izutsu called the magnum opus of his early

years, *Shinpi tetsugaku* (Philosophy of mysticism). “Metaphysics should come after a metaphysical experience,” he wrote. It will come as no surprise that Bergson said much the same thing in *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1932; *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 1935). Some people have had profound experiences, but only a few have been able to put those experiences into words, and rarer still are those who have been able to express them in rich, poetic language.

The works for which Izutsu is known in the West are his studies of Islamic mysticism, especially *Sufism and Taoism*, and his semantic hermeneutics of the Kōran, such as *The Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur’an*. Some have called him a scholar of Islām; during his lifetime, he was recognized as such even in Japan. But he never called himself an Islamic specialist. He considered himself to be a philosopher of language in the higher sense, or rather, to use his most important key term, a metaphysician of *kotoba* (コトバ), WORD. When Izutsu writes *kotoba*, it does not mean words or language in a narrow sense. Just as color is WORD for an artist, sound is WORD for a musician, and shape is WORD for a sculptor. In prayer, the most eloquent WORD is silence. For Jesus as depicted in the New Testament, WORD perhaps was the gaze with which he looked at people. Izutsu believed that the world is full of WORDs, that WORD forms the basis for the existence of all things. “Being is WORD” – Izutsu’s philosophy can be summed up in this one sentence.

Izutsu’s two main works are *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949), published when he was 35, and *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; *Consciousness and essence*). It is a fact worth noting that, although he was conversant with more than 30 languages, had no difficulty writing in English and spent the main part of his scholarly life abroad, he wrote what would become his major works in Japanese. He left books in English that compare favorably with his Japanese writings, but even if these were to be included, that does not change the fact that the two books just mentioned are his main works.

It would be difficult to translate these two books into English any time soon. And yet reading the passages quoted in the present work ought to sufficiently convey the brilliance of the ideas they contain. Words do not achieve their end when they are written but when they

are read. It is not the writer who brings a book to completion; that is the job of the reader. Izutsu's works have a quality well suited to being called modern classics. Books that are considered classics are alive. They continue to be read over the ages, changing as they do so. The words in the New Testament are the same as they were on the day they were written, but the meaning hidden in them has become richer with the passage of time. That ability to change over time is proof that a work is a classic.

Izutsu, a Japanese, left works on Islamic philosophy that are in no way inferior to those of the Islamic scholars who were his contemporaries. Similarly it is highly likely that people whose native language is not Japanese will discover the latent potential of Toshihiko Izutsu's philosophy. I strongly hope so. Not only so that research on the individual called Toshihiko Izutsu may flourish, but, rather, because the role metaphysics ought to play in ameliorating the clash of, and conflicts between, cultures that continue to this very day is, I think, by no means a small one. Toshihiko Izutsu believed that philosophy must play a bigger role in bringing about peace in the true sense. Philosophy for Toshihiko Izutsu was not an abstract matter. The mission of philosophy, he believed, was to cause the workings of that invisible something called Wisdom to abound in the world we live in. At the risk of being misunderstood, the fundamental issue for Toshihiko Izutsu was how can philosophy save the human race.

My book has been fortunate to be blessed with an extremely talented translator. What I sensed while reading the English text is that this translation is not simply a matter of turning the Japanese I wrote into English. The work has taken on a new life of its own. The beauty of the translator's language will no doubt be apparent to the reader, but what deserves attention is the depth of Jean Connell Hoff's "reading." The difficulty of translation lies not in choosing the right words but in reading and understanding the original. Through her reading of it, my book has been reborn on a new level. I wish to convey to her my sincere thanks.

The efforts of many people have, in fact, gone into the production of this translation. Although I cannot cite all their names here, I

would like to single out Ryōko Katahara of Keio University Press, who was also the editor for the Japanese edition, and, above all, Yasuo Saji of the International House of Japan, who has given me his constant and wholehearted support during the long translation process. My profound thanks goes to them both.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to those who have gone on before us. One of them is Frank Hoff, the translator's husband. As she writes in her Translator's Notes, he worked tirelessly with her on the translation, but died on November 7, 2013 and did not live to see the book completed. My father, Akio Wakamatsu, who was looking forward to the publication of this translation, also died before its completion, on May 7, 2012. Death, to be sure, is the demise of the body. But if it signified the end of existence, there would probably be no need for metaphysics. Its very existence tells us that metaphysics forms the basis of life. The dead cannot be seen, but they live together with the living in a different form. This book could not have been completed without their support. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Eisuke Wakamatsu

March 6, 2014

## Preface to the Japanese Edition

AT THE START of a lecture in 1943, Toshihiko Izutsu said he was not a philosopher. He was twenty-nine years old.

My specialty primarily has been Arabic, Persian and Turkish literature, and since these are all Islamic literatures, naturally I have had to study Islām to some extent. For that reason I have nothing to say to those of you who are specialists in philosophy. . . .<sup>1</sup>

He was not being modest. The position Izutsu held at the time was a research fellowship in Arabic language and literature at the Institute of Philological Studies, Keio University. On the other hand, however, he had a book on philosophy to his credit, *Arabia shisōshi* (1941; History of Arabic thought)<sup>2</sup> and had written on Muḥammad and Ibn ‘Arabī.<sup>3</sup> Although *Shinpi tetsugaku* (Philosophy of mysticism, 1949) would not be published until after the war, the lectures on the intellectual history of Greek mysticism upon which it was based had already been given at Keio.<sup>4</sup> On the evidence of these achievements, for all intents and purposes, he might well have said he was a student of philosophy.

Plato, the central figure in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, would have expelled poets from the state. Not because he had any objection to the arts. What Plato objected to were harmful fabrications. Poets ought to be conduits of revelation. When they lost sight of their role as conveyors of divine enlightenment and became preoccupied with self-expression,

they were to be banished from his Republic. In our own day, it is not the poets who are to be expelled but the philosophers. The reader of *Shinpi tetsugaku* can almost hear its author saying this. “Metaphysics is something that should come after metaphysical experience,” Izutsu says in that work.<sup>5</sup> It is no wonder, then, that a person such as he did not recognize as “philosophy” an activity that had severed its ties with transcendence and no longer lent an ear to the voice of poetic inspiration. Nor did he regard himself as a student of philosophy, much less those who unhesitatingly styled themselves “philosophers” simply because they were studying that subject. Already by this time, in his innermost heart, the term “philosopher” had a special meaning for him, completely divorced from its generally accepted usage.

As he himself suggests, the public life of Toshihiko Izutsu can be roughly divided into three periods. The first began in 1941, the year of his maiden work, *Arabia shisōshi*, and continued through the publication of *Shinpi tetsugaku*, *Roshiateki ningen* (1953; Russian humanity)<sup>6</sup> and the translations of the *Kōran* (1957–1958 and 1964),<sup>7</sup> up until the beginning of his life overseas. The second period was spent in pursuit of interdisciplinary studies abroad, first at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, then at the Tehran branch of McGill’s Institute of Islamic Studies and at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy there, namely the period up to his return to Japan in 1979 as the Iranian revolution intensified. During this time he was deeply involved in the Eranos Conference and published almost all of his works in English. The third period lasted from the time of his return to Japan until his death and saw the publication of one work after another, including *Isurāmu seitan* (1979; The birth of Islām),<sup>8</sup> *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* (1980; The original image of Islamic philosophy),<sup>9</sup> *Ishiki to honshitsu: seishinteki Tōyō o motomete* (1983; Consciousness and essence: In search of the spiritual Orient),<sup>10</sup> *Isurāmu bunka: sono kontei ni aru mono* (1981; Islamic culture: The elements that make up its foundation),<sup>11</sup> *Kōran o yomu* (1983; Reading the *Kōran*),<sup>12</sup> *Imi no fukami e: Tōyō tetsugaku no suii* (1985; To the depths of meaning: Fathoming Oriental philosophy),<sup>13</sup> *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu* (1989; Cosmos and anti-cosmos),<sup>14</sup> *Chōetsu no kotoba* (1991; Transcendental WORDS),<sup>15</sup> up to and including part one of his notes on Oriental

philosophy, *Ishiki no keijijōgaku* (1993; Metaphysics of consciousness).<sup>16</sup> At the time of his death, he was about to begin writing the sequel to this posthumously published work, so it would be fair to say that he stayed the course, never resting until he took up residence in the other world.

This does not mean, of course, that, from the very beginning, Izutsu was the profound scholar that one might infer from his present international reputation. There were many events in the process that led to the birth of Toshihiko Izutsu the philosopher. These were not exclusively internal, such as his encounters with Ibn ‘Arabī and Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū. Out of his meetings and interactions with people and ideas in the world around him would emerge Toshihiko Izutsu the epoch-making philosopher. And yet even when reading the selected works of Toshihiko Izutsu,<sup>17</sup> it is difficult to catch a glimpse of his relation to the world in which he lived. The names of even such great Japanese philosophers as Kitarō Nishida (1870–1945) and Daisetz Suzuki (1870–1966), for example, appear only once or twice in his works, and Izutsu made virtually no references to other Japanese thinkers who preceded him. That does not mean he showed no interest in Japanese thought. His veneration for Daisetz Suzuki was no small matter, and we know from writings not included in his selected works that he read Muneyoshi (Sōetsu) Yanagi (1889–1961). Nishida’s best student, Keiji Nishitani (1900–1990), was someone who recognized Toshihiko Izutsu’s genius at an early stage. To this list could be added the names of Islamic scholar Shūmei Ōkawa (1886–1957) and such Keio luminaries as Shinobu Orikuchi (1887–1953) and Izutsu’s mentor, Junzaburō Nishiwaki (1894–1982).

Nor was it Japanese thinkers alone who influenced him. Izutsu frequently mentioned his contemporary Jacques Derrida, but perhaps the non-Japanese intellectual he loved most was Louis Massignon. In terms of the strength of their influence, Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade also cannot be overlooked. But, except in the case of his colloquies with other thinkers and writers, even the names of these friends, mentors and scholars of an earlier generation hardly appear at all in his selected works. Providing us with clues to fill in this gap is *Yomu to kaku* (Reading and writing), an anthology of his essays published in 2009.<sup>18</sup>

Up until that point, there is no denying that Izutsu had been seen as somehow detached from contemporary history. There seems to have been something aloof about Izutsu, and, as a result, countless quasi-mythical anecdotes attached themselves to him from an early period. Even describing Izutsu as an Islamicist, while not mistaken, seems overly restrictive, like calling him simply a philosopher of language. Such titles do much to conceal the truth, I believe. And indeed, he never identified himself as a specialist in the study of Islam, except with reservations. Nearly every year from 1967 to 1982, Izutsu attended the Eranos Conference. Begun in 1933 by Olga Froebe-Kapteyn with the cooperation of Jung and Rudolf Otto, Eranos was an attempt to integrate Eastern and Western spirituality. Izutsu gave a total of twelve lectures at Eranos, but never chose Islamic philosophy as the main topic for any of them. What he did discuss was the thought of Lao-tzŭ and Chuang-tzŭ and the *Ch'u Tz'ŭ* (Elegies of Ch'u), Confucius and the *I Ching* (Book of Changes), the Buddhist thought of the Zen, Hua Yen and Yogācāra schools, Indian philosophy, etc. As will be clear to Izutsu's Japanese readers, these topics flow directly into *Ishiki to honshitsu*. If he had not been invited to Eranos, that work might never have seen the light of day.

*Ishiki to honshitsu* is Toshihiko Izutsu's magnum opus. Even were we to include the works written in English, that fact would remain unchanged. Although he never wrote a memoir, *Ishiki to honshitsu* can be read as his spiritual autobiography. As we watch it unfold, beginning with Sartre through the poets of the *Kokinshū* (ca 920; Collection of Japanese poems from ancient and modern times), Rilke, Mallarmé, the Islamic philosophers, Confucius, Jewish mysticism and Jungian psychology, we seem to be following along with him in the footsteps, as it were, of his intellectual development. Yet if we read this work as an account of his own spiritual journey, we notice there is one topic missing: his relationship with Christianity.

Someone may cite *Roshiateki ningen* as Izutsu's discussion of Christianity, and indeed in it he called Dostoevsky "a Christian witness."<sup>19</sup> But we should not forget that he added soon afterwards that Dostoevsky was above all a true mystic, "a new man" — *novy chelovyek* — who transeends the single religious belief system of Christianity.<sup>20</sup> What

that work makes clear is the lot of a spiritual revolutionary *qua* man of letters who lived in dangerous times. The issue here is literally the direct historical relationship of Toshihiko Izutsu to Christian thinkers. At one time Izutsu was strongly moved by such Christian intellectuals as the poet Claudel, Augustine, John Eriugena and John of the Cross. One of these thinkers whom he discussed with intense emotion was Bernard of Clairvaux. The impact of these poets and religious figures would pierce his soul with a force comparable to that of his contact with the Greek sages. So strong and so profound was their influence that, as is clear in the preface to that work, without this encounter, Izutsu would probably never have begun *Shinpi tetsugaku*.<sup>21</sup>

Toshihiko Izutsu's philosophical projects converge on the "synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophies," the subtitle of *Ishiki to honshitsu*, in other words, what he describes elsewhere as creating "a comprehensive structural framework, a kind of metaphilosophy of Eastern philosophies . . ." <sup>22</sup> "Synchronic" in this context means treating a problem as though it exists both in the present and *sub specie aeternitatis*—"transposing the main philosophical traditions of the Orient spatially into an ideal plane at the present point . . . to create artificially an organic space of thought, which could include all these traditions structurally, by taking [them] off . . . the axis of time and by recombining them paradigmatically."<sup>23</sup> That such an undertaking would be impossible for a single individual to complete was something Izutsu understood from the outset. The words in *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* must be understood in this way, i.e. the "acute sense of powerlessness" he felt as he tried to penetrate the depths of Oriental philosophy through the prism of Islamic mysticism.<sup>24</sup> At the beginning of *Ishiki to honshitsu* as well, he writes that this work is only a prolegomenon to a "synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophies."<sup>25</sup>

To be sure, what Itsuzu wrote was only a "prolegomenon." Yet, as can frequently be seen in an outstanding work, it clarifies the fundamental issues. And even while he acknowledged that the end result would be only an introduction, the very fact that he took up his pen was because he believed there would be readers for it. Izutsu's readers are spread across the world. But what is needed now, I believe, is for Japanese to "read" Izutsu's Japanese works, beginning with *Ishiki to*

*honshitsu*. Most of his readers abroad still do not know his most important work. The possibility of understanding him in his totality is open to Japanese readers alone.

A writer poses a question. The role of a reader is not simply to critique it or comment on it. It is to take the written word to an even deeper level and sometimes to find in it a world or worlds of which even the author him/herself had no idea. The written word remains unchanged, but with the advent of the reader, the meaning hidden within it spontaneously reveals itself. Through “reading” as what Izutsu terms a creative act, the advent of a reader who practices creative “misinterpretation” brings the work to its completion. Frankly speaking – without fear of misinterpretation – authors do not know their own works in their entirety.

Chapters One through Six of this book were serialized in the journal *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature) between the spring of 2009 and the autumn of 2010, but they have been largely rewritten. Chapters Seven through Ten and the Chronology were written especially for this book. Authorial additions within quoted texts are enclosed in brackets [ ]. Following Izutsu’s usage the spelling “Kōran” will be used instead of “Qur’an,” and Wade-Giles romanization will be used instead of Pinyin for Chinese words and names. Pinyin spellings will be given in the Index.

## Translator's Notes

THE ONLY EXPRESSION that seems appropriate to describe the present book is “intellectual biography.” To be sure, it does follow the events of its protagonist’s life in more or less chronological order—a childhood spent practicing Zen meditation with his father; the Keio years as a student and teacher; his early works on Greek philosophy and nineteenth-century Russian literature; his two translations of the Kōran into Japanese (the first to be made from the original Arabic) and the works on the semantics of the Koranic *Weltanschauung*; his major English-language study *Sufism and Taoism*; his years as an acknowledged authority on Islamic mysticism at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in Montreal and later at its branch in Tehran and subsequently at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy; the lectures on Oriental philosophy that he gave at the Eranos Conference; his return to Japan in 1979 on the last rescue mission out of Tehran on the eve of the Iranian revolution; the works in Japanese on Oriental philosophy that he wrote in Japan during the last fifteen years of his life.

But what stands out in the present book are the purely internal events of intellectual development: his awakening to the mysteries of language; his discovery through Greek philosophy that intellectual inquiry and the *vita contemplativa* are not mutually antithetical; the evolution of his ideas about “meaning” while teaching linguistics at Keio University; the impact on him of other thinkers, living and dead, from Ibn ‘Arabī to Mircea Eliade, from Mallarmé to Jean-Paul Sartre;

his work on the “synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophy,” an attempt to synthesize the major philosophical ideas of the Orient, which for him stretched from Greece, north Africa, Russia and the Middle East all the way to India, China and Japan; his encounter with the concept of WORD and the realization that semantics is ontology, that Being is WORD.

And yet the book does not confine itself to Izutsu but discusses many other thinkers who influenced him, directly or indirectly, or who, as in the case of Yoshinori Moroi, for example, were totally unknown to Izutsu and yet were working simultaneously in parallel fields. The inclusion of studies of such diverse figures as his first publisher Mitsuo Ueda; Pan-Asianist Shūmei Ōkawa; his language teachers Setsuzō Kotsuji, Abdur-Rasheed Ibrahim, Mūsā Bigiev and Yoshitarō Yokemura; Orientalist Louis Massignon and his “contemporary” al-Hallāj; Yasaburō Ikeda; Ibn ‘Arabī; Jacques Derrida; Daisetz Suzuki, as fascinating as they are, may at first strike the reader as odd. But as one reads further, one realizes that they all illustrate main themes in the book: the importance of *Zeitgeist*, how certain ideas transcend cultures and animate an age; parallelism and synchronicity, the way other ideas transcend time and link thinkers who lived in different eras; the hypothesis of a *Zwischenwelt*, *mediocosmos*, *mundus imaginalis*, or *M*-realm that mediates between the world we live in and the noumenal world; the subject of the mystical experience; the metaphysics of light; the One and the Many; the unity of existence; the immanence as well as transcendence of God. For the Western reader, the discussions of Japanese thinkers have the additional advantage of shining a spotlight on the vibrant intellectual milieu in which Izutsu lived.

Two aspects of Toshihiko Izutsu’s life seem central to an understanding of Izutsu, the philosopher of WORD: his extraordinary gift for languages—by his own reckoning he knew thirty—and an early, seminal mystical experience. In a sense, the philosophy that he would go on to develop was an attempt to articulate that experience not simply through language but in linguistic terms. And yet, Izutsu was acutely aware of the limitations of language and the way it delimits our view of the world. Differences in languages, and therefore in cultures, are not superficial, he believed; they indicate differences in perceptions of

reality—hence, his fascination with the different personae of God in world religions, the many names for the One and his existential concern about the “clash of cultures.”

The embodiment of these two strands of language and spirituality is the poet, prophet or shaman. Paul Claudel, the Prophet Moḥammad, the Taoist poet Ch'ü Yüan, each experienced a mystical *ekstasis* (a state of self-annihilation, of being literally outside of oneself) and *enthousiasmos* (being filled with God) and became a medium of revelation, a conduit through which the divine word descends. Philosophers, too, serve a similar function when they introduce new technical terms into our vocabulary as Rudolf Otto did with the concept of *Das Numinose*, or Henry Corbin with the expression *mundus imaginalis*, or Japanese thinkers such as Muneyoshi (Sōetsu) Yanagi, Shūzō Kuki and Kitarō Nishida, who contributed to the development of Japanese philosophical terminology.

Izutsu clearly loved poetry; he often cites, and translates, poems in his works. What he says of the Russian poet Tyutchev—“the primary goal of poetry [was] to grasp intuitively the basic essence of the universe, the deepest level of being, and to express his awareness of it symbolically through visual images”<sup>1</sup>—is what he attempted to achieve in his own philosophy. *Ekstasis and enthousiasmos* are not the goal of the mystic philosopher any more than they are for a poet or prophet or shaman. “A person who thoroughly explores the world of Ideas and reverently enters the secret inner chambers of transcendent life has the sacred duty to come back down to the phenomenal world, ignite the flame of transcendent life in its very midst and work diligently toward the idealization of the relative world.”<sup>2</sup> The *katabasis*, the descent from the noumenal world back down to the phenomenal world in which we live, is not the end of the mystical experience but the beginning of the mystic philosopher's mission. And that mission, as Izutsu himself described it, is ultimately a practical one: to prepare “a suitable locus in which . . . mutual understanding” among cultures can be actualized.<sup>3</sup> To do so, Izutsu drew upon his vast knowledge of Oriental thought to develop a philosophy of WORD.

Izutsu's starting point was the concept of *mu*, which is usually translated as Non-Being or Nothingness. But far from being a static,

empty void, it is the primordial chaos, the undifferentiated One from which the Many arise, i.e. Being itself. Drawing on the *ālaya-vijñāna*, the Storehouse Consciousness in Yogācāra Buddhism, he developed a semantic theory of ontology/consciousness, a depth-consciousness philosophy of language, which he called “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness.” Deep in our depth consciousness is a realm where meaning exists in the form of semantic potentials, *bīja*, literally “seeds.” Being manifests itself as beings, or as Izutsu puts it elsewhere, “Being is a meaningful articulation of the absolutely unarticulated ‘Nothingness.’”<sup>4</sup> In short, Being is WORD, “the dynamic force of ontological articulation.”<sup>5</sup> In a beautiful passage Izutsu described the instant in which WORD manifests itself as meaning:

As the countless tangled and intertwined “potential forms of meaning” attempt to emerge into the surface brightness of meaning, they jostle and joust with one another in the dusk of linguistic consciousness—the subtle, intermediate zone where the “Nameless” are just on the verge of metamorphosing into the “Named.” Between “Being” and “Non-Being,” between unarticulated and articulated, the specter of some indeterminate thing faintly flickers.<sup>6</sup>

But if “Being is WORD,” our encounter with language takes on a whole new dimension, and the role of the reader assumes a far greater function than ever before.

Naturally, WORDs must be clear. To understand, through a chain of clear WORDs that a writer has juxtaposed, the meaning behind them that existed from the beginning in the writer’s mind—i.e. their prelinguistic reality—that is what I call “reading.”<sup>7</sup>

Toshihiko Izutsu’s definition of reading is perhaps even more applicable to translating. Trying to grasp what the author wrote and make it read as if he had originally written it in English is what I, as a translator, aspire to. And yet attempting to occupy even a small corner of the wide-ranging mind of Eisuke Wakamatsu—not to mention the protean intellect of Toshihiko Izutsu—has proved to be a daunting challenge, one that I have fallen far short of meeting, as the many corrections that came back to me at the revision stage have made all too evident. These

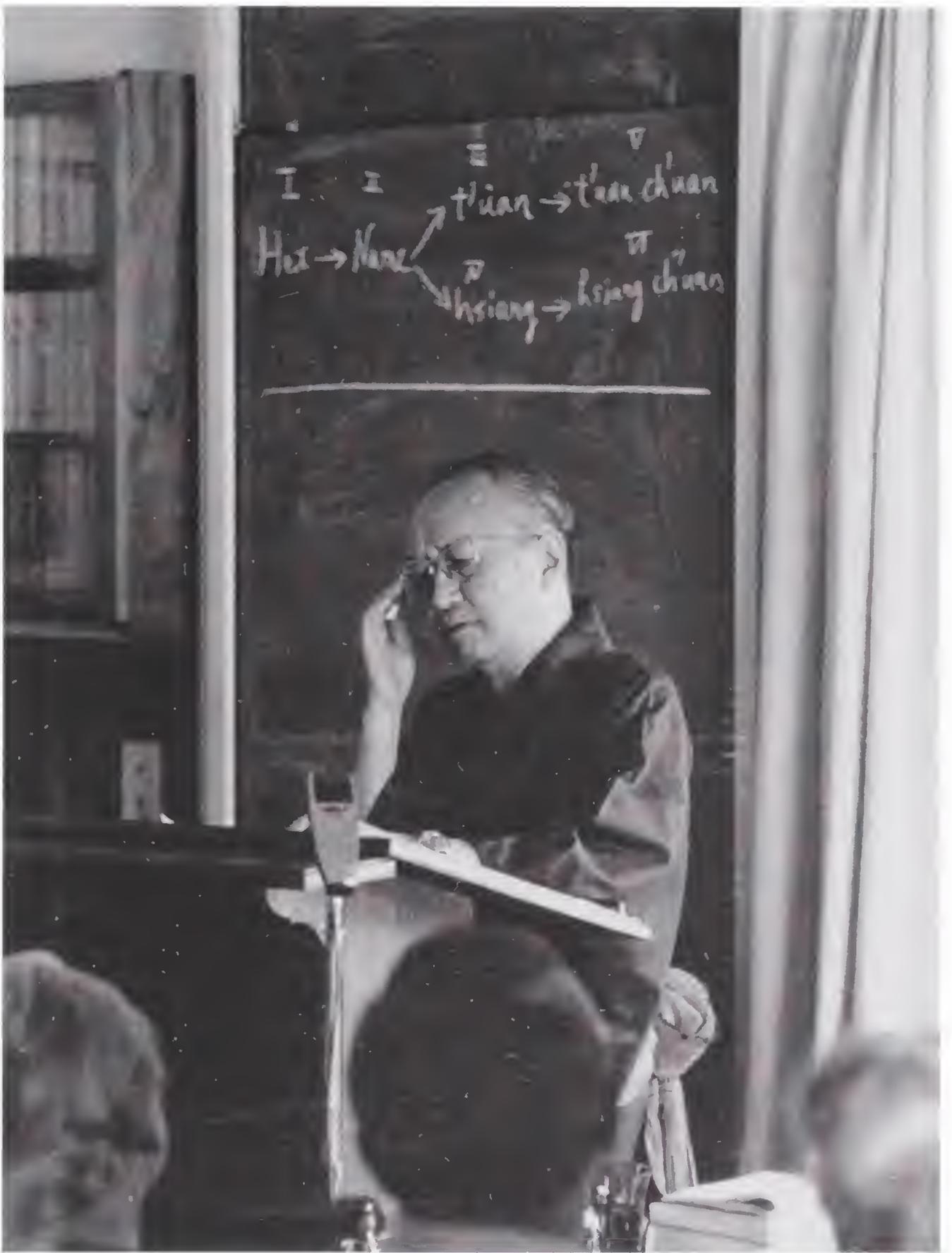
mistakes have now, I hope, been corrected, but I am under no illusion that I have succeeded in living up to the ideal that Izutsu sets for the reader/translator.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Eisuke Wakamatsu, Ryōko Katahara and Ryōji Noguchi for checking my translation, Miriam Skey for her careful proofreading and Fred Unwalla for his invaluable comments on everything from content to style. As always, Yasuo Saji, with whom I have worked for more than thirty years, has been a pillar of support during this project's exceptionally long gestation process. I am more grateful than I can ever express for his assistance at every stage of the translation and for his unfailing kindness and encouragement when I wondered whether I would ever be able to complete this work.

But, above all, my deepest gratitude goes to my husband, Frank Hoff, who died last year on November 7th and did not live to see the completion of this project, which we worked on together for nearly two years. He has now become my "phantom man."<sup>8</sup>

Jean Connell Hoff  
 Toronto  
 February 16, 2014





*Toshihiko Izutsu, lecturing at the Eranos Conference in the summer of 1979 in Ascona, Switzerland.*

*Beginning in 1967, Izutsu gave twelve lectures there, and he was to be personally involved with Eranos for fifteen years; in the latter half of this period, his was a central presence. Photo courtesy of Toyoko Izutsu.*



## CHAPTER ONE

# *Shinpi tetsugaku:* The Birth of a Poet-Philosopher

### The Pure Starting Point

ANY DISCUSSION OF Toshihiko Izutsu's starting point must begin with *Shinpi tetsugaku* (Philosophy of mysticism). The same would also hold true when discussing his intellectual origins or his personal history. The *Shinpi tetsugaku* referred to here, however, is not the revised version found in his selected works, but rather the first edition published by Hikari no Shobō in 1949, to which was once attached the subtitle, *Girishia no bu* (The Greek part). When references are made to passages that he later rewrote for the sake of greater scholarly accuracy, the revised version in his selected works will take precedence. But since the aim of the present book is to follow the course of his intellectual pilgrimage, I shall take the first edition of *Shinpi tetsugaku* as my source, for, in this work, we can clearly sense his living, breathing presence. When *Shinpi tetsugaku* is written without further qualification, it is the first edition that is meant.<sup>1</sup>

In 1989, when he was seventy-five years old, Izutsu returned to the original wording of the first edition for the republication of *Mahometto*, the brief biography of the Prophet Muḥammad that he had written in 1952 and that had been published in a revised and expanded edition under the title *Isurāmu seitan* (1979; The birth of Islām).<sup>2</sup> As in the case

of *Mahometto*, it seems likely that the first edition of *Shinpi tetsugaku* had a special significance for Izutsu personally. In his later years, looking back over half a lifetime, Izutsu spoke reminiscently about this work as his “pure starting point.”<sup>3</sup>

It may sound like a conclusion to say so, but anyone who reads *Shinpi tetsugaku* and *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; *Consciousness and essence*) over and over again, even without having read any of his other works, would be unlikely to misinterpret Toshihiko Izutsu as a person. That is not to downplay the importance of his English-language writings, which are as numerous as those in Japanese. But even if these were included, the position of *Shinpi tetsugaku* and *Ishiki to honshitsu* would not change. Indeed, if these two works were to be translated into English, the world would no doubt once again acknowledge the philosopher Toshihiko Izutsu with the same astonishment as it did at the time of the publication of *Sufism and Taoism* (1966–1967).<sup>4</sup> To ignore these two works is to lose sight of the core and framework of his thought. For these two volumes not only deserve to be indelibly engraved in the history of modern Japanese philosophy, they are also his intellectual and spiritual autobiography. In this regard, it is a matter of no small significance that Japanese people, for whom the Japanese language is their mother tongue, read and understand Toshihiko Izutsu’s works.

Izutsu’s first book was *Arabia shisōshi* (1941; *History of Arabic thought*), which covered the period from the birth of Islām through the twelfth-century philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rushd). Most of his published writings that immediately preceded or followed were related to Islām or the Arabic language. And since the journals to which he contributed were *Kaikyōken* (Islamic Area) edited by Kōji Ōkubo (1887–1950) and *Shin Aija* (New Asia), the journal of the East Asian Economic Research Bureau headed by Shūmei Ōkawa, people may have thought he was a specialist in Islamic studies. But, in fact, Toshihiko Izutsu’s encounter with Greek philosophy preceded his encounter with Islām by more than ten years. The first university lectures he ever gave were on the intellectual history of Greek mysticism.

The “Orient” is a key term for understanding Izutsu, yet the source even for it is to be found in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. In ancient Greece, he

saw “a classic example of the manifestation of a philosophy of identity based on *pathos* and *psychē* that can well be called Oriental.”<sup>5</sup> I will not comment now on the unique topology that Izutsu includes under the term “Orient.” He sometimes even called it “Greece and points east.” Elsewhere he states that it is a spiritual realm not confined to any geographical region.

*Shinpi tetsugaku* does not easily accommodate readers who pick it up out of mere curiosity with no prior preparation. It reminds me of a series of invisible barriers, one after another, that confront the spiritual practitioner. No sooner does the reader open the book than s/he encounters a passage that says “it is impossible to explain to people who have not experienced it personally, no matter who they may be.”<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, however, *Shinpi tetsugaku* is a work in which Izutsu, who almost never discussed his personal history, spoke frankly about his own spiritual journey.

Toshihiko Izutsu was born in Yotsuya, Tokyo, in 1914, the oldest son of his father, Shintarō, and his mother, Shinko. In a colloquy, Shōtarō Yasuoka (1920–2013) asked him if his father was originally from Niigata, and Izutsu said yes.<sup>7</sup> The younger son of a rice merchant, Shintarō from his early days was fond of calligraphy, *go* and Zen. His passion for Zen was so strong that he frequently went to Eihei-ji, the main temple of the Sōtō sect, to practice Zen meditation. He was also a person who, while doing calligraphy, experienced the unique sensation of “actually feeling his mind be suddenly transmitted directly to his brush tip and flow out completely on to the paper.” Calligraphy was not simply a matter of writing characters, the father told his son; it is an “unstoppable movement of the arm and fingers. Feelings that are truly in a person’s innermost recesses gush forth, communicate themselves to the tip of the hairs on the brush and come spilling out.”<sup>8</sup>

Izutsu’s father was a businessman who attached as much importance to his daily meditation practices as he did to his work. These practices had absolutely nothing to do with exercises for what in common parlance is called mental concentration or the promotion of health. The quotation that follows is, as explained earlier, from the introduction to the first edition of *Shinpi tetsugaku* published by

Hikari no Shobō. When the work was later revised and included in his selected works published by Chūō Kōronsha, part of it was omitted. The “he” refers to Izutsu’s father.

There is a saying, “embracing the ideal of the Madonna, one falls into the abyss of Sodom and drowns”; my father was just such an unhappy, demon-possessed man who knew to the very depths of his being this terrible division of the soul. Drawn by some strange, irresistible force, step by step, he would sink down into the dismal depths of ignominy, while at the same time he never stopped longing for the grace-filled light of an absolutely serene and pure mind that is its exact antithesis. Or, rather, he felt more keenly than anyone else the profound sinfulness in which human beings are ensnared, as well as a terror of it that makes the blood run cold, and that very fact seems to have made him all the more fervent in the pursuit of truth, in the search for a clean, undefiled state that can never be found in this world. For as long as I can remember, the austerities that I often saw him perform had an air of desperation about them, as though they were a matter of life and death. He would sit ramrod straight all alone in the tearoom deep into the late autumn night listening to the sound of the distant wind through the pine trees and the bubbling of the water boiling in the antique iron tea kettle. As he sat silently practicing the technique of stopping the breath and looking within, a sense of pain and suffering emanated from the figure of my father.<sup>9</sup>

Given the profound darkness of his inner heart and his extreme sensitivity to sin, he may have thought his son, too, would experience the same torments. It was, perhaps, to build a mind and body that could withstand such suffering that he forced his son from an early age to do *zazen* and to read without understanding such classic Chinese *kōan* collections as *Lin Chi Lu* (The Sayings of Master Lin-Chi), *Pi Yen Lu* (The Blue Cliff Records) and *Wu Mên Kuan* (The Gateless Gate). In a meditation practice, any allowances a spiritual guide makes for a student’s weaknesses implies a lack of love. Since the father’s austerities were practiced on the borderline between life and death, it was inevitable that the impact of such rigor would be passed on to his son.

But it was not only Zen that his father taught him. “I learned from my father his own unique introspective techniques. Or, rather, they were forcibly drummed into me whether I liked it or not.” As these words suggest, it would perhaps be more correct to understand even Zen as merely a stepping-stone to his father’s personal introspective practices.

First, he would write the character for “mind” (心) in bold, flowing strokes; then, he would have me look at it intently day after day for a prescribed period of time. Finally, the moment he saw that the time was ripe, he would tear up the piece of paper and tell me, “Don’t look at the character written on the paper; look at the one inscribed in your mind. Stare at it for twenty-four hours without stopping even for an instant; gather your scattered thoughts together and focus them on that one point.” After some time had passed, he would order me to “make every effort to erase all traces of the character written in your mind. Don’t look at the character for ‘mind’ but at the living ‘mind’ within you that lies behind that character.” Then he would go one step further and say, “Don’t look at your mind. Eliminate all internal and external distractions completely and immerse yourself in nothingness; enter nothingness, see nothingness.”<sup>10</sup>

As far as we can tell from reading this passage, the father’s ascetic practices do not seem to be the fixed meditation techniques handed down by any particular traditional religion. They also differ from the practice commonly known as *naikan* — introspection. As Izutsu writes, these were probably his father’s own “unique introspective techniques.” The fact that he was presented with a path free from specific religious tenets or practices at the beginning of his spiritual life would turn out to be an extremely important condition for the formation of Toshihiko Izutsu’s character.

The path to spiritual perfection is not bound by dogma, as the sincere attempts by practitioners, both Zen and Christian, to perform each other’s religious austerities in silence clearly show. In such a context, the aim is not a discussion of ideas but a deepening of understanding. The former, it goes without saying, primarily exists for the sake of the latter. Izutsu’s recognition of the inextricability of practice and thought never changed as long as he lived. He valued what he actually

felt over what he understood with his mind. That attitude is noticeably present in his major work, *Ishiki to honshitsu*. Good examples of it are his study of the spiritual exercises of the Zen monk Dōgen (1200–1253) and how they concurrently deepened his understanding, or the spiritual exercises of Chu-tzū (1130–1200) and the Northern Sung Confucians, namely, Izutsu's studies of the importance of sitting meditation and its correlation with scholarship. Toshihiko Izutsu's views on ascetic practices will have to be considered elsewhere.

His father, who was so free in his meditation techniques, emphatically forbade his son "to think." Izutsu goes so far as to say, "I was taught that the inclusion of intellectual inquiry was heresy. . . . I believed that [spiritual exercises] were, from first to last, the pure and simple path of praxis, and even to think about them, or to think on the basis of them, was absolutely not permissible."<sup>1</sup> When he says, "I believed," this does not mean he trusted his father and had a premonition that something would come and save him. By following the path the intellect indicated, the spirit would lose its way. And one day it would be destroyed. These words were almost like a curse. But this paternal warning was also the greatest expression of love his father could give him. For the son there was simply no alternative but to believe. Izutsu's encounter with Greek philosophy occurred at the very moment of this dark night of the soul.

What he discovered in the Greek sages was a truth the exact opposite of his father's stern command. He discovered that it is philosophy—the practice of the love of wisdom—by which he could find the way to the pursuit of truth; that the voices of the sages, passing down through thousands of years of history, continue to raise fresh and vital questions right up to the present day. This experience, it would be fair to say, was like that of a man cast adrift in a vast ocean grabbing hold of a plank bobbing in the waves. Going against his father's words, the son felt the urge to "think" well up within him. "Thinking" is not supposition. It is different from speculation. "Thinking," a philosopher once said, is the way something that transcends human beings manifests itself to the world through the intellect.

I never imagined, never even dreamed, that philosophy and metaphysics, which might be called the classic activities of human

reasoning, are predicated on, and can be effectuated by, the experiences of the contemplative life. But, later on, Western mystics would teach me that the exact opposite of this was true. How great, then, was my surprise and my excitement when I learned that, at the base of their philosophy, the Greek sages in particular presupposed the ecstatic experience of the *vita contemplativa* as the very source of their philosophic thinking. This is how I discovered my Greece.<sup>12</sup>

He does not write the name of the philosopher who opened the way to “thinking” for him. Most likely it was Aristotle. But even if it was not Aristotle alone, I believe it was his encounter with the “sage of Stagira” that would become the turning point in the chain of events that might be called his philosophical revelation. Aristotle called the activity of the transcendently Absolute *noēsis noēseōs*, “thinking about thinking,” the self-cognitive power of reason.<sup>13</sup> The following quote is a passage from the chapter on the mystic philosophy of Aristotle in *Shinpi tetsugaku*.

Was it not surely the case that the concept of the *vita contemplativa* as the perfection of human life in this world was an idea that derived from Aristotle’s unique view of life? For the sage of Stagira, who firmly commended the absolute superiority of the intellectual and noetic virtues over the active and practical ones, it was the paradise of pure contemplation resembling the life of the gods that constituted the irreplaceable zest of life, the culmination of human happiness on earth.<sup>14</sup>

Can we not see how consistent this passage is with the earlier one about how “I discovered my Greece”? The Aristotle who frequently appears in the history of philosophy is the repudiator of the theory of Ideas and of mysticism. But the fact that Toshihiko Izutsu first encountered Aristotle under the guise of a mystic philosopher would not only set the tone for *Shinpi tetsugaku*, it would also serve as preparation for his encounter with Islamic philosophy and the Islamic mystic philosophers.

For Izutsu, the discovery of Greek philosophy was not a negation of the spiritual exercises practiced with his father. This is clear, too, from his statement that the days he spent meditating with his father themselves constituted the *vita contemplativa*, “the culmination of human life in this world.” Considering the permanence and profundity of its

impact, one cannot help but think that what Izutsu inherited from his father was the activity of “reading” rather than any introspective technique. His father, who had forbidden him to “think,” required him to read the Chinese texts of the *Analecets* and the Zen classics. In a spiritual praxis, the teacher will select works for students to read corresponding to the depth of their practice. The act of reading Chinese texts without understanding them teaches students that “reading” is not simply an intellectual activity, it is an activity of “feeling” deeply that engages the entire body. At the Academy, too, where Aristotle studied, “reading” meant coming in contact with the mysteries.

“Contemplation” is a translation of the Greek word *theōria*, from which the word “theory” is derived. It is also used in the sense of deep consideration from its meaning of a contact with the Transcendent that occurs beyond intellectual activity. Izutsu writes that “pure contemplation implies an ecstatic experience of the human intellect.”<sup>15</sup> “Pure contemplation” is a synonym for *theōria*. When contemplation has attained the ultimate in purity, one experiences *ekstasis*, the state of being outside of oneself. *Ekstasis* is, of course, the origin of the word ecstasy and often refers to religious exaltation. But, in this context, we do not necessarily have to call to mind the ecstatic experiences of a saint like Teresa of Avila. *Ekstasis* here is nothing less than the experience of making the leap, as though out of longing, to the source of Being, “in short, the process by which a person’s inner soul or spirit sheds its external flesh and returns to, or immerses itself in, the great source of reality.”<sup>16</sup> But were this activity simply to end with “ecstasy,” the spirit that had flown from its flesh might be dashed to the ground. Instead, at the very instant in which one reaches the culmination of the “ecstatic experience,” one immediately experiences *enthousiasmos*. In the twinkling of an eye, those who have offered up their bodies and annihilated their own being are filled by the Transcendent. Having completely emptied themselves, they encounter the phenomenon of “God” instantly filling that void.

For the sages of ancient Greece, *theōria* was a sacred activity, a yearning for the Transcendent. An internal praxis, it was also an activity that required them to put their lives at stake and face dangers and ordeals far greater than those we experience in the external world. Moreover, philosophy for them meant taking the experience of

*enthousiasmos* that arrived at the ecstatic climax of self-annihilation, endowing it with the flesh of logic and leaving a record of it behind for the rest of the world. For that reason, they did not believe that philosophy was of human origin. Plato had called the primal activity of philosophy *anamnēsis*, and, as this implies, philosophy is not a matter of thinking, it is an act of recollection, a retracing and gathering together one's remembrances of the intelligible or noumenal world.

Izutsu described himself as “a Hellenist and a Platonist.”<sup>17</sup> This statement was also a declaration that the existence of a transcendent Intellect, and *anamnēsis* of it, formed the basis of his own philosophy. “That *contemplatio* is an essential element in the mystical process requires no further discussion, but that does not mean that *ekstasis* per se comprises the essence of mysticism itself. Having once attained the lofty heights of *theōria*, one must of one's own accord bring it to fruition through a resolute desire for a praxis that will decisively destroy the peace and tranquility of this beatific contemplation—that is mysticism.”<sup>18</sup> This one passage concisely conveys the gist of *Shinpi tetsugaku*. *Theōria*, *ekstasis*, *praxis*—these will all become key words that begin here and run through the whole of Toshihiko Izutsu's thought. *Theōria* does not always entail contemplation. Nor does it end with the ecstatic experience. It is not complete until it bears fruit in praxis.

When reading *Shinpi tetsugaku*, one becomes aware of how frequently, and how diversely, the term “praxis” is used. What Izutsu unmistakably sets out to elucidate in this study is not a genealogy of Greek mysticism; it is the course of praxis that mystics must follow, the process by which someone goes beyond self-discovery and returns to the ontological source. He called this the *via mystica*. In order to have a common understanding of the true nature of what he means by the “mystic way,” I would like to identify the background of several key terms: intellect and soul or spirit; the phenomenal world and the Real World; the transcendental world or the noumenal world; and finally, *anabasis* (the ascent) and *katabasis* (the descent). Instead of these words, we might use an expression Izutsu would adopt later on, “semantic articulation.” Semantic articulation was a concept that would continue to live within him for the rest of his life. This is clear in his last work *Ishiki no keijijōgaku*: “*Daijō kishinron*” *no tetsugaku*

(1993; *Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*), which in its terminology, subject matter and theses is strongly reminiscent of *Shinpi tetsugaku*. One example of this is the passage cited below, in which he discusses the consciousness of *shin* (心 mind) in the *Awakening of Faith*, the Buddhist treatise traditionally ascribed to the Indian philosopher-poet Aśvaghōṣa (ca 80–ca150). Although the topic under discussion is not the issue we are concerned with here, I would like you to read it taking note of the terminology.

“The important point . . . is that it is a transpersonal, metaphysical consciousness-in-general, a purely intelligible body that has attained perfect enlightenment comparable with *nous* in Plotinus’ emanation theory (an old-fashioned person might even call it a *cosmic* consciousness). To speak of a cosmic consciousness or cosmic enlightened body would be overly pretentious and passé,” Izutsu writes, and people today are not likely to readily believe in “the actual existence of such an infinitely vast, transpersonal consciousness.”<sup>19</sup> Although here he uses expressions like “an old-fashioned person” and “overly pretentious and passé,” in the past he himself had often used the terms “cosmic consciousness” and “cosmic enlightened body.” But that is not all. *Nous*, i.e. Intellect or pure Intellect, was *the* most important key word in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. Indeed, were we to liken *Shinpi tetsugaku* to a fictional genre, it would be fair to call it a long epic poem on the subject of *nous*. Behind the changing scene, going back to the mythical period and passing down through Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Xenophanes, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, the true narrator in this work, the subjective voice of existence that continues throughout, is *nous*.

“From the One to *nous*, from *nous* to the state of fallen souls, the soul descends, losing its original divine form at every step. And at every step the world, too, descends with it.”<sup>20</sup> Izutsu is here describing the place in Plotinus’ emanation theory in which he discussed the creation of all things. Simply put, *nous* is the first form in which the One manifested its true aspect; this gradually changes its form to the “fallen souls,” namely to the “body-soul” or “embodied soul” of human beings. An embodied soul is the *anima* or *psychē* (from which the word “psychology” is derived), and it is distinct from pure spirit, the *pneuma* or *spiritus*. In the present work, we will for the most part use “soul” to indicate

the former and “spirit” for the latter. In *Shinpi tetsugaku*, Izutsu uses the expression “spiritual enlightenment” or “cosmic spiritual enlightenment”; this is an awakening of the spirit and means something greater than the workings of the soul. The soul belongs to a person and defines his/her individuality. The spirit is the seat of the One; it is proof that human beings were born from the Transcendent. To borrow an expression from the philosopher Katsumi Takizawa (1909–1984), soul and spirit are inseparable yet unassimilatable, and in terms of the superiority of the spirit they exist in an irreversible relation to one another.

To read *Shinpi tetsugaku* paying attention to the key word “world” is to be amazed at its diverse classifications. The phenomenal world, the Real World, the noumenal world, the transcendental world cited above are only a few examples. This work could also be read as a discussion of realms—Plato’s world of Ideas, of course, the individuated world, the sensible world, the world of sensible simulacra, the true world, the truly real world, the inner psychological world. This existential experience of the world as a structure woven together out of many layers was probably cultivated by Izutsu’s daily meditation sessions with his father. What he calls the “phenomenal world” is the world that we live in, and yet even though phenomena occur in this world, he does not believe that the “reality” of these phenomena has been made clear. The world in which “reality” unquestionably exists Izutsu calls the “Real World.”

It was probably in Rilke, I believe, that Izutsu encountered this expression. In his library were several old copies of Rilke’s works. This poet, whose personal spiritual crisis reflected that of the late nineteenth century, was, along with Mallarmé, a poet whom Izutsu loved and one by whom he was strongly influenced. Rilke’s novel *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910; *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, 1930) is nothing less than the record of a single soul living in the narrow interface between the Real World (*Realität*) and the phenomenal world (*Wirklichkeit*). Like Izutsu, Rilke, too, was faithful to his personal feeling that the reality of truth is not revealed in this world. Later, in *Ishiki to honshitsu*, Izutsu would note that Rilke was behind his use of the expression the “Real World.”<sup>21</sup>

The noumenal world is, as the term suggests, the world over which *nous*, the Intellect, holds sway, and events transpire there that are

beyond the conjectures of the human mind. The transcendental world is a general term for the Real World or the noumenal world. The noumenal world and the transcendental world both exist beyond the phenomenal world, and in that sense there is no difference between them and the Real World. But the difference in terminology is not merely a rhetorical device. Rather, it reveals the subtlety of Izutsu's contemplative experience. He uses just the right word for the topic under discussion. Just as Dante depicted the ten tiers of heaven, Izutsu recognizes in the one absolute and transcendental world, several different worlds, each with its own dynamic persona.

The pursuit of the *via mystica* is often likened to climbing. The path on which one utterly annihilates the self and single-mindedly seeks the noumenal world, Izutsu calls the *anabasis*, the ascent. A person who thoroughly accomplishes this does not live in peace in the noumenal world, but must find his/her way back down once again to the phenomenal world and reproduce there the intelligible world's ultimate reality. Izutsu calls this path the *katabasis*, the descent. A mountain climber's aim is not simply to reach the summit; s/he commits to memory the scenery seen there, and when s/he comes back down, must tell others about it. Everything seen at the summit may be enchantingly beautiful, but to rest there would be only half the journey. Those whose eyes are so bedazzled by the extraordinary phenomena of the world of the ascent that they do not devote all their energies into putting what they have seen to practical effect have abandoned the *via mystica* and deviated abominably from rectitude. That is why Izutsu does not develop a phenomenology of the mysteries or of mysticism. To linger there is, rather, "to be addicted to meaningless child's play";<sup>22</sup> "to grow dizzy in the dazzling brilliance" of the mystical experience "and be carried away by a bloated self-conceit and self-complacency" is nothing short of a "heresy against mysticism."<sup>23</sup> Although the following passage was perhaps an unwritten law for the sages of ancient Greece, it was also an expression of the rules that Izutsu set down for himself throughout his own lifetime.

Platonic sages who rise above the present world and experience eternal life must leave behind that mystic realm of self-oblivion and serene contemplation, like some deep limpid pool, and once again

return to the present world, where they must untiringly build that eternal world. A person who thoroughly explores the world of Ideas and reverently enters the secret inner chambers of transcendent life has the sacred duty to come back down to the phenomenal world, ignite the flame of transcendent life in its very midst and work diligently toward the idealization of the relative world.<sup>24</sup>

It is not hard to find sentences like this in the chapter on the mystic philosophy of Plato, the central essay in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. He also states, “Even though my soul alone were saved, if the souls of all other people, without exception, were not saved, the work of the mystic would not be complete.”<sup>25</sup> As this statement makes clear, Izutsu argued tenaciously, without fear of repetition, for the absolute importance of the *katabasis* in Platonic philosophy. Anyone who, at the culmination of contemplation, of one’s own accord, breaks through the state of silence and dedicates him/herself to the corrupt world in which we live—such a person for Toshihiko Izutsu is a “mystic.”

Izutsu writes of the “mystic,” but in the mystic coexist the profound thinker and the self-effacing practitioner. Most of the pre-Socratic philosophers were “activists who lived in complete accord with the vibrant spirit of their age; they were passionate practitioners inasmuch as to think meant to act. . . . [Some] were great and vigorous warriors who stirred the hearts of their people and routed external enemies, or the greatest statesmen of their age, epoch-making revolutionaries, brilliant lawmakers for their native lands who saw the corruption and degeneration of their country’s manners and customs and with the unrestrained sincerity of patriotism resolutely stood up and reformed the government.”<sup>26</sup> In short, “they were all mystics before they were philosophers.”<sup>27</sup> As this suggests, the word mystic is an expression that implies spiritual training rather than human individuation, by which I mean a special quality of the soul. Mystics are not mystifiers, men of many words, clever rhetoricians expounding the mysteries. Mystics act before they speak. Their earnest desire is not to propound any “ism.” They are for salvation for everyone. Salvation is not a metaphor here. The ultimate aim of Greek philosophy is not rational understanding but the salvation of the soul.

Izutsu's father, Shintarō, became ill and died in 1944. As was cited earlier, he wrote about his father that he was “an unhappy, demon-possessed man who knew to the very depths of his being this terrible division of the soul.” The following passage was omitted at the time *Shinpi tetsugaku* was reprinted. One cannot help thinking, however, that his fundamental motivation for writing this work is inscribed here.

For someone whose soul has been rent in two by this fundamental schism, one step upward toward the grace-filled light is simultaneously one step in a downward plunge into darkness, a tragic if inevitable consequence. As was only to be expected, just when my father's pursuit of the contemplative life seemed to have reached its utmost limits, for him it meant, on the contrary, giving up on life altogether, in other words, death—even though the consummation of the *vita contemplativa* ought to have meant the consummation of life itself.<sup>28</sup>

Death is one of the fundamental issues dealt with in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. And yet in that work, there is always a dialogue with the dead. Death and the dead are not the same. Death is an event in the phenomenal world, but the dead are “the living” in the Real World. When Izutsu discussed death, he never forgot the dead. That his father was always present in the background of these discussions can somehow never be in doubt. The father whose pursuit of ascetic practices continued right up until his death was the first “mystic” to appear in Toshihiko Izutsu's life.

At the time of writing *Shinpi tetsugaku*, Izutsu was suffering from tuberculosis and coughing up blood as he wrote. Death was closing in on Izutsu himself.

### The Sage of Stagira and the Sacred Duty

Philosophy in ancient Greece, Izutsu writes, was, at its inception, almost inextricably linked to the *mysterion*, the mystery religions. This conviction—that, rather than being a history of thought, the history of Greek philosophy is a profession of faith that originated in the mystery religions—pervades *Shinpi tetsugaku*.

As noted earlier, the spirit with which a person is endowed is proof that s/he is separated off, or, to use one of Izutsu's key terms, articulated from the Transcendent. If we accept the implications of this idea, then, it could be said that spirituality is the act of aspiring to the One, who is the spirit's primordial reality. Greek spirituality underwent a huge transformation with the emergence of a new god, a foreign god from Thrace to the north, Dionysus. Izutsu does not think that the god Dionysus was a product of the imagination dreamed up by the Greeks in the seventh century BCE. He believes in the reality of his existence and treats it as a religious experience of a kind rarely encountered by the human race. One should also not overlook the fact, he notes, that "the rites that accompanied the worship of Dionysus in their original form" were "a kind of shamanism based on mass hallucination and extreme emotional excitement."<sup>29</sup> This means that shamanism, i.e. the experience of a primitive *enthousiasmos*, lies at the root of philosophy.

Toshihiko Izutsu's observation that Greek mythology is utterly this-worldly is profoundly interesting. In the age of myth, the relation between humans and gods had little to do with salvation. The gods did not promise to save the human race. But this new god proclaimed that for those who believed in him there was another world. Life did not end in this world, the new god Dionysus said; there was, in Buddhist terms, a *higan*, an "other shore," a world of nirvana and enlightenment. The Greeks had believed that the present world was all there was, but this god taught them that there was another world beyond it.

"Dionysus! Invoke the name of this fearsome god, and the trees in the forests would stir, the steep mountains would shake in eerie, unearthly rapture. A storm of mysterious ecstasy would envelop the whole earth; people, animals, trees, plants—all things would be absorbed and united into one in a dark night of weird intoxication; wild passions would surge up like a raging sea and run rampant with horrific power."<sup>30</sup> What we find here are sacrificial offerings, rapture, frenzy and divine possession. To be sure, this god proclaimed to the people of Greece that there was another world, but that did not mean he promised them "*personal* salvation" or "beatitude and the immortality of the soul."<sup>31</sup> The ancient Greeks, without any promise of fulfillment, were searching for something that would fill their inner hunger. When the

new god manifested himself in the phenomenal world, this was surely the expression of a primordial human aspiration for salvation. Unable to find satisfaction from the gods of mythology, the Greeks were seeking a life on an “other shore,” eternal life.

“As well as being able to provide a unique doctrinal structure and an organization centered on secret ceremonies and rituals” in his position as the chief god of the Orphic cult, Dionysus became “for the first time the god of a pan-Hellenic, other-worldly religion.”<sup>32</sup> History has not passed down much information about the true nature of Orphism. An early religious sect founded by “Orpheus, ‘a Thracian poet-priest’ hidden in the deep mists of legend”<sup>33</sup> who came from a foreign land, it believed in transmigration and the immortality of the individual soul, held secret ceremonies and preached that the path to eternal bliss lay in a life of asceticism.

Concurrently with the attainment of spiritual salvation, the concept of a spirit-flesh dualism emerged, and, concurrently with that, the germination of philosophy. In this brief moment in time, Pythagoras was born. Not only were philosophy and religion inseparable, the concept of philosophy untinged by religion would probably have never occurred to him. Pythagoras was not alone in thinking this way. This was the true nature of philosophy throughout ancient Greece. “Philosophy was a mystery religion on a higher plane,” Izutsu writes, “where ‘truth’ was hypostatized, so to speak, as a sacramental presence.”<sup>34</sup>

“Orphism-Pythagorism,” as Izutsu calls it in a single term, was a spiritual community in which the Orphic sect and the Pythagorean sect were intimately related to one another. Referring to Parmenides, who is said to have been educated by the Pythagoreans, Izutsu discusses initiation, the ladder by which the soul ascends in the mystery religions. This ladder has three rungs: The first is *katharsis* meaning purification, “sweeping away the emotional filth of the present world”; next comes *myēsis*, “abstaining from thought and becoming absorbed in contemplation”; and finally *epopteia*, “spiritual enlightenment.” *Katharsis* is the purification of the mind, body and spirit. *Myēsis* is the overcoming of intellectual speculation, and *epopteia* is entry into the mysteries. This three-step framework of spiritual progress in the mystery religions was adopted intact by philosophy, but the final rung of the ladder, *epopteia*,

“the culmination of the mystery religions,” Izutsu says, “was the beginning of philosophy.”<sup>35</sup> If entry into the mysteries through the purification and annihilation of being was the end of religion, then rising above this and elucidating its praxis in the world we live in becomes the starting point of philosophy.

It was not just the so-called pre-Socratic philosophers whose lives were predicated on this fusion of religion and philosophy. That would remain unchanged right down to Plotinus, with whom *Shinpi tetsugaku* concludes. Izutsu describes Plotinus as “the final synthesis of Ionian natural mysticism and the spiritual mysticism of the mystery religions.”<sup>36</sup> Plotinus, too, was likely to be both an inquirer into the truth and a priest.

There is a famous painting by Raphael entitled “The School of Athens.” In the center stand two sages. One wears an orange-colored robe and points to heaven. The other, draped in blue, makes a gesture with the palm of his hand as though pushing down the earth. Each, so the interpretation goes, is making a claim for the place where truth resides. The figure pointing to heaven is Plato; the one insisting that it is confined to the phenomenal world is Aristotle. Translated into history-of-thought terms, the painting depicts Plato’s theory of Ideas and Aristotle’s rejection of it.

Because of the sheer greatness of their teacher, most of the students who gathered in the Academy, which Plato founded, were too busy assimilating the thoughts he had passed down and never considered deepening those thoughts themselves. This accomplishment, the history of philosophy tells us, would have to wait for the appearance of Plotinus 600 years later. Most histories of philosophy make note of the time gap between Plato and Plotinus and attribute the reason for it to Aristotle. Aristotle, it has been argued, was the subverter of Platonic philosophy. Aristotle “declared that he loved his mentor but loved the truth even more.”<sup>37</sup> This conviction burned within him from the time he was in the Academy, the home of philosophy. It is likely that Aristotle was well aware of the tenacity of his own skepticism, but at the same time he also knew all too well that when challenged, his former master’s ideas would not be easily shaken.

There is a flower. People do not doubt their belief in its “reality.” But in Platonic philosophy, the things that people perceive with their five senses are regarded as merely *eikones* (illusions or images). What truly exists are the Ideas. No matter how beautiful a flower may be, it cannot be called really real (*ontōs on*). It is an incomplete representation, a mere shadow of the Idea of Flower. Be it stones, people, kings, citizens, states or even concepts such as beauty, courage, equality, this rule does not change. As many Ideas exist as the number of beings. And, Plato believed, the Ideas of all things ultimately converge on the Idea of Ideas, namely the Idea of the Good. If, however, the Ideality or Intelligibility of Being is ubiquitous, as Plato posits, why must it be limited to the world of Ideas in heaven? Why doesn’t it appear right now at this moment? In short, why shouldn’t it be realized in the world that human beings see and feel? “If Being is intelligible, then that would not mean that the Being of the heavenly world somewhere far away from the actual world in which we truly, tangibly live is intelligible; this tangible world of being, the stuff of becoming, must be intelligible. The real, raw being that bleeds when cut would have to be intelligible.”<sup>38</sup> This thought would become Aristotle’s starting point.

Certainly, Aristotle destroyed the “image” of Plato. But wasn’t this image a false idol of their mentor that the Platonists had created? Aristotle was not the subverter of Platonic philosophy. In Aristotle, Izutsu sees “a sincere Platonist,” his most faithful follower.<sup>39</sup> He also states that “Aristotle was a pure mystic, no less so than either his former teacher Plato or Plato’s much later disciple Plotinus.”<sup>40</sup> Izutsu was speaking of Parmenides when he wrote, “In the final analysis, metaphysics is theology,”<sup>41</sup> but he probably had Aristotle in mind at the time. The fundamental unity of metaphysics and theology was a basic issue for Aristotle. From its inception, Aristotle’s philosophy was nothing other than “theology.” But the “theology” referred to here does not mean a human understanding of “God” by human beings. According to *Shinpi tetsugaku*, a philosopher is someone who is entrusted by the Transcendent with restoring Its true image through wisdom. *Theōria*, contemplation, is undoubtedly the path of ontological inquiry, but what precedes it is an invitation from the Source. It resembles the act of surrendering oneself totally to the beloved, Aristotle said. The Aristotle

to whom Toshihiko Izutsu draws attention is not an analytic student of “God.” He is the practitioner-thinker who loves him.

Izutsu alludes to *oreksis*, which Aristotle explains as an instinctive desire for the Absolute with which human beings are endowed. In order to save human beings from confusion and despair, Aristotle believes, God implanted in them the instinct to love; thus, it is innately part of human beings’ true nature to seek the source of their being for themselves. Underlying Aristotle’s “theology” is his trust in the Absolute and his firm belief in a place of repose. It even calls to mind a maternal image of God suggestive of Amida Nyorai in the teachings of Jōdo (Pure Land) Buddhism. The duty of the mystic is to arrive at an understanding of God, not in order to give oneself up to the pleasures of the sweetly beautiful experience of divinity but to prepare for the divine manifestation. Why? Because it is the mission of philosophy, which Aristotle inherited from his teacher, Plato, that “one must never stop until the benefits of personal salvation are shared by all people, and ultimately there is salvation for the entire human race.”<sup>42</sup>

Aristotle, according to Toshihiko Izutsu, not only stated plainly that contemplation is the *via philosophica*. He taught that the ultimate goal of the contemplative experience is to transcend individual limitations and constraints and eventually make possible a “cosmic praxis.” This is nothing less than the “culmination of the pragmatic activities of a person who assumes upon him/herself the weight of all beings by way of a human praxis, i.e. a cosmic praxis.”<sup>43</sup> If a single being experiences *enthousiasmos* in the true sense, this means blessing for the world. Is it not possible to hear in these words the voice of the prophet loudly proclaiming the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, or the transformation of Shakyamuni into the Buddha, in short, the sanctification of the human being?

### The Poet Who Prophesies

In his undergraduate days, Toshihiko Izutsu belonged to the Department of English Literature in the Faculty of Letters, but opinions differ as to the topic of his graduation thesis. His friend Masao Sekine (1912–2000), who later became an Old Testament scholar, said it was

on Chaucer's literary style; a former student and later a university colleague, Hideichi Matsubara (1930– ), said he heard from Izutsu himself that it was on William Morris. In any case, when Izutsu became a teaching assistant, he suddenly began lecturing on “the history of Greek mystic thought.”

Unfortunately, the nationalist trend of thought on the campus as a whole at the time had little sympathy for such purely transcendent reflections; in addition, relations between the US and Japan were rapidly growing strained. The situation at home and abroad had become so tense that most students were mobilized midway through their studies, and I was forced to interrupt my plans.<sup>44</sup>

The reason the lectures at Keio University were discontinued was not simply the intensification of the war. As can be inferred from “the nationalist trend of thought on the campus as a whole had little sympathy for such purely transcendent reflections,” pressures were brought to bear that were hard to resist. Had he merely dealt with “mysticism” as one concept in the history of thought, however, it is unlikely that anyone would have raised a fuss. Toshihiko Izutsu's personal history as a practicing mystic, which is clearly evident in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, may already at this time have made those around him uneasy. If we wish to try and understand “mystics,” “we ourselves must penetrate into the quiet depths of the mysteries of the universe with the same insight that they had and transform the condition of our own spiritual awareness through the same experiences as theirs.”<sup>45</sup> It is not hard to imagine him uttering words such as these from a lecture stand. During the war, the “God” of which Izutsu spoke was not an entity that the “nationalist trend of thought” would tolerate.

Izutsu received no training in philosophy at the university. Indeed, it may be that this very fact determined his intellectual development. There was, of course, someone whom he called his teacher, Junzaburō Nishiwaki, whom he described as his “one and only mentor in my entire life.”<sup>46</sup> A scholar of English literature, a philologist, linguist and poet, Nishiwaki presumably is the person who gave permission for the lectures that formed the basis for *Shinpi tetsugaku*. Nowadays, I “have become as gentle as a lamb,” but at the time he entered college,

he was “truly cocky and conceited [and] looked down on most of the professors.”<sup>47</sup> Since Izutsu says so himself, this is probably true. In his colloquy with Shōtarō Yasuoka as well, he says he was “pretty wild” at Mita.<sup>48</sup> And according to Yasaburō Ikeda (1914–1982), during an English class, Izutsu made a list of the teacher’s mistakes and handed it to him, and he wrote his geography exam in English.

Izutsu had originally enrolled in the Faculty of Economics at Keio. He did so because his father would not give him permission to enter the Faculty of Letters. To his father, who read Sōseki constantly, literature was a path only geniuses were allowed to pursue; he may have felt it had nothing to do with his son. He “held me, I thought, in very low esteems,”<sup>49</sup> Izutsu writes, but that does not mean he felt his son lacked ability. If that had been the case, he probably would not have made his son practice the mystic way from an early age. The father who forced him to enter the Faculty of Economics may have expected that his son would be active in the business world like himself. After registration, when Izutsu sat in his assigned seat, Yasaburō Ikeda sat next to him and Morio Katō (1913–1989) sat behind him. What the three had in common was that they had all enrolled in the Faculty of Economics without any real interest the subject and they all had a passion for literature. They resolved to switch to the Faculty of Letters. On the day the exams in the economics faculty were over, the three of them went to Sukiya-bashi in Ginza and, from the top of the bridge, threw their heavy textbooks on the principles of bookkeeping “into the muddy river, and with that severed our ties with economics once and for all and in high spirits entered the Faculty of Letters.”<sup>50</sup> It was no doubt quite an exhilarating and unforgettable moment; Ikeda and Katō both left similar accounts.

Forty-five years later, upon his return from Iran, Izutsu began a series of short essays in *Sanshokuki* (Tricolore), the journal of the correspondence course division at Keio University. For a man who was guarded in talking about himself, these form an interesting body of work that frankly retraced the course of his life. In one of these, “Shi to Hōyū” (Teachers, colleagues and friends), he said he had no colleagues. As for friends, however, the first to come to mind, he writes, is Yasaburō Ikeda. In the *Analects*, the word translated here as “colleague” means a scholarly companion, and “friend” is a close friend.

When Izutsu and Ikeda first met, the two of them “for some reason were crazy about philosophy.” Yasaburō Ikeda, who would later establish himself as an authority on Japanese folklore, was so passionate about philosophy that he left Izutsu mute with amazement; “I am going to create an Ikeda philosophy one day,” he said at the time. “Yes, I have decided on an Ikeda philosophy.”<sup>51</sup> But after making the acquaintance of Professor Shinobu Orikuchi, Ikeda suddenly turned his attention to Japanese literature.

Yasaburō Ikeda and Morio Katō would both later occupy a special position among Shinobu Orikuchi’s students. Back then, they entered his entourage as if being swallowed up by it, and Izutsu alone knocked at the door of Junzaburō Nishiwaki and became his student. He hated groups. “Scholarship is something to be practiced by oneself alone; it must be a solitary occupation. That was something I decided for myself at an early age.”<sup>52</sup> As these words suggest, the conviction that scholarship was a path that must be travelled alone and ought not to be pursued in a group grew even stronger within him once he met Nishiwaki. The reason he did not become a follower of Orikuchi’s was because of the “rigid *collegial* structure of Orikuchi idolators.” But that did not mean he had no interest in Shinobu Orikuchi. “I felt an indescribable awe and fascination with Shinobu Orikuchi himself and the uncanny aura that surrounded him. . . . He was dangerous,” Izutsu believed, and if he were dragged into Orikuchi’s “magic circle,” he would never be able to extricate himself.<sup>53</sup> Thus, when the two of them had chosen their respective paths, Ikeda ceased to be a “colleague” and became a “friend.” In a colloquy with haiku scholar Kenkichi Yamamoto (1907–1988) entitled *Shi no kokoro* (1969; The heart of poetry),<sup>54</sup> Junzaburō Nishiwaki said that, even after becoming his student, Izutsu not only kept on attending Shinobu Orikuchi’s lectures, he even continued to tell Nishiwaki what Orikuchi had said.

Izutsu had become aware of Junzaburō Nishiwaki the poet during his middle school days. He loved reading *Shi to shiron* (Poetry and poetics), the poetry magazine to which Nishiwaki contributed the discussions of poetry that were later published as *Chōgenjitsushugi shiron* (1929; On surrealist poetry). A passage in the introduction to this work makes one feel one is reading this poet’s confession, as it were.

“Discussing poetry is as dangerous as discussing God. For all concerned, poetics are dogma.”<sup>55</sup>

The various sages known as the pre-Socratic philosophers are not the sole occupants of center stage in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. “Theodicy in Greece first presented itself as a clear problem beginning with the lyric poets in the sixth century BCE. . . . None of the Greeks before the time of the lyric poets thought about” the fundamental problems of human existence.<sup>56</sup> As this passage makes clear, it was the poets Sappho and Pindar whose appearance proclaimed the dawn of philosophy. As for Xenophanes, who was probably Izutsu’s favorite of all the ancient Greek poets, he might even be called a “poet-prophet.” By this Izutsu does not mean someone who predicts the future. Poets are nothing less than those entrusted with the word of God. If overcoming the limitations of one’s individual experience, making it universal and then fashioning it *sub specie aeternitatis* is the beginning of philosophy, then philosophy can certainly trace its origins to Greek lyric poetry. Greek lyric poems were the “songs of reality.” Unlike the poets before them who sang of the gods and the polis, the lyric poets sang about the individual realities of “love, joy, pleasure, pain, agony and anger.”<sup>57</sup> Poetry and philosophy, or, to put it another way, poetry and transcendence—if one were to describe Junzaburō Nishiwaki’s influence on Toshihiko Izutsu, that would be it. Poetic theory is filled with the same potential dangers as theology: The instant such theories are put into words, they lapse into dogma. And yet, people still write them. If, for example, it were possible to produce an image, even only an afterimage, though far from perfect, prayer, the ontological proof of transcendence, would achieve its purpose. The spirit of this poet was passed down directly to his student.

The passage that follows is the poem entitled “Tenki” (Fine Weather) at the beginning of *Ambarvalia* (1933), Junzaburō Nishiwaki’s famous first book of Japanese poetry:

A morning “like an upturn’d gem”  
 People are whispering with someone by the door  
 It is the day of the god’s nativity.<sup>58</sup>

The group of poems that follows Nishiwaki entitled “Grecian lyrics.” One cannot help feeling that, while Izutsu was writing *Shinpi tetsugaku*,

he was thinking of Nishiwaki at the time. Poetry links human beings to God through words; put this way, Izutsu would probably not deny it.

Henri Brémond, who wrote about *poésie pure*, “pure poetry,” said that the ultimate form of poetry is prayer. This philosopher and man of letters, who was also a Catholic priest, had a strong influence on Toshihiko Izutsu. According to Brémond, the true “poet” is someone who endows a prayer with the flesh of logic in the hope that it will be of use to all people. Such a person is not necessarily limited to composing poetry, however. If his destiny was to rule, history called him a tyrant. “The countless tyrants, poets and philosophers who sprang up everywhere in [ancient] Greece,” Izutsu writes, “were three different kinds of flowers that all blossomed forth with the identical spirit at their root.”<sup>59</sup> The first half of *Shinpi tetsugaku*, in addition to being a history of thought, also contains outstanding discussions of poets and poetry.

“The true successor to the spirit of Plotinus was not Proclus or Iamblichus but Saint Augustine,” Izutsu writes.<sup>60</sup> The spirituality of Plotinus did not end with the history of Neoplatonism; it was grafted onto the tree of Christianity, he says, and flourished even more greatly. This observation accords with the facts of intellectual history, but these words also convey a different truth. Before this passage, Izutsu writes as follows. “I myself am not a Christian; in terms of world view, I am merely a Platonist, a pure Hellenist, but I believe that, at least as far as Western mysticism is concerned, Platonism did not reach its culmination in Greece after all. Instead, it attained its ultimate state in Christian contemplation.”<sup>61</sup> The time when he was writing *Shinpi tetsugaku* overlapped with the period in which Izutsu came closest to Christian thought, and, in particular, to Catholic thought; so great was its influence that he had to deny it and say “I am not a Christian.”

The influence of Plotinus was not passed on to Proclus in its perfect form, Izutsu says. Although he hardly ever mentions Proclus, the latter’s thought entered deeply into the thought of John Eriugena, the medieval Christian theologian to whom Izutsu frequently refers. Izutsu is, of course, aware of this fact. But were we to take his words at face value and pass over Proclus, we would be overlooking the role that philosophy played in his time. Plotinus lived in the third century, a period of steady

Christian expansion, and has left works refuting Christianity. Proclus lived in the fifth century, and by this time the situation had become more chaotic. In an attempt to protect Greek philosophy from the encroachment of Christianity, he wrote *The Elements of Theology* and *Platonic Theology*. As we can see simply from these titles, they convey the status of philosophy at the time — that it was synonymous with theology.

In *Proclus, or On Happiness*, Marinus of Samaria writes about the life of his teacher in a way reminiscent of that of a medieval monk.<sup>62</sup> When Proclus spoke in public during a celebration of Plato's birthday, his figure was filled with light, Marinus says, and the words that emanated from his mouth spread out like waves, and sometimes even seemed like falling snow. One day the statesman Rufinus, known for his noble-minded character, saw a halo of light around Proclus' head as he spoke; when the lecture ended, it is written that he worshipped Proclus. People today might say that the story is simply allegorical, or, if not, a case of the deification of a living man. But is that correct? It was not Proclus whom the statesman worshipped; it was the Transcendent who manifested Itself through Proclus. Marinus wrote this biography the year after his teacher, Proclus, had died. Not enough time would have passed for the facts to be distorted to such an extent. Even in Proclus' time, philosophy was more than an academic discipline; it was the study of a praxis that prepares for the manifestation of the Intellect in the world in which we live. The philosopher was also a shaman, a holy medium.

*Shinpi tetsugaku* ends with a chapter on the mystic philosophy of Plotinus. But the relationship between this sage and Tōshihiko Izutsu had only just begun. After *Ishiki to honshitsu*, and more than forty years after *Shinpi tetsugaku*, he would once again discuss Plotinus directly. Not that he did not speak about Plotinus in the interim. He may not have mentioned Plotinus by name, but he spoke about his thought. Tōshihiko Izutsu's interest in Plotinus would continue right up until his death.

### Mitsuo Ueda and Sōetsu Yanagi

“Girishia no shizenshinpishugi: Girishia tetsugaku no tanjō” (Greek nature mysticism: The birth of Greek philosophy), a discussion of the

pre-Socratic philosophers, the sages who are called the Greek natural philosophers, was included as an appendix to *Shinpi tetsugaku*. It was originally supposed to have been published as a separate monograph, but when it was at the type-setting stage, the publishing company went bankrupt. The person who scooped it up was Mitsuo Ueda, the president of Hikari no Shobō.

The writing of the present book was not originally my idea—being in ill health and only too aware of my own incompetence, how could I on my own have contemplated undertaking a large-scale work such as this?—but spurred on from the outset by Mr Ueda’s enthusiastic support and encouragement, I proceeded with the task. If, by good fortune, this work should in some sense serve as a useful companion to young people burning with a passion for metaphysics, and if I am able to continue this work in good health and bring it to completion, then credit for the entire achievement must go not to myself but to Mr Ueda.<sup>63</sup>

Izutsu’s gratitude to, and reliance on, Ueda implicit in the statement that “credit for the entire achievement must go not to myself but to Mr Ueda” probably ought to be taken at face value. It is clear from the sentence that precedes it that his encounter with Ueda was an important turning point in the birth of *Shinpi tetsugaku*. Despite his ill health, Izutsu set aside the parts that he had already written and began to write the text afresh. He wrote the section on pre-Socratic mystic philosophy and the parts that discussed the mystical philosophies of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus at this time.

Nowadays, few if any people are likely to have ever heard of Mitsuo Ueda. All that we have to go on are *Shinpi tetsugaku* and the other works he brought out as the head of a publishing house; the books that he himself wrote or translated; and the few sentences in which Taruho Inagaki (1900–1977) discusses him. Nothing is known of his personal background, when or where he was born, or when he died. The works he translated include Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*,<sup>64</sup> Schelling’s *Philosophy of Revelation*<sup>65</sup> and Fechner’s *On Life after Death*.<sup>66</sup> He was also the author of *Harutoman no muishiki no tetsugaku* (Hartmann’s *Philosophy of the Unconscious*), a guide to Eduard von Hartmann.<sup>67</sup>

Translation is the offspring of the marriage of criticism and a passionate act of reading on the part of the translator. If a translator engages actively and subjectively with the work s/he is translating, a “translation” can tell us about the personality of its translator as effectively as an “original” work can.

Ueda's Kant is a philosopher who thoroughly explored the outermost limits of human reason without denying the existence of a transcendental world. Schelling was a mystic philosopher who developed a theory of revelation. Fechner, who was born in nineteenth-century Germany, started out as a physicist and later became a philosopher. The book Ueda translated was his most important work; a groundbreaking philosophical study on the dead, it was widely read throughout the world. Fechner had an influence as well on the young Sōetsu Yanagi, and his name appears many times in Yanagi's works. Hartmann's “unconscious” differs from the unconscious in psychoanalysis. He was a reclusive thinker who taught that consciousness and unconsciousness existed even in the cosmos.

Ueda's publishing activities can be roughly divided into two periods: managing the Japanese Association of Science and Philosophy (Nihon Kagaku Tetsugakkai), which he began shortly after the war ended in Nagano, to which he had evacuated for safety reasons; and managing Hikari no Shobō between 1947 and 1949 after his return to Tokyo. His relationship with Izutsu, of course, came after the latter had started up. Before that, according to Taruho Inagaki in *Tōkyō tonsōkyoku* (1968; Tokyo fugue), Ueda ran a small flying school on reclaimed land at Susaki.<sup>68</sup>

On the colophon to *Shinpi tetsugaku*, in addition to Hikari no Shobō, which was listed as the distributor, the names given as the entities responsible for “planning and publication” were the “Religious Order of the Philosophic Way/Mystic Way” (Tetsugakudō Kyōdan-Shinpidō), the “Philosophy Monastery” (Tetsugaku Shūdōin) and the “Logos Free University” (Logos Jiyū Daigaku). The address for all three was identical to that of Hikari no Shobō. To understand these somewhat puzzling names, a bit of explanation is perhaps in order. First, the “Religious Order of the Philosophic Way/Mystic Way.” This organization was formally registered as a “religious order,” or what

today would be called a “religious corporation.” To it belonged the “Philosophy Monastery” and the “Logos Free University.” The main entity was clearly the “Religious Order of the Philosophie Way/Mystic Way.” The other two were educational facilities. The relationship among them might be easier to understand by analogy to the relation between Sophia University in Tokyo to its founders, the Society of Jesus, and that of the Jesuits as a religious order to the Roman Catholic Church.

Mitsuo Ueda did not use these specific names right from the start. The first to be founded was Hikari no Shobō. The entity responsible for planning and publication can be ascertained from the first volume of *Sekai Tetsugaku Kōza* (Lectures on world philosophy), which came out in December 1947. At first, the planning department used only the name of the Japanese Association of Science and Philosophy, which dated from the Nagano period. The Logos Free University was added the following year, although Ueda’s plans for it also date back to his wartime stay in Nagano. Mitsuo Ueda’s achievements as a publisher were supposed to converge on the *Sekai Tetsugaku Kōza* series, which was begun as a planned nineteen-volume set plus a supplementary volume. In the end, however, the volumes were published out of sequence and ended with volume fourteen, *Shinpi tetsugaku*. Only about half the planned works were published.

The first volume of the series was a composite work containing Enshō Kanakura’s *Indo tetsugakushi* (History of Indian philosophy) and Tsutomu Iwasaki’s *Girisha tetsugakushi* (History of Greek philosophy).<sup>69</sup> Enshō Kanakura (1896–1987) was an authority on ancient Indian philosophy, and Tsutomu Iwasaki (1900–1975) was an outstanding scholar of Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle. A posthumous work of his is *Tetsugaku ni okeru sukui no mondai* (1982; The question of salvation in philosophy).<sup>70</sup> Although his history of Greek philosophy is a short work, it was much loved by its author, and many people consider it his most important book. Toshihiko Izutsu’s relation with Hikari no Shobō dates back to sometime before May 1948 at the latest. He contributed *Arabia tetsugaku* (Arabian philosophy) for volume five of the series, which was another composite work that included *Bukkyō tetsugaku* (Buddhist philosophy) written by Hakuju Ui et al.<sup>71</sup>

It was just around this time that Taruho Inagaki by chance came across a copy of *Tetsugaku to Kagaku* (Philosophy and Science), the journal that Ueda published. He sent Ueda a letter, and a close friendship began. At one time Taruho lodged at the Logos Free University. Since he was finding it difficult to make a living, Ueda employed him as the head of the university's Astronomy Department. Of Ueda, Taruho would later write that a perceptive gentleman coexisted with a charlatan and a boorish tyrant. Taruho was slow to get started on the work he promised, however, and Ueda lost patience with him and, a short time later, kicked him out. Taruho does not seem to have let himself be carried away by emotion when speaking about Ueda, however, and his account of him appears to be impartial.

In May 1949, when the second volume of Ueda's translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* came out, suddenly the name "Philosophy Monastery, an affiliate of the Religious Order of the Philosophic Way" (Tetsugakudō Kyōdan Shozoku Tetsugaku Shūdōin) began to be used alongside the Logos Free University. The publication of *Shinpi tetsugaku* occurred four months later. The lectures on world philosophy series was not published for the general public. As the description "seminar teaching aids" suggests, they were meant to be teaching materials for the Logos Free University and meditation guides for the Philosophy Monastery. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, which was also sold as a book, was an exception. To be more precise, this book had two editions, one for Hikari no Shobō and the other for the Philosophy Monastery, and the covers were slightly different. This fact tells us not only that in Ueda's mind there was a clear distinction between the two but also suggests the strong feelings he had for this work.

The original works and translations by Mitsuo Ueda cited above might seem to be the sum total of his output, but there are also writings that were distributed free of charge or available only to students attending seminars on the world philosophy lectures. Of the two that I have, one is "Junsui shūkyō: tetsugakudō • shinpidō wa nani ka?" ("Pure religion": What is the Religious Order of the Philosophic Way/Mystic Way?"; the other is "Sekai Tetsugaku Kōza 14kan, 15kan, shūdō shidōshū" (Lectures on world philosophy, vol. 14 and 15, a practical guide." "Junsui shūkyō" is a pamphlet filling up around seventy pages of fine print that might well

be called the religious corporation's manifesto. In it, under the headings "Rules of the 'Religious Order' of the Philosophic Way/Mystic Way" (six chapters and 21 articles) and "Structure of the Religious Order," is a discussion of its system of spiritual practices: the teaching of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism and a guide to practical training in the mysteries. The latter work is a guidebook by Mitsuo Ueda to Toshihiko Izutsu's *Shinpi tetsugaku* and Eijirō Inatomi's *Purotinō no shinpi tetsugaku* (Plotinus' philosophy of mysticism).<sup>72</sup> More than ninety percent, however, is given over to an examination of *Shinpi tetsugaku*. This is not a simple summary. Although it is impossible to go into a detailed discussion of it here, Ueda's reading of *Shinpi tetsugaku* is both accurate and existential. He states positively and passionately that the act of truly "reading" ancient Greek philosophy is in itself directly linked to the philosophic way.

In "Junsui shūkyō," Ueda first defines what he means by "religion." It is "the effort by which God, who is pure experience, 'attempts to return to himself by affirming himself in an absolutely apophatic way.'" "The God, who is pure experience," is also the "I" who is inseparable from "God." Religion is the act of affirming oneself through an absolute negation while attempting to return to one's pure state. Ueda's statement is hard to understand without presupposing his firm conviction that, in a fundamental sense, there is no separation between God and humankind, that human beings exist within God. Creation for God is always an internal act. People are not born from God and exist in a world somehow external to him; human beings always remain within God. Consequently, Ueda believes that, rather than being something that is finally achieved as the result of effort, a "religious" act for humankind is Aristotle's act of *oreksis*, discussed earlier, in other words, an instinct, an innate craving.

An "absolute apophatic affirmation" is an expression that Izutsu used in *Shinpi tetsugaku*.<sup>73</sup> The relevant passage from *Shinpi tetsugaku* is also cited in Ueda's account of it. That is not all, however; a single reading will clearly confirm that book's influence everywhere in this pamphlet. When defining "pure religion" Ueda writes that it is "the act of experiencing the pure essence of religion and worshipping the pure essence of God and Buddha." Running through this small booklet is

both the extraordinary lament of a person who had witnessed firsthand the moral decay of existing religions and the profound reverence and longing for the Absolute of a man who has seen the light of salvation.

“From the time I began middle school, my heart was ablaze with the quest for God,” Ueda writes in “Junsui shūkyō”; he studied at a Buddhist university but was unsatisfied, attended a Christian university and later knocked at the door of Shintō. “I also studied the esoteric religions of India, Persia, Arabia and Greece, read thousands of volumes on philosophy and religion from Japan and abroad, undertook fasts and other austerities, and for these past forty long years [did all I could to achieve] true belief.” The “religion” that he finally found was “philosophy” in the true sense of the word. A religious person is not the only seeker of sanctity. Isn’t it, rather, the philosopher in the true sense who opens the way to it for ordinary people? If “pure religion” is possible in our own day, Ueda says, it will manifest itself in the form of a “philosophy” that seeks an awareness of “pure essence.” Setting aside his mode of expression, Ueda’s views on the disconnect between dogma and salvation shed light on a fundamental problem that virtually all religions inevitably share even today.

What ought truly to be believed, rather, is “Tradition,” which explains the transcendent unity of all religions and is directly revealed by that primal unity. What makes this clear is nothing less than “philosophy” in its true sense, *philosophia perennis*. There is a group of philosophers who made just such a claim. Called the Perennial school, it included such key figures as René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon and Ananda Coomaraswamy. Its founder, Guénon, died in 1951, not too far removed from the period in which Ueda was active. Of course, there was no communication between Ueda and the Perennial school. But I would like to think it is possible to recognize a manifestation of the *Zeitgeist* at work here. Among the adherents of the Perennial school, Schuon was someone who, like Mitsuo Ueda, formed a faith-based community bound together not just by religion but by true philosophy, i.e. metaphysics. This school of thought has not yet been adequately studied in Japan, but today its ideas have spread throughout the world, permeating not only the three major religions but also the realms of psychology and the arts. Seen in this light, the significance of Ueda’s efforts is worth discussing

as one current of thought in the intellectual history of Japan. Just what happened is unclear, but the Religious Order of the Philosophic Way/Mystic Way ceased its activities not long after the distribution of these pamphlets.

It should be obvious even from external circumstances that, at the time, Toshihiko Izutsu was strongly sympathetic to Mitsuo Ueda's activities. It was Ueda's firm belief that, before "philosophy" was a branch of scholarship, it was a spiritual practice directed toward the noumenal world and inseparable from the problem of salvation. These ideas also comprise Izutsu's core values as expressed in *Shinpi tetsugaku*.

It was mentioned earlier that philosophy had its origins in the mystery religions and that, from "Orphism-Pythagorism" and Plato down to the time of Plotinus, philosophy was a form of spirituality rather than an academic pursuit. Around the year 528, the emperor Justinian expelled pagans from public office. In the following year, he banned the teaching of philosophy, and the Academy, which had carried on the Platonic tradition, was forced to close. Even before 392, the year Theodosius I promulgated an imperial edict, Christianity had become the state religion of the Roman Empire. The empire was not merely suppressing thought; it was banning Christianity's greatest threat. From this it is perhaps possible to surmise the status of "philosophy" at the time. Greek philosophy in those days was not a scholarly subject; it was a "religion" in the highest sense of the word. The description that Porphyry gives in his biography of Plotinus is not the image of a philosopher that we have today; he is a sacred medium, a shaman filled with wisdom. What Mitsuo Ueda was attempting to do was to revive Greek spirituality. It was not to be a revival of Greek philosophy in a nostalgic or doctrinaire way. What he wanted was to repair the modern world's severed relation between salvation and the intellect.

Toshihiko Izutsu wrote *Shinpi tetsugaku* while literally "coughing up blood."<sup>74</sup> The author and the publisher were both presumably aware that this might be Izutsu's last work. Nevertheless, "an announcement of forthcoming publications" has survived that attempted to deny this possibility. *Shinpi tetsugaku* had been planned as a three-volume set. Volume one was "The Greek part"; volume two was to be "The Hebrew part," namely the world of Judaism; and volume three was supposed to

be on Christian mysticism. The announcement quoted below indicates that Izutsu had not only begun writing but had already composed a manuscript of considerable length. The wording is likely to be Mitsuo Ueda's.

The author has completed volume one (The Greek part) and is bravely devoting himself, despite his ailing body, to writing an enormous manuscript some thousand pages long for volume two (The Hebrew part). Volume two promises to be a gem of a work in an unexplored realm of scholarship, depicting the majestic landscape of the spiritual history of Hebrew mystic philosophy. The work begins with the Old Testament belief in a personal God and describes how this powerful strain of Hebraic mystic thought eventually came in conflict with the Greek thought of volume one, struggled against it and finally became reconciled with it, giving rise in Judaism to the mysticism of Philo of Alexandria and in Christianity to the mysticism of the Apostle Paul, until they are ultimately and decisively unified in the mysticism of St Augustine. Most of the books on philosophy in this country are merely philological studies or impersonal commentaries; the author of this work, however, through his superb style of scholarly exposition, vividly reveals his own experiences of lofty, existential self-awareness and the passionate call of the soul that blazes within him as a mystical existence, and never stops until he has made the reader, unawares, enter the ecstatic realm that is the *via philosophica*. A third volume to follow.

The contents of this blurb were probably passionately discussed many times by Ueda and Izutsu. That does not mean that the author's "ailing body" was the only hurdle facing the publication of the second volume. As was mentioned earlier, shortly after the publication of *Shinpi tetsugaku*, Hikari no Shobō went bankrupt, but the very fact that this work was the intellectual starting point for a philosopher who would define the twentieth century is proof of the sureness of this publisher's eye.

Even if the activities of the Philosophy Monastery had continued, however, the honeymoon between Izutsu and Ueda seems unlikely to have lasted long. Izutsu did not approach religions in a syncretic way;

his thought would deepen and evolve in the direction of finding meaning in their differences rather than seeking their primal unity. “Right after the publication of this work [*Shinpi tetsugaku*] an unexpected event occurred, and the publisher went bankrupt,” Izutsu would later write in the foreword to the revised edition. “For that reason, fortunately or unfortunately, my plans sadly fell through.”<sup>75</sup> The expression “fortunately or unfortunately” indicates that in the not-too-distant future the differences between the two men would have become too obvious to ignore. Yet even if that is true, the fact remains that, without Ueda, *Shinpi tetsugaku* would not have seen the light of day. If the ailing Izutsu had not met this remarkable person and told him his dreams, he might never have taken up his pen.

When *Shinpi tetsugaku* was published, an authority in Greek philosophy said that the work overly “mysticized” Greece. Had the sequels been written, specialists might similarly have concluded that these works, too, contained many misinterpretations and leaps of imagination. The unpublished manuscripts of the sequels have not yet been found. But fragments of them can be seen in such works as “Shin-pishugi no erosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron” (1951; The mysticism of St Bernard),<sup>76</sup> the discussion of the Qabbālāh in *Ishiki to honshitsu*, and “Chūsei Yudaya tetsugakushi ni okeru keiji to risei” (Reason and revelation in the history of medieval Judaic philosophy) in *Chōetsu no kotoba* (1991; Transcendental WORDs),<sup>77</sup> the last work to be printed in his lifetime.

In *Shinpi tetsugaku*, Toshihiko Izutsu calls the philosophers’ journey the *via mystica*. The first modern Japanese thinker to use this as a key term and to distinguish it clearly from “mysticism” was, I believe, Sōetsu Yanagi. In a work from his earliest period entitled “Sokunyo” (Implicitness), Yanagi alluded to the evils that “isms” — ideologies — have given currency to. For Yanagi, “implicitness” was another name for the transcendently Absolute. “Ideology has been the downfall of the arts. For religion as well, sects have led it to become rigid and set in its ways. Form restricts vitality.” We must “go beyond all mediaries, break down the obstacles that interpose themselves,” Yanagi writes, “and come in direct contact with implicitness.”<sup>78</sup> The discussion in

“Shinpidō e no benmei” (Apologia for the *via mystica*) is even more explicit. There can be no doubt, Yanagi argues, that the expression “mysticism” is by nature a “word that shows signs of the feelings of contempt with which its scoffers have endowed it.”<sup>79</sup> “When a person lives in the true nature he was born with, he is naturally a mystic”;<sup>80</sup> in other words, we must be “emancipated” from all the restrictions that pull one person away from another and impose a separation from God. He calls this path the “*via mystica*.”

A list has been compiled of Toshihiko Izutsu’s library.<sup>81</sup> From it we can confirm the presence there of *Shūkyō to sono shinri* (1920; Religion and its truth), which contains the two works just cited and which Izutsu seems to have read in his youth, as well as *Kami ni tsuite* (1923; On God)<sup>82</sup> and *Shūkyō no rikai* (1929; Understanding religion).<sup>83</sup> These three volumes are all works that date from the period in which Sōetsu Yanagi was recognized as a religious philosopher and a man of letters in the early twentieth-century literary group known as the Shirakabaha (White Birch School) and before his discovery of *mingei*, folk art, for which he has since become well known. Izutsu, who moved frequently across national borders, culled his books from time to time. There is no record in the list even for many of the works he reportedly loved reading by the Catholic philosopher Sōichi Iwashita (1899–1940), Thomistic scholar Yoshihiko Yoshimitsu (1904–1945), poet Akiko Yosano (1878–1942) and novelist Nobuhiko Murakami (1909–1983). The works of Sōetsu Yanagi probably had a special significance for Izutsu. The three volumes mentioned above were all old books published in the 1920s.

In the entire works of Toshihiko Izutsu, the name of Sōetsu Yanagi appears only once. But I believe that the influence of Yanagi’s early works on Izutsu should not be overlooked. The two men were to a surprising degree closely akin, beginning with the assertion running throughout *Shinpi tetsugaku* that philosophy and the pursuit of truth are inseparable, and extending to their intellectual outlook, subject matter and terminology. This “kinship” does not mean a superficial “similarity” but a resonance that occurs between peers. It is not unlike what Thomas Aquinas calls *analogia entis*, an analogy of being.

As can be seen in *Namuamidabutsu* (1928) and his works on Ippen and the Pure Land saints known as *myōkōnin* (1955 and 1950),<sup>84</sup> Sōetsu

Yanagi was also an outstanding interpreter of Buddhism—so much so that Daisetz Suzuki tried to entrust the collection of his personal library and writings, the Matsugaoka Bunko, to Yanagi's care. Yanagi's understanding of religion was not limited to Buddhism, however. As was the case with Izutsu, Yanagi was a thinker who also had a unique understanding of the thought of Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū, i.e. Taoism, and Confucianism. Speaking of the Confucian classic, *Chung Yung* (The doctrine of the mean), Yanagi writes that it is a book on religion rather than morality. We can find the same view in Izutsu's major English-language work, *Sufism and Taoism* (1966–1967). Yanagi, too, discussed Sufism, or what he called “the *via mystica* of Islām,” up to and including the Persian mystic poets Rūmī and Jāmī. And his essay, “Shujunaru shūkyōteki hitei” (1920; The varieties of religious negation),<sup>85</sup> personally conveys Sōetsu Yanagi's existential interest in Christianity. He begins with Augustine, touches upon John Eriugena, Thomas Aquinas, the medieval German mystic Meister Eckhart and his disciples Suso and Tauler, and concludes with John of the Cross, who carried out the reform of the Carmelite Order.

In 1978, when *Shinpi tetsugaku* was republished, Izutsu wrote a new foreword in which he reminisced about his plans for the sequel that was meant to follow volume two, which, as described in the blurb cited earlier, was supposed to have been published as the “Hebrew part.” He planned to write that “Greek mysticism as such had not ended, but had entered Christianity and undergone its true development, reaching its culmination in the Spanish Carmelite Order's mysticism of love, and in John of the Cross especially.” Looking back from his present-day vantage point, however, he could not help thinking, he said, that at the time he had been “possessed by a highly tendentious view.”<sup>86</sup> The issue for us here is not whether the notion was “tendentious.” Our interest, rather, is in his mind at the time when, by his own admission, he describes his younger self who had attributed a positive significance to shamanism as “possessed.”

Only the name of John of the Cross is cited in the sentence above, but Thomas Aquinas and Eckhart are mentioned several times in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, and there are also many references to Eriugena.

Sōetsu Yanagi was also fond of Eriugena; his discussion of this thinker dates back to thirty years before *Shinpi tetsugaku* was published. Philosophy is not a matter of understanding universal truths by way of “logical arguments.” What must be examined, Yanagi says, is “individual temperament,” i.e. an individual’s nature or disposition.<sup>57</sup> “Temperament” is an expression that would become key to an understanding of the young Yanagi. Usually translated into Japanese as *kishitsu* (気質), i.e. nature or character, for Yanagi it includes the meaning of an ingrained mental disposition that cannot easily be changed from within. It is not personality. Rather, it is a term that comes close to spirituality. Even though a person would prefer to stop seeking the Transcendent, s/he is unable to do so. It is, as Aristotle explains, a kind of instinct. For that reason, while logic does not define temperament, temperament requires logic. Moreover, “just as the whole world is colored by the color of a flame, temperament casts its own coloring on the world.”<sup>58</sup> Yanagi believes that it is not logical thought that turns into light and illuminates the four corners of the earth; it is temperament that is the flame. These words of Yanagi’s seem to be discussing *Shinpi tetsugaku*, which can also be considered a group portrait of temperaments.

The two men are also similar in their circumstances. Sōetsu Yanagi was both an outstanding religious philosopher and a thinker in the area of folk art, but he was also a practicing sage in the sense Izutsu discussed in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, namely a kind of mystic. “Thinking about God is the same as God thinking. We see God in God’s own heart,” Yanagi writes. “God hungers for man; man hungers for God. The call of an overflowing spirit is the call by which God calls God.”<sup>59</sup> The mystical experience for him is not a person seeing God; it is nothing less than God seeing God. What Yanagi consistently emphasizes is the true subject of the mystical experience.

“Shizen shinpishugi no shutai” (The subject in nature mysticism), which is the title of the first chapter in the appendix to *Shinpi tetsugaku*, was the first theme in Izutsu’s study of Greek philosophy. The most profound truth that Izutsu discovered in Sōetsu Yanagi, I believe, was his discussion of the subject of the mystical experience. The true experience of the mysteries is not a unique experience of the human intellect; rather, Izutsu writes, “it is the self-awareness of the absolutely

Transeendent suddenly manifesting itself,”<sup>90</sup> and its subject, he asserts, is not human beings but rather the absolutely Transeendent itself. This view will emerge more clearly when Izutsu deals with Islām.

The following is a passage from Yanagi that Izutsu cites. Although its source is not mentioned, it is found at the beginning of “The Way of Tea.” I cite it in the same abbreviated form as Izutsu did.

They saw; before all else, they saw. They were able to see. Ancient mysteries flow out of this spring of seeing. Everyone sees things. But all people do not see them in the same manner; therefore, they do not perceive the same thing. . . . [E]veryone says he sees things, how few can see things properly.<sup>91</sup>

Without pausing, Izutsu continues, “Every time I read these charming words of Sōetsu Yanagi, I can’t help recalling the eyes of the Arabs.”<sup>92</sup> This passage occurs in an essay entitled “Mahometto” (Muḥammad), a work not included in Izutsu’s selected works.

## CHAPTER TWO

# The Encounter with Islām

### The Children of Shem: Setsuzō Kotsuji

“GINZA TENKIN, my family home, was the second building from the corner in Ginza 4-chōme, where the road turns toward Sukiwabashi,” writes Yasaburō Ikeda at the beginning of “Tenkin monogatari” (The Tenkin story) in *Ginza jūnishō* (Ginza in twelve chapters).<sup>1</sup> Ikeda was the son of the owner of Tenkin, an old, established tempura restaurant patronized by Izutsu’s father. I mentioned earlier that Izutsu, on his father’s orders, had enrolled in the Faculty of Economics at Keio University but found his time there unbearable and transferred to the Faculty of Letters. There may well have been a relationship between the two fathers because, when Izutsu presented the argument that he was not the only one, “Tenkin,” too, was making the switch, his father, who had opposed the move, strangely relented saying, then, in that case, it couldn’t be helped.

During his undergraduate days, Yasaburō Ikeda published a literary magazine called *Hito* (People) ostensibly as publicity for Tenkin. Advertising for the family business was merely a pretext; Ikeda and the young men in his circle contributed their work to the magazine. In an essay entitled “Izutsu Toshihiko-kun to no kōsai” (1981; My friendship with Toshihiko Izutsu), Ikeda introduces “Philosophia haikōn,” the prose poem that Izutsu wrote for *Hito*.

The sea grew dark. As I lay on the sandy shore one day looking upward in a gently falling rain, a chalk-white native came crawling slowly toward me and said these words. I want to dream the butterfly dream, to become a bird flying serenely to the east, to the west. In olden times wasn't there a person in your country named Lōshi, or something like that, who had a follower called Bashō? Isn't there an element of truth in "all things are in flux"? There are many in your country, I hear, who do not understand this. We know it from the time we are born. Don't they say if you're not careful, you'll end up like Icarus? The sea is no use; the sky is no use. Ah, I long for the horizon. Ah, I replied, I, too, can see the horizon. But I long for the sea. Oh, *thalatta, thalatta!* Suddenly I looked, and the chalk-white native had vanished, and a huge albatross was circling around and around in the sky. And it laughed the laugh of Mallarmé. ("On Truth or Falsehood")<sup>2</sup>

Even his fellow students, who had half-jealously grumbled that Izutsu might be exceptionally gifted in languages but had no appreciation for literature, Ikeda writes, were clearly astonished when they read this poem and were forced to change their minds. Around the same time, Izutsu handed Ikeda his complete translation of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Since the manuscript is lost, its literary style is impossible to gauge, but it is additional proof of Toshihiko Izutsu's love of poetry. This took place some twenty years before Professor Junzaburō Nishiwaki's translation, Ikeda writes.

In Izutsu's poem cited above, it is perhaps not sufficient merely to recognize the surrealist influence of Junzaburō Nishiwaki. The Taoist sages Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū, who saw the butterfly dream; Bashō, the latter's Japanese heir; ancient Greek ontology and theories about the soul are linked together with Mallarmé to form a mental and spiritual genealogy that presages the world of *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; Consciousness and essence) nearly fifty years later. What is even more worth noting, however, is that, rather than this poem being a projection of the future, Izutsu would go on to formulate his thought in ways that remained true to the end to the poetic intuition of his youth.

In the colloquies with Ryōtarō Shiba and Shōtarō Yasuoka,<sup>3</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu left statements that, even if spoken in jest, make one aware

of his astonishing genius—that he was able to read most languages after a few months and that English, French and German came so effortlessly he didn't consider them “foreign languages.” But until an incident in middle school, Izutsu had been a “poor student” who hated studying English. One day that student's eyes were opened to language. “Gogaku kaigen” (1981; My initiation into the mysteries of language) is the title of an essay that looks back on that time. Not that the incident was anything special. Unlike Japanese, English makes a distinction between singular and plural. For that young man, this simple fact alone was enough to bring out his sensitivity to languages. A person who uses a different language must surely experience the world differently, the young man thought. “The absurd notion kept running through my mind that I would master all the languages in the world, every single one of them.”<sup>4</sup> This experience, as he would say years later, was the “internal leap” that resembles the experience of enlightenment known as *kenshō* (seeing one's true nature) in Zen or *kenbutsu* (seeing the Buddha) in the Pure Land sect. “As a result of that momentary experience, I stepped into the scholarly world,” Izutsu writes. “The fascination of that mysterious thing called scholarship took hold of me as if in premonition of what lay ahead.”<sup>5</sup>

What is more, his raw insight that learning a language means acquiring a new world agrees in principle with German linguist Leo Weisgerber's *Menschheitsgesetz der Sprache* (humanistic law of language) and *Gesetz der Sprachgemeinschaft* (law of linguistic community), which would subsequently exert a strong influence on him. It would, of course, be much later before Izutsu became aware of this.

When Shiba says he has heard that Izutsu read the classics in their original languages, Izutsu answers, “Yes, I did.”<sup>6</sup> If there was a book he wanted to read, he would learn the language in which it was written. He didn't know the exact number of languages he knew, but guessed it was more than thirty. According to “Izutsu Toshihiko-sensei o itamu” (1993; Mourning the death of Professor Toshihiko Izutsu), the tribute that Iwao Takahashi (1928– ) wrote, a joke even circulated among his university students that Izutsu knew as many as 200 languages.<sup>7</sup> He learned Greek and became acquainted with Plato and Aristotle; then

he mastered Russian and encountered Dostoevsky. The next language he studied was Hebrew. It should not pass unnoticed that, after coming in contact with the Oriental mentalities of Greece and Russia, he went on to learn Hebrew and became deeply involved with Jewish spirituality through the Old Testament. Indeed, I believe that studying these languages prepared the way for his encounter with Islām.

According to “Izutsu Toshihiko no koto” (1991; About Toshihiko Izutsu), an essay Masao Sekine wrote for an insert that accompanied Izutsu’s selected works,<sup>5</sup> he became acquainted with Izutsu in 1937 at the Institute of Biblical Research (the name was later changed to the Institute of Hebrew Culture) run by Protestant pastor Setsuzō Kotsuji (1899–1973). Although called an “Institute,” it was not an organization to which large numbers of researchers belonged but rather Kotsuji’s private study group. It was Kotsuji who introduced Izutsu to Sekine. At the Institute of Biblical Research, the “Bible” in the title was not the New Testament but the Old Testament—not that Judaism recognizes the expression Old Testament, which is merely a term applied from the Christian perspective. For the Jewish people, the sacred text that begins with the five Mosaic books including Genesis and Exodus has been the one and only Bible from ancient times and remains so to the present day; there is nothing “old” about it. In the present chapter, following Kotsuji’s example, the term “Bible” refers to the so-called Old Testament, the original text written in Hebrew.

“To my knowledge,” Kotsuji writes in his autobiography, he was “the first Japanese to convert to Judaism.”<sup>9</sup> Had he been able to do so, he would have preferred to become a Jew from the outset, but in Japan, in those days, that was not possible. He was baptized a Christian only out of a desire to come a little bit closer to the God of the Jews. Christianity for him was nothing more than a new religion that acknowledged the significance of the Old Testament. Kotsuji was born on 3 February 1899, on *setsubun*, the first day of spring in the old Japanese calendar, and so he was given the name Setsuzō, *setsu* from *setsubun* and *zō* for “three.” The family he was born into had been chief priests at the Shimogamo Shrine in Kyoto. I use the past perfect tense because early in the Meiji period (1868–1912), during Kotsuji’s grandfather’s time, the position ceased to be hereditary. The Shimogamo Shrine is said

to trace its history back to before the common era. One of the greatest shrines in Japan and a designated World Heritage Site, it is dedicated to the tutelary deity of Kyoto. The Shintō tradition, far from being a hindrance to Kotsuji's conversion to Judaism, prepared the way for it. With Shintō as his starting point, he writes at the beginning of his autobiography, he went in search of "a religious resting place," a spiritual home in the true sense, and his conclusion was that this was Judaism.

Setsuzō Kotsuji's book on Hebrew grammar, *Hiburugo genten nyūmon* (Introduction to the original text in the Hebrew language), was published in December 1936,<sup>10</sup> and in all probability it was through this book that Izutsu learned about the Institute. In the copy that I have at hand is a flyer inviting students to enroll. The "original text in the Hebrew language" is, in other words, the Hebrew Bible. And, of course, Izutsu knocked on the Institute's door for that very reason: to learn Hebrew, the language of the Bible. When he began studying Hebrew, Izutsu made astonishing progress. In a colloquy with Shūsaku Endō, Izutsu left the following statement about those days.

That man [Setsuzō Kotsuji] was also a truly fervent [Protestant] believer; when he read a text of the Old Testament out loud in Hebrew, his voice would tremble with emotion, and tears would glisten in his eyes. This, too, was a tremendous experience for me.<sup>11</sup>

The reason Kotsuji cried while reading the Bible was because he saw the persecution of the Jewish people recorded there as a contemporary event. Time passes, but that persecution was by no means over; this is the harsh reality of religious time that Kotsuji recounts in his autobiography.

"Are the Jews an ethnic group or a religious group?" Kotsuji writes at the beginning of *Yudaya minzoku no sugata* (1943; The true character of the Jewish nation).<sup>12</sup> Although a historical issue, for Kotsuji, this topic was, if anything, an existential question, one on which he had staked his life—could he or could he not become a Jew? If "Jew" was another name for a member of an ethnic group, there was no place for him. But if a Jew was a member of a faith-based religious group, then the way was open for him as well. The conclusion Kotsuji reached is apparent from his formal conversion to Judaism in 1959.

Someone who loved the Old Testament and could not hold back tears while reading it was unlikely to fit easily within the fold of the Christian church in Japan. At Aoyama Gakuin University, the Tokyo Theological Seminary, wherever he went, Kotsuji was treated almost like a heretic. Even after founding the Institute of Biblical Research, obstacles continued. Perhaps since he could not expect anyone to understand him in Japan, he wrote his autobiography, *From Tokyo to Jerusalem*, in English under the name he had taken at the time of his conversion, Abraham Kotsuji. This spiritual journey seems to have had lasting repercussions since his name is hard to find in histories of Japanese Protestantism; only in works like *Nihon to Yudaya: sono yūkō no rekishi* (2007; *Japan and Judaea: A history of their friendship*) by Ben-Ami Shillony and Kazumitsu Kawai are there several chapters devoted to him and his relation to Judaism.<sup>13</sup>

By 1940, the Nazi persecution of the Jews had already begun. The wave of attacks reached from Poland into nearby Lithuania; for the Jews there, remaining in Europe meant imminent arrest. One day a group of Jews gathered outside the Japanese consulate in Lithuania seeking visas. The only route left for them was to proceed through the Soviet Union and Japan to some place beyond the reach of Nazi hegemony. Visas are normally issued only to those who have already been accepted by the country of their intended destination. It was, of course, unlikely that most of these Jews had any such guarantee. The man who issued more than 2000 visas to these Jewish refugees and helped 6000 of them escape was Chiune Sugihara (1900–1986). Not that the Japanese government readily supported his decision; the Foreign Ministry was opposed. Today many people are aware of what Sugihara did, but it would be many decades after the war before his existence became widely known in Japan.

The Jews who made their way to Japan visa in hand did not set off for their eventual destinations without encountering obstacles there as well. Because they had arrived as a result of a loophole in the law, Japan did not readily allow them into the country. Setsuzō Kotsuji repeatedly asked the immigration office to admit the Jews, even conferring on the matter with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yōsuke Matsuoka (1880–1946), and he finally succeeded in getting them allowed into the country. That

was not all; he personally borrowed a huge sum of money to support them during their stay there. Kotsuji had once worked under Matsuoka in Manchuria. From October 1939 to the following July, he served as a consultant on Jewish matters for the South Manchuria Railway. It was Matsuoka who had asked him to come to Manchuria. At first, Kotsuji had stubbornly refused. But as the persecution of the Jews drew closer to the Far East, Yōsuke Matsuoka's clear opposition to anti-Semitism convinced Kotsuji to accept. Sometime later, after he had resigned his position in Manchuria and returned to Japan, and a mere two weeks after he had set up house in Kamakura, Kotsuji writes, he learned that Jews arriving in Japan were being refused admission. As a glance at his life shows, ordeals seem to await him, almost as if he were being tested. Around the time the Jews had all left for their various destinations, Japan declared war. Once again he had to fight against anti-Semitic forces. But the Jewish people did not forget what Kotsuji had done. In Israel, the name of Setsuzō Kotsuji is honored to this very day.

For Kotsuji, teaching the Hebrew language was not a matter of giving lessons on grammar or the writing system; it was an initiation into reading the Bible. To do so is to experience first-hand a primordial dynamic between a people and a religion that is still alive today:

There is a work in which Izutsu speaks of his own experience with the Bible — “Shinpishugi no crosuteki keitai: sei Berunāru-ron” (1951; *The mysticism of St Bernard*). As can be seen from the title, the essay is a study of the twelfth-century Father of the Christian Church, but, in fact, it deals with God in the Hellenic and Hebraic traditions and, in particular, with Hebrew mystic philosophy, which is a source of Christianity. The Old Testament as translated into the Latin of the Catholic Church, Izutsu writes, is no longer “intelligible in a neutered and sterile translation from which the noxious air has been removed.” But when you read the Bible in the original Hebrew, from the very first page “an indescribably powerful human scent suddenly comes wafting directly out at you, leaving you unexpectedly trembling and transfixed.”<sup>14</sup> As he reads the Hebrew Bible, he witnesses in vivid detail the spectacle of the “living God” intervening in the human world. This is the God who smashes the

ethical norms set by modern man and, with his stern demeanor, is the moving force behind a people and their history.

What Izutsu learned from Kotsuji was something more than knowledge of a language; it was how to “read” Scripture. It was nothing less than a synchronic dialogue with history, a response to the call from the Transcendent. Izutsu’s exceptional genius, moreover, lay not in his linguistic ability to read the Bible in the original Hebrew, but rather in his capacity to perceive its staggeringly great mystical aura. It is worth recalling that the sequel to *Shinpi tetsugaku* (Philosophy of mysticism) was supposed to have been “The Hebrew part,” in which Izutsu intended to discuss the judges and prophets who are the spiritual heroes of Judaism all the way down to the Apostle Paul. “I attempted to show in my previous work [*Shinpi tetsugaku*, part one, “The Greek part,” the 1949 edition] that behind the God of Greek philosophy, which at first glance seems like some abstract, inanimate object, in fact, lay concealed a God of unbroken belief.”<sup>15</sup> As can be inferred from this statement, “*Shin-pishugi no erosuteki keitai*” was consciously written as a continuation of *Shinpi tetsugaku*. What it inherited from the earlier book was the “God of unbroken belief,” namely the issue of a personal god.

The “God” that constitutes the Supreme Being of Greek metaphysics was not, as people often mistakenly believe, the abstract, inanimate object that, as a rational requirement of philosophical thought, was assumed to be at the apex of its ontological system. Nor was it simply a product of the imagination, the blind, mechanical forces of nature conjured up in humanized form. This was a *God of life* that appealed to the hidden depths of the human soul and entered into an unbroken personal relation with it.<sup>16</sup>

Human beings can only represent God in human terms. This is a human limitation. But “God is not *human*,” Izutsu says. “God is *personal*.” It may be easier to understand “person” by substituting for it the concept of *nous* (Intellect) in *Shinpi tetsugaku*—God is not human; God is “noumenal.” And so, “Although ‘human’ and ‘personal’ seem close to one another, the difference between them is actually so vast as to permit absolutely no comparison,” he writes in “*Shin-pishugi no erosuteki keitai*.” “Thus, if we were to apply human form, which has meaning only

as an outward sign, not symbolically but directly, as it were, to God, what would this be if not a dreadful blasphemy against God?”<sup>17</sup>

When God from the transcendental world appears in the phenomenal world in which human beings live, God appears in the guise of the human soul. This mode of being is what is known as a “person”; it does not indicate a divine limitation but only a conforming on the part of God to the limitations of human beings. The origin of “person” is the word *persona*. As its meaning “mask” suggests, the world we perceive is merely the mask-like world of the absolute Intellect. And yet it might well be said that, without the interposition of *persona*, human beings would be unable to live, or be capable of having real existence, for the transcendental world beyond the mask surpasses the power of human understanding.

*Persona* is also indwelling in peoples, periods and cultures. That is the reason “the distinction between the Hellenic God and the Hebraic God” occurs. Human beings are no exception to this rule. We become human by sharing a *persona* with and from God. But the theory of *persona* for Izutsu was also a subject that breaks through and overcomes the superficial differences between the Greeks and the Hebrews. These differences, he believed, offer counterevidence for the One God and the singular nature of divinity.

Why, one wonders, is the creative agent of eternal life throughout the entire universe, the Lord God of all things in heaven and earth, different among the Greeks and the Hebrews? Here, too, disputatious theologians have brought the petty distinctions of their human intelligence into the nature of divinity itself—as if the itemization of differences that have great value for their scholarship would naturally have enormous significance for God as well. The distinction between the Hellenic God and the Hebraic God, however, is not a divine distinction but, in fact, a man-made one. The differences are not in God; they are, instead, fundamental differences in the attitudes of human beings toward God.<sup>18</sup>

The differences between the Hellenic God and the Hebraic God cannot exist in the Ultimate One. These are not differences in God, Izutsu says; are they not, rather, differences among theologians who argue

about such matters? Yet even though we intuitively recognize this fact, there are problems that must be overcome before it can be rationally fleshed out into a philosophy and help everyone everywhere understand this insight. One of these problems is language. As the Bible tells us, the birth of language has a direct bearing on cultural differences.

Kotsuji's English-language work *The Origin and Evolution of the Semitic Alphabets* (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan) was published in 1937, around the time that Izutsu was attending the Institute. In it, Kotsuji writes that the greatest contributions made to the world by the Jews and other Semitic-speaking peoples were the Bible, the alphabet and the Kōran. Language may have been the beginning of the divisions among peoples, but it would also be a means of restoring them to unity.

In all cultures or ethnicities, language and spirituality—an attitude of reverence toward the transcendental world—exist inseparably from one another. Indeed, language is regarded as the origin of that primal awe which human beings feel when they encounter the Transcendent. To borrow a formulation from *Shinpi tetsugaku*, language is nothing other than the expression of the enlightened embodiment of a “spiritual reality.”<sup>19</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu's ur-experience might well be said to be his recognition of this inextricability of language and spirituality. The language that played a decisive role in the making of Izutsu's philosophy was not language as *ergon*, a code representing a finished product; it cuts deeply across human affairs, often manifesting itself in human form. To follow his journey to this recognition is to come in contact with the source of what Izutsu would later call “WORD.”<sup>20</sup> WORD in this sense transcends linguistic codes and signifies the origin of all things.

When, toward the end of his life, Izutsu was asked what led him to the world of Islām, he said he didn't really know, but one event that had probably prepared the way for it was his encounter with Setsuzō Kotsuji. In “Yudaya minzoku no kōbō” (1942; The rise and fall of the Jewish people), Kotsuji states that there are many theories about the origin of the Semites, but he believes they can be traced back to Arabia.<sup>21</sup> Izutsu may have heard him say something similar during his lectures. At any rate, one day Izutsu said to Masao Sekine, let's start studying Arabic. Not modern Arabic. The two of them began a study group in classical Arabic.

Kotsuji speculates in *Yudaya minzoku no sugata* that Abraham and Moses, Isaac and Jacob were not simply the names of individuals but generic eponyms for clans or tribes. Independently of Abraham or Moses as historical entities, there were countless, nameless individuals who inherited their spirit. Kotsuji recognized that Jewish history was formed by, and still lives on today in, people who left no names behind in that history. When developing his own account of Judaism, he complained about the flagrant and glaring anachronisms in existing studies of the Jewish people, who arose in southwest Asia and even today adhere to an Asiatic religion, and he deeply lamented the fact that the Japanese were still limited to uncritical direct translations of Western works. 'The Jews, too, are an Asian people; as a fellow Asian, he said, I would like to tell their true history. Kotsuji's "Asian" spirit would be passed on to Izutsu. He would call it "Oriental." Kotsuji's Asia, like Izutsu's Orient, is not a word that designates a geographical area only. It is nothing less than the place where "eternal" creation takes place, beginning with the book of Genesis and continuing on down to the present day.

Izutsu's interest in Hebrew never waned; it lasted to the end of his life. Indeed, along with Buddhism, it was the subject that most intensely fascinated him in his later years. Izutsu's work on the history of medieval Judaic philosophy is an obvious case in point,<sup>22</sup> and his studies of Derrida evolved out of Derrida's Jewishness.<sup>23</sup> The essay on "the divine Hebrew language" in *Ishiki to honshitsu* is yet another example. "The WORD of God, starting from the ultimate root sound 'aleph,' evolving and ultimately realizing itself in its true and perfect form, is, as I have just explained, the Hebrew language made up of twenty-two letters," Izutsu writes. "It is the Hebrew language, yet it is strictly the *divine* Hebrew language and fundamentally different from the *human* Hebrew language."<sup>24</sup> The basic thesis in *Ishiki to honshitsu* is a "depth-consciousness philosophy of language," the mystical philosophy of WORD.<sup>25</sup> Central to the discussion there is the Hebrew language, including the letter mysticism of the Qabbālāh, a form of esoteric Judaism. It seems likely, does it not, that Izutsu was recalling Kotsuji as he was writing this? Perhaps we might say that Izutsu's meeting with Kotsuji can truly be described as his encounter with the "divine Hebrew language."

## The Two Tatars

Toshihiko Izutsu had two teachers of Arabie, both Tatars whose native language was Turkish. One was Abdur-Rasheed Ibrahim (1857–1944), the other was Mūsā Jārullāh (1875–1949). In many reference works today the two are called Mūsā Bigiev and Abdürreşīd İbrahim. In what follows I will refer to them as Ibrahim and Mūsā. Toward the very end of his life, in the colloquy with Ryōtarō Shiba, “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari” (1993; Darkness and light at the end of the twentieth century), Toshihiko Izutsu spoke about the two men. Had this colloquy never taken place, we might not have been aware today of Itzusu’s relation to these two Tatars. Yet even earlier than these comments, there was an essay by Izutsu entitled “Angya hyōhaku no shi: Mūsā” (1983; Mūsā: The wandering pilgrim teacher), in which he wrote his recollections of Mūsā, though hardly anyone has noticed it.<sup>26</sup> In addition, a Japanese translation of Ibrahim’s autobiography has been published.<sup>27</sup> There are also references to the two Tatars in the novella by Toshihiko Izutsu’s wife, Toyoko, “Bafurunnūru monogatari” (1959; The tale of Bahr-un-Noor),<sup>28</sup> and in *Surutan Gariefu no yume* (1986; Sultan Galiev’s dream) by Masayuki Yamauehi;<sup>29</sup> and the Orientalist Shinji Maejima mentions Ibrahim in his autobiographical essay, *Arabiagaku e no michi* (1982; The road to Arabic studies).<sup>30</sup> But none of these works attracted much attention to the relationship among these three men.

On the other hand, however, the fact that there was a time when no one knew much about Ibrahim indicates the extent to which Islamic studies in modern Japan, and Islām as a religion, have been overlooked. And yet no discussion of the vicissitudes of Islām in Japan would be conceivable without mentioning this man. Today research by Hisao Komatsu, Tsutomu Sakamoto, Akira Matsunaga and others is well advanced, and attention is focusing not only on the two Tatars’ relationship with Toshihiko Izutsu but on their role as exemplars of a special late-nineteenth-century spirit that animated Islamic culture. If it is possible to discuss Islām in Japan not as beginning with Toshihiko Izutsu but, rather, that his appearance marked the end an era, it is likely to open a new chapter in modern Japan’s intellectual and spiritual history.

Judging from what Izutsu says, he met Ibrahim sometime in or after 1937 when the war with China had already begun and just around the time he had become a teaching assistant at Keio University. After repeated requests for an interview, the aged Ibrahim finally agreed to meet Izutsu, but at first stubbornly refused to teach him Arabic. With a copy of the English translation of the biography of Muḥammad in his hand, he said to the young man in Arabic, *haza-l-kitab jaa min Amerika. Afahimta?* (This book has just arrived from America. Do you understand, I wonder?) One wonders what the expression on Izutsu's face might have been at that moment. It was a "tremendous thrill," he would say much later, to hear the classical Arabic he so wanted to learn actually spoken.<sup>31</sup> That excitement may have conveyed itself to the old man because he agreed to Izutsu's request, on one condition: There was no point in studying only Arabic; he should study Islām along with it. Ibrahim's plan was for him to come once a week, but Izutsu came almost every day. Two years later, Izutsu had become so immersed in the world of Islām that Ibrahim said to him, "You are a natural-born Muslim. Since you were a Muslim from the time of your birth, you are my son."<sup>32</sup>

Ibrahim was not a teacher of Arabic. Nor was the aim of his stay in Japan to disseminate knowledge of Islamic culture. He had first come to Japan in 1909. He stayed a few months at that time, and returned in 1933. Ibrahim is not an easy person to sum up. An eyewitness to history, a denouncer of injustice to the heavens, Ibrahim was first and foremost a journalist who typified modern Islām, but he was also a religious leader who served as an imām—a position held by someone who has memorized the holy books.

Ibrahim himself claimed to be more than a hundred years old. I wouldn't go that far, Izutsu said in the colloquy with Shiba, but he was over ninety-five, I think. In fact, we now know he was eighty. That does not mean Ibrahim was lying. He was probably just teasing the young man. The story of him handing over an English translation of the Prophet's biography to Izutsu when they first met—that, too, was no accident; he may well have purposely ordered it and agreed to the meeting once the preparations were complete. There was no need for Ibrahim to read an English translation. He was an imām; he had

committed to memory not only the Kōran, but all the important liturgical texts, and could recite them by heart.

Ibrahim had at one time made Russia the base of his operations. Russia, which was then in the process of annexing Islamic countries on its way to becoming a Great Power, had a history of persecuting Islām. The first half of Ibrahim's life was devoted to saving his brethren from danger in his capacity as a speaker and activist. Russia was not alone, however; the countries of Europe were also oppressing the Muslims in their colonies. The aim of Ibrahim's visits to Japan was to try to build an alliance with Japanese militarists, the right-wing activist Mitsuru Tōyama (1855–1944) and others to help Muslims break free of imperialist domination and promote the founding of an Islamic empire. Ibrahim presumably regarded Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War as a miraculous achievement: the defeat of the oppressor. He died in Japan in 1944 and is buried in the foreigners' plot in Tama Cemetery.

In Toyoko Izutsu's novella, Ibrahim is warmly depicted as an engaging and affable man who spoke fluent Japanese and had a penchant for proverbs. One day, Ibrahim said that a remarkable scholar had arrived and took Izutsu with him to the mosque. Located in Yoyogi Uehara in Tokyo, the mosque combined a place of worship known as the Tokyo Jamee Mosque with the Muhammadan School. "As we neared the mosque, I heard a voice reciting the Kōran out loud with a special intonation full of Oriental emotion." "That is Mūsā's recitation," Ibrahim said.<sup>33</sup> It was this person—whom Izutsu called "Professor Mūsā"—who was truly a genius. Ibrahim, who knew all the sacred scriptures by heart, had a memory that is astonishing enough, but Mūsā's memory was another order of magnitude altogether. Not only had he memorized the holy books as well as works peripheral to them, "he had in his head almost all the important texts, not just those on theology, philosophy, law, poetry, prosody and grammar."<sup>34</sup> And it was not only works in classical Arabic that he knew by heart; he had memorized several volumes of commentaries and had his own opinions as well.

When Izutsu first visited Mūsā and, as instructed, went not to the front entrance but around to the garden and called his name, Mūsā appeared from out of the closet, saying, *Ahlan wa sahlān*, the Arabic greeting for welcoming guests. This distinguished scholar did not have

the wherewithal to rent a single room, much less an entire house, and was forced to rent the upper half of a wall-cupboard. One day, when Izutsu was ill, Mūsā visited him bringing some Arab sweets. He looked at all the books in Izutsu's study and asked, what do you do with your books when you move? Izutsu said that he packed them in a basket and took them with him—just like a snail, then, Mūsā laughed. A person wasn't a true scholar, Mūsā said, unless he could do scholarship anywhere empty-handed. In an interview toward the end of his life Izutsu recalled those days and said it had been his first experience with the teaching methods of an Islamic *ulamā* (scholar). One day Izutsu brought some texts in Arabic to the place where Mūsā was staying. A few days later Mūsā had memorized them all.

Mūsā like Ibrahim was a Tatar born in Russia. In *Ibrahimu, Nihon e no tabi* (2008; Ibrahim's journey to Japan), Hisao Komatsu alludes to the meeting between the two men.<sup>35</sup> At the time of the founding of *Ülfet*, the journal for which Ibrahim served as editor-in-chief, there was a growing movement toward Muslim solidarity within Russia. In 1906, the formation of a Russian Muslim League was announced in Saint Petersburg. The author of the manifesto was Mūsā. He was both a scholar and a revolutionary as well as a religious leader who served as the imām at the Great Mosque in Saint Petersburg. Later, after living in Mecca for three years, he opened a publishing house in Russia, but after the Revolution he experienced persecution from the Russian government and was forced to go abroad. He came to Japan via Turkistan and China and stayed there for two years; most of his time in Japan was spent with Izutsu. As Izutsu writes in “Angya no hyōhaku no shi,” Mūsā subsequently wandered through the Islamic world, traveling to Iran, Egypt, India, Iraq and elsewhere before dying in Cairo in 1949, aged 74. The model for the character of Tatsuo Aoki in Toyoko Izutsu's novella was Toshihiko Izutsu. Some time after Mūsā left Japan, a functionary at the Foreign Ministry conveys Mūsā's words to Aoki. “Do you know Tatsuo Aoki, my one and only student in Japan?” When Aoki hears this message from Mūsā, his eyes fill with tears as he recalls “the days of his youth that had sailed so swiftly by,” and once again he hears Mūsā saying to him in Arabic, “To become like a tree rotting in the place it was planted—what a boring life, Tatsuo.”<sup>36</sup>

The world is filled with the glory of the Absolute. Seeing with one's own eyes the diversity of God's creation, revering it, maintaining it and making it known—this worldview is the unwritten law that underlies Islām. That was the reason Ibrahim and Mūsā ended their lives on their travels. If eternity exists, human beings are always able to come in direct contact with its primal life force. Ibrahim and Mūsā are the embodiment this idea.

And that is how Toshihiko Izutsu encountered Islām.

### Shūmei Ōkawa and the Origins of Japanese Islām

At the dawn of Islamic studies in Japan, two organizations were doing research on Islām and Islamic culture, the East Asian Economic Research Bureau, formerly affiliated with the South Manchuria Railway Company, and the Institute of the Islamic Area. When the first of these was founded, the person who served as its director was Shūmei Ōkawa. Since, for all extents and purposes, the bureau functioned as Shūmei Ōkawa's private think tank, it was even called the Ōkawa school. The state supported Ōkawa, albeit indirectly, and the bureau published the journal *Shin Ajia* (New Asia). The Institute of the Islamic Area headed by Kōji Ōkubo also published a monthly magazine, *Kaikyōken* (Islamic Area). According to Yoshimi Takeuchi (1910–1977), who was at the Institute of the Islamic Area in those days, even though the two organizations were not openly antagonistic to one another, that did not necessarily mean they held the same views. In 1940, Izutsu contributed articles to both *Kaikyōken* and *Shin Ajia*. According to Takehiro Ōtsuka's *Ōkawa Shūmei* (1995), Izutsu taught Arabic at the Ōkawa school.<sup>37</sup>

Shūmei Ōkawa spared no expense to amass a collection of important Islamic documents. Under the pretext of having him “organize” *Arabica* and *Islamica*, the two mammoth series he had purchased from the Netherlands, he allowed Izutsu to use them freely.<sup>38</sup> The book Izutsu brought to Mūsā was one of these works. Without these two compendia, Izutsu's maiden work, *Arabia shisōshi* (History of Arabic thought), might never have been written. That work, which came out in 1941 on the eve of World War II was, however, published as a volume in *Kōa Zensho* (Asian

Development series) edited by Kōji Ōkubo.<sup>39</sup> Izutsu had close relations with both organizations and was warmly regarded by both of them.

Although not informed of the plot, Shūmei Ōkawa had been implicated in the attempted coup d'état in 1932, known as the May 15th incident, having supplied guns and money to the conspirators. He was imprisoned but released on parole in October 1937, the year that Toshihiko Izutsu and Ibrahim met. Ōkawa's *Kaikyō gairon* (Introduction to Islām) was published in 1942.<sup>40</sup> But five years earlier, just before he was released from prison, he notes in his diary that he had already completed half of it. It would be fair to say that by that time Shūmei Ōkawa's views on Islām were already mature.

Recently the movement to reevaluate Shūmei Ōkawa, not only in relation to World War II or for his eccentric behavior at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, but also as a thinker, has suddenly been gaining ground even in Japan. I add the qualifier "even in Japan," because the assessment of Ōkawa in India has always been quite different. At the end of Ōkawa's life, when he was on his sickbed and unable to attend, Prime Minister Nehru, who was on a state visit to Japan after the war, invited him to a banquet to honor his support for Indian independence. Gandhi had once declared that, given a choice between cowardice and violence, he would choose violence, but Ōkawa correctly perceived and profoundly appreciated the revolutionary spirit behind Gandhi's nonviolence. Shūmei Ōkawa was a revolutionary in the sense that Gandhi was. Both of them shared the belief that political revolution and religious revolution occur simultaneously.

Yoshimi Takeuchi was interested in Ōkawa from an early period; he planned but never completed a study of him. A 1969 lecture of his entitled "Ōkawa Shūmei no Ajia kenkyū" (Shūmei Ōkawa's Asian research) still exists, however, and it contains the gist of the proposed work. In it, he says, "Ōkawa did not have the personality of a religious man, but as a scholar of religion, I believe, he was first-rate."<sup>41</sup> Takeuchi's words sum up the essence of this man whose starting point had been research on Nāgārjuna (ca 150–250), the greatest figure in early Mahāyāna Buddhism and the author of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Fundamental verses on the Middle Way).

At the time I [i.e. Ōkawa] left the university philosophy department, having completed a study of Nāgārjuna as my graduation thesis, in the back of my mind I expected to dedicate my life to the reading and practice of Indian philosophy. It was the Upanishads, the understanding of which has been refined by Buddhist monks and which explain the way to experience these insights through yoga, that was the inexhaustible holy source which would quench the thirst of my soul.<sup>42</sup>

If it is the mission of scholars of religion not to immerse themselves in the study of dogma but to rescue religion from dogma, then Ōkawa was indeed a scholar of religion. It was not as a student of Buddhism that he would display these gifts, however, but rather as a student of Islām.

What makes *Kaikyō gairon* seem dated is only its choice of words; the writing style is vigorous and its point of view seems fresh even now. Although more than sixty years have passed since its publication, it contains material that would live up to its title today. Ōkawa argued repeatedly that Muḥammad's earnest desire was not jihad but moral instruction, that Muḥammad was a pacifist in the true sense of the word. "Unfortunately, as a result of Christianity's hostility to all things non-Christian, Islām is always painted black," he writes.<sup>43</sup> It would be wrong to see this statement as stereotypical animosity toward Christianity on Shūmei Ōkawa's part. He is just frankly pointing out that the view of Islām as intolerant, which we encounter even today on an almost daily basis, is nothing more than sheer prejudice.

Toshihiko Izutsu and Shūmei Ōkawa are in agreement in recognizing that Islām is not a religion of pureblood Arabs which emerged with the revelations to Muḥammad but that it is nothing less than a richly diverse spiritual impulse forged in a melting pot of religions. As one example of the Islamic spirit of tolerance, Shūmei Ōkawa cites the fact that the Eastern Christian John of Damascus long held the office of councilor under the Umayyad caliphate (661–750) and his father, Sergius, served as finance minister. In *Arabia shisōshi*, Izutsu emphasizes the historical process by which this new world religion organically embraced different traditions, changing as it did so. Through its Semitic bloodlines, Islām was heir to Judaism and supplemented Christianity, while for its ideas it revived ancient Greek thought. Nor

was this incompatible with accepting Muḥammad's revelations. Izutsu describes how this openness extended even to connections with ancient Indian thought and Zoroastrianism.

During the time of the Abbasids (750–1258), who followed the Umayyad caliphate, religious policy in the Islamic world became even more tolerant. This was an era that recognized freedom of thought and saw the birth of Islamic philosophy. Al-Fārābī embodies the spirit of the age. Called the “second teacher” of Islamic philosophy (the first being Aristotle), Fārābī, it would be fair to say, lay the foundations for it. If what he believed to be true contradicted Aristotle, he remained steadfast in his views; his attitude was unchanged even if these views contradicted the Kōran. For Muslims the Kōran is not a book; it is nothing less than the presence in the phenomenal world of the living God. Tōshihiko Izutsu devotes a chapter in *Arabia shisōshi* to this philosopher, who tolerated no compromise whatsoever in his love of truth. Given the kind of person Fārābī was, it may come as no surprise that some of his followers were not Muslims. In addition to his many Muslim students was Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī, a Jacobite Christian. According to Yoshihisa Yamamoto's study of Ibn 'Adī's *The Cultivation of Character*,<sup>44</sup> Yaḥyā, too, was not someone who made an issue of religious differences when faced with the big question, the search for truth. Since the two religions each developed its own theology, rapprochement is hard to achieve. When the two sides come together cloaked in their respective theologies, it is difficult to open a dialogue or make any breakthroughs. Philosophical discussions begin, however, once the cloak of theology has been cast aside. Yaḥyā was subsequently accepted as a scholar by the Islamic world even though he was a Christian.

If there had been no Christians of the Syrian Jacobite or Nestorian sects, Islamic philosophy might have been much poorer than it is today. Yaḥyā, Izutsu writes, “is truly worth noting for his translations of Aristotle and especially for his contributions to the study of logic.”<sup>45</sup> Islamic sages read Aristotle, whom they regarded as the supreme human intellect, wrote commentaries on him and considered him their own flesh and blood. As a Muslim, Fārābī was a pioneer in this regard, and yet the first to translate the works of Aristotle into Arabic were not Muslim philosophers but Syrian Christians in the employ of Islamic caliphs.

It must not be overlooked that Islamic philosophy was syncretic from the start and in the highest sense aspired to absorbing and integrating divergent views. There is a tendency to think of Islām as a mutant strand of spirituality that appeared suddenly out of nowhere, detached from culture or history, but in reality it might well be called the expression of a religious impulse that synthesized the heritage of different eras and different cultures as it grew.

It was true, of course, in the case of Toshihiko Izutsu, but for Shūmei Ōkawa as well, Islām was the consummation of the “Abrahamic religions” and akin to Christianity in its cultural origins. Its dynamic energy would find an analogue in the religious pilgrimage of Shūmei Ōkawa himself, who came to Islām via Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Marxism, Greek philosophy, Indian philosophy, Emerson and the German mystic Jakob Böhme. And yet Islām for Izutsu and Ōkawa was only a way station, as it were. The eyes of both were on the “Orient” beyond. It would be a mistake to tie Ōkawa too tightly to Islām; the same is true of Izutsu. They both were always focused on what lay beyond “religion.”

In *Anraku no mon* (1951; *The gate to paradise*), Ōkawa, who had been taken to a mental hospital after his erratic behavior during the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, writes that he frequently daydreamed “that he met Muḥammad, and, as a result, this strongly revived my interest in the Kōran.”<sup>46</sup> During nearly three long months of delirium, he writes, “Not (a single day) did I spend without meeting my mother.”<sup>47</sup> And when asked why he had been living in paradise, he immediately replies, “because I was living there and thinking of my mother.” He even goes so far as to say, “Religion is nothing less than the gate to paradise. And in my case, thinking of my mother was my religion, my gate to paradise.”<sup>48</sup> Although *Anraku no mon* is his religious autobiography, this book is also a clear confession that the beginning and end of his own spirituality lay in its connection with his mother. The fact that the soul of this intellectual, who bestrode the religions of the world and its philosophical circles and who left his mark so indelibly on his era, was always bonded to his mother may not attract much attention in studies of his thought. Even those who deal with Shūmei Ōkawa as a profound student of Islām do not treat this issue with the same degree of seriousness. But when I think of Ōkawa,

I recall Augustine, one of the greatest of the Christian Fathers. Augustine and Ōkawa are alike in wholeheartedly confronting various types of spirituality, in their intense interaction with the world in times of invasions and upheavals and in having their mothers as the bedrock of their faith.

No discussion of Ōkawa's and Izutsu's relation to Islām is possible without considering its maternal aspect. If the God of Judgment is paternal, "Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful" at the beginning of the Kōran is maternal. Of course, they are not two different gods; they are two different personae. Izutsu would later develop this theme in *Kōran o yomu* (1983; Reading the Kōran). The God of the Kōran has two main forms of self-manifestation—*jamāl*, expressing love, mercy, grace, etc., and *jalāl*, expressing the power of majesty, awe, severity, and dominion. Neither Izutsu nor Ōkawa ever loses sight of the *jamāl* side of Islām. We have already seen that both of them emphasize Islām as a religion of tolerance. It is sheer prejudice to say that the monotheistic religion of Islām is *jalāl*-like—paternal and intolerant—yet such prejudice can be said to be deep-rooted and, for the most part, based on denial. "In the Koranic Weltanschauung, it is *jamāl* rather than *jalāl* that has the primary function," Izutsu says in *Kōran o yomu*.<sup>49</sup> If God's love did not come first, we could not exist. The pervasive worldview in the Kōran is that merely acknowledging the greatness of the Transcendent is not enough; faith begins in experiencing with one's whole being God's all-embracing benevolence.

Toshihiko Izutsu never went to the battlefield. During the war he immersed himself in the study of linguistics and in research on Islām, beginning with *Arabia shisōshi*. In 1943, a society for philosophical studies sponsored by the Committee for the Development of Sciences in Japan met to discuss the topic "Building a Greater East Asian Culture and the Various Philosophical Disciplines." The lecture Izutsu gave there, "Kaikyō ni okeru keiji to risei" (Islamic revelation and reasoning), nicely conveys his wartime attitude.<sup>50</sup> Japan at the time had already occupied a string of Islamic countries in Southeast Asia. At the beginning of his lecture, Izutsu stated that no government in the true sense of the word was possible in those countries without a serious study of Islām. Actions taken out of ignorance as the result of a failure to make

such an effort would incur the local peoples' contempt, he said. That was as far as he would go, however, to accommodate the sponsors. As a single reading makes clear, the main point of Izutsu's lecture has absolutely nothing to do with understanding Islām as an administrative tool. As soon as the lecture starts, as if drawing a line on the subject, he begins to discuss reason and revelation in Islām, i.e. the conflict between theology and philosophy.

For Toshihiko Izutsu, Shūmei Ōkawa was never either a spokesman for the spirit of the age or a right-wing giant. "What I found interesting," Izutsu says in his colloquy with Ryōtarō Shiba, "is that he [Shūmei Ōkawa] was someone who truly had a personal interest in Islām." What he means by "personal" is the attitude someone has toward transcendental reality. It is nothing less than that person's confrontation with the Absolute in the search for salvation. On the other hand, if this "personal" experience does not go beyond the individual and aspire to the salvation of the world, there would be no reason to discuss these two men again here. As long as we remain fixated on Shūmei Ōkawa as an ideologue of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, it is impossible to understand what for him was the fundamental issue. If what Ōkawa had been seeking had not been the salvation of Asians rather than the liberation of Asia, there would be no need to remember him today. For Toshihiko Izutsu, philosophy was the primal activity of human beings, which is directly concerned with the salvation of the human race. During the colloquy, Shiba suddenly said that Shūmei Ōkawa, "rather than being a Japanese rightist, may have been a Japanese embodiment of nineteenth-century German romanticism."<sup>51</sup> Yes, replied Izutsu, with no hesitation whatsoever. This extremely forthright agreement seems to have made a deep impression on Shiba since he refers to it in a letter to Ken'ichi Matsumoto, the author of *Ōkawa Shūmei* (2004).<sup>52</sup> Considering that Shiba was a harsh critic of the war, his assessment of Ōkawa is worth noting.

Shūmei Ōkawa's research on Islām would become significantly deeper after his eccentric behavior at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, his admission to Matsuzawa Hospital, psychological assessment and exemption from prosecution on the grounds of insanity. Dr Tsuneo Muramatsu, the assistant director of Matsuzawa Hospital who was

responsible for Shūmei Ōkawa's care, was the father of critic Takeshi Muramatsu (1929–1994). An entry in Ōkawa's diary (23 December 1946) reads, "I showed the manuscript of my introduction to religion [i.e. *Kaikyō gairon*] to Dr Muramatsu." One day Dr Muramatsu gave Ōkawa's manuscript to his son Takeshi and asked his opinion. There are occasional signs of emotional excitement, the son replied, but the reasoning is consistent. The father said he, too, was of the same opinion, adding in a murmur, "Then I suppose his illness is cured."<sup>53</sup> When Takeshi Muramatsu was writing these recollections, he noted, "The Asian liberationist's role had ended. And with it Shūmei Ōkawa, who, as a young man had planned to study religion, seems to have returned to it once again."<sup>54</sup>

### Martyrdom and Dialogue: Ḥallāj and Massignon

In the introduction to *Arabia shisōshi*, Izutsu cites a stanza from the poem "Furui kotoba" (Old words) in Masayuki Kajiura's poetry collection *Tobihiro no tsuki* (1925; Auburn moon). When the work was revised and published as *Isurāmu shisōshi* (1975), the stanza was removed.

Bygone words do not die.  
 Old words sleep in books.  
 Let the prayers of our God-fearing days  
 Revive the old words.  
 Let our eyes in our quiet times  
 Penetrate into the old words' depths  
 And praise them.<sup>55</sup>

Masayuki Kajiura (1903–1966) was a mystical poet whom people nowadays not only don't discuss but have consigned to oblivion. How did Toshihiko Izutsu read him? Wasn't "Let the prayers of our God-fearing days / Revive the old words" Izutsu's prayer as well? The oldest words in Islām are the Kōran. As Toshihiko Izutsu writes at the beginning of the *Arabia shisōshi*, everything began with the Kōran, not just Islamic theology but all the seeds of the development, disarray and transformation of Islamic philosophy are stored in that one book.

It took less than a hundred years from the appearance of the Kōran for Islām to become a great spiritual movement that shook the world.

The period before the Prophet Muḥammad and the birth of Islām is called the *jāhiliyya*, the state of ignorance. The pre-Islamic Arabs, the children of Shem who lived during the *jāhiliyya*, were not a sentimental people; they were entirely reliant on their sense perceptions. Izutsu sees it as inevitable that Islām would prefer Aristotle, whose ideas drew him to the phenomenal world, to Plato and his theory of transcendental Ideas.

The Arabs in ancient times were extremely sense-oriented; as a result, they were materialists; they were concerned with discreet, individual things. They were utterly unable to imagine a soul, the most immaterial thing of all, separately from the flesh. . . . The existence of a completely formless and invisible soul would not have seemed believable to them.<sup>56</sup>

Islām solidified, deepened and expanded the primal, sense-oriented nature of the ancient Arabs. The words of the New Testament, “Blessed are those who did not see and yet believed” (Jn 20:29), make no sense to Muslims. François Mauriac, citing Pascal, said that the greatest miracle of all is conversion, but for the ancient Arabs such words would probably have seemed delusional. They wanted their miracles to be utilitarian.

When Jesus began teaching in the land of Judea, most of the crowd that gathered around him held him in high esteem when they saw the many wondrous things Jesus performed. These masses never stopped asking Jesus for “a sign.” This finally caused Jesus to lament and say, “A wicked and unfaithful people seek a sign” [Matt 16:4]. But it was this mentality of persistently seeking “a sign” that is the essential ethos of the Semitic people. A sign is a miracle, in other words, a manifestation, visible to the eyes, of the power of God.<sup>57</sup>

Curing an incurable disease is not the only miracle. If a miracle is defined as something that surpasses human limitations, something not achievable by human power alone, then the fact that the world exists is a miracle. In the very degree to which the ancient Arabs sought utilitarian “signs,” they excelled in finding the workings of God in material things. It is impossible for human beings to make the sun or to cause the moon to shine. No one knows the depths of the oceans or the hearts of men. In an appeal to their keen sense perceptions, the

Prophet Muḥammad said to the Arab people: Look at the world; can you doubt that God exists?

Yes, they sought “a sign,” but once they realized that signs were omnipresent in the world, they began to use their own powers to make the visible manifest. To do so was nothing other than to reveal God’s work even more fully. The most important treatises of the great medieval Islamic philosopher Ibn Sīnā were *The Book of Healing* and an abridgement of it entitled *The Book of Salvation*. As this shows, before being a learned pursuit, medicine in Islām was first and foremost a way to save the world. This was the reason that science along with metaphysics made such great advances under Islām. In the fields of medicine, anatomy, physiology and pharmacology, medieval Islamic Yunani medicine far surpassed contemporary levels in Europe in terms of empirical evidence. That was not all. The Arabs were also students of the practical sciences such as law and astronomy with its close association with agriculture. In Islām there is no fundamental conflict between science and religion. Both are contained in God. Izutsu frequently notes that the Islamic sages were not thinkers who locked themselves away in their ivory towers but practitioners who lived among ordinary people.

On the other hand, if it is a miracle that the world exists, the search for truth consists in truly acknowledging this fact. Those who made it their duty to live this way of life were Islamic mystics, indigent ascetics known as *ṣūfīs*, meaning those who wear coarse woolen clothing. John the Baptist comes to mind, who, in the Gospel according to Mark (1:6), “wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist.” Sufism is said to have begun around the ninth century. That is, of course, an English term; in Arabic it is called *taṣawwuf*. A form of asceticism, it was the way of a holy person or, to borrow a Buddhist expression, the Hīnayāna or lesser-vehicle path of ascetic practice that sought the salvation of the individual soul. Sufism would pass through the ninth-century Persians Baṣṭāmī and Junayd of Baghdad until with Ḥallāj it would break through this barrier and reach religious heights, bringing blessing to the entire world of being.

Ḥallāj was a mystic who defined his age, and not only for the history of Islām; Toshihiko Izutsu, too, had a special affection for him.

First, there was his intellectual interest in him as the forerunner who prepared the way for Islamic mystic philosophy, which began with Ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240). Then, there was the influence of Louis Massignon (1883–1962), the leading twentieth-century French scholar of Islām, who brought Ḥallāj out of historical obscurity. And finally there was his awe and respect for the fate of this man, who, as the result of a statement made at the climax of a mystical experience, was executed and died what might well be called a martyr’s death.

Ḥallāj was born around 857 in Baida, a town in Fārs, in the southwestern part of what is now Iran, and died in Baghdad in 922. His entire life was spent in travel and ascetic practices, in pilgrimages and preaching. The experience of God filled his every day. A mystic is someone who aspires to devote his/her life to the Transcendent, but in Ḥallāj’s case, rather than experiencing God, he himself became “God.” One day, Ḥallāj said, “*Ana’l Haqq*” — I am the Truth. In other words, he said that he was God. If his words are taken literally, “God” had become incarnate in Ḥallāj. His statement would be exactly equivalent to Jesus of Nazareth declaring himself to be God. In Islām, however, acknowledging the incarnation of God is not simply heresy; it is blasphemy. God is not like human beings whose existence is only local; God is the absolutely Transcendent One.

The fate of a mystic judged to have blasphemed God was death. In 922, after more than nine years in prison, Ḥallāj was executed. According to Farīd al-Dīn ‘Attār’s “Memorial of the Saints,”<sup>55</sup> when Ḥallāj was confined in prison, his captors intended to free him provided he recanted what he had said. A follower begged his teacher to recant. Whereupon Ḥallāj opened his mouth and said, “Are you telling God, who said this, to apologize?” He could retract his own words, he said, but it was not he who said he was God, but God himself. How could a human being stifle the words of the Absolute?

In the past, Ḥallāj’s teachers Junayd and Bastāmī had said that God was made manifest through themselves. But they had never said without any reservation, as Ḥallāj did, that they themselves were God. Ḥallāj knew that he was not the Absolute One. What he was saying instead was that God is omnipresent. If God is absolutely omnipresent, Ḥallāj, too, might become part of God. Since this could be said of all

beings, they all could say that they were expressions, though incomplete, of God. Some might call this pantheism. But Ḥallāj's unshakable belief was something different. Pantheism is the polytheistic notion that all things are divine, but that was not what Ḥallāj meant. The One God exists in all things universally and inseparably. Hence, all things, he said, had to be God.

The one who said, "*Ana'l Haqq*," was "God" existing deep inside Ḥallāj. If there is an Absolute who truly transcends human beings, that Absolute must not only be externally transcendent in the sense that people look up to it, it must also be deep within; in other words, it must transcend internally, i.e. immanently. The proposition that Ḥallāj risked his life to proclaim was that the unconditionally absolute transcendence of God was nothing less than God's true nature in which God and human beings are inseparable and, what is more, in which the world originally and inextricably exists with God. Today, Ḥallāj's concept of God is an accepted mode of thought called panentheism by R.A. Nicholson and others to distinguish it from pantheism, but almost no one thought that way at the time. Panentheism would form the ontological foundation of Islamic mystic philosophy.

Toshihiko Izutsu observes that there may have been some Syrian Christian influence on Ḥallāj's spirituality. There is a theory that the etymology of *ṣūfī* derives from the woolen dress of Christian anchorites. Moreover, Ḥallāj's father was a Zoroastrian. Thus, a heterodox spirituality naturally coursed through Ḥallāj's soul. It was his lot to transcend religion in the narrow sense. The person who would raise Ḥallāj's spiritual legacy to the level of philosophy was Ibn 'Arabī; his thought would break free of the confines of Islām and even have an influence on Dante.

In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy (21:23), the following verse seems to prophesy Ḥallāj's death: "The corpse that is hanged on a tree is cursed by God." These seem like ill-omened words, yet a person hanged on a tree for calling himself the god of Jerusalem around the year 30 was later hailed as the savior of the world, Jesus Christ. What I have written here about Ḥallāj, brief though it is, depends on *La passion de Husayn ibn Mansūr Hallāj: martyr mystique de l'Islam* by Louis Massignon.<sup>59</sup> As not just Toshihiko Izutsu but the people of the Islamic

world acknowledge, if it had not been for Massignon, Ḥallāj would never have been known today. The reason behind Massignon's choice of the word "passion" in the title was, of course, Christ's Passion with a capital P. Massignon was a devout Catholic who in later years became a Melkite priest; it is perhaps possible to see this act as his profound homage to Ḥallāj.

Massignon was born in 1883 in Val-de-Marne, France. His father was a friend of Huysmans, and, on his father's advice, the seventeen-year-old Massignon met the novelist. Like this writer, Massignon would later experience a dramatic religious conversion. Massignon's encounter with Ḥallāj took place in 1907, when at twenty-four he learned of Ḥallāj's existence in "Memorials of the Saints" by the twelfth-century Persian poet 'Aṭṭār. The drama of his own conversion would take place the following year. His completed study of Ḥallāj was published in 1975, many years after his death; it was literally his life's work.

In Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Massignon and Hamilton Gibb are singled out for extensive discussion as Europeans with a superb understanding of the Orient. Jacques Derrida, who was personally acquainted with Toshihiko Izutsu, wrote about Massignon's activities in his later years. One wonders whether Derrida and Izutsu ever discussed Massignon. Derrida was an Algerian. Massignon was deeply involved in the Algerian War, as a friend of Algiers rather than as a Frenchman. A professor at the Collège de France and one of the finest scholars of Islām of his day, he was also an activist who revered Gandhi. What aroused Derrida's interest was the movement known as Badalīya, which Massignon founded with the aim of bridging the gap between Islām and Christianity. Derrida regarded Massignon as someone who embodied the possibility of a religious reconciliation on a completely different dimension from syncretism—Derrida called it the "prayer front."<sup>60</sup>

Toshihiko Izutsu was even more forthright in his sympathy for Massignon. Massignon's influence led him "to a strange world that goes far beyond mere scholarship."

Massignon when discussing Ḥallāj—that is not what is called "scholarship" as we normally think of it. It is a living record of the existential

encounter between a tenth-century *ṣūfī* who, at the climax of an utterly transformative experience, called out, or could not help but call out, “*Ana’l Haqq*” (I am God) at the risk of his own death, and that formidable and marvelous spirit, Massignon, who *personally* received him in the mid-twentieth century. It evokes enduring interest and invites us to a strange world that goes far beyond mere scholarship.<sup>61</sup>

In terms of his depth of knowledge and breadth of vision in the area of mystic philosophy as a whole and, in particular, for the originality of his study of Gnosis in the Shī’a school of Islām, there is no member of his generation comparable—the object of these words of high praise from Izutsu was Henry Corbin (1903–1978). He was literally a member of the same generation as Izutsu and one of the few thinkers whom Izutsu acknowledged. But even Corbin “must be said to be inferior to his teacher,” Izutsu wrote, “especially when it comes to the existential profundity of his reading in Oriental thought.” Corbin’s teacher was Massignon. When one thinks of Massignon, Izutsu goes on to say, it is not just his extensive knowledge and the fruits of his scholarship but “the intensity of his passion that strikes the reader’s heart.”<sup>62</sup>

Hallāj was undoubtedly a heretic. He was judged and executed as such. But sometimes a heretic appears, leads a revolution and prepares for the appearance of true orthodoxy. We have seen over and over again the historical proof that such people are not destructive subversives but the enemies of delusion and hypocrisy. Those who have been branded as heretics are erased from history. Their memory is preserved in the testimonies of the side that condemned them. It is in these documents, Massignon writes, that we must find the fragments of truth. His was a spirit that gloried not in relating his own views but in breaking through the silence imposed by time and bringing back to life views that had long been suppressed. This for him was indeed “a sacred duty.” The fact that Massignon staked his life on reviving a person buried in historical oblivion is not simply a matter of scholarly interest. What is clear in Massignon’s account is not that he discovered Hallāj but rather his firm conviction that Hallāj had chosen him to do so. For Massignon, Hallāj was not a person from the past. He was nothing less than someone alive in another world, the living dead, as it were. The dialogue

between the two of them occurs on the “synchronic” dimension of what Izutsu calls the “synchronic structuralization” of philosophy.

Aside from his existential fellow feeling, there are other points of contact between Izutsu and Massignon: an exceptional genius for languages and the Eranos Conference. Massignon was a linguistic genius in no way inferior to Toshihiko Izutsu. He spoke more than ten languages and read fluently more than twice that number. Herbert Mason wrote his recollections of Massignon.<sup>63</sup> In his youth, as if drawn by something, Mason met Massignon toward the end of the latter’s life, cultivated an acquaintance with him and was ultimately entrusted with translating into English. For Massignon learning a language was not confined to acquiring a means of scholarship; it meant opening the eyes of the soul. What was truly astonishing, however, above and beyond his outstanding linguistic abilities, Mason says, was that he found documents in the dust and ashes of history, deciphered them, read and understood them and, what is more, uncovered their hidden meaning. It almost seemed as though Massignon “were himself personally [their] old interpreter restored momentarily to life.”<sup>64</sup> I have heard similar statements from people who had been taught by Izutsu.

The Eranos Conference began in 1933 under the leadership of Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) and Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) with the aim of overcoming the fragmentation of spirituality, which had been split between East and West. Since Massignon first took part in Eranos in 1937, it would be fair to say he was one of the participants at its beginning stage. His topic at that time was Gnosis in Islām.<sup>65</sup> The last time he attended Eranos was in 1955; he continued to be a central member up until then. His final lecture was on Fātima, Muḥammad’s daughter, the wife of ‘Ali, founder of the Shī’ite sect, and the mother of his two sons.<sup>66</sup> Women have tended to be hidden in Islām. Despite the indispensability of their activities, they lurk in the shadows of history. The greatest of these, Massignon said, was Fātima. In this woman, reminiscent of Mary in Christianity, he saw the manifestation of the maternal aspect of religion, whose role is to effect an undifferentiated harmony. Izutsu participated in Eranos in 1967. He soon became a leading figure along with Corbin.

Earlier I wrote that in his later years Massignon became a priest. Massignon, who was married, could not become a Roman Catholic priest since they take vows of celibacy. And so, though himself a Catholic, he became a priest not of the Roman Catholic Church but of the Melkite Church. The Melkite Church (more accurately, the Melkite Greek Catholic Church) is virtually unknown in Japan. Its history is said to date back to the time of Jesus.<sup>67</sup> A unique form of Christianity, nurtured by Arab spirituality, it continues to live on in Arab society even today. In order to become a priest, Massignon did not have to convert to the Melkite sect. He received special dispensation from Pope Pius XII. Before Vatican II, it was not easy to find ways to bridge the gap between Islām and the Christian world. That was a time when Catholics called any faith except their own a heresy. Massignon aimed to become a peacemaker between the two major religions by living as a Christian of the Melkite Church, which integrated the spirituality of Christianity with Arabic spirituality. On 11 October 1962, Pope John XXIII convened Vatican II. As if affirming the direction the Council would eventually take, Massignon died at the end of that same month. After Vatican II, Catholics initiated a dialogue with Islām. This dramatic change, it has been said, would never have occurred without Massignon.

Four years later, at the beginning of *Sufism and Taoism*, Izutsu quotes Henry Corbin's words "un dialogue dans la métahistoire,"<sup>68</sup> and says that he is writing this work not only for its academic interest but in response to the needs of the times. Through his dialogue between Christianity and Islām on religious issues and through his activities on behalf of peace in Islamic society, Massignon spent his life not simply in scholarly study but in "un dialogue dans la métahistoire." "Metahistorical" or "transhistorical" are words that clearly convey Corbin's attitude toward scholarship, but this attitude also proclaims Corbin to be the student of Massignon.

The term "dialogue" would become a key word in Toshihiko Izutsu's late period. Religious dialogue can never achieve its objective if it is constantly concerned with identifying areas of agreement in dogma, ceremonies or rituals. "Religious" dialogue must be practiced on a strictly "religious" dimension. At the social level, Izutsu notes, no deepening

of fundamental understanding can be expected despite repeated dialogues. But the “religious” dimension includes and transcends the social dimension. Despite its inextricable relation to existing societies, it is not necessarily dependent on them. The death of Ḥallāj, for example, was an execution in the social dimension, but a martyrdom in the religious dimension. In other words, the study of the life of Ḥallāj the martyr is nothing less than an elucidation of the reality of the “religious” dimension. For Izutsu, the person who, through his scholarship and his practical activities, illuminated the “religious” dimension was Massignon.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Russia: The Spirituality of Night

### The Writer's Mission

IT IS NOT OUT of mere intellectual interest that one speaks about Russia. The questions posed by nineteenth-century Russian men of letters, Izutsu writes at the beginning of *Roshiateki ningen: Kindai Roshia bungakushi* (Russian humanity: A history of modern Russian literature), are “the big issues concerning the life and death of the soul” that will go on being asked by people living in other countries and in subsequent centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Nineteenth-century Russian literature has been a passion of mine since my student days. My encounter with Russian literature drew me into an extraordinary world of spiritual experiences and visions. . . . Around that time I really immersed myself in Russian literature. And it certainly shocked my soul to its very foundations, changed my view of human life and revealed to me an unknown dimension lurking in the depths of existence. In that sense, the works of nineteenth-century Russian literature taught me, in a form no technical treatise on philosophy could ever do, what a living philosophy might be, or rather, what it might be *to live philosophy*.<sup>2</sup>

Reading literature is not a matter of acquiring information. The reader accompanies the writer on a journey, gets lost, encounters fundamental

issues of which even the author was unaware and ultimately proceeds onward all alone. At that time, the writer becomes a guide such as Vergil was for Dante. But it is Dante who sees, who is entrusted with a vision by the Lord of Heaven. The reader, too, witnesses and participates in the vision that the author has experienced—that is the charm of *Roshiateki ningen* and its present-day significance. What Izutsu writes about is not Russia as a time-bound phenomenon; it is the “eternal Russia” that has persisted through the ages.

As is mentioned in the Afterword written to accompany volume 3 of his selected works, there was an earlier version of *Roshiateki ningen*, a textbook used in a Keio University correspondence course entitled *Roshia bungaku* (Russian literature).<sup>3</sup> It began to be distributed as teaching material in 1951. Given its textbook nature, there were limits to its size, and so *Roshia bungaku* was only seven chapters long. *Roshiateki ningen* was fourteen chapters, twice the length of its predecessor. It was published two years later in 1953.

These are not the only works in which Toshihiko Izutsu deals with Russian literature, however. There are two others, “Torusu-toi ni okeru ishiki no mujunsei ni tsuite” (1952; On the paradoxical nature of consciousness in Tolstoy), which is found in the collection of his miscellaneous essays, *Yomu to kaku* (Reading and writing), and “Roshia no naimenteki seikatsu: jūkyūseiki bungaku no seishinshiteki tenbō” (1948; Interior life in Russia: A spiritual history perspective on nineteenth-century literature).<sup>4</sup> The latter work was not only never included in his published works; no reference to it seems ever to have been made, even by Izutsu himself. It was written in 1948, three years before the publication of *Roshia bungaku*, and appeared in the literary magazine *Kosei* (Individuality), which was put out by Shisakusha. In the same issue, the name of Osamu Dazai appears in the table of contents. This was Izutsu’s first study of Russian literature. The poet Pushkin’s true nature was that of a revolutionary in the cause of spirituality; Lermontov was an angelic poet who had fallen to earth; Tyutchev was a poet who wrote about “Being” not beings; before being a writer, Dostoevsky was a mystic who sought the salvation of all humanity; Chekhov was a prophet who had renounced religion. By the time of this essay, it would be fair to say, the views that would be expressed

in *Roshiateki ningen* had already solidified. A work of around seventy pages, it is closer to *Roshiateki ningen* than to *Roshia bungaku* in its structure as well, in that it deals with Russian spirituality and discusses it comprehensively from Pushkin to Chekhov.

“Russians are religious even in the very manner with which they reject religion”—the Russian people whom Izutsu describes in this way do not necessarily have much use for religion as a social institution.<sup>5</sup> In *Roshiateki ningen*, he writes, “Communism is a new religion that denies religion.” “When I think of the form in which Marxism was received in late-nineteenth-century Russia,” he says, “I cannot help but recall that Marx was a Jew, and his father had once been a devout believer in Judaism. Marx’s revolutionary worldview was apocalyptic and extremely Jewish in its essential structure. It was precisely from within such an anomalous atmosphere that Leninism arose.”<sup>6</sup> For Izutsu, Marxism, far from being unrelated to Jewish eschatology, was the most austere expression of that spirituality to appear in modern times. Communism in Russia was not a political ideology; it was nothing less than the embodiment of messianic thought.

Of course, Izutsu was well aware when he wrote this that Marx was not Russian. But, as was true in the case of the “Orient,” “Russia” for him did not only mean the geographical region occupied by a great northern nation; it signified another world, what Berdyaev called “the realm of the spirit.” In Izutsu’s eyes, the German-born Marx was also a citizen of that “realm of the spirit.” Had that not been the case, he says, it would be impossible to understand the reception of Marxism by Lenin and the Russians of his era. The Jewish strain that runs through Marx; the eschatological mentality that pervades Marxism; in short, a proletarian messianism which preaches that the proletariat will be the messiah of the age to come—Izutsu does not mention Berdyaev’s name, but his influence here is clear. These ideas were not Berdyaev’s alone, however. The question of “religiosity” in Marxism had also been noted by Merezhkovsky; though not Russian, Bertrand Russell among others saw an archetypal spiritual/mental congruence between Lenin’s communist state and Augustine’s City of God.

The following is a passage from Berdyaev’s *Dostoevsky’s Worldview* (1923). “[S]ocialism has sprouted in Jewish soil. It is the secular form of

the old Hebrew millenarianism, Israel's hope in the miraculous earthly kingdom and temporal bliss. It was not by chance that Karl Marx was a Jew. He cherished the hope for the future appearance of a messiah, the inverse of the Jesus whom the Hebrews had rejected; but for him, the elect of God, the messianic people, was the proletariat and he invested that class with all the attributes of the chosen race."<sup>7</sup> In the passage cited earlier, Izutsu said, "I cannot help but recall that Marx was a Jew, and his father had once been a devout believer in Judaism." He could well have added, "as Berdyaev writes." The name of Berdyaev, a leading twentieth-century Russian intellectual, does, of course, appear several times in *Roshiateki ningen*. Izutsu lets the reader know he is familiar with him. At the time *Roshiateki ningen* came out, Berdyaev had already begun to be read in Japan. There were several translations of his works, including *Dostoevsky's Worldview*,<sup>8</sup> and critical studies by Nobuhiko Miyazaki<sup>9</sup> and Bernard Schultze had also been published.<sup>10</sup> Izutsu was not concealing Berdyaev's influence. The issue here, rather, is what Izutsu believed so strongly that he felt compelled to personalize the discussion of Marx and begin with the word "I."

Recall the words cited earlier: "My encounter with Russian literature drew me into an extraordinary world of spiritual experiences and visions." The process by which the idea of revolution, conceived by Marx, had been put into practice by Lenin was a cataclysmic change in spirituality that resembled a religious reformation. Perhaps while reading Berdyaev's books, Izutsu saw it as a "vision." The fact that he could not take his eyes off Marx's father when considering Marx's spirituality was likely the result of his own acute awareness of what he had inherited from his own father that was still flowing through him.

As is true in the case of Rilke and Sartre in *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949; Philosophy of mysticism), when a person or a book had a fundamental impact on Izutsu, in many instances, the name of that person or book does not appear in his works. That is because the influence occurred subconsciously, as it were, rather than consciously. When considering Berdyaev's influence on *Roshiateki ningen*, the "religiosity" of Marxism is a topic that cannot be overlooked, but it is not the primary issue. The heart of the matter is Berdyaev's personalism, the spirit of *sobornost*, which means a community of "persons" in the true sense, citizens not of the

world but of the Kingdom of God. If we recall that the writing of “Roshia no naimenteki seikatsu” preceded *Shinpi tetsugaku*, it may have been an event that occurred close to Izutsu’s intellectual starting point. “Persona” was also alluded to in the preceding chapter. For Berdyaev, personality is a synonym for “spirit.” Moreover, “God is Spirit,” he writes in the posthumously published work, *The Realm of the Spirit and the Realm of Caesar* (1949). “God is Spirit and Freedom. . . . God is a person.”<sup>11</sup> The transcendently Absolute is a spiritual reality, manifesting itself personally of its own free will. In “The Problem of Man: Towards the Construction of a Christian Anthropology” (1936),<sup>12</sup> too, he says that all beings including the cosmos exist within personality, not the other way around; thus, personality is not a concept, it is the name of the ultimate Reality.

With Pushkin’s appearance in the nineteenth century, Izutsu writes, suddenly, without warning, a “world literature” was born in Russia.<sup>13</sup> Everyone begins the history of Russian literature with Pushkin. If that were all, it would not have been a particularly new idea. But Izutsu does not restrict the subject of his statement to Pushkin the man. Just as religion begins with a prophet who receives a revelation, in nineteenth-century Russia, literature began with the arrival of this poet. Not only did Pushkin by his efforts bring about the dawn of Russian literature, Izutsu says; a cultural universal that might be called Russian spirituality announced itself through that poet’s mouth.

To the eyes of “Russian humanity,” as Izutsu saw it, the spirit is always visible beneath its veil of flesh. Those eyes recognize the “true reality” behind the everyday realities which it subsumes. They perceive that in some way this world does not completely reflect that true reality. “Russian humanity” swings violently back and forth between appearances and reality—between radical skepticism about the phenomenal world and an insatiable longing for heaven. Just as Daisetz Suzuki speaks of a Japanese spirituality, in Russia there is a Russian spirituality. Izutsu calls it the “eternal Russia.”<sup>14</sup> It is both a historical entity embodied by Peter the Great and manifested symbolically in geniuses of every walk of life, Pushkin, Lermontov, Tyutchev, Dostoevsky, Lenin, yet it is also a “synchronic” one that transcends the barriers of time.

In his dynamic writing style, Toshihiko Izutsu describes the process by which the Russian people, freed from 300 years of Tatar oppression,

experienced the awakening of the sleeping Russian spirit and were transformed into “Russian humanity” in the true sense. At the same time, this work is nothing less than an attempt to find the gateway to the universal in the local—in this case, nineteenth-century Russia. If that had not been so, the following words would lose their credibility: “Just as today there are those who fanatically call Communist Russia the Motherland in a political sense, there are others who just as fervently love it on a completely different level from this and feel that Russia is the homeland of the soul.”<sup>15</sup> If the subject of *Shinpi tetsugaku* had been *nous*, in *Roshiateki ningen* it is “spirit” or “persona.” What Izutsu has portrayed in this work is the manifestation of persona in the phenomenal world, as revealed by nineteenth-century Russian men of letters.

The earliest person to observe that the central thesis in Berdyaev is the concept of *sobornost* was Keisuke Noguchi (1913–1975), the outstanding translator of Berdyaev who translated two of his works cited earlier, among others. Noguchi did not translate *sobornost* in the sense of a commonality of mentality and/or spirituality, or the communality that results from it. Perhaps he was hesitant to do so. Instead, he translates a passage from Berdyaev’s *Eschatological Metaphysics* (1947) as follows.

Heaven becomes possible for me only when there is no longer even one single person among all living things who experiences eternal suffering. People cannot be saved by themselves alone apart from other people. Salvation becomes a reality only when everyone without exception is freed from suffering.<sup>16</sup>

Here, clearly, Noguchi writes, the traditional mentality of making the salvation of all humankind one’s earnest prayer—a mentality that Berdyaev inherited from his predecessors, Dostoevsky and Solovyov,—flows on in unbroken succession. Presumably Izutsu, too, read *Eschatological Metaphysics*—in the original Russian, of course. One cannot help thinking so when reading the following passage: “Russian literature, even, or especially, in the case of nonreligious or antireligious writers, is strikingly eschatological. Berdyaev calls this the ‘Russian Apocalypse.’ There is an extraordinary prophetic fervor among Russian literary men in the way they go about their work thinking they must

save the world, they must reveal to their suffering fellow human beings the way to salvation.”<sup>17</sup> It is not only the contents of the passages that are similar; the earnest prayer in both echoes one another.

The concept of *sobornost* is also alive in Izutsu’s study of Dostoevsky. He discusses it in terms of Dostoevsky’s “Moscow-orientedness.”<sup>18</sup> This strange-sounding term is not the idea of an élite; in Dostoevsky’s day Moscow was on the Russian periphery. It might rather be called the idea of a kind of apostolate. The Apostles who appear in the New Testament, having been chosen by Christ, dispersed throughout the world and ended their lives in martyrdom. Thus, Moscow-orientedness is the idea that the Russian people have been chosen as public servants to the world and endowed with a unique mission: “Russia is the only nation on earth whose people uphold ‘the highest truth’; hence, the world will in due course be saved when Russia becomes the center of the world.”<sup>19</sup> The Dostoevsky whom Toshihiko Izutsu describes is a soul who persistently seeks the salvation of humankind.

For Dostoevsky, whose ultimate desire was the religious salvation of the whole human race, if only a very few special people—be they mystics or lepers—who had been vouchsafed a direct vision of the “eternal present” were saved, it would all be for naught if the remaining tens of millions of the masses who were unable to have this experience were left behind. No matter how precious the experience of rapturous ecstasy might be, if it only ended there, it would be ineffective and powerless.<sup>20</sup>

This statement—reminiscent of the Bodhisattva Path in Buddhism, the belief that those who are saved should remain in the world of suffering for the sake of all sentient beings—truly conveys Dostoevsky’s earnest prayers. And yet, although this idea was uncompromisingly expressed in Dostoevsky, it would also become the spiritual *basso continuo*, as it were, in the works of all the writers discussed in *Roshiateki ningen*.

In Old Testament times, it was not just people like the priest Ezekiel who became prophets. Amos, whom Izutsu frequently mentions, was a farmer. In Christianity there are saints like Catherine of Siena, who, though in no position of power, had an influence on the pope of her day. When Muḥammad received his revelations, he was a prominent

merchant. In the eighteenth-century German-speaking countries, it was musicians who were charged with a similar destiny. That is the reason Izutsu refers to Bach when discussing Dostoevsky and the poet Tyutchev.<sup>21</sup> In nineteenth-century Russia, this role was entrusted to literary figures. The “ultimate objective” of Russian literature, Izutsu writes, was “the search for the highest harmony that must be hiding somewhere, in the human soul or in the flesh or wherever soul and flesh brush or beat against one another, one knows not where but somewhere.”<sup>22</sup> It was for that reason their lives recall the pilgrimage of seekers after truth.

And yet Chekhov was a doctor; Tyutchev a diplomat; Lermontov an officer in the guards. Dostoevsky was almost executed for his political activities. Thereafter, he made publishing his vocation and lived to put his precepts into practice. On the other hand, after Pushkin’s death, Gogol sincerely believed that the salvation of the Russian people rested on his shoulders and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Belinsky cursed God yet never stopped seeking the truth. Tolstoy was not a preacher of Christian charity, Izutsu believes, but rather a heretic who tried to find true holiness by going back to a time that predated religion and searching for the origins of Being. These literary men chose to immerse themselves deeply in the secular world where each of them lived as ordinary citizens, while maintaining strong connections to the spirit of the times. “They were mystics before they were philosophers”—substitute “men of letters” for “philosophers” in this sentence from *Shinpi tetsugaku* and it applies perfectly to *Roshiateki ningen*. What Izutsu calls “mystics” are not world-weary misanthropes living in peace and quiet. They are doers of deeds who lead upright lives, playing their part, attempting to save all humankind while deeply involved in the world. They show no interest in solving the world’s enigmas the way self-styled mystics do. For them an enigma is not a puzzle to be solved; it is nothing less than a hard fact to be lived through.

For the Russian people, suffering under the despotism and oppression that the curious fusion of tsarism and the Orthodox Church had given rise to, literature was more than an art form; it was an oracle, a divine message that told them how to live. That does not mean they regarded literature in the same light as religion. But when the primary concern of the Church was no longer the salvation of the faithful but

its own hegemony, there was no need to doubt that religious leaders were no longer the ones entrusted with the words of heaven. It was against this background that *What Is to Be Done?* (1863), the novel by the social thinker Chernyshevsky, appeared. Literary critic Hideo Kobayashi (1902–1983) writes that this man's life was that of a saint.

The reason Chernyshevsky chose the novel form at this time was not only to avoid the censorship a monograph would inevitably incur. He did not write *What Is to Be Done?* at a desk in his study. The novel was written in prison after the authorities had arrested him for appealing for real freedom and just before he was sent to Siberia. If the present situation continued, countless men and women would be sent to prison for no legitimate reason. When he thought that these might be his last words, he began to write, addressing his ideas not to the intelligentsia but to the *narod*—the people. As a result, his book was not only read by untold numbers of Russians, one of those readers was Lenin. This long novel prepared the way for revolution.

In the last year of his life, Dostoevsky, in his famous “Pushkin speech,” spoke of this poet as a prophet. Pushkin had, in fact, been persecuted merely for being a seeker after truth. When we look at Pushkin's life, we are astonished by his poetry but also by the way hardships and deprivations appear in human form and, one after another, press in upon him. Even his death in a duel can be likened to martyrdom. When Dostoevsky, who regarded Pushkin as a prophet, ended his speech, he, too, was hailed as one by the people.

### The Seer of Souls and the Mystic Poet: Dostoevsky and Tyutchev

Those who write about Dostoevsky struggle to find the right words to describe him. Some say he was a prophet, a saint. Others, like Strakhov, cultivated a friendship with him during his lifetime but did a complete about face after his death and called him a narcissistic fantasist. Berdyaev wrote that he was not a psychologist but a pneumatologist from the Greek word *pneuma* meaning “breath” or “wind.” *Pneuma* signifies not only the physical breath or wind but also the breath of God, the wind of God; with the rise of Christianity, it became another name for the third

person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Literary critic Hideo Kobayashi expressed his partial approval for Berdyaev's term pneumatologist, but searched desperately for a different word, without being able to come up with anything better.<sup>23</sup> With no hesitation whatsoever, Toshihiko Izutsu called Dostoevsky the "seer of souls,"<sup>24</sup> as if to say anyone who overlooks this quality doesn't know what this author is talking about. This one term also suggests a special something Izutsu found in this writer. In Dostoevsky he perceived something important that cannot be encapsulated just by the term "mystic" as it was used in *Shinpi tetsugaku*.

"The works of this 'mere realist' seem to speak to me in this way: Why shouldn't philosophy and psychology become a double-edged sword and pierce your heart?" writes Kobayashi in a study of *Crime and Punishment*.<sup>25</sup> The "mere realist" is Dostoevsky; the quotation marks indicate that Kobayashi was undecided about how to redefine this "realist" author. What Kobayashi means by "philosophy" is the metaphysics that flows from Plato through Plotinus down to Bergson, in other words, Izutsu's "philosophy of mysticism." "Psychology" for him does not refer to the science of treating mental disorders. In what would become one of Kobayashi's last works, a study of the novelist and critic Hakuchō Masamune, he cites a passage from Vergil quoted on the title page of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*: "Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo" (If I cannot bend the Gods above, I shall move the underworld).<sup>26</sup> For Kobayashi "psychology" was connected with the other world, the land of souls.

Of the works on Dostoevsky by English writers, the one that Kobayashi called the most interesting and the most distinctive was J. Middleton Murry's *Dostoevsky* (1916). This singular study also aroused Izutsu's interest. In his "Introduction to Linguistics" course, the lectures he gave around the same time that he was lecturing on Russian literature, Izutsu referred to Murry's views on what it is like to look into the other world. "I do not know whether my experience is common to all those who read and are fascinated by the works of Dostoevsky," Murry apologetically begins before weaving words that read like a confession.

There are times, when thinking about the spirits which he [Dostoevsky] has conjured up—I use the word deliberately—I am

seized by a suprasensual terror. For one awful moment I seem to see things with the eye of eternity, and have a vision of suns grown cold, and hear the echo of voices calling without sound across the waste and frozen universe. . . . And I am afraid with a fear that chills me even to remember that these spirits should one day put on a mortal body and move among men.<sup>27</sup>

Raskolnikov, Sonya, Ivan Karamazov, Myshkin, Murry believes, are people who have real existence in another world. In this reading, Dostoevsky becomes a kind of shaman. Literary criticism is not a matter of enumerating facts; it is nothing less than the act of entering into the time and space that the subjects under discussion inhabit and bringing them back to life in the present. In his determination to do just that, Hideo Kobayashi found a rare and staunch ally in Murry.

In their recognition of Dostoevsky as an author who inhabited the spirit world, Hideo Kobayashi and Toshihiko Izutsu deeply intersect. If that were not the case, Izutsu would probably not have called Dostoevsky the “seer of souls,” and Kobayashi, who loved the seer Rimbaud, would perhaps not have hesitated over how to describe this author. In a lecture given a long time after he had put his study of Dostoevsky aside, Kobayashi said he had done so because he did not understand Christianity.<sup>28</sup> The Christianity that Kobayashi was referring to, however, was not Catholicism or Protestantism. Some say that Dostoevsky embodied Russian Orthodox spirituality. While it is certainly true that Dostoevsky did to some extent have expectations of the Orthodox Church, he also denounced it for being far removed from the True Church. Catholicism, he believed, was Christianity that had yielded to the temptation of the Devil. Read the entries in Dostoevsky’s *A Writer’s Diary* (1873–1881).<sup>29</sup> He expresses his inexhaustible faith in Christ but not in Christianity. He believes in Christ and, for that reason, must not become like ordinary Christians—wasn’t that his creed? Dostoevsky’s “church,” too, was in that other world, where, as Murry observes, the characters in his novels live.

“[I]f someone proved to me that Christ were outside the truth, and it *really* were that the truth lay outside Christ, I would prefer to remain with Christ rather than with the truth.”<sup>30</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu quotes these

words of Dostoevsky and says there was probably never a day that Dostoevsky did not think of Christ. Shortly after Hideo Kobayashi suspended his study of Dostoevsky, he began work on the letters of Van Gogh.<sup>31</sup> This painter, too, was someone who had left Christianity behind and fixed his gaze solely on Christ. The seer of souls is not hallucinating. What he sees is no illusion. It is certainly “real” to him. “Do you know, I’ll tell you a secret: all this might not have been a dream at all! For something happened here, something so horribly true that it couldn’t have been dreamed up.”<sup>32</sup> Even though others may ridicule it as a phantasm, for the “ridiculous man” in Dostoevsky’s “Dream of a Ridiculous Man” (1877), it feels more real to him than touching the cup in front of him. The greatness of Dostoevsky is not that he “saw” something. It lies in the fact that he dedicated his life to try to make the world his visions revealed to him a reality.

If asked to choose one distinctive chapter of *Roshiateki ningen*, I would unhesitatingly cite “Chapter 9: Tyutehev.” Of the ten studies of authors in that book, this chapter is not only the most outstanding, no one can fail to recognize it as a brilliant work by Toshihiko Izutsu on the topic of Being. His writing style and his dazzling treatment of the glory and tragedy of this poet, whose fate was to live in what Izutsu calls the Real World, are, of course, particularly fine. But finer still is the way Izutsu vividly describes how nineteenth-century Russian literature entered the metaphysical world, assigning a central place in his study to this poet as a kind of watershed figure. When developing his views on nineteenth-century Russian literature, it is unlikely that Izutsu ever considered bypassing Tyutehev. He also discusses him in *Roshia bungaku*, where space was limited.

The name of Tyutehev is not as familiar to us as that of Dostoevsky. Russia, too, Izutsu writes, has long forgotten this poet, who “deserves to be called a genius.”<sup>33</sup> A contemporary of Pushkin, Tyutehev was over fifty when he published his first collection of poetry. By that time Pushkin, who died at the age of thirty-seven, was no longer alive. It was Nekrasov who gave him his chance: Russia’s first revolutionary poet discovered Russia’s first mystic poet. There is a dimension in which the intellectual distance between idealism and materialism ceases to be an issue—a truth

conveyed to us by the many encounters that have occurred there. In the history of the arts, sometimes events occur that cannot be fathomed by dogmas such as these. Merezhkovsky devotes a work, *Two Mysteries of Russian Poetry* (1915), to the encounter between these two men.

For these poets and clairvoyants, who were obsessed by strange visions that were considered mad, sick illusions by people for whom the world of everyday affairs is the one and only “reality,” it was rather the so-called “reality” of ordinary people that was the illusion, a world of insubstantial appearances. At times, this phenomenal world may perhaps present a spectacle of ineffable beauty. But, in the final analysis, it is merely a beautifully painted curtain, a veil that conceals the true reality. If I were to try to compare it, I might even call it a smoke-screen that Someone has suddenly cast down from on high so as not to reveal the all-too-awesome true form of the Real World directly to fragile human eyes.<sup>34</sup>

This is a passage from Izutsu’s study of Tyutchev. Their agreement with the following words of Dostoevsky is no accident. “What the majority calls fantastic and exceptional sometimes constitutes the very essence of the real.”<sup>35</sup> “I am only a realist in a higher sense, i.e., I depict all the depths of the human soul.”<sup>36</sup> The agreement lies in the nature of the two writers’ existential experience rather than in how they express it. Tyutchev led the way, and Dostoevsky followed. Although Dostoevsky revered Pushkin, in the predisposition of his soul, he was closer to Tyutchev, Izutsu believes.

Izutsu was one of the very first Japanese to discuss this poet seriously. Since Izutsu, however, not many studies have dealt with Tyutchev as a metaphysical poet. For a full-scale analysis by a Japanese, we would have to wait until Atsushi Sakaniwa’s work came out in 2007.<sup>37</sup> It is suggestive that, in addition to the relationship between Dostoevsky and Tyutchev, who met several times, Sakaniwa cites the influence of Schelling on Tyutchev and deals with the “World Soul,” the fundamental organizing principle of the world as a personal reality. “For Tyutchev,” Izutsu writes, “the primary goal of poetry [was] to grasp intuitively the basic essence of the universe, the deepest level of being, and to express his awareness of it symbolically through visual images.”<sup>38</sup> On

the other hand, however, Tyutchev left statements rejecting his own poetry: As he says in *Silentium*, “a thought once uttered is untrue.”<sup>39</sup> To try to say what cannot be said; to try to save those who cannot be saved—this contradictory activity was what Tyutchev conducted in the cosmic depths. Dostoevsky, who carried on his mission, would attempt it in a more “realistic” way in the “depths of the human soul.”

The Tyutchev whom Izutsu discusses was a consummate poet of “night.” When Izutsu writes that the poet lived the night, what the darkness of night means is not the absence of light but rather its ultimate convergence. Even though darkness is reflected to human eyes as a lightless state, it is not the case that there is no light. If there were no light, there would be no darkness. To witness the instant when light begins to shine upon the earth; to be there when the “Being” who is transcendently Absolute is truly in contact with “beings”—that is *illuminatio*. That experience, which countless prophets, saints and mystics have had, is not always a matter of being enveloped in a blaze of dazzling light. “The terrible instant of recognition! In that tragic, fateful moment the poet witnesses at first hand the forbidden place that human eyes are normally not allowed to see, the primal blackness of the universe. He stands transfixed, seeing before his very eyes ‘something’ that is the direct opposite of ‘God,’ the absolutely irrational bedrock lurking in the deepest layers of all being.”<sup>40</sup> In this experience there is awe rather than terror, and, on the other hand, an “unbearable fascination” rather than joy.<sup>41</sup>

When speaking about the true nature of the mystical experience, Izutsu often uses the expression “fascination.” Like a stranger luring him away, it leads him to places far beyond his thoughts or expectations. It might be described as an invitation that is utterly impossible to refuse. Perhaps it resembles the experience religious people have of being “called.”

This poet’s penetrating eye is like the spring sun melting a glacier. When he looks intently and focuses his gaze, the surface of the Real World that until then had formed a hard, beautiful, crystalline face, instantly begins to dissolve, and eventually, from the terrible fissures that here and there open their gaping mouths, the dark abyss is

exposed. The unbearable fascination of that uncanny instant when he breaks the taboo and catches a brief glimpse of the mysteries of the cosmic depths never ever revealed to the outside world! As if possessed, with thoughts that make his hair stand on end, the poet peers in on the roiling inner depths of terror-filled blackness.<sup>42</sup>

It is not that the poet desires such an experience. It is an “instant of terror.” Yet “whether he wills it or not, this glittering curtain, suddenly, unexpectedly, glides slowly upward in front of him as he looks on.”<sup>43</sup> Undoubtedly this is a portrait of Tyutchev. But it may also have been a portrait of Izutsu himself.

### The Poet Who Sang of Life before Birth

Izutsu may have regarded Dostoevsky with a respect bordering on awe, but it seems to me he considered Lermontov a fellow-countryman. That means he felt a real affinity for him that went beyond personal preferences. In “Chapter 6: Lermontov” of *Roshiateki ningen*, Izutsu quietly but firmly interweaves themes that Lermontov never for an instant set aside during his lifetime: the recollection of heaven and the reality of angels, in other words, his views of heaven and heavenly beings.

As a rebel against the age in which he lived, Lermontov was a successor to Pushkin; as a seeker after holiness, he prepared the way for Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. He had already begun to write poetry by the time he was seventeen. “Angel,” which he wrote at that time, is one of his finest works and is known to have been particularly dear to the poet himself. Here I will cite one stanza, which Izutsu translated into Japanese.

The angel carried the unborn soul  
 To a land of suffering and tears.  
 The words of the song the young soul forgot,  
 Yet its melody clearly recalled.<sup>44</sup>

The “land of suffering and tears” is this life, the phenomenal world. After being born on earth, “the young soul forgot . . . the words of the song . . . / Yet . . . clearly recalled” the melody it had heard in the other world. This statement is not metaphorical. In the case of this poet, it

is a candid confession. “I still remember hearing a certain song when I was three years old, and being so moved that I burst into tears,” reads a passage in Lermontov’s notes that Izutsu cites.<sup>45</sup> The “song” was not of this world. Lermontov did not believe it was a song of his birthplace, where he lived with his mother, who died when he was young. For him it was a melody from the other world. The poet’s confession must be taken literally. In the poems he wrote as an adult, however, he shuns society and in violent language constantly spews out his feelings of rage. His contemporaries treated him as a nuisance.

It is well known that Pushkin lost his life in a duel over his wife. But the truth, says Lermontov, is that it had been nothing less than a publicly conducted assassination, the equivalent of an official silencing. When he died, the world fell silent as if it had forgotten his poems. Those poems that had been so comforting, so encouraging, so soothing, were intentionally forgotten. Pushkin’s poetry did not simply move people’s hearts and minds. It awakened their souls and defined their spirituality. If Lermontov were to keep silent now, Pushkin’s very existence might be denied by the authorities and be reduced to a myth. The death of a great poet announced the arrival of Lermontov. “Death of the Poet” (1837), Lermontov’s poem which asserted that Pushkin did not die in a duel, he was murdered, was not published, but it was copied faster than any printing press and circulated throughout Russia. How great was the impact of this one handwritten poem by a cavalry officer can be seen by the fact that he was conscripted into the regular army and sent to the battlefield in the Caucasus. Lermontov suffered the same end as his predecessor. He, too, died in a “duel.” The local priest refused to bury him; the owner of the house he was renting performed an exorcism; Tsar Nicholas I said, “A dog’s death for a dog!”<sup>46</sup>

A poet who sang of the dark side of human beings and the absurdity of reality rather than salvation—that was Lermontov. But Izutsu’s interest does not lie in “what” Lermontov wrote. He deals with “where” the poet came from. “An exile aimlessly wandering the earth, longing for his soul’s eternal homeland, his body writhing with impatience for a land far, far away, a land of limpid light that surely exists somewhere beyond the distant horizon”—that was Lermontov’s true nature as Izutsu saw it.<sup>47</sup> The statement that he came from “beyond the distant

horizon” brings us back to a passage in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, which Izutsu had called his own intellectual starting point.

From beyond a distant time thousands of years ago, the voice of some gigantic thing came into this breast, thunderously overpowering the circumambient noise. This uncanny sound, whose reverberant echo almost deafens my ears, barely even grazes the heartstrings of most people’s breasts but seems to pass them idly by. They coolly appear to take no notice of it as if they were utterly insensible to that sound. But when I receive this awful voice wholeheartedly onto the strings of my breast, my soul responds to and harmonizes with it with an almost heart-breaking resonance.<sup>48</sup>

This is the ur-landscape of Toshihiko Izutsu the philosopher. His philosophy begins with this passage and always returns to it. Lermontov was likely not the only one to have memories from beyond a distant time and space. “When I receive this awful voice wholeheartedly onto the strings of my breast, my soul responds to and harmonizes with it with an almost heart-breaking resonance.” Reading this, one cannot help thinking that these were the recollections of Izutsu himself:

Because *Roshia bungaku* was meant to serve as teaching materials for a correspondence course — campus publishing as it were — readers other than the students in the course were naturally limited. Inevitably there are only a few references to this work. One of these is a very interesting allusion to *Roshia bungaku* in an essay by Kazuo Miura (d. 1994) entitled “Izutsu Toshihiko-sensei” (Professor Toshihiko Izutsu), written at the time of Izutsu’s death.<sup>49</sup>

In his student days Miura audited Izutsu’s lectures on Russian literature. He learned a great deal about the character and thought of the Russian people and the distinctive features of the Russian language, he said, but there was just one thing “I couldn’t go along with no matter what” — Professor Izutsu’s “tendency to try to explain things like the world’s various cultural phenomena and the workings of people’s minds in terms of differences in types of religious experience, a tendency that might be called overly idealized or even almost mystical.” Moreover, when Miura read *Roshia bungaku* and frankly told Izutsu his impressions

of the book, “his face surprisingly reddened, and in that distinctive tone of voice of his,” he said. “That was a thing of the past that I myself have cast aside. I’m embarrassed even to think of it,” but if it wasn’t any good, “you should write a better one yourself.”<sup>50</sup> Certainly, what he had finished writing was already “a thing of the past that he himself had cast aside,” yet the embarrassment its author felt bears no relation to the value of the work itself. Izutsu may have regretted not having adequately treated the topics in this book, but that “embarrassment” was not the only thing he felt should be clear from the fact that he went on to write *Roshiateki ningen*. *Roshiateki ningen* was published in 1953, the year Stalin died. As he would say years later in the colloquy with Shōtarō Yasuoka, his lectures on Russian literature came to an end at that time, as “a left-wing, socialist ideology was coming into vogue.”<sup>51</sup> It may well be that, around the time of *Roshia bungaku*, Izutsu’s aims in lecturing on what might be called a history of Russian spirituality would not have been readily understood.

Among the works of Kazuo Miura’s early period was a translation of Marx’s *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844), translated in 1962.<sup>52</sup> His last work, published posthumously in 1995, was a translation of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807).<sup>53</sup> I have read praise for each of these translations, which are highly esteemed for their Japanese style. The author’s mastery of logical thinking is also fully conveyed in the short tribute to Izutsu. If we see Miura’s words as a criticism of Toshihiko Izutsu from an ideological standpoint, we might be accused of prejudice. Miura acknowledges that the mystical thought of Neoplatonism found its way into Russia. In the same essay he shows a high regard for Izutsu’s work on semantics, and his account of this subject is accurate. It is clear that he also carefully read Izutsu’s other writings. His objections lie elsewhere. It is unreasonable, Miura observes, to be indifferent to the political problems that existed in Russia at the time and reduce them all to mystical philosophy. What he also objected to in those days seems to have been Izutsu’s treatment of Lermontov.

In the section on Lermontov in *Roshia bungaku*, Izutsu refers to the poet Claudel’s experience of Rimbaud. This section was omitted in *Roshiateki ningen*. The poet Paul Claudel was once a thoroughgoing materialist. What taught him that even matter could not exist without

God was the poetry of Rimbaud. For Claudel, it was literally a revelation. Thereafter, he became a devout believer. What is more, Claudel said that his encounter with Rimbaud had been prepared on a different dimension, that Rimbaud was his spiritual contemporary. Claudel could not free himself from the “strangeness that such a thing as a spiritual *generation* might authoritatively exist, one effected on a spiritual level without any temporal relationship, irrespective of generation as a time-based system.”<sup>54</sup>

The term “generation” may draw the reader into the temporal dimension. Let’s imagine it as a rectangular solid extending vertically. Divide it horizontally at set intervals into ten equal parts. Regard the height of the solid as a hundred years and its plane surface as the world. The equally divided parts become decades, i.e. a “generation.” Let’s call this a “latitudinal generation.” By contrast, take the same solid but now divide it lengthwise from top to bottom into ten equal vertical parts. Assume that people who live in each hundred-year period and are somehow connected to one another are contained along this lengthwise axis. Let’s call this a “longitudinal generation.”

What Izutsu is referring to in his discussion of Claudel and Rimbaud is this longitudinal generation. There is no need to confine ourselves to a hundred years. If, for example, we were to go back to ancient Greece, it would be possible to expand the lengthwise axis to 3000 years. Izutsu would later describe his work as the “synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophy,” but it would be fair to call it the philosophical structuralization of longitudinal generations instead. On such a grid, Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Lao-tzŭ, the ancient Indian sages, Jewish mystics, Islamic philosophers, Chinese Confucianists of the Sung dynasty, Zen monks, Bashō, Motoori Norinaga, Mallarmé, Rilke and Sartre would all live as “contemporaries.” Just as there are “days” in physical time, “time” also exists on the axis of eternity. Ancient Greek made a distinction between quantitative time and qualitative time—*chronos* and *kairos*. The former is external to the world; the latter is internal. Augustine’s statement that a day can be measured by a clock, but time is measured by the soul, probably refers to the same thing.

“Yes, Lermontov was truly a solitary figure who had no place anywhere on this earth where he belonged, who had no one anywhere in the wide world who was close to him,” Izutsu says in *Roshia*

*bungaku*.<sup>55</sup> Before his encounter with Rimbaud, Claudel might have said the same thing. If Rimbaud was a person of Claudel's "time," Izutsu writes, Lermontov's "contemporary" would have been Baudelaire; in "L'Étranger" (The Stranger), the poem at the beginning of *Le Spleen de Paris* (1869; Paris Spleen), he would have heard the voice of someone else homesick for the other world. Cited below is Baudelaire's poem, which Izutsu translated into Japanese for *Roshia bungaku* but which was removed when the work was published as *Roshiateki ningen*.

- Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis? ton père, ta mère, ta sœur ou ton frère?  
 — Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni sœur, ni frère.  
 — Tes amis?  
 — Vous vous servez là d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté jusqu'à ce jour inconnu.  
 — Ta patrie?  
 — J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.  
 .....  
 — Eh! qu'aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?  
 — J'aime les nuages . . . les nuages qui passent . . . là-bas . . . là-bas . . . les merveilleux nuages!
- Whom do you love best? do tell, you enigma: your father? your mother, sister, brother?  
 — I have no father, no mother, neither sister nor brother.  
 — Your friends?  
 — That is a word I've never understood.  
 — Your country?  
 — I don't know at what latitude to look for it.  
 .....  
 — Well then, you puzzling stranger, what do you love?  
 — I love clouds . . . clouds that go by . . . out there . . . over there . . . marvelous clouds!<sup>56</sup>

Lermontov has a poem called "Túchi" (1840; Clouds) that carries a similar resonance.<sup>57</sup> What the two poets are speaking about in the guise of clouds is the gateway to the other world. Just as Lermontov sang of the

“Angel,” the voice in Baudelaire’s “L’Albatros” and “Correspondances” (1857), too, overflows with weariness for this life and nostalgia for a previous existence. Perhaps the wings of Lermontov’s angel were visible to Baudelaire when he wrote of the albatross, “Exilé sur le sol au milieu des huées, / Ses ailes de géant l’empêchent de marcher” (But on the ground, amid the hooting crowds, / He cannot walk, his wings are in the way).<sup>58</sup> Those wings, indispensable in heaven, are not only useless in the earthly world, he laments; they simply become a nuisance. In Izutsu’s view, Lermontov was “a stranger who had stumbled into this world by some mistake or through some trick of malevolent fate, a wandering wayfarer who had no home anywhere on earth.”<sup>59</sup> The same could probably also be said of “the stranger” in Baudelaire’s poem cited above.

Izutsu takes note of the fact that the two poets both had recollections of a previous existence. But, more than that, he never loses sight of the fate of those who, having been born with such “recollections,” speak of the reality of the other world as if somehow driven to do so. Pushkin had already begun to write poetry in French when he was eleven years old. In the case of Rimbaud, not only did the writing of poetry begin in his teens, for all intents and purposes, it ended there as well. As was mentioned earlier, Lermontov, too, was in his mid-teens when he began to write works that deserve to be called poetry. The reason these men could not help but write poetry was that they never stopped thinking of “home.” This was particularly true of Lermontov. For him a poem was a prayer that awakened the feelings he had had in his life before birth.

“Previous incarnation” is a term associated with the transmigration of souls and indicates the cycle of death and rebirth in the framework of this world and the present life. But “previous existence” refers to a realm where we lived before being born. This other world is the world of the Intellect in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, what Rilke calls *Realität*, Plato the world of Ideas, Swedenborg heaven.

He [Lermontov] was born into this world as an obvious misfit, carrying with him an image of eternal beauty. A person with a talent for painting and an extraordinary musical genius, he symbolically depicted his vision of this eternal beauty as the sweet strains of a song

he had heard in a previous existence, before he had been born in this world.<sup>60</sup>

And yet sometimes the words of this poet would also become the words of a curse, railing at the fact that what he longed for could never be found in this life. Nineteenth-century Russian statesmen heard only these outcries and drove Lermontov to his death. “One’s impression of Lermontov is not that of a man, but that of a demon,”<sup>61</sup> Izutsu says. “Undoubtedly, Lermontov was a man possessed. But instead of being a man possessed by the Devil,” he goes on to say, “he is a demon himself.”<sup>62</sup> “Demon” certainly conjures up a sense of the demonic, but it is not satanic. The public made no attempt to understand this fundamental difference. And yet sometimes a holy thing will appear with a deafening roar that shakes the very foundations of Being and stunningly awes people into submission. There is a work by Lermontov entitled the “Demon King” (published posthumously in 1842). The title character is not a being who seeks evil. In Izutsu’s translation, the “Demon King” confesses: “I want to reconcile with heaven. I want to love. I want to pray. I want to believe in goodness” (“Demon King” X).<sup>63</sup>

When Masami Ichijō’s translations of Lermontov’s “Mtsyiri” (1840; *The Novice*) and “Demon” were published in the Iwanami Bunko series (1951), a scholar of Russian literature, Yoshitarō Yokemura, wrote the introduction.<sup>64</sup> Like Lermontov, Yokemura, too, believed in a “country” that was still an unrealized dream. In his case, however, it was not something he was willing to wait for until it appeared; it was something real that he felt he had to play his part and help bring it about.

### The Eternal Idea

Yoshitarō Yokemura (1897–1975) began a lecture on Russian literature in 1947 by speaking about Dostoevsky, “When I went to the Soviet Union about ten years ago, experts didn’t much recommend that readers read Dostoevsky.”<sup>65</sup> There is no writer for whom the range of praise and censure is as striking as it is in the case of Dostoevsky. Some detect a kind of genius in his mystical and religious views and praise him as a prophet, an interpreter of the other world, but Yokemura did not

subscribe to such views. Why not? Because “they cannot become the flesh and blood of those who are advancing along the road to a democratic revolution.” Indeed, studies of this sort of idealistic Dostoevsky are an obstacle to anyone “moving forward on the proper course of development” and must be rejected.<sup>66</sup>

The quote may be arbitrary, but I do not think it distorts its author’s intentions. Readers of Yokemura’s entire oeuvre will likely find statements even more scathing than this. Such oversimplified, leftwing views of Dostoevsky that make a dichotomy between good and evil would probably have few subscribers today. And yet, this was the person who introduced Toshihiko Izutsu to Russian literature. Yokemura’s influence on Izutsu was by no means less than people like Merezhkovsky, Berdyaev and Solovyov, who appear in *Roshiateki ningen* and deserve to be called Dostoevsky’s successors. A glance at the words below suggests that Yokemura was not someone who fits the label of a stereotypical leftwing writer.

At the end of “Higuchi Ichiyō,” a movie I saw recently, there was a reading from her diary—“I am a child of the god of poetry, born to comfort the human world in its suffering and despair. . . . As long as this vessel does not break and spill my blood, I shall leave this beauty behind, and so long as this world does not cease to be, my poems shall become the life of the people.” A conscience and a sense of social responsibility many times greater than that of Ichiyō’s must, I believe, be demanded of writers and critics in the politically aware times of today.<sup>67</sup>

“I am a child of the god of poetry, born to comfort the human world in its suffering and despair”—this passage recalls the cry of Lermontov we saw earlier. Yokemura never loses sight of these words. In the late-nineteenth-century woman poet and novelist, Higuchi Ichiyō, he sees the face of a saint.

The number of people who have ever heard of Yoshitarō Yokemura is no doubt diminishing. There have been reports that a search is under way to find the as-yet-unknown holder of copyright to his works. This student of Russian literature believed in the democratic revolution expounded by Marx and Lenin. Throughout his whole life he never

abandoned the conviction that art had an indispensable role to play in this process. That explains why, as the ideology he believed in has waned, his translations and original writings have trickled off, as it were, and disappeared, and the number of people who comment on him has also declined.

After graduation from the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages (now Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) and a stint in the Investigation Bureau of the Bank of Japan, Yokemura worked for the Russian Embassy in Japan and became an assistant professor at his alma mater and a lecturer at Waseda University. For two years beginning in 1935, he studied in the Soviet Union. What sort of patronage Yokemura may have had at that time is unknown. The fact that he had been employed by the Russian Embassy, albeit in Japan, may have worked to his advantage. But even if that were the case, it can readily be conjectured that there were one or two obstacles he would have had to overcome. Although I used the term “study,” the situation in the Soviet Union in those days was completely different than it would be for a university professor going to study Russian literature there today. It is not hard to imagine that it would have required some determination. Yokemura returned to Japan in 1938, the year in which the actress Yoshiko Okada (1902–1992) and Ryōkichi Sugimoto defected to the Soviet Union. As more information has become publicly available, we now know that when Sugimoto crossed into the Soviet Union, he was arrested and executed on suspicion of being a spy.

“Being a leftist, [Yokemura] seems to have been regarded by the militarists with extreme disfavor.”<sup>68</sup> As Izutsu says, Yokemura was driven out of the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages in 1940 because of his political beliefs and was detained in 1945 for being in contravention of the Public Security Preservation Law. After the war, he became a member of the Communist Party in 1946 and the following year stood for election to the House of Councillors. When a Russian language school, the Soviet Academy (now the Russian Academy of Tokyo), opened in 1954, he became its first principal.

Shortly after entering Keio University, Izutsu also began attending night school at the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages with the aim of learning Russian. All the classes were “like eating sand; I almost

wondered whether Russian could possibly be such a boring language.”<sup>69</sup> There was one exception: Yoshitarō Yokemura. The view that what Izutsu learned from Yokemura was the Russian language not Russian literature is refuted by his own testimony. Izutsu talked about Yokemura in what might be called the closing years of his life. In his colloquy with Shōtarō Yasuoka, he says, “When one studies with someone who has the Russian temperament in his own body, all of a sudden Russian becomes understandable. Simply put, he himself was immersed in Russia. The spirit of the Russian language was alive in that man. It was truly marvelous.”<sup>70</sup> The language in the essay “Shōshi o motomete” (1980; In search of the right teacher) is even more passionate. Even though fifty years had passed, Izutsu’s words are strikingly vivid when he speaks of meeting Yokemura. The “he,” of course, is Yokemura.

The unfathomable depths of the Russian soul, which I later came to understand as “the Russian chaos,” somehow pulsed through his very being, and this moved me tremendously. He, too, was someone who lived his scholarship existentially.<sup>71</sup>

Nihilism and atheism fostered in political and religious confusion; souls in search of salvation and the Absolute in a godless place; the mysticism of night; a unique faith cultivated by a love of Christ that bordered on madness—this for Izutsu was the “Russian chaos,” Russian spirituality that could not rest content with any religion or ideology. Toshihiko Izutsu learned how to catch a glimpse of the innermost recesses of the Russian soul from the leftwing writer Yoshitarō Yokemura.

The expression “He, too, was someone who lived . . . existentially” can be considered the highest praise Toshihiko Izutsu could give. Among the other people of whom he spoke in similar terms, Louis Massignon, who studied Ḥallāj, comes to mind, as does Mircea Eliade, the historian of religion. The former determined Izutsu’s attitude toward scholarship; the latter he regarded as a guide pioneering the way for thinkers in search of truth. Although Islamic mysticism and the history of religion occupy different realms, these two men were both first-rate scholars who were the leading lights of their time in the twentieth century. Among Japanese, Izutsu used the expression for the philosopher Keiji Nishitani. “Existential” in this context does not simply imply

outstanding. And it is utterly different from being correct. It is nothing less than staking one's whole self on one's mission in life. But before anyone can stake their life, they first have to know what state their entire body and spirit are in. It is not possible to risk something one does not truly know. A scholar knows this through his/her scholarship; a painter acquires mastery by painting, a writer by writing. For a religious person, it is prayer; for the sick, the role is just to survive in that condition. For a laborer it is work. Those who are able to master their roles completely Izutsu calls "existential."

And yet, it is not easy to detect Yoshitarō Yokemura's influence in *Roshiateki ningen*. It is clear from that work that Izutsu had a fellow feeling for thinkers like Solovyov, Berdyaev and Merezhkovsky who followed in Dostoevsky's footsteps. Dostoevsky's basic thesis that "beauty is a struggle between light and darkness, the congruence of contradictory polar opposites," Izutsu writes, can be said to have been inherited from Tyutchev and flows through Dostoevsky into Solovyov.<sup>72</sup> But Yoshitarō Yokemura denounced these men for misrepresenting Dostoevsky and qualitatively changing Russian literature for the worse. Even though these three men's attitude toward life may have been sincere, he criticized their idea of ascribing a mystic origin to existence on the grounds that it distorted Dostoevsky's truth, perverted his legacy and established a tradition that was detrimental to Russia. Izutsu and Yokemura do not readily agree. Whether Yokemura read *Roshiateki ningen* is not known; since he died in 1975, there is every possibility that he did. But even if he did, it is unlikely that he would have unreservedly approved.

Solovyov was the model for Ivan and Aloysha in *Brothers Karamazov* (1880), and the words of Ambrosius, whom Dostoevsky met at the Optina Monastery, which he visited with Solovyov, were passed on to us through the character of Father Zosima. Yokemura frequently discussed Dostoevsky and often referred to Solovyov. But he called this story a total "fallacy."

Yokemura sums up Solovyov's philosophy as follows: "The ideal world is the world of God, and the actual world is the world on earth. Human beings play the role of intermediaries between these two worlds. Through human intervention, the kingdom of God will be established on earth." In order to bring this about, first, "we must rely

on God”; moreover, its attainment “can only be achieved by a theocracy centered on the Church [the reunified Eastern and Western churches].”<sup>73</sup> This is only an outline so there is no denying it is highly abridged. But it does not seem to be the account of a biased critic. Not only are there no mistakes, it faithfully conveys Solovyov’s ideas. For there to be true peace, he says, human beings must regain their spirituality as the children of God, put an end to the schism in the Church that has for so many years served as the matrix of wars and confusion, and usher in the work of God—Solovyov calls this eternal idea “Sophia.” But these words are all nothing more than a mystic’s daydream, Yokemura complains; in reality, the world is in such dire straits that it can ill afford to be swayed by empty fantasies.

There is a work by Solovyov entitled *Beauty in Nature: The General Significance of the Arts* (1889), which has been translated by Richio Takamura.<sup>74</sup> The translation was published in 1928, just around the time that Solovyov’s works were first being seriously introduced into Japan. The translator’s commentary on Solovyov’s aesthetics that accompanied it is accurate even by today’s standards, writes the foremost Japanese expert on Solovyov’s studies, Michio Mikoshiba. The writing style conveys to us that the translation was written with an underlying sympathy and enthusiasm for Solovyov and that the translator was keeping his overflowing emotions in check. So close to the original author does the translator get that, if he had not forced himself to be patient and rational, we would not know whether the words the pen weaves are Solovyov’s or the translator’s. At the beginning of “Beauty in Nature,” the lecture on which this book was based, Solovyov quotes Dostoevsky’s words, “Beauty will save the world.”<sup>75</sup> In the same work several poems by Tyutchev are cited; the work itself is almost like a commentary on poetry.

Richio Takamura is another name for Yoshitarō Yokemura, though he subsequently stopped using it. When later asked by a publisher for permission to reprint his translation of Solovyov, he refused saying that he no longer believed those ideas. And yet the fact remains that Yokemura was the Japanese who was most acutely sensitive to the spiritual pilgrimage of Tyutchev, Dostoevsky and Solovyov. Izutsu most likely read this translation. Not only that, Izutsu’s study of Tyutchev is

in such close accord with it that it seems likely this book was the one by which Izutsu first came to know Tyutchev.

At the beginning of his literary career, Yokemura saw a ray of light that led him to Solovyov's thought, but at a certain point he bade farewell to this thinker. "Knowing" the truth was no longer his goal in life. He came to want not just to know the truth but to make it a reality. The person who drew Yokemura away from Solovyov's metaphysical world and brought him back to the phenomenal world was Belinsky. Russian intellectuals, be they religious or socialist, seek "a living truth by which, if only it existed, all problems would be completely solved, and human life would immediately become just and righteous," and they place their trust in those who profess such a truth. Belinsky was "the earliest and the most representative expression of this fundamentally Russian intellectual tendency." His spiritual journey, which "led him successively to" Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, Feuerbach and then to socialism, was not a mere repetition of ideological conversions, Izutsu says. "It was nothing less than an itinerary in pursuit of an all-encompassing truth."<sup>76</sup> This statement is true not only of Belinsky; it is applicable to Yoshitarō Yokemura as well.

An anthology of Belinsky's Russian literary criticism was translated by Yoshitarō Yokemura in a two-volume edition for the Iwanami Bunko series.<sup>77</sup> The commentary that accompanies it is in the voice of a storyteller passing down an oral tradition. For Yokemura, Belinsky can fairly be said to have determined the canon of nineteenth-century Russian literature, and one has the feeling that Yokemura considered it his mission to make this critic live on forever. Yokemura translated many things, but such is the passion that emanates from this work one almost feels that, even if most of them as well as his original writings were to be lost, he wouldn't care as long as these two volumes survived along with their accompanying short biography of Belinsky and detailed commentary. Yokemura when discussing Belinsky transcends the confines of time and space and seems to be living in nineteenth-century Russia. His study of Belinsky poses questions to the reader that seem fresh even now despite the break-up of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Communist Party and the other enormous changes that Russian communism has undergone. What fully justifies reading Yokemura

today is that he writes in a way that goes beyond mere historical time. It is unlikely that Japan will ever produce anyone who can surpass Yoshitarō Yokemura in the depth of his personal interest in Belinsky.

Take the following passages in Yokemura's brief life of Belinsky: "The universe, the whole world, is 'the breath of a single *idée*' in its countless manifestations. . . . It is the mission of people, citizens, as well as the human race, to manifest in themselves this single *idée* and its human values." And, "art is the expression of the universe's vast single *idée* in its infinitely diverse phenomena."<sup>75</sup> The first sentence is Yokemura's; the second are the words of Belinsky as quoted by Yokemura. The reason the difference between the two is so nebulous is that Yokemura was determined to act as Belinsky's spokesperson. It is also astonishing that Yokemura's language is virtually identical to the words with which Solovyov expresses his thoughts. Not only that, they are also reminiscent of what the Islamic mystic philosopher Ibn 'Arabī said about the unity of existence.

Belinsky, who has carved out a place in history for himself as the person who laid the cornerstone of revolutionary thought, would of course later reject the theory of Ideas. But he never lost sight of the "single *idée*" within it as the basis of salvation. People are capable of shedding one ideology after another. But they cannot free themselves from what truly motivates them, that which deserves to be called their deepest desire. What Toshiko Izutsu describes as Belinsky's "pursuit of an all-encompassing truth" is not a different activity from this. What a person desires is not something that they can freely determine. It grabs hold of them. An earnest desire is not egotistical or self-interested. Perhaps it would be more accurate to call it a meaningful existence, the fundamental meaning in the life that is granted to a person.

Belinsky, who read Dostoevsky's *Poor Folk* (1846), immediately appreciated the new writer's genius and made him widely known to the world. But Belinsky did not feel the same way about *The Double*, which came out next. Although he acknowledged the incomparable "independence" of Dostoevsky's genius when it probed deeply into the world around us, the works in which Dostoevsky made clear his mystical views were not to his liking. Belinsky, who died in 1848, did not, of course, know *Crime and Punishment* (1866) or the works that came

after it. Yokemura's opinion of Dostoevsky was inherited from Belinsky. Although Yokemura's study of Dostoevsky seems to be discussing this writer, it was, in fact, a practical, pragmatic extension of the literature that Belinsky regarded as ideal. Yokemura's views cited below reveal his own attitude toward revolution rather than that of Dostoevsky.

Although Dostoevsky saw these revolutionary, democratic movements of the sixties and seventies with his own eyes, he did not proceed in the direction of the people. Because he was only thinking about the suffering in his own head, because he tried to solve everything solipsistically, he was unable to find any real way out. In the forties, at least half of him was on the side of the revolution, but from the sixties on, one could say he had lost faith in revolution. . . . On the one hand, to cease believing in the revolution, on the other, to maintain the ideals of equality and harmony—that is the contradiction.<sup>79</sup>

As can be understood from the criticism implied in the words “to cease believing in the revolution,” for Yokemura the revolution was something “to believe in,” it was a “faith” worth dedicating himself to. When Izutsu was discussing the “religiosity” of Russian communism in *Roshiateki ningen*, it is hard to imagine he didn't have Yokemura in mind. It is not the dogma of communism that was religious. What was “religious” was the instinctive idea that the masses would transcend the individual and seek to bring about truth, justice and love in their own communities and in the world. As Izutsu says, “In Russia, ‘God’ is not necessarily limited to the God of the Bible.”<sup>80</sup>

## CHAPTER FOUR

# A Contemporary and the Biography of the Prophet

Religious Philosopher Yoshinori Moroi

THE ROLE THAT Tenri-kyō and Tenri University played in postwar Japanese studies of Islām has not, I believe, been much discussed before now. Worth noting first is its library acquisitions policy and then the number of distinguished scholars the university has produced. The Islām-related materials amassed by Shūmei Ōkawa at the East Asian Economic Research Bureau were confiscated by the US Army after the war, and their whereabouts are now unknown. By contrast, the Tenri Central Library collected important works related to Islām in the postwar period. The person who strongly urged the second Shinbashira, Shōzen Nakayama (1905–1967), to do so was Yoshinori Moroi (1915–1961). Nakayama had the utmost confidence in Moroi, who was not only a Tenri-kyō theologian but also held important leadership positions as a professor at Tenri University and in organizations related to Tenrikyology.

Tenrikyology, the theology of Tenri-kyō, the Religion of the Divine Wisdom, begins with Yoshinori Moroi. For this monotheistic new religion, which, like Islām itself, traces its origins to divine revelations imparted to its founder, Miki Nakayama (1798–1887), Moroi attempted to construct both a theology and a dogmatic theology that would rival those of the Semitic world religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islām.

Because such a task resembles building a temple, it was not something that could be completed by Moroi alone. But the core concepts for such a project are already evident in his “Tenri-kyō shingaku joshō” (Introduction to Tenri-kyō theology) and “Tenri-kyō kyōgigaku shiron” (A preliminary essay on Tenri-kyō dogmatic theology).<sup>1</sup> Alluding to Thomas Aquinas, Yoshinori Moroi says that, while theology had certainly developed under Christianity, Christians have no monopoly on it. Theology “is not the useless theorizing of people with too much time on their hands, nor is it an idle response to vain and empty speculations. People inside the faith are naturally spurred on to take this step by the immediate and urgent realities of life pressing in on them.”<sup>2</sup> Theology is not an intellectual attempt to understand God. The soul desires it. It is nothing less, he says, than an act of faith on which one must stake one’s whole life.

A distinction between theology and philosophy can be made on conceptual grounds, since theology seeks its origins in revelation and deals with the Absolute whereas philosophy does not presuppose that the Absolute exists. And yet what really exists is a blending of the two, as in the case of Thomism, where theology and philosophy are inextricably intertwined. That is the reason why Islamic philosophers always praise Allah before they begin to speak. “Greek philosophy is a pure and unalloyed monotheism *in religious terms*. But, in fact, when it ceases to be a religion, it is nothing more than philosophy. It is philosophy, but turn it the other way around in religious terms, and it is immediately an absolute monotheism.”<sup>3</sup> Izutsu’s words in “Shinpihugi no erosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron” (1951; The mysticism of St Bernard) certainly are consonant with the historical facts. Proclus, who followed in Plotinus’ footsteps, wrote *Platonic Theology*.

The writings of Christians like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Muslims like Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), Averroes (Ibn Rushd) and Ibn ‘Arabī, Jews like Gabirol and Maimonides, and Buddhists like Nāgārjuna and Aśvaghoṣa, are revered as classic texts in their respective religious circles, but their readers are not limited to believers nor do those who study them feel under pressure to convert to the faith. They are the legacy of the human race, capable of being read as philosophy by everyone—as Toshihiko Izutsu, in fact, did. The same can also be said about sacred

texts. If nonbelievers read them and are unable to catch a glimpse of the truth, such works do not deserve to be called sacred texts. Indeed, isn't it precisely for the salvation of those who do not yet believe that any religion worthy of its name exists? There is no need to go all the way back to Paul to see that Christianity has been sustained by its converts: Before turning to Christianity, Augustine renounced Manichaeism, Francis of Assisi a life of debauchery, Claudel materialism, Jacques Maritain modern rationalism. In his youth, the Tibetan Buddhist saint, Milarepa, had killed people.

The achievements of Yoshinori Moroi are not limited to Tenrikyology. As a historian of religions, he included in his purview not only the world religions but even shamanism, while, in philosophy, his range extended from Greece, of course, and ancient India to modern thought. He was a first-rate religious philosopher who could hold forth on these subjects with a personal passion. The topics to which he devoted most of his intellectual energies were the religious act of "faith," and mysticism as the apogee of the religious experience. But he was also, one realizes when reading the tributes written after his death, someone who thoroughly put his beliefs into practice as an educator, preacher and administrator. This fact must not be overlooked. Instead of simply adding another essay to his résumé, he preferred to give his ideas concrete expression, even if it meant that those ideas would be left only partially complete.

The reason we have forgotten Moroi today is that he died prematurely. Although he attracted attention in religious studies circles through the numerous works he published and through his election at age thirty-six as a director of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies, he succumbed to illness and at forty-six made his departure to the other world. The day before he died, he received his Doctor of Literature degree from the University of Tokyo, seven and a half years after he had submitted his dissertation. Apart from the books brought out during his lifetime by the Tenri-kyō publishing department, as a historian of religion he left this world behind without knowing what would become of his remaining works in the history of religion. His doctoral dissertation, *Shūkyō shinpishugi hassei no kenkyū: toku ni Semu-kei chōetsushinkyō o chūshin to suru shūkyōgakuteki kōsatsu* (1966; A study

of the development of religious mysticism: A religious-studies perspective centering on Semitic monotheism), was published five years after his death by the Tenri University publishing department;<sup>4</sup> what might be called his unfinished magnum opus, *Shūkyōteki shutaisei no ronri* (1991; The logic of religious identity), was revised by Yoshitsugu Sawai (1951– ) and other members of a younger generation of scholars and published thirty years after his death.<sup>5</sup> If he is remembered as a scholar, Yoshinori Moroi, the religious philosopher, the original thinker, is forgotten today. He was born on 30 March 1915; Toshihiko Izutsu was born on 4 May the year before. They were, it is fair to say, contemporaries.

I shall never forget the day when, quite by accident, I spotted a copy of Moroi's study of the development of religious mysticism in a second-hand bookstore; I had never even heard of Moroi's name before. In this octavo volume, nearly 1,000 pages long, were systematically drawn up themes that Toshihiko Izutsu had, or might well have, dealt with. Let me cite a few examples from the table of contents.

- Part 1: The basic elements of religious mysticism
- Part 3: The development of mysticism in early Islām and the circumstances surrounding it
  - Chapter 1: The blossoming and coming to fruition of Islamic mysticism with al-Ḥallāj as its turning point
  - Chapter 2: The unique experiences and ideas in Ḥallāj mysticism
  - Chapter 3: The question of the Prophet Muḥammad's mystical experience
  - Chapter 4: The transcendentalizing of Muḥammad's ur-experience in early Islām and its significance
- Part 4: The development of mysticism in primitive Christianity and our information about it
  - Chapter 1: The distinctive confessions of the Apostle Paul as precedents for mysticism in Christianity and their main points
  - Chapter 2: Research into the records of mystical experiences at the time of Paul's conversion
  - Chapter 3: The semantic structure of the mystical experience in Paul's conversion

While clearly revealing their own distinctive characteristics, the works of these two men complement each other, almost as though there had been a profound connection between them. Shamanism, mysticism, Ḥallāj, Muḥammad, the Kōran, Paul—there is not a single one of these topics in which Izutsu did not show enormous interest. Paul is no exception. It had been Izutsu’s plan for the sequel to *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949; Philosophy of mysticism), the “Hebrew part,” to end with a study of Paul.

In his study of the development of religious mysticism, Moroi deals first with the differences between shamanism and what he calls “religious mysticism.” In other words, it is a study of the subject in mystical thought; it deals with the question of who is the true protagonist of the mystical experience. For Moroi, mysticism is not a concept that corresponds to a specific ideology; it is a word that denotes an existential attitude, a way of life. Next, he moves on to Ḥallāj, the medieval Islamic mystic whom Louis Massignon brought back to life in the modern world. We saw earlier how Massignon’s attitude toward scholarship had had a decisive influence on Izutsu. Ḥallāj, who fully lived the *via mystica*, one day began to say that the one speaking through his mouth was not himself but God, and ultimately went so far as to declare, “*Ana’l Ḥaqq*”—I am the Truth/God. Muḥammad had said the same thing, Moroi says, and the record of that experience is the Kōran. In the descent of the divine word—in other words, in the spirituality of Ḥallāj in the grips of a revelation—Moroi saw a revival of Muḥammad. Ḥallāj did not revive the spirituality of Muḥammad by studying the Kōran; he brought it about through his own experience. It was, in fact, an astonishing thing, Moroi writes, but therein lay Ḥallāj’s tragedy. By Ḥallāj’s time, there was no longer anyone who could call to mind Muḥammad’s vivid experience of divine revelation. As a result, Ḥallāj was branded a blasphemer and ended his life on the scaffold.

Ḥallāj, Muḥammad’s experiences of revelation, the events leading up to the Kōran—Moroi recounts them all as though going backward in time. He turns the clock back even further and goes on to discuss the pre-Islamic period and the mysticism of Paul. He would later seek out even older voices, although not in the work on the development of religious mysticism, and write about the Jewish prophets. The fact

that he deals with these topics retrospectively, by moving further and further back into time, may perhaps be a matter of scholarly method, but, beyond that, it likely also has a direct bearing on what, for Moroi, was the existential question. In it lies the basic problem of how he himself, living in the modern era far removed from Ḥallāj, can also be connected to the times when prophets appeared, and to the ultimate Source of their prophecy.

It was the Roman Catholic priest Yūji Inoue (1927– ), who called the proselytizer Paul “the man who carried Christ.”<sup>6</sup> Though in different forms, Ḥallāj and Muḥammad, too, carried God and dedicated their entire lives to proselytizing. Not all of them were thinkers, yet their “thought” lived after them. Perhaps that is the reason we call people who live their lives in this way apostles. Recall Kierkegaard’s definition of the difference between a genius and an apostle: What a genius discusses, an apostle lives. Remarking on the theme of *Mahometto*, his biography of the Prophet, Izutsu writes that the book is “about the subject of possession that forms the core of the Semitic prophetic phenomenon and about the structure of the descent of the divine word (what is called ‘revelation’), the unique verbal phenomenon that takes place within it as the topos for it.”<sup>7</sup> The Ḥallāj he discusses was also an Islamic saint who revived the spirituality of Muḥammad as well as a mystic who prepared the way for Ibn ‘Arabī.

Japan has been unable to produce anyone since Moroi and Izutsu who has not only been deeply moved by Ḥallāj but able to add fresh insights about him. The two men describe the true nature of Ḥallāj’s antecedent by the word “unique,” but the manner in which they discuss Muḥammad is also unique. They perceive Muḥammad not as the founder of a religious sect or a prophet, but as a mystic of a higher order.

I have said it before, but when Toshihiko Izutsu used the word “mystic,” he endowed it with his own personal meaning. Recluses who spend all their time in prayer and contemplation; ascetics who subject their bodies to religious austerities; visionaries and those who lose themselves in ecstacy—such people he does not call “mystics.” Mystics earnestly desire the annihilation of self. That is because their ultimate aim is to become the pathway through which the Absolute manifests itself. They hate inflated ideas and do not limit themselves to being

contemplative ascetics, for they believe that their “sacred duty” is not just to reflect upon the truth but to put it into practice. Since mystics reveal themselves through their way of life, their occupation or social status is irrelevant. Moreover, they have no direct relation to any religion or ideology. Religious figures are not necessarily mystics, nor does being a materialist prevent someone from being a mystic as well.

It was mentioned earlier that most of the Greek and Islamic sages who influenced Toshihiko Izutsu were thinkers, but they were also people who put their precepts into practice, activists in various spheres. Given Izutsu’s definition of mystics, far from being surprising, it seems almost inevitable that Dante, Bernard, Goethe, Humboldt, Claudel and the other religious leaders, artists and scholars whom Izutsu admired were all, on the other hand, also outstanding statesmen.

There is no evidence that these two contemporaries, who were so close in what might be called their commonality of interests, read each other’s works. It is inconceivable that Moroi was unaware of *Arabia shisōshi* (1941; History of Arabic thought) and *Arabia tetsugaku* (1948; Arabic philosophy), the first studies of Islamic thought by a Japanese writer. Izutsu’s translation of the *Kōran* was published in three volumes between 1957 and 1958; it is unlikely that Yoshinori Moroi took no notice of the first full-scale Japanese translation of that work from the original Arabic. Izutsu had never heard of Moroi, however. Yoshitsugu Sawai confirmed this fact with Izutsu himself. Sawai is a scholar of Indian philosophy of whom Izutsu thought highly; not only is he a member of the same faith as Moroi, he also inherited Moroi’s scholastic mantle in Tenri-kyō theological studies.

If they had known one another, it is impossible to state for certain that they would have seen eye to eye. The similarities and differences between them are clear simply from reading their works. But had they known of each other’s existence, there is no doubt they would not have been able to ignore one another. Both excelled in their fluent use of dozens of languages, and yet even as they pursued studies based on their reading of the classics, they were close as well in their contemporaneity, never losing sight of modern thought. For both, philosophy was not the study of the past; it was nothing less than a direct and

substantive way to overcome the confusions of the present. While on his sickbed not long before he died, Yoshinori Moroi asked Teruaki Iida (1929– ), a Tenri colleague who was going to France, to buy him the latest book by Merleau-Ponty. How many people in Japan were actively reading Merleau-Ponty in 1960? Merleau-Ponty's name also appears several times in *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; Consciousness and essence). Toshihiko Izutsu was interested in the thought of Jacques Derrida, wrote essays about him and was personally acquainted with him, but his interest in Merleau-Ponty was by no means less than his interest in Derrida.

Teruaki Iida writes that at one time the University of Kyoto tried to hire Yoshinori Moroi. The very fact that Kyoto University would consider hiring someone who had neither publications nor a doctoral degree tells us something about Yoshinori Moroi's standing and his promise as a scholar. When its then president Kōkiechi Kanō (1862–1942) once tried unsuccessfully to get Kyoto Imperial University to hire the eminent sinologist Konan Naitō (1866–1934), who was then a high-school teacher in Akita Prefecture, he complained that Kyoto University was a place that would not accept Jesus or the Buddha themselves if they didn't have an advanced degree. An invitation from Kyoto University was also extended to Toshihiko Izutsu. In 1962, the linguistics scholar Hisanosuke Izui (1905–1983) tried to hire him as a professor of linguistics. Both Moroi and Izutsu declined the invitations. Although they considered going to Kyoto, those close to them would not allow it in the hopes that they would become leading lights at the institutions to which each belonged.

### Shamanism and Mysticism

Just as the search for truth is what constitutes daily life for an ascetic, for a scholar of a higher order the way to truth is thinking itself. Rather than the agreement of their interests, what is worth observing in the case of Yoshinori Moroi and Toshihiko Izutsu are the similarities and differences in their spirituality. Whereas the soul is always synonymous with the self, the spirit seeks its Creator. Human beings cannot acquire spirituality; they already have it. Spirituality is nothing less than an

instinct, a desire inherent in beings to return to their origins. And isn't salvation the efflorescence of a dormant instinct for spirituality with the help of the light from beyond? Salvation is both a human aspiration and the desire of the One who endowed human beings with a spirit. Some people become aware of this instinct as the result of a serious illness. Yet even when the flesh is in agony, sometimes the spirit rejoices. And sometimes, instead, it soothes the pain and heals the illness.

At the beginning of his major work, Yoshinori Moroi asserts that mysticism really exists. "We acknowledge, first of all, that mysticism is something that exists as an actual fact, and we recognize that it is not simply a product of the imagination," he writes in his study of the development of religious mysticism.<sup>5</sup> "We must not adopt an attitude that would subsume phenomena regarded as mystical into other ordinary psychological phenomena, and conclude that mysticism as a unique phenomenon does not exist."<sup>9</sup> Mysticism and mystical experiences are not a matter of altered states of consciousness, nor is what a person thinks or feels during a mystical experience the primary issue; the limitations of the human senses, he says, have no bearing on the mystical reality. This passage might well be called Moroi's manifesto. What is the true intention of the subject who speaks through human beings?—this is the question that ought to be raised, and it is the scholar's responsibility to elucidate that purpose. And if mysticism is an experience of God, he says, the scholar begins the discussion by first acknowledging the existence of God. For Moroi, religion is not found in doctrines drawn up by human agency. It is nothing less than the crystallization of one's present life backed by faith and the traditions of that faith.

Having made this assumption, Moroi puts his outstanding linguistic skills to use and conscientiously assembles texts in their original languages to verify it. Anyone who deals with "religious mysticism," he says, must never become removed from historical fact. Scholarly proof was an inflexible iron law for him. What is required of a scholar is not a mystical interpretation but a hard look at history, reading between the lines to discover the "mystery" within. Moreover, he tries to see God's will in the phenomena that survive as historical facts. Far from impeding Moroi's scholarship, by eliminating the mere play of ideas,

this principle might well be said to have further strengthened the passion and the power of imagination that he invests in substantiating his hypotheses. Mystics often say that the present is joined to eternity; Moroi attempts to find the pathway to eternity in every passage, every word, of the texts.

The subject of the mystical experience is a topic that Toshihiko Izutsu also dealt with, first in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. He, too, sees only a secondary significance in the mystical phenomena that present themselves in human beings. That is because the subject/agent of the action is not the human being; it is nothing less than the transcendently Absolute. Human beings are only passive recipients. To speak of an “active mystical experience” makes no sense; the true mystical experience is altogether passive. Anyone who talks about mysticism and deals only with the impressions human beings receive, Moroi believes, fails to notice the manifestation of God, who is its subject. The dragon god manifests itself along with the rain, but the god’s true purpose cannot be explained by discussing the human beings who are awed by the forces of nature. It may be that the god appeared and caused rain to fall on a village not to bring about an abundant harvest but to save the life of a single sick woman.

The phrase “religious mysticism” is a key term for Moroi. He used it to make a sharp distinction between primitive shamanism, on the one hand, and the mysticism found in world religions. Although he does not disavow shamanism, he does not regard it as the same as mysticism. The subject in shamanism is not necessarily the Absolute; it may be the workings not of the One, but of the souls of the dead or a *genius loci*, the protective spirit of a place. Rudolf Steiner called the surge of spiritual power that informs an era a *Zeitgeist*, a “Time Spirit” or a “Spirit of the Age.” There may even have been times when such entities spoke. Dionysus and the other gods who appear in Greek mythology may have been the names given to just this sort of spiritual being. Setsuzō Kotsuji would probably have said that this is true even of the name Moses. But inasmuch as they are also creatures, they are not the subject of the “religious mysticism” that Yoshinori Moroi is talking about.

Mircea Eliade said this in reference to the definition of a shaman: They must, first, be a “specialist in the sacred,”<sup>10</sup> but that is not all;

they must know how to use ecstasy for the good of the community to which they belong. Eliade does not recognize as legitimate shamanism a situation in which a shaman repeats a personal experience for arbitrary or obstructive ends and becomes the object of fear and trembling. Shamanism must always be a spiritual exercise that transcends the individual.

Moroi seems to have had a special aim in mind when he intentionally placed the word “religious” before mysticism to create the term “religious mysticism.” His use of the word “religious” does not, of course, signify a particular religious sect nor does it denote religious activities. What he is probing into is an intrinsic essence that ought to be called the archetype of religion.

“I wish these legends could also be heard, for they would . . . make those of us who live in the lowlands shudder,” reads the preface to the *Tōno monogatari* (1910; *Legends of Tōno*, 1975).<sup>11</sup> The only ones who can speak about a different dimension of reality, no longer visible even to the eyes of religious leaders or literary figures, it says, are the folklorists. This statement is nothing less than the proclamation of the birth of a new academic discipline and an expression of his concern for the times on the part of Kunio Yanagita (1875–1962), the father of Japanese folklore studies. Eliade, the author of *Le chamanisme* (1951; *Shamanism*, 1964), had a similar idea. The various religions are busy discussing their own God, but if “religion” is regarded as the way by which humankind loves, worships and obeys the Transcendent, then the modern world has long lost sight of religion. Historians, philosophers, ethnologists, psychologists and sociologists may be able to discuss religion, but because they all try to pigeonhole it and understand it using their own methodologies, inevitably the results always end up being only partial. The only one “to present a comprehensive view,” in the true sense, of “religious phenomena,” the only one who is genuinely able to discuss hierophany, to borrow Eliade’s word, is “the historian of religions.”<sup>12</sup>

It will come as no surprise that Yoshinori Moroi has written in similar terms. Wasn’t it his fervent belief that, in the present day, only “the historian of religions” is capable of removing the encrustations of dogma and elucidating the inner workings of mysticism? The historian

of religions that he is speaking of here is the scholar who, before regarding religion as an object of scientific study, holds it deeply and indelibly in mind as a “pressing problem of the soul.”

According to Moroi’s Tenri colleague, Tadamasa Fukaya (1912–2007), when Gabriel Marcel visited Tenri and met Yoshinori Moroi, he was astonished to find someone in the Far East who had read his works so carefully. One wonders whether Moroi met Eliade when the latter visited Japan. Toshihiko Izutsu and Eliade met twice at the Eranos Conference. It took no time for the two of them to understand each other; it was as though they had been close friends for ten years, Izutsu wrote. Eliade came to Japan in August 1958 to attend the Ninth World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions. Yoshinori Moroi’s attendance at this conference can be confirmed from photographs taken at the time. Ichirō Hori (1910–1974), whose translations later introduced Eliade to Japan, had met him in Chicago the previous year, but Eliade’s fame in Japan in those days was, of course, nothing like what it is today. If the two of them had met, the encounter with Moroi would likely have left as deep an impression on Eliade as the one with Toshihiko Izutsu did.

Shamanism is a central theme for Toshihiko Izutsu that runs through his works from *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949) to *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983). The subtitle of his major English-language book, *Sufism and Taoism* (1983), is “A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts,” but it might just as well have been subtitled “A Study of Oriental Shamanism.” At the beginning of the section on Taoist thought in that work, Izutsu deals with the evidence for Lao-tzŭ the man and Chuang-tzŭ the man, i.e. for the historical reality of Li Er and Chuang Chou, relying on *Shih Chi* (Book of History) as well as records handed down by the Confucianists, but at a certain point, as if disavowing these efforts to verify their existence, he says that, as long as the writings attributed to “Lao-tzŭ” and “Chuang-tzŭ” exist, whether or not they themselves existed as historical figures is only a secondary matter. The true subject is what Lao-tzŭ calls *Tao*; a person is only a channel for it. Insofar as the one who speaks is not a human being, but One who transcends human beings, the personal identity of these men is probably not a primary concern.

This insight truly conveys Toshihiko Izutsu's intellectual outlook. Unlike Moroi, Izutsu does not make a sharp distinction between shamanism and mysticism. He takes the attitude that a higher order of spirits is quite capable of transmitting a glimpse of the Transcendent. On this point, Yoshinori Moroi and Toshihiko Izutsu do not agree. Indeed, Toshihiko Izutsu does not agree with anyone on this matter. As quoted earlier, his view that ancient Greece, while having a shamanistic spirituality, essentially tended toward monotheism, attests to the originality of Izutsu's experience of Greece.

"The mystical experience is not a human being's experience of God," Izutsu says in his study of St Bernard. "It is, rather, God's experience of himself."<sup>13</sup> If God seeing God is regarded as the mystical experience, then the human being is somewhere in between, forced to see God with God's eyes and at the same time with his/her own human eyes. Properly speaking, this is beyond the power of human endurance. In Greek mythology, the human Semele, who asked Zeus to show himself in his true form, lost her life. But this is also the highest favor that can be bestowed on a human being. In the nature of things, people cannot know the *Urgrund* of their being through their own power alone. It is only at the instigation of the Transcendent that they are able to do so. The relation between God and human is asymmetric and irreversible.

"*Urgrund*" would become a key concept in Yoshinori Moroi's thought. The German prefix "*Ur*," meaning "primal," is affixed to the word "*Grund*" and used as a single word to emphasize our primordial nature. "On reflection, knowing this *Urgrund* was not something that human beings are essentially capable of doing. Originally, it was something that was absolutely impossible for them to do. . . . The Creator knows the *Urgrund* of creatures. *Urgrund* is perhaps something that is made known only by being told or taught by the One who knows the origin of its formation. [People] are able to know [the truth of their *Urgrund*] only by being informed of it."<sup>14</sup> This passage is not a scholarly observation; it perhaps ought to be read as a profession of faith by Yoshinori Moroi, the student of Tenri-kyō. But inasmuch as scholarship for him was also a way of cultivating faith, there is probably no need to make a dichotomy between his existential positions as a scholar and as a believer.

Why do people need to believe in a religion? How can they catch a glimpse of the truth of religion without delving deeply into the inevitable problem of the subject of faith? Nowadays religion may be nothing more than a humanistic concept, and yet “it is obvious that religious people do not fear being included in this term. That is because when it comes to the position of an inexhaustible subject it is intolerable that the pressing problem of their own souls should be flattened out and reduced to a simple objective concept.” Religion is, after all, he says, nothing other than the “locus of the individual subject.”<sup>15</sup> It would be wrong to see in this statement the narrow-minded view that only believers can discuss religion. The very idea of a person converting to some religion or other already relativizes or standardizes religion and ignores the “locus of the individual subject,” which is faith.

Membership in a particular religion is not a problem. But if Moroi were asked whether it is impossible for someone who is not a seeker after transcendental Reality to discuss religion, he would probably say yes. “Such being the case, how would it be possible for them, when they try to discuss religion, to have a grasp of its true essence without reflecting on the living whole of it in conformity with their subjective life?” Moroi writes. “Serious inquiry into religion must be attempted by approaching its true nature with profound sympathy.”<sup>16</sup>

At the time *Shūkyōteki shutaisei no ronri* was published, there were no authorial revisions; it was a posthumous work. If his study of the development of religious mysticism was his scholarly magnum opus, this posthumous book proves that Yoshinori Moroi was a rare individual thinker. He was also a philosopher who had the requisite background and ability to construct an ideological system rare for Japan.

In-depth discussions of mysticism, or what Izutsu calls the “mystical experience,” inevitably delve into the origins of religion. Latent in such discussions is the question of whether human beings are capable of encountering and achieving union with God without the mediation of dogma, commandments, rituals, holy scriptures or faith-based communities such as churches and temples. This, in turn, is connected to the fundamental question of whether people can come in direct contact with the Transcendent without religion at all. When Christian

scholastic theology entered a blind alley, Eckhart appeared and cleared the way for German mysticism. When Islām became inflexible in its interpretation of its doctrines and commandments, Ḥallāj appeared and revived the spirituality of Muḥammad. Massignon saw a high degree of agreement in the spirituality of these two men. Just before his death Eckhart was accused of being a heretic; Ḥallāj was executed as a criminal. It was no accident that they both were shunned in their day and met unfortunate ends. Both spoke words that broke through the confusion of their times and ushered in the light, but for those accustomed to darkness, the light may sometimes seem more like a threat than the bestowal of grace. Suhrawardī, the twelfth-century Persian who spoke of the metaphysics of light, was assassinated. His Japanese contemporary Hōnen, the founder of the Jōdo (Pure Land) school, in his later years was exiled to an island, the virtual equivalent of the death penalty. Jesus was crucified, and most of his disciples ended their lives as martyrs.

Yoshinori Moroi was a believer in Tenri-kyō; Toshihiko Izutsu was a mystic who did not believe in any particular religion. The idea that Izutsu was a Muslim is nothing more than a myth. He was not. He did, however, have an incontrovertible experience of God. Philosophy for Izutsu would be nothing less than the way to verify this experience. That is the reason he was able to find traces of religion, i.e. faith, in ancient Greek philosophy. For Moroi and Izutsu, “mysticism” is not a word that signifies a particular ideology or set of beliefs; it is a straight road, an attitude toward life that regards the mysteries as the main source of righteousness. Mysticism does not reject faith-based communities. Rather, true mysticism serves as a matrix for them. Toward the end of his life, Bergson saw Catholicism as the perfect complement to Judaism and confessed his belief in it. What led him to Christianity were the mystics whom he discussed in *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1932; *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 1935). For Bergson, a Jew, Christianity was not a new religion. Wasn't what he discovered in Catholicism, rather, a way of returning to the *Urreligion*?

In *Shūkyōteki shutaisei no ronri*, Yoshinori Moroi discusses the topic of *Urreligion*. *Urreligion* does not mean the oldest religion or primitive religion. It does not belong to a particular time, but exists

in “time” in a qualitative sense. “Time” does not belong on a measurable temporal axis. J.M. Muñry said that what Dostoevsky depicted was beyond time rather than in time; *Urreligion*, too, implies nothing less than the existence of this kind of “time.” It is also the dimension in which Eliade’s *homo religiosus* lives. Mysticism breaks through spatio-temporal limitations and leads people to the site of ur-revelation, in other words, to the “now-ness” of *Urreligion*. If a true dialogue among religions is to come about, it will likely not occur by haggling over dogma; it will be realized in the silence of the mystics.

The reason Yoshinori Moroi was able to have such a superb feeling for Islām is not unrelated to his being a believer in Tenri-kyō. The fact that it is a monotheism, the position and role of its founder and prophet, its holy land, and the details surrounding the origin of its sacred texts, their revelation and systematic compilation—a mere glance at this list shows that Tenri-kyō is far closer to Islām than it is to Christianity. Tenri-kyō is now engaged in an active dialogue with Catholicism, but if it were to attempt a similar dialogue with Islām, it is apt to discover a new dimension that it would be unable to find in its exchanges with Christianity.

Moroi’s speculations on the persona of God, which he developed in his essay on Tenri-kyō dogmatic theology, could well be called an attempt to go beyond the veil of the denominations of world religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islām and trace religions back to their divine origin. Yoshinori Moroi develops his argument using not only terms such as Creator and Savior for God’s persona, but also Manifest, Protector, Revealer, Designator, Beginning of the World, All-Embracing One and Inspirer. As he describes it, Tenri-kyō is a monotheism pure and simple. As the works of Yoshinori Moroi make abundantly clear, the thesis that Japan is rooted in a polytheistic culture that is incompatible with monotheism is specious and naive. Had he been able to proceed further with his systematic construction of a Tenrikyology and a dogmatic theology of Tenri-kyō, he might have shown analogies that transcend time and space between the God revealed in Japan and Jerusalem respectively.

What he never lost sight of was the relation of “analogy.” An analogy basically connotes comparable phenomena. But these phenomena

are not merely similar. If that were all, there probably would be no need to discuss them further. Analogy signifies that operations of a similar quality are unfolding dynamically among different entities. What Toshihiko Izutsu thoroughly explored in *Sufism and Taoism* is not that these two philosophical worldviews are similar. It is nothing less than to cause them both to manifest Oriental spirituality analogically.

The suggestion that monotheism is based on a paternal principle and polytheism on a maternal one has been heard many times. Some say that the God of the Kōran is, first and foremost, a paternal God who causes fear and trembling. But seeing only fatherhood, the embodiment of sternness and judgment, in the omniscient, omnipotent one God denies God's perfection. This is not the true nature of God but only a graphic reflection of the limitations of the human beings who contemplate God. The following passage is found in Moroi's essay on Tenri-kyō dogmatic theology: "God the Parent wished to save human beings from their many cares and sufferings and bestowed the merit of *salvation* by graciously appearing before them."<sup>17</sup> God loves us as parents love their children; this view of God runs throughout Yoshinori Moroi's theology. It is perhaps for that reason that Tenri-kyō calls the Transcendent "God the Parent."

"A belief in the God of mercy's countenance of bright light, which is the converse of the God of wrath and outwardly a complete antithesis to it, is a fundamental characteristic of Judaic personal theism. . . . The Kōran describes the terrifying Lord of judgment yet at the same time attempts to convey His joyful message as 'good news.' In fact, the boundless mercy and loving kindness of God are emphasized everywhere in the Kōran." These are not the words of Yoshinori Moroi but of Toshihiko Izutsu in *Mahometto*.<sup>18</sup> If God willed it, the world would disappear in an instant. The fact that the world now exists is due to God's loving kindness. The God manifested in the Kōran is a God of maternal mercy before being a God of judgment. This is the spirituality that Toshihiko Izutsu discovered in Islām at an early date. Like Pascal, he discovered what he had already known. It is fair to think that the God of mercy and loving kindness was, in fact, the spirituality of Toshihiko Izutsu himself.

## Biography of the Prophet

The use of “Muhammado” as the Japanese approximation of the Prophet’s name is relatively recent. Japanese formerly referred to him as “Mahometto,” perhaps following French usage. Toshihiko Izutsu’s *Mahometto* came out in 1952, a year after Eliade’s *Chamanisme* was published. In that same year, Yoshinori Moroi wrote a monograph entitled “Muhamaddo ni okeru shinpi taiken no mondai: genshi Isuramu no tassawuffu” (The question of Muḥammad’s mystical experience: The flowering of *taṣawwuf* in early Islām). The following year, 1953, Yoshinori Moroi submitted his doctoral dissertation, *Shūkyō shinpishugi hassei no kenkyū*, which includes this essay, to the University of Tokyo. When the dissertation was published in 1966, the title was changed to “The question of the Prophet Muḥammad’s mystical experience.”

The question in point is found in Chapter 53 of the Kōran.

In the name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate, I swear by the setting star. Your companion was not mistaken nor was he led astray. Nor does he speak out of self-indulgent emotions. It is, indeed, nothing other than a revelation that he reveals. The one of mighty power taught him. The one who has strength (taught him). And so he truly acquired skill. And he was on the highest level of the horizon and approached from there. And he bowed. Thus, he was the distance of two bow-lengths or even nearer than that. Then he turned to his servant and revealed what he revealed. The latter’s heart did not misrepresent what he saw. Do you, then, try to dispute with him about what he saw?<sup>19</sup>

“This passage is extremely suggestive,” Yoshinori Moroi writes. “In all the chapters of the Qur’an [Moroi’s spelling], there is probably nothing like it that conveys such subtle information about the experience.”<sup>20</sup> These are strong words. Considering that the context in which they were written was a doctoral dissertation, we must read them as even further emphasizing what he felt in his innermost heart. The key to a basic understanding of the Kōran is hidden in this passage, Moroi would perhaps say, and those who overlook it have lost sight of something important.

Toshihiko Izutsu translated the Kōran twice. The passage cited below is taken from volume 2 of the first version, published in 1958, which Yoshinori Moroi might have read. When the second translation came out, Moroi was already in the other world. Here is Toshihiko Izutsu's translation of the same passage.

In the name of the profoundly merciful, all-compassionate Allah. By the setting star . . .

Your colleague is not misguided; he is not mistaken. He is not babbling baseless fancies. These are all divine oracles that are being revealed. In the first place, the one who first taught (the revelation) to that man is the possessor of terrifying power, a lord excelling in intelligence. His shape distinctly came into view far off beyond the high horizon, and, as he looked on, he effortlessly, effortlessly descended and drew near; his nearness was almost that of two bows, no, perhaps even closer than that. Then it revealed the main purpose of the oracle to the manservant.

Why would the heart lie about what he certainly saw with his own eyes? Is it your intention to make this or that objection about what he truly saw?<sup>21</sup>

It has to be said that Toshihiko Izutsu's translation is unique. And yet it is probably not enough to sense only a difference in tone here. A fine translation is always an excellent commentary. Both translations faithfully convey the "readings" of the two men. The difference in their translations is, in other words, the difference in their personal experiences of Islām. I shall deal with this topic later when I discuss the Kōran. The issue here is a different one.

As Yoshinori Moroi points out, the question is, "did Muḥammad in fact see Allah?" or was it an angel that the Prophet saw. The "shape [that] distinctly came into view far off beyond the high horizon" in Toshihiko Izutsu's translation, he would come to say, was the archangel Gabriel. Having reviewed the interpretations of B. Shrieke and Josef Horowitz, Yoshinori Moroi came to the conclusion that what Muḥammad saw was not Allah, as they had said, nor was it an angel. "It was Allah as the subject of the Allah nature."<sup>22</sup> The technical term "Allah nature" is unique to Yoshinori Moroi. Allah does not appear *qua* Allah;

human beings are incapable of perceiving him through their senses. Even the Prophet is no exception. God is invisible and unknowable.

When Paul was on the road to Damascus, he encountered a light, heard the voice of Jesus saying, “Why are you persecuting me?” and was knocked to the ground. Led by the hand, he entered the city, and for the next three days, his eyes saw nothing, and he was unable to eat or drink. The light that Paul saw was not God. God, who is infinite, is light, but that does not mean that light is God. Paul saw a light and heard Jesus’ voice. For Paul, God and Christ are synonymous. The mystery of Christianity resides in that synonymy. To borrow Yoshinori Moroi’s words, one might say that this light was not Christ; it was his “Christ nature.”

One wonders whether Toshihiko Izutsu might not have seen an “Allah nature” in Chapter 53 of the *Kōran*. In later years, in the series of lectures published as *Kōran o yomu* (1983; Reading the *Kōran*), he deals with this chapter as the classic example of Muḥammad’s vision experience.<sup>23</sup> Although in his translations he regards the one who appeared as the archangel Gabriel, he adds the reservation that there is room for scholarly debate. But if it was not Gabriel, then a human being saw Allah, he says, and that causes problems from a theological perspective. He left no further comments on this subject. If he had gone on and done so, he might have developed an angelology, a theory of angels. “The only person able to respond to the call of the Western philosophical tradition and approach a solution to it head-on was St Thomas. Herein lies the profound historical significance of his speculations on angels.”<sup>24</sup> “The solution to it” is the question of the divine nature, i.e. the existence of an “Allah nature” that Yoshinori Moroi noted. Ever since the time of *Shinpi tetsugaku*, the problem of angels was on Izutsu’s mind.

What are angels? The fact that angels are a vibrant reality not only in Christianity but also in Islām is evident from the preceding quotes; for Japanese, they may be easier to understand if we think of the Bodhisattvas, who are the attendants of Nyorai. Angels have no will of their own. They are messengers who convey God’s will. For Toshihiko Izutsu, real angels always express “Christ nature” and “Allah nature.” Indeed, Izutsu would probably say they cannot be called “angels” if

they do not do so. The subject of angels would arise once again in his later years as main topics in his discussion of “the angelology of WORD” and “the angel aspect of WORD” in *Ishiki to honshitsu*.<sup>25</sup>

The first work by Toshihiko Izutsu after he returned from Iran in 1979 was *Isurāmu seitan* (1979; The birth of Islām).<sup>26</sup> Part One, the biography of Muḥammad, was a reworking of the older book *Mahometto*, which modified its “extravagantly figurative” expression. The version contained in his selected works (1990) is also the newer one, which he further revised and enlarged. In 1989, however, Toshihiko Izutsu republished the original version of *Mahometto*. The reason for doing so, he wrote, was “that, despite its many flaws, I have come to believe that there is, on the whole, an interesting quality and a special flavor in the original work, and only in the original work.”<sup>27</sup>

When he republished *Shinpi tetsugaku* in 1978 and combined *Arabia shisōshi* and *Arabia tetsugaku* and published them as *Isurāmu shisōshi* (1975; History of Islamic thought) while he was still in Iran, he commented on the significance of their republication, saying that these were works he had written as a young man and that they could only have been written at such a time. That does not mean, however, that he ventured to republish them in versions faithful to the original, as he did in the case of *Mahometto*. An overview of intellectual history and a biography of the Prophet are different genres, and yet the significance he placed on the republication of *Mahometto* is profound in the sense that it was a return to his starting point.

Reading *Mahometto* calls to mind Hideo Kobayashi’s writings on Rimbaud. Not because they are both works by young men in which they describe the God of their youth, but because they are candid snapshots of their authors’ entrance into the other world. Moreover, like Kobayashi, Toshihiko Izutsu’s biography of the Prophet and his other works of this period, rather than being scholarly monographs, contain an element of literary criticism, what Baudelaire called poetry on a higher level. That is not just my own impressionistic opinion. From a glance at the chronology of his writings, it is certainly possible to catch a glimpse of Toshihiko Izutsu the literary critic in the essays on Claudel and the other works around the time of *Roshia bungaku* (Russian

literature) and *Roshiateki ningen* (1953; Russian humanity) that were written just before or after *Mahometto*.

The introduction to *Mahometto* cites a passage from the beginning of Goethe's *Faust*.

Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten!  
 Die früh sieh einst dem trüben Blick gezeigt.  
 Versuch' ieh wohl euch diesmal fest zu halten?  
 Fühl' ich mein Herz noch jenem Wahn geneigt?  
 Ihr drängt euch zu! nun gut, so mögt ihr walten,  
 Wie ihr aus Dunst und Nebel um mich steigt;  
 Mein Busen fühlt sich jugendlich erschüttert  
 Vom Zauberhauch, der euren Zug unwittert.

(Once more you near me, wavering apparitions  
 That early showed before the turbid gaze.  
 Will now I seek to grant you definition,  
 My heart essay again the former daze?  
 You press me! Well, I yield to your petition,  
 As all around, you rise from mist and haze;  
 What wafts about your train with magic glamor  
 Is quickening my breast to youthful tremor.)<sup>28</sup>

*Faust* was not a product of Goethe's imagination. He believed in the actual existence of the other world, that real life was located there. Had that not been the case, Goethe would not have needed to apply seven seals to the container in which he placed Faust after completing it. Izutsu also alludes to Goethe in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. Citing a passage from J.P. Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe* (1836–1848; *Goethe's Conversations with J.P. Eckermann*, 1850), "Ich denke mir die Erde mit ihrem Dunstkreise gleichnisweise als ein grosses lebendiges Wesen, das im ewigen Ein- und Ausatmen begriffen ist" (I compare the earth and her atmosphere to a great living being, perpetually inhaling and exhaling), he calls Goethe "the classic example of someone who has experienced the World Soul."<sup>29</sup> Standing alone before the universe, detached from time and space, liberated from religion and from ideological

dogmas, the mind is suddenly connected to its “life form,” then led to the other world. When Izutsu thinks of Muḥammad, he would probably say, he is always led before the gate to the other world that Goethe describes. Izutsu called Muḥammad “the hero of the spiritual world.” For Izutsu, it is the “spiritual world” that constitutes “reality.”

*Mahometto* is a strange and wonderful work. What clearly remains every time I read it is not the merchant who is transformed into the Prophet, but rather the vast Arabian landscape expectantly awaiting the Prophet’s arrival. Perhaps that was the author’s intention. What the thirty-eight-year-old Izutsu attempted to write, it would be fair to say, was not an objective biography of the Prophet, but rather the recollections of someone who had accompanied the author’s hero. Izutsu does not deal with the “Prophet Muḥammad”; instead he tries empirically to follow the path that Muḥammad took to become a prophet and an apostle. As for the works on Muḥammad written prior to this brief biography, he says, most of them are not “biographies” but merely “legends”; his own objective, he declares, is demythologization. On the other hand, however, he does not conceal the passionate emotion welling up within him: “A depiction of Muḥammad into which my own heart’s blood doesn’t directly flow would be impossible for me to portray,” he writes. But does an empirical mind that would elucidate history in the true sense nourish passion, he wonders. “For that reason,” he writes, “I will take the plunge and give myself over completely to the call of the chaotic and confused forms swarming in my breast,” then goes on to say:

Forget that you are in the dusty and dirt-filled streets of a major city proud of its culture and civilization and let your thoughts go where your imagination leads you thousands of miles beyond the sea to the desolate and lonely Arabian desert. The scorching sun burning relentlessly in the boundless sky, on earth the blistering rocky crags and the vast expanses of sand upon sand as far as the eye can see. It was in this strange and uncanny world that the Prophet Muḥammad was born.<sup>30</sup>

The Arabian landscape described in *Mahometto* is not the author’s imagination. The writing tells us that. He would probably say that he

“saw” it. It is hard to believe he would have had any other reason than this for reviving the original version. The recollections of what he saw and heard are also indelibly inscribed in the passages cited below. Read them, paying attention not just to their meaning but also to the style that he achieved here.

Half of this critical biography is devoted to a discussion of the Arab mind during the *jāhilīyya* before the appearance of Muḥammad. Where he finds evidence for it is in the poems of this era. So frequently is poetry cited that this biography can be read as a poetry anthology or an essay on the poems of the *jāhilīyya* period. “The only thing these pre-Islamic Arabs handed down to posterity,” Izutsu says, “were the songs of the desert, which truly deserve to be called Arabic literature.”<sup>31</sup>

Ah, enjoy this moment

For in the end death will come to the body.<sup>32</sup>

In the background of this poem by Amr Ibn Kulthum are a people who have lost sight of eternity. They were by nature realists who did not believe in life after death.

For them eternal life in a world other than this one was out of the question. Eternity, everlasting life in this world, had to be one enjoyed in the flesh. . . . Existence by its very nature is essentially ephemeral—having been mercilessly dashed against the cold iron wall of reality, people had to accept this. And if this world sadly is not to be relied on and human life but a brief sojourn, then it is a waste not to spend at least the short life we have been granted in intense pleasure. And so people immersed themselves in immorality and debauchery and the search for transient intoxication.<sup>33</sup>

For those for whom only the phenomenal world is real, the natural conclusion is that the bonds of kinship are proof of their own existence. What confirmed this for the people of the desert, the Bedouin, was the tribe to which they belonged, in other words, blood ties. Tribal laws, traditions and customs determined individual behavior. If a member of one tribe met an untimely end at the hands of another tribe, for the remaining members revenge was “a sacred—quite literally a *sacred*—solemn duty.” But Muḥammad, “with a pitying smile for their

haughtiness and arrogance, took no account whatsoever of the significance of blood ties and the preeminence of family lineage.”<sup>35</sup> What he preached was just one thing: “A person’s nobility does not derive from one’s birth or family line; it is measured solely by the depth of one’s pious fear of God.”<sup>36</sup> Islām is, in fact, thoroughgoing in its insistence on equality in the sight of God. There was even a sect which took the position that someone who had been the object of discrimination in the past could become caliph, the leader of the theocracy, if the profundity of that person’s faith were recognized.

Just as people are absolutely dependent on God, time belongs to eternity. Eternity is real. Superiority of family lineage, which promises glory in this world, has no special significance whatsoever for the attainment of salvation. People exist in order to believe in and worship God, said Muḥammad, preaching the absolute nature of piety. He rejected the existing values and customs and even the existing virtues. On the other hand, however, it was the pleasure-seeking realists, people oblivious to transcendence and eternity, those who obeyed the laws of their tribe rather than the laws of God, Izutsu writes, who were the very ones that prepared the way for the coming of Muḥammad. At this time, “If [the Arab people] were not somehow saved, it would have been nothing less than spiritual ruin. The situation was truly becoming more and more urgent.”

Above and beyond the relationships of need, hope, supplication and reliance, the reason people seek God is the result of the workings of *oreksis*, the instinctive desire to seek the Transcendent that Aristotle discussed. What Izutsu was looking for in the poems of the *jāhiliyya* were the vestiges of *oreksis*. The urge that humans have to return to their ontological origins triggered a chain reaction, Izutsu believed, that resonated and invited the Prophet. But what is desired does not necessarily appear in the desired form. The workings of God always exceed human expectations. Before they could obtain the salvation they sought, the Bedouin had to give up the blood ties they had previously considered most important.

At first, Muḥammad had no intention of founding a religion. The Muḥammad whom Izutsu describes is not the founder of a religion but an admonisher, a spiritual revolutionary. “Mahomet, who was sent as

God's apostle to deliver the Kōran to the world, was a *nadhīr* (admonisher). . . . His mission as Prophet was spent *in giving warnings*.”<sup>35</sup> As Izutsu's words suggest, the reason Islām became a religion was only because these warnings went unheeded. The Kōran is a compendium of admonitions. If the experiences of Muḥammad that came to fruition in the Kōran were truly mystical experiences, the words that were spoken could not have been those of Muḥammad the human being. The reason the Kōran is holy scripture is not because the Prophet Muḥammad had a part to play in it, but rather because Muḥammad annihilated himself to the point that even his afterimage disappeared and thereby became the passageway for the WORD of God.

It was Muḥammad's insight as Prophet that it was not the Jews or the Christians, but he himself who had inherited in its entirety the spirituality of Abraham and Jesus.

It had to be a religion that was neither Judaism nor Christianity, a far purer, far more authentic Israelite religion than those historical religions that had gone astray. It had to be a religion that transcended history, truly the direct embodiment of “eternal religion” (*ad-dīn al-qaiyim*). . . . Islām was not a new religion; it was essentially an old religion.<sup>39</sup>

An “eternal religion” — this is perhaps the original nature of Islām that flows from its *Urgrund*, but it also clearly expresses what Izutsu saw in Islām. A study of God that transcends sects and denominations can only be articulated by someone who has had an experience of God that transcended religions. The “eternal religion” of which Izutsu speaks here is identical to Yoshinori Moroi's *Urreligion*.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Catholicism

### The Saint and the Poet

**I**N THE FIRST CHAPTER I mentioned that, when Izutsu was writing *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949; Philosophy of mysticism), he believed that Greek mystic philosophy had not been brought to completion by Plotinus, but rather had flourished under, and reached perfection in, Christian mysticism. The following passage is from the preface written in 1978 at the time a revised version of *Shinpi tetsugaku* was published.

Perhaps as a reaction against the atmosphere at home, where an excessively rigid Oriental mentality prevailed, I was far more fascinated with the West than with the East. In particular, I was deeply affected by ancient Greek philosophy and Greek literature. But that was not all; I was possessed by the highly tendentious view that Greek mysticism as such had not ended, but had entered Christianity and undergone its true development, reaching its culmination in the Spanish Carmelite Order's mysticism of love and in John of the Cross especially.<sup>1</sup>

If Izutsu was saying that mystic philosophy's only legitimate line of descent is the one that leads to John of the Cross, then he must accept the criticism that this was indeed a "tendentious" notion. Yet it would be no one other than Izutsu himself who, in his later years, would clearly show that not only Islām and Buddhism but the other Oriental

thought systems of Confucianism and Taoism also belonged on mystic philosophy's family tree. Nevertheless, it is fair to note that Toshihiko Izutsu, who regarded shamanism as the archetype of religion and ascribed a positive significance to it, described himself as "possessed." Inasmuch as he was "possessed," that was presumably because, independent of his own cool consideration, an idea had seized hold of him that might even be called an uncontrollable impulse. As in the case of shamans, when someone is possessed, it is not the one who is possessed that speaks, but the one who does the possessing.

"Shinpihugi no erosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron" (1951; The mysticism of St Bernard) was written as a sequel to *Shinpi tetsugaku*.<sup>2</sup> In developing his arguments there, Izutsu took over some of the latter work's key concepts, beginning with *theōria*, i.e. philosophical contemplation, the metaphysical activity that might be called intellectual prayer. The relation to that book is further attested to by the fact that, in writing this study about a twelfth-century doctor of the Christian Church, he engaged in a deep and thorough discussion of the Hellenic and Hebraic gods. What is more, he made the superficial correspondences between the two works explicit by referring to *Shinpi tetsugaku* as the "previous book." The main topic of the essay is not merely a discussion of Bernard the man or his thought. It is rather Izutsu's treatise on God, in other words, a study of the unitary nature of God, the One who lies hidden within the many gods whom different religions and culture have divided up and called by different names. For Izutsu, Bernard is nothing less than the classic example of someone who has posed this problem in its acute form.

Greek *theōria*, beginning with Plato all the way down to Plotinus, was still confined to a "purely metaphysical contemplation"; "there was no awareness of the persona-nature of God." There was a presence but no persona. The discovery of a "God" who would become the object of "faith and meditation," he says, was "entrusted to Christian mystics."<sup>3</sup> For Izutsu, "mystics" are those who discover the "face," i.e. the persona, of the Transcendent. That persona changes along with the times, the culture, environment, tradition and circumstances. Izutsu sees no contradiction between the singular reality of the Transcendent and the plurality of religions.

In the twelfth century, the Christian Church was facing crises on several fronts. Confronted by schism within the Church—two popes contending for hegemony—on more than one occasion over the course of his lifetime, Bernard was forced to work strenuously to bring about reconciliation. Not only did he have access to decision-makers within the Church; he met face to face with several kings as well and told them what he believed. Between the sovereign might of the State and the fluctuating influence of the Church, there was always a tense relationship over who should have dominion, the visible or the invisible powers. Then Islām emerged as a threat. Theological crises and confusion in the metaphysical realm shook spiritual society. And, as if in response to the demands of history, Bernard appeared. “A twelfth-century theology of crisis” is what Izutsu calls Bernard’s theology.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps he was here recalling Karl Barth, the twentieth-century crisis theologian. In *Shinpi tetsugaku* he paraphrases Barth’s words: ‘The world is God’s world. For that reason, God alone can save the world. There is no continuity from this world to God; there is an absolute abyss.’<sup>5</sup> Although these words cannot be applied directly to Bernard, there is no doubt that he, too, saw a destructive crisis of the soul in people who had forgotten God.

From the middle of his life onward, Bernard was a religious leader who practiced what he preached, forced to live at the very center of his age in religious, political and spiritual terms, and yet what history has recognized him for is his mystical theology. We see the “contemporary significance” in his actions, but “what would his eternal significance be,” Izutsu writes, “if not the intrinsic significance of his mysticism itself?”<sup>6</sup> The God whom Bernard discusses is a God of love through and through, and the ultimate state of faith is one in which God’s closeness to human beings is expressed by the term *nuptiae* (marriage) instead of the Greek concept of *henōsis* (union). The Christian spirituality nurtured by Bernard led to the mysticism of the Carmelite Order in sixteenth-century Spain, where “it flowered into an infinitely elegant lyricism and, at the same time, was thoroughly rationalized by the rigorous logic of John of the Cross,” Izutsu says, until a perfect “logic of the formation of the transcendental subject” was established.<sup>7</sup> The correspondence between this statement and the one in the preface to the revised version of *Shinpi tetsugaku* cited above is obvious.

Bernard has been called “the last of the Church Fathers.” As the greatest mystic of the High Middle Ages, a theologian who constructed his own unique theology in his sermons on the Old Testament Song of Songs, which are songs of “love,” it was Bernard, not Beatrice, Dante’s eternal love, who would lead the poet to heaven at the end of the *Divine Comedy*. Bernard was not a contemplative living a life of peace and quiet. He established a Catholic monastic order to serve as a systematic base for the search for truth; he was also a man who put his ideas into action and did not begrudge becoming involved in the politics of the day. As his importance in the Church grew, his appeals for reform would eventually move Church administrators.

The Second Crusade—the campaign to take back the Holy Land in whose genesis Bernard had played a leading role—crossed the Bosphorus and headed for the holy city of Jerusalem. Perhaps because he thought it deviated from his main theme, “the mysticism of St Bernard,” Izutsu does not mention Bernard’s involvement in the Crusades. If he had completed this unfinished work, he would surely have mentioned it. On 31 March 1146, the Good Friday before Easter, with the king of France seated next to the abbot at Vézelay Abbey, Bernard preached the significance of the Crusade before a congregation of nobles and countless soldiers. The masses spilling out of the abbey fell under the spell of Bernard’s sermon. So powerful was his language and so full of conviction his tone of voice, some even thought that heaven was speaking through Bernard. The new Christian knight “wages a two-fold war,” Bernard had once written, “both against flesh and blood and against a spiritual army of evil in the heavens.”<sup>8</sup> When the sermon was over, Bernard “did not so much hand out” crosses as tokens of the Crusade “as scatter them around.” When the crosses that had been prepared ran out, he tore strips of cloth from his own vestments, fashioned them into crosses and continued to distribute them until the day was over.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, the figure at the center of this scene is that of a hero as viewed from the perspective of the Christian Church. For Catholics, Bernard would later become St Bernard. But for Muslims, it must have seemed that a scourge had risen up against them. To Dante, who accorded Bernard the highest rank among human beings, Muḥammad was literally the enemy of heaven. In *Mahometto*, his 1952 biography

of the Prophet, Izutsu cites the following passage from the *Divine Comedy*.

Già veggia, per mezzul perdere o lulla,  
 com' io vidi un, così non si pertugia,  
 rotto dal mento infin dove si trulla.

Tra le gambe pendevan le minugia;  
 la corata pareva e 'l tristo sacco  
 che merda fa di quel che si traugugia.

(No barrel staved-in  
 And missing its end-piece ever gaped as wide  
 As the man I saw split open from his chin

Down to the farting-place, and from the splayed  
 Trunk the spilled entrails dangled between his thighs  
 I saw his organs, and the sack that makes the bread  
 We swallow turn to shit.)<sup>10</sup>

The arrival of Muḥammad was startling. Not just for Europe but also for the Arabs who worshipped pagan gods, it was an earth-shaking event. In the eyes of Christians, he probably even seemed like the Devil. As Izutsu says, from today's perspective, Dante's description sounds a bit comical, but during Bernard's lifetime, the raw hostility against Islām was so deep-seated and tenacious that the words cited above seem totally inadequate.

If a saint is someone who is refined, courageous, devout, humble, loving and compassionate, Bernard has every one of these attributes, and yet he does not at all fit the mold. Rather than warm-hearted, Bernard was passionate, "a fervent, terrifying, hot-blooded man who burned with a blazing flame that would scorch even heaven itself."<sup>11</sup> No matter what sort of front someone might present to the world, Bernard "with a single glance would immediately lay bare the baseness of the hidden delusions writhing in that person's innermost heart" — not because some supernatural power resided within him, but because he more than anyone "was keenly aware of the sins" in his own heart that

he could not readily disavow.<sup>12</sup> It was not the “St Bernard” who became an object of veneration that Izutsu was interested in, but rather a man called Bernard of Clairvaux, from whom, if wounded, fresh blood would pour forth from his body and his soul. In fact, it was only in such a person, Izutsu believed, that true sanctity would appear.

For Izutsu, who called Muḥammad a “hero of the spiritual world,” the land of the Arabs was a spiritual homeland and Muslims his brothers. Bernard reviled his hero, sent knights against his homeland and was responsible for the deaths of untold numbers of his brethren. It would not have been strange if, out of commiseration for Arabs and for Muslims, Izutsu had been highly critical of Bernard. Although the Catholic Church’s invasions of the Islamic world, the inhuman violence inflicted on those of a different faith, may be condemned as appalling massacres, today, more than 800 years later, it is easy to pass judgment on the age of the Crusades. And yet who is capable of deciding what is true or false in the sight of God? When confronting history, all we are allowed to do is to ask ourselves frankly how would I have lived had I been born in those times, in that place and under those circumstances.

In 1939, when he was twenty-five, Izutsu wrote a long review of Francesco Gabrieli’s “Correnti e figure della letteratura araba contemporanea” (Currents and figures in contemporary Arabic literature).<sup>13</sup> Francesco Gabrieli was a leading Italian scholar of Islām. But what is at issue here is not found in Gabrieli but in a book to which he refers, *La eschatologia musulmana en la Divina Comedia* (Islamic eschatology in the *Divine Comedy*).<sup>14</sup> As the title suggests, this work, which was published in Spain in 1919, argues that the thought of the Islamic mystic Ibn ‘Arabī entered the *Divine Comedy* through certain theological works and that the structure of heaven, purgatory and hell in this poem are Islamic. Even the poet Dante himself was unaware that an Islamic spirituality deeply underlay his own thought. The influence may have been indirect, the author writes, but, for that very reason, it was unavoidable. Miguel Asín Palacios, a Spaniard, was a professor at the University of Madrid and an outstanding scholar of medieval Islamic thought, but he was also a Roman Catholic priest. In this work, he

vividly describes how the restoration of the divine world will take place, transcending religious differences and beyond historical differences—*dans la métahistoire*.

The *Divine Comedy* may be a classic, but it is not a sacred text. And yet those who were able to discuss the matter dispassionately, as though it were merely a cultural matter that an alien culture had found its way into the *Divine Comedy*, were not the only ones to respond to Asín Palacios's thesis. Particularly within the Catholic Church, just as 'Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* laid the theological basis for Catholicism, the *Divine Comedy* is read, discussed and defended as a poetic expression of the *Summa*, in other words, as the poetic expression of the pure Catholic faith. The view that an Islamic spirituality, which had repeatedly excited hostilities that had once led to massacres on both sides, had found its way into the *Divine Comedy* was not readily accepted. A division of opinion among Dante scholars was only to be expected, but Asín Palacios's views caused an even greater sensation within intellectual and religious circles. Although nearly 100 years have passed since its publication, a final verdict on this book has yet to be reached.

Noting that the work had been neglected by the European scholarly world, the twenty-five-year-old Izutsu was positive in his appraisal of the questions Asín Palacios raised rather than of the theory itself. He never changed that assessment. When Izutsu refers to the *Divine Comedy*, it must never be forgotten that the Dante he had in mind was someone who had been exposed to, and inevitably had come in contact with, a non-Christian mentality. Izutsu's encounter with *La escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia* took place more than ten years before he wrote his works on Muḥammad and Bernard. For Izutsu, discussing Dante was not just a matter of exploring the Christian tradition; rather, it was an act of restoring to its original state the One who had been divided up into many gods by various religious traditions. Hence, it was perhaps only natural for him to discuss the unitary nature of the Transcendent who rises above religious differences in the context of a study on Bernard, whom Dante describes with the highest esteem. Let us look once again at a passage cited earlier.

Why, one wonders, is the creative agent of eternal life throughout the entire universe, the Lord God of all things in heaven and earth, different among the Greeks and the Hebrews? Here, too, disputatious theologians have brought the petty distinctions of their human intelligence into the nature of divinity itself—,as if the itemization of differences that have great value for their scholarship would naturally have enormous significance for God as well.<sup>15</sup>

The Hebrew God is the God of the Old Testament. The Greek God is the Supreme Being of Plato and Aristotle and Plotinus' One. These two gods meet in Christianity. When human beings, seeing God's different personae, conclude that only their own experience of God is the truth, a clash of cultures begins. And when cultures clash, today as in the past, great conflicts ensue. History teaches how fierce was the encounter, and the conflict, between the two cultures and the two "gods" of Hellenism and Hebraism. Then Islām entered the fray. An intensification of the conflict was inevitable.

It is wrong to see a belief in religious pluralism in Izutsu's statement that the Hellenic God and the Hebrew God are merely different divine personae. What he is speaking of there is the unitary nature of God, which exists beyond the plurality of gods. His efforts to discover a deep-level agreement beyond the superficial differences of Hellenism and Hebraism must be evaluated separately from his achievement in being the first person in Japan to deal with a giant of medieval mysticism. "[T]he distinction between the Hellenic God and the Hebraic God," he goes on to say, "was not a divine distinction but, in fact, a man-made one. The differences are not in God; they are, instead, fundamental differences in the attitudes of human beings toward God."<sup>16</sup> What is fundamentally different is not found in God, he adds, but in the Greeks' and Hebrews' sense of God.

For both the Greeks and the Hebrews, God could not be anything other than a "living God," i.e. a personal God. But if someone were to say that the Greeks were polytheistic, the Hebrews monotheistic, they should read the Old Testament and the earliest historical records that predate the books of the prophets. They would then perhaps

realize that Yahweh, the god of Israel, is merely the god of one small tribe, just a single war god coexisting and contending with the god of Moab, the god of the Philistines, the god of Ammon and many other pagan gods. One among these many, the god of this one insignificant tribe, became *the one and only* God through the faith of the prophets; it was a course of development that would take place over a long period of time before acquiring that grand and imposing singularity of a world religion. . . . In the final analysis, the philosophical god of Plato and Aristotle was nothing other than the absoluteness of the living Absolute, i.e. its singularity, which had been pushed to its utmost limits by the abstractive process of a rigorous, ruthless *logos*.<sup>17</sup>

This one passage may suggest what would have been the central topic in the “Hebrew Part,” the unfinished sequel to *Shinpi tetsugaku*. Izutsu rejects the view that the Hebrew god was from the very beginning the one God. The one out of many became “the one and only God” through the prophets. I know of no clearer statement of the difference between polytheism and monotheism than this. Nor have I ever before read a sentence that deals so directly with the fact that the mission of the prophets was nothing less than to make manifest the one and only God.

When Izutsu discusses Bernard, he speaks like a monk following his abbot. And when he discusses Muḥammad, he speaks like a follower of Muḥammad born in the seventh-century Arabian desert. He spoke of Bernard the mystic, who gave sermons on the Song of Songs, just as he spoke of Muḥammad advancing through the desert on jihād.

Toshihiko Izutsu wrote two studies on Paul Claudel, one entitled “Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon: Kurōderu-ron” (1949; Poetry and religious existence: On Claudel),” and the other, “Kurōderu no shiteki sonzai-ron” (1953; Claudel’s poetic ontology).<sup>18</sup> He also refers to Claudel in *Roshia bungaku* (Russian literature), the precursor to *Roshiateki ningen* (1953; Russian humanity), as well as in his English-language work *Language and Magic* (1956).<sup>19</sup> A prominent twentieth-century French poet, Paul Claudel was also a playwright and an outstanding literary critic. A literary light in the France of his day as well as a diplomat, he didn’t mind speaking out, even occasionally in situations where religion and

politics mixed. Although Izutsu never compared Bernard and Claudel, the two are somehow similar. As was true of Bernard, Claudel, too, was all too human.

Just as the Old Testament prophets were poets as well men entrusted with the word of God, Claudel, too, Izutsu writes, was “a poet and a prophet”<sup>20</sup> and “a philosopher as well as a poet.”<sup>21</sup> In his first essay on Claudel, he describes the poet’s mission; in the second, the relation of “Being” and “beings”—the mystery by which the Transcendent is transformed into all phenomena, including humankind. Izutsu also puts into writing his prayer-like hope that, by discussing this poet, he “may be able to solve the mystery of those strange and secret workings of the spirit” that pulsate in poetry.<sup>22</sup>

“When I read Claudel’s poems quietly out loud to myself, I feel with my whole body their sublime and weighty rhythms that seem somehow to resonate up from the deep, deep bowels of the earth, and unexpectedly I tremble,” Izutsu writes at the beginning of his essay on poetry and religious existence.<sup>23</sup> Claudel was probably not the only poet who made him feel that way. Izutsu read poetry out loud. When he did so, a poem was not just a work of literature; it became a tribute offered up to heaven. In it he felt an evocation of Being, the divine mystery of language that prompts the birth of life. Poets do not write poems to divulge their innermost feelings. Claudel never lost the firm conviction that through the medium of language he was taking part in the creation of the world. But he himself does not create. The poet only speaks when inspired by the workings of creation.

He is truly a creative human being, and yet the source of his creative activity lies hidden in the solitary and secluded subterranean, metaphysical depths that predate the beginning of history. And its primordial, original nature is, in fact, nothing other than the original nature of God himself. Claudel is clearly aware that the voice of that unnameable thing that comes bubbling up from the deep and eternal fountainhead of all things and assumes the guise of human speech by passing through his tongue, is the voice of God. In this way, the poet takes part in the great task of the creation of the universe and becomes a co-operator of God’s providence.<sup>24</sup>

More importantly than subjects like joy and anger, birth, old age, sickness and death, or even beauty, Claudel writes of “Being.” Just as “gods” became “God” by speaking through the prophets, the poets’ mission is to bring about the revival of a hidden holiness by writing about it in their poems. Claudel was a poet who was strongly aware of this responsibility, Izutsu says. Although the “he” in the above quotation is Claudel, it is no longer Claudel the man. Just as the prophets’ individual identity ceases when they utter prophecy, poets, too, become the channel that links the metaphysical world with the phenomenal world.

Claudel has no need of extravagant miracles. He sees a miracle in the blooming of a single flower. “[P]our le simple envol d’un papillon le ciel tout entier est nécessaire. Vous ne pouvez comprendre une pâquerette dans l’herbe, si vous ne comprenez pas le soleil parmi les étoiles.” (For the simple flight of a butterfly you need a whole sky. You cannot understand a daisy in the grass if you do not understand the sun among the stars.)<sup>25</sup> We are living in the midst of a miracle at this very moment, Claudel says. If someone desires the manifestation of an invisible reality, s/he must have an accurate knowledge of it. In Claudel’s native French the word meaning “to know” is *connaître*, which contains *co-naître*, “to be born with.”<sup>26</sup> “To know something is *to be born* with it,” Izutsu says.<sup>27</sup> “To know” is a metaphysical form of cognition, and human beings are incapable of achieving it by themselves. If they could, it would no longer be possible to call it a metaphysical activity. For Claudel, a metaphysical activity is not simply a matter of dealing with invisible things; it means *meta-physica*, i.e. the supernatural, — the world that transcends nature, including human beings — in the mysterious sense that Henry Corbin understood metaphysics, and called what was beyond the historical dimension *métahistoire*, meta-history. To come in touch with it, an invitation from the *meta-physica* is indispensable.

The *meta-physica* undoubtedly is also the dimension where human beings make contact with the souls of others. If it is possible to come in touch with someone else’s soul, the one who does so presumably does not doubt the soul’s existence. But the one who is touched also knows s/he has a soul. It is not only a matter of the existence of the soul. When the world mutually knows one another, it causes internal holiness to blossom.

The poet opens his eyes and faces the world; when he does so, by that very act alone, the world occurs in its analogical nature. All beings, despite their eye-deceiving diversity, sense that they ultimately are bound together by a profound affinity; it is this that is the source of Claudel's poetry and philosophy.<sup>28</sup>

“The world occurs in its analogical nature”—what this passage directs the attention to is the order inherent in Thomas Aquinas' *analogia entis*. The concept that the created world by its very existence provides analogies whereby creatures can understand their Creator occupies a central position in Catholic Christian theology even today. Although it certainly forms the theological basis of Catholicism, Izutsu believes that the *analogia entis* Claudel perceives is not a strict theological truth but an existential one that was supported by his own unshakeable experience. Claudel did not learn it first theologically; he “felt” it. For him, “It was a natural feeling, even an instinct. It is not just a basic principle that guides his thinking; it fundamentally colors his intuition and his vision itself.”<sup>29</sup> To be sure, these words clearly express the basis of Claudel's spirituality, but, independently of this poet, don't they describe the soul and his recollections of it of Izutsu himself? Above and beyond being a student of the mysteries of Being, Izutsu, too, was a feeling human being. He verified the authenticity and depth of these feelings by studying them. “Il est légitime de dire qu'il y a dans l'Ange spirituellement quelque chose qui correspond à notre organisation physique. . . . Ainsi, il est permis de dire dans un sens non pas purement métaphorique . . . que l'Ange voit, qu'il sent, qu'il parle, qu'il respire, . . . qu'il se meut.” (It is legitimate to say that something that corresponds to our fleshy frame exists in a spiritual form in angels. Therefore, it is permissible to say in a not purely metaphorical sense that angels see, feel, speak, breathe and move.)<sup>30</sup> The words are Claudel's but it is Izutsu who cites them. It is likely he translated the poet's words here instead of stating his own view of angels.

In the earlier of his two studies of Claudel, Izutsu refers to E.R. Curtius. Curtius was a German who loved French literature even more than the French did. That was not all; he loved an eternal Europe as much as he loved his own country. When Curtius writes that he

perceives a *Geschichtslosigkeit*, an “absence of history” in Claudel, he is not noting a lack of historical perspective in this poet. “He means the profound and awful primordial nature of eternity, which, while in the very midst of time and history, breaks through the limitations and renders time and history equal to nothing.”<sup>31</sup> Claudel, rather, is “a poet of eternity,” Izutsu says, a poet who is directly linked to “qualitative time,” which exists on a different dimension from the physical temporal axis. It was mentioned earlier that, in reference to Bernard, Izutsu spoke of his “eternal significance.” Claudel wrote poetry the way Bernard preached. But what is of interest here is not that the words of a saint and a poet broke through the barriers of the phenomenal world and let in the wind that blows from the world beyond, but, rather, that it is Toshihiko Izutsu himself, who felt this wind keenly and gazed intently on the other world. He did not believe that sermons for a religious leader, or poems for a poet, were fundamentally different from philosophy for a philosopher. That is the reason in the study of St Bernard, before we know it, the philosophers Plato and Aristotle have changed into prophets.

In the summer of 1922, Curtius visited the abbey of Vézelay, where Bernard had given his sermon on the Crusade. A few weeks later, when he visited the abbey of Brauweiler, where Bernard had also preached on the obligation of undertaking the Crusade, he saw the gold brocade vestments the saint had worn when he gave his sermon. And when he visited Cologne and saw the painting of the Madonna and Child with St Bernard by the Meister des Marienlebens, he could not help but feel “die geschichtliche Einheit,” the historical unity of Europe, welling up in his heart, he said. Curtius was German; Bernard was French. The two countries repeatedly fought one another. A breach between Germany and France existed from ancient times. During the First World War, Henri Bergson had gone so far as to say that the war between Germany and France was a war between brute force and moral force. Memories of the tragedy of the Second World War are still fresh today. Curtius, though a German, loved France and believed in a European spirit and the revival of its “historical unity.” His friendship with Gide and Valéry is well known.

Where Curtius refers to Bernard is the essay called "Pontigny."<sup>32</sup> At Pontigny, a small village in the Burgundy region of France, there had once been a great abbey of the Cistercian order to which Bernard belonged. The monastic buildings were destroyed at the time of the French Revolution, and only the abbey church remains today. In 1793, shortly after the revolution, the abbey was dissolved, and in 1906, after the law on the Separation of Churches and State was enacted, the site was auctioned off and bought by Paul Desjardins. Professor at the École Normale Supérieure in Sèvres, Desjardins was a first-rate scholar and critic, Curtius says. He was also the founder of l'Union pour la Vérité to reunite France, which had been split in two politically, socially and spiritually at the time of the Dreyfus affair. Desjardins did not buy the abbey site as a place to live; he intended to use it to bring political and ecumenical unity to a divided Europe.

Living together far from the noise and confusion of cities, lingering in the natural beauty, sometimes going for walks, the participants at Pontigny talked individually to one another and deepened their acquaintance, then held discussions in the afternoon. Desjardins held the first of these "entretiens" there in 1910. These symposia continued until 1914, resumed in 1922, and were held uninterruptedly thereafter until Desjardins's death in 1939. Curtius attended the second Pontigny from 1922 on. Whether you were a scholar, a statesman, a writer or a businessman, Curtius says, at Pontigny you were expected to participate as just an individual human being. Participants included Gide and Valéry, of course, German writers such as Thomas Mann and Heinrich Mann and religious philosophers such as Max Scheler. Among the French literary figures were Jacques Rivière, Roger Martin du Gard, Charles du Bos, François Mauriac and even Louis Massignon. Philosophers included Gaston Bachelard, Gabriel Marcel and Vladimir Jankélévitch. There were also participants from the English-speaking world such as T.S. Eliot. Lev Shestov, the Russian who wrote *Dostoevsky and Nietzsche: Philosophy of Tragedy* (1903), Berdyaev and Claudel also attended.

In its conception and implementation as a place for opposing cultures to meet face to face and break through the prevailing confusion, Pontigny served as the forerunner for the Eranos Conference, in which Izutsu would later participate and play an important role. Ernesto

Buonaiuti, who was part of Eranos from its inception, was also a participant at Pontigny. I shall perhaps have occasion to refer to him later. He was the teacher of the Christian thinker, Ernst Benz, with whom Izutsu became friendly at Eranos, as well as being a spiritual hero of the young Eliade. It is no accident that the English translation of Curtius' magnum opus, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948; *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 1953), was published by the Bollingen Foundation, which virtually ran the Eranos Conferences. Eranos first started in 1933, but its founder, Olga Froebe-Kapteyn, had had the experience that might be called the inspiration for it many years earlier. Eranos shared the same *Zeitgeist*, the revival of the same spirituality, I believe, as that which manifested itself at Pontigny.

### The Praxis of Proceeding toward Truth: Shūzō Kuki and Yoshihiko Yoshimitsu

Just as Izutsu took part in Eranos, a Japanese also participated in Pontigny—the philosopher Shūzō Kuki (1888–1941), author of *Iki no kōzō* (1930; *The Structure of Iki*, 1997).<sup>33</sup> Since the publication of Megumi Sakabe's ground-breaking book, *Fuzai no uta: Kuki Shūzō no sekai* (1990; *Song of non-being: The world of Shūzō Kuki*),<sup>34</sup> studies by Kyūbun Tanaka and others have appeared, but, like Izutsu, Kuki, too, has been unable to secure his rightful place in the history of thought.

Kuki was a close friend of Sōichi Iwashita (1889–1949), who later became a priest. Iwashita was also the first person in modern Japanese Catholicism who deserves to be called a theologian. Kuki was in love with Iwashita's sister and eventhought of marrying her; he was baptized into the Catholic Church at that time. In the end, she, too, like her brother, entered the Church, and nothing came of their relationship. Some critics, who hold Kuki in high esteem, think this unrequited love had a lasting impact on Kuki, but that baptism had no effect on his mentality. But I believe, rather, that his romantic attachment drew him closer to Catholicism, and it is precisely for that reason that vestiges of it were deeply impressed in him. Even though he writes in *Propos sur le temps* (1928; “Considerations on time,” 1997), “I do not believe . . . in a life after death in the Christian sense,”<sup>35</sup> the intellectual issue of

Kuki's relationship to Catholicism should be reconsidered, I think, for the fruits of that encounter do not necessarily take the form of a direct discussion of a Catholic worldview. Even in the life of a philosopher, metaphysical events may occur independently of the study of metaphysics. Here, too, I believe, the words of Izutsu are true: "Metaphysics should come after a metaphysical experience."<sup>36</sup>

The two lectures that Kuki gave at Pontigny in 1928, "La notion du temps et la reprise sur le temps en orient" (The notion of time and repetition in Oriental time) and "L'expression de l'infini dans l'art japonais" (The expression of the infinite in Japanese art), were published in France as *Propos sur le temps*. Kuki sent a copy to Kitarō Nishida, who praised it highly in a letter to Hajime Tanabe (1889–1962), another philosopher of the Kyoto School. This was a work in which its author gives expression to his own interests in a language that is not his own, presenting content with worldwide appeal. In that sense, Megumi Sakabe says, its significance is equal to the works of *Kanzō* Uchimura, Inazō Nitobe and Tenshin Okakura, who were influential in introducing Japan to the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sakabe also regards *Propos sur le temps* highly, and not just for the special place it occupies in Kuki's oeuvre; he considers it his most important work. Kuki and Izutsu are on the same scholarly plane in having books that deserve to be called their main works in both English (or French) and Japanese and in being active internationally as a result.

Kuki studied with Heidegger; indeed, it was Kuki who made Sartre aware of Heidegger's existence. Izutsu would later cite Sartre and Heidegger as the quintessential philosophers of the modern era and, in "Existentialism East and West," he discussed both their differences from Sabzawārī, the nineteenth-century Islamic mystic philosopher, as well as an intellectual closeness to him that transcends time and space.<sup>37</sup> On this point, too, there is a strand of intellectual history that connects Shūzō Kuki with Toshihiko Izutsu. It is not that the two men studied philosophers who dealt with "Being" and "existence," but rather that, under that influence, they both went on to construct philosophies of their own. The two are also close to one another in their awareness of a realm called the Orient. At the beginning of "La notion du temps et la reprise sur le temps en orient," Kuki says his discussion will be

about “Oriental time,” and writes that it is time which repeats itself (the time of transmigration) and transcends physical time. As was also the case for Izutsu, the Orient Kuki is speaking of here is a multi-layered semantic construct that is both a geographical region and a spiritual dimension.

In the temporal dimension capable of measurement, “time has three modes of ‘ecstasis,’ of being ‘outside itself’: the future, the present, the past.”<sup>38</sup> Time occurs by developing ecstasically, i.e. outside itself, in each of these directions. But future, present and past are all confined to the coordinate axis of time, and an *ecstasis* that does not make a dimensional leap is merely a “horizontal” *ecstasis*. Thus, in addition to this horizontal ecstasis, Kuki posits a vertical *ecstasis* that should be called an atemporal or trans-temporal ecstasis. “[T]his ecstasis is no longer *phenomenological*, rather it is *mystical*. . . . [T]he horizontal plane represents the ontologico-phenomenological ecstasis, the vertical plane the metaphysico-mystical ecstasis.”<sup>39</sup> Kuki seems to be the first person to have thoroughly digested the Heideggerian concept of ecstatic time and to be able to speak about it in his own words. On the other hand, what is also worth noting is that he recognizes the place where *ecstasis* occurs on what he calls the mystical plane that goes beyond the phenomenological realm in the narrow sense.

We have already seen that *ekstasis* along with *enthousiasmos* are key terms in *Shinpi tetusgaku*. Izutsu, too, uses the word *ekstasis* presumably in response to Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* (1927; *Being and Time*, 1962) and Sartre’s *L’Être et le néant* (1943; *Being and Nothingness*, 1956), but the reason his usage differs from that of both Heidegger and Sartre is that he is dealing with ecstatic sensations as personal expressions based on his own empirical, i.e. ascetic, practices. The same thing occurs in Kuki.

[The self] always recommences its life anew in order to finish anew. . . . A continuity of self] is a continuity which reveals itself only in mystical moments, the profound moments of a “profound enlightenment,” moments in which the self takes recognition of itself with an astonishing shudder. “The self exists” at the same time that the “self does not exist.”<sup>40</sup>

“[O]nly in mystical moments . . . of a ‘profound enlightenment,’ moments in which the self takes recognition of itself with an astonishing shudder” — this is not the mental state of a philosopher as we know it, but of what Izutsu calls a mystic. “If philosophy is the praxis of proceeding toward the Truth and the praxis of coming back from the Truth, only the genuine mystic has the qualifications to be a genuine philosopher,” he says in *Shinpi tetsugaku*.<sup>41</sup> The “praxis of proceeding toward the Truth,” in other words, is nothing less than experiencing ecstasy in a dimension in which one has access to the “praxis of coming back from the Truth.” If philosophy can be defined as that which first provides a logical system for one’s own fundamental issues and existential experiences, and only after that deals with objective matters, then Kuki and Izutsu are among the few philosophers, in the true sense of the word, in the tradition of Kitarō Nishida.

Izutsu said in a colloquy with Shūsaku Endō that he had often read the works of Yoshihiko Yoshimitsu. A “forgotten” thinker today, Yoshihiko Yoshimitsu (1904–1945) was a philosopher who played an active part not only in prewar religious circles but also in the worlds of literature and journalism. He represented Catholic intellectuals at the 1942 Overcoming Modernity symposium, attended by the leading thinkers of the day.<sup>42</sup>

Yoshihiko Yoshimitsu was born in 1904 in what is now Tokunoshima, Kagoshima Prefecture. In 1927, he became acquainted with Father Sōichi Iwashita and was baptized into the Catholic Church. His life thereafter changed dramatically. In the following year, 1928, he translated Jacques Maritain’s *Eléments de philosophie* (1920; *Introduction to Philosophy*, 1930).<sup>43</sup> Yoshimitsu was twenty-four at the time. The next year he went to France and studied under Maritain himself. As a leading neo-Thomist advocating the renascence of Thomas Aquinas’ thought, Maritain had enormous influence in French intellectual circles as well as within the Catholic Church itself. After Yoshimitsu returned to Japan, he spoke widely, introducing the traditions and current state of European Catholicism to a Japanese audience.

Not just Shūsaku Endō, but the poet Hideo Nomura (1917–1948) and critics such as Yasuo Ochi (1911–1961), Hisanori Tsujino (1909–1937), Shin’ichirō Nakamura (1918–1997) and Shūichi Katō (1919–2008)

were strongly influenced by Yoshihiko Yoshimitsu. He also had friendships with writers such as Tatsuo Hori (1904–1953), Hideo Kobayashi and Kazuo Watanabe (1901–1975). Contributors to the Catholic literary magazine *Creation* (Kōzō), where he served as editor-in-chief, included Tetsutarō Kawakami (1902–1980), Toshihiko Katayama (1898–1961) and Shomu Nobori (1878–1958). The period in which he was active lasted from 1930 until his illness in 1944, not quite fifteen years, but it can be called Japan's Catholic Renaissance.

Izutsu's *Arabia shisōshi* (History of Arabic thought) was published in 1941; it seems unlikely that Yoshimitsu would not have read this historical overview of Islamic theology and philosophy, the first to be written by a Japanese. Yoshimitsu had a personal interest in Ḥallāj, the legendary symbol of Sufism. In fact, the first person in Japan to discuss the latent intellectual significance of this extraordinary mystic was not Izutsu but Yoshimitsu, who, in 1943, referred to Ḥallāj in “Shinpihugi no keijijōgaku” (The metaphysics of *Mystik*).<sup>4</sup> It would be five years later, in 1948, that Toshihiko Izutsu would discuss him in *Arabia tetsugaku* (Arabic philosophy). Yoshinori Moroi's study of the development of religious mysticism, which likewise discussed Ḥallāj, was published in 1966, the last work to do so to the present day. No studies of Ḥallāj to rank with theirs have come out since. Earlier I mentioned Ḥallāj and Massignon. Izutsu never met Massignon, but Yoshimitsu did several times while he was studying in France. Maritain hosted a salon at his home in Meudon, which Massignon attended. Though Yoshimitsu at the time was impressed by Massignon's character, he had no deep interest in his scholarship or in the non-Catholic Ḥallāj, he said. Thirteen years after his return to Japan would pass before Yoshimitsu commented on Massignon and Ḥallāj.

In “Shinpihugi no keijijōgaku,” Yoshimitsu deals with Plotinus, ancient esoteric Indian thought as represented by Śaṅkara and the yoga of Patañjali, Ḥallāj and Sufism, as well as Christian mysticism down to John of the Cross. Few studies since can surpass it in the farsightedness and impartiality of his grasp of mysticism in Eastern and Western spirituality or in the subjectivity of his discussion. The largest number of pages in *Shinpi tetsugaku* are devoted to the mystic philosophy of Plotinus. Toshihiko Izutsu's interest in Plotinus grew steadily over the years.

That Patañjali, Śaṅkara and other ancient Indian thinkers had long been the objects of Izutsu's interest is also clear in *Ishiki to tetsugaku* (1983; Consciousness and essence). And Izutsu had planned to make a study of John of the Cross. The interests of Izutsu and Yoshimitsu were surprisingly similar.

But even more important than the congruence of the topics they discussed is the attitude of the two men toward mysticism. Yoshimitsu alludes to the impossibility of defining mysticism in "Shinpihugi to nijisseki shisō" (*Mystik* and twentieth-century thought). "Beginning a discussion by asking what is the precise definition of 'Mystik' or 'mysticism,' the translations of *shinpihugi*, is not particularly meaningful."<sup>45</sup> When defining mysticism, someone may grope for "a nominal etymological answer" and seek its origins in ancient Greece. Someone else may attempt to offer an "account of the phenomenological essence" of mystical thought or of mystical experiences past and present, East and West. But "the former does not explain anything as to content," Yoshimitsu says, and, "given the overabundance of phenomena, the latter cannot avoid arriving at an arbitrary conclusion."<sup>46</sup> Izutsu deals with the same topic at the beginning of *Shinpi tetsugaku*.

If books entitled "The Philosophy of Mysticism" have to begin first of all by giving a definition of the terms "mystical philosophy" or "mysticism" themselves, people are all the more likely to end up becoming addicted from the outset to this childish, meaningless game. For it belongs to the essence of mysticism to transcend absolutely and positively refuse to answer the logical question: What is it?<sup>47</sup>

What Izutsu may have feared is having the word "mysticism" signify a particular ideology or dogma. He considers it appropriate to call what is popularly known as mysticism a *via mystica*. And yet, "despite the fact that [the *via mystica*] is clearly an experience of human beings, it is by no means a purely human experience," he says. "Rather, something greater than a human being takes possession of the human soul and comes to pass."<sup>48</sup> Just as Izutsu speaks of the *via mystica*, Yoshimitsu uses the German word *Mystik* to avoid the term "mysticism." Izutsu's *Shinpi tetsugaku* has a chapter entitled "Shizen shinpihugi no shutai" (The subject of *Naturmystik*); the topic of the subject in *Mystik* is one

that Yoshimitsu delves deeply into in his study of the metaphysics of mysticism. Yoshimitsu's "mystical person" or *Mystik* is identical to the "mystic" or the *via mystica* in *Shinpi tetsugaku*.

"True *Mystik* is not the self-contemplation of an ideal self," Yoshimitsu believes; "it must always ところ be an existential experience (cognition) in which the Source of our mind (soul) posits his own existence." And there must also be "an affirmation in it of the highest love of creative spirituality."<sup>49</sup> The mystical experience is not one in which human beings know themselves; it is an event in which the Source of the soul, the Transcendent himself, reveals his own existence; the workings of what deserves to be called sublime love must overflow in it, he says.

"The most profoundly mystical person is also the most profoundly active person," Yoshimitsu wrote at the conclusion of "Shinpihugi no keijijōgaku."<sup>50</sup> It should come as no surprise that similar words are also found in Izutsu's *Shinpi tetsugaku*. Recall this passage in *Shinpi tetsugaku* that deals with the mystic's truth.

No matter how blissful the contemplation of the Ideas may be for him, he is not allowed to remain forever in the peace and tranquility of this transcendental world. After he has mastered the hidden depths of ultimate Being, he is charged with the sacred duty to come back down once again to the mundane world and serve his fellow human beings.<sup>51</sup>

Father Joseph Roggenendorf, who was a close friend of Izutsu, had an indirect relationship with Yoshimitsu through Father Hermann Heuvers. Had Yoshimitsu lived longer, perhaps he and Izutsu would have had friendly conversations about Massignon and Hallāj.

### Izutsu's Influence on Christians: Shūsaku Endō, Yōji Inoue and Takako Takahashi

Izutsu's personal history is not the only reason for thinking that the issue of his relation to Christianity cannot be overlooked. There is also the fact that people with deep connections to Catholicism—Yasuo Ochi, Shūsaku Endō, Yūji Inoue and Takako Takahashi—responded

extremely strongly to Izutsu's writings and translations. Many people in the fields of philosophy, religious studies, linguistics, Islamic studies, Buddhist studies and literature were also deeply moved by him. Nor were they confined to Japan; even today there are readers of Izutsu all over the world. Even so, the fact that the abovementioned group of people with deep ties to Catholicism reacted so strongly to Izutsu has a special significance since it sheds light on an aspect of this philosopher that has not been much discussed.

Yasuo Ochi is probably not very well known today. A poet and a critic, he was born in 1911 and died in 1961 at the age of forty-nine. Although nothing of his came out during his lifetime, two years after his death, a posthumous work, *Kōshoku to hana* (Sensuality and flowers), was published by Chikuma Shobō with the support of his friends and moved not only such literary figures as Mitsuo Nakamura (1911–1988) and Kenkichi Yamamoto (1907–1988), who knew him while he was alive, but also Ken Hirano (1907–1978), Toshio Shimaō (1917–1986) and Yōji Inoue.<sup>52</sup> Ochi followed in the footsteps of Yoshihiko Yoshimitsu; he was, I believe, an outstanding literary critic who, in addition to his superb study of Hideo Kobayashi, deserves special mention even now for the works of his early period on Claudel and Gabriel Marcel that are permeated with Catholic spirituality.<sup>53</sup> Shūsaku Endō, who started out as a critic, thought highly of Yasuo Ochi as his predecessor.

Ochi made an in-depth study of Martin D'Arcy's *The Mind and Heart of Love*, which Izutsu translated.<sup>54</sup> (A colleague of Izutsu's at Keio University, Masao Matsumoto [1910–1998], also discussed this work, but dealt with the original rather than Izutsu's translation of it.) Ochi's "'Are ka kore ka' to 'Are mo kore mo': Dāshī no Ai no rogosu to patosu o yomu" ("This or that' and 'this and that': Reading D'Arcy's *The Mind and Heart of Love*) is the only example of what could be called a critique of the Japanese translation, although in it Ochi is discussing D'Arcy's ideas and shows no direct interest in the translator.<sup>55</sup> Presumably Ochi was unaware of Yoshihiko Izutsu the philosopher. Martin D'Arcy was a leading twentieth-century English thinker; in his public capacity, he bore the heavy responsibility of being Provincial of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, one of the largest religious orders in the Catholic Church. Izutsu met D'Arcy in 1953, when the

latter came to Japan at the invitation of the Japan Committee for Intellectual Interchange, and personally asked his permission to translate this book. As might be expected in light of this personal request, there are several passages in this work that could be mistaken for Izutsu's own. One such passage is as follows.

[T]he mystery religions of the East encountered the philosophy of Greece, and out of this encounter came a new religious philosophy or philosophic religion. . . . The Greek wisdom had no contacts with earth; its happiness was in reason and thought and the fruits of these. The mystery religion, on the other hand, was the child of passion and it lived on passion. The madness which love excites was changed from a brutal passion into an ecstasy, a divine frenzy.<sup>56</sup>

D'Arcy believes that Greek philosophy was a "new religious philosophy or philosophic religion" rather than the academic study that it is today. Had these words been found in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, not only would there have been no inconsistency, they clearly express the key theme of that work, i.e. the relation between philosophy and God. "[I]t may well be . . . that many find the true God by becoming initiates of this uncovenanted mysticism," D'Arcy says.<sup>57</sup> This statement predates Vatican II and was made at a time when Catholicism publicly called other religions heresies. D'Arcy deserves full credit for such fair and impartial views.

*The Mind and Heart of Love* was published in 1945; *Shinpi tetsugaku* came out four years later in 1949. Izutsu may have already read this book by then. Seeing that Ochi does not let this passage go unnoticed but responds to it, it seems fair to think that Ochi's allusion to the central idea of *Shinpi tetsugaku*, even if it is via D'Arcy, establishes an invisible intersection between these two Japanese contemporaries. D'Arcy's book should be read not only as a philosophical work on the changing nature of love, but as "an extremely bold attempt at ontology," which pursues the basic principle of Being, love, Izutsu writes in his translator's introduction.<sup>58</sup> Love does not emanate from human beings; it is born from Being alone. The idea that to reflect on love is to reflect on Being itself is in keeping with the theme of Ochi's book, *Kōshoku to hana*.

*The Mind and Heart of Love* is a study of *anima*, Ochi writes. It was Jung who brought the word *anima* back into contemporary usage. D'Arcy deals with *anima* and often mentions Jung, but the *anima* that Jung talks about is a form of the human soul. For D'Arcy—and for his translator Toshihiko Izutsu—*anima*, rather, is understood to be the basic principle that animates the human soul. *Anima* is spirit and *animus* is soul. *Anima* is a persona or manifestation of the Transcendent; *animus* symbolizes the human being who partially possesses it. “[F]or *au fond* he [Animus] knows well . . . that all the fortune belongs to Anima, and that he is a beggar, and lives on what she gives him,” writes D'Arcy, citing the words of Claudel.<sup>59</sup> To be is itself already an act of grace, Claudel would probably say. Ochi and Izutsu intersect with one another through Claudel.

Perhaps as a result of this work, in 1952, D'Arcy took part in the Eranos Conference when Jung was in a leadership position. At the time, it required considerable resolve for a Catholic priest to participate in Eranos. Today the Catholic Church has criticized Eranos in an official statement.<sup>60</sup> It would be fifteen years after this that Izutsu attended the Eranos Conference. D'Arcy came to Japan the year after he had been at Eranos. One wonders whether he talked about that gathering with Toshihiko Izutsu.

When Toshihiko Izutsu died, Shūsaku Endō openly expressed his indignation that Izutsu had not been given his due. He seems to have begun reading Izutsu in earnest around the time of *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* (1980; The original image of Islamic philosophy) or *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; Consciousness and essence). His encounter with the latter work, in particular, seems to have made a great impact; he was sorry to finish reading it, he wrote. Endō's long essay, *Watakushi no aishita shōsetsu* (1985; A novel I have loved), is ostensibly about François Mauriac's *Thérèse Desqueyroux*,<sup>61</sup> but when it first came out in serialized form, it was called “Shūkyō to bungaku no tanima de” (Between religion and literature), and the work's contents seem closer to the original title. In this essay, aided by his reflections on Izutsu's *Kōran o yomu* (1983; Reading the Kōran), Endō discusses the theory of literary archetypes. What Izutsu calls an archetype is not unrelated to

the archetype in Jungian psychology, but its domain is far broader and deeper. An archetype for Izutsu is not a category with which to classify psychological phenomena; rather, it is the way by which human beings return to their origin, the path that the soul takes to be transformed into spirit and vice versa, i.e. the passageway through which Spirit makes its appearance in the phenomenal world. No holy books exist without passing through archetypes nor are there any myths without them. Although stories about God or the gods can be said to have been revealed through archetypes, the fact is, rather, that it is only by passing through archetypes that we can have access to the incorporeal, transcendent reality that is God. Archetypes are the birthplace of holy scripture—or the site of its manifestation.

Another concept that moved Endō deeply was that of “linguistic *ālaya-vijñāna*” in *Ishiki to honshitsu*. In the depths even deeper than *ālaya-vijñāna*, which is the bottom of consciousness in the Yogācāra (consciousness-only) school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Izutsu presupposes the existence of a deep layer that he calls the “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness.” *Ālaya*-consciousness means “storehouse consciousness,” but Izutsu sees in it an even greater function than that of a simple storehouse. This is where the birth of meaning occurs; it is nothing less than the point of contact between consciousness and Being.

Endō refers to linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness in a tribute to the memory of Hideo Kobayashi. In it he defines a writer as someone who has seen firsthand the realm of linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness and describes it in his/her own words. At that time, Endō only used the key words “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness” without mentioning that the term was derived from Toshihiko Izutsu, but by purposefully referring to linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness while discussing Kobayashi’s work on *Motoori Norinaga*, he is clearly suggesting that the minds of Hideo Kobayashi and Toshihiko Izutsu have some invisible but high degree of agreement and resonance. I mentioned earlier that Shūsaku Endō thought highly of Yasuo Ochi. Ochi’s most important work was on Hideo Kobayashi. Although Toshihiko Izutsu’s name does not appear there, what becomes clear in reading Ochi’s work is the place where Hideo Kobayashi and Toshihiko Izutsu meet. On this level, the proper names Hideo Kobayashi and Toshihiko Izutsu cease to be names of

individuals with their own personal histories and become synonyms for a spirit that inquires into the mysteries of reality, sanctity and being.

The Catholic priest, Yōji Inoue, read the works of Izutsu at the recommendation of a friend. It is easy to guess that the friend in question was Shūsaku Endō. The two of them had been close friends and kindred spirits ever since their student days in France shortly after the war. On the impact of his encounter with Izutsu, Inoue wrote the following in his study of the Apostle Paul, *Kirisuto o hakonda otoko* (1987; 'The man who carried Christ).

He very clearly explained, as if pointing out my location on a map, why, ever since my student days in France, I had always felt a distress akin to a sense of spiritual pressure or suffocation when forced to accept European Christianity, or why, for some reason, I felt an interest in the thought of Motoori Norinaga and had so much sympathy for Bashō.<sup>62</sup>

“By coming in contact with the theology of Ibn ‘Arabī,” he goes on to say, “it seemed as though I had been given a sure guarantee to the direction of the Japanese Christian theology and spirituality I had been searching for up until now.”<sup>63</sup> Izutsu’s influence on Inoue is remarkably strong.

What Inoue found in Izutsu was a view that goes beyond pantheism. Panentheism was mentioned earlier in the discussion of Ḥallāj. Izutsu dynamically develops this topic in his English-language magnum opus, *Sufism and Taoism*. There is a connection between panentheism—the view that God is both transcendent and immanently present in the world—and the three persons of the Trinity. It is not possible to know the Trinity, Augustine said, but it is made clear by living and believing in it. When explaining the mystery of the Trinity, Inoue often uses the metaphor of water as a symbol for the Absolute. Hot water, ice and steam are all water that has changed its form, he says. The same metaphor is also found in Izutsu’s work.

Dissatisfaction with medieval Christian theology and its doctrines centered on a paternal God; the discovery of God’s maternal nature in

the life of Christ; and finding the core of the Gospel in the rapprochement between these two natures – that is the spirituality of Shūsaku Endō and Yōji Inoue. Takako Takahashi (1932– ), on the other hand, tries to go back to a medieval European spirituality. Inevitably, this would produce differences between her, on the one hand, and Endō and Inoue, on the other. As a reader of Izutsu, Takako Takahashi has a different image of the philosopher than Endō and Inoue had.

What she responded most sensitively to is Toshihiko Izutsu's treatment of consciousness. In *Ishiki to sonzai no nazo* (1996; 'The riddle of consciousness and existence'), when she speaks of the Christian mystic Teresa of Avila, her words evolve through a deepening of contemplation into a discussion of salvation.<sup>64</sup> Takahashi is particularly fond of Julien Green, and her diary, like that of Green, is a work of art in itself. Toshihiko Izutsu's name appears in the entry for 2 November 2002.

After I had studied the complexities and subtleties of the depths of human consciousness from the Christian mystics in French during the 1980s, these matters were reinforced after my return to Japan by the works of Toshihiko Izutsu, and around the time that I took up my pen again, I had the feeling that what I was writing about was ahead of its time.<sup>65</sup>

At one time she had stopped writing and gone to France with the intention of becoming a nun. When she started writing again, what supported her were the Christian mystics. The voices of those mystics were deepened and strengthened through her reading of Toshihiko Izutsu and finally led her beyond the phenomenal world.

As we saw earlier, there had been a colloquy between Shūsaku Endō and Toshihiko Izutsu. Try to imagine what a colloquy between Toshihiko Izutsu and Takako Takahashi might have been like. Perhaps Izutsu would have told Takahashi, who had spent time in a convent, the thoughts on Christian mysticism that he had never put in writing. A passage in her diary reads, "I took a splendid biography of St Bernard out of the library and read it through in a single sitting. . . . St Bernard – what a wonderful man!" (entry for 30 December 2002).<sup>66</sup> Perhaps she and Izutsu would have exchanged ideas about Bernard.



## Words and WORD

### The Position of Islām in Izutsu's Scholarship

TOSHIHIKO IZUTSU ATTRACTED widespread attention after his return from Iran in 1979. He had written several books prior to that, of course, and was well known in certain circles, but compared to the interest and attention he generated especially after *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; Consciousness and essence), it would have to be said that the degree to which he had been known before then was limited. On the other hand, as his name recognition increased, so did the number of people who called him a scholar of Islām, despite the fact that he always described himself as a philosopher of language.

Izutsu's return to Japan was sudden and unexpected, an event brought about by the intensifying of the Iranian revolution under the Ayatollah Khomeini. From the Japanese perspective, it was impossible to understand why the revolution had been inevitable; it was regarded as a political step backward to theocracy or even as an anachronism. Hence, the Japanese media were eager to ask Toshihiko Izutsu, who had just returned from there, to write or speak about Islām. Coincidentally, books in Japanese by Izutsu on Islām-related subjects were coming out sporadically around that time: *Isurāmu seitan* (1979; The birth of Islām), *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* (1980; The original image of Islamic philosophy), *Isurāmu bunka* (1981; Islamic culture) and

*Kōran o yomu* (1983; Reading the Kōran). If the lectures and colloquies given in this period are included, his pronouncements on Islām would increase still further. These discussions, backed up by existential experience, enthralled his listeners and readers. If he was referred to as a world-renowned scholar, popular opinion had no doubt that it must be in Islamic studies.

Almost as if he had expected as much, Izutsu quietly resisted being labeled a “scholar of Islām.” In the brief biography appended to *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō*, which was published the year after his return, he wrote: “specialty: philosophy, semantics.” Even in a book with the expression “Islamic philosophy” in the title, he refused to call himself a specialist in Islām. Although he did include “Islamic philosophy” among his list of specialties in the works after *Ishiki to honshitsu* such as *Imi no fukami e* (1985; To the depths of meaning), which came out after his series of books on Islām, including the one just cited, he never forgot to add “philosophy of language” before it.

As a glance at his selected works shows, it would be inaccurate to define Izutsu as an Islamic specialist. *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949; Philosophy of mysticism) was a study of the history of Greek mystical thought, but it was also the spiritual last will and testament of a poet-philosopher, written with an acute consciousness of his own mortality. Around the time he wrote “Roshia no naimenteki seikatsu” (1948; Interior life in Russia) for the magazine *Kosei* (Individuality), he seems to have had an inner awareness of himself as a literary critic. The writing style of his studies of Russian literature beginning with *Roshiateki ningen* (1953; Russian humanity), or those on poetry that dealt with Claudel (1949 and 1953), and even *Mahometto* (1952), whose subject was the Prophet Muḥammad, could all appropriately be described as literary criticism. As he himself stated, *Mahometto* was not a work of scholarship; it should perhaps be read as a hymn of praise to his spiritual hero and a confession of his inner thoughts, in other words, as what Baudelaire calls “criticism.” Finally, to read his first English-language book, *Language and Magic* (1956), and the notes taken on “Introduction to Linguistics,” the lectures he gave over a more than five-year period at Keio University, is to realize that the issue of language—or WORD, to use the expression he would later adopt,—underlies the formation of

his thinking. This was the period in which he was a linguist; thereafter, he metamorphosed into a linguistic philosopher.

Even his translations of the Kōran (1957/8 and 1964) were not simply the fruits of his study of Islām. They were unequivocally works of philosophical semantics, attempts to put his ideas on the philosophy of language into practice. His English-language work, *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran: A Study in Semantics* (1959), which came out the year after the publication of his first translation of the Kōran, is more an experiment with a full-scale semantic study played out against the background of the Kōran than it is a treatment of key Koranic terms. It is not intended to be a work on Islamic linguistic philosophy; its subject is, as the subtitle says, “A Study in Semantics.” When this work was translated into Japanese by Shin'ya Makino in 1972, it was published under the title *Imi no kōzō: Kōran ni okeru shūkyō dōtoku gainen no bunseki* (The structure of meaning: An analysis of religious and ethical concepts in the Kōran).<sup>1</sup> The Japanese title is a clearer and more straightforward description of the book's contents than the English title is. Perhaps Izutsu had an emotional attachment to this monograph, for when it was included in his selected works, he extensively rewrote the first four chapters. On that occasion, he alluded to his aim in writing the work and added that he had done so “as part of an effective way to come to grips with dealing *semantically* with the ethical and moral concepts in the Kōran.”<sup>2</sup> In this passage, written toward the end of his life, we should be able to get a clear reading of his intentions from the fact that he specifically emphasized the word “semantically.”

The following passage is from the foreword to *Isurāmu seitan*, which was written in 1979, less than half a year after his return from Iran.

Around the time I wrote this book [*God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (1964)], I was thinking about trying to devise methodologically something that might be called semantic sociology or, more generally, a semantic hermeneutics of civilization, making use of the German linguistic tradition of semantics as represented by Weisgerber and others. And in order to clarify the analytic method—which at first was still hazy but whose outline little by little was beginning to appear—by applying it to

specific material; I took up as my subject matter the Kōran, the holy book of Islām. Such was the aim for which this book was written; in short, it was a preliminary essay to determine, after my own fashion, a methodological range for a semantic hermeneutics.<sup>3</sup>

The words “a preliminary essay to determine, after my own fashion, a methodological range for a semantic hermeneutics” should be taken at face value. His scholarly focus was clearly on “a semantic hermeneutics” and not on Islām.

The fact remains, however, that Toshihiko Izutsu’s achievements in the study of Islām are recognized not just domestically but internationally as well. Japanese research on Islām, led by Shūmei Ōkawa, Kōji Ōkubo and others at the dawn of Islamic studies in Japan, changed greatly with the arrival of Toshihiko Izutsu. Izutsu was not the only Japanese who understood Arabic at that time. But not only could he read Arabic texts, he extensively read the works of Western scholars in their original languages and was the first to describe Islām in Japanese as an Oriental spiritual impulse that had been formed subsequent to but in close conjunction with Hellenism, Hebraism and Christianity. As well as being the first Japanese to write a book on the history of Islamic thought from the birth of the Kōran to Averroes in the twelfth century (*Arabia shis̄shi* [1941; History of Arabic thought]), he was also the first Japanese to make a complete translation of the Kōran from the original Arabic. He became a professor at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, an internationally renowned center for the study of Islamic thought, and, when it opened a branch in Tehran, he went to Iran at their request. In 1978, when his Japanese translation of Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Kitāb al-Mashā’ir* (Book of metaphysical penetrations) was published,<sup>4</sup> with the exception of Henry Corbin and a few others, even the Islamic world had forgotten the existence of this seventeenth-century mystic philosopher. Izutsu wrote that, in the near future, Mullā Ṣadrā would attract worldwide attention, and these words came true. Toshihiko Izutsu left original achievements in the field of Islamic thought: his English-language research on Ibn ‘Arabī in *Sufism and Taoism* (1966–1967), of course, as well as such works as *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (1971) on Sabzawārī, the nineteenth-century

mystic philosopher who followed in Ibn ‘Arabī’s footsteps and whom he dealt with synchronically, showing how his philosophy of existence intersected with the existentialism of Heidegger and Sartre.

In tandem with these activities, during this period, Izutsu gave lectures and seminars at prominent Islamic institutions, including the Institute of Ismaili Studies, the research center in London run by the Ismailis, an offshoot of the Shī’ite sect. Although he certainly displayed exceptional ability in his research on Islām, that is no reason to limit his area of expertise to that field. Even in the studies that focused on Islām, his gaze was always directed to the “Orient” beyond. *Sufism and Taoism* is a good example. While dealing with Ibn ‘Arabī as a representative thinker of Sufism, a form of Islamic mysticism, he simultaneously developed his ideas on the Taoism of Lao-tzŭ and Chuang-tzŭ, and made a thorough examination of the ontological structures that permeated both. “Looking back, I have done a lot of different things up to now. Every time I change the direction of my scholarship, someone has tried to pin a label on my work. But I have never been satisfied with the labels others have applied to me,” he wrote.<sup>5</sup> The one label that he did receive his approval as being most truly descriptive of his scholarship was “philosophical semantics.” In 1967, when Toshihiko Izutsu was invited to be an official lecturer at the Eranos Conference, the organizers proposed listing his specialty as “philosophical semantics.” Not only did he accept this suggestion, nothing, he said, summed up his work so well as this one term.

There was a tacit understanding at Eranos that only one person each time would be invited to attend from any given discipline, which might include philosophy, religion, psychology, biology, music, literature, mathematics and physics. After Jung left, Henry Corbin, by his own reckoning and that of others, was the central figure at Eranos. Izutsu participated in Eranos with Corbin from 1967 until the latter’s death in 1978. Given that Corbin was a leading twentieth-century scholar of Islamic mystic philosophy, it is clear from the external facts as well that Toshihiko Izutsu was not treated as a specialist in Islamic studies there. Izutsu gave lectures at Eranos twelve times over the course of fifteen years, and what he consistently dealt with was the possibility of an “Oriental” philosophy; not once was Islām his main

theme. Toshihiko Izutsu's name was also on the list of official members of the Institut International de Philosophie headquartered in France. Raymond Klibansky, who recommended Izutsu, regarded him as a philosopher who was laying the groundwork for a renaissance of Oriental philosophy, not as a scholar of Islām.

Let me enumerate some of the main topics in Izutsu's magnum opus, *Ishiki to honshitsu*: Japanese classical literature and thought, Islamic philosophy, Jewish mystical thought, Taoist thought, the thought of Confucius, Chu-tzū, Neo-Confucianism in the Sung period, Chinese Zen, Japanese Zen, ancient Indian philosophy, Tibetan tantrism and Kūkai's thought, ancient Greek philosophy, Rilke, Mallarmé and Sartre. To be sure, Islām was a tradition of spirituality that he found endlessly fascinating. But it occupied only one corner of Toshihiko Izutsu's Oriental philosophy and had the same weight as Buddhism or Greek philosophy.

In an article on Toshihiko Izutsu and the Japanese understanding of Islām, Satoshi Ikeuchi observes that Izutsu's perceptions of Islām are "Japanese."<sup>6</sup> As a single reading of this essay makes clear, Ikeuchi is not criticizing Izutsu, but merely pointing out a fact. His view is a fair one and important for Islamic studies in Japan; this is an outstanding study that assesses the originality of Izutsu, who, in his search for a new Orient, read things into texts and actively deviated from Islām. And yet Ikeuchi's observation that Izutsu's understanding of Islām was not necessarily correct is also counterproof of Izutsu's own contention that he was not a scholar of Islām. As he himself said, he had "from the outset I have had absolutely no interest in an *objective* study of someone else's thought with which I have no personal or existential relation";<sup>7</sup> from the very beginning, Izutsu's interest in a standard understanding of Islām was slight. Referring to contemporaries such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, Izutsu comments that, in the background from which these original thinkers emerge, there are often creative "misunderstandings." Barthes's "readings" sometimes are not only incorrect; they may even seem excessively highhanded. But if we single out only their deficiencies or inconsistencies, we completely lose sight of the vein of ore this remarkable writer has discovered.

“Misreadings” that are arbitrary or arrived at accidentally, Izutsu says, sometimes lead us instead to the depths of meaning.

It is not the aim of the present work to confine itself to a critical study that corrects mistakes. What I am trying to the best of my ability to discover are the changes in and the development of Toshihiko Izutsu’s mind. This is the tiger cub that I am pursuing, and to catch a tiger cub one must enter the tiger’s den. Even if there are scholarly “mistakes,” the aim is to understand the path that led to those mistakes and why he continued on down it.

### Language and Semantics

One day when Izutsu was a middle-school student, he was reading the Bible. While casually leafing through the pages, quite by chance, a passage at the beginning of the Gospel according to John caught his eye. “I cannot forget even now how astonished I felt when I read that,” the seventy-year-old Izutsu said.

In the Primal Origin of all things . . . was the WORD. And the WORD was with God. Or rather, the WORD was God. Each and every thing came into being through It, and of all the things that came forth there was not one single thing that came forth without It.<sup>8</sup>

These are the first few lines of the Gospel of John. Although the translation was made by Izutsu in his later years, the words seem to convey the excitement he had felt as a teenager. Compare the same passage from the English Standard Version:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

Even from that one passage alone it is possible to catch a glimpse of how Izutsu “read” the Greek New Testament. Had he translated all four Gospels the way he did that one passage, we would likely have a completely new Japanese Bible just as we have his *Kōran*.

He goes on to describe his thoughts at the time he encountered this passage at the beginning of the Gospel according to John.

I recall being overwhelmed by a truly extraordinary feeling, somewhere between surprise and excitement. “WORD was God.” What a mysterious thing, I thought. I didn’t understand what it meant at the time, of course. Still, even though its meaning was unclear, as mystical words that were somehow full of unfathomable depth, this passage left a lingering aftereffect deep in my heart that did not fade away for a long, long time.<sup>9</sup>

It was probably not long after this incident that Izutsu became acquainted with Greek philosophy. As we saw earlier, for the young Izutsu that encounter was an event that might almost be called a revelation. The middle-school years were the first time that the unique mentality nurtured during Izutsu’s boyhood with his father came into direct conflict with the outside world.

After the lecture in which these statements were made was published as “Gengo tetsugaku toshite no Shingon” (1985; Shingon: A philosophy of language) in the scholarly periodical *Mikkyōgaku kenkyū* (Journal of Esoteric Buddhist Studies), Izutsu made additions to it, renamed it “Imi bunsetsu riron to Kūkai” (Kūkai and the theory of semantic articulation) and published it in the magazine *Shisō* (Thought). This version was later included in the book *Imi no fukami e*.<sup>10</sup> When it was published in *Shisō*, however, the reference to the Gospel was removed. The relationship between the Bible and Izutsu’s linguistic *Urelebnis* could only be confirmed after the collection of his unpublished essays in *Yomu to kaku* (Reading and writing) came out in 2009. This incident was virtually unknown during his lifetime.

“Gengo tetsugaku toshite no Shingon” was a lecture given at Mount Koya to monks of the Shingon sect. The expression “WORD,” which is used here casually, is Toshihiko Izutsu’s most important key term, but it was not until after *Ishiki to honshitsu* that he would structure his philosophy around it. Or, rather, it would be fair to say that it was the act of writing this work that conjured the expression WORD into existence. It was in the same lecture at Mount Koya that Izutsu for the first time articulated the concept “Being is WORD.” “Being is WORD” — Toshihiko

Izutsu's philosophy would converge on this one phrase. "Being" does not refer to the existence of phenomena. "Being" here is as Ibn 'Arabī uses it, another name for the absolutely Transcendent. "WORD" is not confined to any linguistic category such as *langue* or *parole*, *signifiant* or *signifié*. It is different as well from *écriture*. When "Being" "creates" "beings," it undergoes a process of self-expansion as WORD. "WORD" is the dynamic reality that calls phenomena into existence, i.e. it is nothing other than the "energy form" that evokes being.

When Izutsu wrote *Shinpi tetsugaku*, he traversed ancient Greece in search of *nous*; when he wrote *Roshiateki ningen*, he lived in nineteenth-century Russia and stared fixedly at the reality of *pneuma*. Then, his long journey with WORD in Islām began. Passing through Lao-tzū, Chuang-tzū, Confucius, ancient Indian philosophy and Japanese classical literature, he returned to Buddhism at the end of his life. His encounter with Kūkai (774–835), the founder of the Shingon sect, was a fateful one. His last work was *Ishiki no keijijōgaku: "Daijō kishinron" no tetsugaku* (1993; *Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*),<sup>11</sup> in which he discussed the true form of "spiritual true likeness" (心真如, *shin shinnyo*). For Izutsu, *nous*, *pneuma* and "spiritual true likeness" all appeared in the guise of WORD. Toshihiko Izutsu's WORD embraces, yet transcends, the field of linguistics. Bach used the WORDS of music; van Gogh, those of color. For Jung, who drew mandala, images and archetypes were WORDS. To overlook the historical process that led to Izutsu's penetrating examination of WORD and treat him only as a specialist in Islām is to ignore Toshihiko Izutsu the philosopher's most important speculation. For Izutsu, Islām was a fertile intellectual and spiritual field that opened out into WORD.

Leo Weisgerber, who was mentioned earlier, was a twentieth-century German linguist in whom Toshihiko Izutsu had a profound interest. Though well known in linguistics circles, Weisgerber may not be a very familiar name among those outside his special field. He is by no means in the mainstream of linguistics today. In terms of scholarly influence, Weisgerber was an older contemporary of Izutsu's who, along with Junzaburō Nishiwaki and Louis Massignon, had the most

profound impact on him. And yet, as though in inverse proportion to the profundity of their influence, the names of these three men hardly ever appear in Izutsu's writings. This goes to prove that their influence on Izutsu was not confined to the simple absorption or assimilation of their views and concepts: Izutsu tended to wrestle with the ideas of his predecessors until it becomes impossible to determine which are theirs and which, his own. Weisgerber's influence is not limited to the sphere of linguistics in a narrow sense; it manifests itself ontologically.

There are references to Weisgerber such as the one below in the English-language work, *God and Man in the Koran* (1964). In Izutsu's discussion of the "dynamic ontology" of the Kōran as an expression of the inextricable relation between words and the creation of a Koranic worldview, his indebtedness to Weisgerber's theories on the question of language and mind formation is extremely large. Moreover, Weisgerber's ideas, i.e. the "Humboldtian philosophy of language," are consistent with the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity, which attracted considerable attention in linguistic circles in the English-speaking world and which Izutsu himself regarded with considerable interest. "[T]hese two schools [Sapir-Whorf and the Humboldtian school] have long been developing the same type of linguistic theory on both sides of the Atlantic without being acquainted with each other," he says, drawing attention to their synchronic coincidence.<sup>12</sup>

Just as Weisgerber's influence deeply colors *God and Man in the Koran*, it is impossible to discuss *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran* (1959) without mentioning Sapir and Whorf. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf were American linguists active at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result of their studies of native American languages, they too believed that words were something more than tools for naming things; they were a reality that transcended the physical, phenomenal world. In thinking about language, they actively departed from the field of linguistics in the narrow sense. Weisgerber and Sapir-Whorf are in strong agreement in their recognition that language is closely connected to all beings; that to confine oneself to a single academic discipline is to ignore this relationship; and that in a situation such as this it is impossible to come close to one's goal just by pondering these ideas.

Weisgerber called his linguistics neo-Humboldtian. He did so, he writes in *Das Menschheitsgesetz der Sprache* (1964; The humanistic law of language), because the form in which he inherited Humboldt's ideas was reminiscent of the manner in which the thought of Plotinus, who carried on the Platonic tradition, was called Neoplatonism. Although Wilhelm von Humboldt's name appears several times in this book, that does not mean Weisgerber advocates turning back the clock 150 years. Rather, it is "a sign of my conviction that the ceaseless working of time has now made it possible to mobilize the full force of scientific goal-setting and take up in all their diversity the problems that [Humboldt]—far ahead of his day—had in ingenious ways recognized."<sup>13</sup> "In the beginning there was intuition," Toshihiko Izutsu states at the start of *Shinpi tetsugaku*;<sup>14</sup> Humboldt, too, writes that human beings can recover their primal connection to the world through intuition alone. Just as in his youth Toshihiko Izutsu became aware of the existence of the noumenal world through Plato, as a scholar he learned through Humboldt's linguistics that the mystery of WORD was capable of becoming a subject of scholarly study.

Humboldt, who had also been an able diplomat engaged in heated negotiations with the Napoleonic empire, was a remarkable linguist and a friend of Goethe's and Schiller's in private life. In his *Gespräche mit Goethe* (1836 and 1848; *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, 1850), Eckermann writes that he hopes Humboldt's visit will cheer up the melancholy-prone Goethe. I say friend, though Goethe was eighteen years older than Humboldt. Humboldt observed at an early date that the study of language was a fertile but undeveloped field that deserved to be established as a scholarly discipline, and he set about doing so. He continued to lecture in university classrooms for the last fifteen years of his life. Both during his lifetime and after his death, many have held Humboldt in high esteem as a diplomat and as a political theorist. But partly due to the fact that all his writings on linguistics were published posthumously, it was not until the twentieth century that anyone regarded him as a linguist.

A word is not a mere sign that represents an object; a word determines what that object ought to be. Language "is not *ergon*," Humboldt wrote; "it is *energeia*." *Ergon*, which is translated as "product," is a

Greek word that means a completed work. *Energeia is entelekheia*, “the activity by which spiritual power is completely manifested,” as Izutsu explains in *Shinpi tetsugaku*.<sup>15</sup> Continuing his previous sentence, Humboldt goes on to say that language is *die sich ewig wiederholende Arbeit des Geistes*—the eternally self-repeating work of *Geist*.<sup>16</sup> *Geist* is translated as mind; it also means spirit and is related to the Latin *spiritus*, which means breath or breathing, and to *pneuma*, a Greek word used to signify the Holy Spirit. *Pneuma* also refers to wind; rather than the physical flow of air, “wind” here is a metaphor for the creative power of God. A similar spiritual experience lies behind what Islamic mystics call the “breath of mercy,” the divine activity that brings the world into existence. Words don’t know how to stand still; they can perhaps be called an organic form of *Geist*, as it were. Humboldt believed that the true significance of WORD lay not in its function of expressing phenomena but in causing the existence of all things to rise to the surface. Weisgerber inherited this idea and attempted to develop it further. In order to clarify Humboldt’s linguistic world, he structurally designed a field that he called a *Zwischenwelt*.

Between human beings and the external world there exists a *sprachliche Zwischenwelt*, a linguistic intermediary world. In the everyday world, it is impossible to cognize not only material objects but even abstract ideas without passing through this intermediary world. That is because the *Zwischenwelt* is not simply linguistic (*sprachliche*); it is also mental or spiritual (*geistliche*). If the language is different, naturally the spiritual intermediary world is also different. Nor is even our inner reality free from the workings of WORD. Weisgerber continues his argument with an analogy to the stars. We can see the constellation known as Orion, but it is not a universal reality. It is only a cultural universal that is limited to specific cultures; in a different cultural zone, there is a completely different way of “reading” the stars. Orion, Cancer, Pisces and other constellations exist only in the *sprachliche Zwischenwelt* of the people who “read” them that way in the sky.

In certain ethnic groups what we call a palm tree has sixty different names; some ethnic groups, on the other hand, sum up the entire botanical world in four words. What is a weed? Weisgerber asks. There is no “plant” in the natural world called a weed. People only decide

whether something is a weed in proportion to how useful they think it is. In front of my eyes is a *nazuna*. One of the seven herbs of spring in Japan, it is deeply loved by those who know it as an edible plant. If I hear that there is a forgotten piece of land where only *penpengusa* grow, it conjures up a vacant lot, overgrown and desolate – even though *penpengusa* and *nazuna* are different names for the same plant, what in English is called shepherd’s purse. For the poet Bashō, however, who wrote, *Yoku mireba / nazuna hana saku / kakine ka na* (If I look carefully, I see a *nazuna* blooming by the hedge), the plant is a symbol of the microcosmos transmuted into a gateway to the cosmos. An edible plant, a medicinal herb, sometimes a useless weed, on the one hand; on the other, an artist’s motif that serves as the portal to the other world. We cognize the world through the words we use.

Weisgerber also took note of the relationship between people and their mother tongue. Our mother tongue forms the basis of our *Weltanschauung*, our worldview, he asserted, and no one can escape the restrictions it imposes. In other words, the entire human race is inevitably “articulated” into linguistic communities. It is unavoidable that the community that forms the basis of human life is, first of all, a “linguistic community.” He called this the *Gesetz der Sprachgemeinschaft* (law of linguistic community) or the *Menschheitsgesetz der Sprache* (humanistic law of language) and believed it to be an inescapable truth of human existence. A Japanese hears a poem from the *Manyōshū*, the earliest collection of Japanese poetry from the eighth century, or from the *Kokinshū*, an anthology from two centuries later. The reason our hearts are moved by it even before we understand its meaning is because our mother tongue leads us to an ur-landscape of the spirit. “Mother tongue” is not limited to language in the narrow sense. As Rimbaud wrote to Demyen in his famous *lettre du voyant*, it includes even sounds, colors, smells. Our sense of language innately consists of a combination of multiple senses. In an essay, Toshihiko Izutsu said that even biosemiotic activities—the sound of birds, the biological activity of plants, the reactions of cells—are capable of being language.<sup>17</sup>

It is impossible to overlook the association with linguists and philosophers of language in the formation of Toshihiko Izutsu’s thought—Humboldt, Weisgerber, Sapir, Whorf, Jakobson and the reevaluation of

the later Saussure. In particular, the concept of “articulation,” which originated in the Humboldtian school beginning with Humboldt himself and was subsequently deepened by Weisgerber, would become a key term that forms the basis of Izutsu’s thought. Language articulates the world semantically. And semantic articulation automatically becomes ontological articulation. Why? Because Izutsu believes that “meaning” is not a sign attached to a phenomenon; “meaning” grabs hold of the phenomenon. Izutsu first refers to linguistic articulation in his study of Plotinus in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. At that time, the term was simply mentioned in passing, but with each successive work, its meaning deepened. In his magnum opus, *Ishiki to honshitsu*, it becomes one of his most important key terms. It was in *Ishiki to honshitsu* that “philosophical semantics,” i.e. Toshihiko Izutsu’s philosophy of WORD, passed beyond the existing field of linguistic philosophy and took the creative leap to become an ontology and a study of consciousness, a mystical philosophy of WORD. After this work, he made a clear distinction between words and WORD.

### The “Introduction to Linguistics” Lectures

Sparked by the professor’s lectures on linguistics, my interests, once I had entered that field, naturally proceeded in the direction of linguistic theory and the semantic development of a philosophy of language. After graduation, I became Professor Nishiwaki’s teaching assistant and eventually succeeded to his chair in linguistics, and became more and more deeply engrossed in philosophical semantics.<sup>18</sup>

“The professor” refers to Junzaburō Nishiwaki, the “chair in linguistics,” to his Introduction to Linguistics lectures; Shin’ya Makino (1930– ) mentions these lectures in an insert in volume four of Izutsu’s selected works.<sup>19</sup> The lecture notes that the poet Hiroko Murakami faithfully took also exist; although Makino wrote that these notes were to be published in the near future, they remain unpublished to this day. Hiroko Murakami was born in 1930 and left six volumes of poetry; she was also active as an illustrator. Here is a passage from her poem “Yamai” (Illness).

You will come today, I think,  
 .....  
 You, who love to visit the sick.  
 Your visit is as quiet as a painted picture.  
 The chattering wind,  
 Rustling gaily, comes and goes.<sup>20</sup>

The “you” presumably is a reference to Christ, and if we take “wind” metaphorically, perhaps the Holy Spirit is what the author had in mind. Murakami was a devout Catholic; she contributed articles on theology to a magazine put out by the Carmelites, a religious order renowned for its austerity. In the brief biography appended to *Serofan kamishibai* (Cellophane paper picture-play), her last poetry collection, she wrote that she had “studied with Professor Toshihiko Izutsu in the Faculty of Letters, Keio University.”<sup>21</sup> There is no similar comment in any of her preceding works. She died in 2000, shortly after that book came out. According to an obituary written by her friend and fellow Catholic, French literature specialist Masako Taniguchi (1931– ), for several years after graduation Murakami came to Keio just to attend these lectures. Though apparently urged to publish her notes, she adamantly refused to do so on the grounds that they might not accurately convey what the lecturer had intended. So I was told by another note-taker, Daijirō Kawashima (1927– ), with whom Murakami had corresponded on this matter.<sup>22</sup>

It is not possible here to cover all the contents of the “Introduction to Linguistics” lectures that lasted for a total of six and a half years; that would require a separate work. The year after these lectures ended, Toshihiko Izutsu wrote his first English-language book, *Language and Magic* (1956). The likelihood of the lecture notes being published is, at present, slim, but through this English-language work we can get a sense of Izutsu’s linguistic worldview as well as the excitement these lectures must have generated. In this chapter, I will refer to both this unpublished material — Kawashima’s and Murakami’s notes — as well as to “Sarutoru o koenasai” (1996; Surpass Sartre), the posthumous tribute to Izutsu that Kawashima wrote for a literary magazine.<sup>23</sup> In what follows, I will call the records of the lectures given between 1949 and 1950 that

Kawashima attended the “early notes” and those between 1951 and 1955 that Murakami attended the “later notes.” Just as an essay is different when it first appears and when it comes out in book form, ideas that are rough in the early notes and have a one-time-only quality—the beginnings of an idea welling up—show signs of deepening in the later notes.<sup>24</sup>

The lectures of the early period were originally supposed to have been given by Professor Junzaburō Nishiwaki, but sometime in May, in the middle of the first semester [the Japanese academic year begins in April], that abruptly changed. Kawashima’s notes show signs of Professor Nishiwaki’s name being corrected to Toshihiko Izutsu. Being put in charge of the course may have been a sudden event. The year the lectures began, 1949, was also the year that he finished writing *Shinpi tetsugaku*, a period, he recalled, in which “I was actually on my sickbed coughing up blood as I wrote.”<sup>25</sup> “Around that time, as a young man, I lectured on linguistics in the Faculty of Letters at Keio University,” Izutsu wrote when he was in his seventies. “I was dissatisfied with how casually the conventional linguistics that I had studied and that I myself was teaching treated the phenomenon of ‘meaning’ as a self-evident, commonsense fact.”<sup>26</sup> At the beginning of the lectures, as well, he spoke of his distrust of language and the still-embryonic state of linguistics as a scholarly discipline. Students of language must question each and every premise of language and linguistics, he explained, in an effort to change their attitude toward scholarship. These words certainly convey the state of linguistics at the time. But, on the other hand, they were also lecturer Toshihiko Izutsu’s declaration of his intention to construct a linguistics/philosophy of language the likes of which no one had ever seen before. By the beginning of the later notes, the expression is slightly more refined. On the blackboard, according to Murakami’s notes, he wrote a passage in French, perhaps from Paul Valéry, to the effect that one must never believe conventional linguistics can completely fathom all the problems that language presents. The words that Kawashima heard had much the same meaning.

When reading the notes to “Introduction to Linguistics,” Ogden and Richards’ *The Meaning of Meaning* is impossible to ignore. “Words deceive us” is not only Ogden and Richards’ basic proposition in that

book; it is also the underlying thesis of “Introduction to Linguistics.” “Words,” Izutsu said, “do not guarantee that a thing exists,” writes Daijirō Kawashima. Not only do words fail to adequately express the thing in question; people are misled by them. True “meaning” is obscured by words. “[T]here is no longer any excuse for vague talk about Meaning, and ignorance of the way in which words deceive us,” Ogden and Richards write.<sup>27</sup> The words “no longer any excuse” give a sense of the authors’ strong intent.

Although we can speak of “a round square,” no such thing can possibly exist. Even without being so obvious, words in the strict sense usually do not represent reality completely. And yet, though people sense that words are somehow incomplete, in order to communicate they simply disregard this distinctive feature of language. What about the case of “God,” for example, Izutsu asks. Even if human beings were capable of correctly cognizing all the historical implications that this one term carries with it, “God” would not be a word that expresses all aspects of the transcendently Absolute. A God capable of being known would no longer be transcendent. The word “God” contains a fundamental paradox: If human beings were able to cognize God wholly and completely, God would cease to be transcendent. We know only the “God” created by human beings, and that is what we regard as God/the transcendently Absolute. The charge atheists make that human beings invented “God” may even be nearer to the truth. Toshihiko Izutsu calls this impasse “linguistic nihilism.”

The first edition of *The Meaning of Meaning*, which is now a classic, was published in 1923, and the fourth and definitive edition came out in 1936. The Japanese translation by Kōtarō Ishibashi was published that same year.<sup>28</sup> Yoshisaburō Okakura (1868–1936) contributed the introduction. Okakura was a scholar of the English language, editor of the first edition of the Kenkyusha English-Japanese Dictionary, a close acquaintance of novelist Sōseki Natsume and the younger brother of Tenshin Okakura. At the beginning of the introduction, Okakura cites the passage at the beginning of the Gospel according to John: “In the beginning was the Way, and the Way was with God, and the Way was God.” This is, of course, Okakura’s own translation. As we saw earlier in this chapter, the English Standard Version reads, “In the beginning

was the Word.” The meaning of the Greek word *logos*, which is translated into English as “word,” cannot possibly be completely comprehended by this term, Okakura writes. Suffice it to say that *logos* implies a combination of “reason” and “word,” and that is why he translated it as “Way.” “A term that expresses both ‘reason’ and ‘word’ as spiritual entities,” he goes on to say, “is [the Japanese word] *koto*,” and he raises the question of whether it might not have been the original mission of words “to signify spirituality and spiritual intensity.”<sup>29</sup>

Someone who picked up this book as a work on linguistics might feel these sentences by Yoshisaburō Okakura are somehow incompatible with that subject. And yet this passage clearly conveys the spirit that prevailed at the dawn of linguistics, including the spirit of Ogden and Richards themselves. Chapter Two of *The Meaning of Meaning* is entitled “The Power of Words” and deals with the spiritual power of language and the real state of confusion that is produced as a result. According to the introduction to the second edition, in the first edition, this chapter was deemed to have been exceptionally long. Yet even so Ogden did not feel he had been able to treat the subject adequately and at one time planned to publish the chapter as a separate book under the title *Word Magic*. It is unlikely that the word “magic” here is unrelated to the same word in Izutsu’s *Language and Magic*.

With the appearance in the twentieth century of Freud, Jung and Adler, a current of thought arose that sought to explicate scientifically the depths of human consciousness which had previously been the exclusive purview of religion, mystic thought and ancient philosophy. This was a period in which psychology took a creative leap forward and was reborn as literally the study (*logos*) of the soul (*psychē*). All other scholarly disciplines thereafter could no longer overlook the fact that consciousness is a multilayered reality. One of the disciplines that, along with psychology, made the greatest strides in the twentieth century was linguistics. As talented individuals from various fields entered linguistics, they were not afraid to establish close relations with other scholarly disciplines. Ogden was a psychologist and a philosopher; Richards, a literary critic. Ogden was a polymath in the true sense of the word; there were virtually no limits to his expertise. He was someone who had a good command of WORDS that would break through

the confusion of the times. He was also the quintessential outsider who kept his distance from academia. An outstanding editor and series planner, he drew up proposals for the publication of works by authors such as Jung, Russell and Malinowski and was friendly with Russell and Wittgenstein. Yoshiko Aizawa's book *850go ni miserareta tensai: C.K. Oguden* (C.K. Ogden: 'The genius fascinated by 850 words') frankly describes him as not only naturally gifted in many fields but also as a man of conscience who fought against the prevailing orthodoxies of his times.<sup>30</sup> *Psyche*, the journal he edited, covered fields ranging from parapsychology, as can be deduced from its name, to education, religion, literature, art and social issues. But it was a reflection of Ogden's mind that even topics related to the transcendental world must never be considered in isolation from the phenomenal world. Ogden loathed useless mysticizing that went contrary to reason.

Although Sapir did not always see eye to eye with Ogden, he had a profound interest in *The Meaning of Meaning* and contributed to *Psyche*. Also, like Ogden, he was someone who had been quick to respond to Jung. What "Jung" meant to both of them was not just the name of a remarkable psychologist, but rather a worldview predicated on the existence of the unconscious, the unseen reality at the basis of the visible world. Sapir was admired for his prodigious abilities, but his best student, Whorf, was interdisciplinary and innovative. He was not a scholar based in academia, but a successful businessman who worked for an insurance company. In a letter he sent to the Slavic linguist Nikolay Trubetzkoy, Whorf wrote that working for a company was a good opportunity to think about language.

Roman Jakobson spoke about Whorf's situation as an outsider-scholar with an admixture of sympathy. He also had a high regard for Charles Sanders Peirce, the obscure thinker and brilliant linguist whom virtually no one paid any attention to at that time. Referring to Peirce's 1867 paper on semiotics, "On a New List of Categories," Jakobson described it as "his magnificent profession of faith."<sup>31</sup> In the twentieth century, particularly during its first half, linguistics was not a discipline that investigated the function of language; rather, Jakobson believed, it was "theology" under a different guise. To say that linguistics assumed the role of theology implies that this discipline attempts to reveal a dimension that would go

beyond differences in culture, history and mentality. Jakobson's metalanguage was one such attempt. Jakobson's name can be found several times in Izutsu's works. "Even in R. Jakobson's structural analysis of poetic language, it was impossible to find a satisfactory guide," he says in his Afterword to *Imi no fukami e*,<sup>32</sup> and he made critical comments on Jakobson's overly optimistic pronouncements about a universal language, i.e. metalanguage, in "Bunka to gengo arayashiki" (1984; Culture and linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness).<sup>33</sup> In recognizing the need for a metalanguage, far from being outdone by Jakobson, its attainment was Izutsu's own deepest desire. But the metalanguage that Izutsu hoped for would have to be a metalanguage in the true sense—a reality that would transcend language not an existing language used transcendently.

Words are caught between two silences, Izutsu said in a lecture: the silence that precedes language and the silence of the absolute world that is utterly incapable of being expressed linguistically. All phenomena occur between these silent co-existences. And in that space, there are four linguistic levels: "animal cries, conventional usage, the existence of non-existents, ultimate harmony." While each exists independently, they are all inextricably connected. They coexist in concentric circles, so to speak, Izutsu said, and he would draw four concentric circles on the blackboard, Kawashima writes, with animal cries in the center and ultimate harmony in the outermost circle. The four levels beginning with animal cries deepen as they approach ultimate harmony. This multilayered, linguistic world acts as a ladder from the phenomenal world to the transcendental world. It exists in a step-like progression, but that does not mean that the paths leading from each region to the world of silence in and of themselves are blocked off. There is a point at which a leap-like change of dimension occurs; this is the place where "pure poetry" is born.

For the most part the later notes include the same content as the earlier notes. The one exception was pure poetry. Izutsu discussed this topic passionately in the early lectures, but did not refer to it directly in the later ones. In *Roshiateki ningen*, alluding to Pushkin's poetry, he had this to say about the pure poetry element that ran through it:

What brings into being the rare, pure harmony of these poems is not their plot or meaning but *an ineffable something* that far transcends their semantic content, *something* M. Brémond calls *poésie pure*.<sup>34</sup>

“Pure poetry” is not a term applied to a particular work; it is a quality or property that deserves to be called the primordial, original nature that pervades the writing of poetry. In saying that it “is not their plot or meaning but *an ineffable something* that far transcends their semantic content,” Izutsu means, in other words, that it is something prelinguistic.

The first person to use the expression “pure poetry” was Paul Valéry. When Henri Brémond took up this term and wrote *La poésie pure*,<sup>35</sup> a “pure poetry” debate broke out that embroiled the French literary and intellectual worlds. Brémond raised the issue of whether a poem has to be read in its entirety. If something happens to catch our eye in a few lines, that may be enough even without reading what precedes or follows them. Pure poetry is definitely deeply ingrained in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. That is precisely the reason this work has continued to be cherished for the past several hundred years. But it is hard to read the whole poem, and not simply because it is so long. When readers encounter pure poetic images, they often lose interest in what comes before or afterwards. Pure poetry, in which words appear and come into being almost as if a revelation, is not the product of personal choice. The role of the poet is not to search for words; it is to become the field for the pure expression of *something* that passes through the poet. Poets are entrusted with the words by *something*. Their ultimate form, Brémond says, becomes the words of a prayer in the true sense. Underlying Brémond’s idea that, when “pure poetry” arises, the human poet inevitably becomes an “active” passive voice is a clear recognition of human limitations and the absoluteness of God in the work of creation. We should probably not read Brémond’s words to mean a poem must become a prayer. Human beings could not even pray, he believed, unless the prayer was given to them. A prayer is not a supplication; it is an affirmation in words of the Absolute.

As the classic example of such people, the Prophet Muḥammad may come to mind. Or perhaps, just as the Old Testament prophets were poets, Izutsu’s statement that “Claudel, too, is a poet and a

prophet” coincides with this idea.<sup>36</sup> Poets do not have words of their own. Only by receiving the WORD from God do they fully express their own identity. Pure poetry is pure *entelekheia*, “the activity by which spiritual power is completely manifested,” pure *energeia*. Hence, its mission does not end in being understood. “[Un poème] est fait expressément pour renaître de ses cendres et redevenir indéfiniment ce qu’il vient d’être” ([A poem] is expressly designed to be born again from its ashes and to become endlessly what it has just been), said Valéry.<sup>37</sup> Mallarmé had called his ideal of an absolute language *le Verbe*. When Valéry was nineteen he met Mallarmé, who became his teacher. Readers of *Ishiki to honshitsu* will perhaps recall that Izutsu treated Mallarmé as an extremely important person. In both the “Introduction to Linguistics” lectures and *Language and Magic*, Izutsu, like Valéry, “often spoke of Mallarmé.”

In Izutsu’s English and Japanese works, references to Bergson are by no means frequent—there are only two or three—but his name crops up often in the “Introduction to Linguistics” notes, conveying the fact that Izutsu had seriously grappled with his ideas. The Bergson discussed there, however, was not the philosopher of the *élan vital* and time. He is the prosecutor of language that does not express the actual state of things, a denunciator who makes his anger and indignation clear in what could well be called a curse. One might even almost think that he literally believed the account in Genesis 11, where God caused humankind to speak different languages as a punishment for planning to build the tower of Babel.

Although there are a few references to him in *Roshiateki ningen* and “Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon: Kuroderu-ron” (1949; Poetry and religious existence: On Claudel), it is hard to convey on the basis of his published works how Toshihiko Izutsu read Valéry. Among the Western works in the catalogue of his library are several volumes by that poet. And the lecture notes tell us that Izutsu confronted Valéry no less passionately than he did Bergson. He observed that Valéry had a profound interest in Leonardo da Vinci. Perhaps he recalled that Leonardo is the protagonist of the novel *The Renaissance of the Gods* (1900) by Merezhkovsky, who along with Berdyaev was the Russian thinker who influenced Izutsu most. In this novel Merezhkovsky describes Leonardo’s achievements as

not just artistic or scientific but as spiritual. Although not to the extent of Leonardo, Valéry, too, was a multi-talented genius. And yet their true greatness did not lie in the breadth of their fields of activity, but rather in the fact that they continued to seek for one thing in many places. It was Katherine Mansfield who allegedly called Valéry a “godless mystic.” Valéry liked this expression. But its applicability is not confined to Valéry; this was likely a characteristic of Leonardo as well. A mystic for them would have been synonymous with the meaning with which Toshihiko Izutsu used the term consistently from *Shinpi tetsugaku* on.

The power of words, which Izutsu explored in *Language and Magic*, not only gives rise to meaning; it is a mystery of “Being” that determines reality. But if we were to translate the word “magic” in the title with the Japanese words *majutsu* (魔術) or *jujutsu* (呪術), as we read on, the hazier the point under discussion would become. Someone might say that if we understand the English word, there is no need to go to the trouble of translating it. But given his understanding of Weisgerber, Izutsu would avoid so sanguine a view. When reading a foreign language, no matter how proficient we may be, in order to understand it we translate it into our mother tongue. Even though, at a conscious level, Japanese readers may think they understand a Western-language text, at the deep-consciousness level, they grasp its meaning by converting it into its *kana* (syllabary) and *kanji* (character) equivalents or their archetypal images. Such was the view of language of Izutsu himself, who was said to know more than thirty languages. According to Izutsu, words are nothing less than magico-religious entities. The transcendence that “magic” connotes in this context cannot be expressed by the Japanese words *majutsu* or *jujutsu*.

All things that have been given names have their corresponding substance. In this way, an ideograph is in an inseparable relation with, and corresponds to, the real world. It is not the superficial form of a word; it is nothing less than a designation of the substance itself that the word means. Just as spoken words have a *kotodama* [a word soul], written words, too, have this sort of incantatory function.<sup>38</sup>

It was not Izutsu who wrote this. This is a passage from *Kanji hyakuwa* (A hundred stories about Chinese characters) by Shizuka Shirakawa

(1910–2006), an authority on ideographs. A written word is not something that simply expresses an existing object, he says; rather, there is a power in the written word, an incantatory function (呪能, *junō*), that evokes a substance and its meaning. Shirakawa would probably have translated *Language and Magic* as *Kotoba to junō* (ことばと呪能).<sup>39</sup>

It may seem abrupt to introduce Shizuka Shirakawa in this context. But it is not just the attitudes with which he and Izutsu confront the written word and WORD respectively that they have in common. A comparison of the statements they made about people such as Confucius, Chuang-tzū, Ch'ü Yüan or the Apostle Paul, or the themes and subjects they dealt with such as the *Shih-ching* (the Chinese “Book of Songs,” 520 BCE), the *Manyōshū* and the history of the birth of *waka*, in other words, poetics, shows that the writings of the two men are in such accord with one another that it seems all the more surprising that their paths never crossed.

The written word stands at the crossroads between myth and history. With myth in the background, the written word took over from it and assumed the function of making myth put down roots in the world of history. Consequently, the earliest written words were the words of God; they came into being in order to give form to, and make present, the words that were with God. If we were able to continue the biblical text, we could perhaps say, “Then, there was the Written Word, and the Written Word was with God, and the Written Word was God.”<sup>40</sup>

The biblical text that Shizuka Shirakawa is referring to here is, of course, the passage at the beginning of the Gospel of John cited earlier. Someone might say that Shirakawa deals with the written word, Izutsu with spoken language — isn't what they are discussing different? But that this is a dispute about superficial differences would probably be refuted by Izutsu's own words in the quotation cited below. The meaning of “seeds,” “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness” and the other distinctive key terms that Izutsu uses in this passage is not the matter at hand. What I would like you to get a sense of, instead, is how the study of the written language, far from being subsumed into Izutsu's world of WORD, is regarded as the most important issue.

It is a view of language centered on the process of evoking the primal images of the “seeds” of meaning in the realm of the deep-level consciousness, which I have been treating in this essay under the name of “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness”; logically developed, this has the potential to give rise to an imposing philosophy of language. It would be a linguistic philosophy at the depth-level of consciousness completely different from the philosophies of language that we normally think of, i.e. ones that reason fabricates in our surface consciousness. There are several classic cases of it, such as Kūkai’s meditation on the syllable “a” in Shingon Buddhism, the letter mysticism of Islām, and likewise the letter mysticism of the Qabbālāh.<sup>41</sup>

It would be fair to call this one passage ‘Toshihiko Izutsu’s philosophical manifesto. The construction of “a linguistic philosophy at the depth-level of consciousness completely different from the philosophies of language . . . that reason fabricates in our surface consciousness” — that was Izutsu’s deepest desire.

But it is not just an agreement of their views on language that can be found in Izutsu and Shirakawa. Rather, it is the nature of their experience of God. Inasmuch as “the Written Word was God,” Shirakawa’s inevitable conclusion was that the discipline that deals with it is mysticism, i.e. a higher level of theology. The same was also true for Izutsu. What Toshihiko Izutsu discovered in linguistics, the study of WORD, was nothing less than a theology, a study of God for the present day.

With the discovery of the character *sai*, Shirakawa’s study of ideographs took a unique turn. This character could well be called the *kanji* equivalent for Shirakawa of what the syllable “a” had been for Kūkai, i.e. an ur-language. Not the same as the box-like ideograph 𠮩 for mouth, *sai* signifies a container in which to place the prayers and oaths that are offered as pledges to the gods. “The original meaning” of the ideographs that contain this character “was to denote someone who prays to God and is able to hear God’s voice.”<sup>42</sup> It was through the publication of *Kanji* in 1970 that the world learned of this discovery, which shook the study of ideographs to its very foundations, though, unbeknownst to the world, Shirakawa had published his findings much earlier. He developed his thesis in a 1955 essay, “Shakushi” (The history of interpretation). This

corresponds to the period that, unbeknownst to the world, Izutsu was writing *Language and Magic*.<sup>42</sup>

Surprised that Weisgerber and Sapir-Whorf had elaborated highly similar hypotheses at roughly the same time despite there being no direct contact between them, Izutsu responded strongly to the idea that concepts which have so much in common with one another arise synchronically. The same thing could be said to be true about himself and Shizuka Shirakawa. There is little likelihood that Shirakawa read *Language and Magic*. But if he had ever gotten hold of this book, he would probably have been very surprised that a Japanese contemporary of his was discussing the mysteries of language in English.

### The Semantics of *Waka*

Just before he retired from Keio University, Yasaburō Ikeda held a three-day colloquy with cultural anthropologist Ken'ichi Tanigawa (1921– ), which would later result in a collection of conversations about ethnologists Kunio Yanagita and Shinobu Orikuchi.<sup>43</sup> For Ikeda, this seems to have been a special book in the sense that he did not limit himself to looking back on his scholarly career but reflected on his life in general. While proofreading it, he had “the feeling that I was sitting across from professors Yanagita and Orikuchi,” he said. Spontaneously recalling Keio classmates such as historian Saburō Ienaga (1913–2002) and Toshihiko Izutsu, he writes that now “I think I should deepen my ideas, particularly along the lines that Izutsu’s essay suggests.”<sup>44</sup>

It is not clear to which of Izutsu’s essays he is referring, but at the time Ikeda was writing *Tegami no tanoshimi* (1981; The pleasures of letters), the work in which this article appears, “Ishiki to honshitsu” was being serialized in the magazine *Shisō*. Ikeda may have been referring to the place in “Ishiki to honshitsu” where Izutsu alludes to the *waka* of the *Kokinshū* and *Shinkokinshū*. There is a passage in the colloquy with Tanigawa in which Ikeda mentions Izutsu.

There was a fellow at Keio named Toshihiko Izutsu — he’s now a world-renowned expert on Islamic studies — who suggested to me that we work together and try applying colors to poems in the *Manyōshū* — color it

crimson when a poem reads *akanesasu*, for example. . . . It's a method used in literary studies abroad, I understand. When a color appears in a novel, try applying that color to it. That would make the writer's color sense, his likes and dislikes, stand out, he said. We never actually got around to doing this because he went abroad soon afterwards, and it's been something of a blind spot ever since.<sup>45</sup>

In 1983, two years after these words were written, Ikeda died, and the research project was never undertaken. The aim of applying colors to *waka* was probably not to understand the color sense of ancient Japanese or appreciate their brilliant culture and natural environment. Might it not be the case, rather, that by applying color to something colorless it would have caused, as Shizuka Shirakawa says, “the substance itself that the word means” to rise to the surface?

“A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu” is a line from Arthur Rimbaud's famous poem “Voyelles.” As Baudelaire says in “Correspondances,” poets sense colors in words and in smells. Normally the five senses operate independently, each holding fast to its own domain—color for the eyes, smell for the nose, sound for the ears. But sometimes, for some people, several of the senses are largely interchangeable. The five senses interpenetrate each other and work together so that a person perceives colors in words or smells in sounds, for example. This phenomenon is called synesthesia. Mallarmé's *la solitude bleue* expresses this synesthetic world.

Palmes! et quand elle a montré eette relique  
A ce père essayant un sourire ennemi,  
La solitude bleue et stèrile a frémi.

(O you palms! and when it showed that relie  
to this father attempting an unfriendly smile,  
the blue and sterile solitude shivered all the while.)<sup>46</sup>

Color is not normally associated with “solitude.” Another example in the next poem is “blue incense”—*l'encens bleu* in the original. Normally we do not see colors in smells.

Et tu fis la blancheur sanglotante des lys  
 Qui roulant sur des mers de soupirs qu'elle effleure  
 A travers l'encens bleu des horizons pâlis  
 Monte rêveusement vers la lune qui pleure!

(You made the sobbing white of lilies too,  
 tumbling lightly across a sea of sighs on  
 their dreamy way to weeping moonlight through  
 the azure incense of the pale horizon!)<sup>47</sup>

Similar examples are also found in Japanese *waka* and in Bashō. Not everyone perceives things the way Rimbaud and Baudelaire did, and, although Liszt is said to have seen colors in sounds, that does not mean all composers have the same experience. In our everyday life, however, we use terms like “sweet talk” for flattery or “feeling blue” when we are depressed. There are also idioms such as warm colors, hot colors, cold colors or cool colors. And we call an inexperienced person “green.” Synesthesia is deeply rooted in our lives.

In all ages and places, synesthesia has existed almost as a matter of course in a variety of cultural phenomena throughout history. In Japan, in the Asuka (538–645) and Hakuho (645–710) periods, different colored headgear designated each of the twelve court ranks. Colors are also associated with the five elements of Yin and Yang, the two cosmic principles of ancient China. Many religions have sacred colors. In national flags, colors represent virtues, ethical principles and traditions. The reason the color for “freedom” differs from one national flag to another, for example, is that, just as there are linguistic differences between Japanese and English, the “language” of color is also different. The “language of flowers” is another phenomenon that may have arisen out of a similar background. Whorf made an extremely interesting comment about synesthesia. “Probably in the first instance metaphor arises from synesthesia and not the reverse.”<sup>48</sup> The origins of synesthesia are hidden deep in the phenomenal world. Might it not be the case, Whorf is saying, that the reason synesthetic language exists is not because it derives from the development of metaphorical expressions but because phenomena themselves were originally synesthetic?

A discussion of synesthetes as extraordinary individuals is far from the concern of this chapter. It is virtually axiomatic that truth is rare in strange phenomena whereas mysteries manifest themselves in ordinary events. The topic that deserves to be discussed, rather, lies in the fact that we live our everyday lives synesthetically without being aware of it, and that WORD appears and is cognized and expressed through multiple senses. When we encounter a phenomenon that is assumed to be invisible, even though we cannot perceive it with the naked eye, we feel as though we have “seen” it. Most people have had a similar experience, I suspect. Even in the case of the simple act of seeing, people engage in activities everyday that go beyond the normal use of eyesight. The person who was the earliest to notice synesthesia in classical Japanese literature and to write about it in “*Miyu*’ no sekai” (The world of *miyu*) was Akihiro Satake (1927–2008).<sup>49</sup> Although Satake had audited a seminar on general semantics that Izutsu gave at Kyoto University in 1955, it was not until 1982 when Izutsu gave the course on reading the *Kōran* for the Iwanami Citizens’ Seminars series that the two became acquainted. At the time, Izutsu was not yet aware of Satake’s research field, but when he found out, their relation rapidly deepened. When Satake’s *Minwa no shisō* (Intellectual aspects of folktales) came out in paperback in 1990, Izutsu contributed an essay to it.<sup>50</sup> With the exception of his own works, there is no other instance of Izutsu writing a commentary for a paperback book. A single reading shows that he had high expectations of, and great faith in, the younger semanticist.

The Greeks called true reality Ideas, but Ideas were, first of all, visible things, “forms” as objects of intuition. Behind the ancient Japanese word *miyu* as well, the ancients’ thought process, which grasped existence through the sense of sight, is seen to have been strongly at work.<sup>51</sup>

*Miyu*—seeing—was not just a functional activity of the physical eye, Satake insists; it was a joint operation of all the senses. Satake frequently discusses synesthesia in his other works as well.

Just as Satake dealt with the world of *miyu* in the *Manyōshū*, Izutsu discussed what lay beyond the phenomenal world by way of the word *nagame* in the *Shinkokinshū*. “I love the *Shinkokin*,” Izutsu said in his colloquy with Ryōtarō Shiba. “I even once thought I might devote myself

to a semantic study of the structure of thought in it and the *Kokin*.”<sup>52</sup> The period when he seriously considered making a semantic study of *waka* appears to have been between the time of the “Introduction to Linguistics” lectures and the writing of *Language and Magic*. Given Ikeda’s comment earlier that Izutsu “went abroad soon afterwards,” it may have been the same period that the two of them were looking for a joint research topic. Izutsu went abroad for the first time in 1959.

As he informs us through his use of the terms “structure of thought” and “philosophical,” what Toshihiko Izutsu calls semantics is not confined to the realm of linguistics. In linguistics, it is normal to proceed from a thing to the word that names that thing and then to the meaning of the word. But Toshihiko Izutsu’s semantics starts from the source; in other words, it develops from WORD → meaning → word → phenomenon. WORD articulates itself into meaning; meaning calls forth words; and words as *energeia* evoke a phenomenon as *ergon*. Rather than being a search for meaning in words, for Izutsu, the philosophy of language was the activity of finding a way to return to Being through meaning. When Japanese encounter a *Manyō* poem, our hearts are moved even before we intellectually understand what it means. That is because a consciousness other than our surface consciousness perceives in it the breath of “Being” blowing from its primordial precincts.

It is regrettable Izutsu never completed a semantic study of *waka* in book form, and yet there are statements in *Ishiki to honshitsu* that give us an inkling of what he might have said. As Satake points out, the word *miyu* in the *Manyō* period had signified an Idea-like contemplation, but by the time of the *Kokinshū* this connotation had completely disappeared. This was not simply a matter of a word being in or out of fashion. It suggests that a major revolution had occurred in the encounter with and approach to “Being,” to borrow Izutsu’s term, a change that rocked the Japanese worldview to its very foundations.

In the *Kokin* period, according to Shinobu Orikuchi, the word *nagame* meant “pensiveness, with a slight sexual connotation linked to sexual abstinence” during the long rainy period (*nagaame*) in the spring.<sup>53</sup> By the time of the *Shinkokinshū* in the early thirteenth century, however, the situation had changed dramatically. Poets appeared who attempted to direct their gaze (*nagame*) beyond the phenomenal

world, and *nagame* ceased to be confined to a term denoting a love affair and came to acquire an ontological “meaning.” When *nagame* “had evolved completely within an ambience that privileged the pursuit of a *Shinkokin*-like *yūgen* [subtlety and profundity],” Izutsu writes, it signified “a conscious, subjective attitude that attempts to render the ‘essential’ specificity of things indistinct and to perceive in the resulting vast, atmospheric space the depths of Being, which is revealed there in its true form.”<sup>54</sup> The act of gazing (*nagameru*) instantly becomes a response to Being, “a unique kind of ontological experience, a unique kind of relationship of consciousness to the world.”<sup>55</sup> What is called “essence” here is the function by which a phenomenon is determined to be what it is. If there is a moon, for example, there is an underlying quality by which the moon exists *qua* moon. *Nagame*, Izutsu says, is the activity that breaks through this. To gaze at the moon is not simply a matter of placing the moon in the visible world; with the moon as our entry point, we look beyond the phenomenal world and “see” the dimension in which the moon reveals itself.

It was Shizuka Shirakawa who dealt with the function of seeing in *waka* with a particular purpose in mind that might even be called existential. That both Izutsu and Shirakawa recognized a basic Japanese attitude in *nagame* and *miyu*, the act of seeing in the *Shinkokin* and the *Manyō* respectively, is extremely interesting. Rather than merely being independent scholarly conclusions, their concurrence in this regard may well derive from a congruence in their existential experiences. When Toshihiko Izutsu deals with a fundamental issue, an existential experience has always preceded. Or rather, it is characteristic of him to regard only such an experience as a subject that truly deserves his investigation. It is fair to see the statement that “a theory of Ideas must necessarily be preceded by the experience of Ideas” in his discussion of Plato in *Shinpi tetsugaku* as an expression of his own personal article of faith.<sup>56</sup>

The following passage is from Shirakawa’s *Shoki Manyō-ron* (On the early *Manyō*).

The period of the early *Manyō* was one in which the ancient view of nature still dominated; the popular consciousness was in a participatory relationship with nature. It was thought that, through their

activities and their attitudes toward nature, people could negotiate with nature and make it function spiritually. . . . The most direct method of bargaining with nature was through “seeing” it. The act of seeing, found in many of the early *Manyō* poems, is an activity that has just this sort of meaning.<sup>57</sup>

“The incantatory nature of ‘seeing’ is further strengthened by the expression *miredo akanu* [never tire of seeing],” Shirakawa writes. The act of seeing was the earliest activity in which people interacted “spiritually” with the world. What Izutsu and Shirakawa both found in *waka*, i.e. in the origins of Japanese poetry, is not a high point of artistic expression but a manifestation of Japanese spirituality.<sup>58</sup>

The study of ideographs is the field that deals with *what* Shirakawa read into the written word, but my concern is, rather, with *why* he was able to read them in this way. The same is true in the case of Izutsu. Although it is important to discuss how he read something, the main theme of this book is why he encountered certain phenomena and was able to “read” them. In other words, it is not a matter of how Izutsu interpreted *nagame*; it is a matter of why he was able to “read” its true meaning. Shirakawa began by looking at a character. He lingered in front of the written word and did not stop until something in it began to move. What he did next was to copy it out carefully and deliberately. As he was doing so, Shirakawa believed that the written word began to tell him about itself. Didn’t Izutsu approach a text in much the same way? I can’t help seeing the impact of Izutsu’s father here. As was mentioned earlier, I believe that the most fundamental influence Izutsu received from his father was that of “reading.” In their attitude that scholarship is not a matter of acquiring knowledge, but of preparing for the manifestation of wisdom, Toshihiko Izutsu and Shizuka Shirakawa reveal a high degree of unanimity.

Three essays written by Izutsu’s wife, Toyoko, “Gengo firudo toshite no waka” (*Waka* as linguistic field), “Ishiki firudo toshite no waka” (*Waka* as cognitive field) and “Shizen mandara” (The mandala of nature), provide the grounds that allow us to infer how her husband’s work on a linguistic-philosophical semantics of Japanese classical literature might have evolved.<sup>59</sup> A single reading shows that there was a

profound exchange of ideas between the two of them about “philosophical semantics.” That Toyoko was her husband’s best reader is also clear from her understanding of technical terms and the closeness of their literary styles. The following passage is from “Shizen mandara,” an essay in the Iwanami series on Oriental thought, for which Izutsu served as general editor.

It is conceivable that the poetics of Yamato *kotoba*—native Japanese words—and *waka* themselves are nothing less than the intellectual activity of attempting in a creative and original manner to further develop within its own indigenous semantic horizon the foreign thought systems that were being absorbed not in simple but in already complex forms [while retaining] a structural awareness of the individuality and uniqueness of Yamato *kotoba*’s own semantic organization.<sup>60</sup>

By “the foreign thought systems that were being absorbed not in simple but in already complex forms,” Toyoko seems to mean not just such imported ideologies as Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism but to include Neoplatonism and the Christian sect of Nestorianism, which may perhaps have entered Japan via China at the beginning of the ninth century around the same time that Kūkai introduced Tantric Buddhism. Toshihiko believed that Kūkai may have come in contact with Nestorianism and Neoplatonism in Ch’ang-an, which was a cultural crossroads at the time. Toyoko says that *waka* were a declaration of spiritual independence from foreign influences such as these; they also proclaim the dawn of a new way of thinking that was not confined to beauty and emotion or the events of the world of religious ecstasy.

As one more clue for inferring what Izutsu’s poetics of *waka* might have been, I would like to mention Keijirō Kazamaki (1902–1960). Izutsu thought highly of Kazamaki’s accomplishments. Unlike the *Manyōshū* neither the *Kokinshū* nor the *waka* anthologies that followed it had been given their proper place in the critical literature since the time of the poet and literary critic, Shiki Masaoka (1867–1902). Keijirō Kazamaki’s *Chūsei no bungaku dentō* (The literary tradition in the Middle Ages) dealt with the decisive change in Japanese poetry that can be seen in the *waka* of the *Kokinshū* and subsequent anthologies; it

also revived the concept of *yūgen* that runs through the Middle Ages.<sup>61</sup> The first edition was published in 1940, and reprinted after the war in 1948. Izutsu probably read it around the time that he was coming to grips with the *Kokinshū* and *Shinkokinshū*. “Through his innovative approach to the ‘Middle Ages,’ a decisively important period for Japanese literary history, he opened up new horizons for an intellectual understanding not just of literature but, more broadly, of Japanese spiritual history,” was the critique of *Chūsei no bungaku dentō* that Toshihiko Izutsu wrote when he was seventy-three years old.<sup>62</sup> That book’s influence had lasted for more than half his lifetime.

Up until a certain point, Kazamaki composed *waka*. But “now, in addition to my desire to try to write one good poem, I feel a burgeoning desire to clearly understand the history of Japanese culture,” he said, and thereafter devoted himself to scholarship.<sup>63</sup> Kazamaki believed that *waka* was a medium by which the reality of the soul expressed itself directly through words, unconstrained by the world of ethics, virtue or religion. Discussing the revival of *yūgen* in the *Senzaishū* (Collection of a thousand years, ca. 1188), he wrote, “Although *waka* was reanimated in this way, it was, at the same time, the self-conscious establishment of a tradition.” For Kazamaki, tradition is something that, “so as not to be lost, is implanted in hearts that are compelled to love it anew.”<sup>64</sup> Tradition is a life form that chooses those who will carry it on. What we ought to care about, he believed, is not found in the expression of individuality but in the manifestation of truth. Perhaps Izutsu, who was writing *Shinpi tetsugaku* while reading about the mysteries of tradition in Kazamaki’s work, may have inwardly added, “and for philosophy as well.”

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# Translator of the Heavenly World

### The Translation of the Kōran

A TRANSLATION OF the Kōran is a contradiction in terms. The only Kōran is the one in Arabic; a translation is no longer the holy book. Izutsu was, of course, well aware of this. “The Kōran in the original Arabic is *holy scripture*,” Izutsu writes. “The Kōran translated into another language is no longer holy scripture; it is a secular work. It is merely an extremely rudimentary commentary on the original text.”<sup>1</sup> And yet he translated it. It was God who chose Arabic. That fact cannot be changed to suit the convenience of human beings.

The Kōran is not a book written by Muḥammad; originally, it was not “written” at all. It was orally delivered by God, who spoke through Muḥammad. The Prophet was merely the channel through which God appeared in the world we live in. The words of God, spoken over the course of more than twenty years, were memorized by Muḥammad and written down from time to time during his lifetime on palm leaves or parchment or animal bones. Because the compilation of the Kōran was completed during the reign of the third caliph, ‘Uthmān, it is called the Uthmanic recension. The entire work is divided into 114 chapters or *sūrahs*, the oldest of which appear in the latter half, the more recent in the first half; it was compiled in such a way that, for the most part, it goes backward in time. First, God spoke; he approved the

efforts of the man who recorded the divine words; and the holy book, the Kōran, was born. As was noted in the Preface, in recent years, the transliteration Qur'ān is usually used to more closely approximate the Arabic pronunciation, but in this chapter, as in the rest of this book, we will follow Izutsu and use the transliteration Kōran.

Toshihiko Izutsu translated the Kōran twice. In an interview toward the end of his life, he said that he had begun the first translation in 1951 after the publication of *Roshia bungaku* (Russian literature) and completed it in 1958.<sup>2</sup> This corresponds to the period from the beginning of the later lectures on “Introduction to Linguistics” through *Language and Magic* (1956) to the writing of *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Kōran: A Study in Semantics* (1959). The new translation was begun in November 1961 and completed in December 1963. The translator was probably aware that not many readers were likely to compare the two versions. And yet the Afterword to the new translation conveys the translator’s strong hope that, if possible, the reader will not limit him/herself to looking at the corrections and additions. “This revised translation is not just a partial revision; the work has been completely rethought and retranslated.”<sup>3</sup> As the translator himself says, rather than a revised translation, it deserves to be called a new translation. Between the two translations, Izutsu had had, for the first time, the experience of studying abroad. The Rockefeller Foundation awarded him a fellowship on the basis of *Language and Magic*, and, over a two-year period, he visited Egypt and other Arab countries, as well as Germany, France, Canada and the United States. The conversations he had with Islamic scholars in Cairo would prove a decisive turning point for him when it came to embarking on a new translation. Also, when he visited Germany, he met Leo Weisgerber and presented his research findings in his presence.

To translate such an enormous holy book as the Kōran twice in such a short period of time required extremely strong motivation. In addition to “the literary style, which is the most important problem,” Izutsu writes, “the interpretation of many of the verses has also been revised.”<sup>4</sup> The underlying issue here is an understanding of the linguistic levels of the Kōran. *Kōran o yomu* (Reading the Kōran) is the record of a reading of the Kōran that took place over ten sessions at the Iwanami

Citizens' Seminars in early 1982.<sup>5</sup> An introduction to the *Kōran*, this book also serves as an introduction to Tōshihiko Izutsu's thought, one which deals with the basic structure of his philosophy. And if the *Kōran* is regarded as poetic literature of the highest order, Izutsu explains and elucidates how it came to be. This book could not help but pique the interest of literary figures. We have already seen that it moved Shūsaku Endō. Some twenty years ago, when I was a student at Keio, the poet Gōzō Yoshimasu (1939– ) lectured on poetics at the Mantarō Kubota Memorial Lecture there using this work as his text. I have forgotten what the lecture was about, but I vividly recall with what passion Yoshimasu spoke of his surprise and delight at having discovered this book.

In this work Izutsu alludes to three “expressive levels,” i.e. levels of language, in the *Kōran*. The topology he is speaking of is as follows:

1. the realistic level,
2. the imaginal level,
3. the narrative or legendary level.<sup>6</sup>

Although it may not seem particularly provocative to speak of “levels of expression,” it is not merely a rhetorical matter: These levels signify the ontological dimensions of the world that the *Kōran* reveals. In the *Kōran*, the physical, metaphysical and legendary levels are inter-mixed. If the WORD of God uttered in the metaphysical world is not grasped on the realistic level, it will be impossible to come close to the true meaning concealed in the *Kōran*. The dimension in which we live on an everyday basis is the realistic level. The imaginal level is the place where, for example, transcendental reality appears and transforms itself into myth. It is the dimension in which, to use Henry Corbin's term, the *imagination créatrice* arises. It is also the consciousness level of primal, depth-consciousness images and the shamanic dimension, the ontological world of the shaman.

The narrative or legendary level Izutsu calls the “meta-historical level.” Located between the two other levels cited above, it is also the dimension of meta-history, Izutsu writes. Incidents occur in history, but they are also recorded in a dimension that transcends history where they occur continuously and timelessly as current events. For example,

the Shī'ite imām in Islām, Kūkai in the Shingon sect, and the founder of Tenri-kyō, Miki Nakayama, all continue to live on even after their physical deaths. This is a reality for their believers, it is not a metaphorical expression; it is nothing less than a truth of faith that exists between the realistic world and the imaginal world. If the imaginal level is a shamanic world, by contrast, Izutsu says, the legendary dimension is a priestly world, a level presided over by priests. Moreover, what forms the cultural background for this dimension, he says, is a tradition that descends from Mesopotamia, where human beings established permanent settlements at oases, practiced agriculture and engaged in a temple-centered religious life. Under "Mesopotamia" he includes the cultures of Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, Assyria and even Egypt. Into the Kōran, Toshihiko Izutsu observes, have entered traditions other than the spirituality of the desert-dwelling Bedouin nomads or the Abrahamic religions of Judaism and Christianity.

The three levels are tightly interwoven. Something that has happened in the imaginal or transcendental world becomes a phenomenon and occurs in the realistic world. The converse sometimes may also occur. What can mediate in that case is prayer. In order for us human beings to catch a glimpse of the reality of the imaginal world, we must pass through the meta-historical dimension. But there we come under pressure to deconstruct our realistic-world concepts.

The first edition of *Ethical Terms in the Koran* (1959) was published after the completion of the early translation. As can be seen from the fact that it was revised in 1966 after the new translation was completed, this work is directly connected to the translations of the Kōran.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it is in this work that Izutsu reveals the passion for scholarship that he had kept hidden deep within the translations. Izutsu develops the semantics of the linguistic inner structure of the Arabic word *kufr*, which signifies "unbelief," turning one's back on faith. *Kufr* has the meaning of "ingratitude" and also connotes the condition of turning one's back on grace. Expressions that derive from this term occur frequently in the Kōran, and one obvious example is found in the first verse of Chapter 98, "The Divine Omen" (al-Bayyinah: The Clear Proof). The old translation reads, "Both the accursed people of the Book [Jews and Christians] and the band of idol-worshippers."<sup>8</sup> In the

new translation it has been changed to, “Both the people of the Book [Jews and Christians] who have turned their backs on the faith and the polytheists.”<sup>9</sup> Deeply ingrained in the expression “turned their backs on the faith” or “unbelieving,” which is used instead of “accursed,” is his awareness that faith is something that is bestowed, i.e. it is grace. It includes a profession of his belief that the creation of faith is a work of God which human beings are incapable of achieving on their own. They may think they can decide for themselves whether or not to believe in God, but it is not a choice they are able to make. It is God who allows them to choose. This does not mean that the term “accursed” disappears from the new translation. But simply using that word alone, Izutsu believed, does not convey the truth that, in the beginning, God had unstintingly bestowed faith on all people.

Words have meaning. No one denies that. But what if we were to say that words have a “depth of meaning” that exists on a different level from their superficial lexical connotation? The quest for a reading at the “depth of meaning” was yet another existential reason that spurred Izutsu on to make a new translation. Recall the words cited earlier with which he expressed his inner feelings at this time. “I was dissatisfied with how casually [linguistics . . .] treated the phenomenon of ‘meaning’ as a self-evident, commonsense fact.”<sup>10</sup> What he was attempting in his translations of the Kōran was what can fairly be called an ambitious attempt to put his philosophical semantics into practice.

No consideration of the changes in the Kōran translations can overlook *Mahometto* (Muḥammad).<sup>11</sup> Though a small work, it cites several verses from the Kōran. Seen below is one of these from Chapter 112, “Purification.” Let us compare it with the same verse in the old and new translations. *Mahometto* was written in 1952, around the time that Izutsu was actively engaged in translating the Kōran. He retranslated this chapter, which occurs in the latter half of the Kōran, five years later.

説け、アッラーは唯一神  
 永遠の神  
 子もなく父もなく  
 また双ぶべきもの一つだになし。

Preach: Allah is the One and Only God,  
 The God of eternity, ..  
 Not son, not father  
 And without any peer, One alone.

At this time, he read the Kōran, particularly the revelations of the early period, as poetry. Open *Mahometto* at random and you will readily encounter lengthy verses that have been translated as literary language.

Now let us turn to this same verse in the first translation of the Kōran. The changes are small, but the effect is completely different. No longer is the Kōran a euphonious hymn. It becomes a divine oracle of overwhelming power that has peremptorily intervened in this world.

告げよ、「これぞ、アッラー、唯一なる神、  
 永劫不滅のアッラーぞ  
 子もなく親もなく、  
 ならぶ者なき御神ぞ。」

Tell them, “He is Allah, the One and Only God,  
 Allah, the eternal, the indestructible,  
 Not child, not parent,  
 Know he is God without peer.”<sup>13</sup>

The title of the chapter, which had previously been translated as “Purification,” was also changed to “By Faith Alone.” In other translations, it is translated as “Sincerity,” which is closer to the original, *Al-Ikhlās*. Though Izutsu was aware of this, he intentionally translated it “By Faith Alone.” Implicit in this reading, which goes beyond mere sincerity, is Izutsu’s semantic interpretation that the Transcendent who bestows faith and the believer who submissively receives it coexist.

The unique style of “Know he is God without peer,” reminiscent of the words of a shaman, runs through Izutsu’s translation of the Kōran. Here he is trying to revive for today’s world the descent of the divine word, i.e. revelation. In the pre-Islamic period called the *jāhilīyah*, a shaman known as a *kāhin* held absolute sway as the intermediary who connected this world with the other world. Izutsu explains *kāhin* with

the example of the prophet Amos in the Old Testament: “Suddenly, he was possessed by some invisible spiritual power, lost consciousness and spoke not his own words but the words of ‘someone else.’”<sup>14</sup> The words of a *kāhin* are not expressed in ordinary language; they have a special form of utterance known as *saj*. These are words that have made their descent from an invisible world, an intangible dimension. “Characterized by the rhythmical repetition of the same or similar sounds,” Izutsu writes, this rhymed prose has an uncanny resonance like the sound of a drum, by which the listener “is drawn into an excited state of self-intoxication.”<sup>15</sup> *Saj* is present everywhere in the Kōran. Izutsu tries to recreate these *saj* words as divine WORDs being uttered now. He tries to free them from the historical fact that they came down to the Muḥammad more than 1400 years ago and release them once again into the present day.

In the new translation, the change occurs not in the literary style, but in one important verse.

告げよ、「これぞ、アッラー、唯一なる神、  
もろ人の依りまつるアッラーぞ。  
子もなく親もなく、  
ならぶ者なき御神ぞ。」

Tell them, “He is Allah, the One and Only God,  
Allah, on whom all people depend.  
Not child, not parent,  
Know he is God without peer.”<sup>16</sup>

In the second line, “the eternal, the indestructible” has been changed to “on whom all people depend.” The word in the original is *Allahus-samad*. Shūmei Ōkawa translated it with the Buddhist term *shoeshu* (所依者) and added the gloss “means someone on whom all are dependent.” Izutsu was not following Ōkawa, however. Ōkawa’s translation came out in 1950; thus, it already existed at the time Izutsu was making his first translation.

During his studies in the Islamic world, Izutsu experienced Islām in everyday life and encountered the living Kōran. The Kōran is a work

that is meant not to be read but to be recited. It is not the testimony of a human being but the revealed WORD of God. Izutsu experienced this for himself on his travels. He also came in direct contact with a tradition on which many wise men in the past had literally staked their lives on their interpretation of a single word in the holy book.

Given the fact that each word, each phrase, of the Kōran is the word of Allah himself, it was regarded as the sacred duty of the believer to interpret its *one and only* correct meaning and thereby to fathom what God's intention might be. Scholars staked their lives on the interpretation of a single word, a single phrase, because one could easily lose one's life depending on how one interpreted one word or one phrase.<sup>17</sup>

The interpretation of the term *Allahus-samad*, too, has the weightiness implied in the preceding words. Whereas "the eternal, the indestructible" signifies the everlasting, unchanging reality of the One, the phrase "on whom all people depend," by contrast, richly expresses the persona of God, who is both the source of existence and savior.

Several translations of the Kōran into Japanese have appeared since Izutsu's, but none of them is as strongly aware of its *saj'* rhythm as his is. To see how well Izutsu's Japanese translation succeeds in rendering *saj'*, let us compare it to a *saj'*-like passage that appears in Japanese. The event occurred some 170 years ago in the village of Shoyashiki, Yamabe County, Yamato Province (now Mishima, Tenri City).

万代の世界一列見はらせど 旨の分かりた者はない  
 そのはずや 説いて聞かしたことハない 知らねが無理でハないわいな  
 この度は神が表へ現れて 何か委細を説き聞かす  
 この所 大和の地場の神がたと 言うていれども元知らぬ  
 この元を詳しく聞いたことならば 如何な者でも恋しなる  
 聞きたくバ 尋ね来るなら言うて聞かす 万委細のもとなるを

Looking all over the world and through all ages, I find no one who understands My heart.

So should it be, for I have never taught it before. It is natural that you know nothing.

This time, I, God, revealing Myself to the fore, Teach you all the truth in detail.

You are calling this place the Jiba, the home of God, in Yamato; But you do not know its origin.

If you are told of this origin in full, Great yearning will come over you, whoever you may be.

If you wish to hear and will come to Me, I will teach you the truth that this place is the origin of any and everything.<sup>15</sup>

These words, which come at the beginning of the *Mikagura-uta* (Songs for the service), one of the sacred scriptures of Tenri-kyō, are the WORDS of God, who appeared to Miki Nakayama in the early years. I alluded before to the structural similarities between Tenri-kyō and Islām; of these, the high degree of correspondence found in the revelation of their sacred texts is astounding.

Speaking of Tenri-kyō, the *Ofudesaki* (1900; *The Tip of the Divine Writing Brush*, 1971), written by its founder, Miki Nakayama, is well known, but the *Mikagura-uta*, the divine WORDS spoken at its inception, are chronologically even earlier. In Tenri-kyō, too, the WORDS of God appeared not as written words, *écriture*, but as *saj*, spoken WORDS that connect this world with the other world. When one reads *Mikagura-uta*, their rhythm recalls Izutsu's translation of the Kōran. Izutsu has said, however, that, while he was translating the Kōran, he did not refer to the sacred scriptures of Tenri-kyō. He had not read them at that time, a fact that Yoshitsugu Sawai verified with Izutsu himself. It was only after Izutsu's return from Iran that he showed an interest in Tenri-kyō.

The translation of the Kōran below is by Yoshinori Moroi. We have already seen that he was a remarkable scholar of religious philosophy, a commentator on Islām and a believer in Tenri-kyō. This is his translation of Chapter 81, verses 15–23.

And so, truly, I here swear by the waning star, by the falling star, by the hidden star, or, again, by the night that is passing into darkness

and by the dawn at its first glimmerings. These truly and accurately are the words of the noble messenger; these are the words of one who possesses power at the side of the stern and majestic Lord of the Throne; these are the words of someone who ought to be obeyed and who ought to be trusted. And so your companion was not possessed. Truly and assuredly he saw him on the clear horizon.<sup>19</sup>

The phrase “your companion was not possessed” clearly states the difference between the Prophet Muḥammad and a shamanistic *kāhin*. It is God who speaks through Muḥammad, whereas the one who speaks through the mouth of a *kāhin* is not necessarily the Transcendent. Yoshinori Moroi made a rigorous distinction in his scholarship based on this difference. Moroi, who was a believer in Tenri-kyō, had no need to reaffirm that Miki Nakayama could not possibly have been a mere shaman.

Here is Izutsu’s translation of the same passage.

Swear: By the setting stars,  
 By the running stars returning back to their roost,  
 By the evening dusk rapidly closing in,  
 By the light of the brightening dawn,  
 Truly, these are the words of the noble apostle.  
 [The words] of the apostle, brave and powerful, who occupied a seat  
 in the presence of the Lord of the Throne [Allah] and whom all  
 humankind ought to follow and to trust.

Your companion [i.e. Muḥammad] is by no means possessed . . . .  
 There is no doubt that he distinctly saw him beyond the horizon.<sup>20</sup>

Compared to other translations, Yoshinori Moroi’s translation seems philologically more accurate. His is a dignified and beautiful translation. But from Izutsu’s translation we can clearly tell that he felt the *saj* rhythmically with his whole body. More than merely transferring words into the mother tongue, translation for Izutsu was nothing less than an attempt to evoke an a-temporal reality and make it appear in the present time through the experience of reading.

## Structure and Structuralism

In 1962, around the time that the new translation of the Kōran was well under way, efforts were being made to have Kyoto University formally offer a position to Toshihiko Izutsu. The person behind the move was linguist Hisanosuke Izui (1905–1983). The author of a book on Humboldt,<sup>21</sup> Izui may have seen Izutsu as a promising colleague who in *Language and Magic* came close to the Humboldtian school. The following are Izui's words: "In explaining botanical morphology, Goethe said that, beneath the diversity of forms, it was possible to conceive of the existence of an ur-plant as a single prototype. In regard to language as well, a single *Urpflanze* in this sense is not inconceivable. It could even be said that we hold within ourselves the key to understanding all languages."<sup>22</sup> What Izui is pointing to is the possibility of a meta-language. He, too, was someone who saw at the root of language the WORD that transcends words.

We saw earlier that Izutsu gave a seminar on semantics at Kyoto University in 1955. Izutsu himself seems to have seriously considered going to Kyoto, but Keio University was vehemently opposed. It all came to naught when Nobuhiro Matsumoto (1897–1981), not Izutsu himself, went to Kyoto and formally turned the offer down. Matsumoto had been one of the earliest to accurately perceive Izutsu's exceptional abilities. Without his support, Toshihiko Izutsu's scholarly career might well have been quite different. Matsumoto's name almost invariably appears in the acknowledgments to Izutsu's early English-language works. Izutsu, who had said that, when he entered Keio University, there were hardly any lectures worth attending except those of Junzaburō Nishiwaki, Shinobu Orikuchi and Chinese literature specialist Shintarō Okuno (1899–1968), did, however, take Matsumoto's course in Oriental studies.

Matsumoto went to France, earned a doctorate at the University of Paris and returned to Japan in 1928 at the age of 31. Having studied with Kunio Yanagita and Shinobu Orikuchi, he broadened the purview of Japanese folklore to include the Orient and attempted to construct his own Oriental studies that incorporated the study of mythology. After the Kyoto incident, at Matsumoto's recommendation, Keio University restructured its virtually nonfunctioning Institute of Philological

Studies and inaugurated the Keio University Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, installed Izutsu as the professor in charge, freed him from various university responsibilities and provided an environment in which he could concentrate on research. The first director of the Institute was Nobuhiro Matsumoto. It was a small establishment, consisting only of two full-time professors, Izutsu and Naoshirō Tsuji (1899–1979), a specialist in ancient Indian philosophy. Matsumoto also understood and encouraged Izutsu's overseas activities. In the year the Institute was established, Izutsu accepted an appointment at McGill University as a visiting professor. The administration thought it would let him go to Canada for a while to make up for not allowing him to go to Kyoto. But Izutsu would never teach at Keio University again.

Recalling this time, Izutsu wrote, “In the event, I was spurred on by some irresistible existential impulse.”<sup>23</sup> He had received his doctorate surprisingly late, in 1959, at the time he went abroad to study on a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship. He did not have a doctoral dissertation in the conventional sense. Presumably because not having a doctorate might cause Izutsu some inconvenience in his scholarly life abroad, Matsumoto submitted his translation of the Kōran and *Language and Magic* in lieu of a dissertation. McGill University in those days was a mecca for Islamic studies. It was there that Izutsu became acquainted with the Iranian Mehdi Mohaghegh. Although Izutsu was sixteen years older, he had great respect for his younger colleague. In an interview some years later, Izutsu said that, as a result of his chance meeting with Mohaghegh, his life entered a new stage. The two men undertook a joint study of Sabzawārī, the true heir to the Islamic mystic philosophy of Ibn ‘Arabī and Mullā Ṣadrā. “It attempted to analyze in structuralist and historical terms the relation between *essentia* and *existentia*, which is a central theme in Sabzawārī's metaphysical thought, and then to elucidate its contemporary significance in relation to existentialism in particular,” Izutsu wrote.<sup>24</sup> That work was “The Fundamental Structure of Sabzawārī's Metaphysics” in *The Concept and Reality of Existence*.<sup>25</sup>

Sabzawārī, who was born in nineteenth-century Persia, was an Islamic mystic philosopher. He might perhaps be better called a theosophist. Izutsu describes “Sabzawārī's metaphysics” as Ḥikmat

philosophy, from *ḥikmat*, which in Islām refers to divine wisdom, i.e. *theo-sophia* or theosophy. Izutsu's use of the special technical terms theosophy, *theosophia* or *ḥikmat* philosophy rather than mysticism or mystical thought contains the implication that the concepts transmitted by Sabzawārī are not speculative philosophy in the modern sense but rather an activity backed up by his existential experiences as a mystic. As Izutsu notes, it was Henry Corbin who translated *Ḥikmat* philosophy as *theosophia* or theosophy. The prefix *theo-* means god; thus, theosophy means divine wisdom and the system related to it. As with the term mysticism, however, a few reservations are perhaps in order when using the word theosophy today. Nowadays we may often think of theosophy in connection with Madam Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner or the young Krishnamurti. But there are theosophical traditions quite separate from this not only in Islām but in Christianity as well. The theosophy under discussion here is the Islamic one that flourished under Sabzawārī.

And yet, as is clearly apparent in the case of the twelfth-century Persian *ṣūfī*, Suhrawardī, the world of theosophy extends well beyond the framework of religion. When Suhrawardī discussed the theosophic tradition, when it came both to probing the depths of experience and to the philosophical quest, it was not his co-religionists the *ṣūfīs* or Islamic philosophers whom he cites as his predecessors but Pythagoras and Plato. The fundamental characteristic of theosophy that Izutsu dealt with in this work is the relationship by which human beings and the Transcendent come together and dissolve into oneness. That being the case, there is no particular need for religion as an organized community or for prescribed commandments, theology and rituals. Theosophy, i.e. gnosis, or what Suhrawardī called *ishrāq*, Illumination, intervenes directly in the phenomenal world. The recognition that its mission is to endow the primal experience of theosophy with a logical structure and allow it to manifest itself pervades the Islamic theosophical tradition.

Just as Mullā Ṣadrā had been virtually forgotten until Corbin and Izutsu rediscovered him, Sabzawārī, too, had lain hidden beneath the dust and ashes of history. Izutsu may have firmly intended to resurrect this person, but, at the same time, he probably also discovered that

he had a spiritual affinity with him. In his recognition that the fundamental subject of philosophy is the transcendental Existence and that the role of human beings is merely to develop a rationale to explain it, Izutsu also inherits the theosophist tradition.

As representatives of the existentialism mentioned in the earlier quotation, Izutsu cites Sartre and Heidegger. (Whether Heidegger should be included under “existentialism” is not a matter I will deal with here.) A comparative study between a nineteenth-century Persian Islamic scholastic philosopher and twentieth-century existentialists was never Izutsu’s intention. Although he had not yet begun to use the technical term “synchronic” at this time, what he has put into practice here is a “synchronic structuralization” of existential philosophy. The synchronic attitude with which he discusses specific themes as matters of current concern, while fully taking into account the temporal and cultural differences, is already in evidence here and prepares the way for *Sufism and Taoism* (1966–1967) and *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; Consciousness and essence). Heidegger had sent shock waves throughout the contemporary world of ideas when he posed the problem that philosophy had thus far dealt only with *die Seiende*, “beings,” and not with *das Sein*, “Being.” But turn our sights to Oriental philosophy, and to Islamic mystic philosophy in particular, and, ever since Ibn ‘Arabī in the thirteenth century, successive generations of Islamic mystic philosophers have earnestly grappled with Being. For them, Being is nothing other than transcendental Existence, the ultimate One. The first giant in the history of Islamic thought to make this clear was Ibn ‘Arabī, one of the central figures discussed in *Sufism and Taoism*.

Izutsu became acquainted with Henry Corbin’s best student, Hermann Landolt, at McGill University. In 1984, there was a colloquy between the two of them entitled “Sufism, Mysticism, Structuralism: A Dialogue,” in which Izutsu recalls that Landolt’s recommendation of Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962; *The Savage Mind*, 1966) twenty years earlier had led him to learn about structuralism.<sup>26</sup> Izutsu had not known about structuralism when *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Kōran* was published (1959), but, as one can tell from the title, it is worth noting that even before he became aware of the so-called structuralist currents of thought, Izutsu’s own

philosophical experience was structural. This is also evident from Izutsu's extensive use of diagrams in his works. His aim in using graphics is not to simplify the way propositions are expressed; Izutsu is exceptional in his ability to express himself verbally. But, for him, WORD is not limited to words; diagrams are also WORD, as are such phenomena as sound, light, color and even smells. As is clear in his treatment of mandala in *Ishiki to honshitsu*, Izutsu is also exceptional in his ability to read the meaning in iconography.

The intellectual trend known as structuralism became well known in the 1960s, but its birth dates back to 1942 and the meeting between Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson at the *École libre des hautes études* in New York's New School for Social Research. Lévi-Strauss never missed any of the lectures on linguistics that Jakobson gave there. When the lecture notes, *Six leçons sur le son et le sens* (1976; *Six Lectures on Sound and Meaning*, 1978), were published, Lévi-Strauss contributed an introduction. "I promised myself to acquire from Jakobson the rudiments [of linguistics] which I lacked. In fact, however, what I received from his teaching was something quite different and, I hardly need add, something far more important: the revelation of structural linguistics . . . ."<sup>27</sup> What Lévi-Strauss means by the word "revelation" is the manifestation of wisdom that presents itself with irresistible force. Given the fact that a system of thought centered on "structure" arose out of a Jakobsonian linguistic field, it is no wonder that Toshihiko Izutsu in far-off Japan, who was a remarkable student of linguistics/philosophy of language, would also be receptive to it. I alluded earlier to his overseas travels on a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship that would lead to his new translation of the *Kōran*. It was Jakobson who read *Language and Magic* at that time and rated it highly. The two men never met.

*A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism*, Izutsu's major English-language work, was completed in 1967.<sup>28</sup> The Taoism referred to in this work is not the historical Taoism that begins with Lao-tzŭ and has continued in unbroken succession to the present day. Izutsu narrows this ancient Chinese mystical tradition down to Lao-tzŭ, Chuang-tzŭ and the poet Ch'ü Yüan. His treatment of Sufism is even more restrictive; he deals with only one person, Ibn

‘Arabī. Not only that, but from the more than 400 works attributed to Ibn ‘Arabī, he chooses a single book, the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom). The subject matter is, of course, “a comparative study of the key philosophical concepts in *Sufism and Taoism*,” but the title conveys only one aspect of this book. A large work of close to 500 pages, only about a tenth of it is devoted to a comparison of the two mystical thought systems. The greater part consists of stand-alone studies of the Taoism of Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū, on the one hand, and the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī, on the other. The main topic, however, is not limited to the philosophy and background of these mystics. Had that been the case, he would probably have divided the book up and published it in several volumes not as a single work.

Ibn ‘Arabī calls the absolutely Transcendent *wujūd* (Being); Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū call it *Tao* (the Way). At the risk of being accused of being too literary, one might say that this long work is an epic poem on Being and the Way. The protagonist is not Toshihiko Izutsu, the author of the book, nor his predecessors in the Oriental philosophy he is discussing; it is Being or the Way, i.e. the transcendently Absolute. As the author himself writes in the Introduction, what he is attempting is nothing less than a discussion of the “ontological structure” of Oriental philosophy. Izutsu’s focus is not fixed on Ibn ‘Arabī or Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū as human beings. Rather, Izutsu attempts to penetrate beyond their human being and enter with them into the primordial world of all things that was revealed to them.

Moreover, as he mentions in the Introduction and also at the beginning of the comparative study in Part III, the reason Izutsu wrote this work was not simply out of an academic interest in Oriental ontology. What moved him to write it was a contemporary problem, the violent clash of cultures. Although more than twenty years had passed since the end of World War II, one did not have to look far to see that the world was full of strife. Perhaps he was recalling the Algerian war, in which Louis Massignon had been so deeply involved, or the never-ending conflicts in the Middle East since the founding of Israel. What is more, invisible, psychical confrontations were being played out on a daily basis among cultural communities, involving religions, languages, the arts,

traditions and customs. At no time in history, Izutsu said, has mutual understanding been a more indispensable or a more urgent task.

Izutsu describes his purpose in writing this large work by drawing on the words of Henry Corbin: *une dialogue dans la métahistoire*.<sup>29</sup> History for Corbin is a generic term for spatio-temporal phenomena in the world we live in. There is an urgent need for a dialogue that will go beyond this, Izutsu observes. We have already seen there is a “meta-historical dimension” in the *Kōran*, but what “beyond history” also signifies is a meta-historical realm. Believing we can find something beyond dialogue, we have repeated the dialogue. But if something is to arise that would break through the unprecedented confusion, it would not be “beyond dialogue,” it would be through a “dialogue in the beyond,” would it not? The task entrusted to philosophy, and its mission, Izutsu believed, is to prepare “a suitable locus” in which such a dialogue could be actualized

[M]eta-historical dialogues, conducted methodically, will, I believe, eventually be crystallised into a *philosophia perennis* in the fullest sense of the term. For the philosophical drive of the human Mind is, regardless of the ages, places and nations, ultimately and fundamentally one.<sup>30</sup>

What Izutsu calls philosophy here might well be thought of as metaphysics in its original sense. The true study of metaphysics is not conducted separately from physical reality, i.e. from history; it must be carried out in a form that is directly involved in the urgent topics of the day. Philosophy demands participation at the practical level.

A study of the line of descent of two representative mystic philosophies within Oriental philosophy may, at first glance, not seem particularly timely, but Izutsu’s aim, which runs consistently throughout this work, is extremely contemporary and up-to-date, and we must not overlook that fact. Indeed, if we were to borrow the terms he used in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, the work itself becomes his personal expression of *katabasis*, the mystic’s descent. The *via mystica* is not complete with the *anabasis*, the way up to the world of Mind; its true purpose lies, rather, in the *katabasis*, when the mystic brings his/her experiences in

the metaphysical dimension back down to the phenomenal world and allows Mind to flower there. Both the way up and the way down are also the main topics of *Sufism and Taoism*. In Sufism, the ascent is called *fanā'* (self-annihilation), and the descent is called *baqā'* (subsistence). *Baqā'* without *fanā'* is impossible, yet the *via mystica* is not over unless it results in *baqā'*. What is more, in the mystic philosophy of Islām, the world changes its form in the respective states of *fanā'* and *baqā'*. A change of consciousness is nothing less than a change in ontological cognition.

The title of this book later was changed to *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts*, which is closer to its actual contents. As a result of this work, Izutsu was widely recognized as a philosopher; not just Mircea Eliade and Houston Smith, but the leading figures in the various fields who gathered at the Eranos Conference praised it highly. From this time on, the world awaited his pronouncements.

### Ibn 'Arabī

Izutsu's statement "Being is WORD" not only elucidates his intellectual conclusions; it is also a manifesto that places him in a line of descent that stretches back to Ibn 'Arabī. Had he not encountered this mystic philosopher, Izutsu's thought would likely have been completely different.

Ibn 'Arabī was born in Murcia, Spain, in 1165. An Arab, he studied law and theology in Spain and entered the *ṣūfī* path as the result of a vision he saw during an illness. Having received a divine message in a dream telling him to "travel to the East," at the age of thirty-five, he did so and never set foot in Spain again; he died in Damascus in 1240, aged seventy-five. His most important works were written in the East. "From the Occident to the Orient—he was someone who in his own person lived [what was to become] the destiny of the history of Islamic philosophy," Izutsu writes in *Isurāmu shisōshi* (1975; History of Islamic thought).<sup>31</sup> Izutsu's observation that the direction that Islamic philosophical history was destined to take was not from East to West, but "from the Occident to the Orient," perhaps requires some explanation. He

is not alluding only to the geographical movement involved in going from Spain to Damascus. Up until the appearance of Ibn ‘Arabī, Islamic philosophy was staunchly Greek and, in particular, Aristotelian. “Arabic philosophy was not a new thought system or a new philosophical trend that Islamic peoples were able to develop as a result of their own original intellectual activity,” Izutsu writes. “It was, in fact, Greek philosophy dressed up in Arabic garb, . . . more Greek than Islamic in its basic components.”<sup>32</sup> It was in Averroes (Ibn Rushd) that the Greek tradition appeared in its most extreme form. He was a giant in Islamic philosophical history prior to the appearance of Ibn ‘Arabī.

Ibn ‘Arabī met Averroes, or, to be more precise, they were brought together. When Izutsu discusses Ibn ‘Arabī, he frequently refers to the account of the meeting between them. And, indeed, the story pithily depicts the special characteristics of both these sages better than any lengthy analysis of their differences could ever do. If, in some sense, Islām was more Greek than Greece, Averroes was even more theoretical in his thinking than Aristotle, that is to say, he went beyond the Aristotelian philosophy that had been handed down from generation to generation and tried to return to an ur-Aristotle. He was not an Aristotelian pure and simple, however. If something in Aristotle was true, there was no need to reject it because Aristotle had not been a Muslim. But any mistakes his predecessor made had to be corrected; criticizing his predecessor at such times would not suffice. Averroes was an impartial thinker who thought that way.

“Only One can derive from One,” said Averroes. If only one thing can derive from the One, that means that God’s creation does not extend to multiple existents, i.e. to individual human beings. Moreover, though God and the world are connected, insofar as it is not a relationship in which they interpenetrate one another, he denied the survival of individual souls after death; what remains, Averroes believed, is only a pure “active intellect.” He also advocated the theory of “double truth.” Philosophy and religion each has its own separate truths. Not only is it not the case that philosophical truth is invariably the same as religious truth, it is even possible for the former to contradict the latter. This is not a disavowal of religion, however, but rather a statement of the differences between them.

Ibn ‘Arabī fundamentally revolutionized these three principles. He believed that the countless Many are born from the One, recognized the existence of the soul after death, and made it the mission of mystic philosophy (*irfān*) to unify religious truth and philosophical truth.

Ibn ‘Arabī seems to have displayed a unique brilliance from an early age. His exceptional abilities naturally became widely known and were reported to Averroes. Strangely enough, Averroes and Ibn ‘Arabī’s father were friends. The old philosopher told the father he would like to meet the boy, and one day the father invented an errand and sent his son to the philosopher’s home. When the old philosopher saw the young Ibn ‘Arabī, he paid him the highest honor—he stood up and went out to welcome him. In the Islamic world, it is unheard of for an older person to rise from his seat and receive an inferior. The old sage clasped the youngster’s shoulder warmly and said one word, “So?” “Yes,” the youth replied. Averroes, it is said, trembled with joy and showed extreme excitement. Seeing this change of expression, Ibn ‘Arabī suddenly and vehemently retorted, “No!” The philosopher was saying this: “My perception of the world is right, isn’t it?” Unsure of what was being asked, the younger man had hurriedly said, “Yes,” but as soon as he realized what the question really meant, he immediately said, “No!” The old philosopher’s face went white, he began to shake and did not say another word after that. That was last time the two of them met.

The next time Ibn ‘Arabī saw Averroes again was at his funeral procession, when, after his death in Morocco, his body was brought back to his hometown of Córdoba on a donkey. On both sides of the donkey’s back were large bundles; on one side were the philosopher’s remains and, on the other, his enormous literary output beginning with his commentaries on Aristotle. “Look at this,” Ibn ‘Arabī, now an adult, said to the friend who had accompanied him. “On the one side, the body of the philosopher, on the other, his collected works. How I wish I knew whether his hopes have been fulfilled in them.”

At first glance, it may seem that the story being told is about the decline of Averroes and the emergence of Ibn ‘Arabī, but by alluding to this anecdote, what Toshihiko Izutsu was pointing out, first of all, was Averroes’ greatness. The one who goes before lays the groundwork for

those who follow; those who come after such a person know this best of all. The mystical ideas of Ibn ‘Arabī did not emerge in opposition to Averroes’ philosophy; they merged with it. The world may have recognized the singularity of the young Ibn ‘Arabī, but Averroes saw in the boy the arrival of a creative revolutionary who would break through the existing paradigms. The rivalry between philosophy and mysticism is not just something that occurs at the conceptual level; it is a clash in which lives are literally at stake. The incident involving the two philosophers not only clearly describes a watershed moment in the history of Islamic thought—the encounter between philosophy and the *via mystica*—it shows that the transmission of ideas is also an activity upon which not only life, but life after death, is at stake.

As for Averroes, who in the law of causality in a higher sense saw the existence of the Absolute and the system in which it operates, his philosophy would be rejected by those who came after him and would leave no heirs in the Islamic society from which it had sprung. That thought, however, would later be transmitted to Europe, where it was called Latin Averroism. Initially a threat to Christian theology, it spread with unstoppable force and exerted an influence on medieval scholastic philosophy beginning with Thomas Aquinas. Even Dante, who was scathingly critical of Islām, praised Averroes in the *Divine Comedy*, and, thereafter, when anyone in medieval Europe spoke of “the Commentator,” it was Averroes to whom they were referring. Averroes’ philosophy did not die out. It was transformed and developed within the two currents of thought that flowed like great rivers through medieval philosophy: that of Ibn ‘Arabī, on the one hand, and of Thomas Aquinas, on the other.

*Arabia shisōshi* (History of Arabic thought), which was published in 1941, ends with Averroes, on the eve of Ibn ‘Arabī’s appearance. The first work on Ibn ‘Arabī that Izutsu wrote was “Kaikyō shinpishugi tet-sugakusha Ibin Arabī no sonzairon” (The ontology of the Islamic mystic philosopher Ibn ‘Arabī) in 1943 (published in 1944).<sup>33</sup> But that does not mean that Izutsu had been unaware of Ibn ‘Arabī at the time he was writing his history of Arabic thought. That encounter dates back to 1939 at the latest, when, as we saw earlier, he came across Asín Palacios’s *La escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia*, the work which says that Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas inevitably flowed into Dante and appeared

in the *Divine Comedy*, which can be called the poetical sublimation of Thomism. If, according to Aşın Palacios, the *Divine Comedy* was written under the influence of Ibn ‘Arabī, then the influence of Averroes, which had branched off in two great directions, that of Thomas Aquinas and Ibn ‘Arabī, was once again reunited in Dante. Such an event is not only quite likely to occur in a mystical context, mysticism aspires to reconcile and regenerate divergent views. In other words, mysticism is another name for religious deconstruction. “What is called mysticism is, in a sense, a dismantling operation within traditional religions, I believe. In the final analysis, I think that mysticism is in some way a deconstructionist movement inside religion.”<sup>34</sup> Although it was late in his life when Izutsu made this reference to Jacques Derrida’s *déconstruction*, he seems to have had similar views from the very start of his studies on Ibn ‘Arabī. For Izutsu, the encounter with this mystic philosopher had from the outset an intentionality that transcended the existing framework of religion.

If we read Izutsu’s work on Ibn ‘Arabī as a study of Islamic mystic philosophy in the narrow sense, we lose sight of the “dismantling” quality that is a fundamental aim of mysticism. Izutsu does not tie Ibn ‘Arabī down to the Islamic tradition. He places him in an open-ended position facing what he calls the “Orient.” Such an understanding allowed him to choose the format of *Sufism and Taoism* that “synchronically structuralizes” two great currents of Oriental mystic philosophy, Ibn ‘Arabī and Lao-tzū/Chuang-tzū, for whom there is no evidence whatsoever that their paths intersected in the phenomenal world. Later, he would also deal with the synchronic intersection between these mystic philosophers and the world of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (Garland Sūtra), Dōgen’s theory of time, Plotinus and Jewish mysticism.

There would have been no reason for foreign researchers to be aware of a study of Ibn ‘Arabī published in a Japanese scholarly journal during the war. It is worth noting, however, that Izutsu was writing on him at roughly the same time as Henry Corbin, who would later become the foremost authority on Ibn ‘Arabī. Although the place of publication may have been on what was, at that time, the fringes of the academic world of Islamic studies, what Izutsu attempted was at the forefront of world scholarship. Compared to the study of Ibn ‘Arabī in

*Sufism and Taoism*, which is close to 300 pages long, the twenty or so pages on the Islamic mystic philosopher's ontology is certainly no more than an introduction. But the personality of the author is fully felt, and the shock of his encounter with Ibn 'Arabī and his existential cry as he goes in quest of the Absolute that arose from it are clear in this early essay. What he deals with there is nothing less than the meaning of philosophical resurrection and rebirth and their absolute indispensability. "The mystical experience is an astonishing rebirth in the human spirit; it has the momentous significance of dying in the Absolute and being reborn anew."<sup>35</sup> For Izutsu, who wrote these words, a mystical experience is not an experience of some mysterious event. It was to die in the Absolute and live anew. It was to know with one's own body the reality that death and rebirth were inseparable from one another.

Around the time Izutsu was writing the essay on Ibn 'Arabī, he was giving the lectures at Keio on the history of Greek mystic philosophy that would serve as the prototype for *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949; Philosophy of mysticism). This main theme would be developed in that work to an even more penetrating degree. The philosopher's *melete thanatou* (training for death) that Plato speaks of is "the practice of the *via purgativa*, the attempt to live in the spirit by dying in the flesh; it is a 'training for life,' the attempt to attain to a nobler life by abandoning a baser one."<sup>36</sup> The mystic philosophy of Plato, Izutsu believes, is nothing less than a mystical philosophical discussion of death. That what he calls death here does not mean the death of the body in the phenomenal world is clear from the fact that he says that the "training for death" is a "training for life,' the attempt to attain to a nobler life." And, as Izutsu wrote in his study of Ibn 'Arabī, the core of the mystical experience is not dying but "an astonishing rebirth," namely, "dying in the Absolute and being reborn anew." This statement, too, supports that contention. Likewise, in *Sufism and Taoism*, Izutsu cites Ibn 'Arabī's statement that, in the encounter with divine wisdom, "souls are enlivened by knowledge and are delivered from the death of ignorance."<sup>37</sup> Death is no less than a transmigration from the phenomenal world to the Real World.

If a person, who has been touched by the subtle operation of the spirit and whose mind's eye has been opened, sees, the One that is

*ontōs on* appears clearly and vividly beneath each and every one of the phenomenal Many. That is precisely the reason that the One, i.e. God, is said to see in the person who sees everything, and to hear in the person who hears everything. Thus, the One must be said both to exist in all things and also to transcend all things.<sup>35</sup>

The style is reminiscent of *Shinpi tetsugaku*. Though not easy reading, the reverberating rhythm conveys the dynamism of the event occurring within him. Philosophy for him at this time is not a mere speculative activity. It is inseparable from spiritual salvation. The term “operation of the spirit” refers to the dispensation or will of the transcendental Reality.

“The One must be said both to exist in all things and also to transcend all things.” The One is absolute Being, which is both omnipresent in beings and transcends them all. This is nothing less than Ibn ‘Arabī’s core idea of the “Oneness or Unity of Existence.” Contrast this with Averroes’ words earlier that “only One can derive from One,” and the difference becomes readily apparent. The world is such that it is not a matter of One to One, but of One being Many and Many being One. The phenomenal world is full of countless beings, none of them alike. Beings are continuing to multiply at this very moment. But seen through the eyes of a mystic, that multiplicity converges, and the world is seen as Oneness. Indeed all beings are self-manifestations of this Oneness. The Oneness that Ibn ‘Arabī is speaking about is synonymous with Being, i.e. the Transcendent. To be more precise, the form in which Being originally manifested itself is Oneness. The One contains countless Many. If the One did not exist, the Many could not exist.

Izutsu uses the analogy of mirror images that Ibn ‘Arabī used, but for me the metaphor of ink and the written word that Corbin writes about is easier to understand. In the mirror metaphor, there is a single object and many mirrors surrounding it. The reflections in the mirror increase as the number of mirrors increases, but the reflected object itself remains one. Even if we were to break a mirror we didn’t like, the only things that are destroyed are the mirror that the human hand had struck and its reflection. Human beings are far removed from reality. The other metaphor about ink is simpler but seems better at conveying

the dynamism of creation. The ink that printed the letters we are now reading is a single entity, but the letters created from it are infinite. Moreover, people don't see ink when they look at the letters; they see the symbols that have been made to appear there, and they think they understand them.

Although Being, which Ibn 'Arabī calls the ultimate reality, is also God, it is, rather, the absolute, unarticulated reality that precedes what we think of as God. The reason Ibn 'Arabī speaks of Being and not God is probably because he did not think that the word "God" comes near to signifying the absolutely Transcendent. Even though Being may be God, it is nothing less than the *ontōs on*, the Absolute (*Ḥaqq*), that manifests itself. The Absolute undergoes self-manifestation (*tajallī*) in stages. It manifests itself first as absoluteness, God and Lord; then, it becomes half-spiritual and half-material phenomena; and finally it reveals itself as the sensible world. All things and all phenomena that exist, i.e. all beings, not only belong to Being, they are nothing else than self-extensions of it, the determinate aspects of its self-manifestation. Ibn 'Arabī calls this monistic concept of Being in Islamic mystic philosophy "the Oneness or Unity of Existence."

Izutsu uses the term the "self-manifestation" of Being; "to manifest" means that a hidden something, a Reality that transcends the five senses, appears; the word is used particularly in regard to a spiritual being. In the term "the Oneness or Unity of Existence," there is the connotation of a mystical participation in the One. "Unity" is not the same as "union." Union suggests two separate entities becoming one, whereas unity denotes an organic situation in which things are inextricably connected. Consequently, instead of saying "a flower exists," Izutsu writes, we ought to say that "existence flowers," i.e. makes itself appear as a flower.<sup>39</sup> This phenomenon is not limited to flowers; it is a principle that operates in all beings, and is true in the case of human beings as well. We are all articulated from, and share in, Being as the result of its self-manifestation.

What must not be overlooked here, however, is that "manifestation" is "self-determination." Although Being is truly perfect, the reason that human beings, who are manifestations of it, are all too imperfect is due to determination, i.e. "the Absolute as manifesting itself in a

concrete (determined) thing.”<sup>40</sup> For Being, for example, “time”—qualitative time—means eternity, but for beings, time is merely temporality, quantitative time, measurable and irreversible. Although eternity is included in temporality, one would have to transcend the limits of rational understanding to catch sight of it there. Quantitative time, too, is a being.

On the other hand, although each individual human being is imperfect, insofar as human beings are also the self-manifestation of Being, signs of perfection are hidden in them. The Perfect Man is possible. Muḥammad is the classic example, Ibn ‘Arabī believes. The Muḥammad spoken of here is not his bodily presence but an invisible Muḥammad nature. It is Muḥammad *qua* spirit into whom Being has articulated itself. In Islamic philosophy, Averroes was the first to assert the possibility of a Perfect Man. Although his perception of this differs from Ibn ‘Arabī’s, the two men are remarkably similar in recognizing an ultimate potential for perfection in humankind. This principle of Being operates equally in us as well. Muḥammad in his bodily state does not know all the meanings hidden in the spiritual Muḥammad-Reality. For Ibn ‘Arabī, it is the mission of human beings to make manifest the Perfect Man latent in all of us.

The signs of this perfection do not necessarily appear in forms that human beings might expect. Nor do they necessarily materialize in social situations that are obvious to the eyes of most people. Rather, we sometimes see the brightness of Being in a person struck down by disease, deprived of freedom, for whom nothing is left but death. When we see death arrive and light envelope them, we realize that the potential for sainthood had been hidden in these people, who during their lifetime had seemed rather ordinary even to themselves. We are made to realize that, already from the time they are in “life,” they had passed through “death” in the spirit and lived a true “life.” In them, we witness in its literal sense the true meaning of the mystery, “Who knows whether life be death and death be life?”

Behind Ibn ‘Arabī’s idea that, for the Absolute, creation is not a matter of producing something *ex nihilo* but the manifestation of Self, is the firm conviction that Being is an immeasurably profound “Mercy.” Ibn ‘Arabī calls this the “breath of the Merciful” from the fact

that “the Divine act of bringing into existence the things of the world”<sup>41</sup> exists equally in all things. What Izutsu develops in his discussions of God in *Sufism and Taoism* is nothing less than a phenomenology of mercy. The mercy that is poured out on the world is not something that increases or decreases through the initiative of beings. The initiative is always from God, but because mercy exists so widely and deeply, human beings tend to forget that they receive it. And yet “the Divine act” never ceases. The very fact of existence is a sharing of mercy.

Ibn ‘Arabī’s mystic philosophy is the mystic philosophy of Being. He does not analyze it from the viewpoint of beings; he elucidates the mystery of Being latent in beings from the viewpoint of Being. Ibn ‘Arabī calls the loci in which Being articulates itself as beings the “eternal forms.” These “determine both the basic shapes and directions in which [Being in its various guises] manifests itself phenomenally.”<sup>42</sup> They are also the “reality midway between something and nothing,” Izutsu writes.<sup>43</sup> A flower is not God himself; nor does God reside in the flower; the flower is one form of the self-manifestation of Being. In reference to this, Izutsu cites a passage from the *ḥadīth* (reports of statements or actions attributed to the Prophet preserved as a sacred tradition rather than a sacred text) that Islamic mystics like to quote: “I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known. Accordingly I created the creatures and thereby made Myself known to them.”<sup>44</sup> The “I” who says “and thereby made Myself known to them” is not, of course, the Prophet. It is God speaking through the Prophet. It is the “I” who manifests itself in the world through articulation.

### Lao-tzŭ, Chuang-tzŭ and Ch’ü Yüan

Although many points in Part II of *Sufism and Taoism*, “Lao-tzŭ & Chuang-tzŭ,” are worth special mention, here I would like to single out three of them: the assimilation of Confucian thought in Lao-tzŭ and Chuang-tzŭ, and in Lao-tzŭ in particular; Taoism as a religion; and shamanism as the source of Lao-tzŭ’s and Chuang-tzŭ’s ideas. The fact that preconceived notions continue to underlie each of these topics to this very day— notions that deserve to be called stubborn prejudices— is counterevidence for the novelty of Izutsu’s observations.

At the outset of Part II, Izutsu refers to Taoist studies by Sōkichi Tsuda (1873–1961) and indicates his basic agreement with him. Subjecting the Book of Lao-tzŭ, i.e. the *Tao Tê Ching*, to a critical textual analysis, he concludes that, as a written work, it probably postdates the compilation of the works of Mencius (372–289 BCE), to say nothing of the Analects themselves, and came into existence in response to them. There is a story in the *Shih Chi* (Book of History) that Lao-tzŭ was a contemporary of Confucius (551–479 BCE) and that the two of them met. On the other hand, some people say Lao-tzŭ was not a real person at all, that he is nothing more than legend. But the problem of understanding the historical facts poses no obstacle to research for Izutsu; the existence of the text of the *Tao Tê Ching*, with its firm philosophical structure, is sufficient. That work also contains many words and phrases that seem to have been taken from works by Mo-tzŭ (470–391 BCE), Chuang-tzŭ (369–286 BCE) and other texts that belong to a later period. It is quite possible that the text that has come down to us today was edited and reedited several times in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), and that additions and interpolations were made at that time. Thus, it is highly unlikely that the written work is the direct product of a particular person. And yet it is impossible to support the view that it is a compilation of various miscellaneous material because, as Izutsu makes his own view clear, “there is a certain fundamental unity which strikes us everywhere in the book. And the unity is a personal one. In fact, the *Tao Tê Ching* as a whole is a unique piece of work distinctly colored by the personality of one unusual man, a shaman-philosopher.”<sup>45</sup>

Izutsu’s observation that a single personality pervades the *Tao Tê Ching* should not be overlooked. What he is pointing out here is not “individuality” in a phenomenal-world sense; it is nothing other than “persona” as a self-manifestation of the transcendental Reality. What gives expression to this persona with his own body is the shaman. But the shaman that appears here is not a mere medium. He is also someone who meditates on the message, gives it logical shape and transforms it into a vision, in other words, a philosopher. Izutsu sees the same persona-like evolution in Ibn ‘Arabī as well. Ibn ‘Arabī is said to have written more than 400 long and short works during his lifetime. Setting the numbers aside, Izutsu senses an activity that transcends

human intelligence in the profoundly deep visions described in them and in the sublimity of the vertical expansion of their logic.

[T]he problem of the One and the Many is for Ibn ‘Arabī primarily a matter of experience. No philosophical explanation can do justice to his thought unless it is backed by a personal experience of the Unity of Being. . . . Philosophical interpretation is after all an afterthought applied to the naked content of mystical intuition. The naked content itself cannot be conveyed by philosophical language. Nor is there any linguistic means by which to convey immediately the content of mystical intuition.<sup>46</sup>

Mystic philosophy contains a fundamental paradox: The person describing the experience begins from the impossibility of expressing it in language. Because there are no words to describe it, shamans try to relate the events they have personally witnessed through such means as metaphors, stories and iconography. These are not at all intended as self-expression. Although the term “shamanic” is not appropriate for Ibn ‘Arabī, who lived in an Islamic culture, even in his case, the subject making the pronouncements is not Ibn ‘Arabī; he vehemently insists that it is Being, having manifested itself as a vision, who is speaking.

Taoism, Izutsu says, is a “religion,” a unique development of Confucianism. The earliest person to make this observation was Henri Maspero. Maspero was the first to treat the Taoism of Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū as a religion consonant with Islamic mysticism or Christian mysticism. In other words, Maspero made a strong case for Taoism not as folk phenomenon that teaches techniques for cultivating longevity, but as nothing less than a religion that aspires to personal salvation and eternal life. In this book, Izutsu makes clear that his own observations were strongly influenced by Maspero, and a respect for the French Sinologist infuses his writing style. He is dealing with a subject he had inherited from Maspero, who had begun discussing it but whose death had prevented its completion. Maspero signaled the dawn of modern Taoist studies and laid its foundations. Louis Massignon, whom Izutsu also held in high esteem, was a classmate of Maspero’s, and the two enjoyed a warm friendship.

One day in 1944, Maspero was arrested by the Gestapo and died in a concentration camp. Because his son was a member of the French Resistance, he, too, was suspected of involvement and sent to Buchenwald. Even though he was weakened by prison life, his thoughts are said to have turned to his unfulfilled vision of the “Orient.” In 1950, five years after his death, *Le Taoïsme* was published.<sup>47</sup> The world greeted this work with amazement. Maspero had been a renowned expert on Chinese history during his lifetime, but his study of Taoism, a topic virtually neglected even in China, had not been widely known. After Maspero’s death, his editor, Paul Demiéville, who had also been his friend, began putting his posthumous papers in order, patiently reconstructing the scattered remains that were still in the rough-draft stage. It was a task that resembled repairing a broken vase. “Henri Maspero was the first and, thus far, almost the only one in both the West and the East to have undertaken a scientific exploration of the history and literature of Taoism at this time,” Demiéville wrote.<sup>48</sup>

Lao-tzŭ is, no doubt, a figure of legend. And yet that very fact connects him to the state of Ch’u (present day Hunan and Hubei provinces). “By the ‘spirit of Ch’u,’” Izutsu writes, “I mean what may properly be called a shamanic tendency of the mind or a shamanic mode of thinking.”<sup>49</sup> In addition to the latent shamanic tendencies in Lao-tzŭ, Izutsu alludes to Ch’ü Yüan, the leading poet of the *Ch’u Tz’ŭ* (Elegies of Ch’u), and to Chuang-tzŭ as classic examples of the “spirit of Ch’u.” The Ch’ü Yüan (343–283 BCE) of historical fact is said to have been a high-ranking statesman. He was “a man of utterly uncompromising integrity in a world that was ‘muddy and turbid,’” Izutsu writes in *Ishiki to honshitsu*.<sup>50</sup> “A man of moral purity, he saw himself as a tragic figure in a world rife with immorality and injustice.”<sup>51</sup> A courtier loyal to the king of Ch’u, after repeated falls from power, he became a wanderer visiting holy places as a shaman. He drew the voice of history from the earth and the voice of truth from human souls. Finally, he was chosen by Heaven to transmit its will, in other words, to live as a shaman. This is the journey of Ch’ü Yüan.

The poet as shaman—was the fact that Ch’ü Yüan was a poet an exception, one wonders? If, as Shizuka Shirakawa says, the Written

Word is God, and a poem is a phenomenon that restores the perfect connection of a number of Written Words and expresses the true state of the world, then a true poet must in a basic and primordial sense be a shaman, must he not? It is we moderns, rather, I suspect, who have lost sight of the true nature of shamans when we expelled them from the civilized world for being “extremely vulgar and barbaric.” What Izutsu calls a shaman is nothing less than a spiritual visionary. “The state of divine possession, to call it by its traditional term, is the self-deification of a human being, the union of man and god (the proponents of Semitic monotheism despise it as an extremely vulgar and barbaric union, but setting aside whether that view is right or wrong), the protagonist of that experience ought to be the divine subject.”<sup>52</sup> Since *Shinpi tetsugaku*, Izutsu had consistently asserted the view that the subject of a mystical experience is the non-human Being, God. But the problem here lies in his parenthetical comment.

The “proponents of Semitic monotheism” mean Jewish, Christian and Islamic theologians and the philosophers who have been heavily influenced by them, but, Izutsu insists, even though they may “despise” Ch’ü Yüan’s mystical experience as “vulgar and barbaric,” he himself does not agree with them. Perhaps assuming that his Japanese readers might feel far removed from Semitic monotheism, Izutsu does not allude to this again, but, in this one passage, Izutsu expresses his fundamental view of religion almost as a confession, i.e. that, even outside of Semitic spirituality, the way to God is awe-inspiring and that he himself had witnessed it firsthand.

As we saw earlier, Izutsu first dealt with the issue of shamanism in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. A shaman is someone who experiences *enthousiasmos*, being filled with God, not someone who tells fortunes or predicts the future or speaks in tongues. At least, these latter are not the qualifications for what Toshihiko Izutsu believes to be a true shaman. In *Shinpi tetsugaku*, he also discusses poets as those who announce the appearance of philosophers.

According to Izutsu, the “shamanistic existence . . . can be thought of as a psychic structure consisting of three levels or stages of self-awareness, each with a different dimension.”<sup>53</sup> Discussing Ch’ü Yüan and the world of his poem “Li Sao” (An encounter with my own sorrows) in the

*Ch'u Tz'ü*, Izutsu develops a theory of the multidimensional, multivalent consciousness of the shaman.

1. the empirical ego of an ordinary person living in three dimensions;
2. the ecstatic ego open to self-deification and the unity of God and man;
3. "the consciousness of the disembodied subject playing in shamanistic, imaginal space."<sup>54</sup>

A few caveats are needed for the terms Izutsu uses to describe the third level. The disembodied subject "playing" here is no longer *Ch'ü Yüan* the man but *Ch'ü Yüan* the full and perfect shaman.

"To find philosophical significance in surreal visions, transform shamanistic myths into symbolic allegory and weave into it ontological and metaphysical ideas requires the secondary manipulation of a philosophical intelligence that surpasses still further the third stage of shamanistic consciousness. In the intellectual world of ancient China, the philosophy of Chuang-tz'ü, I believe, is the thought system of a person who had started out from a shamanistic base in the sense just discussed, but who had transcended shamanism."<sup>55</sup> Chuang Chou—Chou being Chuang-tz'ü's personal name—was a shaman, Izutsu is saying, thus he reads the "Book of Chuang-tz'ü" as the WORDS disclosed to a shaman.

Chuang-tz'ü is a thinker who develops his splendid and sublime metaphysical speculations through a series of symbolic tales and allegories that weave together "imaginal" images which are constantly welling up from the depths of consciousness and existence. In so doing, he is no longer a pure shaman of the type represented in the "Elegies of Ch'u." This resident of the "Village of There-Is-Absolutely-Nothing" (*wu ho yu chih hsiang*) has already risen far above primitive shamanism. The celestial journey described at the beginning of the "Book of Chuang-tz'ü" of the Bird P'êng—whose back is so large that nobody knows how many thousand miles wide it is, whose wings, like huge clouds, beat the surface of the water for 3,000 miles, and who rises up to a height of 90,000 miles to the Lake of Heaven—has a

philosophical symbolism quite unknown to the shamanistic celestial journey [that Ch'ü Yüan recounts in] the “Li Sao.”<sup>56</sup>

What we see here is the central theme of *Sufism and Taoism* as well as a summation of Izutsu's study of Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū. Even in the case of Ibn 'Arabī, who is described as the classic example of Sufism, Izutsu presumably thinks—although the “proponents of Semitic monotheism” would disagree—that his, too, is “the thought system of a person who had started out from a shamanistic base . . . [but] had transcended shamanism.” It was his firm conviction, unchanged since *Shinpi tetsugaku*, that shamanism is where philosophy began.

Many people have seen Chuang-tzū as a turning point in the development of Oriental thought. On the other hand, and, this is only a personal view, with only one exception, I know of no other instance of someone who has taken note of the tradition of shamanism that runs through Oriental thought like an underground stream, and the sudden welling up from it of philosophy.

The text of “Book of Chuang-tzū” is unprecedented as an intellectual document; there is virtually nothing like it. It makes free use of the subtle logic of the Jixia Academy [ca 318–284 BCE] and translates into reality the protean spiritual world of the Transcendent through figures of speech that go to the extremes of expansiveness and extravagance. This giant [Chuang-tzū] called back the *logos* that had been lost after Confucius. Words recover their free and unrestricted vitality. But in an ancient period such as this, where did this style, which would astonish even a modern existentialist, come from? If we were to look for something close to it, the only parallel would seem to be *jifu* [a type of literature between prose and poetry] beginning with the “Li Sao” of the “Elegies of Ch'u,” but originally it was the literature of shamans.<sup>57</sup>

Just as Izutsu called Chuang-tzū a shaman, Shizuka Shirakawa, in his *Kōshi den* (1972; *Life of Confucius*) cited above, writes that Confucius was the son of a shamaness, a wise man and also someone who

performed rituals for the dead. The founder of Confucianism depicted in Shirakawa's biography is not a mere sage who travels in search of a state to serve. He is a shaman who aspires to record all the WORDs from heaven without exception. Shirakawa reads the Analects as the record of a shaman, a holy person possessed by divinity. Alluding to the passage in chapter seven of the Analects, "transmit, do not create," Shirakawa writes, "These words of Confucius indicated that what Confucius calls the way is nothing less than the embodiment of [Plato's] Ideas."<sup>58</sup> In *Ishiki to honshitsu*, Izutsu dealt with Confucius' "rectification of names" — the thesis that a semantic discrepancy has crept in between a word and its objective referent — in conjunction with Plato's theory of Ideas.<sup>59</sup> If the prophets of the Old Testament and Muhammad, as well as Confucius and Chuang-tzŭ, are regarded as recorders of the WORDs of Heaven, both Shizuka Shirakawa and Toshihiko Izutsu are their outstanding translators.

To revitalize the divine language — the WORD of God or the Written Word that was with God — that had descended to earth but with the passage of time had become difficult to decipher, for the two of them, the way that converged on this was scholarship.

## Eranos—Dialogue in the Beyond

### The “Time” of Eranos

EVERY YEAR IN AUGUST, some ten or so speakers are invited to be official lecturers at the Eranos Conference, which is held for ten days in Ascona, Switzerland, on the shores of Lago Maggiore. Each lectures on a theme announced the previous year, to an audience of as many as 400 people who have gathered from all over the world to listen. The other invited lecturers are also important participants in each of the lectures being given. Beginning in 1967, Toshihiko Izutsu gave twelve lectures there, and he was to be personally involved with Eranos for fifteen years; in the latter half of this period, his was a central presence.<sup>1</sup>

The subjects he discussed were “not only . . . Zen Buddhism, but also the metaphysics of Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū, the semantics of Confucius, such ontologies and the theories of consciousness as Vedānta philosophy, Hua Yen philosophy, and Yogācāra philosophy, the semiotics of the *I Ching*, Confucian philosophy represented by the Ch’êng brothers, Ch’êng I Ch’uan and Ch’êng Ming Tao, and Chu-tzū, the shamanism of [the] Ch’u Tz’ū and so on.”<sup>2</sup> All of these would later become main topics in *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; *Consciousness and essence*). Eranos, it would be fair to say, nurtured Toshihiko Izutsu the philosopher and brought his philosophy to completion. “The synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophy,” the phrase that

served as the subtitle when *Ishiki to honshitsu* first came out in serialized form, sums up Izutsu's fifteen years at Eranos.

In broad daylight, i.e., in the world of light where all earthly things, manifesting their contours respectively, splendidly rise to the surface, twilight emerges and deepens. Things, losing their clear distinctions from one another, become floating and unstable, lose their own original formation, as they mingle and permeate one another, and gradually attempt to return to the primordial chaos. . . . The momentary darkness, just before all earthly things are submerged in the cavernous darkness and completely brought to naught, has an inexpressible fascination.<sup>3</sup>

This is the spiritual landscape of Eranos that Izutsu saw. It would not have been strange had this passage occurred in his study of Tyutchev in *Roshiateki ningen* (1953; Russian humanity), where he once described that “inexpressible fascination” as “unbearable.” Although the preceding sentences were written when Izutsu was seventy-six years old, he had lived the “spirit of Eranos” long before he ever attended the Eranos Conference. Izutsu continues the passage above in this way: “In short, there is the other side in Being. It is the other side of Being, that is, the deep area of Being. Only in the other side of Being, is there the mystery of Being.”<sup>4</sup> I have alluded to this many times before: Being does not just mean beings; it designates the Absolute who causes them to be.

There is an essay entitled “Le temps d'Eranos” by Henry Corbin, who for many years was a driving force behind the Eranos Conference.<sup>5</sup> The name “Eranos Conference” is not appropriate, he writes; Eranos is neither an academic gathering nor a current of thought, it is a “time.” Time appears in the guise of Eranos. Time is a meta-historical phenomenon that elucidates for the phenomenal world the reality of the transcendental world. It does not appear merely as a result of historical necessity; rather, it signifies a manifestation of the transcendental will. It is not just timely; it is fundamentally timeless, i.e. eternal. (Had Eliade written this, he would probably have added the adjective “sacred.”) It is a time that is invisible, indeterminate, that changes with the beholder.

Rather than being Corbin's account of Eranos, it is as though a living thing called Eranos is speaking through Corbin in this essay.

The archetype by which Izutsu perceived Eranos was "spirit." Alluding to the end of regularly scheduled meetings in 1988, he writes, "But even though the Eranos *conference* ended, the Eranos *spirit* has not ended. It is really alive even now and will probably continue to live hereafter, too."<sup>6</sup> It would be wrong to think that the words "it is really alive even now" are metaphorical. The "spirit" here is Existence as absolute subject. Once it has been set in motion, no human being can stop it. In that regard, Corbin's "time" and Izutsu's "spirit" are identical. In their thinking as well, and not only about Eranos, Izutsu and Corbin were in deep accord. In 1967, when Izutsu was first invited to Eranos, Corbin had already moved beyond the confines of Islamic mysticism and was attracting attention outside his special field as a leading figure in the world of philosophy of religion. The person who invited Izutsu to Eranos was his colleague at McGill, Hermann Landolt, one of Corbin's best students. Considering that Corbin was a key figure in Eranos at the time, it would be no exaggeration to say that the invitation was from Corbin himself. Although several monographs of Izutsu's had been published in English—*Language and Magic*, his semantic interpretation of the Kōran, his work on Sabzawārī and the study of Ibn 'Arabī in the first half of *Sufism and Taoism*—since, with the exception of the work on Sabzawārī, the publisher had been Keio University, conditions were not conducive for these books to be widely read. But because it was Corbin, I believe, he was able to appreciate Izutsu's abilities.

As we saw in Chapter Two, Izutsu had said that Corbin was "inferior" to Massignon,<sup>7</sup> but these words should not be taken at face value. Izutsu was not denigrating Corbin. His remark, "I have a high regard for the achievements of my late, lamented friend Corbin," must also be taken literally. Izutsu is merely underscoring the fact that, compared to its assessment of Corbin, the world still did not appreciate the greatness and significance of Louis Massignon. It goes without saying that Corbin was a leading twentieth-century scholar of Islamic mysticism, especially noted for his research on Ibn 'Arabī. In fact, anyone who

seriously intends to study Islamic mysticism today, whatever their views may be, cannot ignore Corbin.

One day Massignon handed Corbin an old book published in Persia, a lithographed copy of Suhrawardī's *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* (Philosophy of Illumination). Corbin's annotated edition of this work would win him international acclaim. As Corbin notes, a teacher giving a student a book to work on signifies the passing on of an intellectual tradition. Out of his reading of this Islamic theosophist classic arose the term "imaginal," the most important key concept for an understanding of Corbin's philosophy. Corbin "established the distinctive adjective *imaginal* as a technical term by translating [Suhrawardī's original expression] into Latin as *mundus imaginalis* and then making *imaginalis* into the French word *imaginal*."<sup>8</sup> It may seem as though Izutsu is disinterestedly stating a fact here, but his words should be taken as a compliment. He is not saying that Corbin's thought is derivative. Izutsu never loses sight of the fact that, before referring to the topic he is discussing, Corbin begins by questioning the language being used to discuss it. The reason Corbin took the trouble to go all the way back to the Latin word *imaginalis* and use his own term "imaginal" is because the modern word "imaginaire" or "imaginary" is far removed from the "imaginal" realm.

In order to artificially allow philosophers, whose histories and traditions are completely different, to be able to meet and talk together and understand one another, a common philosophical language has to be established. Once the ideas of philosophers from various countries have been grasped analytically in their spiritual depth, there has to be an intellectual manipulation that will allow them to speak a common language to each other. The creation of this sort of common philosophical language is what I call philosophical semantics, and it is a task I hope to accomplish myself.<sup>9</sup>

A "common philosophical language" that will span history and connect different traditions is what Izutsu calls a "metalanguage." Isn't the birth of such a language philosophers' deepest desire? If the words that are capable of bringing it into being do not exist today, philosophers must find them by going back in time or by crossing over into a different

dimension. “Imaginal” is nothing less than a word that exists in that other realm; it refers to the intermediary dimension midway between the noumenal world and the human world that lets us know that the two worlds are in an unceasing relationship with each another. This is the dimension in which we interact with spirits and the dead.

Introductory works on Corbin sometimes state that he was the first to introduce Heidegger to France. But this only tells us of his acuity in grasping the *Zeitgeist*; it says nothing about what was central to him. If mention is made of his accomplishments as a translator, it should be said that he was the first to translate not only Heidegger but also Karl Barth into French. Before his encounter with Islamic mystical philosophy, Corbin had been a promising scholar in the Protestant tradition. As Tom Cheetham, the foremost authority on Corbin, has pointed out, Corbin was fascinated by the spirituality of German Protestants such as Jakob Böhme, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Martin Luther and Johann Georg Hamann.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, his earlier deep contacts with the tradition of mystical thought that flowed through Europe strengthened his appreciation of Islamic mystical philosophy; this seems to be an extremely important clue to understanding Corbin. Having perceived existentially the confusion in existing religions and philosophy, Corbin turned to Islām.

That Massignon and Corbin were both Christians and became giants in Islamic studies is clearly emblematic of the current state of spirituality. Today, as the world becomes smaller and smaller, not just in terms of geography and the availability of information but spiritually as well, it is difficult for any religion to assert its own orthodoxy and lay claim to supremacy. Religions headed by human beings are imperfect. They cannot fill in all the gaps by themselves. In order for Christianity to be truly Christian, it is not enough just to be Christian. Didn't Christ come for the sake of nonbelievers? The same can be said of Islām and Buddhism. Izutsu wrote of Eliade that what made him irreplaceably unique was not that he dealt with the crises of the times, but that he was “someone who lived those crises existentially.”<sup>11</sup> The same words apply to Corbin. For that very reason, “although he dealt *with* esoteric theosophy, he gradually began to speak as an esoteric theosophist.” Mikio Kamiya's essay on Henry Corbin's *L'Imagination créatrice*

(1958; *Creative Imagination*, 1969), which includes this sentence, is not only a study of Corbin; it also discusses the intellectual similarities and differences between him and Izutsu.<sup>12</sup>

In the essay cited earlier, Corbin substitutes “gnostic minds” for “time.” “It is not the ‘main currents’ that evoke them [i.e. gnostic minds] and bring them together; it is they that decree the existence of a particular current and bring about their own meeting.”<sup>13</sup> The subject in Corbin’s discussion of Eranos is utterly non-human; it is a persona. Corbin perceives a single will at Eranos. It is not that people gather at a place called Eranos, and gnostic minds spring forth. A reality that deserves to be called “gnostic minds” divinely calls them and produces an intellectual surge. As was the case with “time,” Corbin believes that “gnostic minds” cause a place called Eranos to manifest itself fully and completely. “As Henry Corbin bears witness, Gnosticism in the broadest sense was the underlying tone of the Eranos movement,” Izutsu writes.<sup>14</sup> The “gnosis” referred to here does not, of course, signify the Christian heresy, nor does it designate a historical current of thought. It denotes a direct link between human beings and transcendental Reality. By “direct,” I mean one that is not necessarily mediated by a particular group; in other words, the path that leads to the Transcendent is not limited to religion. Eranos does not reject existing religions or religious institutions, but it also does not regard them as an indispensable gateway. Corbin’s statement, “all conferences are arranged about the same center,” suggests the workings of the Eranos spirit, which blends and transcends religious or ideological differences.

[T]he dozen-odd yearly conference speakers, each proceeding from his own field, are all basically intent upon helping to uncover the essential features of man’s quest to know himself: that is, they strive to verify what is permanent and eternal in human experience. All conferences are arranged about the same center: man’s image of himself as revealed in the universe proper to him.<sup>15</sup>

As Corbin implies, the participants at Eranos were intensely aware that what they were attempting exists in a two-layered time. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema, who were central to Eranos, adopt a similar viewpoint when they write, “Since . . . 1933 we have sought

to portray the primal experience native to the geocentric cosmos as a repository of permanent values, not merely as an interesting object of historical regard.”<sup>16</sup> They, too, aspired to have something manifest itself through their activities. The spirit of Eranos is nothing less than the act of searching for the Absolute, a quest that unfolds on two axes, the historical and the eternal. The participants dedicate their intellects to bring about the manifestation of “time.”

That Eranos did not confine itself to the conventional sphere of metaphysics is clear from a glance at the special fields of its participants. To be sure, clergymen as well as scholars of religion or mythology, psychologists and philosophers gathered there, but so did specialists in physics, biology, mathematics, aesthetics, music and literature. They were “a series of scholars or thinkers who had strong interest in the depth of inner and outer realities in their respective areas”;<sup>17</sup> they were also not of their time. That does not mean that they resisted the age in which they were living or somehow fought against it, but rather that they aspired to a different dimension than the flow of time, i.e. to eternity. In other words, they had to be people whom Izutsu would elsewhere call “a-temporal” rather than timeless.

Just as Mircea Eliade used “historian of religion” instead of “I” when referring to himself, as though speaking as the representative of his academic discipline, the participants at Eranos regarded each other as the symbolic presence of his/her respective field. In addition to Jung, Otto and Corbin, gathering there were Karl Kerényi, who represented mythology; Mircea Eliade, history of religion; James Hillman, psychoanalysis; Jean Brun, philosophy; Gershom Scholem, Jewish mysticism; Portmann, biology; Shmuel Sambursky, nuclear physics. Blake specialist Kathleen Raine and Protestant theologian Paul Tillich also took part. Martin D’Arcy and Jean Daniélou were both Catholic clergymen as well as leading twentieth-century theologians. Today the Catholic Church cannot necessarily be said to have a positive opinion of Eranos; some Catholics even consider it heretical. But D’Arcy was a central figure in the Society of Jesus, and Daniélou later became a cardinal, a position second only to that of the pope. As their presence at Eranos symbolizes, it is not always possible to keep the discussion within the

existing framework even for events in religious circles. And if we widen the perspective to the world, research on Eranos has only just begun.

The first lecture Izutsu gave at Eranos in 1967 was “The Absolute and the Perfect Man in Taoism.”<sup>18</sup> “The Perfect Man,” a central theme in Ibn ‘Arabī’s philosophy, is, as we have seen earlier, the ultimate human state. But Izutsu does not refer to Ibn ‘Arabī at all in this lecture. In so doing, he proves that the existence of “the Perfect Man” is not a phenomenon restricted to Islām. This attitude faithfully attests to Izutsu’s understanding of the Orient, but, as an experiment, it was extremely ambitious, and perhaps even intellectually provocative. Corbin must have had difficulty controlling his astonishment that Izutsu would develop his argument by making free use of a technical term from Islamic mysticism without ever referring to Islām.

More than ten years earlier, Daisetz Suzuki had been invited twice (1953 and 1954) as an official lecturer to talk about Zen. Daisetz had been warmly welcomed, and those who attended sensed something but without gaining any firm understanding. The organizers of Eranos asked Izutsu, as a Japanese, to speak on Zen. Perhaps for that reason, many of his twelve lectures are on that subject. In a blurb to Suzuki’s collected works, Izutsu praised Daisetz and called him “a first-class cosmopolitan,”<sup>19</sup> but if one were only to read Izutsu’s selected works published by Chūō Kōronsha, it would be almost impossible to know that he had any acquaintance with Daisetz Suzuki at all. The one exception in which Daisetz’s name appears is “Zenteki ishiki no fīrudo kōzō” (The field structure of Zen consciousness), the Japanese version of his 1969 lecture, “The Structure of Selfhood in Zen Buddhism.” Izutsu’s presentations at Eranos were all given in English, and these lectures have now been published, but Izutsu later rewrote several of them in Japanese.<sup>20</sup>

From the mildly stated language in this essay, one senses that it is not Izutsu’s intention to follow in Daisetz’s footsteps but to attempt to offer a different perspective. The relation between Izutsu and Daisetz Suzuki, I believe, should be perceived as following a line of descent that deserves to be called a spiritual rather than an intellectual history. In the history of spirituality, even activities that have left behind no outward trace of a philosophy or ideology may become the objects of

study. Although Daisetz insisted that spirituality (靈性 *reisei*) and spirit (精神 *seishin*) are different,<sup>21</sup> haven't attempts to discuss spirituality thus far been repeatedly made from a psychological perspective? *Seishin*—mind, psyche—is a human matter, but the subject of *rei*—Spirit—is not human; it is nothing other than the Transcendent. Studies of spirituality have flourished lately, attracting not only scholars of religion but also literary figures. But just as it is futile to develop a theory of human nature without an understanding of what a human being is, even if someone were to develop a theory of spirituality, it is inconceivable it would bear any fruit without an understanding of Spirit. To show that Izutsu and Daisetz agree on a higher level, one must look at their attitude toward scholarship, their inner mission, and how they put that into practice.

Faced with the confused state of the world, Daisetz Suzuki busied himself with his studies of Buddhism, all the while saying that he had no time. He was eighty-eight when he began his translation into English of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* by Shinran (1173–1263), the founder of Jōdo Shinshū, the True Pure Land school of Buddhism, and he was working on it right up until the end of his life.<sup>22</sup> One day, as Daisetz was about to set off for Karuizawa, he suddenly fell ill and died two days later at the age of ninety-six. The manuscript of this work is said to have been in his luggage, already packed. The same mentality flowed in Toshihiko Izutsu. As was repeatedly discussed in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, philosophy for Izutsu was not simply an intellectual activity. It was nothing less than a *via practica* to change the world.

In the last year of his life, the ninety-five year old Daisetz Suzuki wrote a study in English on the *suibokuga* (monochrome ink paintings) of the Zen monk Sengai (1750–1837).<sup>23</sup> He believed that the person who would understand the truth about this Zen monk would appear in the West, not in the East. As Daisetz sensed, the West was first to appreciate the significance of Sengai's *suibokuga*, and, with the exception of Sazō Idemitsu (1885–1981), who had a close friendship with Daisetz—the Idemitsu Museum of Arts is known for its Sengai collection—it has been only recently that the Japanese have rediscovered him.

Eva van Hoboken, who edited Daisetz's book on Sengai, also appears in Izutsu's essay "Tōzai bunka no kōryū" (East-West cultural

exchange).<sup>24</sup> He refers to her as Mrs H., but from the context, which contains a reference to Sengai, it is unmistakably she. One day Izutsu visited her home in Aseona, where Eranos was held. In her garden there were some red flowers in full bloom. She had taken the seeds for these flowers from ones blooming in the garden of the house where Daisetz Suzuki lived inside the temple precinct of Engakuji in Kamakura. They are not a flower that is native to Aseona, she said, but now, as you see, they grow everywhere throughout the town. She had gone to Japan to ask Daisetz to teach her, and for several months she would visit him every day without fail. “When I go back to Japan in the summer, several months from now,” Izutsu wrote, “I think I will plant some in the garden of my home [in Kamakura].”<sup>25</sup> Spiritual inheritance does not always manifest itself in theories or doctrines. Izutsu’s grave is in Engakuji, where Daisetz Suzuki once lived.

On 18 August 1954, Henry Corbin, Mirecea Eliade and Olga Froebe-Kapteyn were sitting with Daisetz Suzuki. The three were astonished to hear that, more than fifty years earlier, the elderly man from the Orient had translated works of Swedenborg.<sup>26</sup> Corbin asked Daisetz about homologies in the structure of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Swedenborg’s theology. The eighty-four-year-old Daisetz, who already had the dignified appearance of a venerable old man, suddenly grabbed a spoon and, brandishing it, said with a smile, “This spoon now exists in Paradise. . . . We are now in Heaven.” It was an unforgettable event. Corbin writes in his magnum opus that Ibn ‘Arabī would undoubtedly have been delighted to hear these words.<sup>27</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī for him was an exceptional being, synonymous with wisdom itself. It would be right to consider this to be his highest praise.

The phenomenal world is linked directly and inextricably with the noumenal world. The Swedenborgian concept of correspondences, the relationship among the natural, spiritual and divine worlds, is alive in Daisetz’s words. Corbin, too, continued to have a profound interest in Swedenborg. There is even a work of his entitled *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam*.<sup>28</sup> Swedenborg was someone who not only saw Heaven with his own eyes; he claimed to have visited there often while still living in the human world. Although this assertion startled the world,

the depth and diversity of his thinking that became clear only after his death, would become the object of even greater astonishment. Swedenborg's influence on Kant and Balzac is well known, but Baudelaire, Valéry and Dostoevsky were also influenced by him. Recently, following a reevaluation of the late nineteenth-century Christian proselytizer, Ōsui Arai (1846–1922), advances are being made in the study of Swedenborg's reception in Meiji Japan.<sup>29</sup> As Daisetz said to Corbin, Swedenborg is “your Buddha of the North.”<sup>30</sup>

Discussion of Swedenborg's influence on Daisetz seems to have been obstructed by his close followers for a while after his death. But, as Shōkin Furuta, one of Daisetz's best students, has pointed out, not only did that influence continue to live on in him for a long time, it formed the very core of his thought. Corbin's testimony also supports this. The story about the spoon seems to have made a strong impression on him. Corbin even spoke about it to Izutsu, who alludes to this incident in his blurb for Daisetz's collected works.<sup>31</sup>

### Otto and Eliade

Olga Froebe-Kapteyn was born in London in 1881; her parents were Dutch, her father an engineer, her mother an early feminist. It is she who can rightfully be called the “mother of Eranos.” A few years after her marriage, she lost her husband, a musician, in a plane crash. Oriental thought and depth psychology gradually came to occupy her mind, and she would devote the latter half of her life to the study of these fields. “It was her intuition that still unseen and unformulated spiritual currents needed open space to unfold and manifest themselves. She wanted to provide for these as yet unknown forces,” writes Rudolf Ritsema, who later became her assistant at Eranos.<sup>32</sup> The impulse was very strong; yet she remained silent about it for many years in order to verify the genuineness of the event. Gradually she conceived a plan for a meeting place between East and West.

Encounters with Sinologist Richard Wilhelm, Carl Gustav Jung and Rudolf Otto proved decisive. Had she not met them, despite these strong feelings, she might have spent her life as an independent scholar. The spirit of Jung, it goes without saying, is deeply rooted in

Eranos. But, as Izutsu notes, more attention deserves to be given to Otto, who was an indispensable presence. Eranos began in 1933; Otto, who died in 1937 and was already plagued with ill health, did not take part as an official lecturer. Perhaps for that reason, little has been written about Otto and Eranos, but Otto's influence there would continue to live on unbroken. Eranos "means a specific kind of 'dining together' in classical Greek," Izutsu writes. "It is a noble and elegant gathering, loved by the Greeks, in which some participants share food mutually, brought respectively according to their own tastes, and enjoy talking, dining at the same table."<sup>33</sup> Otto was the one who gave Eranos its name.

*Das Heilige* (1917; *The Idea of the Holy*, 1923) has become a classic in the phenomenology of religion, and any discussion of Otto is virtually inseparable from this work. It is unquestionably his magnum opus, and yet by limiting him to this one book, we run the risk of losing sight of his true nature. We ought not to overlook his *West-östliche Mystik* (1926; *Mysticism East and West*, 1932), in which he deals synchronically with Śaṅkara, the eighth-century exponent of Indian Vedānta philosophy, and the mystic Meister Eckhardt, who represents medieval Christianity. Otto, whose scholarly starting point had been a study of Martin Luther's concept of the Holy Spirit, also played an active part in the reevaluation of Schleiermacher's *Über die Religion* (1799; *On Religion*, 1893). In 1911, he set off on a journey of nearly ten months to India, Burma (Myanmar), Japan and China. It was at this time that he encountered the vedantic tradition. Thereafter, he ceased to be merely a Protestant theologian. His contributions to the world of vedantic thought are extensive and would continue well into the last years of his life.

*Das Heilige*, which delved deep into Jewish and Christian phenomenology, was published in 1917, after Otto had become acquainted with the Orient. His views of the Orient are vibrantly alive in this book; they quietly pervade the entire work. His concept of *das Numinose* (the numinous, i.e. the circumstances surrounding the self-manifestation of the Transcendent that evoke fear and trembling) caused a stir in European society. It is no accident that the ones who understood the true meaning carefully concealed in *The Idea of the Holy* would be students of the Orient. I am thinking here of Mircea Eliade and Toshihiko Izutsu. Eliade's major work, *Das Heilige und das Profane* (1957;

*The Sacred and the Profane*, 1959), begins with a reassessment of his predecessor Otto. Eliade was the foremost historian of religion in the twentieth century, but, before that, he had been a student of the Orient who was existentially concerned with India, and with yoga in particular. Izutsu first mentioned Otto in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, and it is suggestive that the work he referred to at that time was *Mysticism East and West*.

In his understanding of mysticism in a higher sense—a synchronic awareness of scholarship, salvation and the world of Being—Izutsu was profoundly influenced by Otto. In Otto's works he detected the same kind of wonder and astonishment as he had received from Louis Massignon. Otto "makes a distinction between *Seelen-mystik* [mysticism of the soul], which seeks God in the depths of the soul, and *Gottes-mystik* [mysticism of God], which searches for God as the absolutely Transcendent in the limitless beyond," but "the inward way and the outward way," which appear antithetical, are both essentially the same; one is not superior or inferior to the other.<sup>34</sup> Which path one chooses depends on the personality of the individual mystic. "In the end," Izutsu asserts, "they will always arrive at the same place no matter which route they take."<sup>35</sup> Izutsu understands that the two mysticisms are not conclusions arrived at through philological analysis. Mysticism for Otto is not a method for understanding the world's mysteries; it is the path that leads to the very Source of religion itself. Yoshitsugu Sawai points out that, though Otto was a Christian, he lived his scholarship, regarding it as an activity that would break through to a dimension that transcended religious denominations.<sup>36</sup> When Massignon discovered the forgotten mystic Ḥallāj, not only did he become fascinated by Islām, it revived his own belief in Catholicism. It was an event akin to a "conversion." A deepening of faith is sometimes brought about by a paradox of this kind. Something similar also happened to Otto. That salvation was always an issue behind his study of religions is probably proof of this. Otto never lost sight of the fact that the ideas of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are directly connected to their theories of salvation. For the ancient wise men of India, the question of salvation was always foremost; scholarly speculation came second. Otto inherits this spirit, Sawai says.

Otto "pointed out the parallelism in the thought structure of Fa T'sang [the seventh-century patriarch of the Hua Yen school] and Ibn

al-‘Arabī,” Izutsu writes.<sup>37</sup> It is precisely the search for this “parallelism in thought structure” that is one of the fundamentals of Izutsu’s own scholarly methodology, one that he learned from Otto. Although Śankara was probably born in 788 and died ca. 820 and Eckhardt was born around 1260 and died in 1328, Otto calls the two “contemporaries.”<sup>38</sup> He recognizes that true “contemporaries” are not those who live diachronically in the same era; even those from different times and different cultures may be “contemporaries” synchronically. Otto uses the term “parallel” to describe this synchronicity. Parallelism is a key concept for understanding Otto after his travels in Asia, Sawai notes.<sup>39</sup> Temporal and cultural differences inevitably give rise to differences in religion and spirituality. But quite apart from these differences, there is a common religious feeling—the numinous experience that Otto would later develop—that exists parallel to them. This hard-to-define ur-experience that runs through all religions, he says, arises parallel to them as if drawing a perpendicular line to their source.

The suggestion of an imaginal image, which, prompted by the spoken WORD, rises up out of the linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness, envelopes the M-region of consciousness like incense densely filling a secret chamber with smoke. This image space of the depth consciousness that sometimes shimmers with blessing, at others is shrouded in dread, at yet others is overpowering. In it lies something that Rudolf Otto once called *das Numinose* (something spiritual that transcends the grasp of reason and that reason, therefore, regards as quite sinister) and considered it a category of religious studies.<sup>40</sup>

Although in this passage Izutsu is alluding to the fact that WORD is intrinsically numinous, at the same time, it is also an expression of his high regard for Otto, who caused the WORD “numinous” to appear. The world is explicated through WORDS; what other primary object of thought could there be? As a result of Otto’s ideas, Izutsu is saying, human beings from this time forth will perceive something numinous, and *das Numinose* will evolve and become part of a metalanguage.

It seems to have happened at Eranos. Ernst Benz told Izutsu that around the time that Plotinus was in Alexandria, a group of Buddhists

was actively engaged in proselytizing there. If Benz's theory is true, Izutsu writes, then the intensely curious Plotinus would surely have made the Buddhists' acquaintance.<sup>41</sup> Benz's ties to Japan were strong; he once spent a year here. He was a professor in the theological faculty at Marburg University, where, until his retirement in 1929, Otto had held the same chair. Benz regarded Otto and Ernesto Buonaiuti as his mentors. Buonaiuti, too, had been a participant at Eranos from its very first session. As though following in his teachers' footsteps, Benz first took part in Eranos in 1953, the same year that Daisetz Suzuki was also invited to lecture there. Benz would later deepen his friendship with Daisetz. The last lecture Benz gave there was in 1978, a time when Toshihiko Izutsu was a central figure in Eranos. Izutsu also read Buonaiuti; his library contains a copy of Buonaiuti's work on medieval mysticism (*Il misticismo medioevale*) published in 1928.

Buonaiuti, the sincere heretic, was the embodiment of the early days of Eranos, the period before Toshihiko Izutsu attended, in other words, the period when the spirit of Otto was vibrantly alive. An outstanding scholar of religion, Buonaiuti had also been a Catholic priest, who was excommunicated in 1925 because he refused to retract publications of his that had been placed on the Church's Index of Prohibited Books. If the Church truly is the body of Christ incarnate in this world, it should not just rigidly stress the importance of dogma; it must change and adapt to current realities and invite everyone in. The Church, in the true sense, is eternal and unchanging—perennial—but, Buonaiuti asserted, it must not mistake what is universal for what can be changed. He called himself a “modernist”; for the Church at that time, those words meant he was dangerous. It was at this point, however, that his real activity began. One day, a young man sent him an impassioned letter. The name of the sender was Mireca Eliade. Eliade, who, as Toshihiko Izutsu says, was compelled to live the crises of his time existentially, sent Buonaiuti a letter in which he poured out the confused and critical state of his inmost heart. Buonaiuti, the classic example of a spirit who was not of his time in an Eranos-like sense, was also a secret hero for Eliade, who frequently mentions him in his journals.

Prophets do not officially exist in Christianity, but prophetic individuals may appear. “Prophets,” like Buonaiuti, are those whom the

Church repudiates because they have publicly proclaimed the true nature of the age they live in. As time passes, however, they are shown to have spoken nothing other than the truth. Joachim of Fiore in the twelfth century was one such person. It is no accident that Buonaiuti played a pioneering role in Joachim studies.<sup>42</sup> Buonaiuti not only studied Joachim; he inherited and put into practice Joachim's spirituality. The study of Joachim has advanced since Buonaiuti. Marjorie Reeves' *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (1969) laid the groundwork, and Bernard MacGinn's *The Calabrian Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Thought* (1985) has added new discoveries as well as a historical exegesis.<sup>43</sup> Eliade contributed a Foreword to MacGinn's book; the two men were colleagues at the University of Chicago. When Eliade met Buonaiuti in 1927, the latter reported that his work on Joachim was progressing.

Joachim of Fiore, so-called because in the twelfth century he served as abbot of an abbey at Fiore in Calabria, Italy, was a gifted cleric, active in both religion and politics until 1183, but in that year he became a prophet. The time had passed when the existing Church was absolute, Joachim said; the age of *Ecclesia spiritualis*—a new "Church of the Spirit" independent of Church hierarchy—was now at hand. This Church would be led, Joachim said, not by priests, but by spiritual persons who have received the grace of the Holy Spirit, with no distinction between cleric and lay. Joachim was not stating a theological opinion; he had received a revelation and was speaking it as words of prophecy. Joachim, who prophesied the coming of a third *status*, i.e. the age of the Holy Spirit, would ultimately be shown the error of his ways and shunned by the Church. But Joachim's ideas lived on after his death. Whenever the Church has come under pressure to reform, Joachimism has been revived in various forms. Ernst Bloch in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (1954; *The Principle of Hope*, 1986) cited Marx as a Joachim-like person. The revival of Joachim's ideas has already spread beyond the framework of the Church.

The excommunicated Buonaiuti reviving Joachim, who had been regarded as a heretic, and Eliade's receptivity to this, are phenomena that are truly indicative of the present situation confronting the Church. To borrow Derrida's words, the Church is at a point where it

must be “deconstructed” in order to be able to be reborn. In the age of Joachim, the Church meant Christianity, but the Church in this sense no longer means just the Roman Catholic Church; it is emblematic of religion itself. The person who emerged to inherit and carry on his mentor’s research was Ernst Benz, who wrote *Ecclesia spiritualis: Kirchenidee und Geschichtstheologie der franziskanischen Reformation* (1934; *The Church of the Spirit: The idea of the church and the history and theology of the Franciscan Reform*). Benz also dealt with Jakob Böhme and Schelling and wrote a lengthy study of Swedenborg; in the history of Christianity that he envisioned, he even attached unique significance to Rudolf Steiner, whose “esoteric Christianity” goes beyond Christian mysticism and who is regarded as a heretic by the new Church and the old one alike.

It was against this spiritual landscape that Eranos appeared. Though the phenomenal world at the time was relatively tranquil, the spiritual world was in turmoil. Fissures were beginning to emerge in its foundations. Just as the participants were circumspect in their use of the word “God,” they did not speak easily about salvation. But there was a strong sense among them that their efforts were directly linked to salvific events. They gathered each year in Aseona with an awareness of having been called, Corbin wrote.

When Eliade died, Toshihiko Izutsu, recalling a friendship that had been deepened through scholarship, wrote a tribute to him in which he left a vivid and indelible image of a profound scholar.<sup>44</sup> Although the two men actually met only twice, the traces those encounters left are so deep as to make that fact seem unlikely. The first time they met they talked as though they had known each other for ten years, Izutsu said. The infrequency of their actual contact may not have been particularly important. During the fifteen-year interval before they met again, they read each other’s works and were influenced by them. Eliade’s name appears in *Ishiki to honshitsu*. The completion of *The History of Religious Ideas*, it would be fair to say, was Eliade’s fondest wish.<sup>45</sup> In it Eliade cited *Sufism and Taoism* as one of the most important works on Islamic mysticism.

The 1967 Eranos Conference was the first one in which Izutsu participated, but it would be Eliade’s last. The two met again in 1982,

when Eliade was invited not as a lecturer but as a distinguished guest. By a strange coincidence, this would be Izutsu's last time at Eranos. The two were also close in inheriting the tradition of Rudolf Otto. One of Eliade's most important works, *The Sacred and the Profane*, was the declaration of a revival of the true spirit of Otto. A Jungian tradition certainly exists at Eranos, but Izutsu does not seem to have been directly associated with it. Eranos, of course, was not a factional gathering nor were there struggles for hegemony. But if we are considering intellectual pedigrees, Izutsu, I believe, was part of the group to which Otto, Massignon, Buonaiuti, Benz and Eliade belonged.

Eliade's travels in India during his early years determined the rest of his life. There for the first time he experienced living philosophies and religions and the raw power of the "sacred." Of these, the encounter with "the classical yoga philosophy of Patañjali" was decisive, Izutsu writes.<sup>46</sup> Although Patañjali is famous as the expounder of the Yoga Sūtras, nothing about him is known for sure, including his *floruit*. Just as Zen achieves its ultimate end in the enlightened state of inner transcendence known as *satori*, yoga is a similar kind of ascetic practice. But even if someone were to reach the height of metaphysical awareness, Eliade writes, Patañjali did not believe that that alone could free human beings. Although that was most likely Patañjali's belief, it was probably Eliade's as well.

Practicing yoga, Eliade said in his memoirs, was indispensable for a true understanding of Indian wisdom. His teacher in India did not allow him to do so easily. In order to read the writings of Patañjali as well as other works of classical philosophy, Eliade first immersed himself in the study of Sanskrit. His dedication to language learning at this time, it would be fair to say, was an ascetic practice on a par with yoga. His days were spent with no regard for social contacts or for ordinary life. Even his meals—simple fare—were delivered to his room once every few days. Words led Eliade to yoga and showed him the way. The minds of Izutsu and Eliade were in profound accord regarding the connection between language and a fundamental metaphysical experience. Izutsu, too, was someone who engaged in ascetic practices. Citing the words of Eliade, "I sought *salvation* in the Orient," Izutsu goes on to say:

For the young Eliade, the urgent concern was not, as in the case of Freud and Husserl, to create a new academic discipline out of the sense of crisis he felt; it was the existential, personal conquest of that sense of crisis itself. The personal predicament of a “crisis of European consciousness” was something that could only be overcome personally. Before scholarship, the existential problems of the person doing the scholarship must first be solved. With these expectations, he went to India. India did not disappoint him.<sup>47</sup>

“Before scholarship, the existential problems of the person doing the scholarship must first be solved” — these words are true of Eliade, but they are also likely to be a confession of Izutsu’s own inmost heart.

Eliade was a remarkable historian of religions, but he was also a novelist, whose original works have been compiled and edited. Indeed, after completing his philosophical studies in India, he started out not as a scholar but as a novelist. As I mentioned earlier, there was a time when Toshihiko Izutsu had been a “literary critic” rather than a philosopher. Neither man had intended to become a scholar. The artist Shikō Munakata (1903–1975), speaking about the karma that led him to woodblock prints, said that *hanga* had called him; in the same way, scholarship called Eliade and Izutsu.

### The Traditionalists and *Sophia perennis*

At the end of volume 1 of Toshihiko Izutsu’s selected works, there is a brief essay entitled “*Chosakushū no kankō ni atatte*” (On the publication of my selected works). In it Izutsu skims over his life and speaks about his philosophical origins and the formation of his views. Izutsu died before the publication of his selected works was complete. Thus, this piece could well be thought of as summing up his intellectual conclusions.

In any event, ideas for me from the very outset have been assumed to be not a perennial, organized philosophical system but rather an existential, semantic, conceptual field, organic and fluid, with language, natural and cultural landscape and ethnicity as its axes, in the environs of which ideas appear and crystallize.<sup>48</sup>

The sentence may seem casual, but it includes several terms that are important when considering Toshihiko Izutsu's position in the world outside Japan. "An existential, semantic, conceptual field, organic and fluid, with language, natural and cultural landscape and ethnicity as its axes, in the environs of which ideas appear and crystallize" is what Izutsu calls "culture." For Toshihiko Izutsu "Culture," along with the Orient, consciousness, essence, meaning and WORD, is a key term, an important technical term. Culture is not a static social phenomenon; it is a living, and constantly changing, organism that encompasses language, art, religion and customs not to mention history. There is a collection of his lectures entitled *Isurāmu bunka* (1981; Islamic culture).<sup>49</sup> Here, too, the title was carefully chosen.

In the passage cited above, Izutsu originally wrote 永遠不易・唯一普遍, the Japanese equivalent of "eternal, immutable, unique, universal," which he annotated with the English word "perennial." Associated with this latter word is a group of thinkers who form a major international current of thought known as the Traditionalist or Perennial school. Foremost among them one can cite René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Martin Lings and Seyyed Hossein Nasr.<sup>50</sup> Traditionalist expression is not necessarily limited to intellectual formats. Schuon was an outstanding artist and wrote poetry. Coomaraswamy, who was an art historian rather than a philosopher, dealt with perennial beauty; his works influenced the composer John Cage.

Although Izutsu's language in the passage cited above seems mild, the statement should probably be read as a forthright declaration of the differences between the Traditionalist school and his own philosophy. Had that not been the case, there would have been no need for him to go to the trouble of annotating characters meaning "eternal, immutable, unique, universal" with the word "perennial." He did so because the technical term *philosophia perennis*, implying true philosophy, is the most important key term of the Traditionalist school. Tradition with a capital T does not refer to the historical transmission of spirituality. It connotes a noumenal or ur-religious reality that is passed down directly from the transcendental Creator. "Primordial" in the sense of original or fundamental has become another important concept of the Traditionalist school. Primordial is different from primitive.

It does not simply signify going back in time. The concept, rather, is a-temporal. The expression “primordial tradition” or *tradition primordiale* is also used.

To encounter the primordial tradition is nothing less than to directly experience the manifestation of Absolute Mind, a synchronic, dynamic Reality that even now continues its unceasing work of creation. The Traditionalists call the path to this truly real Reality *Religio perennis* or *Sophia perennis*. They believe that beyond the differences in the phenomenal world—religious, intellectual, cultural—exists an eternal, immutable, unique, universal, i.e. perennial, Reality that is omnipresent and not subject to any spatio-temporal limitations. Izutsu is not saying that a perennial Reality does not exist. But he would probably not argue for the existence of a truth that transcends cultural universals. “It is impossible for people to shed their cultural traditions as easily as they take off their clothes,” Izutsu writes.<sup>51</sup> As this suggests, he believed that there are, in fact, great dangers and intellectual pitfalls in overlooking cultural differences.

I alluded earlier to Asín Palacios, who claimed that the influences of Islām and Ibn ‘Arabī are found in the basic structure of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. The attitudes of the Traditionalist school and Izutsu toward this phenomenon tell us something about the differences between them. Izutsu does not deny that the influence of Sufism spread to Italy via Spain; to the contrary, he thought highly of the work of Asín Palacios, who intuitively understood complexly intertwined cultural phenomena and backed up his research with subtle reasoning. As we know from the foreword to the 1981 translation of a work by R.A. Nicholson, Izutsu’s assessment of Asín Palacios did not change throughout his lifetime. There he cited the name of Asín Palacios along with other giants of Islamic studies such as Massignon, German Orientalist Theodor Nöldeke, and Nicholson himself.<sup>52</sup>

Nasr is similar in his appreciation of Asín Palacios, but the emphasis in his assessment is different. “Dante . . . reveals many profound similarities with the Ṣūfīs, not only because of a certain historical contact with them through the Order of the Temple, but primarily because he depicts fundamentally the same spiritual experiences and a similar version of the Universe in the context of the Christian tradition.”<sup>53</sup> As

this statement shows, what Nasr values about Asín Palacios's thesis is not Asín Palacios as a scholar developing a theory of culture, but his elucidation of the metaphysical dimension in which Islām and Christianity meet, i.e. the existence of Tradition.

Schuon in his later years spoke frankly about his ideas in an interview.<sup>54</sup> What he talked about there was, first and foremost, the sharp distinction between *Atma* and *Maya*, Reality vs. Illusion. For the Traditionalist school, a discussion of an “organic” phenomenon “with language, natural and cultural landscape and ethnicity as its axes, in the environs of which ideas appear and crystallize” would not be regarded as a Realistic pursuit but would refer merely to the Illusion that conceals it.

The text cited earlier, “*Chosakushū no kankō ni atatte*” (On the publication of my selected works), also serves as an epilogue to *Shinpi tetsugaku*, which comprises volume 1. In that work, Izutsu had emphasized that the completion of the *anabasis*, the way up in fervent pursuit of the Ultimate, is only the midway point in the *via mystica*. “A person who thoroughly explores the world of Ideas and reverently enters the secret inner chambers of transcendent life has the sacred duty to come back down to the phenomenal world, ignite the flame of transcendent life in its very midst and work diligently toward the idealization of the relative world,” he says.<sup>55</sup> In other words, although achieving enlightenment may occur during *anabasis*, nothing will come of it if it ends there. Rather, it was Izutsu's firm conviction, it would be fair to say, that the mystic's true mission lay in the *katabasis*, in returning from the realm of the Absolute to the phenomenal world and “idealizing” it.

Rather than affirming the existence of the other world, “the idealization of the relative world” means discovering and nurturing the seeds of eternity within “culture.” Izutsu does not assume that the noumenal world is a place where the various religions and ideologies are in accord with one another; he emphatically calls attention to the importance of discerning the true nature of each as they exist parallel to one other. For Izutsu, *katabasis* is not a matter of understanding the phenomenal world in a noumenal-world-like way; it is a matter of revealing the noumenal world in a phenomenal-world-like way. That is also what “philosophy” meant to Izutsu.

What is common to the Traditionalist school—it appears in a particularly austere form in Guénon and Schuon—is the rejection of philosophy. Schuon made such a sharp distinction between philosophy and metaphysics that he was even wary of using the term *philosophia perennis* on the grounds that it was too suggestive of “philosophy.” For the Traditionalists, “philosophy” in its present sense is the antonym of *sophia*. Nowadays, when metaphysics is treated as if it were a branch of philosophy and what is central to it is human reason alone, philosophers confine themselves to expressing what can be rationally understood. In so doing, they have completely lost sight of the original meaning of philosophy—the love (*philo-*) of wisdom (*sophia*). It is metaphysics, and metaphysics alone that is engaged in carrying on the Tradition. Indeed, philosophy in the modern sense obscures the Tradition, Schuon believed.

A similar contrast also occurs between ur-religion and religions. By “religions” is meant the existing faith-based communities such as Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islām, Hinduism, Shintō, etc. At their genesis, these religions are strongly colored by the Tradition, but, the Traditionalist school believes, as a result of long-preserved doctrines and ideological infighting, Wisdom is hidden so deep within religions that it is impossible for anyone to easily get a glimpse of it. Traditionalists do not reject religion, but, they explain, one must look beyond the various religions in order to find what is truly religious, i.e. ur-religious. The title of Schuon’s magnum opus, *De l’unité transcendante des religions* (1948; *The Transcendent Unity of Religion*, 1953), a work that T.S. Eliot praised highly, succinctly sets forth the views of the Traditionalist school.

Elucidating the Tradition is like repairing a broken piece of pottery. With the passage of time, the shards have been whipped up by the wind, washed away by water, carried off by human hands and scattered to the ends of the earth. Restoring it to its original shape might even seem impossible. And yet, while it is certainly impossible to find it intact in the “exoteric dimension,” it surely exists in the “esoteric dimension,” i.e. the transcendental dimension in which the unity of ur-religion is revealed, the place where the Tradition manifests itself. What makes it materialize is what the Traditionalists call metaphysics or ur-religion. The Traditionalists might fairly be described as those

who transcend the differences among philosophies and religions and make the reality of the Tradition and Wisdom appear in time.

What I would like to consider here, however, is the Traditionalists' use of the key word "unity." As can be seen from the title of Schuon's magnum opus, it is not a superficial consensus of "religions" they are seeking; it is the unity of "Religion." The Traditionalists are neither syncretists nor what is commonly called religious pluralists; they are pure monists. We saw earlier Ibn 'Arabī's view of the "unity of existence," the view that regards "beings" as self-extensions and self-manifestations of "Being." The theory of unity in the Traditionalist school is extremely close to that of Ibn 'Arabī. Both Toshihiko Izutsu and the Traditionalists are in agreement in recognizing the unity of Being, but they differ as to where that unity is found. Izutsu does not deny the esoteric dimension. He recognizes, too, that it is the place where unity holds sway. But unity is not confined only to the noumenal world; it can manifest itself in the phenomenal world as well, he believes.

Guénon and Schuon both had close ties with Sufism, the spiritual base from which Ibn 'Arabī arose. The two men were both intellectuals and practitioners of religious austerities. Guénon was born in France in 1886; Schuon in Switzerland in 1907. Both had once been devout Catholics, but they believed that the Catholic Church, as a religion, was no longer carrying on the Tradition, and each, independently of the other, went his own way until ultimately they came to the world of Islām and became *ṣūfīs*. Guénon was a solitary thinker. Remote not just in a metaphorical sense, he lived alone in Cairo and spent his days meditating and writing. The Traditionalist school was born in 1936, when, after a lengthy correspondence, Schuon came to visit Guénon. The two would meet again only once, the following year. The Traditionalists begin with René Guénon. Temporally, it was a twentieth-century event and could even be called a "new" school of thought. Although decidedly influenced by Guénon, Schuon was no mere epigone. In 1948, the two clashed over the Christian sacraments. Not just a difference of opinion, it was an incident that might even be called an intellectual falling-out. But the feud was notably played out among the two men's followers rather than between the principals themselves, who never stopped corresponding with one another. In the pursuit of the Tradition,

a divergence of views was probably a secondary matter. After Guénon's death, Schuon left an impartial appraisal of him.<sup>56</sup>

Nasr represents the generation that came after Schuon. If Guénon's solitary pursuit of the Tradition had been broadened and deepened by Schuon, its position in intellectual circles was secured by Nasr. The world first became aware of Nasr in 1964 with the publication of *Three Muslim Sages*, based on lectures given at Harvard University. He was thirty-one at the time. By mentioning the name of Coomaraswamy and citing Schuon in the bibliography of this work, Nasr did not conceal his affiliation with the Traditionalist school. This was during Vatican II. At a time when even the term "interfaith dialogue" did not exist, to be a Traditionalist was to be the target of prejudice and discrimination and conferred virtually no academic advantages. Not only was Traditionalist thought not recognized as a legitimate subject of scholarship; it was, with a few exceptions, shunned in religious circles. In fact, according to Nasr, in the mid 1960s, Corbin was expelled from the Académie for referring to Schuon in a paper.<sup>57</sup> It would be roughly a decade later, in 1974, that Eliade discussed Guénon.<sup>58</sup> Thus, it has not been all that long ago since the world was freed from the biased view that the Traditionalists were heretical thinkers, and gradually began to recognize that they constituted a group that deserves to play its part in thought and scholarship.

As can be seen from the passage cited earlier, while Izutsu makes plain his differences from the Perennialists, that does not mean he underrated their importance. Leo Schaya, on whose works the study of the Qabbālāh and Jewish mysticism in *Ishiki to honshitsu* was based, was a member of the Traditionalist school; as this shows, Izutsu was receptive to the emergence of the intellectual current known as Traditionalism. There were two works by Schaya and several by Nasr in Izutsu's library, but none by Guénon or Schuon. And yet it is inconceivable that Izutsu would have been unfamiliar with the Traditionalist school's two foremost thinkers. Nasr was so decisively influenced by them that he went so far as to declare that no one had read Schuon as thoroughly as he had. Izutsu and Nasr would later become colleagues at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy. Perhaps the two discussed the Traditionalist school.

Judging from the name, one might be apt to assume that the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy was a research center for Islamic thought, but that would merely be a preconception based on the post-revolutionary Iranian regime. As the fact that its journal was called *Sophia perennis* clearly shows, the Academy was a place to pursue “perennial” wisdom; it was not Islamic, it was Traditionalist. The Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy was founded in 1974 by a grant from the Empress of Iran under the then imperial system to honor Nasr’s nomination by Raymond Klibansky as an official member of the Institut International de Philosophie. Nasr, of course, served as the Academy’s director. He invited Izutsu along with Corbin and others to the Academy. William Chittick, who edited *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (2007), studied under Izutsu during his stay there. In pre-revolutionary Iran, Islām was not an absolute religion. Rather, the Shah enacted policies of religious tolerance; the Iranian revolution was, in part, a reaction against these liberal policies.

As can be seen from the inclusion of an essay by Izutsu in a 2003 anthology of essays primarily by members of the Traditionalist school entitled *Seeing God Everywhere*<sup>59</sup> — the title is taken from Schuon — even outside Japan, Izutsu has been regarded as a Traditionalist because of his relationship with Nasr and Chittick. But to speak of a closeness between Izutsu and the Perennialists from such circumstances is only scratching the surface. It should be clear from the following statement that the existential distance from the Traditionalist school that Izutsu felt was by no means insignificant.

If there are philosophers who try to formulate a permanent, unchanging (?) abstract moral philosophy, I don’t think I would deny the value of such an undertaking. But, even in a case like this, I would insist that, before developing such abstract speculations as these, philosophers must self-consciously pass through the even denser realm of differences in linguistic and cultural paradigms.<sup>60</sup>

One can readily imagine that “a permanent, unchanging (?) abstract moral philosophy” refers to Traditionalist thought. But, as his words imply, that did not mean that Izutsu rejected the Traditionalist school. It was Izutsu, after all, commenting on the differences between the

Hellenic God and the Hebraic God, who perceived that they did not indicate differences in God but merely differences among theologians. Perhaps, given the critical state that religion was in, he understood the inevitability that a 'Traditionalist current of thought would arise. In *Sufism and Taoism*, Izutsu used the term *philosophia perennis* and regarded its actualization as the fundamental objective behind the writing of that study.<sup>61</sup> He was no less desirous for a *philosophia perennis* than the 'Traditionalists. But Izutsu also regarded it as taboo to construct his own philosophy on the presupposition that a "Tradition" exists. This conviction remained unchanged from the time of *Sufism and Taoism*. Having disclosed his inner aspirations, he did not conceal in his own work the acute sense that the ideal dimension was much too far away to catch a glimpse of. What human beings call "God" is, after all, only a tiny portion of "God" and falls far short of the transcendental Absolute. How can those who see only a fragment speak of the whole? It was from doubts such as these that he could not avert his eyes.

What would happen, Izutsu asks, if all the instances of the word *koi* 恋 in the *Manyōshū* were translated as "love"? Does the Japanese word *seigi* 正義 mean the same thing as the English word "justice"? As he observes in *Kōran o yomu* (1983; Reading the Kōran), the Arabic word *dīn*, meaning "judgment," when used in certain contexts, is not a judgment of good and evil, but is directly connected with the regeneration of the world including the resurrection of the dead. Needless to say, the same holds true for the word "God." For Izutsu, differences in language are not merely differences in vocabulary; they express differences in reality. For that reason, not only does he consider translation in the strict sense impossible, he also believes that human beings are incapable of completely conveying what they mean in words. On that premise, he became a philosopher who expressed himself in words. And it is precisely for that very reason that he learned more than thirty languages, read the classics of the East and the West in the languages in which they were originally written, and desired the birth of a meta-language, a common philosophical language.

The same doubts he harbored about language he directed toward the 'Tradition, i.e. toward the "perennial" Reality of the 'Traditionalist school. He did not choose the path of a 'Tradition that transcended culture;

rather, he recognized that diverse cultures, too, are manifestations of the universal. It is not a matter of envisaging a transcendental dimension somewhere beyond the points that cultures have in common; the unity of the Transcendent exists beyond their differences, Izutsu believed.

The world *manifests itself* through semantic articulation. All phenomena and all things are concrete manifestations of a person's subjective semantic articulation.<sup>62</sup>

This passage was written in the last year of Izutsu's life, at the time he was revising *Imi no kōzō* (1992; The structure of meaning). It would be fair to say it encapsulates Toshihiko Izutsu's philosophy. Culture in the phenomenal world is non-transcendent. Superficially, it is nothing more than a phenomenon. Yet writhing in its depths is "meaning," which causes phenomena to manifest themselves. What we ought to take away from this is that meaning does not occur in the noumenal world; it is hidden along with "reality" in the phenomenal world. It may be possible to discuss the noumenal world. But human beings do not live in the noumenal world; they live in the phenomenal world. Philosophy must on no account divorce itself from the realities of this world, Izutsu believed.

The view that, at the highest level, all religions converge on Tradition is not merely an empty theoretical argument; as the writings of the thinkers who belong to the Traditionalist school fully convey, it is backed up by their existential experiences. Izutsu would presumably acknowledge this. But, he would argue, there is no single point at which religions converge; they are parallel in Otto's sense. It is not a matter of presupposing a reality that transcends culture; it is cultural reality itself that gives expression to the transcendence of the Transcendent, he believed.

The following quotation is from *Ishiki to honshitsu*. "Culture" or "spirituality" could just as well be substituted for "essence" here.

There was a unique ancient Greek system of "essence" in ancient Greece and a unique ancient Chinese system of "essence" in ancient China. Neither Soerates, who gave rise to a new philosophical

movement by searching for an eternal, immutable “essence” (Idea) of things, nor Confucius, who likewise sought for the “essence” (Truth) of things and built a system to “rectify names” based on it, were able to escape the limitations of the system of “essence” that their respective cultures assumed. “Essence” was not something they created; it was simply something they had to find and correctly understand.<sup>63</sup>

I know of no statement in which Toshihiko Izutsu’s theory of “essence” is expressed with such absolute clarity as this. Śaṅkara’s *advaita* monism in ancient India; Lao-tzū and Chuang-tzū’s ‘Taoism and Confucius’ rectification of names in China; Plato’s theory of Ideas in ancient Greece — Izutsu is not arguing that they are all the same; each, from its own unique vantage point, sheds light upon the truth, he believed.

All these sages formulated their own ideas, knowing that they could not escape the framework of the “essence” system presupposed by their cultures. “‘Essence’ was not something they created; it was simply something they had to find and correctly understand.” This sentence shows how acutely aware of cultural differences Izutsu was. It also points out the dangers of seeing unity carelessly. What Izutsu deals with in *Ishiki to honshitsu* is not the unity of different cultures or spiritualities. His focus is not on their agreement but on their subtle differences. Differences do not only give rise to friction; rather, they show that there can be many different routes by which to reach the universal. Seeing the One in the Many is a perspective that permeates *Ishiki to honshitsu*.

Differences among religions seem perplexing to those proceeding along the way to God, and the multiplicity of philosophies appears to make the discovery of truth difficult. But, as Ibn ‘Arabī made clear, if all things primordially are articulated self-extensions of Being, religion does not conceal God; it can be said to be God’s persona. Culture, too, is nothing less than a symbol of Being. Multiple personae may sometimes lead us into confusion, but the fact that there are many ways to God may be a blessing as well.



## CHAPTER NINE

# Consciousness and Essence

### On the Eve of “Ishiki to honshitsu”

ERANOS, THE SUMMER OF 1979—Detlef Ingo Lauf, an authority on Tibetan Tantra, speaking passionately into Toshihiko Izutsu’s ear, as if blowing something in, tells him, “We Westerners must now understand Oriental wisdom *from within*. Because that is where the potential for developing a completely new higher knowledge is hidden.” I often recall those words, Izutsu writes in the Afterword to *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; Consciousness and essence).<sup>1</sup> As we have already seen, the foundations for this work had been laid during the dozen or so years in which Izutsu was active at Eranos. In its subject matter, perspectives and structure, this work is permeated with the Eranos spirit. Serialization began in June 1980 and ended seven installments later in February 1982. Izutsu continued to attend Eranos while writing “Ishiki to honshitsu.”<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, italics will be used to refer to *Ishiki to honshitsu* the book and quotation marks will be used for the essay serialized under that name in the periodical *Shisō* (Thought) that forms the core of that book. For the most part, it is this long essay that will be discussed here.

The mission of Eranos is to elucidate the existence of *nous*—Intellect—and the noumenal world. But human beings cannot experience

the purely noumenal world directly. If they could, it would not be purely noumenal. Harnessing the power of traditional religions, philosophy, the arts and cutting-edge science, the participants at Eranos aspired to make the noumenal world open and accessible to all humankind as an experience that, if not primal, could be regarded as coming as close as humanly possible to it. Their mission was nothing less than to find the place, midway between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds, where primal events occur. The discovery of a transcendent-oriented *Zwischenwelt* became the aim of Eranos. Adolf Portmann, who embodied the Eranos spirit, called the region that lay between the “macrocosmos” and the “microcosmos” the “Mediocosmos.” Corbin called it *mundus imaginalis*; Izutsu the *M*-realm, and to the seething dynamism in that realm he gave the name “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness.” The difference in names is not the issue. What is extraordinary is that, despite differences in their ur-experiences, the activities of each of these men were carried out collaboratively in the true sense.

The human world and the transcendental world form a continuum, and the latter subsumes the former. In addition, there exists an intermediate zone, perceptible to human beings, where at every moment that truth arises. For the participants at Eranos, Izutsu included, wisdom did not mean the mere accumulation of knowledge; it was something that issues forth from the mediocosmos. For them, “to know” meant to chip away at the previously known information that had accumulated in the sensible world and get back to the noumenal dimension. In this process, the One who truly speaks is not a human being. Human beings only witness and report the events that It has manifested. As is frequently seen, what outstanding thinkers discuss is not what they themselves think but something the true Speaker has said. Plato and Aristotle called this Speaker *nous*; Ibn ‘Arabī “Being”; Suhrawardī “light”; Izutsu “WORD.”

Upon hearing Lauf’s words, Izutsu writes that he thought, “Instead of waiting for Westerners, shouldn’t we Easterners ourselves first make the effort to understand, personally and existentially, our own philosophic traditions once again from within?” The words “personally” and “existentially” have weighty significance for Izutsu. For him as a philosopher, they are synonymous with saying he was staking his life on it.

“To . . . understand, personally and existentially, . . . from within . . . is not just to study [these traditions] scientifically and philologically.” It is nothing less than to dedicate one’s whole self to the “effort of going one step further, internalizing the various traditions of Oriental thought in our own consciousness and, from within the magnetic field of Oriental philosophy that is spontaneously formed there, bringing forth a new philosophy in a global context.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1978, the year before the outbreak of the Iranian revolution forced Toshihiko Izutsu to return to Japan, *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949; Philosophy of mysticism) was republished. The following is from the Foreword written at that time.

Even if I were subsequently to consider writing a sequel to this work [*Shinpi tetsugaku*], were I so inclined, I would probably not take the route that leads from the Old Testament to Christianity. For me, now, Jewish mysticism from the Qabbālāh to Hasidism is a far more important line of thought in the Old Testament tradition, and, as I said before, [I find] Indian esoteric philosophy and the mystical thought of China and of Islām vastly more interesting.<sup>4</sup>

This statement, which provides a glimpse of the areas of Oriental philosophy Izutsu had in mind—Jewish mysticism, Indian esoteric philosophy, the mystical thought of China and Islām—foreshadows the appearance of “Ishiki to honshitsu.” As the words “were I so inclined” suggests when he wrote the preceding passage, he probably never imagined he would be returning to Japan the following year and start writing books in Japanese again. Izutsu, who had won international acclaim not only for his Islamic scholarship but also for his studies of philosophical semantics, was affiliated at the time with the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, played a central role at Eranos and was the author of many works in English.

At the end of January 1979, Izutsu boarded a plane at the Tehran airport bound for Athens. The plane he was on was the last rescue mission sent by the Japanese government on the eve of the Iranian revolution. Around the same time, a plane carrying the Ayatollah Khomeini had left Athens and was heading to Iran in the opposite direction.

Prerevolutionary Iran had not been an Islamic state. The Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi II, had enacted policies providing not only for the separation of church and state but guaranteeing equal opportunity for non-Muslims to practice their religious faiths. During the so-called White Revolution, agrarian reforms, women's suffrage, educational reforms, etc., were successively implemented. These Shah-led reforms at times spawned religious and political purges and repression, and the rapid pace of modernization gave rise to poverty and economic disparity, resulting in great suffering among the citizenry. At the root of these policies was the effort to deny absolute status to Islām. And the priority given to modernization rather than to defending the Islamic tradition would become a primary factor behind the unrest. Khomeini was diametrically opposed to the White Revolution. Because in those days power still resided with the Shah, Khomeini was forced into exile in 1964. Fifteen years later the Iranian revolution occurred. In mid-January, about two weeks before Izutsu left Tehran, the Shah and the Empress, carrying a box containing Iranian soil, flew abroad on the pretext of seeking medical treatment. They would never set foot in Iran again.

Discontent over social deprivation was not the sole motivating force behind the Iranian revolution. The eruption that occurred went well beyond what modern political science could have predicted. In opposition to the Shah's vision of a renaissance of ancient Iranian culture, a spiritual impulse flared up among Khomeini's followers desiring instead the revival of Shī'ite Islām. Preparations were under way to call back from abroad their absent imām. In the Shī'ite sect, the imām is the successor to Ali, the fourth caliph, in a direct spiritual line of descent from the Prophet Muḥammad. That succession continued until the twelfth imām, Muḥammad al-Muntazar, whom Shī'ites believe is "the hidden one." Although nonbelievers claim he was assassinated, Shī'ites say he went into seclusion. This Occultation (*ghayba*) continues even to this day, and the faithful fervently await the imām's second coming. Until that day, a spiritual leader must serve as his substitute. This is what Khomeini called the Governance of the Jurist (*velāyat-e faqīh*). As the title "Imām Khomeini" symbolizes, after the revolution, he was recognized as having absolute authority over both politics and religion.

If it had been his intention, Izutsu could have left Tehran much sooner. By the autumn of the previous year, “arson, assaults and assassinations by bloodthirsty mobs were daily occurrences everywhere throughout Tehran. Just below the window of our apartment in central Tehran, the rat-ta-tat-tat of machinegun fire would suddenly pierce the heavy darkness of night,” he writes.<sup>5</sup> At the time, “aided by superb colleagues” at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, Izutsu was proceeding in tandem with work “centered on editing and annotating unpublished Islamic philosophical texts [in areas such as] non-Aristotelian speech act theory in the basic theory of Islamic jurisprudence, the metaphysical foundations of Sufism, etc. In an unusually tense atmosphere, we held regular meetings and enthusiastically pressed ahead with our research.”<sup>6</sup>

International society did not believe that a chaotic Iran could ensure the safety of non-Iranians. Izutsu decided to leave the country. “Leaving all this behind,” he “unwillingly departed Iran.” The following passage conveys his feelings at the time.

At night, a depressing rain was falling heavily. Suddenly, from the rooftop of a nearby building, a mournful cry praising Allah rang out. Immediately, other voices from the surrounding rooftops took up the call. This was a fierce challenge to the imperial regime. Government troops took aim from below. As I looked up at the dark sky, for some reason the word “fate” flitted through my mind.<sup>7</sup>

Izutsu called himself a “fatalist” in the colloquy with Shōtarō Yasuoka.<sup>8</sup> In this instance, “fate” does not refer to a predestined outcome, but rather to an agency that on occasion intervenes in human life in forceful and revelatory ways and requires us to change the direction in which we are proceeding. On the one hand, Izutsu felt an unflagging interest in his work in Iran, but “strangely, not the slightest feeling of regret at leaving it all behind ever occurred to me,” he writes,<sup>9</sup> a clear statement of how he lived his life. But that was not all; no sooner had he sat down in his seat on the rescue plane than Izutsu began thinking of what he would do next. On the plane, he embraced the “feeling, somewhere between hope and resolve, that from now on I would try to develop my ideas on Oriental philosophy in Japanese and express them in Japanese.”<sup>10</sup>

Why did Toshihiko Izutsu write “Ishiki to honshitsu” in Japanese? The fact that he had taken up residence in Japan is, in his case, not by itself a sufficient reason. It would not have been difficult for him to live in Japan and continue writing in English for a worldwide audience; far from it, it would have been an extension of the work he had been doing up to that point. Even after his return to Japan, he did not stop presenting papers at academic conferences abroad. Indeed, he gave lectures in English not long after his return to Japan. Considering the environment he was working in at the time, it would have been more natural for him to write in English. There were readers for his English-language works all over the world. In fact, he was in the process of revising *Sufism and Taoism* (1966–1967) at the same time that he was writing “Ishiki to honshitsu.” On the other hand, Toshihiko Izutsu, who knew more than thirty languages, was deeply aware of the decisive role played by one’s mother tongue. People can choose their primary language by changing their environment, but no one can choose their native language. For Toshihiko Izutsu, WORD is inseparable from language, but not confined to it. Just as color is WORD for artists, sound becomes WORD for musicians. In mandala, it is images; in psychology, archetypes. When we look at the life of Ibn ‘Arabī, there are situations in which mutual understanding is achieved not through language, but by the power of feeling, as it were. Feeling, too, is WORD.

“If a Japanese living today were to take up a topic of Oriental philosophy and simply study it at the level of modern consciousness, by that act alone an encounter between Eastern and Western thought would already occur in the field of existential experience, and a blending of Oriental and Occidental perspectives, in short, a kind of comparative philosophy East and West, would be automatically realized.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, if, as a Japanese, he expressed himself in Japanese, a “synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophy” would spontaneously be accomplished. This is how Izutsu describes his motivation for writing “Ishiki to honshitsu.”

Not many readers are likely to nod in agreement at these words, but if they lent an unbiased ear to what Izutsu was saying, he was letting them know what he expected of “a Japanese living today.” What he wanted was not just to finish his essay, but to find readers for it.

They could possibly be his contemporaries, but he was probably hoping for future readers as well. Just as a last will and testament is brought to completion by being read, a literary work is born in the true sense not when it is written but when it is read. And if it is blessed with a reader who not only understands it, but internalizes it, it is reborn and will continue to be reborn. Reading “Ishiki to honshitsu” does not end with an understanding of Toshihiko Izutsu’s intellectual conclusions. This work defies such an easy approach. This book teaches that basic human propositions continue to live on in its readers. Whenever I read this work, I recall a passage that Takaaki Yoshimoto (1924–2012) added to the introduction when his *Kyōdō gensōron* (On collective illusion) was included in his selected works. “How can it have an impact on someone who begrudges the effort and hard work needed to understand it?”<sup>12</sup> It would come as no surprise if Toshihiko Izutsu had addressed the same words to readers of “Ishiki to honshitsu.”

*Ishiki to honshitsu* is Izutsu’s magnum opus. If, for some reason, one could only choose one work by Toshihiko Izutsu to read, it would have to be this book. It is his magnum opus, not in the sense of being a summation of his work, but because one would form the wrong impression of its author if one went ahead without reading it. “There are difficulties with reading a long novel that very closely resemble making one’s way through life.”<sup>13</sup> Hideo Kobayashi’s dictum is not limited to novels. The same could be said of the works of a philosopher who, like Toshihiko Izutsu, had the soul of a poet.

### *Ad Orientem*

At the time that “Ishiki to honshitsu” began to be serialized in the periodical *Shisō* (Thought), Toshihiko Izutsu was sixty-three years old. At the outset, he planned to stop after the second essay, he wrote, but serialization would continue at intervals over two years and ultimately ran to eight installments. “As I kept on writing, I couldn’t put down my pen.”<sup>14</sup> This statement is unlikely to be true in the sense that he came to feel this way as the number of installments began to accumulate. He probably already realized after finishing the first installment that, once complete, this would become his major work. There are clear

differences in the writing style of the first and second installments. The first rapidly traced the course of his life as a philosopher in a way that would connect to the next, but, from the second one on, the tone was different. The subject matter pulled the writer along, a situation similar perhaps to that of a novelist writing a novel whose characters begin to take on a life of their own. If a character in a novel behaves as the author intends, Mauriac says, the novelist is left clutching at sloughed-off skin.<sup>15</sup> A scholarly work is different from a novel, someone may say, but, as can be seen from a glance at *Shinpi tetsugaku, Roshiateki ningen* (1953; Russian humanity) and *Sufism and Taoism*, Izutsu contended that, when the mysteries are revealed, the Speaker is no longer a human being. Cases also exist, like that of Muhammad, that unmistakably indicate the role of a prophet. In ancient Greece, it was philosophers and poets who assumed that function.

It is no accident that “Ishiki to honshitsu” strongly moved readers outside the field of philosophy in a narrow sense—authors such as Shūsaku Endō and Keizō Hino (1929–2002), linguistic philosopher Keizaburō Maruyama (1933–1993) and Jungian psychologist Hayao Kawai (1928–2007). Although “Ishiki to honshitsu” is the most important philosophical essay to have emerged in twentieth-century Japan, it is also a work of “criticism” by Toshihiko Izutsu, who, at one time, both in name and in fact, had been a first-rate literary critic. There is no table of contents for this lengthy essay, which in the paperback version is more than 300 pages long; not only that, there are no subheadings and not a single note. There had been two or three notes in the first installment, but none from the second on, and, at the time the work was published in book form, even those early notes were all woven into the text. This is an unusual format for a scholarly work, but natural for a work of criticism.

“Ishiki to honshitsu” contains several key concepts, but Izutsu does not define them. One of these is the “Orient.” He writes in such a way that the context prepares for the term’s meaning to be revealed. This makes strong demands on the reader not just to understand the words at an intellectual level but to get a feeling for them and learn from experience. The reader is forced to stop looking for information as to the whereabouts of the Orient and wait for it to become self-evident.

The subtitle of the book *Ishiki to honshitsu* is “seishinteki Tōyō o motomete” (In search of the spiritual Orient); for the serialized essay, “Ishiki to honshitsu,” it is “Tōyō tetsugaku no kyōjiteki kōzōka no tame ni” (For a synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophy). And for the volume in the selected works, which was to become the authorized version, the subtitle was changed once again and became “Tōyōteki shii no kōzōteki seigōsei o motomete” (In search of the structural integration of Oriental thought). Although one can tell that the central subject is the Orient, Izutsu did not write about it explicitly. It is only in the colloquies that he refers to the Orient several times.

Izutsu’s Orient includes not just the region called Asia—Japan, China, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Middle East—but also Greece and Russia. We have seen up to now that its range extends from Japanese literature and Japanese thought to Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhist thought—Yocāgāra (Wei Shih), Zen and Shingon esotericism,—Indian philosophy, Islamic philosophy and even Greek philosophy and Russian literature. For Izutsu, though, its purview sometimes even crosses the Straits of Gibraltar. What lies across those Straits is Spain. To be sure, Ibn ‘Arabī was born in Murcia, and Averroes in Córdoba, but Spain was also the birthplace of the Discalced Carmelite Order, the home of Teresa of Avila and the motherland of John of the Cross, whom Izutsu at one time regarded as the apogee of mysticism. Crossing those Straits in the opposite direction, one arrives in Morocco, the gateway to the African continent. In the fourth century, Augustine was born in what was then the Numidian city of Tagaste. “The true successor to the *spirit* of the great mystic Plotinus was not Proclus or Iamblichus but Augustine,” Izutsu once wrote.<sup>16</sup> Plotinus died in Rome, but he was born in Egypt.

But the full scope of Izutsu’s Orient cannot be perceived even by conjuring up a vast territory that crosses several national borders and brings together numerous cultural zones. For he regarded it as a mental and spiritual concept rather than a geographical region. The Orient is also an “imaginal” place, predicated on his own existential experiences. Henry Corbin coined the concept “imaginal” by translating Suhrawardī’s *‘ālam al-mithāl*, the world of figurative similitudes, into the Latin phrase *mundus imaginalis*. Suhrawardī, an Islamic

mystic philosopher who lived in the twelfth century, was also a theosophist who saw himself as the inheritor of the wisdom passed down from Pythagoras and Plato. He regarded it as his mission to purify Islām completely. The Islamic way would be brought to perfection, he believed, when Islām was purged to the point that it ceased to be Islamic. Whereas Ibn ‘Arabī had been shunned by Islamic conservatives, Suhrawardī was targeted by them; he is thought to have been assassinated. Izutsu left a comprehensive study of Ibn ‘Arabī in English, but no definitive work on Suhrawardī. He had planned to translate Suhrawardī’s magnum opus, *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* (The Philosophy of Illumination), but it never materialized. His feeling of awe and respect for Suhrawardī, however, was in no way inferior to what he felt for Ibn ‘Arabī. Commenting on Suhrawardī in “Ishiki to honshitsu,” he said:

He [Suhrawardī] is not speaking about mere *images* of angels. For him, angels really exist. Angels may not exist in our world, but they do exist in a different dimension of being, what he called the “Orient” or the “land of matutinal light.”<sup>17</sup>

Izutsu was probably like Suhrawardī in believing that angels really exist. The Orient for him may have been Suhrawardī’s “land of matutinal light,” “a different dimension of being.”

With this one word “Orient,” Toshihiko Izutsu confronts us with the intangible traditions of human wisdom. “I hope to separate out Oriental philosophy as a whole from the complex historical associations that surround its various traditions, transfer those traditions to the level of synchronic ideas and structuralize them there anew,” Izutsu writes at the beginning of “Ishiki to honshitsu.”<sup>18</sup> The work’s aim is clearly summed up in this one sentence. By “structuralize,” he means to apply the flesh of logic to an invisible entity. Just as WORD for Izutsu transcends the realm of linguistics, “structure” transcends the category of structuralism. In contrast to structuralism, which tries to bring the reality of the other world into a world we regard as real, Izutsu considered it to be the aim of philosophy to deal with the “structure” of the other world. “Synchronic” connotes an expository technique that frees thinkers and thoughts from the axis of time, gathers them together in the present, and treats the issues they pose as “contemporary” problems.

Synchronicity is a Jungian term referring to the experience of events that may be unrelated causally but that are felt to be related meaningfully. In Jung's use of the term, however, although coincidences are events that occur synchronically, his real aim is not to draw the reader's attention to synchronic phenomena. Rather, these are merely corroborations of an underlying pattern, proof that the world is a diverse, multilayered reality that causes synchronicity to occur. Synchronicity breaks through the barrier of time. The irreversibility of time is not antithetical to eternity. Rather, the fact that time, once past, can never come back again is proof of eternity's existence. Eternity is not a long duration of time; eternity is always "now." The past exists as past; eternity, provided human beings make the necessary preparations, always manifests itself in the present. Eliade calls anyone who has had an encounter with the sacred, be it a shaman, prophet, mystic, apostle or saint, "*homo religiosus*," and observes that they are all unfettered by the shackles of time and space. The manifestation of the sacred, which he calls "hierophany," is, in other words, nothing less than the beginning of eternity.

Izutsu, who attempted to develop a synchronic approach to Oriental philosophy, did not underrate the irreversibility of history. Indeed, he wrote one work after another that deals empirically with the historical development of thought. His earliest books, *Arabia shisōshi* (1941; History of Arabic thought), *Shinpi tetsugaku* and even *Roshiateki ningen*, could not have been written without a clear historical perspective. While his scholarly methodology may have been empirical, "synchronic" connotes an existential attitude. The two are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, if his scholarship had not been supported by synchronic events, wouldn't it have been difficult to be empirical in the true sense? Events that we regard as fortuitous may, on a different level, be inevitable. Synchronic events clearly teach us that phenomenal-world rationalism does not necessarily apply in the noumenal world. Moreover, the synchronic dimension is a-temporal not timeless; it has a dynamism different from that of the phenomenal world. To be synchronic is nothing else than to stand on the multilayered nature of time.

When "Ishiki to honshitsu" began to evolve in earnest, Izutsu step by step began to deal with Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), the great

scholar of Japanese philology and philosophy. Norinaga's attitude in writing about the *Kojiki* (ca 711–712; Records of ancient matters), the oldest existing chronicle of Japanese history, is reminiscent of Izutsu's in writing “Ishiki to honshitsu.” Scholarly accuracy and synchronicity coexist in ways that are both multilayered and three-dimensional. Be it written works or people who lived in the past, if called upon, they would respond—didn't both Izutsu and Norinaga believe that? For them, “reading” was an activity that went beyond intellectual understanding.

For that reason, naturally, WORDs must be clear. To understand, through a chain of clear WORDs that a writer has juxtaposed, the meaning behind them that existed from the beginning in the writer's mind—i.e. their prelinguistic reality—that is what I call “reading.”<sup>19</sup>

If he had not had an existential experience of a similar kind, Norinaga would probably never have completed his commentary on the *Kojiki*, nor would he have been able to dedicate thirty-five years of his life to doing so. For Norinaga, Hieda no Are, the *Kojiki*'s eighth-century compiler, may have been his predecessor, but he was not a person of the distant past. Just as Norinaga thought of the *Kojiki* as a living thing, Toshihiko Izutsu treated the sages who appear in “Ishiki to honshitsu” as if they were present here and now and invited the reader to join them there.

### A Spiritual Autobiography

Toshihiko Izutsu left virtually no biographical material—no autobiography, memoirs, collected letters or diary; or, at least, nothing of this sort has been made public. But a careful reading of “Ishiki to honshitsu” allows readers not only to see firsthand the fruits of the author's thinking but also to witness his philosophical and spiritual progress. “Ishiki to honshitsu” can be read as Izutsu's intellectual and spiritual autobiography. Just as the record of a poet's life is found not in a chronology but in his/her poems, the life of a philosopher is recorded in his/her writings.

In Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, the twelfth book, in which he developed his ideas about God, has traditionally been treated as an independent work known as Book Lambda. When reading "Ishiki to honshitsu" as spiritual autobiography, the first and tenth sections, I believe, are Izutsu's Book Lambda. It is probably far more beneficial for an understanding of Toshihiko Izutsu's spiritual progress to read Section I several times than to aimlessly proceed any further. The first person Izutsu alludes to there is Jean-Paul Sartre. No sooner has he said that he is undertaking the "synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophy" than he begins discussing this twentieth-century French existential philosopher.

In "Derida no naka no 'Yudayajin'" (The "Jew" in Derrida), Izutsu deals with the intellectual and spiritual Jewishness of Jacques Derrida;<sup>20</sup> the same subject matter is taken up in his discussion of Sartre. Sartre was a leading French writer—and a Jew. No matter how often Sartre tried to deny God, a Hebraic spirituality animated his mind. Like a desert plant that has no need of fertile soil, Jewishness continued to live on in him even without the nourishment of faith. Izutsu became fascinated with Sartre when he read *La Nausée* (1938; *Nausea*, 1965). Reading that work, it would be fair to say, was a life-changing event. His encounter with this novel even seems to have led him to philosophy. In Japan at the time, few knew Sartre's name; even in intellectual circles, knowledge of, or information about, him was limited. Suddenly, out of nowhere, rumors had come to people's attention that he had caused a furor in Europe; that was about all that was known. The only person in Japan to have a copy of the recently published *L'Être et le néant* (1943; *Being and Nothingness*, 1956),<sup>21</sup> rumor had it, was the philosopher Arimasa Mori (1911–1976), and he wouldn't show it to anyone. "And even if I did, it's much too difficult for ordinary Japanese to be able to understand it," Mori is supposed to have said. "Whether true or false, at any rate, that was the story. . . . This rumor thoroughly inflamed my curiosity," Izutsu wrote.<sup>22</sup> The person who passed on Arimasa Mori's comment to Izutsu may have been Masao Sekine. In an essay contributed to an insert accompanying Izutsu's selected works, Sekine writes that he was the intermediary who introduced Toshihiko Izutsu and Arimasa Mori to one another after the war.<sup>23</sup>

One day, Izutsu found a copy of Kōji Shirai's translation of *La Nausée* in a pile of books at a bookstore near Keio University. Because Izutsu mentions its distinctive red cover, it seems to have been the one published by Seijisha in 1947.<sup>24</sup> Although Izutsu had publicly stated that "all foreign works should always be read in the language in which they were written," just this one, he "couldn't be bothered with such precepts and principles" and devoured the translation in two days and two nights.<sup>25</sup> "What Oriental sages from time immemorial have developed in the form of concepts of ontological deconstruction such as *mu* [Non-Being] or *kū* [Nothingness, void or emptiness], Sartre has existentially vomited up and brought into the field of modern philosophy as a kind of failure of language, in short, as the critical consciousness's experience of the collapse of the linguistic-semantic order of existence. The novelty of this personal approach fascinated me" would be the way, many years later, that Izutsu described his impressions of reading this work.<sup>26</sup>

What fascinated him was the "ecstatic" experience of *Nausea's* protagonist, Antoine Roquentin. One day Roquentin is in a park.

The roots of the chestnut tree were sunk in the ground just under my bench. I couldn't remember it was a root any more. The words had vanished and with them the significance of things, their methods of use, and the feeble points of reference which men have traced on their surface. I was sitting, stooping forward, head bowed, alone in front of this black, knotty mass, entirely beastly, which frightened me.<sup>27</sup>

Sartre's vivid description of this existential experience shook Izutsu profoundly. "I know of no other passage that so brilliantly gives shape to the relationship between absolute, unarticulated "Being" and the operation of the human consciousness that produces things, namely "beings," using the meaning of WORDS as clues and drawing fine, segmental lines vertically and horizontally to its surface."<sup>28</sup> The shock of the encounter remained so vivid within him that, even though some forty years had passed, the writing style makes it seem as though it happened just the other day.

What Roquentin encountered was the reality of Tree stripped of its covering. A covering may be something like the layers of skin and flesh

that protect a human being. A person cannot live if the subcutaneous layer is peeled away, and it would probably be difficult to keep on looking at someone in such a state. In the phenomenal world, having skin is an indispensable condition for all things. When someone penetrates through that skin and encounters the reality beneath, human flesh cannot bear it, and the result is nausea. The covering spoken of here is nothing else than what Izutsu calls “essence” in “Ishiki to hōshitsu.”

This [the encounter with *Nausea*] confirmed my belief that the existential foundations for a theory of semantic articulation, which, at the time, had little by little been taking shape within me, possesses a universality that transcends the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. Thereafter, my thinking began to proceed slowly but surely in one direction.<sup>29</sup>

“Thereafter, my thinking began to proceed slowly but surely in one direction” — as these words suggest, the encounter with Sartre became the impetus behind Izutsu’s becoming a philosopher. Sartre’s influence remained strong in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, which was written shortly afterward.

Izutsu was not alone in regarding the protagonist of *Nausea* as a distinctly modern portrait of a mystic. In *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, he compares Roquentin’s experience to what Étienne Gilson had called *une extase vers le bas* (a descending ecstasy).<sup>30</sup> Gilson was a leading twentieth-century French linguistic philosopher and an authority on medieval philosophy, i.e. a prominent figure in Christian philosophical circles. In Gilson’s case, an “ascending” mysticism would have been Christian mysticism, but the expressions “descending mysticism” or “descending ecstasy” would not have been purely negative terms. If he had thought it unworthy of serious consideration, Gilson would probably have remained silent and not have used the word “ecstasy” at all. When it comes to the vectors of mysticism, people may think that an upward vector is desirable, but God does not. For Gilson, “ecstasy” does not signify an incomprehensible experience incapable of scientific explanation; it refers to the experience of God.

Before being an author and an intellectual, Sartre for Izutsu was a visitor to the other world, something that had become rare in modern

times. He read *Nausea*, Izutsu writes, not as a novel but as a “work of philosophy in a completely new form.”<sup>31</sup> That may have been what Sartre intended. The philosopher Gabriel Marcel, who was active at the same time as, and on the same level with, Sartre, also engaged in creative writing, publishing numerous plays; for Marcel, the topic determined the choice of form. Perhaps Sartre, too, thought at the time that he would be unable to confer universality on a *problématique* involving a unique existential experience except by having it pass through the novel form. Ever since writing *Shinpi tetsugaku*, Izutsu had the attitude, which resembled a firm conviction, that, in order to revive philosophy for the present day, one must awaken its spiritual unity with literature, namely poetry, and that poetry and philosophy are by nature inextricable. A poem does not depict an imaginary world. It is nothing less than the act of manifesting another dimension. For Izutsu, poets are travellers from the other world; what they record in their poetry is always the landscape of “home.” It is no accident that poets such as Rilke, Bashō, Mallarmé and the poets of medieval Japan are discussed along with the big philosophical questions in “Ishiki to honshitsu.” Sartre, of course, was one of them. Izutsu never stopped reading Sartre right up until his last years. In 1985, when he was seventy-one, he wrote that a copy of *Being and Nothingness* was on his desk along with works on Yogācāra (Wei Shih) Buddhism.

There is yet another important event associated with *Nausea* that deserves to be mentioned. It came up in a colloquy when Shūsaku Endō asked what had led him to Islām. Izutsu had been asked that same question many times before and, finding it tiresome to answer, would fob off the inquiry by saying he didn’t really know. But, as a matter of fact, Izutsu said, “my encounter with Christianity became the remote cause,” and slowly and deliberately he began to describe a certain incident.<sup>32</sup> He had matriculated to the middle school of Aoyama Gakuin, a mission school founded by Methodists, and every day was forced to take part in morning prayers. He put up with it somehow during the first term, but by the second, the strain was not just psychological; it was producing physical symptoms as well. One day, as prayers and Bible readings by the teachers were proceeding as usual, for some reason, he felt “particularly hypocritical,” Izutsu recalled. “I was overcome by a feeling of

indescribable discomfort, finally felt sick to my stomach” and threw up. It was not a mild case of nausea. He “threw up everything” he had eaten for breakfast that morning on the student standing in front of him. The vomiting and diarrhea were so severe that “to this very day I clearly recall the grey color of his uniform.”<sup>33</sup>

This incident has been cited as anecdotal evidence of Toshihiko Izutsu’s antipathy toward Christianity, but that is a misreading. Thereafter, not only was he cured of his dislike of morning prayers, Izutsu said, he started to feel that Christianity, too, was “something quite interesting.” It is inconceivable that Izutsu would not have recalled his own experience of nausea when he read *Nausea*. The philosophical significance of this event might not have been understood by Izutsu the middle-school student, but there can be no doubt that what he came face to face with was “the critical consciousness’s experience of the collapse of the linguistic-semantic order,” the moment when words fail, which human beings encounter when they have caught a glimpse of the bedrock of Being. Looking back on that day, Izutsu said, “It was, I believe, an important event that determined the course of my life.”<sup>34</sup>

If one goes back to the beginning of “Ishiki to honshitsu” when it first came out in serialized form, one will notice that, when it came out as a book, the very first passage is a later addition:

Ever since Socrates passionately insisted on the absolute necessity of “definition” for the proper exercise of human intelligence, for the precise development of thought and for a correct understanding of things, determining the “essence” of an object of intellection or cognition has become part of the mainstream of the Western philosophical tradition down to the present day. Setting aside whether or not [the topic] is dealt with thematically as a study of “essence,” the problem of “essence,” under various guises and names, has always dominated the speculations of thinkers throughout the history of the Western tradition.<sup>35</sup>

When he had finished the last serialized installment, Izutsu probably realized he had produced a monograph that deconstructs the *doxa* which “has always dominated the speculations of thinkers throughout the history of the Western tradition.” From this one passage, one can

sense Izutsu's audacity in tracing back the unbroken history of Western philosophy to its starting point and attempting to break through "synchronically" to that point in time.

Insofar as it grapples with problems not just in the present but *sub specie aeternitatis*, synchronic activity is never complete. As Izutsu himself stated in the preface to *Ishiki to honshitsu*, what he had undertaken was only a "prolegomenon"; he understood from the outset that it would be impossible to bring it to a successful conclusion.<sup>36</sup> What Izutsu wrote may only have been a prolegomenon, but, as we frequently discover in this outstanding work, it clearly states the basic issues.

### "Consciousness" and "Essence"

In "Ishiki to honshitsu," the properties of the words "consciousness" and "essence" themselves are different from the way we normally use them. According to Izutsu, "consciousness" is inherently "ecstatic," a comment he made in reference to a statement by Sartre in "Une idée fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl: l'intentionnalité" (1939; "A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Philosophy: Intentionality," 2010). Izutsu never lost sight of the dictum that "consciousness is consciousness of something." In the inseparability of ontology and theories of consciousness, Izutsu sees the contemporaneity and traditionalism of Sartre.

*Datsuji* (脱自), a compound of characters that literally means "out of oneself," is a key term for understanding "Ishiki to honshitsu." But if a reader were to keep on reading with only a superficial grasp of what Izutsu means by "consciousness" and "essence," s/he will completely lose the drift of Izutsu's argument when it begins to move dynamically. "Consciousness," he writes, citing Sartre, is *un glissement hors de soi*, "a sliding outside of itself."<sup>37</sup> Awaiting "consciousness" on the outside is "essence"; "consciousness" slides "outside of itself" toward "essence." In this essay, neither "consciousness" nor "essence" is a static concept; they both evolve "ecstatically."

Try looking up *datsuji* in a Japanese dictionary, and you won't find it there. Although the first Japanese to use this word in a translation is unknown, Shūzō Kuki used it at a very early date. We saw in Chapter

Five that, inspired by Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (1927; *Being and Time*, 1962), he took note of *ekstasis*, the original meaning of *datsuji*, at quite an early date and developed it as part of his argument in his study of time. After *Propos sur le temps* came out in France in 1928, he used the expression *datsuji* in his essay "Keijijōgakuteki jikan" (1931; *Metaphysical time*), which was based on a lecture he gave on his return to Japan.<sup>38</sup> *Datsuji* also appears in the first Japanese translation of *Being and Time*, which was published in 1939,<sup>39</sup> and ever since then, it has been accepted in Japanese philosophical circles as a technical term. The role Kuki played in the development of Japanese philosophical terminology and technical terms is worth noting. He was also the first to use the expression *jitsuzon* (実存) for "existential."

Izutsu began using the term *datsuji* regularly from the time of *Shinpi tetsugaku* in 1949. It became a key word in that work along with *shinjū* (神充), which literally means "being filled with God," i.e. *enthousiasmos*. It is not certain, however, whether Izutsu used *datsuji* under the influence of Heidegger. He was already reading Sartre by this time, and his sense of *datsuji* seems nearer to Sartre's usage, i.e. as an experience in which language fails, which closely resembles the world of *Nausea*. Sartre frequently deals with *ek-stase* in *Being and Nothingness*, which Izutsu read after *Nausea*. *Being and Nothingness* was written as a response to Heidegger's *Being and Time*, and it was Kuki who made Sartre aware of Heidegger's existence.

My aim in alluding to etymology here is not merely out of interest in the associations connected with this word. The fact is that the philosophical term *datsuji* term was born of, and fleshed out by, the "ecstatic" experiences of various thinkers and would become the impetus behind the existential experiences of those who came after them. The words in the following sentences are Kuki's; they seem to describe what *datsuji* meant to him existentially. "Philosophy, I believe, is a primal understanding of existence in general."<sup>40</sup> "We ought to feel surprise at the contingent fact itself that the real world exists. The abyss of some supersensible thing opens up there."<sup>41</sup> As we can see from these statements, the connection between Kuki and Izutsu goes beyond mere similarity.

In *Shinpi tetsugaku*, *datsuji* is acknowledged to be a translation of the Greek word *ekstasis*. It signifies an existential experience in which

“the human self dies completely to its selfhood; the self is thoroughly annihilated; the self is utterly destroyed until not even a single dust mote of it remains.”<sup>42</sup> If *datsuji* is “the annihilation of the relative self as a sensible life principle,” then *shinjū*, which Izutsu annotates as *enthousiasmos*, is “the occasion for a spiritual awakening of the absolute self as a supersensible life principle” that accompanies ecstasy and occurs “immediately” with it.<sup>43</sup> *Ekstasis* is an instinctive breaching of the restrictions of the phenomenal world such as self, time and space, and an aspiration for the Other, eternity, a different dimension. *Enthousiasmos* is the dispensation of Being, who reacts to it. There is no interval between *ekstasis* and *enthousiasmos*. As Izutsu says, the experience of *ekstasis* and *enthousiasmos* occurs on the same ontological dimension as *kenshō* (見性), seeing one’s true nature/self-awareness in Buddhism, or *t’o jan kuan t’ung* (脱然貫通), the enlightenment experience in Confucianism known as the “sudden breakthrough.” *Enthousiasmos*, however, is not a special occurrence limited to mystics. Let us, for convenience sake, call the one who does the filling up “God.” If *enthousiasmos* were an experience that occurs only under narrowly prescribed conditions, it would fall under the vulgar definition of mysticism, i.e. that the One who does the filling up only truly exists in a chosen few. But “God” is omnipresent, or, rather, the Transcendent, which is omnipresent, is “God.” The way is open to all people.

If “consciousness” is “a sliding outside,” “essence” is “a filling up.” The true nature of “essence” lies in giving fully and completely of itself. It is the same as what the medieval Christian mystic Meister Eckhardt speaks of when he says that if one empties oneself and becomes nothing, God will instantly fill that person up. If it were possible to be truly “conscious” of “essence,” it would be an experience of overflowing—even though we are profoundly incapable of recognizing this. Likewise, “consciousness” always causes human beings to aspire to the exact opposite of existential isolation.

What seems extremely important when reading “Ishiki to honshitsu” is that Izutsu firmly roots, and develops the basis for, his speculations in a sense of realism. He detested superficial views of mysticism. What he asks of his readers is to observe in minute detail the commonsense worldview that we experience every day and not to disavow it. Rather,

while leading his readers to the world's depths, he urges them to return once again from this innermost region to the everyday world in which we live. The following passage truly states his intellectual attitude.

It is precisely in order to justify the coming into being of an essence-free, articulated world that Buddhism sets forth the theory of *pratītya-samutpāda*. But no matter how subtle this may be *in theory*, *in practice* it is somehow not without its deficiencies. That is because we have certain reactions to the things that we actually deal with in the sensible world that cannot be explained by the *theory* of *pratītya-samutpāda* alone.<sup>44</sup>

The meaning of the Buddhist theory of *pratītya-samutpāda* (interdependent origination) is not the issue here. Where we ought to be looking lies elsewhere. It is Izutsu's view that our starting point must never be from theory; it is only through our "reactions" to the sensible world that human beings can proceed to the depths of existence. He strongly admonishes us against forgetting ordinary "emotional understandings" over specific ideologies or dogmas. Continuing the previous sentence, he writes, "Among the many schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, it is Zen, I believe, that *in practice* comes to grips with this issue head-on. . . . Zen demands that each and every one of us confirms in practice for ourselves that it is not an essence-initiated articulation of a solid substance but an essence-free, fluid, ontological articulation."<sup>45</sup> The point at which "each and every one of us confirms [this] in practice for ourselves," Izutsu believes, is the starting point and also the goal of ontological investigations.

All things are endowed with "essence" by "Being," the transcendental Universal, and become "beings." What causes a cup to appear before someone's eyes is the working of "Being," but it is because that person senses the "essence" of cup that s/he recognizes a "being" as a cup. As we saw in the discussion of *Nausea*, "essence" is, as it were, the covering that is indispensable for our understanding of "Being." Rather than concealing something, it is the basic infrastructure that makes human life what it is. Because "essences" exist, people are able to recognize things, interact with other people and live their everyday lives. "Essence" is the self-evident truth that "distinguishes a thing (a

flower, for instance) from all other things and makes it what it indisputably is.”<sup>46</sup> Consequently, the same number of “essences” exist as there are beings. Mountains, rivers, plants, flowers, valleys, lakes, oceans, people—each has its own “essence.” The world is partitioned off into countless “essences.” On the other hand, “essence” conforms to the cultural framework within which it is generated; it is complexly intertwined with the multilayered consciousnesses of countless men and women and precipitated out into history. A certain thing appears in the sensible world as the result of the existential experience of a sage, a mystic or a poet; it takes shape as art or philosophy or religion, etc., and is passed on to other people.

It is this unceasing activity of the human race that Toshihiko Izutsu attempts to bring back to life in the present time through “synchronic structuralization.” This attempt is nothing less than laying the groundwork for the self-manifestation of the Idea of Oriental spirituality, which has been dispersed among countless different cultures. It resembles restoring a single book by bringing together scattered scraps of paper. The “essence” that Izutsu is dealing with is not limited to things; nor is it confined to visible, material existence. The principle behind the generation of “essence” works the same way for invisible concepts and spiritual realities. If it did not, “how could we explain the overwhelming sense of reality in an esoteric Buddhist mandala,” which consists of images alone?<sup>47</sup> Even the images that float up in our consciousness, Izutsu says, are “essences.”

Although there have been many psychologists who have investigated the reality of images, few have called them “essences” having the same sense of reality as a single flower. If we regard the evil spirits of mountains and rivers depicted in a mandala as nothing more than symbols, Izutsu’s study would probably make no sense. “It is, rather, the things of what we call the *real* world that are merely shadow-like beings, the shadows of shadows,” he writes, referring to Suhrawardī’s theory of images. “The true weight of existence is in the ‘metaphor.’”<sup>48</sup> There have been modern philosophers who treat images as real, but has there ever been anyone like Izutsu who perceived them as “essences,” the ground of reality? In the view that the Tathāgata and Bodhisattvas in mandala are symbols and do not really exist, but are only “symbols,”

Toshihiko Izutsu sees the embrittlement of the modern mind. A “symbol,” rather, is the passageway by which WORD manifests itself in the phenomenal world. A “symbol” expressly indicates that behind it exists an invisible something. It is the “metaphor” that is the reality, says Izutsu. How is it possible to doubt the reality of Bodhisattvas? “They materialize before our eyes and in the inner parts of ourselves. They appear only to those who have eyes to see them.”<sup>49</sup>

After mandala, Izutsu deals with “archetypes,” the world of images, as part of his treatment of the reality of “essences.” Though it is a study of archetypes, he does not discuss specific archetypes here such as what Jung calls *anima*, *animus*, the wise old man or the Great Mother. Instead, the context in which Izutsu treats this technical term is the *I Ching*. He sees that the process by which WORD expands itself and gives birth to meaning is graphically found in the eight divination signs of the *I Ching*, and notes that myths have been imprinted into each of them. WORD is intrinsically latent in myth and poetry. Mythopoesis, he argues, is not just a distinguishing feature of WORD, but rather its fundamental characteristic and true nature. Myths are not merely made-up stories. They are a form of self-manifestation by the Transcendent. Human beings do not fabricate myths. Transcendental phenomena choose the “archetypes” known as myths.

Archetypes are mental and spiritual patterns that, independently of the individual unconscious, determine the ontological infrastructure of a community or a culture. We can think of archetypes as analogous in their function to what Ibn ‘Arabī described as “permanent archetypes” or “fixed entities” (*a’yān thābitah*), which ontologically exist midway between the Absolute and the world of sensible things.<sup>50</sup> Izutsu counts them as a kind of “essence” and recognizes their reality. Archetypes are deeply connected to the “cultural framework” that fundamentally ordains the depth structure of a person’s consciousness, and they achieve their unique development in a community. “In other words, it is impossible for them [archetypes] to have universality in the sense of surmounting regional and historical differences and being common to all ethnicities or to the human race as a whole.”<sup>51</sup> “There is no such thing as an ‘archetype’ endowed with a universality shared by the entire human race. Both individual ‘archetypes’ and the systems in

which they mutually materialize differ from culture to culture.”<sup>52</sup> Gershom Scholem once asked, “Why don’t [Buddhists] see Christ or the Madonna in their meditative visions?” Conversely, Izutsu asks, “Why don’t images of Tathāgata or Bodhisattvas or the various deities of the Shingon mandala ever appear in the contemplative consciousness of Christians?”<sup>53</sup> In contrast to the unity that, as we saw earlier, drew the attention of the Traditionalist school, Izutsu tries to find meaning in the differences among “essences.”

In order to grasp the true nature of “consciousness,” Izutsu believes, “We must push on to the point at which consciousness goes beyond the nature of consciousness, i.e. to the point at which consciousness ceases to be consciousness.”<sup>54</sup> The same logic is applied to the pursuit of “essence.” “Essence” must be dealt with up to the point at which it separates from essentiality and ceases to be essence. At the instant that our “consciousness” perceives “essence,” “*Such and such a thing* exists in it, a mountain or a river, for instance,” Izutsu writes.<sup>55</sup> If we accept this statement, then, if it were not for the fact that our depth consciousness grasps a thing, not only would we have no true sense of that thing’s reality, the thing itself would not even exist. There are levels of consciousness. “Essence” changes shape depending on its position on the ladder of consciousness. Or, it would be fair to say, Being appears in response to consciousness.

The ultimate state of consciousness that Izutsu deals with here is not the one that comprises the consciousness we personally experience, or the unconscious that psychoanalysis regards as a category. Izutsu created the expression WORD (コトバ, *kotoba*) as a technical term that transcends language and at times even signifies the Ultimate, but, on one occasion only in “Ishiki to honshitsu,” he wrote *kokoro* (ココロ, mind) as another name for it. “Used in this context, ‘attachment’ (*ushin*, 有心) and ‘no-mind’ (*mushin*, 無心) are not synonyms. There is a MIND in which ‘attachment’ and ‘no-mind’ each come into being on different dimensions.”<sup>56</sup> As this indicates, it is MIND that is the reality in which “consciousness goes beyond the nature of consciousness,” but a full-scale treatment of this idea would have to await the discussion of *shin* (心), the conscious Transcendent, in what would become his final

book, *Ishiki no keijijōgaku: "Daijō kishinron" no tetsugaku* (1993; *Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*).<sup>57</sup> "Being is WORD," Izutsu had said, summing up his thought; he began to deal with the possibility that Being might also be MIND.

In Oriental philosophy, cognition is a complex, multilayered interweaving of consciousness and existence. Thus, in the process of pursuing the structure of this interweaving, human beings are inevitably forced to confront the question of the reality of "essence."<sup>58</sup>

This passage is found in what is virtually the last sentence of "Ishiki to honshitsu." It is both a conclusion and a starting point. "Existence" here is not "existents." It is another name for the absolutely Transcendent, what Ibn 'Arabī calls "Being."

Izutsu was extremely cautious about using the technical term "unconscious," which had rapidly become popular after the birth of psychoanalysis. Or, rather, he seems to have regarded the careless use of this word as almost taboo. It is not that he thought lightly of Freud and Jung; indeed, he was someone who responded sensitively to the contributions made by the founder of psychoanalysis and his heretical successor and to the questions each had raised. But he had absolutely no use for the false image of the "unconscious" that is prevalent today. "Consciousness" is deep, broad and chaotic and defies theoretical control. All that human beings are permitted to do is to seriously observe its dynamism and hypothesize about its structure; we experience only a part of it. There should be no doubt about the reality of "consciousness," but that does not mean there is a monster called the unconscious lurking beneath it. The determinant "unconscious" is unnecessary; "consciousness" is strange enough as it is.

Like a bottomless swamp, human consciousness is a weird thing, a world where mysterious matters dwell. No one really knows what lies hidden in its depths. Nor can anyone predict what will suddenly rise up from it.<sup>59</sup>

“Consciousness is assumed to have a two-layered structure, superficial and deep,” Izutsu writes,<sup>60</sup> but this distinction is merely for the sake of convenience. It is not his intention to divide consciousness into two; his aim is to endow the field that he calls the “middle space of consciousness” — the “*M*-realm” or “*M*-region” — with structural reality. Izutsu attempts to lead the reader to this intermediary region that connects the surface-level of consciousness with its depths.

Diagram 1 is a structural model of consciousness in “*Ishiki to honshitsu*.”<sup>61</sup> A is the surface consciousness; *M*, B and C indicate the realms of depth consciousness. The *M* of the *M*-realm is perhaps an abbreviation for “middle,” or, considered as the field in which meaning is born, it could conceivably stand for “meaning.” This is also the location of the *mundus imaginalis* mentioned earlier that Corbin described. But, above all, we perhaps ought to detect the strong influence of Leo Weisgerber here. As we saw earlier, for Weisgerber, language itself was nothing less than

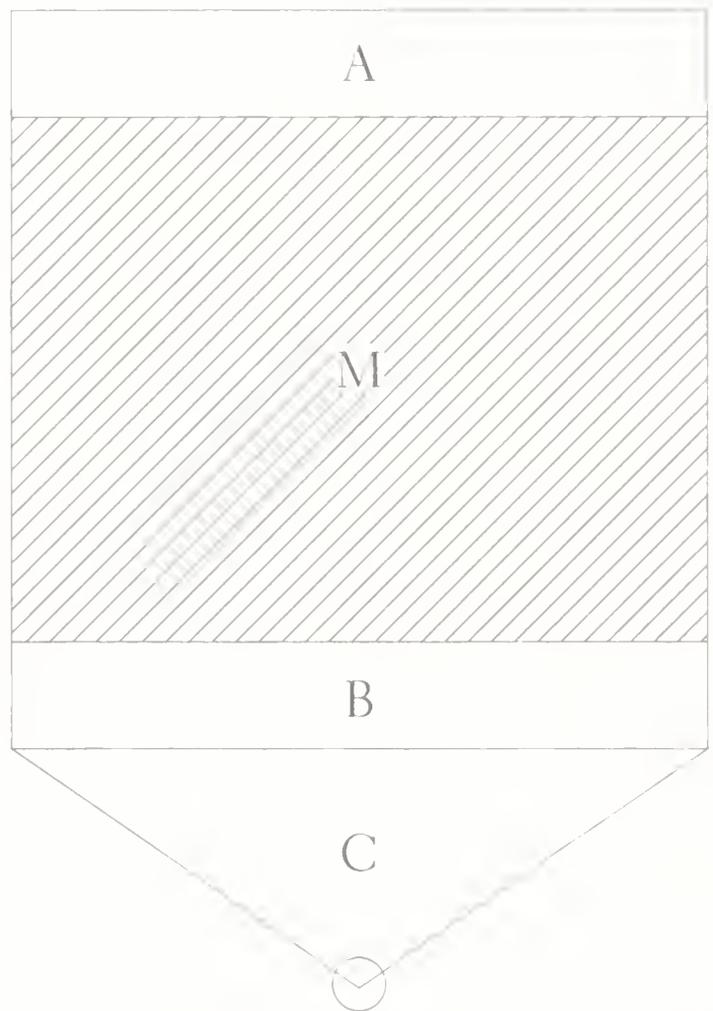


Diagram 1: Structural model of consciousness  
Source: *Ishiki to honshitsu*, ITC 6: 175.

something situated “between” us and reality. Language determines the structure of culture. In other words, the *sprachliche Zwischenwelt* is also a *geistliche Zwischenwelt*. Just as there are phenomena that exist only in the mind, there are phenomena that exist only in particular languages, as we saw in the case of the constellation Orion. For Japanese, a crow is associated with ill-omened events, but, in the Old Testament, crows are the companions of the prophet Elijah. Something similar probably holds true for other symbols of good and bad fortune in everyday life.

But that does not mean that they ought to be regarded as nothing more than symbolism. Conversely, since it is impossible for us to be free of language and culture, we cannot readily escape from the world structure they impose.

Above and beyond being merely a theoretical hypothesis, the *M*-realm was an existential region for Izutsu. “The theory of Ideas has to be preceded by the experience of Ideas”<sup>62</sup>—that statement in *Shinpi tetsugaku* did not just apply to the true nature of Plato’s Ideas alone; it would be fair to think that this one sentence expressed Izutsu’s own article of faith: When dealing with basic issues, existential experience always takes precedence. Indeed, it is a characteristic of Toshihiko Izutsu that he would only delve deeply into what he had experienced existentially.

### The Mystic Philosophy of WORD

Even the word “meaning,” when Toshihiko Izutsu uses it, becomes a uniquely personal, technical term that is not limited to the denotative content of a word, sentence or phenomena. “Meaning” is the appearance of Being as it emerges from chaos; it is the “face” of beings. It is individual entities, no two of which are alike.

Words are bodies of energy without any fixed form. It is not the case that “meaning” is produced when a word comes into being; “meaning” seeks words, Izutsu believes. In short, “meaning” is the matrix of words, not the other way around. Izutsu perceives WORD as articulating meaning. WORD is synonymous with “primal, absolute, unarticulated reality,” the basis of all things.<sup>63</sup> In short, Izutsu believes that WORD gives rise to all things. Our usual understanding is that a flower exists, and so the word “flower” is born. But Izutsu’s statement confronts us with a truth that is the exact opposite of this. If we take Izutsu at his word, a flower is born after being formed in the “mold” of the “meaning” of flower. In a world perceived by ordinary consciousness, i.e. surface consciousness, things appear to be generated in the order of phenomenon → word → meaning. A phenomenon comes first; words and meaning follow. A word is a sign denoting a thing. Over time, the sign becomes endowed with meaning. If a phenomenon does not exist,

there is no word to designate it. If a word does not exist, no meaning can be produced. That undoubtedly is what is generally thought.

“In the instant that a linguistic sign loses its semantic function, it loses its vitality as a sign and becomes a dead thing,” Izutsu writes.<sup>64</sup> “Meaning” is life itself. A phenomenon may exist in the surface consciousness, but in the world of depth consciousness it begins with meaning. The chain of phenomenon → word → meaning, Izutsu says, is retroactively reversed. The Yogācāra school of Buddhist thought developed its own unique semantic theory of ontology/consciousness. It calls semantic entities *bīja* or “seeds” and discusses the world of Being using the metaphor of a tree. Just as a seed sprouts, sends forth leaves, and becomes a tree, all things unfold and evolve and appear in the sensible world in a tree-like manner. The Yogācāra school called the contact point between reality and chaos in the world of consciousness *ālaya-vijñāna* or the Storehouse Consciousness.

Seed is meaning, Izutsu says. He is not simply following or rehashing Yogācāra thought. He, too, is participating in that tradition. For him, inheriting a tradition, in the true sense of the word, is synonymous with deepening it. “Borrowing ideas from Yogācāra philosophy, I symbolize this [the linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness] as the place in which semantic *bīja* implicitly exist in a potential state characteristic of seeds.”<sup>65</sup> He calls the place deep within the *ālaya-vijñāna* where WORD gives birth to meaning “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness” and attributes a special reality to it. When he encountered the reality that he called the linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness and endowed it with a logical framework, Izutsu ceased to be an inheritor of the Oriental philosophic tradition and assumed the role of innovator. The linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness is located deep in the *M*-realm mentioned earlier. By this term, Izutsu expressly describes the path in the depths of consciousness, hidden from psychoanalysts, that links the world to Being. He is attempting to go even further beyond the unconscious in psychology or *ālaya-vijñāna* in Yogācāra, which seemed to have dealt exhaustively with the innermost recesses of consciousness, and also to enter one step past what Corbin calls the “imaginal” realm.

The poets who appear in “Ishiki to honshitsu” are, as Izutsu points out, “alchemists of WORD,” as well as solitary investigators who follow the path of linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness. Mallarmé speaks of his own

writing of poetry in terms of a “religious discipline,” Izutsu writes. “It is very interesting that he compares it to the activity of a monk quietly seeking God deep within a cloister.”<sup>66</sup> “The language of Mallarmé, the poet (artist of WORD) who performs this metaphysical alchemy, is no longer the ordinary *langage* that people use for communication; he has killed the thing at the level of empirical existence and transferred it to the level of eternal reality; there [it becomes] *le Verbe* [absolute language], which *existentially* evokes the ‘essence’ of that thing.”<sup>67</sup> Absolute language—WORD, *le Verbe*—manifests itself; this means that words as ordinary language fall away. In short, WORD, which is Being, emerges from language as “essence.” The instant that WORD vigorously intervenes in the sensible world, we become aware that the world is a multilayered, multidimensional reality.

On occasion, Izutsu uses the expression “the karma of meaning.”<sup>68</sup> Karma for him is not an evil fate attendant on the life of an individual. Does karma narrow or limit a person’s life? Instead of being an impediment, doesn’t it make us aware of something that we must change, deepen or free ourselves from? Recall the sentence at the beginning of *Ishiki to honshitsu* cited earlier: “The problem of ‘essence,’ under various guises and various names, has always dominated the speculations of thinkers throughout the history of Western philosophy.” Karma, accumulated in “cultural universals,” determines meaning, and this forms the cultural infrastructure of human beings. Just as people’s lives are at stake depending on how they live out their karma, there is also a karma in culture and spirituality respectively. In culture, “the karma of meaning” resides in its analogical function. It is an invisible reality that governs spiritual communities and cultures as a whole.

When referring to the creativity of Toshihiko Izutsu, people call attention to the expression “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness.” To be sure, this technical term is unique to Izutsu, and in this one term, it is possible to perceive signs of speculation that is backed up both by the traditional thought of the East and the West as well as by modern philosophy of language. But the reality that he was pursuing, *Mu*-consciousness, lies beyond it. He calls this the “zero point” of the world where Being and consciousness are undifferentiated. Linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness elucidates the reality of the zero point. That point

is nothing other than the origin of a “depth-consciousness philosophy of language” in Izutsu,<sup>69</sup> the origin of a WORD-like world.

“Ishiki to honshitsu” was serialized in eight installments, but when it was published in book form, it was divided into twelve chapters. There were, of course, additions and revisions, but, in terms of line of thought, there do not appear to be any major changes. There was one exception, however—the word “WORD.” At the time of serialization, the word “WORD,” even when it had special connotations, was written out in characters (言葉), but when the book came out, all of these were changed to “WORD” in *katakana* (コトバ). Izutsu had begun making a clear distinction between “WORD” and “word” or “language” during serialization, at the time of the seventh installment. The encounter with the word “WORD” was undoubtedly an unexpected experience even for the author himself.

To read “Ishiki to honshitsu” is nothing less than to witness at first-hand the spiritual drama taking place in Toshihiko Izutsu as “word” metamorphoses into “WORD,” and then “primordial WORD,” i.e. Being. Commenting on Mallarmé, he wrote that WORD “*existentially* evokes ‘essence.’”<sup>70</sup> Although words are confined to expressing “essence,” WORD creatively calls things forth out of the sea of absolute Nothingness. In short, the mystery of WORD is nothing less than “the dynamic force of ontological articulation.”<sup>71</sup> But Izutsu uses the meaning of WORD in a multilayered way. When he says, “Being is WORD,” WORD is a transcendental reality, but if “Being” or “God” were substituted for all occurrences of WORD in “Ishiki to honshitsu,” this study would fall apart. When, in regard to *Nausea*, he says that “if WORDs fall away and ‘essence’ falls away, inevitably all that is left is Being itself without any fissures whatsoever,”<sup>72</sup> WORDs in this context are beings; they are not the same as Being. Indeed, semantically, the usage here comes close to “essence.”

Moreover, while originally profoundly connected to words and spoken or written language, Izutsu’s WORD possesses a dynamism that attempts to go beyond them. When we get to the tenth section of *Ishiki to honshitsu*, the word “WORD” rapidly assumes the aspect of the Ultimate. Alluding to Kūkai (774–835), the founder of the Shin-gon school of Buddhism, and to the Jewish mysticism of the Qabālāh,

he develops a “depth-consciousness philosophy of language”: “the WORD of God—or, more accurately, the WORD that is God.”<sup>73</sup> God and WORD exist inseparably, Izutsu asserts. It is this section that epitomizes the thought of Tōshihiko Izutsu, which began with words and converged on WORD; it is nothing less than the philosophical Book Lambda of *Ishiki to honshitsu*.

Kūkai’s tantric Buddhism, i.e. Shingon esotericism, too, was an esoteric religious community of WORD, where WORD is regarded as “the beginning of all things and their outcome.”<sup>74</sup> The word “Shingon” (真言; lit. “true language”) signifies “the primordial WORD, one that has not yet been articulated at all, the absolutely unarticulated WORD.”<sup>75</sup> In short, the Shingon school can be thought of as a spirituality which explains that the primal reality of the world is WORD.

Kūkai gives shape to the ultimate and primordial state of Being itself [the dharma body] as the Vairocana-Buddha—or, to be more precise, the primordial state of Being manifests itself in Kūkai’s depth consciousness as the image of the Vairocana-Buddha. Accordingly, for Kūkai, everything in the world of Being is ultimately and primordially the WORD of the Vairocana-Buddha. In short, all things are deep-level linguistic phenomena.<sup>76</sup>

When Izutsu wrote that “everything in the world of Being is ultimately and primordially the WORD of the Vairocana-Buddha,” he might well have continued, as he had when discussing the *Qabbālāh*, and added “—or, more accurately, the WORD that is the Vairocana-Buddha.” *Hosshin* (法身), the “dharma body,” is the “utmost primal WORD” that subsumes all things.<sup>77</sup> In other words, it is “the ‘recondite meaning’ of all Being, *the meaning of the meaning* of beings.”<sup>78</sup> For Izutsu, Kūkai was the first and quite possibly the loftiest “depth-consciousness philosopher of language” in Japan.

Even after checking with Mrs Izutsu and others close to him, I have been unable to discover when Izutsu encountered Kūkai, except that it was relatively late. There is no evidence that Izutsu discussed Kūkai at Eranos. When he dealt with mandala there, he only mentioned the Shingon school once.<sup>79</sup> Judging from one passage in “*Ishiki to honshitsu*,” Izutsu probably encountered Kūkai’s concept of the “primordial

state of one's mind" (*jishin no gentei*; 自心の源底) after he had used the technical term "linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness." Pure semantic forms, he writes, are those in which "the energy of what Kūkai calls the 'primordial state of one's mind' has been primarily articulated through the net-like structure at the linguistic base of the depth consciousness, which I have called in this essay the 'linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness.' And the primordial state of consciousness [is] precisely the primordial state of Being."<sup>80</sup> The encounter with Kūkai seems to have taken place not very long after the writing of "Ishiki to honshitsu," or it may have occurred while he was still writing it. The time was presumably already ripe for such an encounter. Didn't Izutsu read Kūkai as a way of confirming his own intellectual roots? It is not hard to imagine Izutsu's astonishment when he realized that, more than 1000 years earlier, there had been a Japanese who had intellectually structuralized the metaphysical horizons that had been opened up by Ibn 'Arabī and Chuang-tzū.

It was in a lecture on Kūkai and WORD, that Izutsu spoke the sentence "Being is WORD."<sup>81</sup> The following passage speaks of Kūkai's theory of Being/Consciousness and conveys Izutsu's shock at encountering him.

Kūkai pursues the process of ontological articulation deeper and deeper. He goes against the stream—proceeding in the opposite direction from the process whereby what occurs in the depths of consciousness arrives at the surface level and then appears in this world—until he finally arrives at the origins of consciousness, until he reaches the "primordial state of one's mind," which he describes (in the *Jūjūshinron* [*Treatise on the Ten Stages of the Development of Mind*]) as "making an exhaustive study and awakening to the primordial state of one's mind."<sup>82</sup>

Izutsu uses the English term "zero point" to express Kūkai's "primordial state of one's mind," indicating its contemporaneity. In the essay based on the lecture, he makes a distinction between the "zero point of consciousness" and the "zero point of Being," but he also uses the term the "zero point of the entire world of Being," suggesting that the attributive use of "of consciousness" and "of Being" does not mean that each exists separately but rather that they are technical terms or structural

articulations in his ontology and theory of consciousness. Not only are “consciousness” and “Being” inseparable at the “zero point”—the place where “consciousness” and “Being” meet and the point at which they begin to be differentiated—reality is, rather, another name for the interpenetrating unity of the two. In short, at the instant that “consciousness” grasps meaning, the articulation of beings occurs. Semantic articulation may well be said to be ontological articulation itself.

We know, of course, that not all things that are thought exist in the sensible world. The word “consciousness” here is not the surface consciousness of individual human beings. It is an event that occurs in the deepest depths of depth consciousness. “Ontological articulation, in fact, occurs at a far, far deeper place in consciousness. The articulation of things that we see on the surface of superficial consciousness is merely the result of the primary articulation in the deep level consciousness, or a secondary development thereof.”<sup>53</sup> If the starting point of ontological articulation does not occur in the consciousness that human beings are normally aware of, it is impossible to deal with it in language. Izutsu does not try to do so. He does try, to the best of his ability, to evoke the world “beyond” it. Just as the existence of the “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness” hints at something “beyond” it, Izutsu attempts to make a thorough investigation of it up to “the very first point in the process of the self-manifestation of WORD at which the ‘recondite meaning’ comes in direct contact with the linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness, the first point at which WORD starts to move.”<sup>54</sup>

What Izutsu turns his attention to is the letter A in Shingon esoteric Buddhism. The letter A is located at the beginning of all languages. The opening to “Being” and “consciousness” at the zero point is found there. “The sound *a* is the first sound to come out of the mouth of the Vairocana-Buddha. And, together with this first sound, consciousness is born, and the entire world of Being begins to appear.”<sup>55</sup> The Vairocana-Buddha hears the sound *a* with his own ears. Immediately, consciousness occurs there, and beings are actually and fully manifested. What Izutsu is dealing with in “Ishiki to honshitsu” is not the genesis of language but the origin of WORD. This experiment invites the reader into a prelinguistic world, a world before the birth of language. There, human beings, bereft of the means of thinking, speaking or expressing,

can only stand dazed and motionless. It is here that people truly “see” the world.

As can be sensed from the terms “depth-consciousness philosophy of language” and “linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness,” Izutsu’s theory of WORD goes beyond the existing framework of linguistic philosophy and succeeds in deepening his own theory of consciousness. These efforts would continue right up until his last work, *Ishiki no keijijōgaku*. During this process, the appearance of Hayao Kawai as a reader was perhaps not accidental. The man who made huge contributions to Japanese depth psychology at both the practical and intellectual levels had an enormous interest in *Ishiki to honshitsu*.

## The Philosophy of Mind

### Buddhism and Depth Psychology: The Unconscious and *Mu*-consciousness

**I**SHIKI TO HONSHITSU (1983; *Consciousness and essence*) introduced new readers to Toshihiko Izutsu. One of them was Hayao Kawai, who would later participate in *Erano*s as, in a way, Izutsu's successor. The serialized version of "Ishiki to honshitsu" "made my heart leap as I read it," Kawai wrote in his obituary of Izutsu for the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. Later in a semi-autobiographical interview, Kawai said that, although it was not his practice to read the same book again, he reread *Ishiki to honshitsu* several times. "*Ishiki to honshitsu* was an extremely important book for me," he stated, adding that he was dependent on Izutsu for the expression "depth consciousness." Though the comment may seem restrained, the statement that he would gladly speak a dozen times on the themes of *Ishiki to honshitsu* conveys the extremely strong impact that he felt.

That Kawai, an authority on "consciousness," was profoundly moved by Izutsu's treatment of "depth consciousness," and the significance of that fact, are probably worth considering. It was a noteworthy event, I believe, not only for any discussion of Hayao Kawai the thinker, but also for depth psychology in Japan, which would mark a major turning point with his arrival on the scene. It was also a portent

that depth psychology would go beyond being the study of mental states and become an independent discipline as the science of “the psyche” in the true sense. Research within a field advances that field, but, for a fundamental deepening to occur, it must confront, or engage in a dialogue with, other disciplines. This is true not only for scholarship but for religion and the arts as well. The meeting between Izutsu and Kawai had a significance that went well beyond simply being an event in their respective personal histories.

As we saw earlier, the serialization of “Ishiki to honshitsu” began in June 1980 and was completed in February 1982; the book version came out the following year in 1983. A glance at the chronology of Kawai’s life shows that this corresponds exactly with the period in which Kawai the psychologist moved beyond that sphere and completed the transformation into Kawai the thinker. Kawai cultivated dialogues not just with Izutsu but with people in other fields including Shūsaku Endō and the philosopher Yūjirō Nakamura (1925– ). The statement by Kawai himself that the encounter with Izutsu greatly influenced this transformation is found in *Kawai Hayao: shinri ryōhōka no tanjō* (Hayao Kawai: The genesis of a psychotherapist) by Nobukazu Ōtsuka, who deepened his acquaintance with Kawai while working at the publishing company, Iwanami Shoten, of which he later became president.<sup>2</sup> The following is from a personal communication that Kawai sent to Ōtsuka.

I’ve been practicing psychotherapy for a long time, but recently, thanks to Professor [Toshihiko] Izutsu, I finally feel that the philosophical background of what I am doing has, to a large extent, become clear. I’ve been thinking of putting particular emphasis on this point in my writing. I have the feeling that, as philosophical background, Hua Yen philosophy, which has been clarified by Professor Izutsu—and Myōe, too—fits right in with what I am doing.

This letter was sent in January 1987; Kawai’s book on the Buddhist priest Myōe (1173–1232) was published in April of that year, so it was precisely around the time that he was nearing the completion of that work.<sup>3</sup> This book, which centers on a dream diary written by Myōe, a priest of the Kegon school (the Japanese equivalent of Hua Yen), deals with the career of this unique mind and the development of his

extremely self-aware depth-psychology activities. When discussing the supernatural phenomena that Myōe experienced, Kawai refers not only to Jung's synchronicity but even to Swedenborg. As this indicates, Kawai tries to remove the trappings of priesthood, religious sect and historical period and invite Myōe as an individual thinker and practitioner onto the stage of ideas.

“There is a wooden plaque made of *Zelkova* hanging in Kōzanji,” writes Kawai.<sup>4</sup> On it Myōe recorded the regulations governing daily monastic life at Kōzanji, the temple in the mountains outside of Kyoto that he had founded in 1206, and at the beginning he wrote the phrase *Arubekiyōwa*, “As it should be.” This is not a statement that sets a high value on nature in the sense of “things as they are,” Kawai notes, but, rather, it clearly reflects Myōe's intention to live existentially, to try to live only in the here and now, not in or for some previous or future existence.<sup>5</sup> For Kawai, Myōe was Japan's first self-aware depth psychologist as well as its first existentialist. When dealing with the thought of Hayao Kawai, this one work cannot be overlooked. Chapter 7, “Mutual Interpenetration,” is both a discussion of the ontological boundaries within the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, or Garland Sūtra, as well as Kawai's study of Toshihiko Izutsu. In it Kawai cites the lecture Izutsu gave at Franos, “The Nexus of Ontological Events: A Buddhist View of Reality,” which Izutsu later revised and translated into Japanese as “*Ji-ji muge/ri-ri muge: sonzai kaitai no ato*” (The world of ‘non-hindrance’: After/traces of ontological deconstruction) and in which he describes the world of Kegon/Hua Yen.<sup>6</sup>

There are four Domains in Hua Yen, each corresponding to a level of consciousness, Izutsu says. The *shih* (事) Domain and the *li* (理) Domain are interchangeable with terms we have seen before; the former is the phenomenal world of ordinary consciousness, and the latter, the noumenal, or perhaps what we might call the pre-phenomenal world, i.e. “the ultimate non-phenomenal dimension of reality, in which all phenomenal things . . . are reduced to oneness or nothingness.”<sup>7</sup> There is also a Domain in which *shih* and *li* interpenetrate each other, and another in which *shih* and *shih* interpenetrate. In the mutual interpenetration of *shih* and *li*, *li* (absolute metaphysical Reality) is “a universal and boundless expanse of cosmic energy, . . . homogeneous and

undifferentiated,” that manifests itself in the form of *shih*, “seemingly independent and different entities (different, i.e., ontologically distinct from one another) [that] are homogeneously permeated by the same *li*.” The Absolute in Hua Yen is *k’ung* (空), void, nothingness, *śūnyatā*, but “*śūnyatā*, in its two fundamental aspects, negative and positive, all-nullifying and all-creating,”<sup>8</sup> and “the phenomenal or empirical appearance of the one absolute Reality in the form of divergent things in the universe is known as *hsing ch’i* (性起), the arising of the Buddha-Reality.”<sup>9</sup>

The field in which the beings that are born in this way from a single source are able to continue to be separate, individual things is called the Domain of the interpenetration of *shih* and *shih*. Every empirical thing mutually forms part of every other empirical thing, that is, they mutually interpenetrate one another, and make up the world. This is what is known in Hua Yen philosophy as *yüan ch’i* (緣起), which corresponds to the Sanskrit term *pratītya-samutpāda*, i.e. interdependent origination. These two principles, the arising of the Buddha-Reality and interdependent origination, Izutsu says, are the basic principles of the Hua Yen world. What must not be forgotten here is that these principles are not just external; they include the immanent as well.

When Kawai read this essay, he writes, he understood the real reason why Myōe sent letters to rocks and islands and why it was significant that Myōe recognized the black dog he saw in a dream as another form of Reality. In the Kegon/Hua Yen world, the principle behind Ibn ‘Arabī’s theory of the “unity of existence” is alive in a virtually identical form. What Izutsu attempted to do in the abovementioned essay is to present a view of an ontological world in which these two thought systems would resonate with one another. The reader understands anew not only that there is a point of contact here between Buddhism and Islām, but also that, already by Myōe’s time, Japanese Buddhist thought had risen to a level at which it could pose problems to the world as a “philosophy.” Ibn ‘Arabī was born in 1165, Myōe in 1173; they were literally contemporaries.

During his time at Eranos, what Izutsu, with a strong sense of purpose, was attempting to do could well be called laying the groundwork that would make it possible to discuss Buddhist thought—Zen, Hua Yen or Yogācāra—on the world stage. In his lectures there he dealt with Zen, rather than Zen Buddhism, in other words, with the dynamic

philosophical system that, since Bodhidharma in the fifth/sixth century, has spread through all parts of the Orient and has been built upon over the course of 1500 years. Other lectures dealt with the Garland Sūtra as a noble intellectual work that expounds an ontology of light, and with Dōgen (1200–1253) as a religious philosopher who developed his own theory of time. If he had had the opportunity, Izutsu would probably have devoted a book to Kūkai, the philosopher of a higher order of WORD. This sense of purpose would continue right up until the end. His last work was an exploration of the Mahāyāna Buddhist classic, the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.

On second thought, however, it was Kawai, I believe, who was able to understand Izutsu's true intentions and was ready to take the next scholarly leap forward. Kawai saw in Izutsu someone who was carrying on the tradition of Oriental philosophy in the true sense. It is not the author who brings a work to completion; it is the reader. For Izutsu, too, there is no doubt that the encounter with Kawai was a serendipitous event.

After his return from Iran, Izutsu started a study group, which included Hayao Kawai and philosophers Shizuteru Ueda (1926– ) and Yoshihiro Nitta (1929– ), primarily to read the philosophy of Kitarō Nishida. Although Kawai makes virtually no mention of this study group, Nobukazu Ōtsuka writes that he seems to have learned a lot from it.<sup>10</sup> It is likely that Kawai perceived in Izutsu's works a world beyond the unconscious, one that depth psychology had dimly grasped in its field of vision but whose contours it had thus far been unable to clearly make out. Recall the sentence in “Ishiki to honshitsu”: “We must push on to the point at which consciousness goes beyond the nature of consciousness, i.e. to the point at which consciousness ceases to be consciousness.”<sup>11</sup> In passages like this, Kawai probably got a real sense for “depth consciousness,” which was a region that psychology thus far had not yet fathomed. The unconscious, as Jung and Kawai understand it, is an area that transcends the consciousness of individuals and is connected to the consciousness of a culture or a historical period. In that sense, Kawai's perception of consciousness was already “superconscious.” Jung and Kawai seem to have arrived at Corbin's *mundus imaginalis* from a different direction.

Izutsu assumes that the linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness is even deeper than the unconscious; it is, he argues, the region in which “Being” turns into “beings.” But, for Izutsu, this is not the bottom of depth consciousness. The point at issue vacillates between what Jung calls the “cultural unconscious” and the “universal unconscious” (which Izutsu translates as “collective unconscious”), on the one hand, and the imaginal world, on the other. A “consciousness that goes beyond consciousness,” which stores up boundless creative energy, manifests itself in its ultimate reality in depth consciousness. This is the reality that Izutsu calls *Mu*-consciousness, punning on the Japanese word for “unconscious” *muishiki* (無意識) and the philosophical term *mu* (無) meaning Nothingness. *Mu*-consciousness, however, is not consciousness of Nothingness. As the fact that Izutsu also calls it “meta-consciousness” suggests, it is absolute consciousness before Nothingness manifests itself as “essence.” Thus, *Mu*-consciousness cannot be consciously grasped.

A theory of consciousness as part of a new Oriental philosophy will likely be put on a firm footing once efforts have been made to attempt to restructuralize consciousness in an integrated manner in a form that also includes the consciousness that goes beyond consciousness, the consciousness that is not consciousness. And it is precisely there, I believe, that the significance of studying Oriental consciousness lies, especially for a theory of Oriental consciousness.<sup>12</sup>

When Izutsu writes “Oriental,” he is implying something real that spans different dimensions. Similarly, *Mu*-consciousness, too, does not simply indicate the conscious world of human beings alone. It is not a region that can be caught sight of at the height of human activity but, rather, a place illuminated by the transcendent world. The true nature of consciousness does not become clear only by dealing with its phenomena and structure. Anyone who attempts to study it must necessarily have the experience of seeing “consciousness” from beyond consciousness. Kawai perceived in Izutsu’s philosophy the possibility of doing just that.

*Mu*-consciousness is transcendental Reality, but Izutsu does not end the discussion there. He emphasizes the inseparability of ordinary consciousness and *Mu*-consciousness: “It is also an obvious and

undeniable fact that it [*Mu*-consciousness] is in an intimate and inseparable organic relationship with consciousness in the ordinary sense, not to mention that that very fact is also its most remarkable distinguishing feature for an understanding of consciousness in the various traditions of Oriental thought.”<sup>13</sup> Endowing the invisible entity of transcendental Reality with a form visible to the phenomenal world is a tradition of Oriental thought. And the aim of Oriental philosophy, Izutsu believes, is not to describe the transcendental world; it is nothing less than to explain in the phenomenal world how the transcendental world works and what it means. What Izutsu treats as the most remarkable, most immediate and most dynamic form of this is WORD.

In 1983, there was a three-way discussion among Izutsu, Kawai and American psychologist James Hillman.<sup>14</sup> In it, Kawai says that, although his intellectual position is “Jungian,” he does not necessarily think in Jung’s terms. Given the differences between Eastern and Western culture, in particular, he says, not only is it impossible to apply the language of Jungian psychology directly to Japan; it does not even seem to be the right choice. By “Jungian,” he means Jung’s language indicating basic attitudes toward the world, including the phenomenal world and the world of consciousness, he goes on to explain, not his support for Jung’s methodologies or theories. Moreover, even Jung could not escape being a child of his age. There are places where Jung attempts to express his ideas by modeling them on the so-called natural sciences. I think we ought to be free of such things, he says.<sup>15</sup>

*Kokoro* (こころ), the word Kawai uses to translate “psyche,” is an old Japanese word for “mind” or “heart”; depth psychology is a new discipline. In modern Japan, especially, hardly any of the groundwork had been laid to talk about this subject in our own language. The period in which Kawai began to speak publicly was one in which the scholarly language, as it were, was undeveloped. This fact must not be forgotten when thinking about the intellectual history of Japan and the situation in which Kawai found himself. To translate “spiritual being,” he would sometimes use the Japanese word for “soul” or “spirit,” *tamashii* (たましい). This sort of notational convention—writing *kokoro* (こころ) for “psyche” and *karada* (からだ) for “body” in *kana* rather than in characters—seems almost natural to us in Japan today, but, at the time that

Kawai was experimenting with terminology, he was criticized in certain quarters for not conveying the essence of *tamashii* as a technical religious term. Others complained that such usage was not sufficiently scholarly. Although a baptism of fire such as this is unavoidable for creative thinkers, today, when we can view the situation objectively, his achievements deserve to be properly appreciated. Alluding to critiques of Myōe, Kawai writes, “It is the quality of his religious life that warrants our attention above and beyond a consideration of his contributions to Japanese religious history. Paradoxically, it is only in this light that Myōe’s place in the history of Buddhism in Japan can be properly appreciated.”<sup>16</sup> Substitute “attitude toward scholarship” for “religious life” and “history of thought” for “history of Buddhism,” and this passage becomes an introduction to Hayao Kawai the thinker, himself.

The discovery of technical terms in one’s native language and the development of them into a metalanguage—a challenge similar to what Izutsu attempted in “Ishiki to honshitsu”—was what Kawai put into practice for depth psychology. When evaluating others, Izutsu frequently uses expressions such as “personal,” “original” and “existential.” “Personal” does not connote giving one’s own interpretation to an existing concept or idea; one draws the concept into one’s own body, thinks about it, considers its universality and explores it thoroughly. “Original” means attempting to speak about an experience or research topic in one’s own words. And “existential,” as Kawai applied it to Myōe, indicates an attitude toward life in which one stakes one’s whole being on something here and now. Although Izutsu left no formal statement about Kawai, it was he who recommended Kawai to Eranos. This fact clearly indicates the esteem he felt for him.

James Hillman had written that “a new angelology of words” will be indispensable from now on.<sup>17</sup> In their colloquy, Toshihiko Izutsu remarked that, even though some call Hillman a left-wing Jungian, from what Izutsu himself had heard, Hillman went far beyond the boundaries of the Jungian realm in a conservative sense—indeed, some might even say he had gone too far.<sup>18</sup> As can be inferred from the phrase an “angelology of words,” Hillman does not fit into the category of depth psychologist.

After the death of Corbin, for a time, Izutsu and Hillman led Franos. Just as Freud had formed a school and Jung had broken away from it and developed his own, Hillman did not confine himself to the Jungian school but went his own independent way. From this we can detect an attitude toward scholarship and a stance as a thinker that goes beyond mere temperament. Like Hillman, Izutsu disliked being part of a group. Although Izutsu had great respect for Shinobu Orikuchi, he did not enter his coterie while at Keio but attached himself to Junzaburō Nishiwaki instead. His inherent dislike of groups may also have influenced the strong sense of incompatibility that Izutsu felt toward the 'Traditionalist school. Although schools of thought are formed by history, scholarship itself, Izutsu believed, "must be a solitary activity." Hillman and Izutsu were directly acquainted with one another, but even setting that fact aside, Hillman's influence on Izutsu rivaled or surpassed that of Jung. As Izutsu says in their three-way conversation, meeting Hillman was a turning point that deepened his interest in Jung and Jungian psychology.

Although no source is cited in "Ishiki to honshitsu," where the phrase occurs,<sup>19</sup> Hillman referred to an "angelology of words" in a book entitled *Re-visioning Psychology*, based on a series of lectures he had given. In the book itself, Hillman hardly ever uses the technical term "re-visioning" in its title, but if a reader misunderstands the original meaning of "vision" there, s/he will lose sight of the issues that Hillman is raising. Every time I read this work, I recall a passage in *Kansō* (Impressions), Hideo Kobayashi's study of Bergson.

At this point, presumably, the double meaning that Bergson applied to the act of seeing will already be clear. In the past, theologians used the word "vision" in the sense of "seeing God," i.e. the beatific vision, but even though modern science has restricted the same word to the meaning of "the sense of sight," it has been unable to get rid of the old connotations that this word has. That is because the living word has put down roots in reality.<sup>20</sup>

"Vision" is the act of looking at the noumenal world. We have already observed that "seeing" is the most primal form of metaphysical activity. What Hillman explores throughout this work is the contact with the noumenal world, which subsumes the phenomenal world.

Izutsu translated “words” in “a new angelology of words” using his technical term コトバ (*kotoba*), WORD. What Hillman passionately discussed in *Re-visioning Psychology* is words as angels rather than “the angel aspect of the word.” “In short, what Hillman is trying to say is that there is an ‘angel aspect’ to WORDS; to put it another way, all words have a unique semantic side, which, in addition to the ordinary general sense that each of them has, evokes other-dimensional images. It is not only a word like ‘angel’ that, from the outset, signifies an other-dimensional being; even words that signify quite commonplace things like ‘tree’ or ‘mountain’ or ‘flower’ also [have] the semantic potential to metamorphose into other-dimensional images.”<sup>21</sup> Izutsu interprets this semantic side to be what Hillman “calls ‘the angel aspect of the word.’” If “the semantic potential [of words] to metamorphose into other-dimensional images” is their “angel aspect,” then, “the meanings that metamorphose into other-dimensional images” are the angels themselves. Carried to its logical conclusion, it would presumably become “WORD which is angel,” which might be more easily understood existentially as the expression “WORD as angel.” Latent in Izutsu’s comment is the understanding that angels are in an inseparable relation with the WORD which is Lord, namely the Transcendent. Izutsu “reads” Hillman as dealing not with language but with Being as transcendental Reality.

To speak of an “angelology” is nothing less than to acknowledge the existence of angels. Hillman probably did not doubt the reality of angels, and Izutsu, who discusses the subject, presumably didn’t either. As in the case of Tathāgatas and Bodhisattvas, angels, too, are archetypes, “essences.” Angels are the will of God. The thoughts of the Transcendent manifest themselves in the world along with the “essences” known as angels.

### The “Readings” of Writers

After *Ishiki to honshitsu*, there were writers who responded strongly to Toshihiko Izutsu. Those who come to mind are not only Shūsaku Endō, Takako Takahashi, Shōtarō Yasuoka and other writers with close ties to Catholicism mentioned earlier, but also Keizō Hino, Keizaburō Maruyama, Ryōtarō Shiba and Kenzaburō Ōe.

Izutsu's colloquy with Shiba entitled "Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari" (Darkness and light at the end of the twentieth century) was the last one he ever took part in, his final opportunity to present himself before the public.<sup>22</sup> The shock of his sudden and untimely death is emotionally described in Shiba's tribute "Arabesque"—the title is taken from that of a novel written by Izutsu's wife, Toyoko.<sup>23</sup> What makes their colloquy interesting is that in it Izutsu personally relates previously untold historical details about himself, such as his relationships with Ibrahim, Mūsā and Shūmei Ōkawa that were alluded to earlier, and the fact that he had made serious attempts at a semantics of *waka*. But even more noteworthy is the lively way in which he talks to novelist Shiba about the boundaries between the historical world and the synchronic world that seethed within him. The colloquy overflows with passion as he attempts to demolish certain historical and cultural perspectives that had become received opinion.

The conversation between the novelist who wrote *Kūkai no fūkei* (Kūkai's landscape)<sup>24</sup> and the philosopher who dealt with the philosophy of language in Shingon esoteric Buddhism takes an extremely interesting turn in regard to the course of Kūkai's life. When Izutsu says that Kūkai was familiar with the philosophy of the Neoplatonist Plotinus, Shiba responds by raising the possibility that Kūkai was aware of Christianity, and Izutsu emphatically agrees. "Not only does a metonymic relationship hold true between Platonism and the Shingon esotericism of Kūkai in terms of their thought structures, but I think the latter is, in fact, historically related to Greek thought," Izutsu says.<sup>25</sup> Metonymy is a rhetorical term indicating that a strong association exists between two parallel things. What "a metonymic relationship in terms of their thought structures" means is that, although, historically, there was no direct intellectual exchange between Kūkai and Plotinus, there is a remarkable structural agreement in their points of view. Izutsu wants to overturn that commonly held view, however; he believes that the two thought systems actually interacted with one another in the Chinese capital city of Ch'ang-an during the eighth and ninth centuries.

When the Japanese translation of the complete works of Plotinus began to come out in 1986, Izutsu contributed a blurb entitled "Hirakareta seishin' no shisōka" (The thinker with an "open mind").<sup>26</sup>

Although Plotinus is called a Neoplatonist, he by no means confined himself within the parameters of Platonic philosophy. “In particular, he had a passionate interest in Indian philosophy. The awareness of a primal subjecthood that forms the basis of his thought is clearly yogic. It was also not unrelated to Mahāyāna Buddhism,” Izutsu writes. “His vision of Being as the mutual permeation of all things, which he depicts as a sea of light in which everything is brilliantly intermingled, is reminiscent of the sea of the lotus repository world that manifests itself in *sāgara-mudrā-samādhi*, Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation [the highest form of contemplation in Mahāyāna Buddhism], and is suggestive of the Domain of the interpenetration of *shih* and *shih* in Hua Yen philosophy.”<sup>27</sup>

Izutsu’s post-*Ishiki to honshitsu* writings are premised on these ideas, and what becomes apparent when one reads them is a spiritual perspective quite separate from his scholarly views that deserves to be called the “philosophical landscape” Izutsu saw. What I am thinking of here is *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu* (1989; Cosmos and anti-cosmos).<sup>28</sup> Just as *Imi no fukami e* (1985; To the depths of meaning) constitutes the flip side of *Ishiki to honshitsu*, adding to it and deepening it, *Kosumosu to anchikosumosu* broadens and deepens the main themes of *Sufism and Taoism* (1966–1967). In this work are collected translations of the lectures of the Eranos period as well as those that he gave in Japan upon his return from Iran. These are not what are generally regarded as lecture transcripts. Izutsu wrote his lectures the same way that he composed his essays. What he read before an audience was a work for which he had chosen his words with extreme care, thought about their expression, gave them structure and then polished them until the lecture could be published unchanged as an essay. I have seen a documentary film of the English-language lecture “Cosmos and Anti-cosmos,” which would serve as the title of the book.<sup>29</sup> There is virtually no difference between what was spoken on that occasion and what is contained in the printed text.

In one essay in *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu*, in which Izutsu alludes to Plotinus, he writes as follows about the aim of his speculations and the results that might be expected from them. “If there is any merit in this essay, it probably lies in the fact that I have attempted

to interpret the classical texts of Hua Yen philosophy systematically in terms of their relevance to the modern philosophical *problématique*.”<sup>30</sup> We should not understand this attempt as philosophical speculation in a general sense. For Izutsu, the “philosophical *problématique*” means the issues that are directly related to human existence. That he does not go so far as to say so is not out of modesty; for him, the assumption was so self-evident that, were it not the case, there would be no reason for philosophy to exist. Izutsu continued to be interested in Plotinus throughout his life. In his final years, that interest grew deeper and deeper. Plotinus’ ideas flow like an underground stream through *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu*. Just as Plotinus depicts the primordial emanation from the One as light, Izutsu draws attention to the fact that the world of Hua Yen, too, is a world full of light. As if to say there were topics he had been unable to deal with exhaustively in *Shinpi tet-sugaku* (1949), he often alludes to Plotinus even in his last work, *Ishiki no keijijōgaku* (1993).

The biography of Plotinus—“On the Life of Plotinus and the Arrangement of His Books,” to be exact—was written shortly after his death by his disciple Porphyry.<sup>31</sup> The person depicted in it is not the brilliant philosopher; rather, he is a man of unusual powers with ties to the other world. Small wonder then that one of the treatises in Plotinus’ *Ennead* is called “On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit.” In the Roman period, it was the custom to celebrate Plato’s birthday as a holy day and to offer poems. On one such occasion, when Porphyry read aloud a poem entitled “The Sacred Marriage,” full of mystical and occasionally even shamanistic content, someone in the crowd yelled out that he was out of his mind for composing such a fantastical work. At that moment, Plotinus said to Porphyry in a loud voice for all to hear: “You have proved yourself simultaneously a poet, a philosopher and a teacher of sacred truth.”<sup>32</sup> Plotinus, it would be fair to say, was a sage in the true sense, someone who went beyond being a philosopher narrowly defined.

“[H]aving completed the inquiry in his own mind from the beginning to the end, he then committed to writing the results of his inquiry, and as he thus wove together, in the course of writing, what he had deposited in his soul, it seemed as if he was transcribing what he wrote from a book.”<sup>33</sup> Porphyry speaks not only about what his teacher Plotinus

wrote but about how he wrote it. When it came to speaking, Plotinus “often . . . goes into raptures and speaks emotionally from the depths of feeling rather than from tradition.”<sup>34</sup> What Porphyry describes as “tradition” means the history of Platonic philosophy as passed down in the Academy, but to say that he spoke “from the depths of feeling” does not mean he said what he pleased; “as was divinely told to him” would perhaps be a better description. Philosophy for Plotinus was not an academic intellectual discipline; it was a wisdom, a spirituality, a religious practice that rivaled Christianity, which was then spreading throughout the Roman Empire. What Porphyry tries to depict is not what we today would call the life of a philosopher. It is the life of a mystic seeking after Truth. In Izutsu’s statement that Plotinus’ successor was not Proclus but Augustine, we should probably read his view of the history of philosophy that sees the revival of Plato’s philosophy as occurring not in the philosophic tradition but in religion. The ideas of Plotinus that Kūkai encountered, too, were not a philosophy but had already assumed the form of religion, Nestorian Christianity, which had made its way across China and changed its name to Chingehiao, the “luminous religion.”

In an early novella, “Tosotsuten no junrei” (The pilgrimage of heaven),<sup>35</sup> Shiba envisions the possibility that Nestorianism had been introduced into Japan. The assumption that Christianity as a religion had been brought to Japan in Kūkai’s time was open to debate, as both Shiba and Izutsu were presumably fully aware, but that was probably not the main point. The two of them believed, however, that one could not completely discount the possibility that the cultural—or what may well be called the spiritual—shock, which began with Plotinus and was inherited by Augustine, had been brought to Japan by the founder of Shingon esotericism.

Kenzaburō Ōe (1935– ) has written a work entitled “Izutsu uchū no shūen de: *Chōetsu no kotoba* Izutsu Toshihiko o yomu” (On the fringes of the Izutsu universe: *Transcendental WORDs*, Reading Toshihiko Izutsu).<sup>36</sup> The impact of reading Izutsu’s *Mahometto* (1952; Muhammad) in his youth, Ōe says, was comparable to that of reading *Furansu runesansu no hitobito* (1950; The people of the French Renaissance) and deciding that one day he wanted to study with its author, Kazuo

Watanabe (1901–1975).<sup>37</sup> It would be fair to regard this as the highest praise Ōe could give. While Ōe was reading William Blake, he read Izutsu's *Shinpi tetsugaku* “as though in a delirium.”<sup>38</sup> And when he read Dante, too, he took his lead from Izutsu's studies of Islām, he said. For Ōe, Blake and Dante are not merely literary classics; they are his predecessors who opened the way to Corbin's *mundus imaginalis*. Ōe even made a statement suggestive of Asín Palacios when he said that Dante's *Divine Comedy* came to mind while he was reading Izutsu on Ibn 'Arabī. What is more, in discussing 'Toshihiko Izutsu, Ōe alluded to themes that Hideo Kobayashi dealt with in his later years, his theories about language and the world of the dead.

I once likened the late Hideo Kobayashi's study of the ancient period and the world of the dead in *Motoori Norinaga* to the world of Professor Lévi-Strauss. If Mr Kobayashi had adopted structuralism as a practical approach, I believe that he would have been able to make those statements in which, even despite his prodigious rhetorical ability, ambiguities remain, into something more readily understandable. To put it another way, Mr Kobayashi would likely have gone in the direction of bringing his research on Motoori Norinaga to completion as linguistic theory, and new perspectives on it would likely have been opened up; or so I thought as I gave my imagination free rein while reading Mr Izutsu's work.<sup>39</sup>

The potential for linguistic development in Norinaga studies that Ōe remarks on presumably points to the deepening of the theory of WORD as a “depth-consciousness philosophy of language” that Izutsu had attempted. It was noted earlier that Shūsaku Endō had alluded to linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness, without mentioning Izutsu's name, in a tribute to Hideo Kobayashi's memory. That both Ōe and Endō discuss points of similarity between Izutsu and Kobayashi is highly suggestive. I have heard that Izutsu read Ōe's essay and was so delighted by it that he sent a letter to the editors of the magazine in which it was published.

Had he never heard of 'Toshihiko Izutsu, Keizō Hino (1929–2002) writes, he would not have been able to get through the uphill battle against the hallucinations that plagued him during his treatment for a

malignant tumor and “could probably not have brought my consciousness, which had gone one step short of madness, back into a somewhat more bearable form.” There is a collection of essays, selected by Hino himself, entitled *Tamashii no kōkei* (The spectacle of the soul).<sup>40</sup> Divided into four parts corresponding to the times in which the essays were written, it begins in Part One with pieces dating from 1950 into the 1960s when he was employed at a newspaper company; the last section, Part Four, contains works written in the 1990s while he was suffering from cancer. The name of Toshihiko Izutsu is found here and there in several works from this last period. Guided by the *Kōran*, which Izutsu translated, Hino speaks of the “night of existence”; he also discusses the light of “Being,” an allusion to Suhrawardī and his “metaphysics of light.” Keizō Hino started out as a literary critic. In his later years, he returned once again to the question of Being, which he had raised during his years as a critic. As he proceeded along this path, Izutsu was, in a true sense, his travelling companion. Having been a reader of Izutsu ever since *Mahometto*, Hino had long been aware of Toshihiko Izutsu. Yet what he experienced in *Ishiki to honshitsu* was something on a completely different order from what he had caught sight of in the biography of the Prophet. The impact of reading it exceeded his expectations, as can be deduced from his statement, “I probably read *Ishiki to honshitsu* three times.”<sup>41</sup>

Keizō Hino was sixty-one when a malignant tumor was discovered. After surgery, suffering from hallucinations as a result of side effects from general anesthesia and painkillers, he came to experience the world of *Ishiki to honshitsu* literally.

Whenever a hallucination occurs, even though not clearly aware of it, I had the physical sensation of some faint movement deep inside my body. It is a sensation that had an awful, primordial effect in which meaning and image were indistinguishable, that somehow combined both meaning and image, or, rather, as though image were actually meaning and meaning were image.<sup>42</sup>

Hino sees that Izutsu’s true nature is that of a poet, not because Izutsu discusses poets, but because “his awareness of issues is itself poetic” and because he relates to the world as a poet. “The poet is the

person who puts him/herself in the deepest places of the body and of consciousness from which words shimmer forth and who lives primordially in all human beings, the whole world, the entire universe. In that sense, s/he is even a branch of science, and of what is called scholarship as well,” he writes.<sup>43</sup> This passage from a work entitled “*Igataku yutaka na sabaku no hito*” (A man of the ineffably fertile desert), written as an insert to accompany Izutsu’s selected works, is one of the most beautiful in all of Keizō Hino’s essays. In it, he cites *Imi no fukami e* as one of his favorite books and quotes this paragraph from it.

As the countless tangled and intertwined “potential forms of meaning” attempt to emerge into the surface brightness of meaning, they jostle and joust with one another in the dusk of linguistic consciousness—the subtle, intermediate zone where the “Nameless” are just on the verge of metamorphosing into the “Named.” Between “Being” and “Non-Being,” between unarticulated and articulated, the specter of some indeterminate thing faintly flickers.<sup>44</sup>

This beautiful passage truly captures the very instant at which WORDs manifest themselves in the world along with meaning, but Hino probably did not cite it simply to express his appreciation of its style. Just as Izutsu did when dealing with Ibn ‘Arabī, Hino borrows Izutsu’s words to speak about his own experience. He, too, had witnessed a similar scene and found in Izutsu’s writing what he had been unable to put into words for himself.

Keizō Hino died at the age of seventy-three, twelve years after being diagnosed with cancer. In his late novels, Toshihiko Izutsu’s influence can be found, both directly and indirectly. It appears in the way Hino perceives the reality of the other world and puts it into words and in his constant efforts to try to universalize that experience. If it were possible to discuss in detail this group of novels written toward the end of his life, a new understanding of both Izutsu and the true nature of the mystic within Keizō Hino the writer would perhaps become clear.

Alluding to *Imi no fukami e*, linguist Keizaburō Maruyama (1933–1993) writes, “the main melody can be heard echoing throughout.” It is “nothing less than the WORD at the root of human existence.”<sup>45</sup>

Maruyama was perhaps the first to perceive that WORD was Toshihiko Izutsu's most important technical term. He, too, used WORD as part of his own core vocabulary. In an essay introducing Izutsu, Maruyama writes, "The living thought of this profound international scholar does not know how to stand still and is even now in flux," calling attention to the fact that his predecessor's ideas know no bounds and continue to evolve.<sup>46</sup> Maruyama's contributions to the study of Saussure in Japan are huge. His existence as a trailblazer has been indispensable for the emergence of such outstanding scholars as Hideki Maeda (1951– ) and Morio Tagai (1972– ) who came after him. Although Maruyama's views on Saussure may have been superseded by the deepening of research and the discovery of new material, the study of Keizaburō Maruyama the thinker has only just begun.

Keizaburō Maruyama's major work is *Seimei to kajō* (Life and excess), a central topic of which is the thought of Toshihiko Izutsu. *Seimei to kajō* was intended as a trilogy, but when he completed Part Two, *Homo mortalis*, he became ill and died suddenly at the age of sixty. When reading this work, one realizes that, although Maruyama's experience of Izutsu occurred in his later years, it was the most important intellectual event in his life.

If I were to summarize the theory of linguistics as ontology common to Toshihiko Izutsu, to the late Saussure of the anagrams, and to me myself, it is the idea that "the semantic articulation process of WORD, which simultaneously affects the superficial and deep strata of consciousness, is essentially incorporated into the end function of perception—object recognition; the entire world of being that spreads out before us externally and internally is itself nothing less than the product of WORD's power to cause being to arise."<sup>47</sup>

Hereafter, similar passages frequently appear in Maruyama's writings. Maruyama speaks of Izutsu's theory of WORD in enthusiastic language as though he has made a discovery. But in "Nijisseiki no 'chi' ni mukete" (Towards a 'wisdom' for the twenty-first century), which concludes *Sei no enkan undō* (The cyclical movement of life), the work he wrote in the year before he died,<sup>48</sup> the tone is slightly different from his other writings. Rather than the study of WORD, what Maruyama

powerfully deals with this time is the significance of Eranos. And, as if going back in time, he discusses *ekstasis* and *enthousiasmos* and calls attention to the need for a reevaluation of *Shinpi tetsugaku*. This work is a profoundly interesting, as well as accurate, study of Izutsu, but it perhaps should be read as Maruyama's intellectual last will and testament. Just as the writer of a will expects it to be read and put into effect, one cannot help thinking that Maruyama, too, expected this work to be read in a similar way. Indeed, already suffering from cancer, Maruyama sensed that death was near.

Although the acquaintance between Izutsu and Maruyama arose out of the scholarly field of linguistic philosophy, the inevitability of their encounter predates scholarship. From the time he was a boy, and even more so as a young man, Maruyama felt a "distrust of reality, a sense of its insubstantiality, its utter inability to answer the question 'why.'"<sup>49</sup> He was unable, he said, to have a firm sense of being alive. The mere telling of his own experiences, he probably thought, would make it difficult for them to acquire universality. And so Maruyama let Julien Green say what was in his own heart. "C'est un bizarrerie de mon esprit de ne croire à une chose que si je l'ai rêvée." (It is one of my peculiarities not to believe in anything unless I have dreamt about),<sup>50</sup> or "Peut-être tout cette vie qui s'agitait autour de nous n'était-elle qu'un songe, un autre sommeil qui ne nous fermait pas les paupières, mais nous faisait rêves les yeux ouverts. . . . [D]ans ce monde d'illusions, . . . [n]i les paroles des hommes, ni leurs livres . . . n'avait de réalité." (Perhaps the whole of this life which went on about us was nothing but a dream, another sort of sleep, which did not cause our eyelids to close, but induced us to dream with our eyes open. . . . [I]n this world of illusions . . . [n]either the words that men uttered nor their books . . . had any reality.)<sup>51</sup>

When discussing Maruyama, it is necessary to consider Julien Green's influence as having the same importance for him as Saussure's. Indeed, the fact that he started out from a study of Julien Green would determine Maruyama's intellectual and literary views. "The seer of souls"—this term that Izutsu used of Dostoevsky could be applied directly to Julien Green. Green did not conceal the fact that he had such a nature. When one reads his diaries and other writings, one realizes that this quality belonged not only to him but to his

family as well. It was probably because of his encounter with Green that Maruyama discovered Saussure not just as a linguist but also as an existential seeker. Saussure was two people, Maruyama writes. One was the founder of modern linguistics; the other, the late Saussure symbolized by his study of anagrams, he writes, “was also a poet for whom madness, phantasms and fear and trembling flooded his inner being.”<sup>52</sup> That this was not merely Maruyama’s personal opinion, but an indisputable historical fact can be seen from the research of Morio Tagai. Recall the passage cited above, “common to Toshihiko Izutsu, to the late Saussure of the anagrams, and to me myself.” The intrinsic function of *langage* for Saussure and WORD for Izutsu and Maruyama is the evocation of Being. WORDS are not means of expressing something; WORDS, they believed, cause all things to be. Each of them developed his own respective ideas based on a recognition that the existence of WORDS plainly demonstrates that another world exists deep within the phenomenal world and that WORDS are sign posts which lead human beings to the other world.

Being is fundamentally phenomenal. From the perspective of fundamental phenomenality, one acknowledges that what people no doubt believe to be the whole of “reality” is not indeed the whole of reality but merely its surface. The surfaces of Being are merely the visible forms of its depth. All phenomena emerge from that which is the “prior-to-phenomena.” Entering the “prior-to-phenomena,” one has to grasp everything from it.<sup>53</sup>

The reason that Maruyama alluded frequently to Eranos in the last year of his life was because he, too, was living the “Eranos spirit” in Japan.

“Lettre à un ami japonais” is an open letter addressed to Toshihiko Izutsu from Jacques Derrida. It is dated 10 July 1983, and, as we can tell from its contents, the occasion for writing it was a conversation Izutsu had had with Derrida in Paris earlier that June.<sup>54</sup> Although *Psyché*, in which this work is contained, was not published in France until 1987, Keizaburō Maruyama’s translation of this letter came out in the April 1984 issue of the magazine *Shisō* (Thought) under the title of “‘Kaitai kōchiku’ Déconstruction to wa nani ka” (What is *déconstruction*?).<sup>55</sup> It was Izutsu who recommended Maruyama as its translator.

In the autumn of the year in which the letter was written, Derrida visited Japan, and at that time Maruyama exchanged views with him on Saussure. In *Bunka no fetishizumu*, Maruyama alludes to their conversation and to this letter as well. In the final analysis, Derrida's *déconstruction* is "by no means destructive," Maruyama writes, "but rather, it was an act of dismantling the Western metaphysical tradition, by tracing it back to its origins."<sup>56</sup> There is a perception that *déconstruction* has been exhaustively dealt with, so it is extremely interesting that Maruyama says it is a dismantling that goes back to the origins. Here, as in Derrida, a Being is perceived that is eternally incapable of being deconstructed. What Izutsu discussed throughout "Ishiki to honshitsu" is a type of dismantling/*déconstruction* involving the breakdown of language in the phenomenal world; it is nothing less than the act of going back to the origins of the Real World. "Things, losing clear distinctions from one another, become floating and unstable, lose their own original formation, as they mingle and permeate one another, and gradually attempt to return to the primordial chaos."<sup>57</sup> This was also the mentality that permeated Eranos. Derrida, Maruyama writes, "called [Izutsu] *maître*, with a respect that went beyond *professeur*."

In "Letter to a Japanese Friend," the question Derrida first raised with Izutsu was the possibility of translating *déconstruction* into Japanese. The letter format indicates Derrida's desire to continue their earlier conversation. Recalling his own philosophical career, Derrida begins by attempting a negative definition of *déconstruction*, which, despite being repeatedly misunderstood, had taken the intellectual world by storm. And yet, no matter from which angle one looks at it, it is impossible to define *déconstruction*, in the sense of elucidating its linguistic meaning. *Déconstruction*, rather, is an "event," Derrida says, one that takes place of its own accord.<sup>58</sup> He not only perceived in it something that is by no means capable of being "deconstructed" by human hands, he presumably held the firm belief that the subject/agent of *déconstruction* is not a human being. In the letter, Derrida repeatedly says that what we should pay attention to is not the static meaning of the virtually undefinable word *déconstruction* but its dynamism.<sup>59</sup>

Nowadays philosophers, too busy dealing too long with the empirical world, have forgotten to invest their intellectual energies in solving

problems that have intrinsic meaning—this sense of crisis seems to be the spiritual foundation that both Izutsu and Derrida shared. History will likely remember Derrida, who played an active part in the political, religious and cultural clashes of his day, not just as a thinker but as a practitioner in the higher sense—someone who put his ideas into practice. Such a figure calls to mind the sages who appear in Izutsu's *Shinpi tetsugaku*.

Of the many essays by Izutsu on Derrida, “Derida no naka no ‘Yudayajin,’” (The “Jew” in Derrida) is a response to this letter.<sup>60</sup> Derrida is accorded a special position in *Imi no fukami e*, which contains this essay, and is discussed there many times. Although Izutsu was a first-rate exegete of the classics, he was also an outstanding expositor of modern thought. There are essays of his on Sartre, of course, but also on Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Lévinas, Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida. What is common to the modern French thinkers just cited is their “Jewishness.” In “Derida no naka no ‘Yudayajin,’” Izutsu deals with Jewishness in relation to Derrida. Jewishness does not indicate simply that someone has genetically inherited Jewish bloodlines. It was Derrida who said of Husserl that, although he was a Jew, he was Greek inside. Derrida was an Algerian by origin, and, as Izutsu points out, he was a Jew more by basic temperament, i.e. spiritually, than in terms of blood. What Izutsu has his sights on is the *déconstruction* of the spirituality taking place in Jacques Derrida the man. Derrida might say that, unless religion is deconstructed, “real” religion cannot exist. Here Izutsu cites the words of the Jewish poet Edmond Jabès. The possibility and impossibility of *déconstruction* was clearly recognized by Jabès, who likened the world to a book. A book is static, but the WORDS contained in it are alive. WORDS change their shape and reveal themselves depending on the reader who sees them.

### True Reality and Panentheism: Kitarō Nishida and Ben’nei Yamazaki

Kitarō Nishida probably never heard of Toshihiko Izutsu. The reason that statement cannot be made categorically is that Izutsu's *Arabia shisōshi* (History of Arabic thought), the first serious history of Islamic

philosophy in Japanese, was published in 1941, and Kitarō Nishida was still alive at the time.

When Izutsu first began to read Nishida is not known. After Yasaburō Ikeda entered Keio University but before he became a student of Shinobu Orikuchi, around the time he was boasting about constructing an “Ikeda philosophy,” he and Izutsu were, for some reason, “crazy about philosophy,” he wrote, so it is conceivable that Izutsu was already reading Nishida by that time. In the writings and colloquies contained in Izutsu’s selected works, Kitarō Nishida’s name appears once in one of the essays and once in the colloquies, and each citation is limited to quoting a passage from Nishida. He did not engage in any developed thinking about Nishida’s philosophy. In addition, there is a comment on *Zen no kenkyū* (1911; *An Inquiry into the Good*, 1992), which Izutsu wrote in response to a questionnaire from Iwanami Shoten, “*Watashi no sansatsu*” (1988; *My three books*), which is included in the collection of his miscellaneous pieces, *Yomu to kaku* (*Reading and writing*): “The central theme of this work, ‘pure experience,’ is the starting point of what is called Nishida philosophy. It is a record of his thinking in the early years while he was still groping for the path he should follow. The freshness of that thinking strikes the reader’s heart.”<sup>61</sup> There is also a blurb, which has not yet been published elsewhere, for the 1988 edition of Nishida’s complete works, entitled “*Ima, naze ‘Nishida tetsugaku’ ka*” (*Why “Nishida philosophy” now?*).

An original and creative philosopher who, in his speculations, freely manipulated the conceptual structures of Occidental philosophy while preserving in the depths of existence the primal subjecthood of Oriental self-awareness. In post-Meiji Japan, newly opened to the West, he lived dynamically as a pioneer at the intellectual contact point between Orient and Occident. The genuine starting point of modern Japanese philosophy, Kitarō Nishida’s thinking hints at the potential for developing Oriental philosophy in various new directions. The time has now come, I believe, to once more critically retrace the trajectory of his thought.<sup>62</sup>

These sentences are the most substantial account of Nishida that Izutsu ever made. When he writes “The time has now come . . . to

once more critically retrace the trajectory of this thought,” his “reading” of Nishida does not seem to be that of someone who had been following him earlier.

It is possible, however, to detect Nishida’s influence in *Shinpi tet-sugaku* and the essays of Izutsu’s early period. It is not my intention to argue that this influence was on a par with the influence Izutsu received from Ibn ‘Arabī, Plato or Plotinus. Yet the closeness in their terminology and the contrast in their speculations about God seem impossible to overlook. The term that comes to mind here is “true reality” (*shinjitsuzai*, 真実在). The importance that this one word has in *An Inquiry into the Good* can be seen simply by looking at the table of contents. The fourth chapter in “Part II: Reality” is entitled “True Reality Constantly Has the Same Formative Mode,” and the fifth is “The Fundamental Mode of True Reality.” Let me cite several sentences in which Nishida refers to “true reality.”

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 the nature of the universe, human life, and true reality. (*An Inquiry into the Good*, pp. 37–38)

In the independent, self-sufficient true reality prior to the separation of subject and object, our knowledge, feeling, and volition are one. Contrary to popular belief, true reality is not the subject matter of dispassionate knowledge; it is established through our feeling and willing. (*Ibid.*, p. 49)

[T]rue reality is the free development that emerges from the internal necessity of a single unifying factor. (*Ibid.*, p. 58).

The first sentence deals with the priority of understanding reality. This takes precedence over ordinary activities, of course, but also over the personal desire for peace of mind. “Peace of mind” here does not mean financial security; it implies salvation as seen from the human perspective. Nishida states clearly that knowledge of true reality comes before this. To truly know the Transcendent, he believes, is the real goal of human life. The next passage implies that what brings reality

into existence is “feeling and willing”; in other words, it is something that results from an activity of the soul. And, in the final passage, true reality is shown to be synonymous with the “freedom” that arises from the internal necessity of the One.

As the ultimate true reality, the One is not something that in an absolute, negative way is opposite to, or rejecting of, the world of the relative Many. It must be the agent of wise love, dispensing being to them and causing them to be, surpassing all beings in its infinite loftiness, while enveloping them with infinite closeness and infinite warmth. To put it another way, Xenophanes’ God is not a purely metaphysical One that unequivocally confronts and contends with the All. It is *hen kai pān*, in which both the One and the All, while in an absolutely antithetical relationship of transcendence vs. non-transcendence, are congruent with one another in a paradoxical unity (Simplicius, on *Physics* 22: *to gar touto hen kai pān ton theon elegen ho Xenophanēs* [For Xenophanes said that God is One and All]).<sup>63</sup>

Whereas for Nishida “[t]rue reality is the free development that emerges from the internal necessity of a single unifying factor,” Izutsu writes that it is nothing less than “the agent of wise love, dispensing being.” For both men, “true reality” is another name for the absolutely Transcendent, but Nishida understands it as “ultimate freedom,” Izutsu, as “wise love.” The two men are not dealing with different realities; each sees a different persona of the One.

The God of Islām, the Ultimate, has ninety-nine personae, Yoshinori Moroi writes, and a hundred faces, if one adds Allah. Moroi translates them all into Japanese, beginning with “The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful, the King, the Most Holy” and ending with “Pardoner.” What he emphasizes by doing so is the impossibility, in an ultimate sense, of naming God. The moment someone gives God a name, no matter how outstanding that person may be, s/he is already circumscribing God. By adding Allah and counting a hundred personae, Moroi is clearly stating his awareness that even the word “Allah” is incapable of expressing God’s true nature. Allah is God, but not God per se. The statement that even the absolute name in religious terms cannot elucidate God carries even more weight when one

considers that Moroi was a sincere monotheist. He perceived the world as he discussed it, and he lived that way. Moroi made the impossibility of speaking about God the starting point of his own scholarship.

Herein lies the main reason for discussing the similarities and differences between Izutsu and Nishida in regard to the term “true reality.” They both call transcendent reality “true reality” and base their discussions of it on the persona that each of them perceived precisely because they are aware that God has countless faces that they cannot possibly deal with fully. In their studies of the Transcendent, each of them treated only those aspects that they had seen, felt and experienced for themselves.

In the language of Izutsu, who calls the Transcendent “wise love,” one cannot help recalling Ibn ‘Arabī, who expressed the workings of God as “the breath of the Merciful.” That the “internal necessity” of the Transcendent is ultimate love is what Ibn ‘Arabī dealt with at the risk of his life and what Izutsu sought to revive for modern times. In this endeavor, it was Hua Yen thought, Izutsu contended, that had a remarkable, synchronic resonance with the ideas of Ibn ‘Arabī.<sup>64</sup> The influence of Hua Yen had already found its way into Izutsu’s thought in the work on the pre-Socratics that he wrote before *Shinpi tetsugaku*.<sup>65</sup> In the passage cited above, Izutsu sums up Xenophanes’ ideas with the phrase *hen kai pān*, which he translates into Japanese as *ichi soku zen* (一·即·全). It is clear that behind this translation is the passage from the Garland Sūtra *ichi soku issai, issai soku ichi* (一即一切·一切即一), “One in All, All in One,” which is emblematic of a central concept of Hua Yen: interdependent origination.<sup>66</sup> The expression “One in All,” taken directly from Hua Yen, is frequently used in *Shinpi tetsugaku*. “One and All” and “One in All” signify that individuals and the whole are in a participatory relation with one another. In other words, it is not an additive view of the world in which ones—separate, individual beings—gather together to form a whole; the One is immediately in All and vice versa.

Hua Yen is also alive in Nishida when, in discussing the basic principle of being, he writes that, “the fundamental mode of reality is such that reality is one while it is many and many while it is one.”<sup>67</sup> Nishida does not refer directly to Hua Yen in *An Inquiry into the Good*; yet the influence of Hua Yen thought can be detected everywhere in this work.

The fact that the spirit of Hua Yen flows powerfully in both *Shinpi tetsugaku*, which was Izutsu's real starting point, and in *An Inquiry into the Good*, which was Nishida's intellectual starting point, cannot, I believe, be overlooked in accurately assessing the intellectual role that Buddhism played up to that time and not just in the spiritual history of these two men.

The thought of Izutsu and Nishida also resonates with one another in regard to the deepening their thinking underwent at the linguistic and WORD level. Just as Izutsu expresses WORD's transcendence when he says, "Being is WORD," Nishida, too, attempted to explain the mystery of Being in terms of the logic of "subject," "predicate" and "copula." The Catholic philosopher Isao Onodera (1929– ), who has been developing a unique reading of Nishida's philosophy, takes note of Nishida's view that "subject," "predicate" and "copula" constitute an integral reality and sees in it a logical/ontological structure that corresponds to the Christian Trinity.<sup>68</sup> Kitarō Nishida's philosophical struggles lay in the discovery of a philosophical language. The task Nishida was charged with was not only to develop his own thought but also to create a philosophical language for Japan. In beginning his speculations from the discovery and/or creation of a philosophical language, Izutsu inherited Nishida's bloodlines. Nishida called prophets "the mouth of God,"<sup>69</sup> and he recognized that a philosopher was another name for the "hand" of the Transcendent. The two men are remarkably close in their efforts to transform their thoughts into words. At the time Izutsu was writing *Shinpi tetsugaku*, he faced the manuscript pages, he writes, "while coughing up blood," and not metaphorically; the work was written in his blood. There are traces of a similar struggle in Nishida's works as well. It is no lie when Nishida says of his own work that it is a "document of a hard-fought battle of thought."<sup>70</sup>

Formulating a concept and discovering a language in which to express it are activities that may be alike in appearance, but they are different in nature. Whereas conceptualizing is an activity in the phenomenal world, philosophical language, like poetic language, never manifests itself except through existential access to the other-worldly realm. It is for that reason that Izutsu felt close to, and had the utmost respect for, Mallarmé, a predecessor entrusted with a similar mission.

A mission is literally one's life's work, an obligation that cannot successfully be brought to completion without setting to work and staking one's life on it. What reveals itself is language; a person only observes and elucidates it. In "Ishiki to honshitsu," Izutsu vividly depicts the scene of Mallarmé's encounter with absolute language, *Le Verbe*.

But when the poet pronounces the word "flower" in an absolute-language sense, something odd happens. The flower that had appeared as [what Mallarmé calls] a "contour," a real sensate thing under the ordinary circumstances of being, is transformed into a faint vibration of air produced by the spoken word, and disappears. And with the disappearance of the flower's "contour," the subjecthood of the poet who sees the flower also disappears. The flow of life is suspended, and the forms of all things fade away. In the solidification of this space of death, the flower that had once disappeared becomes a metaphysical reality, and suddenly, illuminated by a flash of lightning, very clearly rises to the surface. A flower, an eternal flower, an immutable flower.<sup>71</sup>

This sort of event occurs not only with external objects but with immanent phenomena as well. If, as Izutsu shows in *Shinpi tetsugaku*, poetry and philosophy are inextricable, then the mystery of the birth of an "absolute language" works in the same way for philosophical language as it does for poetic language. And it is for that very reason that the appearance of WORD in philosophy, too, "suddenly, illuminated by a flash of lightning, very clearly rises to the surface."

When he stood on these metaphysical heights of being and pronounced the word "flower," it was, for Mallarmé, a primal act of creation comparable to God's creation of the universe. But, at the same time, in the uncanny tension of its extreme impersonality, brought about through its [the flower's] nonexistence as a thing, it was also a gesture, both splendid and infinitely sad, with which Mallarmé signalled the end of his own poem.<sup>72</sup>

Mallarmé likened himself writing poetry to a monk. *Le Verbe* would visit him when he was by himself and no one else was there; in fact, even when there are people around, when the event occurs, the poet must confront the Absolute alone.

*An Inquiry into the Good* was published in 1911. But if there were a Japanese who used the term “true reality” (真実在 *shinjitsuzai*) before that date, he would probably be worth considering. Why? Because the act of talking about ultimate reality in one’s own words is nothing less than the beginning of philosophy. If the age we live in has forgotten that person, we must recall him. His name was Ben’nei Yamazaki. Ben’nei was a Buddhist priest of the Jōdo (Pure Land) school, who was born in 1859 and died in 1920. A zealous proselytizer, he was also a cleric who, having formulated systematic teachings on “light” that would reform modern Japanese Buddhism, deserves to be called a philosopher. Together with Benkyō Shīo (1876–1971), he could fairly be said to represent modern Pure Land Buddhism.

In 1914, Ben’nei established the Kōmyōkai as a sect independent of the existing Pure Land school and called his teachings Kōmyōshugi, the doctrine of *kōmyō* (光明), the light of grace that emanates from the Buddha. To serve as nourishment for his own teachings, Ben’nei actively absorbed and assimilated Christian theology. Rather than being a purely Buddhist expression, his *kōmyō* is reminiscent of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity. Religious philosopher Akira Kawanami, the foremost authority on Ben’nei Yamazaki studies, writes that “an important part of the development [of Ben’nei’s doctrines] was Christian, Christianity itself; indeed, it was far more Christian even than Christianity itself.”<sup>73</sup> This statement is worth noting when one considers that Kawanami is also a Buddhist priest practicing under the name Jōshō. Ben’nei Yamazaki’s teachings on Kōmyōshugi have points of contact with Ibn ‘Arabī’s “unity of existence” and with Suhrawardī’s mystical philosophy of light. In addition, Ben’nei treated “spirituality” as a core concept more than twenty years before Daisetz Suzuki wrote *Nihon-teki reisei* (1944; *Japanese Spirituality*, 1972). If the Transcendent per se is regarded as a spirit, then Ben’nei’s teachings can also be said to be about spirit and spirituality.

“There is no one so unhappy as the person who lives his life in darkness and enters into darkness without recognizing the *true reality* of the one Parent in the world,” Ben’nei writes.<sup>74</sup> The one whom Ben’nei calls “Parent” is Amida Nyorai, the Amitābha Buddha, or Buddha of Infinite Light. Despite being a Buddhist, Ben’nei not only actively uses

the word “God” in his teachings, he writes that the ideal state of ultimate religion is a “transcendental/immanent monotheistic pantheism.” In other words, it goes well beyond the religions and spiritualities that slavishly adhere to the differences between monotheism and pantheism as narrowly defined.

The passage cited below is from *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* (1949; “The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview,” 1986–1987), Nishida’s final work.<sup>75</sup> I cannot help regarding it as providential that it was published posthumously after Nishida finished writing it. Not only is it a sincere valediction to those who come after him, it is also, I believe, Kitarō Nishida the philosopher’s most important work. “A God who is merely transcendent and self-sufficient is not a real God,” he states and goes on to say:

The truly dialectical God is totally transcendent and immanent, immanent and transcendent. As such, he is the real absolute. . . . This view is not pantheistic but may be called panentheistic.<sup>76</sup>

“Pantheism” is the belief that all things are gods; “panentheism,” on the other hand, is the belief not that all things are gods but that God exists transcendently in all things, both intrinsically and extrinsically. A God that merely transcends human beings is not a real God. Nor does Nishida subscribe to the worldview that each thing individually is a god. Rather, all things exist and contain God within them. It would be fair to think of these words as a clear expression of Nishida’s philosophic creed.

When I read the following passage, it makes me think that Izutsu had, at least, read “The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview” before writing *Shinpi tetsugaku*.

In regard to this theory of divine immanence, there is no need to argue whether it is *pantheismus* or *panentheismus*. On the affirmative side of Plotinus’ own view of the One, i.e. on the immanent side, it is not a matter of God existing immanently within all things; clearly all things are contained in God and exist immanently within God.<sup>77</sup>

When Izutsu writes that there is no need to discuss the difference between pantheism and panentheism, that “true reality” lies “beyond”

such distinctions, it would be natural to think that Nishida's essay was in Izutsu's mind. What is more, Izutsu believes that the entrance to the transcendental world is found at the point at which human discussion of the Ultimate reaches its limits.

In addition, when Nishida says, "the One of Plotinus is diametrically opposed to Oriental Nothing for it does not reach the ordinary standpoint [i.e. the horizon of everyday existence]," he places Plotinus and Oriental Nothing at diametrically opposite poles.<sup>78</sup> He also writes that because the Greeks turned toward philosophy, they had no real knowledge of religion. In the passage from Izutsu just cited, his strong objection both to Nishida's interpretation of panentheism and his view of Plotinus is, I suspect, evident. Not only that, *Shinpi tetsugaku* as a whole emerges as a resounding "No" to Nishida's views on Greece.

It is Ben'nei Yamazaki, rather, who resonates with Izutsu. "A transcendent/ immanent monotheistic pantheism" goes beyond panentheism, which is the polar opposite of pantheism, because, as Ben'nei explains, the argument over which alternative to choose takes place within the Transcendent.

If all things were created by the hand of the one and only Dharmakāya of the universe [and] if the great ones, the universe as a whole, the sun, the earth and all things belonging to them, as well as each and every separate part, no matter how infinitesimal, are offshoots of the one great Dharmakāya, then, each is a small dharmakāya. . . . In that case, a person is an individual dharmakāya, and no matter how infinitesimal things may be, there is nothing so small that it cannot contain God.<sup>79</sup>

The Dharmakāya—the unmanifested unity of all beings and things—is the ultimate Absolute. All things are generated by its hand. The large ones are the sun, the earth, the universe as a whole, but no matter how tiny a thing might be, there are no beings that are exceptions to this rule. Each individual being is a real existence to which the Transcendent has allotted a piece of itself. For that reason, Ben'nei says, no matter how small each thing might be, nothing is so small that the workings of God do not extend to it. These words closely resemble the world of Ibn 'Arabī. Just as Ibn 'Arabī calls the Transcendent "Being," Ben'nei writes

“Parent” or “Dharmakāya” or “God.” It is his strong intention to show that even the single word “God” is only an expression of the self-manifestation, self-determination and self-articulation of the One.

Throughout his entire life, Toshihiko Izutsu continued to raise questions existentially about reincarnation. In *Shinpi tetsugaku*, there is even a chapter entitled “Rinne tensci kara junsui jizoku e” (From metempsychosis to *durée pure*), but the topic was not confined to that one chapter.<sup>80</sup> He did not lose sight of it even in his discussions of Plato and Aristotle. Stop it, Pythagoras said to someone kicking a dog; that dog used to be a friend of mine in a previous existence. Plato inherited Pythagoras’ ideas and believed in previous, present and future lives, Izutsu writes; likewise, the young Aristotle came under Plato’s influence and at one time even treated reincarnation and transmigration in the context of the mystery religions. Even though Plato and Aristotle may have discussed it, Izutsu did not believe in it unless he was able to experience it for himself. The issues of reincarnation and karma are classic examples of this. For that reason, Izutsu’s theory of karma reveals a development uniquely his own.

We cannot know the truth about the concept of karma, Izutsu believed, as long as it is confined to the framework of the individual; whereas individuals remain individuals, karma, rather, is the gateway that opens on to the universal. We find this conclusion of his in his final work, *Ishiki no keijijōgaku, “Daijō kishinron” no tetsugaku* (1993; *Metaphysics of consciousness in the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*).

And yet, be that as it may, the journey to reach “ultimate awareness” is indeed long and arduous. For in order to achieve *satori* in the sense of the “ultimate awareness” that the *Awakening of Faith* talks about, a person must rid him/herself of the karma of the innumerable and immeasurable semantic articulations that have accumulated layer by layer not only during his/her lifetime but over the hundreds or even thousands of years that preceded it, and that cannot be done all at once.

And so, in order to renounce *all* karma and revert to the original state that preceded it, as long as one lives, one must repeatedly return from unawareness to awareness, over and over again. *Satori* is not a one-time-only event. From unawareness to awareness, from awareness to unawareness, and from unawareness to awareness once again . . . .

The individual existence that has awakened to the religious and ethical principle of “ultimate awareness” is drawn into the cyclical motion of the field of existential consciousness that the unceasing exchange between unawareness and awareness creates in this way.

It is this existential, cyclical journey, I believe, that is the deep level of *philosophical* meaning of what is known as *saṃsāra* [reincarnation].<sup>51</sup>

This passage might well be called the last sentence of *Ishiki no keijijōgaku*. That means that it was also the last sentence that Izutsu ever wrote.

In it Izutsu raises the primordial question of who is it that has truly lived. That he felt that “a person must rid him/herself of the karma of the innumerable and immeasurable semantic articulations that have accumulated layer by layer not only during his/her lifetime but over the hundreds or even thousands of years that preceded it” tells us that his dialogues with the people he encountered through his philosophical activities both in everyday life and in the imaginal world were real events for him in the true sense of the word. Yet simultaneously implicit here is an existential question: Can philosophy save the dead?



## Afterword

ON 7 JANUARY 1993, Toshihiko Izutsu died suddenly. In *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949; Philosophy of mysticism), Izutsu had written the following about death.

While the body lives, the spirit sinks down into the darkness of death; therefore, so long as the body does not die, the spirit cannot live. Until one dies in the flesh, one cannot live in the spirit. For a person to be able to live a life truly worthy of that name, the spirit must first be freed from the tomb of the flesh. As the tragedian Euripides says, “Who knows but that life be death and death be life?”; to be alive in this world is, in fact, to be dead, and to be dead in this world, conversely, is to be truly alive.<sup>1</sup>

Death is one of the central themes of *Shinpi tetsugaku*. In it Izutsu thoroughly explores how to die while still alive. The *via mystica*, he says, is to die existentially while still having a body. But if that were all, it would merely be imitating *meletē thanatou*, “the training for death” that Plato advocates. Signs of deepening are found in the passage from Euripides, “Who knows but that life be death and death be life?” So as not to allow death to end up as merely a conceptual problem, Izutsu attempts to understand the dead as solid realities, as Rilke had done in the *Duino Elegies*. Such remarkable passion is found in that attitude that the term “longing” befits it.

But, as time passed, Izutsu's meditations on the dead later in his life took on a very different complexion.

There really is a strange dimension to human existence. I feel that intensely every time I meet Yasaburō, “the phantom man.” That may partly be because the Yasaburō who haunts my figural space is surprisingly youthful and lighthearted. I meet him there after a long time, as funny and as playful as he was in our student days. . . .

On the level of existence, I have lost an irreplaceable friend. But every time he comes to visit me now in the guise of “the phantom man . . . holding up a flower,” he comforts me, cheers me up and entertains me. On this level, in this new form, our friendship will continue to grow. I sincerely hope so.<sup>2</sup>

The words written in “Gen'ei no hito': Ikeda Yasaburō o omou” (1983; Remembering Yasaburō Ikeda, “the phantom man”) must be understood at face value. They are by no means a figure of speech. “The phantom man” is one of those “fondly remembered people who suddenly appear from the world of the dead and visit me.”<sup>3</sup> Although it may not necessarily be the case in Junzaburō Nishiwaki's poem, for me, Izutsu says, “the phantom man” cannot help but be the living dead. “Now, I meet him [Ikeda] only as ‘the phantom man,’” Izutsu writes. “A strange space opens up there where the two of us, on different levels of existence, intimately clasp hands and are able to talk to one another.”<sup>4</sup> So vivid is the experience for Izutsu that it evokes the sensual expression “intimately clasp hands and . . . talk to one another.” Conferring the flesh of WORD on a reality that goes beyond the five senses— isn't that what Izutsu believed the philosopher's mission to be? Had that not been the case, there would have been no positive reason for him to go so far as to write on a subject that was bound to be misinterpreted.

I learned of Izutsu's death from the newspaper. I distinctly recall even now how little attention was paid to it. I bought all the national papers, but none of them had anything more than a formal announcement. Some time would pass before Hayao Kawai and Ryōtarō Shiba wrote moving tributes, but they were the exception; it would be fair

to say that the media greeted this news with silence. The length of an obituary does not, of course, say anything directly about a person's achievements. Many outstanding individuals have passed away quietly, without any fanfare. And yet the enormous sense of incongruity I felt at the time would become the direct motivation behind the writing of the present book. As I look back, no small amount of time has elapsed since this plan first took shape. What I have intensely felt during the writing process is the significance and the difficulty of “reading” as opposed to writing. Indeed, this feeling has allowed me to cherish the hope that the situation of being forced to “read” might, by some invisible power, enable me to “write” something about this profound scholar.

There is an essay by Toshihiko Izutsu entitled “‘Yomu’ to ‘kaku’” (“Reading” and “Writing”).<sup>5</sup> His whole life can be summed up in those two words. “To read” is to come in direct contact with the Real World; “to write” is nothing less than to put one's experiences of that world into practice. As I was writing this book, what stood out were the two guises of Toshihiko Izutsu, the reader and the writer. “From beyond a distant time, thousands of years ago, the voice of some gigantic thing came into this breast, thunderously overpowering the circumambient noise”<sup>6</sup> — reading this sentence at the beginning of *Shinpi tetsugaku* was my first encounter with Toshihiko Izutsu. Although I had previously read *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* (1980; The original image of Islamic philosophy) and *Ishiki to honshitsu* (1983; Consciousness and essence), I was so busy following the words that I had been unable to get a true sense of who Toshihiko Izutsu the philosopher really was. I remember even now the shock of that moment; it was a feeling of having literally collided with something. The reading process did not go smoothly, however, and a long time would be needed before I finished *Shinpi tetsugaku*. The book refused to let me turn the page; the language demands that the reader stop—many days like this were to follow. It may only be my own arbitrary impression, but I felt the same sort of thing with Rilke's *Duino Elegies*. In short, it was not at the level of a person searching for the words on one's own initiative, but rather the experience of the words appearing and the person only being allowed to observe them.

There is an extremely interesting entry in E.R. Curtius' book diary. It happened when he was preparing to write his work on Balzac. While

checking contemporary critiques of Balzac, he knew there was one in Goethe's diary, but found it extremely difficult to get hold of the text. One day, when he was nearly at his wit's end, he bought a sausage at a roadside stand, and there, in the paper used to wrap it, was the passage from Goethe he had been looking for. "In Zeiten geistiger Hochspannung kommen die Dinge zu einem, ohne daß man sich darum bemüht. Ich habe diese Erfahrung wiederholt bestätigt" (In times of high mental tension, things have come to me without any effort on my part. I have had this experience corroborated repeatedly), he writes,<sup>7</sup> recalling times in his life when he had been guided by a phenomenon reminiscent of Jung's synchronicity.

During the time I was gathering together Toshihiko Izutsu's unpublished papers that were included in *Yomu to kaku*, and even while I was writing the present book, similar experiences happened to me many times. I would find material not just in library stacks or journal repositories but also in books casually picked up in second-hand bookstores. One incident I particularly remember is my encounter with Yoshinori Moroi, whom I dealt with in Chapter Four. Moroi was both a believer in Tenri-kyo who attempted to lay the basis for a Tenri-kyo theology and a remarkable religious philosopher, but at the time I decided to serialize this book, I had never even heard Moroi's name before. I learned of his works quite by accident and decided to devote a chapter to the relationship between Moroi and Izutsu. It was not because I had any sort of ties with Tenri-kyo. Far from it; I had never even read *Ofudesaki* (1900; *The Tip of the Writing Brush*) or *Mikagura-uta* (*Songs for the service*).

Moroi died at the age of forty-six in 1961; this year is the fiftieth anniversary of his death. He passed away before any of his works as a religious philosopher were published. Whenever I read Moroi's books, the suffering that preceded his death always came to mind, and my heart ached as I read him. For some reason, I could not shake off that feeling even when I was reading works from the period before he was aware of his illness. At the same time, however, Moroi's writings also strongly conveyed a feeling of "resurrection." Darkness exists, but the light envelops it—I can vividly recall even now the solid sense of this that virtually dominated me at the time. Moroi taught me that the question of death and the dead has different dimensions.

Shortly after Chapter Four came out, my wife, Keiko, died. Just after I had finished writing Chapter One, she, who had seemed so healthy at the time serialization began, received confirmation that the cancer she had first been diagnosed with in 1999 had recurred. She was told at the time that she had only six months to live. I wrote Chapters Two and Three while searching for a cure. Around the time I started Chapter Four, visible changes were already occurring in her body. I don't know how many times I thought I would stop writing, but she never asked me to. What she feared more than anything else was that her illness would interfere with my work and my writing activities. "I will do everything I can to get better," she said, "so keep on working." She even told me she was happier when I was working than when I was by her side. If a social obligation can be fulfilled simply by enduring, I would say that this book has been a joint work.

When her condition moved into its terminal stages and she was no longer able to move about freely, no one, except for a very few people, knew of her illness, not even her parents or other close family members. She refused to let them know. She hated the idea that others might suffer on her account and would not allow that to happen. While she was fighting the disease, she never stopped smiling or expressing her gratitude. That never changed even when she had to put up with several kilograms of ascitic fluid and a pleural effusion so severe it became difficult for her to breathe. When I told her it was all right to let me know when she was in pain, she replied, "If I put my pain into words, I don't think you'd be able to bear it." And when I asked how she could keep on smiling at times like this, she answered, "Because it's the only thing that I can do for you now." Such was the collaboration with which this book was written. That collaboration continues even now that she has become a "phantom woman."

Many hands are actually involved in the production of a single book. This book got its start when I proposed serializing it in *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature) to editor-in-chief Muneya Katō and received his ready consent. I was also fortunate to be blessed with many good readers during the serialization process. Had I not been given the opportunity to publish and provided with readers, this rash venture of mine would

never have been realized. I would like once again to extend my deepest thanks to the editorial staff at *Mita Bungaku* and everyone else who supported me while this work was being serialized.

In addition, while I was writing, I had a number of important encounters. I was able to obtain valuable suggestions as a result of my conversations on several occasions with four people—Toshihiko Izutsu's wife, Toyoko; Yoshitsugu Sawai, who was acquainted with him; Takashi Iwami, who catalogued Izutsu's library, compiled his bibliography and laid the foundations for the study of Izutsu; and Daijirō Kawashima, who took the lecture notes for Izutsu's "Introduction to Linguistics" course. Let me take this opportunity to formally express my heartfelt gratitude to them.

The first time I met Hiroshi Sakagami, the director of Keio University Press who supported the publication of this book, was exactly twenty years ago when I was in the editorial office of *Mita Bungaku*, which was then still located on the Mita campus. Mr Sakagami at the time was both a leading novelist and was also working as a businessman for a large international company. The fact that I am now writing while engaged in a business that has nothing to do with literature is strongly due to Mr Sakagami's influence. "It might be better not to write anything until you're thirty-five," he told me. "Look at people instead. And, if possible, work for a company that makes things." What he was probably saying was don't write from your head. Having been so advised, I did not write my first serious work until 2006, when I was thirty-eight. Now, as I combine writing with a full-time job in just this way, I have feelings of deep emotion and appreciation for his advice.

A writer is, in a way, like a farmer. Every day I am involved in a business that deals with herbs, and, when I write, the activity involves cultivating the subject matter, "the raw material," in the soil of language, tending to it, harvesting it and shipping it off. But these efforts alone do not get the product to the consumer. In between, the existence of cooks and grocers is indispensable. Cooks such as proofreaders, bookbinders and editors have been strong intermediary presences in the production of this book. Being able to work with them has been a truly happy event. By passing my writing by them, I gained fresh insight into what I was trying to say. Instead of saying how grateful I

am to have worked with them, I would like to say how honored I feel to have had them as my associates. In the future, through the efforts of good sales personnel, I sincerely hope readers will acquire this book. The act of selling completes a work; that is because a text does not come alive until it is read. If there are mistakes, the responsibility for the “raw material” rests with the author. Given such recalcitrant material, limits do inevitably arise that are naturally beyond the scope not just of the grocers but of the cooks as well.

I will not cite any names here, but, as I was writing, I always had in mind several acquaintances of mine who are now in distress. My hope is that this book will be read and understood by people like them who are experiencing life’s tribulations. For the victims of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami and others who have lost those close to them, I can only hope that the words in this book reach them. The responsibility of literature, I believe, is not to reveal the truth; it is nothing less than to be there for those who seek it.

Ryōko Katahara of Keio University Press was the editor in charge of this book. We have worked together several times before; in the present work as well, she has carried out the entire process with great seriousness. Her efforts have transformed words into a book. As the one person who was there with me at every step of the way, I extend to her my heartfelt thanks.

Eisuke Wakamatsu  
14 April 2011



# Chronology

This Chronology does not list republications of either Japanese- or English-language works, with the exception of *Mahometto* in 1989. Japanese lectures, conference papers, etc. that can be dated are described in as much detail as possible, and the essays based on them that were subsequently gathered together in book form are cited separately. Where the title of a work was changed at the time of republication, the newer title is used (e.g. *Arabiya tetsugaku* = *Arabia tetsugaku*).

In the case of Izutsu's foreign-language works, only the title of books and those lectures given at the Eranos Conference that were later expanded and revised and published in Japanese are included here; a complete listing of works by Izutsu can be found in the bibliography below. Readers should also consult the bibliography and curriculum vitae compiled by Takashi Iwami and published in *Consciousness and Reality: Studies in Memory of Toshihiko Izutsu* (Iwanami Shoten, 1998) and the *Bekkan* (Supplement) to Izutsu's selected works (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991–1993), which are the primary sources for an understanding of Toshihiko Izutsu's achievements. These lists bring together his major works in Japanese and English. I have been deeply indebted to them in compiling the present Chronology.

Eisuke Wakamatsu

[*Translator's note:* Where applicable, the translations used are the ones given on the websites of the Toyo Bunko's Documentation Center for Islamic Area Studies and CiNii (Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator) of the National Institute of Informatics.]

1914

Born on 4 May in Yotsuya, Tokyo, to father, Shintarō, and mother, Shinko. Originally from Niigata Prefecture, Shintarō was the younger son of a rice merchant. Deeply interested in Zen, a skilled calligrapher and *go* player, he loved the novels of Natsume Sōseki. He made his son, Toshihiko, from an early age read aloud in Chinese the Analects of Confucius and such Zen classics as *Wu Mên Kuan* (The Gateless Gate), *Lin Chi Lu* (The Sayings of Master Lin-Chi) and *Pi Yen Lu* (The Blue Cliff Records) and taught him his own unique method of introspection.

1927 AGE 13

Izutsu enters the middle school affiliated with Aoyama Gakuin University, founded by Protestant Christians of the Methodist denomination. His inability to adapt to daily morning prayers develops into a psychosomatic disorder, and one day he vomits during the service. Thereafter, however, he quickly begins to be cured of his antipathy to Christianity and develops an interest in it instead. Izutsu would later reflect that this incident was his ur-experience with monotheism. Around this time, he begins reading the works of Junzaburō Nishiwaki.

1931 AGE 17

Completes the five-year curriculum in four years and graduates from Aoyama Gakuin. Enters the preparatory course for the Faculty of Economics at Keio University. Meets Yasaburō Ikeda, who would become a lifelong friend. Around this time, studies Russian with Yoshitarō Yokemura in the night school of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Long afterward, he would write of Yokemura that “he drew out . . . the hidden depths of the Russian soul, and this moved me tremendously” (1980; “Shōshi o motomete”/In search of the right teacher).

1934 AGE 20

Takes and passes the entrance exam for the Faculty of Letters at Kyoto Imperial University; the results are even posted in the newspaper but is unable to matriculate because of a procedural problem (according to Yasaburō Ikeda, *Mita sodachi*/Growing up in Mita). Having decided to

switch to the English Literature Department in Keio's Faculty of Letters, celebrates with Ikeda and Morio Katō by throwing their principles of bookkeeping textbooks from Sukiwabashi Bridge. After entering the Faculty of Letters, though fascinated by the lectures of ethnologist Shinobu Orikuchi, studies with Junzaburō Nishiwaki as his academic adviser. Izutsu would later write that Nishiwaki was “the one and only mentor in my life” (1982; “Tsuioku: Nishiwaki Junzaburō ni manabu”/Reminiscences: Studying with Junzaburō Nishiwaki). Even after becoming Nishiwaki's student, Izutsu continued to audit Orikuchi's lectures and tell Nishiwaki about them.

1935 AGE 21

In January, contributes the prose poem “Philosophia haikōn” (Philosophy is image) to Yasaburō Ikeda's literary magazine, *Hito*. Around this time, translates T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and gives it to Ikeda.

1937 AGE 23

Graduates from the English Literature Department. Appointed a teaching assistant in Keio's Faculty of Letters. Sharing Junzaburō Nishiwaki's office with him was Fumio Kuriyagawa (a specialist in early English literature). Around this time, gives the lectures on “the history of Greek mystical thought” that would form the basis of *Shinpi tetsugaku* (1949; Philosophy of mysticism).

Studies Hebrew at the Institute of Biblical Research headed by Setsuzō Kotsuji. There becomes acquainted with Masao Sekine (later, an Old Testament scholar). Subsequently begins a Greek and Arabic study group with Sekine.

Makes the acquaintance of Abdur-Rasheed Ibrahim, who teaches Izutsu Arabic and becomes his spiritual guide to Islām. Although Izutsu did not convert to Islām, Ibrahim loved him deeply and told him, “You are a natural-born Muslim. Since you were a Muslim from the time of your birth, you are my son.”

1939 AGE 25

In September, “Saikin no Arabia gogaku: shiukan shōkai” (Contemporary studies of Arabic: A review of recent publications) appears, and in

December, “Akkado-go no *-ma* kōbun ni tsuite” (On the syntax of the Akkadian particle *-ma*) appears, both in the periodical *Gengo Kenkyū* (Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan).

Around this time, Ibrahim introduces Izutsu to Mūsā Bigiev, who becomes his teacher of Islamic theology and philosophy. He also meets Shūmei Ōkawa about this time. Ōkawa has confidence in Izutsu and puts him in charge of cataloguing two large series of works on Islām purchased from the Netherlands.

1940 AGE 26

In August and September, “Zamafusharī no rinrikan” (Idées éthiques de Zamakhsharī) appears in *Kaikyōken* (Islamic Area), the bulletin of the Institute of the Islamic Area, and in October, “Arabia bunka no seikaku” (A characteristic feature of Arabic culture) appears in *Shin Ajia* (New Asia), the bulletin of the East Asian Economic Research Bureau. Becomes acquainted with Shinji Maejima of the EAERB (later, a professor of Islamic studies at Keio University) and deepens his friendship with him.

1941 AGE 27

In July, publishes *Arabia shisōshi* (History of Arabic thought; Hakubunkan) in the *Kōa Zensho* (Asian Development series) under the general editorship of Kōji Ōkubo of the Institute of the Islamic Area. This was his maiden work.

1942 AGE 28

In September, the Keio Institute of Philological Studies opens at the suggestion of Junzaburō Nishiwaki. Izutsu becomes a research fellow. In addition to Nishiwaki, those registered as research fellows include such outstanding language scholars as Nobuhiro Matsumoto, Tsunetada Oikawa, Eiichi Kiyooka, Naoshirō Tsuji, Shirō Hattori, Yoshio Ogaeri, Shōshō Chino, Rintarō Fukuhara, Sanki Ichikawa, Seiji Ikumi and Tsugio Sekiguchi. In October, Keio University sets up its Foreign Language School and appoints Nishiwaki as the school’s first principal. Izutsu “was given the freedom to accompany the teacher whom I liked best of all and to set up the foreign language courses that I liked best of all” (1980; “Dōtei”/Curriculum vitae). At the same Institute, he studies

Sanskrit with Naoshirō Tsuji and Tibetan with Tōkan Tada. Izutsu lectured on Islamic philosophy. In the same month, publishes *Higashi Indo ni okeru Kaikyō hōsei: Gaisetsu* (Islamic jurisprudence in East India: An overview; Tōa Kenkyūjo [East Asian Institute]).

1943 AGE 29

In July, gives a paper entitled “Kaikyō ni okeru keiji to risei” (Islamic revelation and reasoning; published in September 1944) at a special conference on philosophy sponsored by the Committee for the Development of Sciences in Japan. In October, writes “Tōruko-go” (Turkish), “Arabia-go” (The Arabic language), “Hindosutānī-go” (Hindustani) and “Tāmiru-go” (Tamil) for *Sekai no gengo* (Languages of the world), put out by the Keio Institute of Philological Studies.

1944 AGE 30

In June, writes “Kaikyō shinpishugi tetsugakusha Ibunū Arabī no sonzairon” (The ontology of the Islamic mystic philosopher Ibn ‘Arabī; *Tetsugaku* [Philosophy], put out by the Mita Philosophical Society). In November, contributes “Isuramu shisōshi” (History of Islamic thought), “Mahometto” (Muhammad) and “Arabia kagaku, gijutsu” (Arabian science and technology) as a coauthor of *Seia sekaishi* (World history of western Asia; Kōbundō Shobō). Abdur-Rasheed Ibrahim dies. On 2 October, his father, Shintarō, dies.

1947 AGE 33

Around this time, reads Kōji Shirai’s translation of Sartre’s *Nausée*. While convalescing from illness, writes “Girishia no shizen shinpishugi: girisha tetsugaku no tanjō” (Greek nature mysticism: The birth of Greek philosophy); plans to publish it abandoned when the publisher goes bankrupt. It would later become the appendix to the first edition (1949) of *Shinpi tetsugaku* and Part 1 of volume 1 in Chūō Kōronsha’s *Izutsu Toshihiko Chosakushū* (Selected works); hereafter = ITC.

1948 AGE 34

In March, “Roshia no naimenteki seikatsu: jūkyūseiki bungaku no seishinshiteki tenbō” (Interior life in Russia: A spiritual history perspective

on nineteenth-century literature; in *Kosei* [Individuality]) comes out. In May, contributes *Arabia tetsugaku*, *Kaikyō tetsugaku* (Arabic philosophy, Islamic philosophy; Hikari no Shobō) to volume 5 of *Sekai Tetsugaku Kōza* (Lectures in world philosophy; Izutsu's part of this joint work would be combined with a revised version of *Arabia shisōshi* and published as *Isurāmu shisōshi* in 1975).

Around this time, becomes acquainted with Mitsuo Ueda, the head of Hikari no Shobō, who strongly encourages Izutsu to write *Shinpi tetsugaku* (Philosophy of mysticism). While managing a publishing house, Ueda wrote, as well as translated, works on philosophy. In addition to Hikari no Shobō, he ran the Tetsugakudō Kyōdan/Shinpidō (Religious Order of the Philosophic Way/Mystic Way), a religious corporation, as well as a monastery and an academic institute affiliated with it, the Tetsugaku Shūdōin/Rogosu Jiyū Daigaku (Philosophy Monastery/Logos Free University). Izutsu writes that without Ueda's "enthusiastic support and encouragement," *Shinpi tetsugaku* would never have seen the light of day.

#### 1949 AGE 35

In May, begins "Introduction to Linguistics" lectures (Daijirō Kawashima's lecture notes go on into the following year). In September, publishes *Shinpi tetsugaku: Girishia no bu* (Philosophy of mysticism: The Greek part; Hikari no Shobō), which he had written on his sickbed "while coughing up blood." Awarded the first Fukuzawa Prize and the Gijuku Prize for that work. As sequels, plans a second volume on Judaism and a third on Christian mysticism, and an advertisement for them is issued, but when Hikari no Shobō goes bankrupt, the plans are abandoned. In November, "Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon: Kurooderu-ron" (Poetry and religious existence: On Claudel) appears in *Joseisen* (Women's Line). Mūsā Bigiev dies. On 15 August, Izutsu's mother, Shinko, dies.

#### 1950 AGE 36

In September, publishes *Arabia-go nyūmon* (Introduction to Arabic grammar; Keio Shuppansha). Appointed assistant professor in the Faculty of Letters, Keio University.

## 1951 AGE 37

Publishes *Roshia bungaku* (Russian literature), part I in January and part II in June, as a textbook for a Keio University correspondence course. In August, “Shinpushugi no erosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron” (The mysticism of St Bernard) appears in *Tetsugaku* (Philosophy).

The later lectures in “Introduction to Linguistics” begin (and continue until 1956). Lecture notes taken by the poet and writer of Catholic picture books, Hiroko Murakami. Around this time, Izutsu begins his translation of the *Kōran* (completed in 1958).

## 1952 AGE 38

Marries Toyoko. In April, publishes *Mahometto* (Muhammad) as a volume in the *Atene Bunko* (Athens Library series; *Kōbundō*). In July, “Tōrusutoi ni okeru ishiki no mujunsei ni tsuite” (On the paradoxical nature of consciousness in Tolstoy) appears in *Sanshokuki* (Tricolor). In November, contributes “Hindōsutānī-go” (Hindustani) to volume 1 of the jointly authored *Sekai gengo gaisetsu* (Overview of world languages).

## 1953 AGE 39

In February, publishes *Roshiateki ningen: kindai Roshia bungakushi* (Russian humanity: A history of modern Russian literature; *Kōbundō*). That spring, meets M.C. D’Arcy, who had come to Japan at the invitation of the Japan Committee for International Interechange affiliated with the International House of Japan, and asks permission to translate *The Mind and Heart of Love*. In August, “Kurōderu no shiteki sonzairon” (C Claudel’s poetic ontology) appears in *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature).

In September, Shinobu Orikuchi dies.

## 1954 AGE 40

Appointed professor in the Faculty of Letters, Keio University.

## 1955 AGE 41

In May, contributes “Arabia-go” (The Arabic language) to volume 2 of the jointly authored *Sekai gengo gaisetsu* (Overview of world languages). That summer, conducts a seminar on semantics at Kyoto University.

- 1956 AGE 42  
Publishes his first English-language monograph, *Language and Magic: Studies in the Magical Function of Speech* (Keio Institute of Philological Studies).
- 1957 AGE 43  
In March, publishes his translation of D'Arey's book under the title *Ai no rogosu to patosu* (The logos and pathos of love; Sōbunsha). In November, publication begins on Japan's first translation of the Kōran from the Arabic original (Iwanami Bunko; completed the following year in June). In December, "Mahometto to Kōran" (Muhammad and the Kōran) appears in *Bunko* (Library). That month, Shūmei Ōkawa dies.
- 1958 AGE 44  
In April, "Kigō katsudō toshite no gengo" (Language as a semiotic activity) appears in *Sanshokuki* (Tricolore), and in July, "Kōran to Senya ichiya monogatari" (The Kōran and *The Thousand and One Nights*) appears in *Bunko* (Library).
- 1959 AGE 45  
Receives a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation to study abroad for two years, his first foreign travel. Stays in Lebanon for six months. In October, his report from abroad, "Rebanon kara Beirūto nite" (From Lebanon: In Beirut) appears in *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review). Awarded a doctorate in literature from Keio University. Publishes *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran: A Study in Semantics* (Keio Institute of Philological Studies).
- 1960 AGE 46  
Lives in Cairo, Egypt, as a continuation from the previous year of his studies abroad. In August, visits Aleppo, Syria. In October, meets Leo Weisgerber in Germany. Subsequently arrives in Montreal via Paris. Begins research at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University.

1961 AGE 47

Attends the American Academy of Religion annual meeting in New York. With Keio colleague Shinji Maejima follows in the footsteps of Emerson and Thoreau in the Boston suburb of Concord. In July, his report from abroad “Bosuton nite” (In Boston) appears in *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review). Drawing on his experiences in the Islamic world, sets out to revise his translation of the Kōran (Iwanami Bunko).

From December to the following June, gives special lectures at McGill’s Institute of Islamic Studies.

1962 AGE 48

Around this time, the linguist Hisanosuke Izui offers Izutsu a position at Kyoto University. As a result, in June, Keio University reorganizes the Institute of Philological Studies, launches the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies and appoints Izutsu professor. The Institute’s first director is Nobuhiro Matsumoto (Oriental history and folklore studies). A small research center, the only full-time professors seconded to it from the Faculty of Letters are Izutsu and Naoshirō Tsuji (ancient Indian philosophy).

Leaves to take up the position of visiting professor at McGill University (until 1968). Becomes acquainted there with Mehdi Mohaghegh (Iranian specialist in Islamic studies). The two men will go on to write a number of joint works including the edition of a text by 19th-century Islamic scholastic philosopher Sabzawārī. Also, at the same Institute, makes the acquaintance of Hermann Landolt. Looking back on this time, Izutsu would write, “In any event, I was urged on by what seemed like an unstoppable existential impulse” (1980; “Dōtei”/Curriculum vitae).

1964 AGE 50

Publishes *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies). In December, completes his revised translation of the Kōran.

1965 AGE 51

Publishes *The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology: A Semantic Analysis of Imān and Islām* (Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies).

1966 AGE 52

Publishes *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān* (McGill University Press) and *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism* (Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies). The second volume of the latter work comes out the following year. Revised, expanded and retitled *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts*, it was published by Iwanami Shoten in 1983 and the University of California Press in 1984. It is Izutsu's major English-language work.

1967 AGE 53

In June, "Tetsugakuteki imiron" (Philosophical semantics) appears in the bulletin of the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies. That summer, attends the 36th Eranos Conference for the first time as an official lecturer; lectures on "The Absolute and the Perfect Man in 'Taoism.'" Becomes the second Japanese participant at Eranos since Daisetz Suzuki. At this time, meets historian of religion Mircea Eliade and deepens a friendship with him.

1968 AGE 54

Resigns as professor in the Faculty of Letters at Keio University.

1969 AGE 55

Is officially appointed professor at McGill University (until 1975). Following the opening of the Tehran branch of McGill's Institute of Islamic Studies, moves to Iran with Mehdi Mohaghegh. Up until the preceding year, he used to spend six months in Montreal and six months in Japan, but, after this move, makes Tehran his main base for the next ten years. That summer, takes part in the 38th Eranos Conference, lecturing on "The Structure of Selfhood in Zen Buddhism" (later revised as "Zenteki ishiki no firudo kōzō" [The field structure of Zen consciousness] and published in *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu* [Cosmos and anti-cosmos]). In June, "Kōran honyaku gojitsudan" (Reminiscences of translating the Kōran) appears in *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review). Attends the Fifth East-West Philosophers' Conference in Honolulu and lectures on "The Basic Structure of Metaphysical Thinking in Islam."

That winter, gives a lecture entitled “An Analysis of *Wahdat al-Wujūd*” (later revised and included in *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* [‘The original image of Islamic philosophy’]) at the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, attended by Gershom Scholem, an authority on Qabbālāh studies; atomic physicist and leading expert on Maimonides, Shlomo Pines; and Shmuel Sambursky, a specialist on Neoplatonic natural philosophy and theories of time.

1970 AGE 56

That summer, takes part in the 39th Eranos Conference, lecturing on “Sense and Nonsense in Zen Buddhism.” Is accompanied by Iwao Takahashi, a pioneering researcher on Rudolf Steiner.

1971 AGE 57

Becomes a member of the Institut International de Philosophie. Publishes *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies).

1972 AGE 58

That spring, begins a study group on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) with five students at the University of Tehran. Members of the study group, which continued until 1977, included William Chittick, who would later become a well-known Ibn ‘Arabī scholar, and future Islām scholars Nasrollah Pourjavady and Gholamreza Aavani. On 20 and 24 May, lectures on “New Creation” at Tehran University. In August, “Ainu-ru-Kuzāto Hamadāni no shisō ni okeru shinpishugi to gengo no tagiteki yōhō no mondai” (Mysticism and the linguistic problem of equivocation in the thought of ‘Ayn Al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī) (trans. Toshio Kuroda) appears in *Oriente* (Orient). That summer, takes part in the 41st Eranos Conference, lecturing on “The Elimination of Color in Far Eastern Art and Philosophy.” In September, attends the International Conference of Medieval Philosophy, in Madrid, Spain. After the conference, travels to Córdoba with Islamic scholar William Montgomery Watt and others. In November, *Imi no kōzō: Kōran ni okeru shūkyō dōtoku gainen no bunseki* (The structure of meaning: An analysis of ethico-religious

concepts in the Kōran, a translation of *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran* by Shin'ya Makino [Shinsensha]) is published.

1973 AGE 59

In February, "Tōzai bunka no kōryū" (East-West cultural exchange) appears in *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review). That summer, takes part in the 42nd Eranos Conference, lecturing on "The Interior and Exterior in Zen Buddhism."

1974 AGE 60

In January, "Kaikyō tetsugaku shokan" (Perspectives on Islamic philosophy) appears in *Tosho* (Books). That summer, takes part in the 43rd Eranos Conference, lecturing on "The Temporal and A-Temporal Dimensions of Reality in Confucian Metaphysics." Awarded a doctorate from the University of Tehran.

1975 AGE 61

In February, publishes *Isurāmu shisōshi* (History of Islamic thought; Iwanami Shoten); that same month, "Zen ni okeru gengoteki imi no mondai" (Problems of linguistic meaning in Zen) appears in *Risō* (Ideal). That summer, takes part in the 44th Eranos Conference, lecturing on "Naive Realism and Confucian Philosophy." Appointed a professor at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy (until January 1979 and the outbreak of the Iranian revolution).

1976 AGE 62

That summer, takes part in the 45th Eranos Conference, lecturing on "The *I Ching* Mandala and Confucian Metaphysics." At the World of Islam Festival, held in London, lectures on Hua Yen philosophy. That summer, visits Tōdaiji.

1977 AGE 63

Publishes *Toward a Philosophy of Zen Buddhism* (Iranian Academy of Philosophy). In October, takes part in an international symposium in Tehran, lecturing on "Beyond Dialogue: A Zen Point of View" (later translated as "Taiwa to hitaiwa" [Dialogue and non-dialogue] and

included in *Ishiki to honshitsu* [1983; Consciousness and essence]). Revisits Tōdaiji with Iranian specialist on architecture Nader Ardalan.

1978 AGE 64

In January, colloquy with philosopher Tomonobu Iwanami entitled “Tōzai no tetsugaku” (Oriental and occidental philosophies) appears in *Shisō* (Thought). As general editor of Iwanami’s Classics of Islām series, publishes *Sonzai ninshiki no michi: sonzai to honshitsu ni tsuite* (The path of ontological cognition: On existence and essence; a translation of Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Kitāb al-Mashā’ir*) in March, and *Rūmī goroku* (The discourses of Rūmī; a translation of Rūmī’s *Fīhi mā fīhi*) in May, and writes detailed commentaries on both works. Publication of Suhrawardī’s *Kitāb Hikmat al-Ishrāq* (Philosophy of Illumination) is also planned for the same series but never realized.

That summer, takes part in the 47th Eranos Conference, lecturing on “The Field Structure of Time in Zen Buddhism.”

1979 AGE 65

In January, “Taiwa to hitaiwa: Zen mondō ni tsuite no ichikōsatsu” (Dialogue and non-dialogue: Some thoughts on Zen *mondōs*) appears in *Shisō* (Thought). In February, returns to Japan via Athens having left Tehran on a Japan Airlines rescue mission because of the Iranian revolution. With this event as a turning point, Izutsu says, his life entered its third stage. On 22 and 29 May, lectures on “Isurāmu tetsugaku no genten” (The origin of Islamic philosophy) at the Iwanami Citizen Lecture series (published in the August and October issues of *Shisō* [Thought]) as “Isurāmu tetsugaku no genten: shinpishugiteki shutaisei no kogito” (The origin of Islamic philosophy: *Cogito* of the subjecthood of mysticism). In June, colloquy with historian Shinobu Iwamura entitled “Isurāmu sekai to wa nani ka” (What is the Islamic world?) appears in *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review). That summer, takes part in the 48th Eranos Conference, lecturing on “Between Image and No-Image: Far Eastern Ways of Thinking.” In October, publishes *Isurāmu seitan* (The birth of Islām; Jinbun Shoin). In December, “Honshitsu chokkan: Isurāmu tetsugaku danshō” (Wesenerschanung: A brief note on Islamic philosophy) appears in *Risō* (Ideal). That same

month, lectures on “Oriental Philosophy and the Contemporary Situation of Human Existence” at the Keio-sponsored international symposium, “Dimensions of Global Interdependence.” Lectures on “Matter and Consciousness in Oriental Philosophies” at the Colloque de Cordoue (included in *Ishiki no henreki* [The journey of consciousness; Tama Shuppan], the translation of the conference proceedings, *Science et conscience*). Contributes a tribute to *Kaisō no Kuriyagawa Fumio* (Recollections of Fumio Kuriyagawa), a collection of essays in Kuriyagawa’s memory.

1980 AGE 66

Between January and June, contributes a series of essays to *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review): “Kokusai kaigi, gakusai kaigi” (International conferences, interdisciplinary conferences), “Dōtei” (Curriculum vitae), “Keiō kokusai shinposiumu shokan” (Reflections on the Keio international symposium), “Musha shugyō” (A warrior’s training), “Shōshi o motomete” (In search of the right teacher), “Kokusai kaigi” (International conference) and “Shi to hōyū” (Teachers, colleagues and friends). On 23 April, lectures on “Isurāmu to wa nani ka” (What is Islām?) at the Japan Cultural Congress (published in the July issue of *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review) as “Isurāmu no futatsu no kao” [The two faces of Islām]). In May, publishes *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* (The original image of Islamic philosophy; Iwanami Shoten). In June, begins serialization of “Ishiki to honshitsu” (Consciousness and essence; in *Shisō* [Thought], until February 1982); that same month, a three-way colloquy with philosopher of religion Shizuteru Ueda and Qabbālāh specialist Tadahiro Ōnuma entitled “Shinpushugi no konpon kōzō: *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō ni tsuite*” (The fundamental structure of mysticism: On *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō*) appears in *Risō* (Ideal). That summer, takes part in the 49th Eranos Conference, lecturing on “The Nexus of Ontological Events: A Buddhist View of Reality.” Writes “Daiikkyū no kokusaijin” (A first-class cosmopolitan), a blurb for the Complete Works of Daisetz Suzuki.

## 1981 AGE 67

In January, a colloquy with historian Shuntarō Itō entitled “Isurāmu bunnei no gendaiteki igi” (The contemporary significance of Islamic civilization) appears in *Ekonomisuto* (Economist). In March, contributes a preface to the Japanese translation of R.A. Nicholson’s *The Idea of Personality in Sufism* (*Isurāmu ni okeru perusona no rinen*; trans. Kiyoshi Nakamura). In December, publishes *Isurāmu bunka* (Islamic culture; Iwanami Shoten). 27–30 November, attends an international colloquium, “Les crises spirituelles et intellectuelles dans le monde contemporain,” sponsored by the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco. Publishes *The Theory of Beauty in the Classical Aesthetics of Japan* (co-authored with Toyoko Izutsu; Martinus Nijhoff).

## 1982 AGE 68

Between 18 January and 29 March gives ten lectures entitled “Kōran o yomu” (Reading the Kōran) as the first Iwanami Citizen Seminar. In June, Junzaburō Nishiwaki dies. In July, Yasaburō Ikeda dies. That summer, takes part in the 51st Eranos Conference, lecturing on the “Celestial Journey: Mythopoesis and Metaphysics.” Meets Mircea Eliade again at this conference; this would be their last meeting; it would also be the last Eranos Conference that Izutsu would attend. Becomes professor emeritus at Keio University. In October, “Tsuioku: Nishiwaki Junzaburō ni manabu” (Reminiscences: Studying with Junzaburō Nishiwaki) appears in *Eigo seinen* (The Rising Generation). In November, receives the Mainichi Publishing Culture Award for *Isurāmu bunka* (Islamic culture). In December, elected a member of the Japan Academy. At the request of Mutsuo Yanase, lectures at the Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University.

## 1983 AGE 69

In January, “Derida genshō” (A Derridian phenomenon) appears in *Shinkan no me* (A look at recent publications). The same month, publishes *Ishiki to honshitsu* (Consciousness and essence; Iwanami Shoten). In February, “‘Gen’ei no hito’: Ikeda Yasaburō o omiou” (Remembering

Yasaburō Ikeda, “the phantom man”) appears in *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review). In May, “‘Yomu’ to ‘kaku’” (“Reading” and “writing”) appears in *Risō* (Ideal). In June, publishes *Kōran o yomu* (Reading the Kōran; Iwanami Shoten). That month, a three-way colloquy with James Hillman and Hayao Kawai, “Yungu shinrigaku to Tōyō shisō” (Jungian psychology and Oriental thought) appears in *Shisō* (Thought), translated by Toyoko Izutsu. Also that month, meets Jacques Derrida in Paris. Derrida writes “Lettre à un ami japonais” (Letter to a Japanese friend), an essay in letter form dated 10 July, based on their previous month’s conversation (there is a translation of this letter by Keizaburō Maruyama in the April 1984 issue of *Shisō*). In July, contributes “Nishiwaki sensei to gengogaku to watashi” (Professor Nishiwaki, linguistics and I) as an insert to the supplement to Junzaburō Nishiwaki’s collected works. In September, “Derida no naka no ‘Yudayajin’” (The “Jew” in Derrida) appears in *Shisō*. On 23 December, lectures on “Shīaha Isurāmu” (Shī’ite Islām) at The Industry Club of Japan. Awarded the Yomiuri Prize for Literature for *Ishiki to honshitsu*. Receives the Asahi Prize (Asahi Shimbunsha). Ryōtarō Shiba also awarded the same prize this year; first meeting of the two.

#### 1984 AGE 70

In March, “Gogaku kaigen” (My initiation into the mysteries of languages) comes out in *Michi: Shōwa no hitori ichiwashū* (Pathways: One person one story, a Shōwa-period anthology). That month, “Shīaha Isurāmu: Shīateki junkyōsha ishiki no yurai to sono engekisei” (Shī’ite Islām: The origin of the Shī’ite martyr complex and its theatricality) appears in *Sekai* (World); contributes “Bunka to gengo arayashiki: ibunkakan taiwa no kanōsei no mondai o megutte” (Culture and linguistic *alaya*-consciousness: On the question of the possibility of cross-cultural dialogue) to *Gendai bunmei no kiki to jidai no seishin* (The crisis of contemporary civilization and the spirit of the times), an international forum to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the publishing company, Iwanami Shoten. In April, “Tansū, fukusū ishiki” (Consciousness of singular and plural) appears in *Bungaku* (Literature), and “‘Kaku’: Derida no ekurichūru-ron ni chinande” (“Writing”: Apropos of Derrida’s theory of *écriture*) appears in *Shisō* (Thought). That month, writes a blurb for Mark Taylor’s *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology* (later translated as

*Samayou* by Toyoko Izutsu; Iwanami Shoten). In early spring, invited by the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, to lecture over a three-month period on the reception of ancient Indian philosophy in Islamic philosophy. In June, “Sūfizumu to gengo tetsugaku” (Sufism and linguistic philosophy) and a colloquy with Hermann Landolt, “Sūfizumu to misutishizumu” (Sufism and mysticism) appear in *Shisō*. In October, “Konton: mu to yū no aida” (Chaos: Between being and nothingness) appears in *Kokugo Tsūshin* (Japanese Language News). On 26 December, gives a special lecture at the 17th Conference on Japanese Esoteric Buddhism held at Mount Kōya, entitled “Gengo tetsugaku toshite no Shingon” (Shingon: A philosophy of language), published the following March in *Mikkyōgaku kenkyū* (Journal of Esoteric Buddhist Studies).

### 1985 AGE 71

In January, a colloquy with Shūsaku Endō, “Bungaku to shisō no shinsō” (The depths of literature and thought) appears in *Sekai* (World). In February, “Imi bunsetsu riron to Kūkai: Shingon mikkyō no gengo tetsugakuteki kanōsei o saguru” (Kūkai and the theory of semantic articulation: Exploring the linguistic philosophical potential of Shingon esoteric Buddhism), an expanded and revised version of “Gengo tetsugaku toshite no Shingon,” appears in *Shisō* (Thought). In July and September, “Ji-ji muge / ri-ri muge: sonzai kaitai no ato” (The world of ‘non-hindrane’: After/traces of ontological deconstruction) appears in *Shisō*. In November, “Mita jidai: Sarutoru tetsugaku to no deai” (The Mita years: My encounter with Sartre’s philosophy) appears in *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature). In December, publishes *Imi no fukami e* (To the depths of meaning; Iwanami Shoten).

### 1986 AGE 72

In January, publishes a collection of colloquies, *Eichi no daiza* (Bezels of wisdom; Iwanami Shoten). In March and April, “Sōzō fudan: Tōyōteki jikan ishiki no genkei” (Perpetual creation: A basic pattern of Oriental time consciousness) appears in *Shisō* (Thought). On 12 May, at a regular meeting of the Japan Academy, lectures on the “assassins” of the Ismaili sect; published in the July and August issues of *Shisō* as “Isu-nairuha ‘ansatsudan’: Aramūtojosai no myutosu to shisō” (The Ismaili

Assassins: Mythos and thought around the Alamut castle). In September, “Eriāde aitō: ‘Indo taiken’ o megutte” (Mourning Eliade: On his “Indian experiences”) appears in *Yuriika* (Eureka). From the 13th to the 17th of December, takes part in an international symposium held at and sponsored by Tenri University, lecturing on “Cosmos and Anti-cosmos.” Writes blurbs for the collected works of Plotinus and the selected works of Keiji Nishitani.

1987 AGE 73

In January, “Kizuku: shi to tetsugaku no kiten” (Becoming aware: The origins of poetry and philosophy) appears in *Shisō* (Thought). In March, “Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu: Tōyō tetsugaku no tachiba kara” (Cosmos and anti-cosmos: From the standpoint of Oriental philosophy) appears in *Shisō*. In April, “Fūkei” (Landscape) appears in *Gekkan Kanagawa* (Kanagawa Monthly).

1988 AGE 74

Becomes a member of the editorial committee for the Iwanami lecture series on Oriental thought, for which, in January, he writes, “Chūsei Yudaya tetsugakushi ni okeru keiji to risei” (Reason and revelation in the history of medieval Judaic philosophy), and, in October, “Gengo genshō toshite no ‘keiji’” (“Revelation” as a linguistic phenomenon); “Avisenna, Gazārī, Averoesu ‘hōraku’ ronsō: ‘tetsugaku no hōraku’ to ‘hōraku no hōraku’ o megutte” (Disputes among Avicenna, Gazārī and Averroes: Concerning “destructio philosophorum” and “destructio destructionis”). In August, “Zenteki ishiki no firudo kōzō” (The field structure of Zen consciousness), an expanded version of his 1969 Eranos lecture, “The Structure of Selfhood in Zen Buddhism,” appears in *Shisō*. In November, a colloquy with Shōtarō Yasuoka, “Shisō to geijutsu” (Thought and Art) appears in *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature). Writes a blurb for the selected works of philosopher and historian of science Toratarō Shimomura.

1989 AGE 75

In April, contributes a long entry on “Tōyō shisō” (Oriental thought) to *Konsaisu zoseiki shisō jiten* (Concise dictionary of 20th-century thought).

In May, returns to and publishes the original version of *Mahometto* (Muhammad; Kōdansha Gakujutsu Bunko). In June, “TAT TVAM ASI (nanji wa sore nari): Bāyajīdo Basutāmī ni okeru perusona tenkan no shisō” (TAT TVAM ASI [Thou art that]: The idea of change of persona in Bāyajīdo Basutāmī) appears in *Shisō* (Thought). In July, publishes *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu* (Cosmos and anti-cosmos; Iwanami Shoten).

1990 AGE 76

In January, “Māvāteki sekai ninshiki: funiichigenronteki Vēdānta no shii kōzō o megutte” (Cognition of a *Māvā*-like world: On the thought structure of Advaita Vedānta) appears in *Shisō* (Thought). Becomes general editor of *Eranosu sōsho* (Eranos yearbooks; Heibonsha). In July, contributes “*Eranosu sōsho* no hakkan ni saishite: kanshūsha no kotoba” (On the occasion of the publication of the *Eranos yearbooks*: Words from the editor). In December, writes “Imiron josetsu: *Miuwa no shisō* no kaisetsu o kanete” (Introduction to semantic theory: With a commentary on *Miuwa no shisō*), an exegesis of Akihiro Satake’s *Miuwa no shisō* (The intellectual aspects of folktales).

1991 AGE 77

In May, publishes *Chōetsu no kotoba* (Transcendental WORDS: God and men in Islamic and Jewish philosophy; Iwanami Shoten). In October, publication begins on *Izutsu Toshihiko Chosakushū* (The selected works of Toshihiko Izutsu; Chūō Kōronsha; completed posthumously in 1993). For volume 1, writes “*Chosakushū* no kankō ni atatte” (On the publication of my selected works).

1992 AGE 78

In April, greatly revises and expands the first half of *Imi no kōzō* (The structure of meaning), volume 4 of his selected works.

Late that autumn, engages in a colloquy—his last—with Ryōtarō Shiba, “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari” (Darkness and light at the end of the twentieth century; published the following January in *Chūō Kōron* [Central Review]). Begins serialization of “Ishiki no keijijōgaku: *Daijō kishinron* no tetsugaku” (Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*; in *Chūō Kōron*

[Central Review]): “Sonzaironteki shiza” (Ontological perspectives) in May, “Sonzairon kara ishikiron e” (From ontology to a theory of consciousness) in August, and “Jitsuzon ishiki kinō no naiteki mekanizumu” (The internal mechanism of the function of existential awareness) in October (the third installment would be the last thing he ever wrote).

**1993** AGE 79

On the morning of 7 January, after finishing writing, trips on a rug and falls on his way to the bedroom. Gets up as though nothing has happened and calls out *oyasumi* (roughly, “I’m going to lie down”) to his wife, Toyoko; this would be his last word. Suffers a brain hemorrhage in his bedroom at 9 AM and dies the same day at 4:45 PM in a Kamakura hospital. At his own request, there was no funeral (burial at Engakuji, Kamakura). In March, *Ishiki no keijijōgaku: “Daijō kishinron” no tet-sugaku* (Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna; Chūō Kōronsha) is published.

**1994** 1 YEAR AFTER HIS DEATH

In December, *Creation and the Timeless Order of Things: Essays in Islamic Mystical Philosophy* (White Cloud Press) is published.

**2001** 8 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

In November, Izutsu’s translation of *Lao-tsu: The Way and Its Virtue* is published as volume 1 of The Izutsu Library Series on Oriental Philosophy (Keio University Press).

**2008** 15 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

The lectures he gave at the Eranos Conference are published in two volumes under the title *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy: Collected Papers of the Eranos Conference* (Keio University Press). In August, an international conference on his work on Islām, entitled “Japanese Contribution to Islamic Studies: The Legacy of Toshihiko Izutsu,” is held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Since 2002, several of his English-language monographs have been republished in Malaysia.

2009 16 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

In January, a special edition of *Mita Bungaku* [Mita Literature] is devoted to Toshihiko Izutsu.

2011 18 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

In March, publication begins on *The Collected Works of Toshihiko Izutsu* (Keio University Press), with *Language and Magic: Studies in the Magical Function of Speech* as volume 1.



## Notes

In citing works in the notes, the short title has generally been used. References to *Izutsu Toshihiko Chosakushū* (The selected works of Toshihiko Izutsu) will be abbreviated as ITC.

### PREFACE TO THE JAPANESE EDITION

1. “Kaikyō ni okeru keiji to risei” (Islamic revelation and reasoning), in *Nippon Shogaku Keukyū Hōkoku* (Report of the Committee for the Development of Sciences in Japan) Tokushū 12 (1944), 53–67; rept. in *Youu to kaku: Izutsu Toshihiko esseishū* (Reading and writing: A collection of Toshihiko Izutsu’s essays), ed. Eisuke Wakamatsu (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2009), pp. 63–78, at 63.
2. *Arabia shisōshi: Kaikyō shingaku to kaikyō tetsugaku* (History of Arabic thought: Islamic theology and Islamic philosophy) (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1941).
3. Both were published the following year: “Mahometto” (Muhammad) in *Seia sekaishi* (World history of western Asia), ed. Asatarō Yasaka (Tokyo: Kōbundō Shobō, 1944), pp. 289–300, rept. in *Youu to kaku*, pp. 127–146; and “Kaikyō shinpishugi tetsugakusha Ibun Arabī no sonzairon” (The ontology of the Islamic mystic philosopher Ibn Arabī), *Tetsugaku* (Philosophy) 25–26 (1944), 332–357; rept. in *Youu to kaku*, pp. 41–62.
4. *Shinpi tetsugaku: Girishia no bu* (Philosophy of mysticism: The Greek part) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949; rept. Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010); rev. ed., Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1978; rept. ITC 1 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991). Citations will be to the 2010 edition and ITC 1.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 31 (ITC 1: 224).
6. *Roshiateki ningen: kiudai roshia bungakushi* (Russian humanity: A history of modern Russian literature) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1953); new edition (Hokuyōsha, 1978); rept. ITC 3 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992). Citations will be to the 1978 edition and ITC 3.
7. *Kōran*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957–1958); rev. ed., 3 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964); rept. ITC 7 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992).

8. *Isurāmu seitan* (The birth of Islām) (Tokyo: Jinbun Shoin, 1979); rept. in ITC 2 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1993).
9. *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* (The original image of Islamic philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980); rept. in ITC 5 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992).
10. *Ishiki to honshitsu: seishinteki Tōyō o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the spiritual Orient) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983); rept. as *Ishiki to honshitsu: Tōyōteki shii no kōzōteki seigōsei o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the structural integration of Oriental thought), in ITC 6 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992).
11. *Isurāmu bunka: sono kontei ni aru mono* (Islamic culture: The elements that make up its foundation) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981); rept. in ITC 2 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1993).
12. *Kōran o yomu* (Reading the Kōran) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983); rept. ITC 8 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991).
13. *Imi no fukami e: Tōyō tetsugaku no suii* (To the depths of reading: the Fathoming of Oriental philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1985); rept. in ITC 9 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991).
14. *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu: Tōyō tetsugaku no tame ni* (Cosmos and anti-cosmos: For a philosophy of the Orient) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989); rept. in ITC 9 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991).
15. *Chōetsu no kotoba: Isurāmu Yudaya tetsugaku ni okeru kami to hito* (Transcendental WORDs: God and men in Islamic and Jewish philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991)
16. *Ishiki no keijijōgaku: “Daijō kishinron” no tetsugaku* (Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993; rept. 2001).
17. *Izutsu Toshihiko Chosakushū* (The selected works of Toshihiko Izutsu), 11 vols. and supplement (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1991–1993).
18. *Yomu to kaku: Izutsu Toshihiko esseishū* (Reading and writing: A collection of Toshihiko Izutsu’s essays), ed. Eisuke Wakamatsu (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2009).
19. *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 235 (ITC 3: 215).
20. *Ibid.*, p. 239 (ITC 3: 218).
21. Cf. ITC 1: 13–14.
22. *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1971), p. 1.
23. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 429 (ITC 6: 339–340); the translation is by Yoshitsugu Sawai in “Izutsu’s Creative ‘Reading’ of Oriental Thought and Its Development,” the editor’s essay to *The Structure of Oriental*

*Philosophy: Collected Papers of the Eranos Conference*, 2 vols., The Izutsu Library Series 4 (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008), 2: 215–223, at 221.

24. *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō*, ITC 5: 334.  
 25. *Ishiki to hōshitsu*, p. 4 (ITC 6: 9).

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

1. *Roshiateki ningen: kindai Roshia bungakushi* (Russian humanity: A history of modern Russian literature) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1953), p. 164; rept. ITC 3 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 143.
2. *Shinpi tetsugaku* (Philosophy of mysticism) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949; rept. Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), p. 46; rev. ed. rept. ITC 1: 237.
3. *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 469.
4. “Cosmos and Anti-Cosmos: From the Standpoint of Oriental Philosophy,” in *Cosmos, Life, Religion: Beyond Humanism* (Tenri: Tenri University Press, 1988), p. 122.
5. *Ishiki to hōshitsu* (Consciousness and essence) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983), p. 251; rept. ITC 6 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 200.
6. “Bunka to gengo araya ishiki: ibunkakan taiwa no kanōsei o megutte” (Culture and linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness: On the question of the possibility of cross cultural dialogue), in *Imi no fukami e* (To the depths of meaning) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1985), pp. 46–83, at 73; rept. ITC 9 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 65.
7. “‘Yomu’ to ‘kaku’” (“Reading” and “writing”), *Risō* (Ideal) 600 (1983), 2–8; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 417–425, at 422.
8. See p. 322.

## CHAPTER ONE

*Shinpi tetsugaku: The Birth of a Poet-Philosopher*

1. *Shinpi tetsugaku: Girishia no bu* (Philosophy of mysticism: The Greek part) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949; rept. Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010); rev. ed. (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1978); rept. ITC 1 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991). Citations will be to the 2010 edition and ITC 1.
2. *Mahometto* (Muhammad) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1952; rept. Kōdansha, 1989); rev. ed. *Isurāmu seitan* (The birth of Islām) (Tokyo: Jinbun Shoin, 1979; rept. in ITC 2 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1993).

3. “*Chosakushū kankō ni atatte*” (On the publication of the selected works), in ITC 1: 471–474, at 472.
4. *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts of Sufism and Taoism: Ibn ‘Arabī and Lao-tzū, Chuang-tzū*, 3 pts. in 2 vols., Studies in the Humanities and Social Relations 7 and 10 (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1966–1967); rev. ed., *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
5. “*Chosakushū kankō ni atatte*,” ITC 1: 472; the Japanese words that Izutsu annotates with *pathos* and *psychē* mean “feeling or emotion” and “mind.”
6. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. ii (ITC 1: 193).
7. “*Shisō to geijutsu*” (Art and thought), *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature) 67,15 (1988), 22–47; rept. in ITC *Bekkan: Taidan teidanshū* (Supplement: The colloquies and three-way conversations) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 327–368, at 352.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 363.
9. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. vii.
10. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, pp. viii–ix.
13. Met. 12.9 1074b 34f.
14. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 142 (ITC 1: 321).
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 512 (ITC 1: 177–178).
17. *Ibid.*, p. vi.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 47 (ITC 1: 238).
19. *Ishiki no keijijōgaku: “Daijō kishinron” no tetsugaku* (Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), p. 65.
20. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, pp. 215–216 (ITC 1: 383–384).
21. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 37 (ITC 6: 35).
22. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. ii.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 45 (ITC 1: 236).
24. *Ibid.*, p. 46 (ITC 1: 237, with minor revisions).
25. *Ibid.*, p. 45 (ITC 1: 236–237).
26. *Ibid.*, p. 384 (ITC 1: 70–71).
27. *Ibid.*, p. v.
28. *Ibid.*, p. vii–viii.

29. Ibid., p. 434 (ITC 1: 113).
30. Ibid., p. 421 (ITC 1: 102).
31. Ibid., p. 434 (ITC 1: 113).
32. Ibid., p. 427 (ITC 1: 107).
33. Ibid., p. 511 (ITC 1: 176).
34. Ibid., p. 30 (ITC 1: 223).
35. Ibid., pp. 30–31 (ITC 1: 223–224).
36. Ibid., p. 214 (ITC 1: 382).
37. Ibid., p. 144 (ITC 1: 323).
38. Ibid., p. 156 (ITC 1: 333).
39. Ibid., p. 144 (ITC 1: 323).
40. Ibid., pp. 153–154 (ITC 1: 331).
41. Ibid., p. 33 (ITC 1: 226).
42. Ibid., p. 62 (ITC 1: 252).
43. Ibid., p. 150 (ITC 1: 328).
44. Ibid., p. 319, omitted in the revised edition.
45. Ibid., p. 325 (ITC 1: 22).
46. “Tsuioku: Nishiwaki Junzaburō ni manabu” (Reminiscences: Studying with Junzaburō Nishiwaki), *Eigo Seinen* (The Rising Generation) 128,7 (1982), 415–416; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 509–511, at 510.
47. “Nishiwaki sensei to gengogaku to watashi” (Professor Nishiwaki, linguistics and I”), in insert to *Nishiwaki Junzaburō Zenshū bekkān* (Supplement to the complete works of Junzaburō Nishiwaki) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1983), pp. 2–4; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 522–524, at 522.
48. “Shisō to geijutsu,” *ITC Bekkan*, p. 336.
49. “Tsuioku” (Reminiscences) in *Kaisō no Kuriyagawa Fumio* (Recollections of Fumio Kuriyagawa), ed. Yasaburō Ikeda (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Mita Bungaku Library, 1979), pp. 42–46; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 503–508, at 504.
50. Ibid., p. 505.
51. “Shi to hōyū” (Teachers, colleagues and friends) in *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review) 803 (1980), 2–3; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 589–591, at 590.
52. Ibid., p. 589.
53. Ibid., pp. 589–591.
54. *Shi no kokoro* (The heart of poetry) (Tokyo: Nihon Sono Shobō, 1969; rept. Perikansha, 1982), pp. 200–201.
55. “PROFANUS,” in *Chōgenjitsushugi shiron* (On surrealist poetry) (Tokyo: Kōseikaku Shoten, 1929); rept. in *Nishiwaki Junzaburō Korekushon* 4:

- Hyōronshū* (The Junzaburō Nishiwaki Collection 4: Anthology of literary criticism), ed. Toshikazu Niikura (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2007), p. 6.
56. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 412 (ITC 1: 94–95).
57. *Ibid.*, p. 403 (ITC 1: 87).
58. *Ambarvalia* (Tokyo: Shiinokisha, 1933); rept. in *Nishiwaki Junzaburō Korekushon 1: Shishū 1* (The Junzaburō Nishiwaki Collection 1: Anthology of poetry 1), ed. Toshikazu Niikura (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2007); trans. Donald Keene, in *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era: Poetry, Drama, Criticism, A History of Japanese Literature 4* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 324. The simile, “like an upturned gem,” is from Keats’s *Endymion*.
59. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 381 (ITC 1: 68).
60. *Ibid.*, p. vi (ITC 1: 197); Izutsu omits “Saint” in the revised edition.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Neoplatonic Saints: The Lives of Proclus and Plotinus by Their Students*, trans. Mark Edwards (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 58–115.
63. Foreword to *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. x (ITC 1: 200).
64. Immanuel Kant, *Kanto junsui risei hihan chūshaku: yasashii junsui risei hihan* (Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* with annotations: A simplified *Critique of Pure Reason*), trans. Mitsuo Ueda (Tokyo: Hikari no Shobō, 1947).
65. Friedrich Schelling, *Kami to wa nani ka? Shinteki keiji no tetsugaku* (What is God? The philosophy of divine revelation), trans. Mitsuo Ueda (Tokyo: Hikari no Shobō, 1948).
66. Gustav Theodor Fechner, *Uchū kōmyō no tetsugaku: reikon fumetsu no risetsu* (Philosophy of cosmic light: Theory of the immortality of the soul), trans. Mitsuo Ueda (Tokyo: Hikari no Shobō, 1948).
67. Mitsuo Ueda, *Harutoman no muishiki no tetsugaku* (Hartmann’s *Philosophy of the Unconscious*) (Tokyo: Hikari no Shobō, 1948).
68. Taruho Inagaki, *Tōkyō tonsōkyoku* (Tokyo fugue) (Tokyo: Shōshinsha, 1968; rept. Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1991).
69. Sekai Tetsugaku Kōza 1: *Indo tetsugakushi, Girishia tetsugakushi* (Lectures in world philosophy 1: Indian philosophy, Greek philosophy) (Tokyo: Hikari no Shobō, 1947)
70. Tsutomu Iwasaki, *Tetsugaku ni okeru sukui no mondai* (The question of salvation in philosophy) (Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 1982).
71. Sekai Tetsugaku Kōza 5: *Bukkyō tetsugaku, Kirisutokyō gairon, Arabia tetsugaku* (Lectures in world philosophy 5: Buddhist philosophy; An introduction to Christianity; Arabic philosophy) (Tokyo: Hikari no Shobō, 1948).

72. Sekai Tetsugaku Kōza 15: *Purochinosu no shinpi tetsugaku* (Lectures in world philosophy 15: Plotinus' philosophy of mysticism) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949).
73. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 333 (ITC 1: 29).
74. Preface to the revised edition of *Shinpi tetsugaku*, ITC 1: 12.
75. Ibid., ITC 1:14.
76. “Shinpihugi no erosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron” (The mysticism of St. Bernard) *Tetsugaku* (Philosophy) 27 (1951), 33–64; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 359–395.
77. “Chūsei Yudaya tetsugakushi ni okeru keiji to risei” (Reason and revelation in the history of medieval Judaic philosophy), in Iwanami kōza: *Tōyō shisō 2: Yudaya shisō 2* (Iwanami lecture series: Oriental thought 2: Judaic thought 2) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988); rept. in *Chōetsu no kotoba: Isurāmu Yudaya tetsugaku ni okeru kami to hito* (Transcendental WORDS: God and men in Islamic and Jewish philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991).
78. “Sokunyo” (Implicitness), in *Shūkyō to sono shinri* (Religion and its truth) (Tokyo: Sōbunkaku, 1920); rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi shūkyō senshū* (Selected works of Muneyoshi Yanagi on religion) (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1990), collector's version, 1: 140.
79. “Shinpidō e no benmei” (Apologia for the *via mystica*), in *Shūkyō to sono shinri*; rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi shūkyō senshū*, collector's version 1: 87.
80. Ibid., 1: 93.
81. *Izutsu Toshihiko bunko mokuroku* (Catalogue of Izutsu Toshihiko's library), 2 vols. (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Toshokan, 2002–2003).
82. *Kami ni tsuite* (On God) (Osaka: Ōsaka Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1923); rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi shūkyō senshū*, collector's version, vol. 2.
83. *Shūkyō no rikai* (Understanding religion) (Tokyo: Sōbunkaku, 1929); rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi shūkyō senshū*, vol. 2.
84. *Namuamidabutsu* (Tokyo: Daihōrinkakusha, 1928); rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi shūkyō senshū*, collector's version, vol 3. *Ippen shōnin* (St Ippen) (Tokyo: Shinronsha, 1955); rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi Shūkyō senshū*, collector's version, vol 3. *Myōkōnin Inaba no Genza* (Buddhist Saint Genza of Inaba) (Kyoto: Ōtani Shuppansha, 1950); rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi myōkōnin ronshū* (Collection of essays by Muneyoshi Yanagi on Buddhist saints), ed. Bunshō Jugaku (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991).
85. “Shujunaru shūkyōteki hitei” (The varieties of religious negation), in *Shūkyō to sono shinri*; rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi shūkyō senshū*, collector's version, vol. 1.

86. Preface to the revised edition of *Shinpi tetsugaku*, ITC 1: 13.
87. “Tetsugaku ni okeru temperamento” (Temperament in philosophy) in *Shūkyō to sono shinri*; rept. in *Yanagi Muneyoshi shūkyō senshū*, collector’s version, vol. 1.
88. *Ibid.*, 1: 251.
89. “Shujunaru shūkyōteki hitei,” in *Yanagi Muneyoshi shūkyō senshū*, collector’s version 1: 197–198.
90. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, pp. 326–327 (ITC 1: 24).
91. “The Way of Tea,” lecture given at the Honolulu Academy of Arts in 1953, online at [www.themista.com/freebooks/wayoftea.htm](http://www.themista.com/freebooks/wayoftea.htm); rept. in slightly modified form in *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty*, by Muneyoshi Yanagi and Bernard Leach (Tokyo, New York: Kodansha International, 1972), p. 177; *Yomu to kaku*, p. 132.
92. “Mahometto” (Muḥammad), in *Seia sekaishi* (World history of western Asia), ed. Asatarō Yasaka (Tokyo: Kōbundō Shobō), pp. 249–265; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 127–146, at 132–133.

## CHAPTER TWO

## The Encounter with Islām

1. “Tenkin monogatari” (The Tenkin story), in *Ginza jūnishō* (Ginza in twelve chapters) (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun sha, 1965; rept. 1996), p. 48.
2. “Philosophia haikōn,” cited in “Izutsu Toshihiko-kun to no kōsai” (My friendship with Toshihiko Izutsu), in *Tegami no tanoshimi* (The pleasures of letter-writing) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1981), p. 34; rept. in *Yomu to kaku* (Reading and writing), p. 331. The term “Philosophia haikōn,” presumably, is a combination of Greek and Japanese, *philosophia ha* (i.e. *wa*) *ikōn*, which might be translated “Philosophy Is Image.”
3. “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari” (Darkness and light at the end of the twentieth century), *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review) 108,1 (1993), 222–240, and “Shisō to geijutsu” (Art and thought), *Mita Bungaku* 67,15 (1988), 22–47; rept. in *ITC Bekkan* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 369–399 and 327–368, respectively.
4. “Gogaku kaigen” (My initiation into the mysteries of languages) in *Michi: Shōwa no hitori ichiwashū* 7 (Pathways: One person one story; a Shōwa-period anthology), ed. Yoshio Kamiyama (Nagoya: Chūtō Kyōiku Toshō, 1984), 120–125; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 601–604, at 603–604.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 601–602.
6. “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari,” *ITC Bekkan*, p. 380.

7. “Izutsu Toshihiko-sensei o itamu” (Mourning the death of Professor Toshihiko Izutsu), *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature) 77,33 (1993), 152.
8. “Izutsu Toshihiko no koto” (About Toshihiko Izutsu), in the insert to ITC 1, pp. 1–4.
9. *From Tokyo to Jerusalem* (New York: Bernard Geis, 1964), p. 5.
10. *Hiburugo genten nyūmon* (Introduction to the original text in the Hebrew language) (Tokyo: Nichieidō Shoten, 1936).
11. “Bungaku to shisō no shinsō” (The depths of literature and thought), *Sekai* 470 (1985), 230–258; rept. in ITC *Bekkan*, pp. 7–53, at 12.
12. *Yudaya minzoku no sugata* (The true character of the Jewish nation) (Tokyo: Meguro Shoten, 1943).
13. *Nihon to Yudaya: sono yūkō no rekishi* (Japan and Judea: A history of their friendship) (Tokyo: Mirutosu, 2007).
14. “Shinpihugi no erosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron” (The mysticism of St Bernard) in *Tetsugaku* (Philosophy) 27 (1951), 33–64; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 359–395, at 373.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 370.
16. *Shinpi tetsugaku: Girishia no bu* (Philosophy of mysticism: The Greek part) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949; rept. Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), p. 28; rev. ed. (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1978); rept. ITC 1 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), p. 230.
17. “Shinpihugi no erosuteki keitai,” p. 375.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 369–370.
19. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 16 (ITC 1: 210).
20. [Translator’s note: In his later works Izutsu uses the katakana spelling コトバ of *kotoba*, which I have translated as “WORD,” to distinguish it from “word/words” in the normal sense written with the characters 言葉.]
21. “Yudaya minzoku no kōbō” (The rise and fall of the Jewish people), in *Seiman Ajia no sūsei* (Trends in southwest Asia) (Tokyo: Meguro Shoten, 1942).
22. “Chūsei Yudaya tetsugakushi ni okeru keiji to risei” (Reason and revelation in the history of medieval Judaic philosophy), Iwanami Kōza: *Tōyō shisō* 2: *Yudaya shisō* 2 (Iwanami lecture series: Oriental thought 2: Judaic thought 2) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), pp. 3–114; rept. in *Chōetsu no kotoba: Isurāmu Yudaya tetsugaku ni okeru kami to hito* (Transcendental WORDs: God and men in Islamic and Jewish philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991), pp. 279–405.
23. Cf. “Derida no naka no ‘Yudayajin’” (The “Jew” in Derrida), *Shisō* (Thought) 711 (1983), 21–37; rept. in *Imi no fukami e* (To the depths of meaning), pp. 87–120 (ITC 9: 361–387).

24. *Ishiki to hōshitsu: seishūteki Tōyō o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the spiritual Orient) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983), p. 248; rept. as *Ishiki to hōshitsu: Tōyōteki shii no kōzōteki seigōsei o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the structural integration of Oriental thought), ITC 6 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 198.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 234 (ITC 6: 188).
26. “Angya hyōhaku no shi: Mūsā” (Mūsā: The wandering pilgrim teacher), in “Wasureenu hito” (Unforgettable people), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 7 March 1983 evening edition; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 512–513.
27. *Ālem-i İslām ve Japonyada intişār-ı İslāmīyet*, 2 vols. (Istanbul: 1910–1913); *Japōnyā: Isurāmukei Roshiajin no uita Meiji Nihon* (Japan: Meiji Japan as seen by a Russian Muslim), trans. Kaori Komatsu and Hisao Komatsu (Tokyo: Daisan Shokan, 1991). A French translation is also available, *Un Tatar au Japon: voyage en Asie, 1908–1910* (A Tatar in Japan: Travel in Asia, 1908–1910), trans. François Georgeon ([Arles]: Actes Sud-Sindbad, 2004).
28. “Bafurunnūru monogatari” (The tale of Bahr-un-Noor), in *Hakuji gōshi* (White porcelain box) (Tokyo: Shōkoten Shobō, 1959; rept. Chūō Kōronsha, 1993).
29. *Surutan Gariefu no yume: Isuramu sekai to Roshia kakumei* (Sultan Galiev’s dream: The Russian Revolution and the Islamic world) (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1986; rept. Iwanami Shoten, 2009).
30. *Arabiagaku e no michi: waga jinsei no shiruku rōdo* (The road to Arabic studies: The Silk Road of my life) (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1982).
31. “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari,” ITC *Bekkan*, p. 374.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 375.
33. “Bafurunnūru monogatari,” p. 42.
34. “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari,” ITC *Bekkan*, p. 379.
35. *Ibrahimu, Nihon e no tabi: Roshia, Osuman teikoku, Nihon* (Ibrahim’s journey to Japan: Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Japan) (Tokyo: Tōsui Shobō, 2008).
36. “Bafurunnūru monogatari,” p. 75.
37. *Ōkawa Shūmei: Aru fukko kakushinshugisha no shisō* (Shūmei Ōkawa: The thought of a reactionary revolutionary) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1995; rept. Kōdansha, 2009).
38. *Islamica* presumably refers to the series *Bibliotheca Islamica* by that name (and also published under the Arabic title *Nasharāt al-Islāmīyah*) founded in 1929 by Hellmuth Ritter under the auspices of Deutsche

Morgenländische Gesellschaft and still being published today. *Arabica* is likely to be the series *Bibliotheca arabica scholasticorum*: Série arabe, which contains some of the earliest modern critical editions of Averroes, al-Fārābī and al-Ghazzālī, usually with critical apparatus and introduction in French, and appears to have run from 1927 to 1952 (although some of the volumes were reissued, likely as anastatic reprints, between 1990 and 1992), produced by Imprimerie catholique in Beirut. Many of the volumes appear to be the work of Maurice Bouyges (1878–1951). This identification may not be secure, however, since there was a roughly contemporaneous series called *Bibliotheca arabica*, published by the Faculté des lettres d'Alger, which ran from 1925 through 1936. But since most of the works included in that series are literary (such as the famous collection of *Dîwân*, edited by Henri Pérès), not philosophical or theological texts, on balance, the reference may in fact be to the *Bibliotheca arabica scholasticorum*. I am indebted to Fred Unwalla of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies for providing this information.

39. *Arabia shisōshi: Kaikyō shingaku to Kaikyō tetsugaku* (History of Arabic thought: Islamic theology and Islamic philosophy) (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1941).
40. *Kaikyō gairon* (Introduction to Islam) (Tokyo: Keiō Shobō, 1942; rept. Chikuma Shobō, 2008).
41. “Ōkawa Shūmei no Ajia kenkyū” (Shūmei Ōkawa’s Asian research), in *Ōkawa Shūmei-shū* (Shūmei Ōkawa collection), ed. Bunzō Hashikawa, *Kindai Nihon shisō taikō 21* (Modern Japanese thought series) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1975), 391–406, at 398. See also “Portrait of [an] Asian Minded Man X: Ōkawa Shūmei,” *The Developing Economies* 7.3 (1969), 367–379, esp. 376.
42. *Fukkō Ajia no shomondai* (Issues related to the reconstruction of Asia) (Tokyo: Daitōkaku, 1922; rept. Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), p. 17.
43. *Kaikyō gairon*, p. 22.
44. “Yafuyā Ibun Adi Seikaku no tōya ni okeru rinriteki seikatsu no kōzō to shatei” (The structure and scope of ethical living in Yahya Ibn ‘Adī’s *The Cultivation of Character*) *Eikon: Studies in Eastern Christianity* 32 (2005), 63–86.
45. *Isuramu shisōshi: shingaku, shinpishugi, tetsugaku* (History of Islamic thought: Theology, mysticism, philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975; rept. 2005); rept. in *ITC* 5 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), pp. 7–330 at 179.
46. *Anraku no mon* (The gate to paradise) (Tokyo: Izuino Shobō, 1951); rept. in *Ōkawa Shūmei-shū*, p. 251.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

48. Ibid., p. 267.
49. *Kōran o yomu* (Reading the Kōran) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983); rept. ITC 8 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), p. 133.
50. “Kaikyō ni okeru keiji to risei” (Islamic revelation and reasoning), in *Nippon Shogaku Kenkyū Hōkoku* (Report of the Committee for the Development of Sciences in Japan), 12 (1944), 53–67; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 63–78.
51. “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari,” ITC *Bekkan*, p. 379.
52. *Ōkawa Shūmei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004).
53. Comments on *Kaikyō gairon* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), pp. 268–269.
54. Ibid., p. 272.
55. “Furui kotoba,” in *Tobihiro no tsuki* (Tokyo: Shokōshisha, 1925), cited in *Arabia shisōshi*, p. 3.
56. *Arabia shisōshi*, p. 10.
57. Ibid., pp. 11–12.
58. *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya’* (“Memorial of the Saints”), trans. A.J. Arberry (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966; rept. Routledge, 2008).
59. (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1922; new ed. 4 vols. Gallimard, 1975; rept. 2010); English translation, *The Passion of Al-Hallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islām*, trans. Herbert Mason, 4 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982; abridged ed. 1994).
60. “Hostipitality,” in *Acts of Religion*, trans. Gil Anidjar (New York, London: Routledge, 2002), p. 414 and passim; *hostipitalité* is a word coined by Derrida, playing on the similarity between the Latin words *hospis* (“host”) and *hostis*, which means “enemy.”
61. Preface to *Isurāmu shinpishugi ni okeru perusona no rinen* (The idea of personality in Islamic mysticism), a translation of R.A. Nicholson’s *The Idea of Personality in Sufism* by Kiyoshi Nakamura (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1981), pp. 1–9; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 212–219, at 214–215.
62. Ibid., p. 214.
63. *Memoir of a Friend, Louis Massignon* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).
64. Ibid., p. 46.
65. “Die Ursprünge und die Bedeutung des Gnostizismus im Islam” (The origins and meaning of Gnosticism in Islam), *Gestaltung der Erlösungsidee in Ost und West II* (The shaping of the idea of redemption in the East and the West 2), *Eranos Jahrbuch* 5 (1937) (Ascona: Eranos Stiftung, 1938), pp. 55–77.

66. “L’expérience musulmane de la compassion, ordonnée à l’universel; à propos de Fâtima, et de Hallāj” (The Muslim experience of compassion, prescribed to all: apropos of Fātima and Hallāj), in *Der Mensch und die Sympathie aller Dinge* (Man and the sympathy of all things), *Eranos Jahrbuch* 24 (1955) (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1956), pp. 119–134.
67. Akiko Sugase, *Isuraeru no Arabujin Kirisutokyōto: sono shakai to aidentiti* (The Christian Arabs of Israel: Their society and identity) (Hiroshima: Keisuisha, 2009).
68. *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism: Ibn ‘Arabī and Lao-tzū, Chuang-tzū*, 3 pts. in 2 vols. (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1966–1967), 1:2.

## CHAPTER THREE

## Russia: The Spirituality of Night

1. *Roshiateki ningen: kindai Roshia bungakushi* (Russian humanity: A history of modern Russian literature) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1953); new edition (Hokuyōsha, 1978), preface; rept. ITC 3 (Chūō Kōrōnsha, 1992), p. 9. Citations will be to the 1978 edition and ITC 3.
2. Afterword to *Roshiteki ningen*, pp. 274–275 (ITC 3: 249).
3. *Roshia bungaku* (Russian literature) (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2011).
4. “Torusutoi ni okeru ishiki no mujunsei ni tsuite” (On the paradoxical nature of consciousness in Tolstoy), *Sanshokuki* (Tricolore) 52 (1952) 9–14; rept. in *Yomu to kaku* (Reading and writing), pp. 350–358; and “Roshia no naimenteki seikatsu: jūkyūseiki bungaku no seishinshiteki tenbō” (Interior life in Russia: A spiritual history perspective on nineteenth-century literature), *Kosei* (Individuality) 1,3 (1948), 2–29; rept. as an appendix to *Roshia bungaku*, pp. 195–1241.
5. “Roshia no naimenteki seikatsu,” in *Roshia bungaku*, p. 202.
6. *Roshiateki ningen*, pp. 41–42 (ITC 3).
7. English translation, *Dostoevsky*, trans. Donald Attwater (London: Sheed and Ward, 1934), p. 140.
8. *Dosutoiefusukii no sekaikan* (Dostoevsky’s worldview), trans. Jirō Kashima (Tokyo: Suzaku Shorin, 1943).
9. *Berujaefu: kakumei to seishin no keifu* (Berdyaeu: Revolution and the genealogy of his mind) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1949).
10. *Die Schau der Kirche bei Nikolai Berdiajew* (Nikolai Berdyaeu’s view of the church), *Orientalia christiana analecta* 116 (Rome: Pontification Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1938), trans. Tokuji Shimoyama as

- Berujaefu no tetsugaku: Roshiateki jitsuzonshugi* (Berdyaeв's philosophy: Russian existentialism) (Tokyo: Risōsha, 1951).
11. Trans. Donald A. Lowrie (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 40.
  12. Trans. S. Janos, 2000. Online at [www.berdyaeв.com/berdiaev/berd\\_lib/1936\\_408.html](http://www.berdyaeв.com/berdiaev/berd_lib/1936_408.html).
  13. *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 73 (ITC 3: 71).
  14. *Ibid.*, preface (ITC 3: 9).
  15. *Ibid.*
  16. Cited in “Berujāefu no shōgai to shisō” (Berdyaeв's life and thought), in his translation *Ai to jitsuzon: Rei no kuni, Sezaru no kuni* (Love and existence: The realm of the spirit, the realm of Caesar) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1954), p. 254. Cf. R.M. French's translation of the same passage: “[P]aradise is a possibility for me, if there is not to be any everlasting hell for any single creature who lives or has lived. One cannot be saved in loneliness and isolation. Salvation can only be a corporate experience, a universal release from suffering.” *The Beginning and the End: Essays on Eschatological Metaphysics* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952, p. 237.
  17. *Roshiateki uingen*, p. 26 (ITC 3: 28).
  18. *Ibid.*, p. 49 (ITC 3: 48).
  19. *Ibid.*, p. 48 (ITC 3: 47).
  20. *Ibid.*, p. 238 (ITC 3: 217–218).
  21. *Ibid.*, p. 163 (ITC 3: 151).
  22. *Roshia bungaku*, p. 16.
  23. “*Tsumi to batsu ni tsuite II*” (On *Crime and Punishment II*), in *Kobayashi Hideo Zenshū* (Complete works of Hideo Kobayashi) 6 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1978; rept. 2004), p. 314. In addition to a number of essays on the works of Dostoevsky, Kobayashi wrote a biography of him, *Dosutoefusukii no seikatsu* (Life of Dostoevsky) (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1939; rept. Shinchōsha, 2005).
  24. *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 233 (ITC 3: 213).
  25. “*Tsumi to batsu ni tsuite II*,” in *Kobayashi Hideo Zenshū* 6: 314.
  26. “Masamune Hakuchō no saku ni tsuite,” in *Kobayashi Hideo Zenshū, Bekkan 1* (Complete works of Hideo Kobayashi, supplement 1) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2002), p. 433.
  27. *Fyodor Dostoevsky: A Critical Study* (London: Martin Seeker, 1916; rept. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), pp. 33–34.
  28. “*Dosutoefusukii 75 nensai ni okeru kōen*” (Lecture on the 75th anniversary of Dostoevsky[’s death; 1956]), in *Kobayashi Hideo Zensakuhin*

- 21 (Complete works of Hideo Kobayashi, annotated edition) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2004).
29. *A Writer's Diary*, 2 vols., trans. Kenneth Lantz (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993–1994; abridged ed., 2009).
30. Letter 90 to Natalya Fonvisina (1854), ed. and trans. David Lowe and Ronald Meyer, in *Complete Letters*, 5 vols. (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1988–1991), 1: 193–196, at 195; cited in *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 33 (ITC 3: 35).
31. *Gohho no tegami* (The Letters of Van Gogh) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1952; rept. 2004).
32. “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man,” trans. Ronald Meyer, in *The Gambler and Other Stories* (London and New York: Penguin Classics, 2010), p. 353.
33. *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 153 (ITC 3: 143).
34. *Ibid.*, p. 159 (ITC 3: 148).
35. Letter of 26 February 1869 to Nikolai Strakhov, in *Complete Letters* 3: 137, cited in *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 234 (ITC 3: 214).
36. Diary entry from 1881, in *The Dostoevsky Encyclopedia*, ed. K.A. Lantz (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 352; cited in *Roshiateki ningen*, pp. 233–234 (ITC 3: 213–214).
37. *Fuyōdoru Chutchiefu kenkyū: jūkyūseiki roshia no jiko ishiki* (Fyodor Tyutchev studies: Self-consciousness in nineteenth-century Russia) (Osaka: Manyaru Hausu, 2007).
38. *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 154 (ITC 3: 143).
39. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 164 (ITC 3: 158).
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60 (ITC 3: 148).
41. *Ibid.*, p. 155 (ITC 3: 145).
42. *Ibid.*, p. 155 (ITC 3: 144–145).
43. *Ibid.*, p. 159 (ITC 3: 148).
44. *Ibid.*, p. 117 (ITC 3: 110–111). Also cited in *Roshia bungaku*, pp. 124–125.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 115 (ITC 3: 109).
46. *Ibid.*, p. 111 (ITC 3: 105).
47. *Roshia bungaku*, p. 126.
48. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 323 (ITC 1: 21).
49. “Izutsu Toshihiko-sensei” (Professor Toshihiko Izutsu), *Sanshokuki* (Tricolore), supplement (1993), 52–53.
50. *Ibid.*
51. “Shisō to geijutsu” (Art and thought), *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature) 67,15 (1988), 22–47; rept. in *ITC Bekkan: Taidan teidanshū* (Supplement:

- The colloquies and three-way conversations) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 327–368, at 335.
52. *Keizaigaku tetsugaku shukō* (*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*), trans. Kazuo Miura (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1962).
53. *Seishin no genshōgaku joron: gakumonteki ninshiki ni tsuite* (Introduction to *Phenomenology of Spirit: On scholarly cognition*), trans. Kazuo Miura (Tokyo: Michitani, 1995).
54. *Roshia bungaku*, p. 127.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
56. “The Stranger,” in *Paris Spleen: Little Poems in Prose*, trans. Keith Waldrop (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), p. 5; cited in *Roshia bungaku*, pp. 119–120.
57. Partially translated by Izutsu in *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 113 (ITC 3: 107).
58. “Albatros”/“The Albatross,” in *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. James McGowan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993; rept. 2008), pp. 16–17.
59. *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 112 (ITC 3: 106).
60. *Ibid.*, p. 116 (ITC 3: 109).
61. *Ibid.*, p. 111 (ITC 3: 106).
62. *Ibid.*, p. 112 (ITC 3: 106).
63. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 110 (ITC 3: 105).
64. *Mutsuiri, Akuma* (The novice; Demon), trans. Masami Ichijō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1951).
65. *Roshiya bungaku ni tsuite* (On Russian literature) (Tokyo: Naukasha, 1948), p. 80.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 81–82.
67. *Geijutsu to riarizumu* (Art and realism) (Tokyo: Keiō Shobō, 1947), p. 27.
68. “Shisō to geijutsu,” *ITC Bekkan*, p. 336.
69. “Shōshi o motomete” (In search of the right teacher), *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review) 803 (1980), 2–3; rept. in *Yomu to kaku* (Reading and writing), pp. 586–588, at 588.
70. “Shisō to geijutsu,” *ITC Bekkan*, p. 336.
71. “Shōshi o motomete,” *Yomu to kaku*, p. 588.
72. *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 156 (ITC 3: 145).
73. *Roshiya bungaku ni tsuite*, p. 91.
74. *Shizen ni okeru bi: geijutsu no ippanteki igi* (Beauty in nature: The general significance of the arts) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1928).

75. Ibid., p. 6; also in *The Heart of Reality: Essays on Beauty, Love, and Ethics*, trans. Vladimir Wozniuk (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), p. 29.
76. *Roshiateki ningen*, p. 143 (ITC 3: 134).
77. *Roshiya bungaku hyōronshū* (Anthology of Russian literary criticism), 2 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1950–1951).
78. Ibid., 1: 224.
79. *Roshiya bungaku ni tsuite*, p. 104.
80. *Roshiateki ningen*, pp. 47–48 (ITC 3: 47).

## CHAPTER FOUR

## A Contemporary and the Biography of the Prophet

1. “Tenrikyō shingaku joshō: sono rinkaku to kadai ni tsuite” (Introduction to Tenrikyō theology: Its outline and themes), in *Moroi Yoshinori Chosakushū* 6 (Tenri: Tenrikyō Dōyūsha, 1971); and “Tenrikyō kyōgigaku shiron” (A preliminary essay on Tenrikyō dogmatic theology), in *Chosakushū* 1 (Tenri: Tenrikyō Dōyūsha, 1962).
2. “Tenrikyō shingaku joshō,” *Chosakushū* 1: 3–4.
3. “Shinpihugi no erosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron” (The mysticism of St Bernard), in *Tetsugaku* (Philosophy) 27 (1951), 33–64; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 359–395, at 372.
4. *Shūkyō shinpihugi hassei no kenkyū: toku ni Semu-kei chōetsushinkyō o chūshin to suru shūkyōgakuteki kōsatsu* (A study of the development of religious mysticism: A religious-studies perspective centering on Semitic monotheism) (Nara: Tenri Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1966).
5. *Shūkyōteki shutaisei no ronri* (The logic of religious identity) (Nara: Tenrikyō Dōyūsha, 1991).
6. *Kirisuto o hakonda otoko: Pauro no shōgai* (The man who carried Christ: The life of Paul) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1987; rept. Nihon Kirisutokyōdan Shuppankyoku, 1998).
7. *Mahometto* (Muhammad) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1952; rept. Kōdansha, 1989), p. 5.
8. *Shūkyō shinpihugi hassei no kenkyū*, p. 3.
9. Ibid., p. 4.
10. *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris: Payot, 1951; rept. 1978); *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964; rev. and enl. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1972]; rept. 2004), p. 509.

11. *Tōno monogatari* (Tokyo [1910]; rept. Daiwashobō, 2010); *The Legends of Tono*, trans. Ronald A. Morse, Japan Foundation Translation Series (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1975; rept. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), p. 5.
12. *Shamanism*, p. xiii.
13. “Shinpushugi no crosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron,” *Yomu to kaku*, p. 381.
14. “Tenrikyō kyōgigaku shiron,” p. 50.
15. *Shūkyōteki shutaisei no ronri*, pp. 8–9.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
17. “Tenrikyō kyōgigaku shiron,” p. 46.
18. *Mahometto*, p. 65.
19. *Shūkyō shinpushugi hassei no kenkyū*, p. 414.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Kōran*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1957–1958). Izutsu’s translation with part of the commentary and rubrics omitted. The same below.
22. *Shūkyō shinpushugi hassei no kenkyū*, p. 424.
23. *Kōran o yomu* (Reading the Kōran) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983); rept. ITC 8 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991).
24. *Shinpi tetsugaku: Girishia no bu* (Philosophy of mysticism: The Greek part) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949; rept. Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), p. 170.
25. *Ishiki to honshitsu: seishinteki Tōyō o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the spiritual Orient) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983), p. 213; rept. as *Ishiki to honshitsu: Tōyōteki shii no kōzōteki seigōsei o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the structural integration of Oriental thought), ITC 6 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 187.
26. *Isurāmu seitan* (Tokyo: Jinbun Shoin, 1979; rept. in ITC 2 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1993).
27. *Mahometto*, p. 3.
28. *Faust: A Tragedy*, trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1976; rept. 2001), p. 3. Cited in *Mahometto*, p. 22; the Japanese translation was, of course, by Toshihiko Izutsu.
29. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 170. The Goethe quotation is found in the entry for 11 April 1827, in J.P. Eckermann’s *Gespräche mit Goethe*, ed. Ludwig Geiger (Leipzig: M. Hesses, 1902; rept. 1908), 1: 367; *Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret*, trans. John Oxenford (London, 1850; rept. Cambridge: Cambridge Library Collection, 2011), 1: 387.
30. *Mahometto*, p. 23.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

32. Ibid., pp. 51–52.
33. Ibid., p. 51.
34. Ibid., p. 39.
35. Ibid., p. 29.
36. Ibid., p. 30.
37. Ibid., p. 57.
38. Ibid., pp. 65–66.
39. Ibid., p. 116.

CHAPTER FIVE  
Catholicism

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2. “Shinbishugi no erosuteki keitai: Sei Berunāru-ron” (The mysticism of St Bernard), *Tetsugaku* (Philosophy) 27 (1951), 33–64; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 359–395.
3. Ibid., p. 380.
4. Ibid., p. 362.
5. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 340 (ITC 1: 34).
6. “Shinbishugi no erosuteki keitai,” p. 363.
7. Ibid., p. 380.
8. *Liber ad milites Templi: De laude novae militiae* (Book to the Knights Templar; In Praise of the New Knighthood) in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux 7: Treatises 3: On Grace and Free Choice. In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. Conrad Greenia (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977), p. 129.
9. Pierre Riché, *Petite vie de Saint Bernard* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1989), p. 83.
10. *Inferno*, Canto 28: 22–27, trans. Robert Pinsky (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), pp. 294–295; cited in *Mahometto* (Muhammad) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1952; rept. Kōdansha, 1989), pp. 18–19.
11. “Shinbishugi no erosuteki keitai,” p. 384.
12. Ibid., p. 385.
13. “Gaburieri: ‘Gendai Arabia bungaku no shuryū’” (Gabrieli’s “Correnti e figure della letteratura araba contemporanea”), in *Tōa Kenkyūjohō*

- (Reports of the East Asian Institute) 3 (1939), 30–46; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 464–484. The Gabrieli article originally appeared in *Oriente Moderno* 19,2 (1939), 110–121.
14. (Madrid: Imprenta de Estandislaio Maestre, 1919); *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, trans. Harold Sunderland (London: J. Murry, 1926; rept. Routledge, 2008).
  15. “Shinpushugi no erosuteki keitai,” p. 370.
  16. *Ibid.*
  17. *Ibid.*, p. 371.
  18. “Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon: Kurōderu-ron” (Poetry and religious existence: On Claudel), *Joseisen* (Women’s Line) 4,11 (1949), 40–48; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 332–349; “Kurōderu no shiteki sonzairon” (Claudel’s poetic ontology), *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature) 43 (1953), 34–42; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 396–413.
  19. *Language and Magic: Studies in the Magical Function of Speech* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Philological Studies, 1956; rept. Keio University Press, 2011).
  20. “Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon,” p. 337.
  21. “Shiteki sonzairon,” p. 396.
  22. “Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon,” p. 337.
  23. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
  24. *Ibid.*, p. 336.
  25. “Religion et poésie” (Religion and poetry), in *Positions et propositions*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1929–1934); rept. in *Œuvres en prose* (Prose works) (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), p. 59; *Ways and Crossways*, trans. John O’Connor (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1933; rept. 1967), p. 5; cited in “Shiteki sonzairon,” p. 406.
  26. “Traité de la co-naissance au monde et de soi-même” (Treatise on the “co-naissance” of the world and of oneself) in *Art poétique* (Art of poetry) (Paris: Mercure de France, 1907); rept. in *Œuvre poétique* (Poetic works) (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), pp. 147–204; cited in “Shiteki sonzairon,” p. 408.
  27. “Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon,” p. 333.
  28. “Shiteki sonzairon,” p. 400.
  29. *Ibid.*
  30. *Présence et prophétie* (Paris: Egloff, 1933; rept. 1947), pp. 249–250; cited in “Shiteki sonzairon,” p. 402.
  31. *Französischer Geist im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (The French spirit in the twentieth century) (Bern: Francke, 1952; rept. 1965), p. 115; cited in “Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon,” p. 334.

32. “Pontigny,” in *Der Neue Merkur* (Novembre 1922), 419–425.
33. *Iki no kōzō* (The structure of ‘iki’) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1930; rept. Kadokawagakugei Shuppan, 2011); *Reflections on Japanese Taste: The Structure of Iki*, trans. Sakuko Matsui and John Clark (Sydney: Power Publications, 1997; rept. 2007).
34. *Fuzai no uta: Kuki Shūzō no sekai* (Song of non-being: The world of Shūzō Kuki) (Tokyo: TBS Buritanika, 1990).
35. *Propos sur le temps: deux communications faites à Pontigny pendant la décade 8–18 août 1928* (Considerations on time: Two essays delivered at Pontigny during the *décade* 8–18 August 1928) (Paris: P. Renouard, 1928); “Considerations on Time,” in Stephen Light, *Shūzō Kuki and Jean-Paul Sartre: Influence and Counter-influence in the Early History of Existential Phenomenology* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), p. 64n15.
36. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 31 (ITC 1: 224).
37. In *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1971), pp. 57–149.
38. “The Notion of Time and Repetition in Oriental Time,” in *Shūzō Kuki and Jean-Paul Sartre*, p. 46.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
41. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 44 (ITC 1: 235).
42. The presentation he made at the symposium has been translated in *Overcoming Modernity: Cultural Identity in Wartime Japan*, ed. and trans. Richard F. Calichman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 77–91.
43. *Sukora tetsugaku joron* (Introduction to scholastic philosophy) (Tokyo: Katorikku Kenkyūsha, [1929]); rept. as *Keijijōgaku joron* (Introduction to metaphysics) (Tokyo: Enderureshoten, 1948).
44. “Shinpihugi no keijijōgaku” (The metaphysics of *Mystik*) in *Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko Zenshū* 4 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1984).
45. “Shinpihugi to nijisseki shisō” (*Mystik* and twentieth-century thought) in *Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko Zenshū* 4: 3–27 at p. 3.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. ii (ITC 1: 193–194, with minor revisions).
48. *Ibid.*
49. “Shinpihugi no keijijōgaku,” p. 81.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
51. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 62 (ITC 1: 251).

52. *Kōshoku to hana* (Sensuality and flowers) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963; rept. 1970).
53. *Kobayashi Hideo: Ochi Yasuo Zensakuhin* (Hideo Kobayashi: The complete works of Yasuo Ochi), ed. Eisuke Wakamatsu (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010).
54. *The Mind and Heart of Love: Lion and Unicorn: A Study in Eros and Agape* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946; rev. ed. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1962); *Ai no rogosu to patosu*, trans. Toshihiko Izutsu and Fumiko Sanbe (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1957; rept. Jōehi Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1967).
55. “‘Are ka kore ka’ to ‘Are mo kore mo’: Dāshī no *Ai no rogosu to patosu o yomu*” (“This or that’ and ‘this and that’: Reading D’Arcy’s *The Mind and Heart of Love*), in *Kobayashi Hideo: Ochi Yasuo Zensakuhin* (Hideo Kobayashi: The complete works of Yasuo Ochi), pp. 145–179.
56. *The Mind and Heart of Love*, p. 22; the latter half of the quote is cited in “Dāshī no *Ai no rogosu to patosu o yomu*,” p. 153.
57. *The Mind and Heart of Love*, p. 166.
58. *Ai to rogosu to patosu*, p. 2.
59. *The Mind and Heart of Love*, p. 174. For Claudel’s parable see, “Parabole d’Animus et d’Anima: Pour faire comprendre certaines poésies d’Arthur Rimbaud,” in *Positiones et propositions*, pp. 27–28; “The Parable of Animus and Anima,” trans. Wallace Fowlic, *Poetry* 87,3 (1955), 141–143.
60. Presumably this is a reference to the report of the Vatican’s Working Group on New Religious Movements; cf. Pontifical Council for Culture and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 2003, Section 3.5, cited in Robert Kugelman, *Psychology and Catholicism: Contested Boundaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 229.
61. *Watakushi no aishita shōsetsu* (A novel I have loved) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1985; rept. 1988).
62. *Kirisuto o hakonda otoko: Pauro no shōgai* (The man who carried Christ: The life of Paul) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1987; rept. Nihon Kirisutokyōdan Shuppankyoku, 1998).
63. *Ibid.*, p. 192. Although “spirituality” is usually translated into Japanese with the characters meaning “spirit” and “nature” (靈性), Inoue uses the characters that mean “heart (or nature) that seeks the truth” (求道心 or 求道性). This is a key term for Inoue as an intellectual as well as one that expresses his fundamental *raison d’être* as a priest.

64. *Ishiki to sonzai no nazo: aru shūkyōsha to no taiwa* (The riddle of consciousness and being: Dialogue with a religious person) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1996).
65. Takahashi Takako no “nikki” (“Diary” of Takako Takahashi) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2005), p. 74.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

CHAPTER SIX  
Words and WORD

1. *Imi no kōzō: Kōran ni okeru shūkyō dōtoku gainen no bunseki* (The structure of meaning: An analysis of ethico-religious concepts in the Kōran) (Tokyo: Shinsensha, 1972); rev. ed. ITC 4 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992).
2. ITC 4: 27.
3. Foreword to *Isurāmu seitan* (The birth of Islām) (Tokyo: Jinbun Shoin, 1979); rept. in ITC 2 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 9–12, at 10–11.
4. *Sonzai ninshiki no michi: sonzai to honshitsu ni tsuite* (The path of ontological cognition: On existence and essence) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978); rept. ITC 10 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1993).
5. “Tetsugakuteki imiron” (Philosophical semantics), *Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Gengo Bunka Kenkyūjo Shohō* (Bulletin of the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies) 6 (1967), 2–3; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 414–416, at 414.
6. “Izutsu Toshihiko no shuyō chosaku ni miru Nihonteki Isurāmu rikai” (The Japanese understanding of Islām as seen in the writings of Toshihiko Izutsu), *Nihon Kenkyū* (Japanese Studies) 36 (2007), 109–120.
7. *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* (The original image of Islamic philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980); rept. in ITC 5 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), pp. 331–495, at 336.
8. “Gengo tetsugaku toshite no Shingon” (Shingon: A philosophy of language), *Mikkyōgaku kenkyū* (Journal of Esoteric Buddhist Studies) 17 (1985) 1–29; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 251–286, at 273.
9. *Ibid.*
10. “Imi bunsetsu riron to Kūkai: Shingon mikkyō no gengo tetsugakuteki kanōsei o saguru” (Kūkai and the theory of semantic articulation: Exploring the linguistic philosophical potential of Shingon esoteric Buddhism), *Shisō* 728 (1985), 1–21; rept. in *Imi no fukami e: Tōyō*

- tetsugaku no suii* (To the depths of meaning: Fathoming Oriental philosophies) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1985), pp. 238–278; rept. in ITC 9 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), pp. 76–105.
11. *Ishiki no keijijōgaku: “Daijō kishinron” no tetsugaku* (Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāvāna*) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993; rept. 2001).
  12. *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964; rept. North Stratford, NH: Ayers, 1998), p. 29.
  13. “[W]ohl aber ein Ausdruck der Überzeugung, daß die rastlose Arbeit der Zwischenzeit es bei aller Andersartigkeit ermöglicht hat, heute mit dem ganzen Nachdruck wissenschaftlicher Zielsetzung die Probleme aufzunehmen, die er—seiner Zeit weit vorausilend—in genialer Weise erfaßt hat.” *Das Menschheitsgesetz der Sprache als Grundlage der Sprachwissenschaft* (The humanist law of language as the basis of linguistics) (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1964), p. 5.
  14. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 324 (ITC 1: 22).
  15. *Ibid.*, p. 144 (ITC 1: 323).
  16. “Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts” (On the diversity of human language construction and its influence on the mental development of the human species), in Andreas Flitner and Klaus Giel, eds., *Werke in fünf Bänden: 3, Schriften zur Sprachphilosophie* (Works in five volumes: 3, Writings on philosophy of language (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963; rept. 2010), p. 418. “Sie selbst ist kein Werk (*Ergon*), sondern eine Thätigkeit (*Energeia*). . . . Sie istnehmlich die sich ewig wiederholende Arbeit des Geistes, den articulierten Laut zum Ausdruck des Gedanken fähig zu machen.” For an English translation of this passage see *On Language. On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and Its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species*, trans. Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 49.
  17. “Kigō katsudō toshite no gengo” (Language as a semiotic activity), *Sanshokuki* (Tricolore) 121 (1958), 11–15; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 241–250, at 245.
  18. “Nishiwaki sensei to gengogaku to watashi” (Professor Nishiwaki, linguistics and I), in insert to *Nishiwaki Junzaburō Zenshū bekkān* (Supplement to the complete works of Junzaburō Nishiwaki) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1983), pp. 2–4; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 522–524, at 524.

19. “Shi toshite no Izutsu Toshihiko sensei” (Professor Toshihiko Izutsu as a teacher), in insert to ITC 4, pp. 3–6.
20. “Yamai” (Illness) in *Fuyu no Maria: Shishū* (Mary in winter) (Tokyo: Ōdosha, 1984), pp. 32–33.
21. *Serofan kamishibai: Shishū* (Cellophane paper picture-play: A poetry collection) (Tokyo: Kashinsha, 2000).
22. Kawashima is a specialist on the history of mid-nineteenth-century Japanese translations of the New Testament and has done pioneering work in the study of the translations of, and commentaries on, the New Testament by the early American missionaries to Japan Jonathan Goble (1827–1896) and Nathan Brown (1807–1886): *Jonasan Gōburu kenkyū* (Study of Jonathan Goble) (Tokyo: Shinkyō Shuppansha, 1988); *Jonasan Gōburu yaku Matai fukuinsho no kenkyū* (Study of Jonathan Goble’s translation of the Gospel of Matthew) (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1993); *Neisan Buraun to shin’yaku zensho* (Nathan Brown and the New Testament) (Tokyo: Shinkyō Shuppansha, 2008). Through this research we have been able to confirm that, in addition to the translation of the Bible by James Curtis Hepburn (1815–1911) and others that was aimed at the intelligentsia, there was yet another history of biblical translations in Japan that sought to carry the Gospel directly to the souls of ordinary people. Yoshinori Yagi (1911–1999) wrote an essay on Kawashima’s *Jonasan Gōburu kenkyū* (Study of Jonathan Goble), in which we learn that Kawashima was over fifty when he first encountered Goble; he began to study Greek and spent the next thirteen years doing research on the subject.
23. “Tsuitō Izutsu Toshihiko: Sarutoru o koenasai” (An obituary for Toshihiko Izutsu: Surpass Sartre), *Genryū* 10 (1996), 27–33.
24. Many students audited these lectures, including future literary critic Jun Etō (1932–1999) and novelist Masao Yamakawa (1930–1965).
25. Preface to the revised edition of *Shinpi tetsugaku*, ITC 1: 12.
26. Afterword to *Imi no fukami e* (To the depths of meaning), p. 292 (ITC 9: 604).
27. *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism* (London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner, 1923; 4th ed. rept. Routledge/Thoemmes, 2002), p. 8.
28. *Imi no imi* (The meaning of meaning) (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1936; rept. Shinsensha, 2008).
29. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
30. 850go ni miserareta tensai: C.K. Oguden (C.K. Ogden: The genius fascinated by 850 words) (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Shoten, 2007).

31. “A Glance at the Development of Semiotics,” trans. Patricia Baudoin, in *The Framework of Language* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, c1980), p. 7.
32. Afterword to *Imi no fukami e*, p. 293 (ITC 9: 605).
33. “Bunka to gengo arayashiki: ibunkakan taiwa no kanōsei no mondai o megutte” (Culture and linguistic *ālaya*-consciousness: On the question of the possibility of dialogue with other cultures), in *Gendai bunmei no kiki to jidai no seishin* (The crisis of contemporary civilization and the spirit of the times) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984), pp. 87–124; rept. in *Imi no fukami e*, pp. 46–83, at 59 (ITC 9: 44–73, at 54).
34. *Roshiateki ningen: kindai Roshia bungakushi* (Russian humanity: A history of modern Russia literature) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1953); new edition (Hokuyōsha, 1978); rept. ITC 3 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 79
35. *La poésie pure, avec Un débat sur la poésie par Robert de Souza* (Pure poetry, with A discussion of poetry by Robert de Souza) (Paris: Grasset, 1926; rept. 1937). In the preceding quote, Izutsu referred to him honorifically as “M. Brémond” because he was not only a distinguished scholar of literature but also a Catholic priest.
36. “Shi to shūkyōteki jitsuzon: Kurooderu-ron” (Poetry and religious existence: On Claudel), *Joseisen* (Women’s Line) 4,11 (1949), 40–48; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 332–349, at 337.
37. *The Art of Poetry*, trans. Denise Folliot (New York: Vintage, 1958; rept. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 72.
38. *Kanji hyakuwa* (A hundred stories about Chinese characters) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1978; rept. 2003), p. 19.
39. The character *ju* (呪) of *junō* does not refer to a curse; it is etymologically related to *iwau* (祝), to celebrate or congratulate, and is also read as *inoru* (pray); it was probably at a later period, Shirakawa writes, that it came to acquire the meaning “to curse.” Shirakawa uses the expression *juchin* (呪鎮) in the same sense as *junō*.
40. *Kanji* (Characters) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), p. 3.
41. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 233 (ITC 6: 186–187).
42. *Kanji*, p. 30.
43. *Tanigawa Ken’ichi Zenshū* 19: *Jinbutsu* 2 (The complete works of Ken’ichi Tanigawa 19, Persons 2) (Tokyo: Fuzanbō Intānashonarū, 2008).
44. “Izutsu Toshihiko-kun to no kōsai” (My friendship with Toshihiko Izutsu), in *Tegami no tanoshimi* (The pleasures of letters) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1981), p. 41.
45. *Tanigawa Ken’ichi Zenshū* 19: *Jinbutsu* 2: 390–391.

46. “Don du poème” (Gift of the Poem), in *Collected Poems and Other Verse*, trans. E.H. and A.M. Blackmore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; rept. 2008), pp. 26–29. The translation in the Japanese text is by Junzaburō Nishiwaki.
47. “Les Fleurs” (Flowers), *Collected Works*, pp. 14–15.
48. “The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language,” in *Language, Culture, and Personality: Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir*, ed. Leslie Spier, et al. (Menasha, WI: Sapir Memorial Publication Fund, 1941; rept. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 90.
49. “‘Miyu’ no sekai” (The world of *mivu*), in *Man’yōshū nukigaki* (Manyōshū excerpts) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980; rept. 2000).
50. “Imiron josetsu: *Minwa no shisō no kaisetsu o kanete*” (Introduction to semantic theory: With a commentary on *Intellectual aspects of folktales*), in Akihiro Satake’s *Minwa no shisō* (Intellectual aspects of folktales) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1990), pp. 247–271; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 306–327.
51. “‘Miyu’ no sekai,” p. 30.
52. “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari” (Darkness and light at the end of the twentieth century), *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review) 108,1 (1993), 222–240; rept. in *ITC Bekkan* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 369–399, at 396.
53. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 52 (ITC 6: 47).
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., p. 53 (ITC 6: 48).
56. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 83 (ITC 1: 269).
57. *Shoki Manyō-ron* (On the early *Manyō*) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1979; rept. Chuokoron-Shinsha, 2003), pp. 12–13.
58. According to Shizuka Shirakawa, 靈 (*rei*), the character for “spirit,” is said to be patterned on the characters for a priestess 巫女 (*miko*) praying for rain 雨乞い (*amagoi*). It originally meant the descent of the divine spirit, he says, then gradually came to express the divine spirit itself, and later came to include all things related to the divine spirit. The character 靈 here has absolutely nothing to do with 心靈, the souls of the dead; it signifies the works of the Transcendent, another name for Absolute Reality.
59. “Gengo fīrudo toshite no *waka*” (*Waka* as linguistic field), *Bungaku* 52,1 (1984), 44–53; “Ishiki fīrudo toshite no *waka*” (*Waka* as cognitive field), *Bungaku* 52,12 (1984), 10–22; and “Shizen mandara: ishiki fīrudo toshite no *waka*” (The mandala of nature: *Waka* as cognitive field), in *Kōza Tōyō shisō 16: Nihon shisō 2* (Lectures on Oriental thought 16: Japanese thought 2) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989), pp. 219–261. See also

- her English-language essay, “The Aesthetic Structure of *Waka*,” in *The Theory of Beauty in the Classical Aesthetics of Japan* (The Hague/Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), pp. 3–25.
60. “Shizen mandara,” p. 224.
61. *Chūsei no bungaku dentō: waka bungakuron* (The literary tradition of the Middle Ages: On *waka* literature) (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1940; rept. Iwanami Shoten, 1985).
62. “Watashi no sansatsu” (My three books), *Toshio* (Books) 454 (1988), 11–12; rept. in *Youu to kaku*, p. 448.
63. *Chūsei no bungaku dentō*, p. 31.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## Translator of the Heavenly World

1. *Kōran*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964; rept. 2004), 3: 339.
2. *Kōran*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958). The comment was made in an interview with Nasrullah Pūreevādī, “Izutsu-sensei to no saigo no kaiken” (The last interview with Professor Izutsu), translated by Takashi Iwami and Akira Matsumoto and published in the insert to ITC 11.
3. *Kōran* (1964/2004), 1: 5 (ITC 7: 17).
4. *Ibid.*, (ITC 7: 17–18)
5. *Kōran o yomu* (Reading the *Kōran*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983); rept. in ITC 8 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991).
6. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
7. *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran: A Study in Semantics* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Philological Studies, 1959); rev. ed. *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qurʾān* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1966).
8. *Kōran* (1958), 3: 321.
9. *Kōran* (1964/2004), 2: 296 (ITC 7: 828).
10. Afterword to *Imi no fukami e: Tōyō tetsugaku no suii* (To the depths of meaning: Fathoming Oriental philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1985), p. 292 (ITC 9: 604), cited above in Chapter six, p. 170.
11. *Mahometto* (Muhammad) (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1952; rept. Kōdansha, 1989).
12. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
13. *Kōran* (1958), 3: 321.
14. Commentary to the revised translation of the *Kōran*. *Kōran* (1964/2004), 1: 300 (ITC 7: 854).

15. *Kōran o yomu* ITC 8: 216.
16. *Kōran* (1964/2004), 3: 311 (ITC 7: 845).
17. Afterword to the revised translation of the *Kōran* (1964/2004), 3: 338.
18. Official translation of Yorozuyo on the Tenrikyology website, accessed 4 January 2013: <http://tenrikyology.com/29/post-26-report-aug-2008/>.
19. *Shūkyō shinpishugi hassei no kenkyū* (A study of the development of religious mysticism (Nara: Tenri Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1966), p. 414.
20. *Kōran* (1958), 3:2730.
21. *Funboruto* (Humboldt) (Tokyo: Kōbundō Shobō, 1938).
22. *Ippan gengogaku to shiteki gengogaku* (General linguistics and historical linguistics) (Osaka: Zōshindō, 1947), p. 9.
23. “Dōtei” (Curriculum vitae), *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review) 800 (1980), 2–3; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 577–579.
24. “Kōran honyaku gojitsudan” (Reminiscences of translating the Kōran), *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review) 683 (1969), 21–27; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 549–560, at 558.
25. *The Fundamental Structure of Sabzawari’s Metaphysics* (Tehran: McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies, 1968); later published as a chapter in *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1971), pp. 57–149.
26. “Sufism, Mysticism, Structuralism: A Dialogue,” *Religious Traditions* 7–9 (1984–1986), 1–24, at 1–2. “Sūfizumu to misutishizumu,” trans. Toyoko Izutsu, *Shisō* (Thought) 720 (1984), 22–52; rept. in *ITC Bekkan*, pp. 193–243, at 193.
27. *Six leçons sur le son et le sens* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1976; rept. 1991), p. 7; *Lectures on Sound and Meaning*, trans. John Mepham (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978; rept. 1981), p. x.
28. *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism: Ibn ‘Arabī and Lao-tzū, Chuang-tzū*, 3 pts. in 2 vols. (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1966–1967); rev. ed. *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984; rept. 2008). Citations will be from the revised edition.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 469.
31. *Isurāmu shisōshi: shingaku, shinpishugi, tetsugaku* (History of Islamic thought: Theology, mysticism, philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975); rept. in ITC 5 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), pp. 7–330, at 314.

32. *Arabia tetsugaku*, in *Bukkyō tetsugaku, Kirisutokyō gairon, Arabia tetsugaku* (Buddhist philosophy; An introduction to Christianity; Arabie philosophy) (Tokyo: Hikari no Shobō, 1948); rept. *Arabia tetsugaku, Kaikyō tetsugaku* (Arabie philosophy, Islamic philosophy) (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2011), pp. 6–7.
33. “Kaikyō shinpishugi tetsugakusha Ibun Arabī no sonzairon” (The ontology of the Islamic mystic philosopher Ibn ‘Arabī), *Tetsugaku* (Philosophy) 25–26 (1944), 332–357; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 41–62.
34. “Sūfizumu to gengo tetsugaku” (Sufism and linguistic philosophy), *Shisō* (Thought) 720 (1984), 1–21; rept. in *Imi no fukami e*, pp. 197–237, at 213 (ITC 9: 460).
35. “Kaikyō shinpishugi tetsugakusha Ibun Arabī no sonzairon,” in *Yomu to kaku*, p. 41.
36. *Shinpi tetsugaku* (Philosophy of mysticism) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949; rept. Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), p. 121; rev. ed. 2 vols. (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1978); rept. ITC 1: 303.
37. *Sufism and Taoism*, p. 226.
38. “Kaikyō shinpishugi tetsugakusha Ibun Arabī no sonzairon,” in *Yomu to kaku*, p. 46.
39. *Isurāmu tetsugaku no genzō* (The original image of Islamic philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980), p. 290; rept. ITC 5 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), pp. 331–495, at 451.
40. *Sufism and Taoism*, p. 216.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
42. *Isurāmu shisōshi*, p. 313.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
44. *Sufism and Taoism*, p. 136.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
47. Volume 2 of *Mélanges posthumes sur les religions et l’histoire de la Chine: Le Taoïsme* (Paris: Civilisations du Sud, S.A.E.P., 1950; rept. P.U.F., 1967).
48. “Henri Maspero était le premier et, jusqu’ici, aussi bien en Occident qu’en Orient, le seul ou presque à avoir entrepris la prospection scientifique de l’histoire et de la littérature du Taoïsme à cette époque,” *Le Taoïsme*, p. 9.
49. *Sufism and Taoism*, p. 290.
50. *Ishiki to honshitsu: seishinteki Tōyō o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the spiritual Orient) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten,

- 1983), p. 196. Rept. as *Ishiki to honshitsu: Tōyōteki shii no kōzōteki sei-gōsei o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the structural integration of Oriental thought), ITC 6 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 158. The phrase “muddy and turbid” is taken from the poem “Yū I’u” (The Fisherman) attributed to Ch’ü Yüan, cited by Izutsu in “Celestial Journey: Mythopoesis and Metaphysics,” in *Das Spiel der Götter und des Menschen/The Play of Gods and Men/Le jeu des hommes et des dieux*. Eranos Jahrbuch 51 (1982), ed. Rudolf Ritsema (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1983), pp. 449–477; rept. in *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy: Collected Papers of the Eranos Conference 2* (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008), pp. 187–214, at 194.
51. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, pp. 195–196 (ITC 6: 158).
52. *Ibid.*, p. 198 (ITC 6: 160).
53. *Ibid.*, p. 195 (ITC 6: 157).
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*, p. 206 (ITC 6: 166).
56. *Ibid.*, p. 207 (ITC 6: 166).
57. *Kōshi den* (Life of Confucius) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1972; rept. Chuokoron-Shinsha, 2003), p. 225.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 310ff (ITC 6: 246ff).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## Eranos—Dialogue in the Beyond

1. Izutsu’s lectures have been published in *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy: Collected Papers of the Eranos Conference*, 2 vols., The Izutsu Library Series on Oriental Philosophy 4 (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008).
2. “*Eranosu sōsho no hakkan ni saishite: kanshūsha no kotoba*” (On the publication of the Eranos yearbooks: Words from the editor), in *Toki no genshōgaku* (In time and out of time), *Eranosu sōsho* (Eranos yearbook) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1990), 1: 11–20; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 592–600. An excerpt from Izutsu’s preface to this book has been translated as “Reminiscences of Ascona” and published as the Appendix to *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy*, 1: 283–289. The passage cited here is found on pp. 288–289.
3. “Reminiscences of Ascona,” p. 283.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

5. In Roger Godel, *De l'humanisme à l'humain* (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 1963); "The Time of Eranos," in Joseph Campbell et al., ed., *Man and Time: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957; rept. 1983), pp. xiii–xx. A revised version with additions translated by Lee B. Jennings is found in *Eranos and Its Meaning* (Ascona: Eranos Foundation, 1978), pp. 7–16.
6. "Reminiscences of Ascona," p. 286.
7. Preface to *Isurāmu shinpishugi ni okeru perusona no rinen* (The idea of personality in Islamic mysticism), a translation of R.A. Nicholson's *The Idea of Personality in Sufism* by Kiyoshi Nakamura (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1981), pp. 1–9; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 212–219, at 214. See above, p. 67.
8. *Ishiki to honshitsu: seishinteki Tōyō o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the spiritual Orient) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983), p. 208; rept. as *Ishiki to honshitsu: Tōyōteki shii no kōzōteki seigō-sei o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the structural integration of Oriental thought), in ITC 6 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), pp. 167–168.
9. "Tetsugakuteki imiron" (Philosophical semantics), *Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Gengo Bunka Kenkyūjo Shohō* (Bulletin of the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies) 6 (1967), 2–3; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 414–416, at 416.
10. *The World Turned Inside Out: Henry Corbin and Islamic Mysticism* (Woodstock, CN: Spring Journal Books, 2003), p. xii.
11. "Eriāde aitō: 'Indo taiken' o megutte" (Mourning Eliade: On his "Indian experiences"), *Yuriika* (Eureka) 18 (1986), 68–76; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 525–540, at 530.
12. "Anri Koruban no Sōzōteki sōzōryoku ni tsuite" (On Henry Corbin's *Creative Imagination*), in *Toki no genshōgaku* (In time and out of time), *Eranosu sōsho* (Eranos yearbook), 1: 270. Also worth mentioning is Shin Nagai's "Imaginaru no genshōgaku (Genshōgaku to Tōyō shisō)" (The phenomenology of the *imaginal* [Phenomenology and Oriental thought]), *Shisō* (Thought) 968 (2004), 23–39.
13. "The Time of Eranos," p. 9.
14. "Reminiscences of Ascona," p. 285.
15. "The Time of Eranos," p. 7.
16. *Eranos and Its Meaning*, p. 5.
17. "Reminiscences of Ascona," p. 285.
18. In *Polarität des Lebens* (Polarity of Life), *Eranos Yearbook* 36 (1967), ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1968), pp. 379–441; rept. in *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy* 1: 1–74.

19. “Daiikkyū no kokusaijin” (A first-class cosmopolitan), blurb for *Suzuki Daisetsu Zeushū* (Complete works of Daisetz Suzuki) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981); rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 439–440.
20. “Zenteki ishiki no firudo kōzō” (The field structure of Zen consciousness), *Shisō* (Thought) 770 (1988), 4–37; rept. in *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu* (Cosmos and anti-cosmos), pp. 189–246 (ITC 9: 308–357). The lecture on which the essay is based is “The Structure of Selfhood in Zen Buddhism,” in *Sinn und Wandlungen des Menschenbildes* (Meaning and Transformation of the Image of Humanity), *Eranos Yearbook* 38 (1969), ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsemā (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1972), pp. 95–150; rept. in *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy* 1: 75–135.
21. *Nihonteki reisei* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1944; rept. Kadokawa Gakugei Shuppan, 2010); *Japanese Spirituality*, trans. Norman Waddell (Tokyo: Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, [1972]; rept. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 11–16.
22. *Shiuran’s Kyōgyōshinshō: The Collection of Passages Expounding the True Teaching, Living, Faith, and Realizing of the Pure Land* (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha, 1973; 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
23. *Sengai: The Zen Master* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971).
24. “Tōzai bunka no kōryū” (East-West cultural exchange), *Mita Hyōron* (Mita Review) 723 (1973), 16–22; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 561–573.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 567.
26. *Suedenborugu* (Tokyo: Heigo, 1911; rept. Iwanami Shoten, 2001); Daisetz’s Japanese biography of Swedenborg has been translated by Andrew Bernstein and published as *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1996).
27. *Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d’Ibn ‘Arabi* (Paris: Flammarion, 1958); English translation, *Alone with the Alone: Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans. Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series 91 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969; rept. 2008), p. 354.
28. Trans. Leonard Fox (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1995). This is the title of the English translation of two of Corbin’s essays, “Mundus imaginalis” and “Herméneutique spirituelle comparée,” published under the title *Face de Dieu, Face de l’homme: Herméneutique et soufisme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1983).
29. Cf. Masahito Senoue, *Meiji no Suedenborugu: Ōsui Arinori Shōzō o tsunagu mono* (Swedenborg in Meiji Japan: What connects [Arai] Ōsui, [Mori] Arinori, [and Tanaka] Shōzō) (Yokohama: Shunpūsha, 2001).
30. *Creative Imagination*, p. 355 n41.
31. “Daiikkyū no kokusaijin,” p. 439.

32. “The Origins and Opus of Eranos: Reflections at the 55th Conference,” in *Wegkreuzungen/Crossroads/La croisée des chemins*, ed. Rudolf Ritsema, Eranos Yearbook 56 (1987) (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1989), p. vii.
33. “Reminiscences of Aseona,” p. 287.
34. *Shinpi tetsugaku: Girishia no bu* (Philosophy of mysticism: The Greek part) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949; rept. Keiō Gijukudaigaku Shuppankai, 2010), p. 140; rev. ed., 2 vols. (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1978); rept. ITC 1 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), pp. 318–319.
35. Ibid. (ITC 1: 319).
36. “Ottō no vēdānta tetsugaku e no shiza” (Perspectives on Otto’s Vedānta philosophy), in *Indogaku shoshisō to sono shūen: Bukkyō Bunka Gakkai jissūnen Hōjō Kenzō Hakushi koki kinen ronbunshū* (Ideas on Indian studies and their dissemination: Collection of essays in honor of the tenth anniversary of the Research Society of Buddhism and Cultural Heritage and Dr Kenzō Hōjō’s 70th birthday) (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2004), pp. 55–73. Sawai is a religious phenomenologist and also an outstanding Otto scholar whose scholarly exchanges with Izutsu were mentioned earlier. Izutsu thought highly of Sawai’s work on Indian philosophy.
37. “Ji-ji muge / ri-ri muge: sonzai kaitai no ato” (The world of ‘non-hindrance’: After/traces of ontological deconstruction), *Shisō* (Thought) 733 (1985), 1–31 and *Shisō* 735 (1985), 17–37; rept. in *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu*, pp. 1–102 (ITC 9: 117–195).
38. *West-östliche Mystik: Vergleich und Unterscheidung zur Wesensdeutung* (Gotha: Leopold Klotz, 1926; rept. Munich: Beck, 1971); *Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism*, trans. Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne (New York: Macmillan, 1932; rept. 1976), p. 15.
39. “Ottō no vēdānta tetsugaku e no shiza,” p. 55.
40. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 235 (ITC 6: 188).
41. “Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu,” rept. in ITC 9: 124.
42. *Gioacchino da Fiore: I tempi, la vita, il messaggio* (Joachim of Fiore: His times, his life, his message) (Rome: Collezione meridionale editrice, 1931; rept. Cosenza: Lionello Giordano, 1984).
43. Our knowledge of Joachimism in Japan is mainly dependent on translations of these two works: *Chūsei no yogen to sono eikyō: Yoakimushugi no kenkyū*, trans. Yoshiyuki Ōhashi (Tokyo: Yasaka Shobō, 2006) and *Fiōre no Yoakimu: Seiō shisō to mokushiteki shūmatsuron* (Joachim of Fiore: Implicit eschatology and Western thought), trans. Yōko Miyamoto (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1997).
44. “Eriāde aitō: ‘Indo taiken’ o megutte”; see above 111.

45. *Eliade* completed three volumes, trans. Willard R. Trask, Alf Hiltebeitel and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978–1985).
46. “Eriāde aitō,” p. 527.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 534.
48. “Chosakushū no kankō ni atatte” (On the publication of my selected works), in *ITC* 1: 472.
49. *Isurāmu bunka: sono kontei ni aru mono* (Islamic culture: The elements that make up its foundation) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981; rept. 1994); rept. in *ITC* 2: 189–361.
50. Serious study of the Traditionalist school has yet to be undertaken in Japan. Islamic scholar Masataka Takeshita (1948– ) took note of the Traditionalist school at a relatively early date, but that interest did not become widespread. Translations of Nasr’s works have been published in Japanese, but even though his name has become well known, he is almost never discussed as a member of the Traditionalist school. Recently, in “Frithjof Schuon to Izutsu Toshihiko” (Frithjof Schuon and Toshihiko Izutsu), *Journal of Religious Studies* 83,4 (2010), 1422–1423, Kōjirō Nakamura (1936– ) considered the similarities and differences between the ideas of these two men. Two books by Coomaraswamy were translated in the first half of the twentieth century, but they were regarded at the time as studies of Indian art, not as works on Traditionalist thought: *Indo oyobi Tōnan Ajia bijutsushi* (History of Indian and southeast Asian art), a translation of *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927) by Chikyō Yamamoto (Tokyo: Hokkai Shuppansha, 1944); and *Indo bijutsushi* (History of Indian art), trans. Rokurō Sobu and Masumi Iwasaki (Tokyo: Kōryūsha, 1916); rept. *Bijutsu sōsho* (Art series) 5 (Tokyo: Kankōkai, 1930).
51. “Kaikyō tetsugaku shokan: Korubansho *Isurāmu tetsugakushi* hōyaku shuppan no kikai” (Perspectives on Islamic philosophy: On the occasion of the publication of the Japanese translation of Corbin’s *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*), *Tosho* (Books) 294 (1974), 38–42; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 485–492, at 492.
52. Preface to *Isurāmu shinpishugi ni okeru perusona no rinen e*, in *Yomu to kaku*, p. 213.
53. *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardī, Ibn ‘Arabī* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964; rept. Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 2007), p. 120. Asín-Palacios is mentioned in a footnote to this sentence on p. 169.
54. On the Schuon website, [www.frithjof-schuon.com/interview.htm](http://www.frithjof-schuon.com/interview.htm), accessed 21 January 2013.
55. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 46 (*ITC* 1: 237, with minor revisions).

56. René Guénon: *Some Observations* (Ghent, NY: Sophia perennis, 2004).
57. *In Search of the Sacred: A Conversation with Seyyed Hossein Nasr on His Life and Thought* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), p. 92
58. “The Occult in the Modern World,” a paper given in 1974 and reprinted in *Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions: Essays in Comparative Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976; rept. 1995).
59. “Creation according to Ibn ‘Arabī,” in *Seeing God Everywhere: Essays on Nature and the Sacred*, ed. Barry McDonald (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2003; rept. 2005), pp. 137–159.
60. *Imi no kōzō: Kōran ni okeru shūkyō dōtoku gainen no bunseki* (The structure of meaning: An analysis of ethico-religious concepts in the Kōran) (Tokyo: Shinsensha, 1972), a translation by Shin’ya Makino of *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Kōran: A Study in Semantics*; authorial editions to rev. ed. ITC 4 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 14.
61. *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, rept. 2008), p. 469.
62. *Imi no kōzō*, ITC 4: 19.
63. *Ishiki to hōshitsu*, pp. 131–132 (ITC 6: 108).

## CHAPTER NINE

## Consciousness and Essence

1. *Ishiki to hōshitsu: seishiuteki Tōyō o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the spiritual Orient) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983), p. 430; rept. as *Ishiki to hōshitsu: Tōyōteki shii no kōzōteki seigōsei o motomete* (Consciousness and essence: In search of the structural integration of Oriental thought), ITC 6 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), p. 340.
2. “Ishiki to hōshitsu: Tōyō tetsugaku no kyōjiteki kōzōka no tame ni” (Consciousness and essence: For a synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophy). Serialized in *Shisō* (Thought), June 1980 to February 1982. *Shisō* 672 (1980), 1–13; 673 (1980), 86–99; 678 (1980), 1–19; 681 (1981), 68–87; 687 (1981), 40–59; 690 (1981) 88–107; 691 (1982), 44–67; 692 (1982), 1–24.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Foreword to the revised edition of *Shiupi tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Jinbun Shoin, 1978), rept. ITC 1 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), p. 14.
5. Afterword to *Imi no fukami e: Tōyō tetsugaku no suii* (To the depths of meaning: Fathoming Oriental philosophy) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1985), p. 301; rept. in ITC 9 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), p. 612.

6. Ibid., p. 302 (ITC 9: 612).
7. Ibid.
8. “Shisō to geijutsu” (Art and thought), *Mita Bungaku* 67,15 (1988), 22–47; rept in *ITC Bekkan* (Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 327–368, at 334.
9. *Imi no fukami e*, p. 302 (ITC 9: 612).
10. Ibid., pp. 302–303 (ITC 9: 612).
11. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 433 (ITC 6: 342–343).
12. Introduction to *Kyōdō genshōron* (On collective illusion), in *Yoshimoto Takaaki Zen chosakushū* (Collected works of Takaaki Yoshimoto), 11 (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1972), p. 10.
13. “Tsumi to batsu ni tsuite II” (On Crime and Punishment II) in *Kobayashi Hideo Zenshū* (Complete works of Hideo Kobayashi) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2004), 6: 224.
14. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 433 (ITC 6: 343).
15. “Lorsqu’il se plie docilement à ce que nous attendons de lui, cela prouve, le plus souvent, qu’il est dépourvu de vie propre et que nous n’avons entre les mains qu’une dépouille.” *Le Romancier et ses personnages* (Paris: Éditions R.-A. Corrêa, 1933), pp. 126–127.
16. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. vi (ITC 1: 197).
17. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 211 (ITC 6: 170).
18. Ibid., pp. 3–4 (ITC 6: 9).
19. “‘Yomu’ to ‘kaku’” (“Reading” and “writing”), *Risō* (Ideal) 600 (1983), 2–8; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 417–425, at 422.
20. “Derida no naka no ‘Yudayajin’” (The “Jew” in Derrida), *Shisō* (Thought) 711 (1983), 21–37; rept. in *Imi no fukami e*, pp. 87–120 (ITC 9: 361–387).
21. Izutsu translates “nothingness” in the title with the Japanese word *kyomu* (虚無; nihility) rather than the more usual *mu* (無).
22. “Mita jidai: Sarutoru tetsugaku to no deai” (The Mita years: My encounter with Sartre’s philosophy), *Mita Bungaku* 64,3 (1985), 12–13; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 496–499, at 497.
23. “Izutsu Toshihiko no koto” (About Toshihiko Izutsu), insert to ITC 1, pp. 2–3.
24. *Ōto* (Nausea), trans. Kōji Shirai (Tokyo: Seijisha, 1947).
25. “Mita jidai,” p. 497.
26. Ibid., p. 498.
27. *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1949), pp. 126–127. The translation in the Japanese essay was by Izutsu himself.
28. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, pp. 7–8 (ITC 6: 12).

29. “Mita jidai,” p. 498.
30. *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1971), p. 132, citing *L'Être et l'essence* (Being and essence) (Paris: J. Vrin, 1948), p. 301.
31. “Mitai jidai,” p. 498.
32. “Bungaku to shisō no shinsō” (The depths of literature and thought), *Sekai* (World) 470 (1985), 230–258; rept. in ITC Bekkan, pp. 7–53, at 10.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 3 (ITC 6: 9).
36. *Ibid.*, p. 4 (ITC 6: 10).
37. “Une idée fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl: l'intentionnalité,” in *Critiques littéraires (Situations I)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), pp. 29–32, at 30; “A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Philosophy: Intentionality,” trans. Chris Turner, in *Critical Essays (Situations I)* (London; New York: Seagull Books, 2010), pp. 40–46, at 43.
38. “Keijijōgakuteki jikan” (Metaphysical time), in *Kuki Shūzō Zenshū* 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980), p. 192.
39. *Souzai to jikan*, trans. Jitsumin Terashima, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Mikasa Shobō, 1939–1940).
40. “Tetsugaku shiken” (My personal view of philosophy), in *Kuki Shūzō Zenshū* 3: 106.
41. “Odoroki no jō to gūzensei” (Contingency and the feeling of surprise), in *Kuki Shūzō Zenshū* 3: 175.
42. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 19 (ITC 1: 214).
43. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
44. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 22 (ITC 6: 23).
45. *Ibid.* (ITC 6: 23–24).
46. *Ibid.*, p. 153 (ITC 6: 125).
47. *Ibid.*, p. 211 (ITC 6: 169).
48. *Ibid.*, p. 210 (ITC 6: 169).
49. *Ibid.*, p. 251 (ITC 6: 200).
50. Cf. Chapter 12 of *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
51. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 255 (ITC 6: 203–204).
52. *Ibid.*, p. 256 (ITC 6: 204).
53. *Ibid.*, p. 255 (ITC 6: 204).

54. Ibid., p. 101 (ITC 6: 85).
55. Ibid., p. 190 (ITC 6: 153).
56. Ibid., p. 125 (ITC 6: 103).
57. *Ishiki no keijijōgaku: “Daijō kishinron” no tetsugaku* (Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993).
58. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 329 (ITC 6: 261).
59. Ibid., p. 186 (ITC 6: 150).
60. Ibid., p. 101 (ITC 6: 85).
61. Ibid., p. 222 (ITC 6: 178).
62. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 269 (ITC 1: 83).
63. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 128 (ITC 6: 106).
64. “Zen ni okeru gengoteki imi no mondai” (Problems of linguistic meaning in Zen), *Risō* (Ideal) 501 (1975), 8–17; rept. in *Ishiki to honshitsu*, pp. 367–389, at 377 (ITC 6: 297–308, at 299).
65. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 222 (ITC 6: 178).
66. Ibid., p. 80 (ITC 6: 68).
67. Ibid., pp. 77–78 (ITC 6: 67).
68. “Imiron josetsu: *Minwa no shisō* no kaisetsu o kanete” (Introduction to semantic theory: With a commentary on *Minwa no shisō*), in *Minwa no shisō* (Intellectual aspects of folktales) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1990), pp. 247–271; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 306–327, at 319.
69. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 234 (ITC 6: 188).
70. Ibid., p. 78 (ITC 6: 67).
71. Ibid., p. 251 (ITC 6: 200).
72. Ibid., p. 8 (ITC 6: 13).
73. Ibid., p. 251 (ITC 6: 200).
74. Ibid., p. 241 (ITC 6: 193).
75. Ibid., p. 240 (ITC 6: 192).
76. Ibid., p. 239 (ITC 6: 191).
77. Ibid., p. 240 (ITC 6: 192).
78. Ibid., p. 241 (ITC 6: 192).
79. “The *I Ching* Mandala and Confucian Metaphysics,” in *Einheit und Verschiedenheit/Oneness and Variety/Lun et le divers*, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 45 (1976), ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema (Leiden: Brill, 1980), pp. 363–404; rept. in *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy* 2: 39–81, at 58.
80. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 239 (ITC 6: 191).

81. “Gengo tetsugaku toshite no Shingon” (Shingon: A philosophy of language), *Mikkyōgaku Kenkyū* (Journal of Esoteric Buddhist Studies) 17 (1985), 1–29; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 251–286, at 254. This lecture was later revised and expanded into an essay and published under the title “Imi bunsetsu riron to Kūkai: Shingon mikkyō no gengo tetsugakuteki kanōsei o saguru” (Kūkai and the theory of semantic articulation: Exploring the linguistic philosophical potential of Shingon esoteric Buddhism), *Shisō* (Thought) 728 (1985), 1–21; rept. in *Imi no fukami e*, pp. 238–278 (ITC 9: 76–105).
82. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 238 (ITC 6: 191).
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*, p. 241 (ITC 6: 193).
85. *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER TEN

## The Philosophy of Mind

1. *Shinsō ishiki e no michi* (The road to depth consciousness) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004), p. 158, see also 185.
2. *Kawai Hayao: shinri ryōhōka no tanjō* (Hayao Kawai: The genesis of a psychotherapist) (Tokyo: Toransubyū, 2009), p. 338.
3. *Myōe: yume o ikiru* (Kyoto: Shōhakusha, 1987; rept. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995); English translation, *The Buddhist Priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams*, trans. Mark Unno (Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1992).
4. *A Life of Dreams*, p. 120.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 129–130.
6. “Ji-ji muge/ri-ri muge: sonzai kaitai no ato” (The world of ‘non-hindrance’: After/traces of ontological deconstruction) first came out in two installments in the journal *Shisō* 733 (1985), 1–31, and 735 (1985), 17–37; rept. in *Kosumosu to anchikosumosu*, pp. 3–102 and ITC 9: 117–195. Izutsu’s 1980 Eranos Lecture, “The Nexus of Ontological Events: A Buddhist View of Reality,” was first published in *Grenzen und Begrenzung/Extremes and Borders*, Eranos Yearbook 49 (1980), ed. Adolf Portmann (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1981), pp. 357–392; rept. in *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy* 2: 151–186. The translation of Kawai’s summary of Izutsu’s ideas in *A Life of Dreams*, pp. 192–195, uses slightly different terminology.
7. “The Nexus of Ontological Events,” pp. 175–176.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

10. *Kawai Hayao: monogatari o ikiru* (Hayao Kawai: Living the stories) (Tokyo: Toransubyū, 2010).
11. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 101 (ITC 6: 85).
12. *Ibid.*, p. 102 (ITC 6: 85).
13. *Ibid.*, p. 101 (ITC 6: 85).
14. “Yungu shinrigaku to Tōyō shisō” (Jungian psychology and Oriental thought) trans. Toyoko Izutsu, *Shisō* (Thought) 708 (1983), 1–35; rept. in *ITC Bekkan* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 245–303. [Translator’s note: Although a transcript of this colloquy is listed in the “James Hillman Checklist” at the Pacifica Graduate Institute, which houses the Hillman papers, Dr Sharon Rossi, executive director of the OPUS Archives & Research Center, was unable to locate it. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her efforts.]
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 255–256.
16. *A Life of Dreams*, p. 47.
17. *Re-visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1975; rept. HarperCollins, 1992), p. 9.
18. “Yungu shinrigaku to Tōyō shisō,” pp. 247–248.
19. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 233 (ITC 6: 187).
20. *Kansō* (Impressions) (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1959); rept. in *Kobayashi Hideo Zenshū, Bekkan 1* (Complete works of Hideo Kobayashi, supplement 1) (Shinchōsha, 2002), p. 28.
21. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 234 (ITC 6: 187).
22. “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari” (Darkness and light at the end of the twentieth century), *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review) 108,1 (1993), 222–240; rept. in *ITC Bekkan*, pp. 369–399.
23. “Arabesuku: Izutsu Toshihiko-shi o itamu” (Arabesque: Mourning Toshihiko Izutsu), *Chūō Kōron* 108,4 (1993), 238–248; rept. in *Jūroku no hanashi* (Sixteen talks) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 45–64.
24. *Kūkai no fūkei* (Kūkai’s landscape) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1975; rept. 2005); English translation, *Kukai the Universal: Scenes from His Life*, trans. Akiko Takemoto (New York: ICG Muse, 2003).
25. “Nijisseikimatsu no yami to hikari,” in *ITC Bekkan*, p. 397.
26. “‘Hirakareta seishin’ no shisōka” (‘The thinker with an “open mind”’), blurb for *Purotimosu Zenshū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1986–1988); rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 446–447.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Kosumosu to anchi kosumosu: Tōyō tetsugaku no tame ni* (Cosmos and anti-cosmos: For a philosophy of the Orient) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989).

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39. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
40. *Hino Keizō jisen esseishū: Tamashii no kōkei* (Selected essays of Hino Keizō: The landscape of the soul) (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1998).
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  54. *Psyché: inventions de l'autre* (Paris: Éditions Gallilée, 1987; rev. ed. 2003), pp. 387–393; English translation, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 2: 1–6. Although most of Derrida’s works have been translated into Japanese, for some reason, no translation of *Psyché* has yet been published.
  55. “‘Kaitai kōchiku’: Déconstruction to wa nani ka” (“Déconstruction”: what is déconstruction?) *Shisō* (Thought) 718 (1984), 19–29.
  56. *Bunka no fechishizumu*, p. 175. *Kaitai kōchiku* (解体構築), the expression Maruyama uses to translate *déconstruction*, predates *datsukōchiku* (脱構築), which has become the established Japanese translation of this technical term, and represents Maruyama’s “reading” of Derrida.
  57. “*Eranosu sōsho no hakkan ni saishite*,” p. 592; translated in “Reminiscences of Ascona,” p. 283.
  58. “Letter to a Japanese Friend,” in *Psyche* 2: 5.

59. As was noted earlier, Derrida's core concept *déconstruction* is expressed in Japanese as *datsukōzō*. Izutsu translates it as *kaitai*. He presumably felt that *datsukōzō* was incapable of adequately expressing the word's meaning as a radical and/or dimensional change in the basis of existence that Derrida intended. Maruyama's translation *kaitai kōzō* also seems to be visible behind Izutsu's choice of words.
60. "Derida no naka no 'Yudayajin'" (The "Jew" in Derrida), *Shisō* (Thought) 711 (1983), 21–37; rept. in *Imi no fukami e*, pp. 87–120 (ITC 9: 361–387).
61. "Watashi no sansatsu" (My three books), *Tosho* (Books) 454 (1988), pp. 11–12; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, p. 448. Nishida's *Zen no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōdōkan, 1911; rept. Iwanami Shoten, 2012) has been translated by Masao Abe and Christopher Ives as *An Inquiry into the Good* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990; new ed. 1992).
62. "Ima, naze 'Nishida tetsugaku' ka" (Why "Nishida philosophy" now?), blurb for *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū* (Complete works of Kitarō Nishida) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988).
63. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 18 (ITC 1: 212, with minor revisions).
64. In what follows, I follow Izutsu's usage in referring to Hua Yen rather than its Japanese counterpart Kegon, i.e. to the organic synthesis produced by the complex intertwining of three elements: the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* (Garland Sūtra) as sacred text; the Hua Yen school and the spiritual tradition that it has given rise to; and the teachings about it that were further deepened by, among others, Fa Ts'ang (643–712), the greatest philosopher of the Chinese Hua Yen school.
65. As noted in Chapter One, "Girishia no shizenshinpishugi: Girishia tetsugaku no tanjō" (Greek nature mysticism: The birth of Greek philosophy) would be published as an Appendix to *Shinpi tetsugaku*.
66. Cf. "One world system enters all,/ And all completely enters one;/ Their substances and characteristics remain as before, no different:/ Incomparable, immeasurable, they all pervade everywhere." *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1984), 1: 215.
67. *An Inquiry into the Good*, p. 57.
68. Cf. *Zettaimu to kami: Kyōto gakuha no tetsugaku* (God and absolute nothingness: The philosophy of the Kyoto School) (Yokohama: Shunpūsha, 2002).
69. *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū* (Complete works of Kitarō Nishida) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1948; rept. 2003), 8: 365.
70. Preface to *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1917); rept. in *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū* 2; English translation, *Intuition and*

- Reflection in Self-consciousness*, trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo, Yoshinori Takeuchi and Joseph Stephen O’Leary (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. xxiii.
71. *Ishiki to honshitsu*, p. 78 (ITC 6: 67). The reference is to Mallarmé’s preface to René Ghil’s *Traité du Verbe* (1886; *Treatise on the Word*).
72. *Ibid.*, p. 79 (ITC 6: 68).
73. *Hikari no genshōgaku* (The phenomenology of light) (Tokyo: Mioya no Hikarisha, 2003), p. 425.
74. *Ben’nei shōja kōmyō taikai Mugekō* (Unhindered light: Ben’nei’s system of the light of grace), Mokusha Tanaka, ed. (Izumi, Saitama: Mioya no Hikarisha, 1956), pp. 33–34, my italics.
75. *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1949); partial English translation in “The Logic of Topos and the Religious Worldview,” trans. Michiko Yusa, *Eastern Buddhist*, ns 19,2 (1986), 1–29, and ns 20,1 (1987), 81–119.
76. “The Logic of *Topos*,” pp. 20–21.
77. *Shinpi tetsugaku*, p. 256 (ITC 1: 419).
78. “The Logic of *Topos*,” p. 106.
79. “Banyū seikiron” (On the origin of all things), in *Ben’nei shōja kōmyō taikai muryō kōju* (Ben’nei’s system of the light of grace: The immeasurable blessing of light) (Tokyo: Mioya no Hikarisha, 1931), p. 84.
80. “Rinne tensei kara junsui jizoku e” (From metempsychosis to *durée pure*), pp. 509–525 (ITC 1: 175–189).
81. *Ishiki no keijijōgaku: “Daijō kishinron” no tetsugaku* (Metaphysics of consciousness: The philosophy of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), pp. 182–183.

#### Afterword

1. *Shinpi tetsugaku: Girishia no bu* ((Philosophy of mysticism: The Greek part) (Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shūdōin, 1949, rept. Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), p. 121; rev. ed., Jinbun Shoin, 1978, rept. ITC 1 (Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), pp. 302–303.
2. “‘Gen’ei no hito’: Ikeda Yasaburō o omou” (Remembering Yasaburō Ikeda, “the phantom man”), *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review) 98,2 (1983), 344–348; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 514–521, at 521. The phrase “the phantom man . . . holding up a flower” is taken from *Tabibito kaerazu: Nishiwaki Junzaburō shishū* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shuppan, 1948); English translation, “No Traveller Returns,” in *Gen’ei: Selected Poems of Nishiwaki*

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  4. *Ibid.*, p. 521.
  5. “‘Yomu’ to ‘kaku’” (“Reading” and “Writing”), *Risō* 600 (1983), 2–8; rept. in *Yomu to kaku*, pp. 417–425.
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\*“Shinkan shōkai” (A review of recent publications). *Gengo Kenkyū* (Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan) 2 (1939), 117–126. Rept. *Yomu to kaku*, Appendix, pp. 14–26.

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JEAN CONNELL HOFF has been a translator for more than thirty years. Based in Toronto, she has translated seven books for the LTCB International Library Series.

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The only expression that seems appropriate to describe the present book is “intellectual biography.” To be sure, it does follow the events of its protagonist’s life in more or less chronological order. But what stands out in the present book are the purely internal events of intellectual development: his awakening to the mysteries of language; his discovery through Greek philosophy that intellectual inquiry and the *vita contemplativa* are not mutually antithetical; the evolution of his ideas about “meaning” while teaching linguistics at Keio University; the impact on him of other thinkers, living and dead, or who were totally unknown to Izutsu and yet were working simultaneously in parallel fields; his work on the “synchronic structuralization of Oriental philosophy,” an attempt to synthesize the major philosophical ideas of the Orient; his encounter with the concept of WORD and the realization that semantics is ontology, that Being is WORD.

Two aspects of Toshihiko Izutsu’s life seem central to an understanding of Izutsu, the philosopher of WORD: his extraordinary gift for languages—by his own reckoning he knew thirty—and an early, seminal mystical experience. In a sense, the philosophy that he would go on to develop was an attempt to articulate that experience not simply through language but in linguistic terms. And yet, Izutsu was acutely aware of the limitations of language and the way it delimits our view of the world. Differences in languages, and therefore in cultures, are not superficial, he believed; they indicate differences in perceptions of reality—hence, his fascination with the different personae of God in world religions, the many names for the One and his existential concern about the “clash of cultures.”

—From the Translator’s Notes

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