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Characteristics of Eastern Thought and the Philosophy of Kyoto School

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The character of modernized Western thought can be thought to consist in the observational view which keeps a distance from things. In contrast, the character of even recent East Asian thought consists in standing within the pure experience in which there is not yet a subject or an object. For example, the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarō (西田幾多郎, 1870-1945) often uses the phrase “mono-to natte-mi, mono-to natte-hataraku, (物となつて見、物となつて働く)” which can be translated as, “Look/see by becoming the thing, work/do by becoming the thing.” This phrase means that one should see from within the thing by going within the thing. That is to say, in distinction from the West’s objectively logical thought, Nishida sought at the root of Eastern thought a thinking that becomes the ‘thing’ completely. In other words, to transcend the self, while standing in the existential world that envelops this self, and to stand on the realized plane wherein things come to appear to the extent that the self is made of nothing. In this sense, Nishida’s standpoint is related to what is called “ko-wu, chih-chie” (knowledge which reaches all things [格物致知]) in the “Ta-hsüeh” (Great Study [大學]). Hence, with regards to Nishida’s philosophy, we can see that it cannot be thought in terms of a self and world, subject and environment, and other such oppositionally constituted dualisms. Rather, both terms are taken to be none other than contradictory, dialectical, and relational (sōsoku-teki 相即的), and are determined ‘topologically’ (basho-teki 場所的). This means that, as opposed to the modern Western way of looking at the world from the side of the self, Nishida’s philosophy tries to look at the self from the side of the world, i.e. from the side of things.

To give a much earlier example of Eastern verticality, Cheng Mingdao (程顥 1032-1085) advocated what he termed a ‘compassion of heaven and earth as one body (天地一体の仁) .

We must pay attention to the fact that humanity is a self-awareness based not on observation but on physiological sense. Before we see the objective world, we come into contact with everything physiologically. Usually we live in pure and direct experience. There is not yet a subject or an object, and knowing and its object are completely unified. This is the most refined type of experience. Zhaolun (僧肇 374-414) says in his work Zhaolun [肇論], “Heaven and Earth have a common root. All being and we are one body.” And also Chuang-tzu (莊子) says in Zhuangzi [莊子], “Heaven and Earth live with us, everything in the universe is united with us.”

Keywords: Nishida Kitarō, the pure experience, the compassion of heaven and earth as one body, Neo-Confucianism, The spirit of extension of knowledge and investigation of things, the logic of “immanent transcendence”, the transcendent one, Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana, mirror that reflects itself, the absolute place of nothingness.

Introduction

The representative of Japanese philosophy, the philosophy of Kyoto School, has a strong religious color. It has close relationship with Buddhism. In the case of Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870-1945), it is related to Zen Buddhism, especially Rinzai Zen.

While in the case of Tanabe Hajime 田邊元 (1885-1962), his original thought is developed from the thinking of Dōgen 道元, the founder of Sōtō Buddhism, as well as the idea of absolute other power from Shinran of Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism. As for Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治 (1900-1990), his position of “emptiness 空” is from Zen Buddhism.

One may focus on the individual thoughts and developments of the three thinkers, but there is a common theme. In a sentence, it is the relation of substance 体 and function 用. In other words, it is the “logic of transcendence and immanence.” Precisely speaking, Nishida’s early thought of “pure experience” 純粹經驗 is a logic of the transcendent oneness, which later has developed into the “self-determination of the universal” 一般者の自覚的限定, “place of absolute nothingness” 絶対無の場所, “absolute contradictory self identity” 絶対矛盾的自己同一 and “inverse correspondence” 逆対応. It has its root in the logic of substance and function (t’i-yung) 体用の論理 in Mahayana Buddhism or Neo Confucianism. For Tanabe, his “dialectics of the absolute mediation (absolute conversion)” 絶対媒介(絶対転換)の弁証法 is the dynamic relationship between the absolute and the relative. It is nothing but the interpretation of the logic of substance and function in Tanabe’s unique dialectical thinking. Nishitani did not develop philosophical logic in the manner of Nishida or Tanabe, but he tried to overcome the nihilism on the fringe of absolute nothingness, and grasped the position of “emptiness” from the notion of *jijimuge* (事事無礙、non-obstruction of

phenomena) in Kegon (Hua yan) Buddhism (華嚴仏教, Garland Buddhism. This approach has a deep philosophical thinking, which is influential to many readers.

However, the concepts of substance and function are widely discussed in *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* 『大乘起信論』. Two concepts can be traced back to Sengzhao’s 僧肇 (374-414) analysis of “tranquil state(寂)” and function(用)” in his work *Zhaolun* 『肇論』. According to Tong Yongtong 湯用彤, “From Wei Jin to Southern and Northern Dynasties, there are many disputes among Chinese scholars. Being apparently complicated, all of them refer to the concepts of substance and function.”

However, it is not clear whether the *concepts* of substance and function are from Buddhism or Confucianism. According to Shimada Kenji 島田虔次, Christianity is a causal theory (God as the cause and the world as the effect) that the transcendent absolute personal God as the absolute other creates the world *ex nihilo*; while in Chinese speculative thought there is no transcendent God or Creator, and hence the only possible theory is the fundamental or potential substance and function theory as in the case of Buddhism and the Zhu Zi School 朱子学.¹

In this paper, I shall grasp the essence of the philosophical thought from Kyoto School from the view point of the “logic of substance and function” or “logic of transcendent immanence” which is the very ground of Buddhism or Neo Confucianism. However, I shall begin with a brief introduction of the Zhu Zi School, the original of Chinese thinking. The reason is that Nishida Kitarō, who is the founder of Kyoto School, was born in 1870. It should be noticed that the Confucian tradition was influential to the thinkers who were born in early Meiji period and were active in late Meiji period. Confucianism was not only an element in the making of their thoughts, but was rooted in their spiritual life

since youth. At that time, it was not weird to see students reading ancient Chinese texts, even for those who studied in modern school established according to new education system in 1872.

What is the world view of the Zhu Zi School that influenced the people in Meiji period or the beginning of Japan's modernization? I shall explain it in the next section.

1. *The Characteristic of the Zhu Zi School and the logic of substance and function (体用の論理) in Eastern metaphysics*

Zhu Zi School refers to a group of thinkers such as Zhou Lianxi 周濂溪(1017-1073), Cheng Mingdao 程明道 (1032-1085), Cheng Yi-chuan 程伊川 (1033-1170) and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) in Song Dynasty. It is also known as Neo-Confucianism.

Confucianism used to be an important element in political ethics, but it was a condemned after the death of Confucius. In Qin Dynasty, there was a period of burning of the books and burying of the scholars 焚書坑儒. Later in Han Dynasty Confucianism was overpowered by Lao Zi's and Zhuang Zi's teaching (老莊思想), while in the Six Dynasty it was further mixed by Daoist and Buddhist thoughts. Neo Confucianism or the Song School was an attempt to revive the weakened local traditional thought in Confucianism in a systematic way. Based on the natural philosophy of *I Ching* 『易經』, it developed a cosmology from the theory of Yin Yang Five Elements 陰陽五行說. It also formed a practical ethics from the Four Books, i.e., *The Great Learning* 『大學』 (*Ta-hsüeh*), *The Doctrine of the Mean* 『中庸』 (*Chung-yung*), *The Analects* 『論語』 (*Un-yü*) and *The Book of Mencius* 『孟子』 (*Meng Tzu*). However, it also combined the popular Zen 禪 and Hua yan Buddhism 華嚴教学 as well as the philosophy of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, which developed into a speculative metaphysical

system. The Song School emphasized the moral normative of human relationship such as the Five Virtues 五常 (humanity 仁 ren, justice 義 xi, propriety 禮 li, wisdom 智 zhi, and confidence 信 xin) and the Five Relationships 五倫 (between ruler and subject 君臣, father and son 父子, elder and younger brother 長幼, husband and wife 夫婦, friends 朋友). The foundation of this thinking lies in the idea the "Heaven and Earth are of same root, and all beings are one body. 天地与我同根、万物与我一体". Human world and natural world are formed by the same principle, therefore the grounds of moral laws can be found in natural laws. Therefore, the ethical task for human being is to remove the greediness and desires of one self, and to become one with the Heaven and Earth. One may say the characteristic of this school is to provide ground for human ethics from the Heaven or natural law. The essence of the moral norms of human society is from the law of the Heaven.

(1) *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*

In Zhu Zi School, the ultimate reality of the universe is grasped as "infinity and ultimate (Wuji er Taiji, 無極而太極)," influenced by Zhou Lianxi's 周濂溪 *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* 『太極圖說』 (*Taiji tushuo*). In other words, the ultimate reality has no form, sound or odor. As an infinity, the taiji 太極 brings the *qi* 氣 that makes the movement of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 possible. Moreover, the self movement of *qi* 氣 combines the five elements 五行 (tree 木, fire 火, earth 土, metal 金 and water 水), creating all beings. Zhu Xi understands taiji as *li*, which is essentially different from *qi*. The relationship between *li* and *qi* can be rendered as "first *li* and then *qi* 理先氣後 (lixian qihou)," which is an irreversible ontological relationship. This idea can be traced back to Cheng Yi-chuan's 程伊川 philosophy of "xing ji li 性即理." Zhu Zi School suggests a theory of life for all the beings

of the universe, here Zhu Xi follows Cheng Yi-chuan in understanding that the transcendent *li* is “static 靜.” The mainstream of Zhu Zi School emphasizes a static *li*, which gives rise to “seriousness 居敬 (jūjing).” It is a theory about the potentiality of motion. Therefore, static is not an absence of motion; rather, it is an ultimate static that includes the motion. It can be understood as “static in motion 動中の靜” or “motion in static 靜中の動.”

(2) *Four Books* (四書) : *Emphasis on The Great Learning* (『大学』)

In Neo-Confucianism, *The Great Learning* is regarded as the Written Legacy (遺書) of Kong zi (孔子 Confucius). He says that the kernel ideas are the three principles and the eight items.

What the Great Learning teaches, is to illustrate illustrious virtue 明明德 (ming mingde); to revivate the people 新民 (xinmin); and to rest in the highest excellence 止至善 (zhi zhishan).”

The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the empire, first ordered well their own States (治國 zhiguo). Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families (齊家 qijia). Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons (修身 xiushen). Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts (正心 zhengxin). Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts (誠意 chengyi). Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge (格物 gewu) lay in the investigation of things (致知 zhizhi).

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their

persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed. Their States being rightly governed, the whole empire was made tranquil and happy (平天下 ping tianxia).³

Of above the ideas, the teaching of personal cultivation, family regulation, state politics and world peace require a way restricting one’s own desires and developing concentrically into the sphere of the community. This way builds a sense of responsibility towards the public sphere for the feudal class in Japan. It should be noticed that Zhu Zi School is the origin of moral consciousness to the West introduced as “*bushidō* 武士道.” Japanese in Meiji Period (including Nishida himself) follows this tradition. In “The Goal of Good Conduct” (part 3, chapter 12) of *Zen no Kenkyū* 善の研究, Nishida suggests “Personality, which is both the unifying power of consciousness and the unifying power of reality, is first actualized in individuals,” and explains the idea of “developing oneself, and hence the family, the nation and the whole world” in the following way:

Fundamentally, the center of the self is not limited to the interior of the individual: the self of a mother is found in her child, and the self of a loyal subject is found in the monarch. As one’s personality becomes greater, the demands of the self become increasingly social. Such social consciousness consists of various levels. The smallest and most immediate is the family, which is the first level at which one’s personality develops in society. [...] The development of social consciousness is not limited to the small group of the family. Our mental and physical life can develop in all of the various social groups. At the new level beyond the family, the nation unifies the entirety of our conscious activity and oppresses a single personality. [...] The essence of the nation is the expression of the communal

consciousness that constitutes the foundation of our minds. In the context of the nation, we can accomplish a great development of personality; the nation is a unified personality, and the systems and laws of the nation are expressions of the will of this communal consciousness. [...] At present, the nation is the greatest expression of unified communal consciousness. But the expression of our personality cannot stop there—it demands something greater: a social union that includes all humankind.⁴

This is a well known fact that in Zhu Zi School, the morality of ethics community criticizes radically the anarchical “world-renunciation 出家主義” in Buddhism and “anti-civilizationalism 反文明主義” in the Daoist notion of “non-acting nature 無為自然 (wuwei ziran).”

(3) *Seriousness (居敬 jujing)*
and *ultimate Knowing (窮理 qioangli)*

As mentioned above, the ethical principle of Neo-Confucianism begins from the

Cheng Yi-chuan’s notion of “*xing* is *li*.” Hsing becomes *li* when it is internalized in the individual being. It has two contradictory elements, namely the nature of inborn (本然之性, Benranzhixing) and the nature of disposition (氣質之性, Qizhizhixing). The ethical task of human being is to rectify the nature of character and to return to nature of inborn, which is the origin of the good. In other words, it is the idea of removing the desire that can be found in “manifesting the clear character” in *The Great Learning*, as well as the Neo-Confucian idea of respect. According to Zhu Xi, nature of inborn is in the state of “non-developed 未發 (Weifa).” This non-developed state can be traced back to “potentiality 未發之中 (Weifazhizhong)” in *The Doctrine of the Mean*. It is the absolute and static state of the mean, in which the human passion of happiness, anger, sadness and joy is not expressed. One may recall Nishida’s poem: “Inside my mind is a profound

deep ground that the wave of happiness and sadness do not stir.” The deep ground or mind is nothing but the transcendent mind of the absolute static non-developed state before any passion in Neo-Confucianism and Cheng Yi-chuan. When motion beings in the non-developed state, it becomes developed, and hence one can express the passions.

In other words, “Seriousness 居敬” is to suppress the mind of developed and awaken the mind of non-developed 未發. Zhu Xi tries to study the *li* inside each being, as he writes, “even a grass or an insect has *li*.” (『朱子語類』卷十五, [Zhuzi yulei, Classified Conversations of Master Zhu Xi], Vol.15) It is the idea of “seeing a thing by having a thing,” or the essence-intuition of thing before a subjective way of seeing, and to become one with the cosmic life. This way of seeing can reveal the authentic nature of the self. This is nothing but the so-called knowing or investigation of things in *The Great Learning*. This teaching of Zhu Xi discusses simultaneously seriousness and knowing as the way for the sage. It presupposes the ultimate unity of the *li* of mind and the *li* of thing.

(4) *The spirit of investigating things*
and *carrying knowledge to the utmost*
extent (格物致知 gewu zhizhi)

The spirit of investigating things and carrying knowledge to the utmost extent lies in the inquiry of *li* within a thing. Zhu Xi says;

The meaning of the expression, “The perfecting of knowledge depends on the investigation of things, “is this: If we wish to carry our knowledge to the utmost, we must investigate the principles of all things we come into contact with, for the intelligent mind of man is certainly formed to know, and there is not a single thing in which its principles do not inhere. But so long as all principles are not investigated, man’s knowledge is incomplete. On this account,

the Learning for Adults, at the outset of its lessons, instructs the learner, in regard to all things in the world, to proceed from what knowledge he has of their principles, and pursue his investigation of them, till he reaches the extreme point. After exerting himself in this way for a long time, he will suddenly find himself possessed of a wide and far-reaching penetration. Then, the qualities of all things, whether external or internal, the subtle or the coarse, will all be apprehended, and the mind, in its entire substance and its relations to things, will be perfectly intelligent. This is called the investigation of things. This is called the perfection of knowledge.⁵

One may find that it has common ground as in modern empirical science. Theoretically, we can say that Zhu Zi School has many elements of a preparatory study of natural science based on the method of modern induction.

In fact, the position of Zhu Xi's extension of knowledge and investigation of things brings fruitful outcomes to researches in Japan such as Kaibara Ekiken 貝原益軒(1630-1714)'s *Studies of Japanese Herbs* 大和本草, and Miyazaki Yasusada 宮崎安貞 (1623-1697)'s *Encyclopedia of Agriculture* 農学全書. The study of western science in Japan in 18th -19th century is based on Zhu Xi's extension of knowledge and investigation of things, as in the case middle Edo thinkers such as Yamagata Bantō 山片蟠桃 (1748-1821) and Sakuma Shōzan 佐久間象山 (1811-1864). This is an important point that Zhu Zi School contributed Japan's modernization. As is suggested by Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139-1193), "All the matters in the universe are included in Confucianism."

As is mentioned above, Nishida uses expressions in his last years such as "approaching the intrinsic nature or substance of a thing 物の真実に行く", "Thinking and acting not from the subjective self but from the viewpoint of things 何処までも物となって 考え、物となって

行う", "The self is lighted up by the objective things 自己が客観に照らされる." All these expressions are related to the essence of scientific spirit. Nishida calls his position of "to become a thing" as "radical objectivism."⁶ This can also be traced back to the position of "knowing and investigation of things," which is the maxim of Zhu Zi School. In fact, Nishida quotes Zhu Xi's infamous commentary of *The Great Learning* in "Poiesis and Praxis," collected in *Philosophical Essays* (vol. 4). He adds, "What I meant by 格物 is to follow Zhu Xi, that is *mono ni itaru* 物に格る. (It means that the man turns the thing itself. He regards all things and self as one body. To him there is nothing that is not himself. He recognizes all things as himself). The authentic objective action is from this starting point."⁷

(5) *Li-qi dualism* (理先気後 *lixian qihou*, *first li then qi*) and its criticism

The relationship between *li* and *qi* is regarded as "first *li* then *qi*." This is a criticism to the speculative nature of Zhu Xi's emphasis of the transcendence of *li* in his "*li* monism." In other words, *li* is not the transcendent being of all the phenomena; rather, it is only the acquiring of *li* 摂理 in phenomenon (理一分殊 *liy fen zhu*). It is impossible to distinguish between *li* and *qi*. This idea can be found in Lu Xiangshan's thought, as well as in Ming Dynasty (16th Century) thinkers such as Luo-Qinshun (羅欽順 1465-1547) and Wang Yang-ming (王陽明 1472-1528)'s criticism against Zhu Zi School. They do not agree the Zhu Zi's metaphysics of *li*, and propose a philosophy of *qi* that emphasizes *qi*. The orthodox teaching in Tokugawa period in Japan was Zhu Zi School, but it was against a transcendent ultimate principle. In this sense, it is closer to the philosophy of *qi*. The original thinking of Japan in "thing-ism 即物主義" can be traced back to this source.

Wang Yang-ming was not satisfied with the doctrine of extension of knowledge and

investigation of things of Zhu Zi School, he followed the path of Lu Xiangshan to criticize Zhu Xi's position of “性即理xing ji li” and proposed “心即理xin ji li.” His focus is on “conscience 良知 (liang zhi, awareness 覺),” which is the nature of human mind. His understanding of extension of knowledge and investigation of things is no longer Zhu Zi's investigation of things 格物, but realizing the conscience 致良知(zhi liang zhi). While Zhu Zi emphasizes meditation by *seiza* 靜坐 (sitting- meditation) , Wang focuses on unification of knowing and action 知行合一 (zhixing heyi) and training with things 事上磨鍊(shishang molian).

However, the position of *li*-monism of Zhu Zi School suggests the transcendent *li* is participated in all beings. It becomes the idea of “the differentiation of *li* as one principle 理一分殊” that all beings can have *li* when their own particular self is uncovered. This can be found in the popular “Kanhua Chan 看話禪” of Sung Dynasty as well as the influential notion of “*li shi wu ai* 理事無礙 (non-obstruction of the noumenal principle and the phenomenal aspects) and *shi shi wu ai* 事事無礙 (non-obstruction of the each phenomenal aspects)” in Hua Yan's teaching 華嚴教學. These are all related to the logic of “substance and function.” In other words, the logic of “immanent transcendence 內在的超越”

The concepts of substance and function can be traced back to Zhu Zi (『中庸章句』 Zhongyong zhangju , Ch. 1): “The big entity is the body of the Way; the Way can be approached only through the Way.” It can also be found in the following (『朱子語類』 Zhuzi yulei , 1:1): “For *yin yang* (陰陽), function is in *yang* while substance is *yin*. Motion and motionless have no beginning; yin and yang have no starting point.” It is suggested that nature 性 is substance 体, feeling 情 is function 用. As mentioned, the original idea of substance-function (or essence-function) was in *Awakening*

of Faith in the Mahayana 『大乘起信論』, which is widely discussed in Buddhist philosophy.

Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana is said to be written by Aśvaghōṣa in 5th or 6th century, and was translated by Paramartha. The book is usually regarded as a philosophical text of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, since the original Sanskrit text is absent. The so-called thinking of *ru lai zang* 如来藏 (tathāgata-garbha, the Buddhahood in a living being) is rendered as *zhen yu sui yuan* 真如隨緣 (following condition of the true Thusness or the ultimate reality) , and the relationship of substance (体, t'i) and function (用, yung) is analogically regarded as the causal relationship between water and wave. Substance is the basis and the self, while function is a derivative of substance and its action. It is a relationship between the original being and *its* function, substance and *its* phenomenon.

Causal relationship is regarded as the inseparability of cause and effect, for cause and effect are like two separate things such as wind and wave. However, the relationship between substance and function is characterized as the “unity of substance and function” or “substance is nothing but function, function is nothing but substance 体即用、用即体.” Unlike wind and wave, the substance and function cannot be conceived separately. Water can have appearances such as big wave or small wave, but the water itself (or moisture 濕) maintains this self identity which *transcends* the form of wave. In another way, we can say that water (substance) has the function of moistening other brings. Water is no longer water when it misses the act of moistening. The self-ness of water lies in the fact that it keeps its self identity by moistening other but not moistening itself. As long as water does not moisten water, it becomes water that moistens other beings. The substance keeps the self identity as “a unifying being” that unites all the other beings. In this way, substance has

a relationship with function called “not one not different 非一非異,” and it remains itself as a transcendent being. Hence, as water is not separable from wave, the transcendence is not an external transcendence 外在的超越, but an *immanent* transcendence. This transcendence is immanent in all phenomena, which keeps the self identity as being and self develops as function (action 働き). This is actually the systematic development of the transcendent one 超越的一なるもの. It explains why the logic of substance and function is an “immanent transcendence.”

2. *Characteristic of Nishida's Philosophy: The logic of transcendence and immanence (内在と超越の論理)*

The central question of Nishida's philosophy in all phrases is the problem of the

“ultimate reality 真実在.” In his maiden work *The Inquiry of the Good* 『善の研究』 (1911), he discussed the notion of “pure experience 純粹經驗,” which is regarded as the true reality itself or the moment of approaching the true reality. By pure experience, it is the consciousness that “The moment of seeing a color or hearing a sound, for example, is prior not only to the thought that the color or sound is the activity of an external object or that one is sensing it, but also to the judgment of what the color or sound might be.” It is the consciousness of the present without subject or object: “There is not yet a subject or an object, and knowing and its object are completely unified.”⁸ This primary consciousness is the sole reality that develops itself from the state of the implicit to that of the explicit.⁹ Pure experience, with the contents of the activity of the true reality, further differentiates from the original state without subject or object 主客未分 into thinking or reflection. It is the process of deepening the pure experience, which keeps an ever-developing *unity of one-ness*.

With the notion of pure experience, Nishida tries to account for the *unity* of the consciousness in direct experience, as well as the unity of intellect-emotion-will 知情意. It comes to a *transcendent character* in the following way: “Over time I came to realize that it is not that experience exists because there is an individual, but that an individual exists because there is experience.

I thus arrived at the idea that experience is more fundamental than individual differences, and in this way I was able to avoid solipsism.”¹⁰

The idea of the systematic development of the “unifying being” with a transcendent character has its very root in Zhu Zi School that discusses *li* as the origin of all beings in “the differentiation of *li* as one principle 理一分殊,” and the Hua Yan teaching (華嚴教学) of “*li shi wu ai* (理事無礙) and *shi shi wu ai* (事事無礙)” that was influential to Zhu Zi School as well as the popular “*Kanhua Chan* (看話禪)” in Sung Dynasty. As mentioned, the very essence of this idea is the logic of substance and function (体用, *t'i-yung*), in other words, the logic of “immanent transcendence.” The idea of “systematic development of the transcendent one principle,” which is the essence of Nishida's *philosophical* thinking, is based on the logic of substance and function or the logic of “immanent transcendence (内在的超越)” , in other words, “infinity inside the finite.” In this way, this is an idea covering Chinese Buddhist philosophy as well as Sung metaphysics.

Through his study of Western philosophy, Nishida tried to clarify the logic of substance and function or the Eastern way of thinking. We should notice that his logic of substance and function focus on the *transcendence* of the “immanent transcendence.” The transcendent character of Nishida's philosophy can be found in his philosophical position established in his early career: “the self has a self in oneself transcending the self 自己は自己を超えたものに於て自己をも

つ。” The most fundamental character of Nishida’s philosophy is the intentionality towards the “transcendent being 超越的なもの。”

As is well known, Nishida develops the position of pure experience to the position of the self-awareness 自覚, and later comes to the position of “place of the absolute nothingness 絶対無の場所.” This process of development is related to his “logical” investigation, and he elaborates the position of the dialectical universal 弁証法的な一般者 in a concrete way. Finally, the position of pure experience is directed as the idea of acting intuition 行為的直観, his final position explains life in the world of historical reality in a direct way.

Nonetheless, this process of development of Nishida’s philosophy has a consistent ground in “the determination of the self awareness of the dialectical universal 弁証法的な一般者の自覚的限定.” This can be explained as the deepening of the self awareness to the reality of the real self through the media of absolute negation 絶対否定を媒介とした実在の自在自身への 自覚の深まり.”

In other words, the world of absolute reality is seen as the radical movement of a self-awakening system that the self reflects in itself. To know the true reality, we cannot know from the outside. The infinity of the reality is the deep infinite self awakening. This is how the reality knows the reality, or the reality deepens into the infinity of the ground of the reality itself, or the self-awakening of the ultimate reality itself (実在の自在的自覚).

Following this way of thinking, Nishida realizes at the ground of the self-awakening of

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the reality, there is the act of *seeing* 見るもの. Later, his thought is to focus on this act.

This is also a deepening of the reality, which cannot be reached by mere reflection. That is to

see without the seeing subject, where the self turns the “place of absolute nothingness” . In the place of nothingness an individual thing is no longer the objective *hypokeimenon* specialized by the subjective self. Here, each individual thing is truly as it is. Such as-it-is-ness, that is, the true Thusness is based on the place of absolute nothingness. Nishida often compares it to the “mirror” , where all things are nothing but the reflected images .¹¹

However, the most fascinating and suggestive of Nishida’s uses of the metaphor have to do with an idea of a “ self-enlightening mirror (自ら照らす鏡) ” to probe the philosophical ground of self-illumination (自己返照) . As Nishida emphasizes, we should notice that the place of nothingness is merely the identity of the *self* that reflects the image of the self *in itself*; and the mirror is “a mirror that reflects the self.”¹² In other words, all individual things are images that are reflected in the mirror, but the mirror itself is not the reflected image. Nevertheless the mirror has an action of self- reflection that reflects itself infinitely. Such an original action unfolds prior to the representation of things. In Zen-Buddhism such a mirror is dubbed “ a clear mirror 明鏡” . What is in the mind of Nishida is exactly this structure of mirror that reflects the things, where the mirror itself has an action reverting the self. Nishida uses the expression “mirror that reflects itself (自己自身を照らす鏡) ” It is not a mirror that reflects other things on itself infinitely, but a mirror that reflects itself prior to reflecting all other things on itself. In other words, the mirror deepens itself into the very ground, and always reflects itself through returning to the self. As mentioned above, the mirror is becoming clear before the representation of things. In this sense, the clear mirror as such is an active development that breaks down the static, fixed self, and returns to the focus of the continuity of an infinite reflection. This focal point is the axis to develop the self.”¹³

Furthermore, this clear mirror remains clear by always reflecting itself and returning to the self. The returning to the mirror itself is nothing but the self determination of the absolute present, in which the present presents the present 現在が現在を現在化させてゆく. The *present is becoming the present* 現在から現在へ, in which the flow is not a running (流動) but a vertical movement (湧出) like a spring. Or it is compared to a whirlpool. This center is not seen, but everything springs out from the center and at the same time everything is sucked into the center. We can also say that with this reverting movement 遡及動向 towards the invisible center, the back spring 逆流的湧出 becomes possible. While there is a continuous spring of the present, there is also the action of a never-ending hidden reversion 覆蔵的帰滅. In this sense, the mirror which deepens itself into the very ground, and always reflects itself and returns to the self is, so to speak, “an eternal darkness 永遠の闇”. It follows that the mirror reflecting itself is the mirror as such. The “self identity 自己同一” in Nishida’s expression of “absolutely contradictory self identity 絶対矛盾的自己同一” is the absolute hindrance of the hiding self. The total oneness of the place, where the representation of the manyness of things as manyness of things is possible, is the hidden total oneness. “One is one 一即一” or one becomes one can only be possible when it is disappearing from the one and self hiding. The disappearing qua spring 還滅即湧出 of the oneness of one, or the “non-self self identity 即非的自己同一” is what Nishida means by “seeing without seeing subject 見るものなくして見るもの” or “reflecting the self in itself with the self becomes nothingness 自ら無にして自己の中に自己を映すもの.” It is precisely the true reality of the “place of absolute nothingness 絶対無の場所.”

The absolute hindrance, which is the absolute negation of self contradiction, of self identity is the “absolute other 絶対の他.” Without doubt,

this absolute other is the *transcendent* 超越的なもの. This becomes clear when it touches the problem of religion.

3. *Logic of absolute media* (絶対媒介の論理) in Tanabe Hajime (田辺元):
Critique of Nishida’s philosophy

On the transcendence of the notion of absolute nothingness, Tanabe Hajime radically criticizes Nishida by the position of the dialectics of absolute conversion 絶対転換. For Tanabe, Nishida’s notion of absolute nothingness returns to the absolute sphere, where the relatively limitedness of human being is neglected. The relative becomes the absolute under a continuous identity, which is a static absolute one seen by the acting medium externally. In other words, the relative is subsumed by the place or the subsuming totality. This static one is a product of metaphysical contemplation. In order to explain all entities, Nishida’s position of the logic of *soku* (即) is nothing but a genetic mysticism, which is non-dialectical and ideological. It ends with a kind of intuitionism. Now what is the position of absolute conversion held by Tanabe?

According to Tanabe, dialectical thinking is not merely the direct state of intuition that transcends logic. Rather, it is nothing but the development of negation qua affirmation 否定即肯定 of logic as a dynamic ground. Through negation the self deepens to its ground. To return to this ground is not to return the static ground of identity, but to deepen oneself to the groundless ground 無底の根源, in which static and dynamic become one 動静一如. The self is only a relative medium. If there is a ground of identity to be reached, it is not a transcendent one, but a mere relative another one. In other words, the transcendence is based on the medium of the absolute negation (絶対否定) of the relative.

For Tanabe, the absolute becomes a transcendent medium through the medium as the

presentation of the absolute. It is impossible for the absolute and the relative to become one body. These two consist in the inter-mediation(相互媒介). It does not mean making the relative as an absolute medium. The relative being preserving relative, the absolute keeps the transcendent being. The absolute is always an *ultimate* being. This outer realm of the medium should not be an intuited absolute. However, this relative unity of the absolute and relative can be a faith in religion. In religion, the faith in the transcendent and the proof of the internal become one in ethical conducts. It sets up the transcendence qua immanence.¹⁴

From Tanabe's position of absolute medium 絶対媒介の立場, Nishida's philosophy is criticized as a non-mediated intuitionism. This criticism is, however, based on Tanabe's misunderstanding. Tanabe would suggest Nishida's philosophy as a logic of the unmediated "soku 即," but this is not Nishida's standpoint. Rather, the standpoint of Nishida is the logic of "soku-hi 即非" that focuses on absolute negation. Nishida and Tanabe have different approaches to this "soku-hi" thought.

Tanabe emphasizes on the self-negating conversion of the absolute 絶対の自己否定的転換. This can be regarded as the absoluteness of the absolute in contrast to a relative medium. In contrast with Tanabe's dialectic thought, Nishida will suggest a discontinuous continuity of "soku(即)". Nishida emphasizes not the inter-mediation(相互媒介) of the absolute and the relative, but the outer-mediation, that is, the "absolute qua (soku) the absolute – qua(soku) – the relative qua(soku) the relative." In other words, the absolute keeps itself as the infinite being, and at the same time, the relative keeps itself as the finite being, and in this way these two being are combined in unity. Nishida calls such a discontinuous continuity "the absolute contradictory self identity(絶対矛盾的自己同一). We can regard such a self identity, so to speak, the transcendent absoluteness of

the absolute as the returning movement into the itself.

Nishida might have noticed Tanabe's criticism, and he proposed the idea of "inverse correspondence (逆対応)" in his late year as a response. This notion can be found in his last essay "Logic of place and religious worldview" (1945), in which the neglected theme of religion is under investigation. Here, the "absolute contradictory self identity," a dialectical ontological structure expressed in a rather abstract way, is rendered as an ontological relational structure hidden in the place between the absolute and the individual self. It is now freshly expressed as a logic. In short, this is the love of God that embraces the self facing away from God, and the compassion of the 如来 that receives the desires 煩惱 of the sinful self. This is the paradoxical situation, in which the isolation between the individual self and the absolute becomes one in a deep reality. This situation, as quoted by Nishida, can be found in Monk Daito's words: "Separated by an eternity, yet not separated even an instant; face to face the whole day, yet not face even an instant 億劫相別、而須臾不離、尽日相對、而刹那不對."¹⁵ Nishida interprets these words as "words from mortals," but I shall put it in the following way: They are seen from the perspective of the absolute. It means an internal direction for the absolute towards the relative in self negation, and an absolute irreversible self hindrance 絶対に翻らぬ自己覆蔵性, which is transcendent in nature. In the case of inverse correspondence, it is not merely the relationship between the individual existence and the absolute, but in the ground of this relationship lies the reversed self of the absolute that realizes the relationship. In the analogy of the mirror, it is the movement of the self reflecting mirror. The place reflects the place itself in a return to the self, which is a radical movement of disappearing qua spring. According to Nishida,

As the self negation of the absolute, God is inversely correspondingly to himself and in himself including the absolute self negation. Thus, it is a being determined by himself. He is an absolute being because he is also the absolute nothingness.

Being is from nothingness; he is omniscient and omnipotent.¹⁶

Here, the notion of “inverse correspondence” is merely “to oneself.” The self-spring of the absolute, in which the absolute will always be the absolute, is simultaneously, a return to the absolute self in the *reverse direction* of the spring. The “inverse correspondence” of the absolute self is creative action, in which the absolute becomes the relative in self-negating reversing. The expression “The Buddha is in all beings, all beings are Buddha” is an example of such logic of “inverse correspondence.” We should be aware of this multilayer structure of the logic of inverse correspondence.

The reversed covering of the absolute self of the absolute is an *autonomous hierarchy* 自体的順序, which is prior to the self-awakening hierarchy of the individual existence. As a result, the relationship of inverse correspondence of the absolute and the individual self has the structure of “irreversible.” What is irreversible is that the immanence transcendence is a *transcendent immanence*; the transcendence will always be transcendent.

The conflict between God and human being is an inverse correspondence. Thus, our so-called religious heart is not from ourselves, but from the calling or action of God or Buddha. It is the origin of our own selves.¹⁷

From Nishida’s words above, it shows clearly why the “inverse correspondence” is irreversible. In brief, Nishida does not have in his mind the relation of the relative as in Tanabe; rather, Nishida’s concern is on the relation of the absolute self. It is clear that in the reverse movement of

the self negation of the absolute self, the absolute becomes the absolute. In other words, he focuses on *sokuhi*-self-identity, which is the condition of the reversing of the oneself of the absolute one, is one qua one, totality qua totality, absolute qua absolute. He reckons that this *sokuhi*-self-identity is the movement of the self-hindrance of the absolute.

It is right to say even Tanabe sees the absolute negative turn of the absolute that is the movement of the absolute self to be called as the “revisit qua outflow” of the absolute. However, Tanabe keeps his direction to grasp it as the mediated correspondence of the relative. Nishida puts the relation of relatives into blankets, and sees the dynamic of the dimension of the absolute self isolated from the relative. If the absolute and the relative is a relationship of non-*soku* non-*ri* 不即不離, Tanabe’s absolute converse 絶対轉換 of the inter-media shows the aspect of non-*ri* 不離, while Nishida’s focus is on the aspect of non-*soku* 不即. The absolute contradictory self identity is not a inter-mediated “response 対応,” but a “reverse response 逆対応.” As seen in the quotation above, the reverse response is before the relation between the absolute and the individual self, but the relation to the absolute self of the absolute. Tanabe sees the relational reversing of the absolute and the relative, while Nishida sees both sides of the *irreversible* that is the reversing of the absolute self of the absolute, or the absolute hindrance of the absolute. We can say Nishida sees its ontological primacy over the reversing of the relative. For the relative (thing) to be a relative (thing), the absolute has to be absolute. The clear mirror is clear, such as that things show as they are. Nishida mentions “all being are Buddha, the Buddha is in all beings.”¹⁸ It does not mean the reversible relationship of the relative media of the beings and the Buddha, but the independent identity of the beings and the Buddha, or the absolute transcendence of the Buddha over the

beings. That is, beings can be beings only if the Buddha is a (transcendent) Buddha. We should bear in mind this expression of the *irreversible relation* 不可逆的關係.

4. “Emptiness 空” in Nishitani Keiji:
*Logic of jijimuge 事事無礙 based
 on passion 情意*

I shall also mention the case of Nishitani Keiji.¹⁹ His philosophy is based on Nishida’s philosophy, but through a subjective and existential understanding he deepens the logic of “逆対応” by associating it to kegon thought 華嚴思想 (the thought of Garland). Nishitani enlightens from his self awakening of the groundlessness of ground of existence, and from practicing Zen under the influence of Nishida. Standing on the fringe of absolute nothingness, he promotes the idea of “overcoming nihilism through nihilism.” Unlike Nishida and Tanabe, who developed their own systematic philosophies, Nishitani’s deep and insightful thinking gains support from Japan as well as in Europe. The starting point of Nishitani’s philosophy is “emptiness 空” based on Zen experience, but the logic of his philosophy is rooted in kegon philosophy. He investigates into the ground of Nishida’s logic of “逆対応,” but explains the above-mentioned non-one and non-difference 非一 非異 relation of the absolute and relative by the ideas of interpenetration 回互 and non-interpenetration 不回互, and develops kegon’s notion of “one as many, many as one,” as well as the logic of “rijimuge 理事無礙” and “jijimuge 事事無礙.” Kego school has its root in hokkaiengi 法界緣起. Before dealing with Nishitani’s philosophy, we shall briefly explain the philosophy of kegon.

The first monk who focuses on the hokkai 法界 (Dharma- realm) of kegon is the First Patriarch Tu-Shan 杜順 (557-640), but the Fourth Patriarch Cheng Guan 澄觀 (738-839) was the first one who systematized it as four hokkai (Dharma-

realm). Cheng Guan clarified the relationship between “*isshin* 一心 (one mind)” or the self clear heart, and the real existence of all things in a systematical way. The four hokkai are: 1) *jihokkai* 事法界 (the realm of phenomena), 2) *rihokkai* 理法界 (the realm of noumenal principle), 3) *rijimuge hokkai* 理事無礙法界 (the realm of the non-obstruction of noumenal principle and phenomenal aspects) and 4) *jijimuge hokkai* 事々無礙法界 (the realm of the non-obstruction of each phenomenal aspects). First, the *ji* of *jihokkai* is the actual existence of all beings. The individual things maintain their own nature and difference. The next *rihokkai* focuses on *li* 理 (Principle) the opposite of *ji* 事 (phenomena). There are notions such as *rihō* 理法 (the noumenal truth) or *ritai* 理体 (the noumenal substance), or *rishō* 理性 (the noumenal principle). However, *li* should not be misunderstood as the noumenon realm opposite to the phenomenal realm, or actual realm opposite to the ideal realm. All beings with *engi* 緣起 (pratītya-samutpāda, coming into existence by depending on other things) are determined by the *rihō* (principle) of *engi*. They do not have the ground of their being, and hence they are *mujisyō* 無自性 (non-self nature). In *rihokkai*, the *manbō* 万法 (all beings) is conceived as *mujisyō* or emptiness. Furthermore, the third “*rijimuge hokkai*” explains the *sōsokuenyū* 相即円融 (Pronounced *enyū*; ‘perfect and fused together’; said of the reality-principle established in the Tendai and Kego sects that all existences are in themselves perfect and interfused.) relationship between the phenomena of *ji* (phenomena) and the *shinnyō* 真如 (the true thusness, the ultimate reality) as *ritai* 理体としての真如 (the true ultimate reality as noumenal substance). All causal laws are in *jihokkai* if seen from the position of phenomenon, and they are in *rihokkai* if seen from the position of *mujisyō* or emptiness.

They are not two separate worlds, but two faces of one thing. When *jihokkai* and *rihokkai*

are combined together as one, the individual things and emptiness become one. In the final realm of “jijimuge hokkai,” things in the world are independent yet maintain a harmony. Things exist as individual entities, but they do not prevent the existence of the other. They co-exist by knowing their limits. This is the unique philosophy of *enyū* 円融, *yūzū* 融通, *muge* 無礙 in *kegon*. How can we understand further this deep philosophy of the relationship of the *enyū* of things?

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, there is a notion that “human beings and *dharma* are empty 人法俱空.” I (subjective self) and *dharma* (objective being) are all empty. It shows that all *dharma* are empty. In other words, the causality that things are empty is at the same time as the emptiness awoken when the subjectivity of the subject becomes self-less 無我. It brings the following question: what is the structure of moment in the presentation of *enyū*, when I and the *dharma* are empty?

The logic of *engi* (縁起) is not the same as the formal logic of identity. The formal logic of identity is the logic of the objective world. The logic of the world of *engi* is the logic that breaks down the logic of the standpoint of objectivity, or the formal logic of identity. This logic can be found in “emptiness is form; form is emptiness” or “one is many, many is one.” Why this logic is emphasized in Mahāyāna Buddhism? It is because it stands and thinks from destroying the position of subject-object dichotomy. It is a way of expression when all objective thoughts such as thing, man, self are destroyed, it comes the standpoint of a “self” cannot be objectified. Here all the beings are no longer objects 対象 or objectified thing 客体 from my perspective. Things exist as they are. We see the beings as being; we see the *shinnyo* 真如 directly. For example, Nishitani suggests the notion of the “realistic awakening of reality, that is,

realization of ultimate reality 実在の實在的自覚.” It is the standpoint of *yuishiki mukyo* 唯識無境 in *Yuishiku* School.

In case we know our own self, it is a reflective act in which the self is objectified. It is to know thing by projecting oneself to the plane of consciousness. Here, there are the knowing I and the known I. The known I in reflection is not the I as such, but a I objectified 対象化 and ideated 觀念化. The authentic I is the I at present, a subject as such who reflects and sees the objectified I.

To grasp the present I as such is not to objectify the subject and reflect on it, but to intuit the living self as such. It is to return to the state before reflection or differentiating. The differentiation of subject and object in pure experience is the “non-discriminating wisdom 無分別智” in *yuishiki* 唯識 (Weishi). As firstly explained by Vasubandhu 世親 in his work *Vimshatika* 『唯識二十論』, the *yui* 唯 of *yuishiki* means to negate any object 境. There is no such thing as objectified object. To know there is no such object is *yuishiki*.

However, even in *yuishiki* there is a knowing subject who realizes one’s self. In this sense, knowing 識 has the nature of non-knowing 非識. To put it another way, knowing has its object in presenting oneself. It becomes one with this object in nothingness. Knowing does not objectify the object; rather, knowing becomes the object and knows the object. It is to know the object as it is, in which object has the nature of non-knowing. Becoming the object, it does not mean object is the subject facing the position, but to know the object from within the object. Alternatively, the object is known without being objectified by the subject. It is a matter of self-knowing or self-awakening of the object. Here, the object is presented as it is, and it becomes the object of “*yuishiki mukyō* 唯識無境.” Meanwhile, it also becomes “*yuikyō mushiki* 唯境無識.” That is, to see the thing as it is. Even in beings such as grass, tree, insect or fish, there is a reality of the self that cannot be

objectified. The wisdom of the *yuishiki mukyō* as *yuikyō mushiki* is the “*hannyaharamitsu* 般若波羅密,” or the wisdom of Prajna.

The notion of “emptiness” means the absence of all object 対象. Meanwhile, it refers to the wisdom of the absence of object. This wisdom is the wisdom of knowing the essence of thing without objectification, which means *jissō* 実相 (true reality) or *shinnyo* 真如 (ultimate reality). Emptiness, *jissō* and *shinnyo* are synonyms. In *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* 『般若經』, there is an expression of “form is emptiness (色即是空); emptiness is form (空即是色).” According to the wisdom of Prajna, *jisso* and *shinnyo* are not objects. They are nothing but themselves. For such a wisdom, to know *jissō* and *shinnyo* is to know itself. A wisdom and *jissō* are one body. For the wisdom to know itself is, so to speak, for the *jisso* to know itself. In other words, it is the “realistic self-awakening of the reality.” In Mahāyāna Buddhism, it is the “double emptiness of human being and dharma(人法二空).” Here, to know and being known is the same. Reality as

truth is revealed as it is. Every being becomes emptiness, while the nature is revealed as it is. This is the meaning of “Emptiness is no different from form; form is no different from emptiness 色不異空,空不異色.” Precisely speaking, “emptiness” acts by encompassing the all being of “form” in absolute nothingness, while it reveals the authentic nature of the all being of “form.” Beside, this simultaneity is a feeling of self identity arising from the place where subject and object are not differentiated. Emptiness is therefore not a mere void; rather, it is a fundamental act that all beings projected to their original place. “Emptiness” is absolute nothing is a sense that all beings are absorbed by the absolute nothingness in itself, but it is an open act that has never ends infinitely. Here, the self identity of absorbing and opening should be the notion of *soku* in “Emptiness is form; form is emptiness.” Nishitani calls this position of “*kū* 空 and *soku* 即” as “free opened space 自由な開け.” He emphasizes the openness of the world of poetic image, or “the emptiness as passion 情意としての空”, which is before logical thinking.

¹ Tang, Yongtong, 『漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史上冊』 *Kan-gi-ryōshin-nanbokucyō bukkyōshi jōsatsu*, Zhonghua Publisher, 1955, p.333; Shimada Kenji 島田虔次, 「体用の歴史に寄せて(Tai-yū no rekishi ni yosete)」 『中国思想史の研究』 *Cyūgokusisōshi no kenkyū*, Kyōto University Press, 2002, p. 303.

² Shimada Kenji, 『朱子学と陽明学』 *Shushigaku to Yōmegaku*, (The Zhu Zi School and the Wang Yang-ming School), Iwanami Shinsho, 1985, p. 5.

³ Translation by James Legge : *The Original Chinese Texts of The Work of Laou-Tsze, The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean with their Japanese Translations & Notes*, 『英和双訳 老子・大学・中庸』, 二子堂書店, 1933

⁴ 『西田幾多郎全集』第1巻, *Nishida-kitarō Zensyū* (NKZ) Vol. 1: 129-130. Iwanami Syoten

⁵ Translation by James Legge, *op.cit.*

⁶ NKZ 9: 19.

⁷ NKZ 9: 230.

⁸ NKZ 1: 9.

⁹ NKZ 1: 52, 22, 48.

¹⁰ NKZ 1: 23-24.

¹¹ NKZ 3: 429.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ NKZ 10: 320.

¹⁴ Tanabe Hajime, 『正法眼蔵の哲学私観』 *Syōbō Genzō no tetsugaku-shikan*. 『田邊元全集』第五巻, *Tanabe Hajime Zenshū*, Vol. 5. 筑摩書房 Chikuma Shobō, 1963.

¹⁵ NKZ 10: 317, 325. 662.

¹⁶ NKZ 10: 316

¹⁷ NKZ 10: 325

¹⁸ NKZ 10: 316

¹⁹ Nishitani’s major works include *What is Religion* 『宗教とは何か』 and *Position of Zen* 『禪の立場』. His collected works (26 vols.) are published by Sōbunsha 創文社. *Nishitani Keiji Chosakushū*, Vol. 10, & Vol. 11, Sōbunsha, 1987. 『西谷啓治著作集』第10巻, 第11巻. In this paper, I will only introduce his philosophical thoughts instead of mentioning all his works.

²⁰ See, Nishitani's important paper, "空と即 (Kū to Soku)". *Nishitani Keiji Chosakushū*, Vol. 13, Sōbunsha, 1987. 『西谷啓治著作集』第13巻. 創文社

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Может показаться, что современное западное мышление заключается в философии наблюдения, которая характеризуется сохранением дистанции по отношению к вещам. Прямо противоположным является мировоззрение Восточной Азии, которое заключается в чистом опыте, где нет разделения на субъект и объект. Например, японский философ Нисида Китаро (西田幾多郎, 1870-1945) часто использует фразу «*mono-to natte-mi, mono-to natte-hataraku*, (物となつて見、物となつて働く)», которую можно перевести как «Смотри, становясь вещью; работай, становясь вещью». Смысл фразы заключается в том, что для того, чтобы увидеть мир чужими глазами, необходимо проникнуть внутрь такого смотрящего. То есть в отличие от западного объективного логического мышления Нисида искал в основе восточной мысли философию полного становления «вещью». Другими словами, чтобы выйти за пределы своего «я», находясь в реальном мире, который окружает это «я», необходимо переместиться в реализованную плоскость, где становится понятно, что «я» сделано из ничего. В этом смысле точка зрения Нисиды связана с так называемым "ko-wi, chih-chie" (знанием, которое постигает все вещи [格物致知]) в "Ta-hsüeh" (Великое учение [大學]). Таким образом, ссылаясь на философию Нисиды, мы можем увидеть, что невозможно рассуждать, противопоставляя друг другу собственное «я» и мир, субъект и окружение и аналогичные противоположные друг другу дуализмы. Скорее, оба понятия рассматриваются не иначе, как противоречащие друг другу, диалектические и относительные (sōsoku-teki 相即的) и определяются «топологически» (basho-teki 場所的). Это значит, что противоположно тому, как западный взгляд на мир рассматривает мир отдельно от личности, в философии Нисиды личность рассматривается с точки зрения мира, т.е. глазами вещей.

В качестве более раннего примера, демонстрирующего восточную вертикальность, Чэн Миндао (程顥 1032-1085) пропагандировал то, что он называл «небо и земля в одном теле» (天地一体の仁).

Необходимо обратить внимание на тот факт, что осмысление человечеством себя основано не на наблюдениях, а на физиологических чувствах. Прежде чем мы смотрим на объективный мир, мы вступаем с ним в контакт физиологически. Обычно мы живем с чистым и прямым опытом. Еще нет деления на субъект и объект, а знание и его объект абсолютно едины. Это самый чистый вид опыта. Чжаолунь (僧肇 374-414) в своей работе Чжаолунь 『肇論』 говорит, «Небо и Земля имеют одно происхождение. Все мы существуем и являемся частью одного целого». Так же рассуждает Чжуан-цзы (莊子) в Чжуан-цзы 『莊子』, «Небо и Земля сосуществуют в нас, все, что есть во Вселенной, связано с нами».

Ключевые слова: Нисида Китаро, чистый опыт, небо и земля в одном теле, неоконфуцианство, дух расширения знаний и исследования вещей, логика постоянной трансцендентности, трансцендентное, пробуждение веры в махаяну, зеркало, которое отражает себя, абсолютное место небытия.
