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On Descartes' Philosophy

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Translator's Introduction

Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) is recognized as the founder of the Kyoto School, a group of twentieth-century Japanese thinkers whose original contributions to philosophy mark a major moment in cross-cultural thinking between East Asia and the West. The Kyoto School thinkers creatively combined elements of the intellectual and spiritual traditions of East Asia with Western philosophy to engage and reconceptualize topics including metaphysics, epistemology, mathematics, science, culture, religion, science, etc. This legacy of far-reaching and innovative inquiries begins with the impressive work of Nishida.

Nishida published “On Descartes’ Philosophy” in 1944, roughly one year before his death. Surprisingly, this very late entry into Nishida’s corpus represents one of Nishida’s very few direct engagements with Descartes’ philosophy.¹ Nishida has productive engagements with other early modern rationalists from whom he unmistakably draws influence, most notably Spinoza, Leibniz, and Cusanus.² In fact, in another late essay “Towards a Philosophy of Religion with the Concept of Pre-established Harmony as a Guide” (1944).³ Nishida will again engage early modern thinkers in another metaphysical disquisition. Although this work represents Nishida’s longest engagement with the philosophy of religion before his final work *The*

1. Nishida’s mentions of Descartes throughout his philosophical career are surprisingly sparse. The other places where he discussed Descartes directly are in a letter, “Correspondence with Yamamoto” (NKZ 19: 6–7), and his first book *Inquiry into the Good* published in 1911 (NKZ 1). These references are compiled in YAMADA 2007.

2. See GHILARDI 2008, SAKAI 2008, and JACINTO ZAVALA 2016 for Nishida’s thoughts on Cusanus and Leibniz.

3. English translation in NISHIDA 1970.

Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview (1945), some of Nishida's ideas on religion in these later two texts are already prefaced in "On Descartes' Philosophy."⁴

On turning to the seminal summation of his philosophy of religion in his final essay, it is noteworthy that Nishida makes it his task in "On Descartes' Philosophy" to clarify the meaning of philosophy, its problem, and its method. The long rivalry between two prominent Kyoto School figures, Nishida and his student and successor Tanabe Hajime, began with Tanabe challenging Nishida's methodological ambiguities. Tanabe accused Nishida of failing to draw a distinction between philosophy and religion in his work.⁵ It is thought-provoking that just before penning the culmination of his philosophy of religion *The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview*, Nishida in his essay "On Descartes' Philosophy" takes up the task of clarifying his method of philosophy, and the true method of philosophy in general.

I will explain here some of what Nishida understands to be the meaning of philosophy and its proper method in "On Descartes' Philosophy." Nishida identifies in this essay Descartes' approach to philosophy as the quintessence of its practice. The features of Descartes' approach that earns Nishida's highest approval are the centering of the study of true reality (真実在の学) and the study of the true self (真の自己の学) as the authentic problems of philosophy that are uniquely approached by philosophy through self-negating self-awareness, the characteristics of which are partially demonstrated by Descartes' method of doubt.⁶ Descartes' method of doubt, which is the principal subject of the essay, is so singularly prized by Nishida as the model for what he considers the only true method of philosophy because it combines self-aware analysis (自覚的な分析) with study of true reality.

4. English translation in NISHIDA 1987.

5. For details on this long conflict between Nishida and Tanabe, see HEISIG 2001, 13–14 and Davis 2023, 246–74. The conflict began in Tanabe's brilliant but otherwise infamous essay "Requesting Instruction from Professor Nishida" (THZ 4: 305–28).

6. See BROUGHTON 2002, CURLEY 1978, WILSON 1978, and FRANKFURT 1970 for an analysis of Descartes' method of doubt. Particularly, Broughton's reading of Descartes' method of doubt as an artificial and strategic deployment of skeptical scenarios to establish absolute certainty of some of his beliefs by showing that their truth is a condition of using his method of doubt is problematic for Nishida's reading. However, Wilson, Frankfurt, and Curly do not interpret Descartes' doubt as beginning from a point where he is certain. This makes room for Nishida's position which maintains the genuineness of Descartes' skepticism.

Descartes' method of doubt, which he will himself refer to as the method of analysis (*analyse ou résolution*) according to Nishida proceeds by what he calls negative analysis (否定的分析). Negative analysis in Descartes' case means clearing away all possible sources of deception through the negation of subjective experience to arrive at objective knowledge. Descartes conducts his negative analysis using thought experiments such as the dream argument, the deceiving God argument, and the malicious demon argument, ultimately concluding with the undeniable existence of the cogito.

However, for Nishida, negative analysis includes more than only the negation of subjective experience, but also the negation of what he refers to as "subjective logic." John Maraldo explains that subjective logic posits "objects of consciousness [that] are made the grammatical subject of propositions or judgments and are specified by predicating properties of the subject."⁷ Along with positing the subject, subjective logic also necessitates objectification of the world as the theme of its objective cognition. Since Descartes' analysis only negates the content of subjective experience as a source of deception but not the form of subjective logic itself, his skeptical self-awareness does not fully extend the process of negative analysis to achieve what Nishida would consider negative self-awareness (否定的自覚).

Subjective logic, and further the entire legacy of what Nishida refers to as "subjectivism," furnishes a target for Nishida's entire exposition in "On Descartes' Philosophy." The reason is that in the investigation of true reality the presuppositions of subjective logic (Nishida will also refer to this as formal logic or Aristotelian logic) have been the thorniest obstructions. The problem is that this logic through the necessary bifurcation of subject and predicate (the subject can never become a predicate—basic to Aristotelian logic) obscures the true reality of the self insofar as it is conceived as the subject, the primary topic of a judgment, which nonetheless can never be grasped by the predication of the judgment itself. This basic unbridgeable difference between subject and predicate has guided the view of the subject as abstract consciousness or a detached observer which cannot be part of a world of objects described by the predication of judgment. The true self, the

7. See MARALDO 2019.

embodied self, which must be a contradictory identity of subject and object for Nishida, is inconceivable according to subjective logic.⁸

According to Nishida, the inherent contradiction of the true self—being both the subject of free will and existing within a causal reality of objects—has consistently led to philosophical errors. The source of these errors is the fidelity of Western philosophy to subjective logic. He understands the elimination of individual free will in Spinoza and Hegel, the substantializing of cognitive subjectivity in Fichte, and the mysteriousness of Kant's thing-in-itself, to be missteps of philosophy all owed to each philosopher being misled in his own way by the necessary conclusions of subjective logic which they employed as a guide.

In reply to the misgivings of the history of philosophy owed to the legacy of subjectivism, Nishida positions his original contributions to philosophy as a remedy. "On Descartes' Philosophy" is truly interesting from the standpoint of Nishida scholarship insofar as Nishida in this essay attempts to seamlessly blend several concepts from his middle and late periods of thought to define the method of philosophy.

A full survey of the rather circuitous path of conceptual connections that paint the full picture of the method of philosophy that he espouses in "On Descartes' Philosophy" is beyond the scope of this introduction. However, I will provide a cursory sketch for the benefit of the reader.

The method of negative analysis is an infinite process of self-negation that clears away the objectifications and substantializations of subjective logic in the practice of negative self-awareness culminating in the consummation of the true self or what Nishida calls *basho* or place.⁹ The continuous practice of exhausting all self-activity such as breaking through the deceptions of subjective experience and subjective logic culminates in the achievement of the true self as the place of the reflection of true reality. The true self together with its objective knowledge is the expression of true reality in the

8. See NISHIDA 1987, 73.

9. My reading of the mutually dependent relationship between self-awareness and objective knowledge is in part indebted to the popularized "pure experience–self-awareness–*basho*" structure of development attributed to Nishida's philosophy. Among others, KOSAKA 1991 and UEDA 2002 are proponents of this reading. TAKEUCHI 2022 offers an insightful analysis of the distinction between doubtful self-awareness and negative self-awareness in Nishida's interpretation of Descartes, drawing effectively on the scholars mentioned above.

practice of negative self-awareness. The negative self-aware self that continuously clears away all subjective obstructions to its true perception of reality must be that which truly expresses reality.

The perception of true reality by the true self that must be in true reality is the self-development of that reality as the historical world insofar as the full expression of reality in reality as the intuition of it must be an infinite recursion. The true self that must be within true reality is the self-determination of reality as the free will of the self-aware individual whose intuition of reality is also historical action through which itself and the world develop.

Through his discourse on the true self, it can be summarized that up to writing of “On Descartes’ Philosophy” from as early as his first book, *Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida waged a decades long struggle against the dangers of subjectivism that he understands to be stubbornly embedded in various forms throughout Western thought. Nonetheless, despite his best efforts, it is arguable that even Nishida’s idea of the true self still harbors the vestiges of the subjectivism he struggled so doggedly against. For example, is not the idea of a “true self” still yet a kind of subjective device? Further, cannot the relationship between the true self and the world that it reflects and expresses be understood as a kind of self-to-self relation, the egoism of a self-mirroring self?¹⁰

I do not believe this concern is fully lost on Nishida. From as early as the *Inquiry*, Nishida had worked to articulate the idea of true personality, individuality, creativity, and selfhood without falling into the distortions of subjectivism. For Nishida, the abolishing of subjectivism does not mean the destruction of selfhood. Self-awakening (自覚) means the realization of self-awareness that is no longer bound by the subject-object distinction. By this understanding the self reflects all things, and all things reflect the self. This understanding on Nishida’s part is shown in his turn towards Dōgen near the end of the following essay.

The self does not dissolve in the overcoming of subjectivism but rather relinquishes the form of the self-identical subject. It could be said that the form of the self rather than the form of the subject for Nishida is contradictory self-identity (矛盾の同一). The self exists, but in a way that can-

10. This critical exploration of the possible unpurged vestiges of subjectivism even in Nishida was prompted by the thoughtful suggestions of a reviewer to whom I am indebted.

not be objectively grasped. If even Nishida's philosophy is to be accused of subjectivism then this is owed to his commitment to understanding selfhood beyond the limits of conventional subjectivity.

To explain his position that the realization of the true self is at the same time self-negation, it may be instructive to note that Nishida near the end of the following essay turns to a relevant passage from chapter 18 of the *Diamond Sutra*: "all minds are no-mind, and this what is said to be a mind" (諸心皆異為非心、是名為心). We are awakened to true nature of the self by precisely what is not the self and we come to understand the true nature of things precisely by what a thing is not. When the self reflects all things as the place (*basho*) of true reality it is awakened to itself by what is outside of it. Nishida understands the unique personality of the true self to be a response to a demand (要求) in the environment or world.¹¹ The self-awakening of the unique personality of the true self in historical action as a response to a demand from the outside world demonstrates that the root of the self is outside of it such that the true self is non-self (無我).

The same is true of things. The true reality of things must include the dimension of its expression in consciousness. The historical world of things develops itself in and through consciousness. Things are precisely what they are not in and through the activity of consciousness as historical action. And consciousness is further itself imbedded in the world as historical action. Therein, to truly know things is to know the self and know the self is also to

11. In *The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview*, Nishida understands the religious demand (宗教的要求) to emerge from a confusion of as one's whereabouts (在處) and the feeling of one's own powerlessness (自己の無力感). This claim lends itself to the interpretation that the religious demand is awakened to from outside the self, beyond the powers of volition and cognition. Further in the *Inquiry*, Nishida refers to our personalities as the invocation of the unifying power of the universe (宇宙統一力の発動) that manifests in response (に応じ) to circumstances (事情) (NKZ 1: 121–2). In the same passage, he further characterizes the Good of the personality as the appearance of this great power that is also a solemn demand. It could then be said that realization of personality is response to a demand in the world. Of course, there are some technical adjudications in order concerning the equivocation of terms Nishida uses across his philosophical career. For example, we might interrogate the relationship between the term personality (人格) used in the *Inquiry* and the individual (個物) used in *The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview*. However, without exhaustively handling the issue here, I believe it suffices to say use there is a parallelism between the use of certain terms which renders the structure of the argument that I have attempted to explain roughly parallel across early and late Nishida.

know things. The self and things are empty of self-identity but rather form a contradictory identity as what Nishida calls “absolute nothingness” (絶対無).

Beyond my account given thus far, there is still further a tremendous deal of complexity to digest in Nishida’s “On Descartes Philosophy” that cannot be fully done justice merely in this introduction. However, in conclusion, I will offer one final theme of consideration. This essay makes unambiguously clear the mutually dependent relationship between self-knowledge and objective knowledge. Nishida would argue that the legacy of subjectivism has hindered the clear identification of this relationship by distorting our relationship with ourselves. In all practices of knowledge, including philosophy, meditation like that of Descartes is demanded. To truly know anything at all might also require earnest self-reflection and self-understanding. Therein no practice of knowledge is ever impersonal or anonymous.

Nishida Kitarō

On Descartes' Philosophy

Translated by Gerald Nelson, Jr.

I

[117]¹ Descartes' philosophy was discarded after the arrival of Kantian philosophy. It was regarded as dogmatic and metaphysical. Philosophy was thought necessarily to be critical and epistemological. The idea of approaching all problems in terms of examining the true nature of reality was no longer taken into consideration. These days, it is generally thought that praxis is the starting point. There is no reality apart from praxis. What is only thought is not real. But then again, true praxis can only take place within a truly real world. Otherwise, it is nothing more than fantasy. Even granted that the form of morality comes to light from the so-called standpoint of practical reason, as in the claim that ought [*Sollen*]² is said to proceed existence [*Sein*], true praxis is not something that can be simply settled formally.³ Even here, form without content is hollow.⁴ It is probably generally said that true reality is unknowable. If that were the case, we would have to think of life itself as no more than mere appearance or fantasy.⁵ Hence, there would not emerge an earnest conviction such as wagering one's life. Reality cannot be separated from the existence of the self.⁶ That being so,

1. Numbers in square brackets refer to the original pagination of the Japanese.

2. Square brackets denote Japanese words used by Nishida to translate philosophical terms. Parenthesis are used when the translation is Nishida's own. Foreign words transcribed in *katakana* are not given in italics.

3. A reference to Heinrich Rickert's theory of validity in which ought (*Sollen*) conceptually proceeds all of reality (RICKERT 1928, 373). Rickert's theory of validity is a reconstruction of the ethical formula "ought implies can," usually attributed to Kant (See KPR, A548/B576).

4. KPR, A51/B75.

5. KPR, B156.

6. Here, the term 我々の自己 has been translated simply as "the self." The word 我々 has been translated as "the" throughout unless Nishida has used it in a rare non-philosophical sense (which occurs towards the end of the Appendix). Nishida and other Japanese philosophers have intentionally used the term 我々 as a means of appropriating the definite article, which other-

the world that is thought to arise by the synthetic unity of the subject, even if we refer to it as consciousness in general, is always no more than a world thought up by the self, an object of knowledge. It is hardly necessary to say that no practical ought can emerge from such a world of objective reality. Just as in Descartes, all reality would be open to doubt.⁷ However, it is not possible to doubt one's own existence, because it is still the self who is doing the doubting.⁸ People say that the self cannot know itself.⁹ The knowing that is generally spoken of here is knowing in the sense of objective cognition [*episteme*]. [118] In this sense, it goes without saying that the self cannot know itself. Anything that is an object for the self is not the self. In that case, is the self simply unknowable? The unknowable cannot be plainly distinguished from that which is nothing. Is the self really nothing? What is it that says the self is unknowable? The self that cannot be objectively known must be that which is best known by the self. But at the same time, when we think the self knows itself what do we mean by this? First, knowing must be problematized. And further, objective knowledge as well. Someone who begins from the standpoint of objective cognition thinks of even their very self objectively and applies to it the forms of space and time. As a psychological self, the self can also be conceived in this way. However, this self is the self that is thought not the self that is thinking. It is a self that can be the self of anyone. It is not a form of the self-existence of the self-aware self [自覚的自己].¹⁰ Knowing is a fact, but knowing cannot be thought of simply as a fact of time and space. The knower along with being within the world of space-time must also exceed it. How is it possible to be in the world of space-time but also exceed it? This must be considered in terms of expressive relationships. The self expresses the world, but it is also one standpoint of the world's self-expression. By such a form of contradictory self-identity,

wise does not exist in Japanese. It must also be noted that Nishida is likely playing on the sense in which 我々の自己 (“our self”) allows him to give the idea of “the self” an embodied and historical, or “concrete universal,” sense rather than an abstract universal sense.

7. OD 7: 24–5; 8: 6–7; 6: 32.

8. OD 7: 32.

9. This is likely a reference to Kant's claim that consciousness of the self is not knowledge of the self (KPR, B158).

10. 自覚的 has been translated here as “self-aware.” There is an important difference between 自覚 (embodied awareness) and 意識 (psychological or objectifying consciousness) for Nishida.

self-aware existence can be thought. The self-aware existence of the self can at the same time be thought of as the basis of this form of contradictory self-identity. Along with being within the world, it always exceeds the world. By this immanent-transcendence, transcendent-immanence, the unrepeatable and unique historical self can be thought.¹¹ The self-aware self must have a personal history. The form of space-time can also be logically conceived as the form of the self-formation of the world that expresses itself. Such a world exists temporally as many self-contradictory individuals and exists spatially as one self-contradictory group. An expressor that is given expression is what is called knowledge, and in self-awareness, knower and known [119] are one. Thus, existence is knowledge, and knowledge is existence. Consequently, in self-awareness, existence is essence, and essence is existence (*essentia = existentia*). From such a standpoint of reality, an infinite ought emerges. The more solely individual the self becomes, the more we contradict the unconditional ought as we limit ourselves. Or, detached from our self-awareness, the mere consciousness of things and the mere existence of things may even be questioned. But the more even these foundations are considered, the more we must recall the self-awareness of Descartes.

The problem of philosophy does not begin with how pure mathematics and pure physics are possible, nor does it begin with the existence of knowledge and therein asking how such knowledge is possible.¹² Even science comes to be developed in the historical world. When the epistemologist speaks of knowing, he has already determined this knowing in the sense of objective cognition and the knower has already been purged. But knowing without a knower is unthinkable. This is a serious contradiction—a problem. Moreover, once we stand from the position of objective knowledge, that which is called a “knower” does not enter our field of vision. The world of reality

11. I have rendered 即 with a hyphen throughout instead of a *sive* as in other translations to capture the sense that both terms on both sides of the hyphen ought to be taken as immediately identical although apparently contradictory.

12. This is a criticism of Kant's starting point in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the form of the question of how synthetic a priori judgments are possible. Kant assumes that such knowledge must be possible given the indubitable nature of mathematics and physics. However, Nishida here criticizes Kant's uncritical acceptance of math and physics as a starting point for philosophy. See for example, Kant's claim that math provides a “splendid example” of *a priori* cognition (KPR, B8).

is just something that conforms to the so-called form of knowledge. There are only things that are known, there is no knower. In accordance with the ancient tradition, I consider philosophy to be the study of reality. This is the study of ὄντος ὄν, ontology.¹³ That is the essence of philosophy. From this standpoint, philosophy considers various problems. Epistemology discusses knowledge. Moral philosophy discusses morality. Critical philosophy is deep reflection regarding knowledge. That is philosophy. It is the serious confrontation between knowledge and reality. However, the problem of true reality was abandoned as the problem of the unknowable thing-in-itself [*Ding an sich*]. Up to that point, the problem may have been aborted, but it must be said that there are still many questions left open. Philosophy has become subjective. Of course, I am not saying that it is psychologistic, but even the discussion of the objectivity of knowledge [120] stands on the “ought” of the cognitive subject. Discussing true reality has been set aside as metaphysics.

So then, what is true reality? First of all, it must be what it is in itself, that is, what needs nothing else for its existence (Cartesian substance).¹⁴ However, that which is truly for itself includes that which is other and therein necessarily includes a self-contradiction. As an individual, it must include an infinite many, that is, it must be self-acting. If so, it cannot be said to exist for itself. Something that is for itself, that is, something which is self-acting, must be something that contains within itself an absolute self-contraction. If so, then it cannot truly be something that acts by itself. In whatever sense, to the extent that what is foundational is considered, it is not self-acting. That which in all aspects includes a self-contradiction in itself and acts by the mediation of self-negation must act by self-objectification.¹⁵ Self-negation must depend on the other. That which includes its total self-negation within itself and acts by self-negation as an intermediary must act by self-objectification. The expressor is what is expressed and self-expressively acts, that is, that which knowingly acts genuinely contains within itself infinite negation; that which moves by itself can be said to act by itself. I believe that from this standpoint the philosophical method we seek, which considers

13. Plato, *Timaueus*, 52d-e.

14. OD 8: 24.

15. HEGEL 1977, 11.

what true reality is, naturally appears. This method is *meditari* (reflection)¹⁶ which is the same method used in Descartes' *Meditations*—self-awareness by means of doubt.¹⁷ This method must thoroughly be a negative analysis. In the second reply to the *Meditations*, there are two proof methods (*démontrer*).¹⁸ The first one is analysis (*analyse ou résolution*), the other is synthesis (*synthèse ou composition*). Analysis is a method of procedurally discovering things and seeing how a consequence is due to its cause. If the reader follows this method closely and pays attention to all that is contained in it, it is a way of proving and understanding things perfectly as if you had discovered them yourself. [121] On the contrary, synthesis is the so-called “geometrical method” that proves a conclusion by the process of definitions, axioms, maxims, and so on. Therein, it is said that he used an entirely analytical method in his *Meditations*. The reason is that in geometry the fundamental concepts coincide with sensible intuition and are accepted by everyone. However, in metaphysics, grasping the first fundamental concepts with clarity and distinction constitutes a serious problem from the beginning. But from the proper standpoint, metaphysical problems are far clearer than those of geometry. However, these problems can only be understood by those who detach their minds from the senses as much as possible and with extreme care examine what appears not to coincide with those prejudices received from the senses and that we have further become accustomed to from childhood. If this alone were simply asserted, those who love controversy would easily refute it. Descartes is mostly concerned with explaining this to normal people. However, as thoroughly doubtful self-awareness and exhaustively negative analysis are particular to philosophy, philosophical study must be carried out by philosophy itself. I consider negative self-awareness and self-aware analysis to be the methods of philosophy. The true reality which is for itself, and which does not need anything else for its existence, must understand itself—it must be self-aware. Even if it is understood by itself as in Spinoza, it is already divided between the universal (*ri*) and the particular (*ji*) and further opposed between essence and existence.¹⁹ That

16. OD 7: 9.

17. NODA 1981..

18. OD 7: 155–7.

19. The doctrine of *ri* (理 Ch. *li*) and *ji* (事 Ch. *shi*) is a central teaching of Huayan Bud-

which is understood simply by itself is an attribute, not a substance. God as a substratum of infinite attributes must be the subject of composable worlds and the subject of the world of particular things. That which is truly by itself and understood by itself must be the pure reality of things determining things themselves. Pure action is already dualistic. There is a dependence on absolute negative self-consciousness in such reality being made disclosed; or rather, the disclosure of such reality necessarily depends on it. Here philosophy flows into religion. It is said that under the Great Doubt (大疑) is the Great Awakening (大悟).²⁰ It is in this position that philosophy can grasp the fundamental principles of knowledge. Therefore, the most fundamental truth of philosophy must be a sort of contradictory self-identity.

[122] Knowledge is not established simply from the standpoint of formal logic. Knowledge must include some sort of intuition. Otherwise, it is not objective knowledge. What I call intuition is a process in which the end is included in the beginning. Consequently, each and every process contains both the beginning and the end. Perhaps such could be said for intentional action as well. However, within intuition, each and every point is both beginning and end. It is a creative process and therefore self-aware. It is not that this process is time-mediated, but rather the process of time itself comes from here. Therefore, intuition is an infinite process. This is what I call the reality that by itself reflects itself within itself in an infinite process. Intuition does not mean simply that process is negated and that the ultimate truth is seen at once. This is extremely childish, mystical thinking. It cannot even be said to be like artistic intuition either. It is an infinite process. Even physics is based on the infinite process of the active intuition of the sense organs of historical bodies. In the intuitive process, each and every point

dhism. *Ri* can be read as “principle,” and *ji* as “phenomenon.” The earliest explanation of this doctrine is perhaps Dushun’s 杜順 (557–640) *Gate to the Discernments of the Dharmadhātu in the Avatamsakasūtra* (華嚴法界觀門). However, this work only survives via later commentary. This doctrine is also discussed in Fazang’s 法藏 (643–712) *Treatise on the Golden Lion* (華嚴金獅子章) and the *Treatise on the Five Teachings* (華嚴一乘教義分齊章). See FAZANG 1970 and 2016.

20. In some traditions of Zen/Chan Buddhism the experience of the Great Doubt is treated as necessary for the realization of enlightenment, i.e., the Great Awakening. This view is expressed succinctly in a quote from Boshan 博山 (1575–1630) that he attributes to ancient wisdom: “As the old worthies said: ‘Great Doubt, Great Awakening; small doubt, small awakening; no doubt, no awakening (古德云。大疑大悟。小疑小悟。不疑不悟。)’” (BOSHAN 2023). English translations of this text can be found in BOSHAN 1959 and 2011.

is a beginning and an end, and infinite doubt emerges from this creative place. Nothing arises from a simple negation.²¹ From the position of mere formal logic, any problem can certainly be dealt with. However, this is not a scholarly question. Problems arise where the self becomes a process of the self-expression of true reality. The answer can be thought to lie at the place of questioning. Our consciousness does not develop from the simple world of things nor the simple world of the self. To use a conventional idiom, it emerges from the mutual determination of the subjective and the objective.²² The self can only constitute a point of view of the self-expression of true reality as a process of the self-expression of what is self-determining by itself. Consequently, the more the self is truly real, as the self-determination of true reality (i.e., the more individual it is), the more it seeks truth. True praxis emerges from here as well. Truth is neither relative as a relativist may say, nor determined in a single instant as an intuitionist may. Problems include infinite solutions and solutions include infinite problems. [123] Previously, I have said that the historical world possesses its self-identity in a problem; this statement should also be understood from this basis. On account of the aforementioned, all searches for truth can be said to be negative analysis and doubtful self-awareness. Science is neither a simple judgmental negation nor an analysis. Scientific negation must be the negation of our conventional prejudice and personal dogmas from the standpoint of active intuition. Analysis must be analysis in Descartes' sense. There is no difference between the negation of negation, the analysis of analysis, and the doubting of doubt. Therefore, in forming the standpoint of scientific knowledge the standpoint of active intuition must come first. Philosophy in the preceding sense, as the process of the self-expression of fundamental reality that is by itself and determines itself by itself, must be in all respects negative self-awareness and self-conscious analysis. Therefore, philosophy as the study of the foundation of reality and the reality of reality must be the standpoint of seeing without a seer and the standpoint of the world projecting (映る) itself. Philosophy must not be based on in any way on what is objectified, or rather on a substratum (基体). It must not be what is sought by inference. What requires self-demonstration from another is not what is by itself. Even to say that the

21. A reference to Hegel's criticism of simple negations. See HEGEL 1977, Preface, §18.

22. A reference to HEGEL 1977, Preface, §60.

subject cannot become the predicate is not “self-evident” (自証).²³ The object of philosophy must be the self-evidencing of the self itself—the object that is not an object. What Kant rejected as metaphysics is metaphysics which by inference seeks reality outside of itself. In this way, philosophy degenerates into science. As long as it is detached from active intuition, mere reason cannot be objective. Philosophy does not go beyond daydreaming. Philosophy as the study of the non-objective object must be the study of self-evidencing. That is philosophy’s *raison d’être*—it’s different from science. Science is established when the self-expressive world has expressed itself in active intuition. The world of science is the world where form determines itself. Its foundation must be seeing without a seer and the world that reflects (映る) itself. This is why philosophy must be the foundation of science. Consequently, the method of science is active intuition. [12.4] The method of philosophy is self-awareness. Therefore, both together constitute an infinite process. As previously mentioned, what I call active intuition is an infinite process. Doubtful self-awareness is also an infinite process. As Alain says, doubtful self-awareness must be repeated continuously.²⁴ The standpoint of philosophy as the standpoint of seeing without a seer, as the standpoint of the knowing without a knower, is therein the grasping of the self-aware principle of self-determination. This must in all respects be deeply conceptually grasped as the principle of reality that determines itself by itself. Up to the point that they are substantiated, these are just dead concepts. I believe that from time immemorable philosophy departed from this standpoint and further develops today from such a standpoint. Even Socrates’ philosophy in ancient Greece began from the standpoint of doubtful self-awareness, and in the Idea (*eidōs*) Plato grasped the principle of self-determining reality. However, in the Greek world of the *polis*, there was still not yet truly individual self-awareness. It was not a world of acting things. The reality of the world of *logos* was a world of seen things. Augustine’s philosophy of self-awareness can be thought of as grasping Christian reality, that is historical

23. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (5.8.4).

24. Nishida is referring to the pseudonym of the French philosopher Émile-Auguste Chartier. However, this idea attributed to Alain should be seen rather as Nishida’s own interpretation of Descartes. There is no passage in Alain that corresponds exactly to this. Of course, in his studies on Descartes, Alain uses the term “renewed doubt” (*le doute renouvelé*), but the usage is slightly different (See ALAIN 1939, 117–21).

reality. However, medieval philosophy was religious philosophy. It did not problematize reality itself. This conception of reality did not depart from the Greek way of thinking. It can be said that the reality of medieval philosophy was Christian and Greek. As the medieval world reached its end, the world entered the modern scientific era. The world of self-expressive historical reality returned to itself and sought a new starting point for philosophy. It can also be said that in the medieval era, the personal, self-aware world of historical reality further sought a self-awareness of nature. The self, in this quest, returning to its deep roots, required a new understanding of reality. This was the subject of Descartes' philosophy. However, in Descartes' philosophy, even from Descartes to Leibniz, medieval philosophy was still in the background. The relationship between God and the self was completely illogical. I believe with the arrival of Kant's philosophy we entered the pure philosophy of science. Kant's philosophy was the philosophy of the self-awareness of the scientific self. [125] However, the world of pure science is not the world of the true reality of the self that is for itself and determines itself; it is not truly the world of concrete reality. As I said at the beginning, Kant did nothing but truncate the problem. Even if he speaks of praxis, from here only formal norms can be considered. Kant's practical philosophy is affixed to the foundation of civil morality of modern society. I am not disregarding Kant's moral norms, but the historical world of today is seeking a new starting point for philosophy and new practical principles. We must now once again attempt to think back to Descartes' starting point.

II

The problem of philosophy is that of true reality which is by itself and determines itself. The philosophical method must be thoroughly doubtful self-awareness. Or more precisely, absolute negative self-awareness and self-aware analysis. A praxis that we can truly commit our lives to starts here as well. It is in this sense that I assent to Descartes' problem and method. To enter philosophy, I suggest careful reading of his *Meditations*. However, I think Descartes was ultimately unable to thoroughly pursue this purpose and method. He was unable to escape Aristotelian reason. He resolutely sought reality in something subjective, in substance. Hence, he fell into so-

called “dogmatic” metaphysics. Such were the grounds as to why Kant had to reject him.

That which is truly by itself and determines itself, must not only make itself understandable but must understand itself and be self-aware. Otherwise, it is something opposing the self and is nothing more than an object. I believe that when Descartes affirmed *cogito ergo sum* and spoke of an external substance he had already left the path of negative self-awareness and the method of self-aware analysis. Of course, even we take [126] *sum cogitans* as one proposition as Spinoza says, the problem must be in this *sum*.²⁵ If we think of the self as a substance in Descartes’ sense, then the clear and distinct truth that is regarded as an inner reality is inescapably subjective. Descartes is clearly aware of this. Even the likes of mathematical truths were thought to be perhaps the work of the devil. He ultimately sought the objectivity of truth in the sincerity of God.²⁶ Descartes’ thinking here and Leibniz’s *harmonie préétablie* are timely to their era but are not suitable to sharp minds. When we consider the self as an independent substance as Descartes did, this necessarily contradicts the existence of God. In the “Third Meditation,” Descartes discusses the existence of God. The existence of God is proven based on his effects. One proof begins from considering the cause of God’s idea within the self, the other begins from seeking the cause of our existence. Nothing is born from nothing. Moreover, the cause of the infinite idea of God cannot be sought within the finite self. Further, the cause of the duration of the self towards the next moment cannot be sought within the self. This must be the work of something creative. We are told that this cause must be recognized as the existence of God. However, in this manner of thinking, the self is not its own reality. The reality of the self must be that of God. Along with this, we lose our independence, and our self-awareness is erased. Thus, we cannot escape God as being a mysterious cause within the self. That is to say, in Descartes’ philosophy, a cause is that which is by itself and determined by itself like Spinoza’s *causa sui*. It must have the basic significance of essence that is directly existence and existence that is

25. In the prolegomenon to the *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, Spinoza identifies the statement *cogito ergo sum* as equivalent to *ego sum cogitans* (I am a thinking being) as an ontological clarification of *sum*.

26. OD 7: 44–5.

directly essence. Before this can be considered, the relationship between essence and existence must be clarified. In the "Fifth Meditation," Descartes again touches on the problem of the existence of God. There, his concerns are epistemological. What is clear and distinct is true. The existence of God is at least as certain to oneself as mathematical truth. Therefore, just as the fact that the sum of the three angles of a triangle is two right angles cannot be removed from the essence of a triangle, [127] in the same way, the existence of God cannot be removed from God's essence. Thinking of supreme perfection without existence is as self-contradictory as thinking of mountains without valleys. Hence, the perfect God does not deceive. From here, the objectivity of the clear and distinct knowledge within us is established. The ontological proof of the existence of God, according to which the idea of God as a supremely perfect Being that contains existence, must not be rejected with hasty arguments such as that according to which the idea of a hundred yen is not the real currency of a hundred-yen gold coin. Within the form of Kant's philosophy, God does not exist. When thinking exhaustively about the logical foundation of reality, I think there is also reason to the claim that "that which is most perfect exists" (Leibniz, *quod ens perfectissimum existit*). However, there is no logic in founding the objectivity of knowledge on the basis of God's sincerity. It indicates the collapse of subjective reasoning. What is clear and distinct must be understood in itself. Perfect knowledge must be of that which truly exists. God is that which expresses itself. As long as our ideas take God as their cause, they are perfect, clear, and distinct. In short, Descartes' philosophy that emerges from *cogito ergo sum* could only lead to that of Spinoza, who will go as far as to say "Everything must exist within God, without God not even nothingness can be understood."²⁷ Spinoza's philosophy can be said to have emerged from Descartes' substance and reached the extremity of subjective logic. Arriving at this point, the self completely loses independence and becomes a modality of substance. We become a modality of God as the *cogito*. Only when our concepts are in God do we know. We are bearers of knowledge only to the extent that our ideas are in God. Thus, together with the denial of our self-awareness, God concedes the property of our self-awareness. God who

27. *Ethics*, Part 1, prop. 15.

ought to be that which is the most concrete becomes a highly abstract *caput mortuum*.²⁸

Descartes doubted everything. He attempted to consider whether Heaven, Earth, spirits, bodies, and even the self existed. [128] Of course, it is the I who thinks this. However, could it not be that a great deceiver is always misleading me? Could it be that there is not even something like a true God? Nevertheless, even if I doubt this, the I who is deceived exists. No matter how much the deceiver deceives me, as long as I can think, I have reached the proposition of *cogito ergo sum*. Thus, Descartes' philosophy started from here. I maintain that it is precisely here that Descartes' philosophy lacks thoroughness. Even if God deceives the self, the deceived self exists. Even if I doubt my existence, it is I who doubts. The reality of doubting itself proves the existence of the self. The principles of reality that can be grasped from this proof of reality are not in the form of subjective reality. They must be of the same form of negative self-awareness. The self of *sum cogitans* is grasped as a self-contradictory existence. The self exists where it completely negates itself. Moreover, it is not simple negation, it must be both absolute negation and affirmation (否定即肯定). It must be a reality that is thought by subjective reasoning that doubts itself. Descartes doubted everything from the standpoint of self-awareness. However, he did not arrive at the standpoint of true negative self-awareness in the sense made clear above. When we speak of the fact of evidence, we immediately think it inwardly. Thus, proceeding from there is thought of as proceeding from within. Therefore, proceeding from the truth that cannot be doubted is not to proceed from what is outside of us. However, I think that here as well the dogmatism of subjective logic is premised. The fact of evidence, which even in doubting cannot be doubted, is equivalent to the fact of the contradictory self-identity between the self and things, the inside and the outside. It cannot be that there is first the self and this fact results from an inference since our self is established from this fact. It is a result of reasoning to think such a fact. The self is formed from such a fact. Instead of the fact of evidence from within the self, reality should be revised as the fact of our self-formation. Thinking is already this reality. Even doubt emerges from this same contradictory self-identity. Of course, I am not saying that knowledge is from the outside

28. "Dead head," i.e., worthless remains.

as the empiricists do. However, neither am I simply [129] saying that knowledge comes from the inside. The reason why we think of reasoning as subjective thinking is because we think of the self as a subject and take thought as its action. However, logic does not belong to the self; rather it is from logic that one comes to the self. The self can be thought of as self-determination in the individual sense of the logic of contradictory self-identity. Otherwise, even speaking of logic would be nothing more than a combination of ideas, as British psychologists once claimed.

The dogma of this subjective reality furnished a target for Kant's critical philosophy. Thinking existence inferentially, leaving aside intuition, means falling into the fallacy of transcendental dialectics, which presents the self-contradictions of subjective logic. Therein, the meaning of reality itself was taken as suspicious. What is constructed by the so-called synthetic unity of the cognitive subject is objective reality. The self sees itself in its own negation. The foundation of reality was sought in the self-awareness of the transcendental ego. In this sense, I think that the method of Kantian philosophy is also negative self-awareness. I think that critical philosophy was negative self-awareness in response to science. However, did Kant's philosophy truly devote itself to negative self-awareness? Kant negated transcendent reality in the subjective orientation, but it can be thought that he pursued the ground of reality rather in the predicate direction. Unlike Descartes, Kant's self-aware self is not a substance in itself; but rather my thinking that accompanies all of my representations.²⁹ My judgmental cognition is constituted by this synthetic unity. The subject that cannot become the predicate on the contrary envelopes the subject in the manner of predication and becomes the predicating subject that forms every judgment as self-determination. Of course, many Kantians would likely have various objections. I will not enter these disputes. At any rate, like in the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic, the opposition of subject and object is like the stirring of the self from the outside and it is rooted in their mutual determination, [but] subjective logic is not here purged. This is where the problem of the thing-in-itself emerges as well. Even if we exchange the opposition of subject and object with the opposition of form and content or matter [*hylē*], [130] it remains the same. As is well known, Fichte proceeded towards the substantiation of

29. KPR, B132–6.

the cognitive subject to eliminate such thorough contradictions. The predicating subject became a metaphysical substance that determined the self. This is Fichte's transcendental ego. I think a new concept of reality emerged in Fichte. In Descartes' philosophy, the substance by itself was thought of by transcendence in the subjective direction. However, in Fichte, it was thought of by transcendence in the predicative direction. The orientation of radicalization from Kant to Fichte is similar to that of Descartes to Spinoza. Nevertheless, it is best to say that the direction is exactly the opposite. From the standpoint of self-awareness as contradictory self-identity, it can be said that from Descartes to Spinoza we go outward, while from Kant to Fichte we go inward. Despite being equally metaphysical, the philosophy of Fichte and that of Descartes move in mutually conflicting directions. Returning to the contradictory self-identical standpoint of the self-awareness of the self of actuality,³⁰ namely, the self-awareness of the self of reality, that is the standpoint of absolute negative self-awareness, Descartes' philosophy along with Fichte's philosophy must be criticized. However, Kant's critical philosophy itself must be criticized as well. The standpoint of Kant's critical philosophy, on this foundation, cannot escape the dogmatism of the subjectivist self. I once again urgently assert the grounds for returning to and reconsidering the standpoint of Descartes' negative self-awareness and standpoint of self-aware analysis. Today, like in the time of Descartes, the intellectual tradition so far must be considered and criticized from its foundation. We must once again return and consider Descartes' problem. The problem is not like that of Kant as to how objective knowledge is possible. The problem must be what true reality is that is by itself and determines itself. Science is a product of the historical world. In Kant's era, the world was contemplated beginning from science. Today, science must be contemplated beginning from the world.

Contemplating such oppositions as inner and outer, subjective and objective, immanent and transcendent, while starting from the outer to contemplate the inner is dogmatic, [131] but this dogmatism cannot be eluded by contemplating the outer from the inner. To say that an ought precedes existence is to say that an ought cannot emerge from existence. If this is the case, then what is the thinking thing that is you? Is there no thinking thing? If there's no thinking thing, then there is no "ought." Even if such reasoning

30. 現実.

errs, there must be a self that errs. If it is said that something is not there, there must be a self that says so. Descartes with the *cogito ergo sum* started from the self. But before that, he even doubted his own existence. Thus, he grasped the contradictory self-identical truth of the subjective substance whose thinking is what is thought. In response to this, I think a new logic and new concept of reality had to emerge. However, he did not depart from the Aristotelian conception of logic and reality. The logic that thinks our reality must be the logic of the Universal which contains the self as an extension of it (what I call the logic of place or *basho*). The logic of Kant's objective epistemology denied this reality from the beginning. It goes without saying that the thinking self cannot think of itself objectively. Therefore, it is natural that Aristotelian logic does not envelop the self, as the subject does not become the predicate, but the *hupokeimenon* can be said to have a broader meaning than the Kantian epistemological object.³¹ When I think, that "I" more or less has a subjective meaning. Of course, when I say "more or less," I mean that the "I" is broadly undefined. For this reason, once I went beyond Kant's philosophy and sought a new standpoint of logic, I returned to the standpoint of Aristotle's *hupokeimenon*. Logic, as it is generally thought, is not the subjective form of the self. The standpoint of logic must transcend the opposition of subject and object and allow us to consider both the opposition of subject and object and their interrelationship. Even the self that thinks the self is thinking according to logical form. When we deny the dogmatism of Kant's philosophy and try to depart from a new standpoint of self-awareness, that standpoint must be fully within logic. Therefore, there must be a deep self-introspection of logic. However, for people who casually depart from the standpoint of traditional logic, [132]it everything outside of traditional logic is mysterious. After Kant, the person who negated the standpoint of the subjective self and stood in the standpoint of pure logic was Hegel. While Fichte began from the standpoint of "the self is the self" (*ich-ich*),³² Hegel departed from the standpoint of Being.³³ Hegel's philosophy was a philosophy of logical reality which exists by itself and is understood by itself. Here, I think there is a bond with Descartes. Moreover,

31. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1044b9.

32. FICHTE 1845, I: 94.

33. *Enzyklopädie* I. §86.

unlike Descartes, Hegel grasped a new reality and a new principle of logic. This is Hegelian dialectics. It can be said that Hegel for the first time grasped a philosophical principle which is by itself and determines itself. When the self stands fully on the standpoint of negative self-awareness, this standpoint must be consistent with the principle of absolutely contradictory self-identity as immanent-transcendence and transcendent-immanence. There is no self-awareness either in the thinking of the self from without, nor in thinking of it from within. Self-awareness must be grounded by self-awareness. When a person declares self-awareness from within themselves, they have already stepped outside the self. It can be said that the subjectivism of the pure ego that takes Kant as its starting point was more or less superseded by Hegel. The pure ego as the cognitive subject became the dialectical ego as the fact-act (*Tathandlung*) in Fichte. The fact-act as Fichte's practical ego, I think opened a new world of reality. In Schelling, starting from that standpoint, the world was thought of in a Spinozian sense, as *Indifferenz* or *Identität*; but further with the arrival of Hegel, that shell of subjectivism was avoided, coming to be conceived as a logical-dialectical reality. It became the world of the self-development of objective reason. However, although it may be presumptuous, I think that with this conception of the world not even Hegel had reached the position of absolutely negative self-awareness. He did not discard the subjective guise entirely. Hegel's universal does not contain the true individual. It does not contain the volitional self nor the practical self. Hegel's reason was opposed to individual volitional self. [133] That is how subjective (主観的) it is. It is not the principle of reality truly grasped from the standpoint of the self-awareness of the volitional self. It could be thought of as the principle of the intellectually self-aware self. However, it is not the principle of our true practical self nor the self of historical action. The world of reality in Hegel is not the world from which it arises and could not derive the principle of true reality as the life and death of the self. When speaking of the volitional self, he considers the abstract will of the simple conscious self. However, this is not the true practical self. In practice, each act must constitute a historical creation. The self in every practical decision is on the standpoint of life and death. The self exists in crisis. Our practical judgments do not emerge from within the self of abstract cognition. Thinking in this way is the fruit of the dogmas of subjective logic. I have already discussed this extensively.

The true self exists as the historical-practical self. There is no such thing as praxis outside of historical action. Even our own thinking is historical action. Our self-awareness is a place that is created and creates. Therefore, the self is historical and physical. If not, it is no more than a self that is thought. Attachment to such a self is an illusion. Absolute affirmation-negation cannot be said to come from the standpoint of the self of judgment. It must be the standpoint of the historical self which is created and creates in the standpoint of the concrete self which lives and dies. Dōgen says that “studying oneself is forgetting oneself. In forgetting oneself, oneself is confirmed by all things.”³⁴ This is the place where we negate the abstract conscious self and the place where the body and mind become one. Now we must attempt to rethink the traditional philosophy from the standpoint of such a true practical self and the self-awareness of the mind-body united self. That is why I again claim Descartes’ standpoint. However, the logic of such a standpoint must differ from Hegel’s dialectic, not to mention that it is not Cartesian subjective logic. Hegel’s logic, although dialectical, does not escape Aristotle’s subject. It is the logic of objective spirit, not the logic of historical formative power in the world of historical praxis. [134] This would be the opposite standpoint to Hegel’s conceptual dialectic. We must return to the foundation of the genesis of logical consciousness in the world of historical practice. In the self-formation of the historical world, form and matter are everywhere opposed as contradictory self-identity, and at the same, from form to matter, from matter to form, form is limited by form itself. From there, there is a reality that is immediately an ought and an ought that is immediately real.

The relationship between God and the self in Descartes’ proof of the existence of God in the “Third Meditation” could be understood immediately on the basis of the logic of contradictory self-identity, according to which the self is the individual expression of the whole that becomes the self-expression of the whole. The world is formed from things limiting themselves in the contradictory self-identity of the universal One and the individual Many. The world is formed from the self-determination of the event by the event itself. From the logic of contradictory self-identity, the

34. 「自己をならふといふは、自己をわするるなり。自己をわするるといふは、万法に証せらるるなり。」(DŌGEN 1991, “*Genjo kōan*”).

beginning of the self is the beginning of the world, and the beginning of the world is the beginning of the self. The opposition and mutual relation of both can only be thought of as both moments of the historical world that forms itself. Both ends of the finite and infinite contradictory self-identity is the self and God. However, as the instantaneous self-limitation of the Absolute Present, my self exists in the next instant by God. What I call the Absolute Present is nothing more than the absolutely contradictory form of self-identity between the Many and the One. Further, in the “Fifth Meditation,” it is said that the concept of God must include self-existence and God does not deceive, but on the contrary grounds the objectivity of our consciousness, the clear and distinct intuitive consciousness within us is the consciousness of the self that in self-negation is confirmed by things.³⁵ Therein, as the self-expression of the world, the self is an act-intuitive seeing. The thought that a transcendent God is necessary is a consequence of our imprisonment in subjective logic.

This way of philosophizing is nothing more than explaining one thing that is not understood with another thing that is even less understood. An absolutely perfect being must be the true reality which is by itself and determines itself. That is, the thing that expresses is the thing that is expressed and is that which expresses itself. [135] In such a form of existence, a being confirms itself, and a thing that confirms itself must be a thing that exists. In this sense, as in Spinoza, God is by himself and is understood by himself; all things are in God; and without God, there could be neither nothing nor something, nor could this even be understood. One winter night, sitting at the fireside, Descartes began to think. He began to think in historical reality, as a historical and real self. He doubted. He even came to doubt his own existence. He began to think as the historically real self in historical reality. He doubted. He even doubted his own existence. However, the blade of his doubt was not pointed towards reason itself. He did not reach true self-negating self-awareness consciousness. His self was a bodiless, abstract self.

“Everything is in God, without God even nothingness cannot be comprehended.”³⁶ God who exists by himself and understood by himself, must be the Absolute Present that determines itself in absolute contradictory

35. OD 7: 66–7.

36. *Ethics*, part 1, prop. 15.

self-identity or absolute space. This means that God, insofar as he is a substance that is not a substance, must be the substance of the historical world. Thus, Spinoza's philosophy can be given new life. Spinoza, beginning from Descartes, oriented himself in a radically subjective direction. Thus, the self-aware independence of the self was erased and became an aspect of God. God as the Absolute Present was space in the orientation of past to future as the orientation of the everywhere reflected thing to the reflecting thing, and the opposite orientation from reflecting thing to reflected thing as time in the orientation of future to past, as consciousness-like. God is from one side (aspect, fact) spatial as *res extensa*, and from another side consciousness as *res cogitans*. Thus, the two attributes can be thought. An aspect as the self-determination of the Absolute Present must be nothing other than the self-determination of the self. One side is totally spatial, and the other side is totally consciousness. It can be said "*ordo et connexio idearum idem est, ac ordo et connexio rerum.*"³⁷ Spinoza's "cause" should be thought as having completely the meaning of *causa sui*. [136] Essence contains existence, and this essence is only understood as existence. That which exists as the self-determination of the Absolute Present must have this character, since the expressor is always the expressed. The Relative (事) is immediately the Absolute (理), and the Absolute is immediate the Relative. Spinoza's sufficient knowledge must mean the self-aware intuition in which we see ourselves in our self-negation. Once the self has been verified in all things, our self-knowledge is perfect. As long as God has created the human soul, perfectly complete ideas in us must be perfectly complete ideas in God. Here, in absolute contradictory self-identity, we see the self in God and God in the self. From this standpoint the self is religious in the ground of its formation, and philosophical knowledge is grounded there. Therefore, the method of philosophy is negative self-awareness, and the object of philosophy is the object that is not an object. It exists in the self and is the true reality that is understood by the self. For Spinoza as well, perfect ideas are not related to objects, it is only in itself thought, this means that truth is already unified with its object. Here, the thinking thing and what is thought must be one. Spinoza's famous intellectual love (*amor Dei intellectualis*) is rooted here as

37. "The order and connection of ideas is identical to the order and connection of things," (*Ethics, part 2, prop 7*).

well. To the extent that we have adequate knowledge we have power and we are happy. This orientation must be distinguished from the scientific knowledge of objective cognition. According to Spinoza as well, the mind only possesses inadequate ideas regarding things. The difference between adequacy and inadequacy is not a matter of degree. It must be a qualitative difference. It must be a difference in standpoint.

After Descartes, adequate knowledge was explained by means of the example of mathematical knowledge. Even Spinoza's perfect knowledge is sometimes understood as such. But if it is thought of as such, even Spinoza's philosophy must degrade to a mathematical intellectualism. And now, today's consistent mathematics is sure enough thought to be perfect as in those days. In Spinoza's philosophy, [137] the discrepancies of the aforementioned standpoint are made clear in the case of subjective logic. There must be a revolution of the logical standpoint.³⁸

However, although I have previously highlighted the difference that should be made between science and philosophy, I do not think that the two are unrelated as some factions of scholars do. As philosophy respects science and makes it an ingredient of itself, science must be based on philosophy. The intention of Descartes, who commented that Galileo had built with no foundation for science, can be said to have been to create a metaphysical foundation for a new science.³⁹ However, that is not to confuse the two positions and insert philosophy into science. Nevertheless, following the flourishing of science, it cannot be but felt that philosophy has become its handmaiden. Recently it has simply become epistemology and pragmatism. It feels as if philosophy has lost the problem of philosophy itself.

38. "Towards Philosophy of Religion as a Guide to the Pre-Established Harmony," NKZ 10: 91–115; English translation in NISHIDA 1970.

39. "I find in general that [Galileo] philosophizes much better than common people insofar as he avoids as much as possible the errors of the Scholastics, and attempts to examine physical matters by means of mathematical reasons.... But it seems to me that he is greatly deficient in that he digresses continually and that he does not stop to explain fully any subject; this shows that he has not examined any in orderly fashion, and that he has sought for the reasons of some particular effects without having considered the first causes of nature, and that thus, he has built without foundation" (OD 2: 380).



I am not rehashing Descartes' philosophy. However, I am once more returning to and attempting to think through Descartes' problem and method. Descartes' philosophy was covered over by Kant's Copernican Revolution. However, today, must we not once more criticize the standpoint of Kant's philosophy? Kant's philosophical method was not directly a philosophical method. A philosophical method must be thoroughly Descartes-like, thoroughly negative self-awareness and self-aware analysis. Therefore, philosophy is not individualism or liberalism. Philosophy is the negation of the self. It is learning to forget the self. Upon striking a great turning point in world history, we must dig deep into the root of Japanese culture and establish our ideas on a deep and expansive foundation. For true action, as Descartes said, reflection and cognition must be problematized.⁴⁰ As said before, philosophy begins from the self-contradictory nature of the self. Doubt itself becomes a problem. I believe that from the self-contradictory nature of the self, it is possible to move in two contrary directions. One is the direction of self-affirmation and the other is the direction of self-negation. [138] Western culture moved in the direction of the former. It can be said that Eastern culture has its strong point in the orientation of the latter. However, today, we must return to the root of our self-contradictory nature and the standpoint of the contradictory self-identity of truth. Here, the route to a fusion of Western and Eastern cultures exists. Therein, in our Japanese culture which has developed from East Asian culture, there is that which is the Absolute Present which is immediately contradictory self-identity as the self-determination of the Absolute Present. People think that Western culture is logical, and they say that Eastern culture is simply (first-hand) experiential. However, if Eastern culture is simply said to be experiential, then the root of Western culture is also experiential. It is not necessarily logical to move from contradictory self-identity to objective cognition. It is here that the subjective tendencies of Western people lurk. However, in Eastern culture that is oriented towards self-negation, a logic of the self was not developed. But in today's world which is negated by Western culture, we must possess our own logic. Therein, there is no choice but to face the battle

40. OD 7: 62.

without airplanes.⁴¹ I think there is a logic at the root of Eastern culture. I think it will combine with the foundation of today's science as well. As I touched on in the essay "Logic and Mathematics," I believe that the syllogism must harden and become the logic of the contradictory self-identical logic of truth.⁴² Until the present, logic has developed from Greek logic. Is everything founded on the form of categorical logic?

Appendix

I

[139] Following the philosophy of Kant, Herbart was among those who took up the standpoint of realism. He also promoted the work of Leibniz. He said that the something akin to Leibniz's philosophy doesn't provide much material as an entrance to metaphysics.⁴³ However, according to Herbart, Leibniz's philosophy contains several issues that ought to be demonstrated. How is it possible to prove that the concept of the whole world as a synthesis of monads, while being solely thought, is knowledge of the actual world? How can we recognize that such a concept of the world is identical with the world of our sensuous experience? Contrary to the old metaphysics, Herbart set out from the concept of given experience. Thus, philosophy is the adapting of concepts (*Bearbeitung der Begriffe*).⁴⁴ In opposition to Kant, he claimed that the form of experience was not subjective, but rather it was the form of objective reality. Therein, in opposition to Hegel, his logic avoided contradiction. It is formal logic. According to Herbart, excluding all negation and all relation, that which must be absolutely assumed is Being (the standpoint of Absolute Position).⁴⁵ Absolute

41. Nishida is making a reference to the Pacific War (1941–1945). Matteo Cestari, in his Italian translation of the text notes that although Nishida criticized the total war supported by militarist of Imperial Japan, he still believed in the moderating and civilizing function of the Imperial family up until the end of his life (CESTARI 2001, 99). See also Christopher Ives's "Ethical Pitfalls in Imperial Zen and Nishida Philosophy: Ichikawa Hakugen's Critique" (esp. 22–36) and Agustín J. Zavala's "The Return of the Past: Tradition and the Political Microcosm in the Later Nishida" (esp. 143–4) in HEISIG and MARALDO 1995.

42. NKZ 10: 49–90.

43. HERBART 1851, 3: 72.

44. *Lehrbuch zur Einleitung in die Philosophie*, in HERBART 1851, 1: 27–30, 47–8.

45. *Allgemeine Metaphysik, Sämtliche Werke*, in HERBART 1851, 3: 408.

assumption is included in all perception. The assumption that is included in all perception must be Being. This is Herbart's so-called "real thing" (*das Reale*). He thought of the world as a synthesis of such *realen*. The monads of Leibniz became perceptual *realen* in the thought of Herbart. In Herbart as well we set out from the form of experience and logically adapt concepts. On this point, there is a thread of mutual connection between him and I. However, it is not possible to say that the absolute assumption included in perception is Being. Opposing the standpoint of prioritizing epistemology in Kantianism, Lotze thought that because what is said to be knowledge is in the first place the relation between things, metaphysics must be established before epistemology. His thinking was like Herbart's. However, in terms of what was thought to enact reality, his philosophy differed from Herbart. His worldview was organic. His logic was like Herbart's. Opposing Herbart, his philosophy can be said to be materially concrete. [140] However, I differ from Lotze and think that the most concrete reality and truly real world is the creative and created historical world. Even if said to be absolute, that which is merely assumed is no more than something thought. Even speaking of Lotze's active thing, that which is truly active must be something creative and created and *poesis*-like. Thus, the logic of a true world such as this cannot be like that of Hegel, let alone like that of formal logic, it must be a logic like the place of absolute contradictory self-identity. Herbart's intelligible space [*intelligibler Raum*] should be thought of as one aspect of my Absolute Present that is immediately the aspect of absolute space.⁴⁶ On the standpoint of the logic of absolute contradictory self-identity, that which absolutely assumed is not said to be something like *realen* as a perpetual simple. It must be self-determination of each and everything as the instantaneous self-determination of the Absolute Present.

II

Up until the twentieth year of the Meiji era, our country wholeheartedly pursued the philosophy of British empiricism. However, after this, German philosophy arrived. From then on German philosophy became mainstream. And then, from the fortieth year of Meiji, neo-Kantianism

46. *Hauptpunkte der Metaphysik*, in HERBART 1851, 3: 25–30.

piqued. Our country's philosophy too became completely epistemological. After this, Husserlian phenomenology came into practice, and Heideggerian hermeneutical phenomenology arose. Phenomenology like neo-Kantianism is not formalism, but unsurprisingly, does not escape epistemology. Even Heidegger's ontology does not surpass the standpoint of the subjective self. Even the recently much talked about existential philosophy of Jaspers is based on existence in Kierkegaard and such transcendence can be though to be rooted in the temporal world. As one would expect, it does not escape the standpoint of the subjective self. To go from subjectivity to objectivity is to go from immanence to transcendence. In this sense, even existence is not true historical existence. I believe that we are right now at a point where the subjective philosophy of recent times has reached a dead end and must be rethought from its foundations. [141] The historical world must be everywhere temporal as well as spatial. The historical world is time-space and space-time. Such a world must be grasped from the standpoint of the creative and created, poesis-like self. Descartes doubted and returned to the self that cannot be doubted. From this he constructed a new philosophy. However, the indubitable self that is doubted is not the abstract conscious self, but rather the creative and created, historical, and formative self. To think, this is something historical. From the standpoint of Cartesian reflection, I believe there is a deeper and more fundamental path forward than the route Descartes went, a more concrete point of departure. It is not possible to move from the subjective to the objective. The philosophy of concrete existence must come from the standpoint of the contradictory self-identity of subjectivity and objectivity. That which is doubted and cannot be doubted is an immediate standpoint within the self, the standpoint of our self-construction. The opposition of subject and object and their mutual relation can be thought from here.

At its outset, Husserl's philosophy should be seen as a development from psychologism to logicism emerging from the origin of Brentano's immanence of the object [*Inexistenz des Gegenstandes*] joined with Bolzano's proposition in itself [*Satz an sich*].⁴⁷ In phenomenology it reached its culmination. Philosophy, like mathematics, came to be thought of as a strict science. Phenomenology is not psychology. Phenomenology is the science

47. See BRENTANO 1951, I: 77.

of eidetic intuition—eidetic science (*Wesenswissenschaft*). It purges the natural viewpoint in all respects and takes up the standpoint of pure intuition. This referred to as the phenomenological epoché (ἐποχή). Furthermore, as Husserl said as well, this differs from Descartes objectively logical standpoint of universal doubt. However, his philosophy is not unrelated to Descartes. In *Cartesian Mediations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, lectures given during his later years in France, he goes as far to say to that in the creation of phenomenology there is received a stimulation from Descartes through a study of the *Meditations*, and that phenomenology is transformed into a new form of transcendental philosophy, a neo-Cartesianism.⁴⁸ Needless to say, this was not a straightforward adoption of the content of Cartesian philosophy, [142] but rather an innovative development. Husserl, like Descartes, attempted to returned to his own intuition. Further, he set out from the apodictic evidence of the existence of the self (*l'évidence apodictique du "je suis"*). Descartes sought to ground the world of transcendental reality in the *ergo sum* and in the objective direction from apodictic evidence. However, Husserl did not take the objective world to be certain and halted completely at the standpoint of the transcendental subjectivity (*subjectivité transcendantale*) of the *ego cogito*. Although both Husserl and Descartes both similarly set out from the *cogito*, it must be said that they stand in opposite orientations. Husserl always takes the standpoint of Descartes' internal intuition (*mentis inspectio*). From this standpoint of internal intuition, he tries to return even the factual to its essence. I have said in my main discourse said that from the standpoint of self-awareness (自覚) Descartes transcended to the subjective standpoint and Kant transcended to the predicative standpoint, but Husserl's pure ego is not Kant's consciousness in general. Nor is it the synthetic unity of the cognitive subject. It is the consciously intuitive self and therefore predicative. From this standpoint it cannot be thought that I posit the objective world.

It goes without saying that the self-awareness of the self is not simply from the outside and originally in philosophy it cannot be thought simply from the inside either. The interiority of the self is externally from a created thing and to a creative thing and the exteriority of the self is internally from a created thing and to a creative thing as well. It is historically embodied

48. HUSSERL 1960, section 1.

and self-aware as the historical self. The self exists by itself, as an individual of world that expresses itself and is self-awareness. Thought is nothing other than an act of the self-expression of the world. From this standpoint of the contradictory self-identity, Descartes fell into so-called metaphysics by thinking the factual transcendentally in the orientation of the active determination of the self. In opposition to this, the standpoint of Husserl, is the standpoint of the immanent self that reflects itself passively in all respects—simply the standpoint of a reflective mirror so to speak. The moment of self-reflection in the manner of time as immediately space (即) from reflecting thing to reflected thing, and in the manner of space as immediately time from reflected thing to reflecting thing must be included within the world of the self-determination of the Absolute Present. [143] The movement from the created thing to the creative thing and the determination of form itself by form must be the world baselessly reflecting itself. The abstract spatial plane of this world is the plane of consciousness. In such an abstract space, everything is simply something expressed, and the world becomes a world of intentional objects. Such conscious self-determination of the world can be thought of as apodictic evidence. Phenomenology does not set out from this standpoint. Even if psychologism is transcended, this is only the transcendence of psychologism from the standpoint of psychologism. It is not possible to proceed to a concrete standpoint from an abstract standpoint. Concrete things cannot be combined with abstract things. The abstract world, as the moment of the determination of the self-itself in a self-contradictory identical manner, is the plane of the self-negation of the material world. The real world of the determination of the self-itself cannot return to the world of essences. On contrary, it moves from individual concrete phenomenon (事) to general principle (理). The praxis of the historical self does not emerge from the world of essences. Can the problems of philosophy be solved phenomenologically?

Jasper's standpoint can also be understood in relation to Descartes' standpoint of *cogito ergo sum*.⁴⁹ In short, he takes up the standpoint of phenomenological, transcendental subjectivity and the standpoint of the self-determination of the self of the abstract conscious plane. However, on such a standpoint, he takes up a standpoint opposing that of Husserl. Husserl's is

49. See JASPERS 1966.

a spatial standpoint in the self-determination of the conscious self. Jasper's is a temporal standpoint. The former is mathematical. The latter is historical. It goes without saying that Jasper's *Existenz* is originally based on Kierkegaard's *Existenz*. It has the sense of historically substantial Being. This encompassing (*das Umgreifende*) must have the sense of something historical and spatial. It is the act of self-transcendently elucidating (*erhellen*) the world of the self at the bottom of the immanent world of the self from the standpoint of the contradictory self-identity of the *cogito ergo sum*. [144] The thinking of "encompassing" is identical to the continuous act of me elucidating myself (*Das Denken des Umgreifenden ist identisch mit einem ständigen inneren Handeln, in dem ich mich erhelle, hervorbringe, verwandle*).⁵⁰ Jaspers said that it is possible to think that he as well as Descartes set out from the "I am" and the indivisibility of the existence of the "I" in the *cogito ergo sum*.⁵¹ However, when the self is referred to as *res cogitans* with regards to *res extensa* what is the existence of the self? This existence of the self does not emerge in the horizon of philosophical illumination. In Descartes, the existential self is narrowed to a hollow point that thinks itself. Thus, by adding things it is confused with psychological existence. I agree with such criticism with regards to Jaspers' Descartes. However, as one would expect, Jaspers' illumination of existence (*Existenzerhellung*), as the self-determination of the self of abstract consciousness in all respects does not transcend the standpoint of transcendental subjectivity.⁵² That is why I refer to it as phenomenological. Like me, Jaspers starts from the standpoint of contradictory identity of the self and the world wherein the self is a thing in the world. In this respect, he has taken a step forward compared to previous philosophies, which thought of the self as if it were outside the world, observing it like an eye. However, for me, the self as a creative created thing, is some-

50. JASPERS 1966, 25.

51. JASPERS 1966, 13.

52. Jaspers' concept of *Existenzerhellung* refers to the possibility of the individual human being to illuminate and realize their existence. Human beings have various ways of objectively cognizing our various modes of existence but none of these approaches can capture the true self, i.e., *Existenz*. *Existenz* is not understood objectively, but only interpreted subjectively by each self. This concept is explained most precisely in the second volume of his *Philosophie* which is generally treated as the heart of his existential philosophy (JASPERS 1932). See also Kunitsugu's note on *Existenzerhellung* in the NKC 10: 454–5.

thing self-aware in historical embodiment, the world is the historical world, and the self is the historically active self. The world of true existence is the world of the praxis of the historical self, and true existence comes to be illuminated act-intuitively by from the self-contradictory self of the creating, created, and creative self. The world that forms itself expressively develops itself in the self. The self, as an individual of such a world, expresses the world. Thought is not a non-embodied action as is commonly thought. We are always thinking in a historically embodied way. The thinking act, as an act of world expression, appears at the extremity of the individual self-determination of the individual self that determines itself in a historically embodied way. [145] We are self-aware as the extreme point of the individual self-determination of the world determining itself. Therefore, in the self, thinking is that which is thought, and expression is that which is expressed. It can be thought of as a point of existence that thinks itself. It is here that Descartes in a subjective and logical manner thinks of substance as that which exists by itself. Here, as Jaspers says, it becomes a point of self-aware existence lacking content.⁵³ However, originally, the existential self is not self-aware in the manner of abstract consciousness, but rather is self-aware from active-intuitive action as a creative element of the creative world. By expressing the world the self forms the world and by forming the world it expresses the world. It knows by acting and acts by knowing. Thought and the will of the self comes from this. There is thinking and willing because the self is a creative element of the creative world. The content of the self is the content of the self-expression of the world. Like Leibniz's monads, each and every self is a single perspectival focus. Therefore, each and every self is a single self-formative world—a microcosm. This is our self-awareness. In self-awareness, we are a single world. The existence of the self is a single world-existence. Descartes thought of this in the manner of objective logic as a single independent actual existence which exists by itself, i.e., substance. Jaspers started from the self-awareness of the abstract conscious self—the self-awareness of the internal self so to speak—and considered the conscious self-determination of the world. However, the historical world is act-intuitively a world that is internal as immediately (即) external and external as immediately internal, immanent as immediately transcendent, and tran-

53. JASPERS 1966, 17–20.

scendent as immediately immanent. It is a world that is singular as the self-negation of multiplicity as well as multiple as the self-negation of the singular. It is temporal as immediately spatial and spatial as immediately temporal. What we have called the conscious world is a singular world as the negation of multiplicity and a temporal planar world of vanishing time, as one plane of the world of the contradictory identity of multiplicity and singularity, i.e. as one plane of the world of the Absolute Present. Time is the form of self-existence of that which is vanishing. Our conscious existence is fully temporal. Since the abstract conscious self is the extreme limit of the individual self, when we set out from the abstractly conscious self, [146] temporal things are thought to exist immediately and immanently. However, temporal things must be spatial in the manner of contradictory self-identity. The standpoint of the conscious self can be thought of on one hand as the world determining itself in a temporal-spatial and immanent-transcendent manner. Jasper's world is something like this. Even it is called transcendent, this is not true transcendence. It is goes no farther than transcendence from a subjective standpoint. Even if we call it a world, this is not a truly existing world. That which is "encompassing" is related to my "place" (場所), but it should be said that it does not go further than the subjective dimension. Jasper's *Existenz* is not truly historical existence. Even if he talks of "risk," it does not elude the subjective. Nevertheless, the existential world must be spatiotemporal in every respect. It must be concretely transcendently immanent and immanently transcendent. We must set out from the self-awareness of the created-creating historically active self. It is here that there is for us a world that is truly immediate. It is from here that the so-called immanent world can be thought. From the standpoint of existential philosophy, there is no such thing as an experimental scientific standpoint. Nor can we ground ourselves in historical practice by clarifying the basis of our self-constitution. From here there is no such thing as an objective ought (*Sollen*). The true ought does not appear as the self-determination of the self on the conscious plane. The self must come from the standpoint of the self-formation of the historical world that forms from there as a created-creating thing. Descartes sought the objectivity of truth in the sincerity of God. This is something that is not worthy of a mind like Descartes'. Nonetheless, Descartes problem was that of unquestionable true existence. However, he reduced self-aware existence to the contentless transcendent

individual. The ground he stood on was in no regards subjective experience but rather logical. He stood on the standpoint of the historically formed self, i.e., the metaphysical self. The standpoint of the true metaphysical self must originally be the standpoint of the historically formed self. It is from here that metaphysical problems arise (It is in the same sense that I can neither think of [147] Heidegger's ontology as true ontology). However, people who are trapped on the standpoint of the abstract conscious self reject any departure from such a standpoint as being transcendent.

III

Today, philosophy from the Japanese spirit, or rather, Japanese philosophy, is being demanded. What ought this philosophy be? Philosophy originally emerges abstractly and generally from questions like "What is existence?" and so on. To think of existence in such a way is already to be on the standpoint of objective logic. Philosophical problems arise from deep self-awareness of life. Even Greek philosophy, which believed that philosophy arises from intellectual wonder, actually stems from the self-awareness of the intellectual Greeks themselves. There is a self-awareness of Japanese life for Japanese people. Where there is a self-awareness of life there must be a worldview. We ourselves necessarily view and think about things rigidly. People without a worldview are not living things. Further, to the extent that there is self-awareness of life, the self grasps truth in various senses within existence. These are not simple particularities. Mere particular things are not living things either. We do not live as particulars or universals or as species of a genus. We live as unique individuals of a unique world as historical individuals of a historical world. Further, things of individuality are in all respects true individuals as things in all respects distinctive and in all respects universal. The great depths of life must envelope the great depths of universality. The universal in such a sense is not an abstract universal that negates the individual. It is what makes an individual truly an individual, and it is what is at the bottom that makes all things possible. We live by such a universal. This is called Reason (理性). Reason does not have the meaning of an abstract universal. The deeper our self-awareness of our lives becomes [148] the more we contradict in all respects the absolute that makes us indi-

vidual qua individual. This is philosophy. Philosophy is nothing other than the self-aware expression of life.

The self-awareness of Japanese historical life is as eternal as heaven and earth and in all respects creative and vigorously unfolding in the way of the oneness of the individual and the whole, i.e., in an absolutely contradictory self-identical manner and in the manner of the nondifference of all things with the imperial household at the center.⁵⁴ Opposing things are necessarily in one dimension identical. Black and white are even more opposite than red and blue. Things which are completely unrelated cannot be said to be opposing. The extreme limit of opposition is mutual contradiction. It is here that in no sense identity can be claimed. However, that which is simply unrelated cannot be mutually contradictory. This identity exists by nullifying itself; it is contradictory within itself, i.e., it must be a contradictory identity. I believe that the Eastern self-awareness of life has such a logical grasp of the world. This can be called Eastern reason (東洋の理性).⁵⁵ It is said that one is immediately all and all is immediately one. Being is immediately nothingness and nothingness is immediately Being. Furthermore, dialectically all minds are no-mind, and this what is said to be a mind.⁵⁶ Buddhism has a tendency become fixed in this peaceful place, but on the standpoint of absolute contradictory self-identity, this place is infinitely dynamic and unfolding. This is actualized in the life of the national body of the core imperial household as the self-determination of the Absolute Present in an immanently transcendent and transcendently immanent manner. If we con-

54. Jacynthe Tremblay, in her French translation of the text, notes that the phrase “with the Imperial House as the center” (皇室を中心として) was the primary formulation of Imperialist doctrine, which its supporters referred to as *tennō-centrism* (天皇中心主義) (NISHIDA 2003, 280).

55. “Eastern reason” is the translation of 「東洋の理性」 (*tōyōteki risei*). Tremblay writes that Nishida employs this term to separate his ideas from Shinto extremism (NISHIDA 2003, 281).

56. The reference is to the *Daimond Sutra*. Red Pine’s translation renders the relevant passage as follows: “Subhuti, what the Tathagata speaks of as ‘streams of thought’ are no streams. Thus are they called ‘streams of thought.’ And how so? Subhuti, a past thought cannot be found. A future thought cannot be found. Nor can a present thought be found” (RED PINE 2001, 20). Nishida’s quotation of the passage from literary Chinese in part reads as follows 「諸心皆異為非心、是名為心」 (NKZ 10: 148). The entirety of the passage in literary Chinese originally translated by Kumārajīva (344–413) can be found in the combined English and literary Chinese version published by CHUNG TAI TRANSLATION COMMITTEE 2009, 22.

sider the language of absolute contradictory self-identity in the manner of Absolute Reason, then the confusion of thinking of the imperial household as self-contradictory may arise. However, originally, a contradiction cannot be said to be an identity in Absolute Reason. Absolute contradictory self-identity can be said to transcend contradiction by enveloping contradiction. It is the sense of self-identity in the manner of place (*basho*). Therefore, it is not Hegelian process-dialectical, but rather has the sense of the envelopment of dialectics as the Absolute Present. The Greeks had Greek reason. Japanese must have a Japanese reason. Furthermore, it must be the reason of the grasping of the historical world. Contrary to the Greek world which was ahistorical, the Japanese world is the [149] world of the histories of many nations in the ultimate sense.

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