

Nothingness and Creativity  
-Towards an Integral Philosophy of Creative Transformation-

Yutaka Tanaka

Contents

Part I : Christian-Buddhist Encounter beyond the Frontiers of Religion

1. Christian Existence
2. Buddhist Awakening
3. The Significance of the Christian-Buddhist Dialogue beyond the Frontiers of Religion
4. *Analogia Nullius Entis* and Topology of Nothingness

Part II : Pure Experience and the Logic of Topos:

1. Nishida's Theory of Pure Experience
2. Concrescence and Pratītyasamutpāda
3. Process Theology and the Logic of Topos

Part III: Nothingness as the Principle of Creative Transformation in the Historical World:

1. Subjectivity in the Historical World: Heidegger, Whitehead, and Tanabe
2. Tanabe's Philosophy of Science after Metanoetics
3. Natural Theology based on *Analogia Nullius Entis*:  
Big-Bang Cosmology and the Concept of Nothingness in Modern Physics

References

## Part I Christian-Buddhist Encounter beyond the Frontiers of Religion

The dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism is usually characterized as "inter-religious". We have taken it for granted that "religion" is the universal genus which comprehends both Christianity and Buddhism, as we distinguish between their specific differences. Observing Christianity and Buddhism as socio-historical institutions which have been established in various syncretic forms, we seem to have no scruple in saying that they are religions. We may enumerate such "religious" characteristics as the existence of holy hierarchy, canonical scriptures and laws, liturgical systems, etc.; they are common or analogous to Christianity and Buddhism at various levels.

Is it self-evident, however, that Christianity is a kind of religion and Buddhism is another? Comprehending them in the category of religion, don't we thereby fail to grasp the core of matters? In the first part of this paper I shall argue that both Christianity and Buddhism really contain something that denies the very concept of religion in the making, and then reconsider the possibility of a mutual transformation through their encounter beyond the frontiers of religion.

### 1. Christian Existence

A thesis that Christianity essentially involves the abolition of religion was explicitly launched by K. Barth in *The Epistle to the Romans*. He says: <sup>(1)</sup>

All that religion can do is to expose the complete godlessness of human behaviour. As a concrete human being and having and doing, religion is — flesh; it shares, that is to say, in the profligacy and essential worldliness of everything human, and is in fact the crown and perfection of human achievement. Religion neither overcomes human worldliness nor transfigures it; not even the religion of Primitive Christianity or of Isaiah or of the Reformers can rid itself of this limitation....

Religion casts us into the deepest of all passions; it cannot liberate us. Flesh is flesh; and all that takes place within its sphere, every step we undertake towards God, is as such weak. Because of the qualitative distinction between God and man, the history of religion, Church History, is weak—utterly weak. Since religion is human, utterly human history, it is flesh, even though it be draped in the flowing garments of the "History of Salvation"

Barth's denial of religion should not be confused, as is the case with his many followers, with the absolutist claim that Christianity is the only true religion, other religions false. What he means is simply that the essential Christianity is not a religion at all, and that even the established Christianity as a positive religion must be rejected for the very reason that it has been degenerated into "a religion as unbelief". These words must be taken at their face values. The religion is counted as "true" only in its awareness of its dependence on what is absolutely not a religion just in the same way that a human being is "just" only in his or her repentance of sins before God.

Why should we reject religion in the Christian perspective? The answer is that religion is no more than the vanity of human wishes and desires, nothing but the ideal self-projection of human beings who suffer from the miserable states of sinfulness. It may be admitted that religion sometimes looks like the crown and perfection of humanity, showing itself in various "sublime" forms, for example, magnificent temples with fine arts where solemn ceremonies take place accompanied by celestial music. All the same, Christians will surely view these "perfect" forms as nothing unless they find something proper to their faith in God. They cannot forget the words of Jesus foretelling to his disciples the destruction of Jerusalem where they were amazed at the magnificence of the stone Temple." Christianity demands realizing the arrogance of religion and the renewal of humanity even in its most "perfect" form. This renewal means that Christians, unsatisfied with the established order of this world, continue to travel on the earth hoping the coming of God's Kingdom. In his earthly life Jesus himself proclaims this kingdom as the Son of Man "without place to lay his head",<sup>(3)</sup> and recommends his disciples to imitate the absolute perfection of the heavenly Father<sup>(4)</sup>. Even the performance of funeral ceremony essential to every religion is of secondary importance to Jesus, as he tells one of his disciples to "let the dead to bury their own dead."<sup>(5)</sup> If these words of Jesus are too radical to religious people, Jesus's disciples must "seek first for God's Kingdom and His righteousness before anything else".<sup>(6)</sup> The world of religion is merely "flesh"; however sublime religious elements may seem, they must be judged to be worthless in themselves from the Christian viewpoint.

As "flesh" is a key word to Barth's criticism of religion, we have to consult the Bible in order to clarify the original usage of this word. In the context of the Bible we find that "flesh(σάρξ *bāsār*)" signifies one reality: the earth-bound wholeness of a human being, and not the mere body distinguished from the soul.<sup>(7)</sup> Hebrew people use indiscriminately the terms *nepeš* (soul) and *bāsār* (flesh); the expressions "*Kōl bāsār*

(all flesh)" and "Kōl hanepēš (every soul)" are equivalent. What is called σάρξ in the New testament can characterize the totality of a human being including his or her thoughts, words, acts, and negligence. Such expressions as "not to walk according to the flesh(σάρξ)", "not to judge according to the flesh", and "not to live according to the flesh" do not indicate exhortations to ascetic life as in mystical religions. What opposes the flesh in the Bible is the "ruah (πνεῦμα =spirit)" which signifies a participation in the supernatural order, a call to transformation. The Biblical distinction between σάρξ and πνεῦμα holds between creatures and the Creator/Redeemer, not between body and soul. The prophet is called "a man of spirit",<sup>(8)</sup> and "the spirit sees all things, even the depth of God."<sup>(9)</sup> The words of Jesus are spirit and life,<sup>(10)</sup> and a man cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and spirits.<sup>(11)</sup> The testimony of Christian faith is also due to the fact that "the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children<sup>(12)</sup>." The πνεῦμα-σάρξ (spirit-flesh) dialectics should be distinguished from the ψυχὴ-σῶμα (soul-body) dualism in Greek philosophy because the former is the opposition between grace and nature, whereas the latter is dualism within nature in the biblical perspective. The religious world which belongs to the flesh can be overcome not through the immanent principles in this world but through God's self-revelation only.

In this event of God's becoming, as Barth aptly formulates, "the revealing God, the revelation, and its effect upon man"<sup>(13)</sup> constitute the inseparable wholeness of trinity. The Christian testimony is based on this self-revealing event of One who is, as Pascal said, "not a god of philosophers, but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."<sup>(14)</sup> This event enables Christians to proclaim the truth of the cross, which was "a scandal to Jews, and folly to Gentiles."<sup>(15)</sup> The paradoxical nature of inter-personal communion between God and man is essential to Christian Existence, in which the revelation as God's free self-giving abolishes "religion as unbelief".

## 2. Buddhist Awakening

What we encounter in Buddhism today as well as in Christianity is an established religion with various syncretic forms, in which the fundamental spirit of original Buddhism has been lost amid the various forms of idolatry and magics for worldly desires. Shōkō Watanabe points out how the key words of Buddhism have acquired quite different usages from their original ones in the process of syncretization in the polytheistic soil of folk religions."<sup>(16)</sup> Though Gautama Buddha's last sermon urges his disciples to depend on themselves and the Law of Truth(dharma) as the island of refuge

in the ocean of transmigration(samsāra) or as the lamp shining in the darkness of Ignorance(avidyā),"<sup>(17)</sup> Buddhism has become a religion of Buddha as the god-like object of worship. The doctrines of Original Buddhism, as understood in the practice of the Eightfold Way based on the saving wisdom of the Fourfold Truth and the theory of dependent arising, does not impose any theistic belief upon his followers, nor contain any teachings of the immortal soul. Therefore, Buddhism is sometimes called an atheistic religion by Western scholars. But if atheism is defined as the denial of God's or gods' existence, then Buddhism cannot properly be called atheistic. Buddhism does not deny the existence of gods which it has succeeded from polytheistic Hinduism."<sup>(18)</sup> These gods, however, are considered by Buddhists to be continuous to other sentient beings totally swallowed up in the circle of death and life(samsāra). Though gods have a long span of life and superhuman abilities, they also remain in the state of suffering, self-love and mutual hate, and have to struggle for existence in the state of Ignorance. Buddhists do not seek their salvation through these deities because they are indeed inferior to the Enlightened One who have overcome Ignorance and testified to Freedom (nirvāna) through awakening to the Law of Truth. As many Buddhist scriptures depict, Hindu gods themselves came to hear and worship Gautama Buddha for their own enlightenment.<sup>(19)</sup> The Buddhist concept of salvation is thoroughgoingly free from illusion, and more radical than that of any other religion which presupposes the immortal soul. The salvation from the sufferings of this world comes neither from reliance on super-human deities nor from believing in the well-being in the heavenly world because even the next life in the heavenly world is another stage of transmigration characterized by inevitable sufferings and Ignorance after all. True Salvation(nirvāna) comes only when Buddhists transcend not only this world but also the next life at the same time.<sup>(20)</sup> Therefore the doctrine of the immortal soul is not relevant to Buddhists as to Socrates in *Phaedo* in spite of the similarity of moral theses. As the doctrine of non-ego (anātman) denies the concept of soul as the substantial ego apart from the body, the Buddhist wisdom(prajñā) cannot be equated with the Hellenistic idea of salvation knowledge (γνῶσις), : Socrates insists on the liberation of the immortal soul from the tomb of body, whereas Buddhists reject the body-mind dualism itself as a result of the illusion of objectifying intelligence. Buddhists do not prize the ascetic practice of mystic religion in the doctrine of the *Middle Way* (madyamā pratipad) which is based on the fundamentally different principle from Aristotle's idea of Golden Mean (μεσότης) in the Nicomachean Ethic. As the doctrine of Dependent Arising (pratītya-samutpāda) denies the concept of absolute existence (svabhāva) as illusory,

Buddhists have overcome both hedonism and asceticism not because the extremes could not lead to happiness in the secular empirical sense, but because the extremes coincide with each other co-inhering in the realm of life and death(samsāra) and thus they become an obstacle to salvation in so far as they erroneously assume the empty ego as an absolute substance. The reason why Gautama Buddha has rejected the metaphysical Brahmanism which equates the ego (ātman) with the Absolute (brahman) is that the extreme form of ascetic practice, in so far as attached to the ego, has become futile and even carnal from the Buddhist perspective. Awakened to the law of Dependent Arising and the Emptiness (śūnyatā) of the ego, Buddhists have overcome not only this world of life and death(samsāra) but also Brahmanists' practice of *apotheosis* with their misleading faith in gods and immortality.

### 3. The Significance of the Christian-Buddhist Dialogue beyond the Frontiers of Religion

Many participants of the interfaith dialogue cite Arnold Toynbee's words that future historians will consider the Christian-Buddhist encounter at their deepest levels as the most important event of this century.<sup>(20)</sup> The dialogue between two religions, however, is often very dubious in so far as the truth claim is concerned. Exclusiveness and dogmaticism are almost incurable diseases of any established religion, and the religious dialogue tends to be a disguised attempt of preaching or only deals with the peripheral problems. If the Buddhist-Christian dialogue remains "inter-religious", then it cannot have such an epoch-making significance today as Toynbee said. That dialogue must transcend the frontier of religion through comparing Buddhist Awakening with Christian Existence as the abolition (*Aufhebung*) of religion.

Katsumi Takizawa, a theological successor of K. Barth and philosophical disciple of Kitarō Nishida, is a pioneer of the Christian-Buddhist dialogue in the above sense. He tries to deconstruct the supra-structure of religion into the openness to "the primordial divine-human relationships", and understands both Christian Revelation and Buddhist Awakening as the paradoxical event of God-man encounter which transcends the frontier of religion. The essence of his theological anthropology may well be expressed in the phrase, God-with-us (Emmanuel), which he borrows from the Bible. This phrase was originally used as another name of Christ according to Matthew, and signifies the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophesy of salvation in the unique event of God's revelation in Jesus of Nazareth. K. Barth elaborates the doctrine of Reconciliation on the basis of

"Gott-mit-uns" in his Church Dogmatics.<sup>(22)</sup> Takizawa's doctrine of God-with-us is different from many followers of Barth in that he has abandoned the absolutist claim of Christianity, extending God-with-us beyond the frontier of the "Christian religion" to the paradoxical structure of "Emmanuel in the primary sense". Takizawa interprets "Emmanuel" not only as the unique event of God's revelation in Jesus of Nazareth in the exclusively Christian sense, but also as the event which can happen in principle outside "the wall of Christendom", and even as the event which he firmly believes to have happened in Zen and Pure Land Buddhism. In the context of Buddhism Takizawa mentions "Emmanuel" sometime as "the fact that Defilement has been absolutely annihilated, and Pure Life recovers itself at the same time", and at other time as "the discovery of the critical point where we can distinguish absolutely between the Pure Land and the Defiled Land, the True Man and the False Worldliness".<sup>(23)</sup> He admits that "those who fight against the idolatrous man, ourselves by nature, are few", but believes in the universal grace which is given to every human being to overcome the divine-human separation regardless of personal capacity or achievement in the worldly standard, and equally regardless of religious differences between Christianity and Buddhism. Discussing with Karl Barth such theological problems as the unity of human nature and Godhead in the person of Jesus Christ, a true man and true God, Takizawa recognizes the same *problematik* as that he has found in the philosophy of Nishida who elaborates a Mahāyāna Buddhist thesis of the paradoxical identity between sentient beings and Buddha. This recognition makes Takizawa to rethink Nishida's work as "a philosophy of *metanoia* which bears testimony to the true God in this country in this particular age".<sup>(24)</sup> Takizawa reports in his memoirs that he tried to persuade Barth to accept the possibility of the triune God's revelation outside "the wall of Christendom", but Barth flatly denied it as a real possibility, charging Takizawa of an idealistic philosopher and pantheist.

Despite his failure of persuading Barth, Takizawa insists on the importance of the interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism on the basis of his theological anthropology. According to him "the primordial divine-human relationship" is the same between East and West, not belonging to a particular age and country; the different aspects of Christianity and Buddhism are so many human reflections of the same Light, i.e. so many replies to the primordial Fact which constitutes human being itself. In order to explain these differences he introduces the ideas of "primary Emmanuel" and "secondary Emmanuel". Primary Emmanuel means "God-with-us absolutely antecedent

to our own subjectivity": it holds everywhere and everytime before all our thoughts, words, acts, and even negligence. In Mahayana Buddhism this kind of God's omnipresence is recognized as "Original Enlightenment" as we find in, for example, the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* attributed by Asvagosha. Only through awakening to the authentic self in the original Enlightenment, a finite human being can begin to participate in the process of actualizing the divine-human relationship in concrete forms. This historical process of actualization is called by Takizawa "Secondary Emmanuel" which corresponds to human's response to God's call or guidance in Christianity and "the inceptive enlightenment (particular events of enlightenment)" in Mahāyāna Buddhism.<sup>(25)</sup> It seems impossible for Barthians to accept Takizawa's argument for the triune God's revelation outside Christendom, for such possibility would deny the privileged status of the Christian religion. But if we accept the thesis that Christianity is essentially not a religion, we cannot remain in and should go beyond Barth's own standpoint in *Church Dogmatics*. Barth's misconception of Buddhism as a religion may have caused his followers not to take seriously the interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism. In *Church Dogmatics* Barth flatly denies the truth claim of Jyōdo Shinshū simply because Pure Land Buddhists do not call on the name of Jesus Christ though he acknowledges the parallels between Shinran's and Luther's teachings of salvation by faith through "Other Power's Pledge" and "God's grace alone".<sup>(26)</sup> Barth does not seem to have considered the equally possible claim of Pure Land Buddhists that Christianity might be a false religion simply because Christians do not rely on the name of Amida Buddha. The mere worship of the holy Name would become invalid if it involves idolatry without self-denial. Not every one who calls to Jesus "Lord" will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of his Heavenly Father, as Jesus himself says in Matthew.<sup>(27)</sup> Calling on the name of Jesus Christ means at the same time living in the universal Truth for which Jesus has come into the world, and to which he bears witness through his death and resurrection. Rejecting philosophical idealism, Barth rightly stresses the importance of proper names which have been historically handed over from person to person. The use of proper names cannot be reduced to conceptual categories, and both Christians and Pure Land Buddhists need proper names in their respective faith. What made Barth dogmatic in the very sense of the word was that his arguments are confined only within the data of Christian revelation considered as fixed axioms. He was a kind of positivist who did not seriously care for the problem of how the holy Name was given to us as a salvific revelation. If revelation abolishes



religion, then we may characterize Christianity as "the revealed religion" only in a self-contradictory sense. Those who have put Jesus on the cross are his most "religious" contemporaries who firmly observe the Law and respect rituals of the Jerusalem Temple as the sanctuary of their faith. Though they have overcome polytheistic idolatry in the tradition of Judaism since Moses, they are not free from monotheistic idolatry in which they imagine God as the absolute dictator of this world. When Jesus says, "My Father and I are one", they pick up stones, saying "we are going to stone you for your blasphemy; you, a mere man, claim to be God."<sup>(99)</sup> To Jesus, however, those whom the word of God is delivered to are rightly to be called gods.<sup>(29)</sup> Jesus' proclamation that "God and I are one" is the core of Good News which testifies the Primordial Fact of God-with-us; the Gospels are narratives about the man who is "one with Heavenly Father", his teachings and acts, and his resurrection after death on the cross for the salvation of humanity. The religion which is abolished by Christian revelation is idolatry in the sense of both polytheism and monotheism.

The trinitarian concept of God can be understood as a human interpretation of God's self-revelation which denies such idolatry. This theology recognizes three Persons as one God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same God on account of "*circumincessio*", i.e. their mutual immanence. Despite the overwhelming influences of Greek ontology, Christian theologians have insisted on the equality of three Persons, which signifies the core of the New Testament; the Father who is the hidden God of Israel, the Son who is Jesus Christ as a historical revelation, and the Holy Spirit who has filled disciples of Jesus after Pentecost, are essentially the same God. The doctrine of trinity is the middle way which has overcome the antithesis of pluralism and monism in theology on the basis of the relation of mutual immanence of three Persons without losing their distinctive features. The implications of trinitarian thinking are not to be restricted within revealed theology, though the doctrine of trinity has not been considered intelligible to unaided human reason alone. The vestige of trinity (*vestigia trinitatis*) has been the source of creative thinking in Christian natural theology. As Alfred North Whitehead noted in *Adventures of Ideas*, the trinitarian theologians may have the distinction of being the only thinkers who in a fundamental metaphysical doctrine have improved upon Plato.<sup>(30)</sup> They have rejected the dogmatic priority of the Absolute One over the Many in the triad of Neoplatonism through the concrete historical events of revelation in the biblical tradition. Thus, the trinitarian mode of thinking can be retrieved as the prerequisite for our understanding the universal Truth which holds

beyond the frontier of the religious dogma, though the doctrine of trinity has been often misused as the petrified dogma of orthodoxy erroneously supposed to give a privileged status to the Christian "religion" over all others.

The thesis that Buddhism is not a religion but essentially the overcoming of religion seems unintelligible to those who see Buddhism only in the various forms of its syncretization with racial religions. In Japan, for example, we can find many remains of idolatry and superstition in various denominations of Buddhism especially before the Meiji Era. These aspects are the result of Japanese Buddhists' ambiguous attitudes towards their racial religions: they usually take advantage of gods and magics as skillful conventions (*upāya*) for the weakness of superstitious people. The modernization of Japan, however, necessitates the reformation of Buddhism faithful to its original spirit because scientific enlightenment has liberated Buddhists from the yoke of magics. Modern men's dilemma is that they can neither go back to religion in the past nor remain in the present state of irreligion and nihilism engendered by science: they will not find the way out of this dilemma unless they grasp the principle which truly overcomes the antithesis between religion and science.

In *Buddhism and Christianity* Takizawa discusses the radical form of Zen Buddhism which Shin'ichi Hisamatsu has propounded in the article titled Atheism. What Takizawa recognizes in Hisamatsu's article is not atheism in the usual sense of the word, but rather "the providence of the true God who does not abide in the human-made temple" operating in Zen Buddhism which has been thought to be diametrically opposed to the traditional form of theism in Christianity. In Atheism Hisamatsu discusses three fundamental modes of human existence: theistic heteronomy in the premodern age, humanistic autonomy in the modern age, and absolute autonomy as the abolition of both theism and humanism in the coming postmodern age.<sup>(32)</sup> His concept of absolute autonomy comes from *Lin Chi's* idea of "a true person with no rank", only possible after "great death" of human's egocentrism and "resurrection" through awakening to the non-self. Hisamatsu rejects the authority of any established religion and relying on the authentic "self with no form", thus reviving the spirit of Zen patriarchs with their iconoclasm and freedom from illusion and superstition. Both a consistent atheist and Zen Buddhist, he is reported to have prohibited any religious funeral ceremony to be held at his death, telling his disciples to awaken to the non-self in their own experience of "death and resurrection" rather than to come to his funeral.<sup>(33)</sup> It is noteworthy that Takizawa recognizes in Hisamatsu's atheology and

Barth's theology the common *problematik* to be discussed in the future Buddhist-Christian dialogue. Christian theology and Buddhist atheology seem divergent in each of their conceptions of ultimate reality: "the personal God as absolute Being" on the one hand, and "Nothingness or Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) as the impersonal Field of dependent arising" on the other. Why, then, despite these differences, are they convergent in their conceptions of a human being's authentic existence when abolishing religion as unbelief and idolatry? Is there anything common to the event of God's self-revelation and the event of a human's awakening to the non-self? The universal Truth comprehending the traditions of both Buddhism and Christianity could not be obtained by the mere understanding of different religious traditions; the dialogue must go deeper for the mutual self-transformation of the partners.<sup>(34)</sup>

In *Problems of Religious Pluralism* John Hick rejects the absolute claim of Christianity in the pluralistic age. His standpoint, similar in many ways to Takizawa's, may be characterized by "Copernican Theology" of religions, in the perspective of which "the religious universe centres upon the divine Reality, and Christianity is seen as one of a number of worlds of faith which circle around and reflect that Reality."<sup>(35)</sup> Rejecting both Christian exclusivism and inclusivism as "Ptolemaic theology", he recommends religious pluralism defined as below: <sup>(36)</sup>

By this I mean the view that the great world faiths embody different perceptions and conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to, the Real or the Ultimate from within the major variant cultural ways of being human; and that within each of them the transformation of human existence from self-centredness to Reality-centredness is manifestly taking place—and taking place, so far as human observation can tell, to much the same extent. Thus the great religious traditions are to be regarded as alternative soteriological "spaces" within which, or "ways" along which, men and women can find salvation/liberation/fulfilment.

In order to elucidate the significance of this "Copernican Revolution" in theology, I would like to consider the logical scheme of mutually opposing propositions which seem to be involved in any inter-religious dialogue. Suppose there are conflicting truth-claims between Religion A and Religion B. Then we have four alternatives concerning the truth of religion:

- (I) A is true but B is false;
- (II) B is true but A is false;
- (III) Neither A nor B is true; and

(IV) Both A and B are true.

These propositions constitutes the *tetralemma* one of which we, when unable to decide on any empirical ground, seem to have to presuppose dogmatically. We may compare the above *tetralemma* with that between Ptolemaic and Copernican Theories:

( I ) Geocentrism is true but Heliocentrism is false (the dogma of the Inquisition);

(II) Heliocentrism is true but Geocentrism is false (Galileo's new system);

(III) Neither Geocentrism nor Heliocentrism is true (Newton's theory of Absolute Space);  
and

(IV) Both Geocentrism and Heliocentrism are true (Epistemological relativism or the paradigm-shift theory of scientific revolution).

As I have argued elsewhere, modern physics denies all of these propositions on the basis of Einstein's principle of relativity; there is no such privileged place as the centre of the universe, and every place can be a centre of the world in the sense that the universal laws of physics should hold and can be expressed quite independently of any choice of the coordinate system of reference."<sup>(37)</sup> Modern physicists warn us not to mistake Einstein's theory for epistemological relativism (the proposition IV) ; the task of physics is, according to Einstein, to find the absolute Truth that holds independently of our choice of the coordinate frame of reference, whereas epistemological relativism erroneously considers that the truth-claims always depend on our choice of such a frame. "Relativity" refers only to our choice of alternative frames rather than the Real that is described by us: truth-claims should be absolute and hold beyond our choice of alternative frames or paradigms.

Using the analogy of relativity, I would like to compare many religions to so many coordinate frames of reference, but not to the Real that shows itself in any chosen one. There is no privileged religion; every religion is equal in the sense that we can face the Real in any tradition of religion. In defense of religious relativity, I must emphasize the important element of *absolute negation* which Hick does not seem to mention in his theory of religious pluralism: the Real cannot be grasped by us without making us negate the absolute truth-claims of any religion. Just as the *Middle Way* of Buddhism consists in its rejection of all propositions of the *tetralemma* (wyjmo, in the same way the universal Truth, whose light shines on every religion indifferently, would be realized by us only after our radical abolition of any religious ideology. A religion would be counted as "true" only when it realizes its ground which is absolutely not a religion.

#### 4. *Analogia Nullius Entis* and Topology of Nothingness

It is common knowledge that Barth rejects the possibility of natural theology through replacing *analogia entis* by *analogia fidei* in his Church Dogmatics.<sup>(36)</sup> Whereas Thomists maintain the consistency and continuity between grace and nature in the celebrated principle that "grace does not destroy nature but perfects it (*gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*)",<sup>(39)</sup> Barth emphasizes the inconsistency and discontinuity between grace and nature; analogy holds between God's revelation and a human's decision and response, and between God's knowing me and my knowing God. In Barth's analogy of faith, "being" follows "operations" (*esse sequitur operari*) rather than the vice versa. The identification of God with Being itself, i.e. the concept of God as the first Cause of creatures' beings, would be a misplaced one if we can neither know God's Being through *analogia entis* of this world, nor abstract the mere Being of God from His self-revelation as the triune God in history. Thus, Barth's denial of *analogia entis* is closely related to his intolerance of religion as unbelief. But what about *analogia nullius entis*?

Whereas Christian theology does not seem to have ever used such an analogy, it is obvious that the Buddhistic realization of nothingness (*śūnyatā*) cannot positively be without *analogia nullius entis* because of the primacy of nothingness over being, and of the negative over the positive way. Shin'ichi Hisamatsu's tractatus titled "The characteristics of Oriental Nothingness" deals with the Zen Buddhist's self-understanding of *śūnyatā*.<sup>(40)</sup> To avoid possible conceptual confusions when we apply "Western" categories to *śūnyatā*, he discusses the problem of "what Oriental Nothingness is not" as the *via negativa*, and has classified five types of our misunderstanding "Oriental Nothingness";

- (1) Nothingness as the negation of existence;
- (2) Nothingness as the negation of predication;
- (3) Nothingness as the abstract idea;
- (4) Nothingness as imagined; and
- (5) Nothingness as unconsciousness.

Though *śūnyatā* is a transcendental concept, or more precisely that which transcends conceptualization, we may use linguistic conventions as the figure or *analogy of Nothingness* if we truly awaken to the absolute denial of Nothingness.

Hisamatsu lists six kinds of analogy of "Oriental Nothingness" as the *via positiva*;

- (1) Having nothing at all (nothingness as poverty in spirit);
- (2) Firmament over us nothingness as infinite extension or omnipresence);
- (3) Mind as the topos of everything (nothingness as spirituality);
- (4) Selfness (nothingness as the self-transcending subjectivity);
- (5) Unhindered activity (nothingness as freedom); and
- (6) Creative activity (nothingness as creativity operating without discrimination between created beings and the Creator).

Fritz Buri compares Hisamatsu's analogy of "Oriental Nothingness" with the analogy of Being in the Western tradition of natural theology."<sup>(41)</sup> Although he does not systematically discuss the implications of *analogia nullius entis* to Christian theology, his comparative analysis suggests a new perspective in which we can see the universal Truth which transcends the discrimination between East and West, or Buddhism and Christianity. The adjective "Oriental" would be superfluous if we realize "Absolute Nothingness" just in the same way that we find in the *Buddha Nature* no such discrimination between South and North as in human beings. <sup>(42)</sup>

As Hans Waldenfels and Van Bragt rightly point out, the Kyoto School philosophers of religion including Hisamatsu and Takizawa tend to disregard the Catholic tradition of Christianity."<sup>(43)</sup> They prefer subjective faith of Protestantism to the objectivity of Catholic truth. If they are interested in the medieval Christianity, their discussions seem to be about Christian mystics exclusively. The historical relation between Christian mystics and catholic theology is generally skipped over by them. Keiji Nishitani's *God and Absolute Nothingness*, for example, compares the works of the German mystic Meister Eckhart with Zen Buddhism on the basis of German vernacular sermons, but does not seem to recognize the background of medieval Catholic theology found in Eckhart's Latin works. If we mean by "Catholicism" the universal Truth of Christian faith (*veritas catholica*) which transcends the antithesis between subjective faith and objective truth, that is, the Truth as the middle way between the negative theology of mysticism and the positive theology of dogmatism, then we must reconsider the relation between Nishida's philosophy and Catholic Christianity.

There is no such thing as "Roman" or "Anglican" Catholicism in the strict sense of the word. We cannot identify Catholicism with a particular denomination of Christianity historically and culturally restricted within a particular climate of thoughts. The Catholic truth of Christian faith is the Ideal which Christians must seek and realize through the negation of "religious" ideologies. It necessitates a radical criticism of

ideology just in the same way that the *Middle Way* of Buddhism does in the examination of biased views (dṛṣṭi-parīkṣā). The purpose of Nishida's philosophy is to grasp the true individual in the Universal which he calls "the topos of Absolute Nothingness" that transcends every kind of categorial predication.<sup>(44)</sup> Through this transcendence of Nothingness over categories we are, far from being confined within subjective mysticism, totally open to the universal Truth; we can communicate with each other beyond the restriction of biased views only through the realization of the universal "*topos of Nothingness*". Nishida's quest for Nothingness can be compared with that of Being in the Western tradition of onto-theology from Parmenides to Hegel. As Aristotle elucidates in his *Metaphysics*, "being" can be "said in many ways", but it is not ambiguous in the sense of accidental homonym. "Being" has the unity of analogy with the distinction between central and derivative meanings. *Existentia* and *essentia* constitute two foci of "being" which presuppose the Aristotelian concept of *substance*.<sup>(45)</sup> "Being" as existence is properly said of the primary substance which is "neither predicated of nor immanent in any subject", and "being" as essence is properly said of the secondary substance which "can be predicated of some subjects but never immanent in any subject."

In contrast with Aristotle, Nishida's concept of *Nothingness as the topos* is characterized as that which is always predicate, never a subject. There is no such thing as nothing that is a predicable subject. "*Nothingness*" is *nothing other than the topos where beings are realized*. Faithful to the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, he rejects the concept of substance (svabhāva); individuals are not ready-made entities that exist and that then enjoy their own experiences. Rather, they are interdependent, and immanent in each other as "foci of the creative world" because an individual's experience of others constitutes its own existence. Thus, Nishida's concept of nothingness as *topos* suggests a new way of the Buddhist-Christian dialogue through *analogia nullius entis* as the synthesis of positive and negative ways. As this analogy concerns nothingness, it can face absolute transcendence in both Christianity and Buddhism, avoiding the fallacy of *via positiva* as the analogy of being. At the same time we can discuss the absolutely immanent elements both in Christian existence and Buddhist awakening because they are analogical in the *topos* of nothingness.

Kant's concept of transcendental subjectivity may help us to understand Nishida's meaning of "nothingness as *topos*". Nishida characterizes the field of consciousness as a *topos* of nothingness, in which "I think" (transcendental apperception) and "I will" (free will) are one. As there is no self-identical substratum of my ideas and will,

transcendental subjectivity is not a thing at all in spite of its involvement in every act of consciousness. Rather, it is pure activity in which the empirical subject posits itself and objects of experience. Nishida considers the field of consciousness as the necessary condition of the possibility of this substantial activity. Voluntarism is to be replaced by a kind of intuitionism in the *topos* of Nothingness. "Seeing without seer" in Nishida's concept of transcendental subjectivity denotes the *topos* of nothingness. Nishida goes beyond the celebrated law of self-identity, which Fichte formulates in his *Wissenschaftslehre* as the primordial Act (*Tathandlung*). What Fichte means by *Tathandlung* before every act of objective consciousness is not absolute in Nishida's sense, but possible only after its being radically negated in the *topos* of Absolute Nothingness."<sup>(46)</sup> Thus, Nishida recognizes self-identity ("I am I") as necessarily involving contradiction("I am not I") in the *topos* of Absolute Nothingness.

One of the most persistent objections against Nishida's philosophy raised by Christian theologians is that his concept of Nothingness lacks the elements of positivity and concreteness which Christians need in their faith and historical practice. To deal with this objection, I would like to discuss Nishida's concept of pure experience and its relation to the logic of *topos* in the second part of this paper. I shall argue that Nishida's theory of pure experience can be characterised both as radical positivism and as prolegomena to metaphysical topology of Nothingness, and then compare Nishida's philosophy of *topos* with Whitehead's process theology in the context of the Christian-Buddhist interfaith dialogue.



## Part II : Pure Experience and the Logic of Topos: Nishida's Philosophy and Process Theology

### 1. Nishida's theory of Pure Experience

John Cobb and Shizuteru Ueda have pointed out the congeniality of Nishida and Whitehead in their conception of "radical" experience which at least involves three issues: (1) Experience is a unified, concrete whole; (2) experience is prior to the individual; it is from experience that an individual is born and that a subject-object dichotomy comes to be; and (3) experience is active.<sup>(47)</sup> Drawing attention to the fact that Whitehead did not use the term "pure experience", Cobb has pointed out the ambiguities of the problematic adjective "pure" used by William James. Cobb contends:

In the first, James says that pure experience is "the immediate flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories." This could lead us to think that there are two kinds of experience occurring in succession; first, pure experience, and then, later, reflective experience. Yet in the second quote James says that "the instant field of the present is at all times what I call the <pure> experience." In that case reflective experience must also be pure since nothing can occur anywhere other than in the instant field of the present. Something of this ambiguity or tension may be present in Nishida as well. Whitehead emphatically agrees that the instant field of the present is where all experience occurs. He calls this concrescence, and concrescence is characterized by sheer immediacy. Speaking reflectively about the multiplicity of concrescences, we find that some of them involve reflection and some do not. But there can be no other locus of reflection than in the immediacy of concrescing experience.... In any case, from Whitehead's point of view all experience is pure experience as defined in the second quote from James. This is by no means an unimportant point. Indeed, I take it that this is at the heart of Nishida's project.<sup>(48)</sup>

From this emerge two interrelated problems to be examined. The first is whether we can recognize such ambiguity in Nishida's earliest work as Cobb has pointed out. The second is to what extent the concept of "concrescence", one of the proto-words in Whitehead's metaphysics, is relevant to the contents of Nishida's theory of pure experience, and then, how the logic of *topos* as a philosophical development of pure experience is related to the principle of relativity or solidarity in Whitehead's philosophy of organism. The first

problem would be comparatively easy if we accept Nishida's paradigm and realize that we cannot stand outside of pure experience: the moment we experience something, the very experiencing subjects that we recognize as ourselves have already been constituted by nothing other than pure experience. We will not recognize any ambiguities of pure experience nor tensions which have to be resolved in the reflective considerations afterwards. From the traditional non-radical empiricists' viewpoint, however, Nishida's definition of pure experience seems to contain equivocity and even contradiction, as it was criticized by Satomi Takahashi's review of *An Inquiry into the Good* just after its publication.<sup>51</sup> Nishida responded to Takahashi concerning the equivocity of "pure experience", saying that the intent of the first chapter of *An Inquiry into the Good* was "not to discriminate pure from impure and indirect elements of experience", but "to demonstrate that perception, thinking, will, and intellectual intuition are of the same kind".<sup>52</sup> Pure experience in Nishida's sense was neither a passive reception of objective sense-data given before subjective mental operations, nor the raw material of experience which must be given forms by an experiencing subject, but more fundamentally was "the subject-object called nature in its activity of self-constructing", if we use the phrase of Schelling's *Philosophy of Nature* which was referred to by both Whitehead and Nishida.<sup>53</sup> In order to understand this activity, Schelling must leap to an intellectual intuition of nature which the empiricist would reject as metaphysical, but Nishida did comprehend it within the range of pure experience at the outset. So what Nishida called pure experience, i.e. "the direct experience before mental operations" is not blind at all in the Kantian sense, for the intuition without categories is blind only when we deny the existence of intellectual intuition and limit human reason (*intellectus, Vernunft*) to inferior mental operations of understanding (*ratio, Verstand*). "Pure experience" is a proto-word (Gruntwort) which signifies the metaphysically ultimate activity; the whole range of our experience, including both sense-perception and intellectual-intuition, is the explicit order of its development. We may analogically say that pure experience has an implicit order of the absolute wealth of all kinds of experience just as pure light without colours contains implicitly in itself all colours in nature. The experience known as the result of reflective analysis is always, an abstract aspect of the self-unfolding of pure experience.

Cobb's identification of pure experience with "perception in the mode of presentational immediacy" is not relevant in this context, though he was not wrong in pointing out that all experience is (the self-unfolding of) pure experience in the case of Nishida, if we take

it as "the instant field of the present"<sup>(52)</sup> As pure experience is dynamic activity behind the subject-object dichotomy, it necessarily includes "perception in the mode of causal efficacy" as well as "the perception in the mode of presentational immediacy" in the Whiteheadian sense. The philosophy of pure experience, as Ueda aptly summarizes,<sup>(53)</sup> contains the possibility of integrating three mutually conflicting tendencies in the modern philosophy, namely, empiricism, metaphysics, and existential philosophy, in both the backward movement going behind the subject-object dichotomy and the forward movement of unfolding pure experience as ultimate actuality and the authentic self. It is noteworthy that Nishida did not think that he succeeded in actualizing to the full extent this possibility in his first work. In the preface to the 1936 edition of *An inquiry into the Good*, (26 years after he had first published it), Nishida admitted the limits of the theory of pure experience, and the necessity of reforming it in such a way that the world of pure experience should be interpreted as the world of historical reality, or as the world of creative activity (ποίησις) and action/intuition in the light of later developments of his philosophy. *An Inquiry into the Good* lacks "dialectic of absolute negation" which became characteristic in his later works, but develops the positive theme of pure experience. Its tone seems to us so simple and unsophisticated that we tend to overlook the importance of an original pure positivity in the development of negative dialectic in Nishida's philosophy.

## 2. Concrecence and pratīyasamutpāda

Cobb wrote that while studying Buddhist writers, he came to the conclusion that "what some of them described as pratīyasamutpāda was what Whitehead called concrecence."<sup>(54)</sup> He agrees to the tradition of Nāgārjuna as he has thought that "the distinctive attainment of Buddhist meditation is to realise that one is nothing but the many becoming one".<sup>(55)</sup> As the process of "the many becoming one" is called "concrecence" in Whitehead's metaphysics, we must explicate the meaning of this key word and relate it to the Buddhist standpoint of radical relationality expressed as the triad of dependent origination, non-substantiality, and emptiness.

"Concrecence" is usually interpreted etymologically as "grow together" (obsolete usage according to OED), but this reading fails to catch its Christian-Platonistic connotations. Nicolaus Cusanus used the corresponding Latin word (concrecere, concretum) in an analogous sense to signify the dynamism of the absolute infinite which

"contracts" itself to a finite concrete thing."<sup>(56)</sup> We may say that Whitehead and Cusanus had the same task in the common tradition of a Christian Platonism; they had to avoid the monistic fallacy of the "emanation" theory of Neo-Platonism as well as the abstract transcendentalism which lacked the concreteness of this world. In Cusanus the world is really immanent in everything in the mode of contraction or "concretum": *universum vero est in universis contracte*. God is also immanent in everything of the world, but in a way radically different from that in which the world is immanent in everything. Cusanus said, "The world is neither the sun nor the moon, but it is in the sun the sun, and in the moon the moon. God, however, is neither the sun in the sun, nor the moon in the moon". In other words, God is the principle of self-transcendence of the individual as a focus of the world. In Whitehead, God is "the principle of concretion" as well as "the organ of novelty aiming at intensification".<sup>(57)</sup> God cannot be identified with the world because the concurring individual (actual occasion) "prehends" God as the ground of its own subjectivity which transcends the givenness of the actual world.

In a sense Whitehead's attitude towards this world was more radically positive than Cusanus and other Christian Platonists; the dynamical rhythm of "the many becoming one and increased by one"<sup>(58)</sup> involves everything in the actual world, and every ideal entities in the realm of "eternal objects". Even God himself cannot be detached from this historical process; God must give totally himself as one of actual entities according to his "superjective nature". The immortality which Whitehead talked about is not that which the substantial soul will enjoy in the world beyond, but the "objective immortality" in this world, which is inseparable from "the becoming and the perishing of actual entities".<sup>(59)</sup> There is no actual entity that is unborn and immortal enjoying separated existence from this world. Ideas (eternal objects) are not actualities but potentialities of related and definite actual entities. The creature which becomes and perishes is objectively immortal in the Whiteheadian sense."<sup>(60)</sup>

The experience which Whitehead's speculative philosophy seeks to clarify must be so radical and pure that it may break through what Nishida expressed as "the contradictory self-identity" of one-many, subject-object, and divine-human.<sup>(64)</sup> The way in which this contradiction is expressed, resolved or synthesized in the unity of opposites is different among philosophers, reflecting the climate of thoughts which they inherit in their own traditions. Cobb stressed the necessity of dialogue between East and West for the mutual self-transformation, and put forward the thesis of complementarity between Christianity and Buddhism in so far as they are expressed, and crystallised into official

dogmas in linguistic forms. A successful dialogue can reveal the nature of pure experience out of which these outer forms are born, signifying a small portion of totality by abstraction. One of the important features of Nishida's later philosophy is the concept of *topos* (*Basho*) which Cobb found baffling in his dialogue with the Nishida School. Nishida's logic of *topos* in his later developments of the theory of pure experience is too large a topic to be discussed in detail here. Instead, I shall present the thesis of complementarity between *topos* and *process* in both Nishida's and Whitehead's theories in the next section.

### (Comments on how to translate "concrecence" in Japanese)

I usually translate "concrecence" into "genjyo" in Japanese. This word is obsolete in modern Japanese just as "concrecence" is in English; it is the very word that the Zen Master Dōgen in the thirteenth century frequently used in *Shōbōgenzo* (*The Eye and Treasury of the True Law*) to signify the actualization of the absolute and infinite in "the here-present" in the concrete act of experience. He said that the ultimate aspect of actuality is "this body, this mind, this world, this wind, and this rain, this sequence of daily going, living, sitting, and lying down, this series of melancholy, joy, action, and inaction, this stick and wand, this Buddha's smile, this transmission and reception of the doctrine, this study and practice, this evergreen pine and this ever unbreakable bamboo." ("The True Nature of Dharmas" in *Shōbōgenzo*)

At the 1985 conference of AAR, Steve Odin pointed out that Whitehead's epochal theory of time has something common with Dōgen's "Uji (being-time)" in their conceptions of time as "discontinuous continuity".<sup>(65)</sup>

Time is conceived as a continuous series of discontinuous epoch-making monads; Whitehead and Dōgen termed each temporal monad "the concrecence of an actual occasion" in the extensive continuum and "the genjyo of being-time(有時現成)" in the locus of "nikon(而今=And Now)" respectively. Dōgen was a great exception among other Zen Buddhists in that he was not satisfied with the *via negativa* in Zen Buddhism, i.e. the tradition of "the direct pointing to the Mind and no reliance on letters"; he had quite a low opinion of the significance of the silence of Vimalakīrti, who was generally highly commended in this tradition. In a glossary of *Shōbōgenzo*, "genjyo" occurs 262 times in important contexts of Dōgen's thoughts whereas "nothingness(無)" and "emptiness (空)" occur only 30 and 51 times respectively.<sup>(66)</sup> The characteristic usage of

"nothingness" and "emptiness" is pejorative in such a way that "(the absolute is) neither being nor nothingness" or "(we must transcend) both emptiness and being". On the other hand, "genjyo" is always used in an absolutely affirmative way as it signifies the actualization of enlightenment (genjyokōan). This seems to suggest that the proto-word (Gruntwort) which transcends the relative opposition of "being" and "nothingness" was neither "(Absolute) Nothingness" nor "(True) Emptiness" but rather "genjyo", the dynamic and concrete activity in "the here-present."

### 3. Process Theology and the Logic of *Topos*

It is remarkable that Whitehead calls his metaphysics "the philosophy of organism", but not "process theology". The reason why the successors of Whitehead have been called "process theologians" is that the ultimate purpose of PR is to elucidate the relationship of the world to God in history. It may be admitted that one of the main characteristics of this cosmological essay is the concept of dynamic process as actuality which subordinates the static (objective) beings as potentials, but we must remember that the fundamental theme of the philosophy of organism is to "elucidate the paradox of the solidarity or the connectedness of things:--the many things, the one world without and within".<sup>(67)</sup> Process theologians seem to have overlooked the importance of this paradox, i.e. the connectedness of actual entities which are mutually immanent in each other qua genuine individuals. What the philosophy of organism seek to preserve is "the discovery that the, process, or concrescence, of any one actual entity involves the other actual entities among its components".<sup>(68)</sup> The categoreal scheme of Whitehead's metaphysics was invented to develop "all those generic notions adequate for the expression of any possible interconnection of things".<sup>(69)</sup> In order to elucidate the solidarity of the world, Whitehead introduced "the principle of relativity" as "the one general metaphysical character attaching to all entities, actual and non-actual, that every item of its universe is involved in each concrescence".<sup>(70)</sup> Whitehead stressed the philosophical significance of this principle as follows:<sup>(71)</sup>

The principle of universal relativity directly traverses Aristotle's dictum, "A substance is not present in a subject". In fact if we allow for degrees of relevance, and for negligible relevance, we must say that every actual entity is present in every other actual entity. The philosophy of organism is mainly devoted to the task of making clear the notion of "being present in another entity". This phrase is here

borrowed from Aristotle; it is not a fortunate phrase, and in subsequent discussion it will be replaced by the term "objectification".

The concept of substance is often roughly characterized as that which is always an subject, never a predicate(object). This definition is not adequate because it does not articulate two different aspects in the *definiens* of substance between which Aristotle carefully distinguishes in his theory of Categories."<sup>(72)</sup> One is the aspect of grammatical predication which is schematized as "to be asserted of a subject (καθ' ὑποκειμένου τινός λεγέσθαι)"; the other is the ontological aspect of immanence which is schematized as "to be present in a subject(ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ τίς εἶναι)". The primary substance (say, Socrates) is defined as "that which is neither present in any subject nor asserted of any subject, whereas the secondary substance (say, animal) is not in any subject but can be asserted of some subject(say, dog)". The concept of substance, whether primary or secondary, certainly contains an element of mutual externality or exclusiveness among substances, and this kind of disconnectedness is the target of Whitehead's criticism against the ontological tradition since Aristotle.

Whitehead replaces the Aristotelian phrase of "being present in a subject" by "objectification". In this context, the object is always a universal element inherent in a subject and the "objective reality (*realitas objectiva*) " does not mean the reality of a thing which exists independently of any subject as it usually means in modern philosophy. Rather, it signifies the reality of other entities objectified for and immanent in an actual entity. According to the principle of relativity, everything can function as an object, i.e. every being has "the potentiality for being an element in a real concrescence of many entities into one actuality".<sup>(73)</sup> What makes an entity "actual" is its subjectivity in the process of concrescence, and the actuality without subjectivity should be rejected as "vacuous" in Whitehead's system,<sup>(74)</sup> The subjectivity of an actual entity is always self-transcending ; it gives itself as one object among others to the universe through the transition from the subjective immediacy to the objective immortality. In order to signify this character of self-transcendence, Whitehead replaces the concept of mere subject by that of "subject-superject". The actual entity is to be conceived both as a subject presiding over its own immediacy of becoming, and as a superject exercising its function of objective immortality in other actual entities.<sup>(75)</sup> The actual entity as a superject is a universal in the sense of its entering into the constitutions of other actual entities because it has become a "being" and it belongs to the nature of a "being" that it is a potential for every "becoming". <sup>(78)</sup> The actual entity in its own subjective immediacy is

an individual occasion of experience in the sense that the same process of concrescence cannot happen twice on account of "the insistent particularity of things experienced and of the act of experiencing."<sup>(77)</sup> The unity of opposites such as the concept of an actual entity as a subject-superject and as an individual-universal is a necessary condition for understanding the solidarity of the universe. According to Jorge Luis Nobo who has presented a new interpretation of the philosophy of organism,<sup>(78)</sup> the concept of the "receptacle" or "the extensive continuum" plays an ultimate role for the solidarity of the universe. Nobo distinguishes the metaphysical extensive continuum from the physical spatio-temporal continuum, and tries to demonstrate that the (metaphysical) extensive continuum and the eternal creativity are both sides of the same ultimate metaphysical coin. Extension and creativity will then be understood as distinguishable, but inseparable aspects of "the one ultimate reality grounding the becoming, the being, and the interconnectedness of actual entities." There may be some objections to Nobo's interpretation of Whitehead, because Whitehead himself did not include the extensive continuum in the categoreal scheme in the first part of PR, but classified it as one of applications of the categoreal scheme. This fact may refute Nobo's thesis that the extensive continuum and creativity are both sides of the same ultimate reality. Nobo anticipates this criticism,<sup>(80)</sup> saying that the categoreal scheme in the first part of PR should be considered neither as a final and accurate formulation of the metaphysical principles nor as the categories of the organic philosophy. I agree with Nobo that Whitehead's system has to be read in the making, but not to be read as a completed dead system, yet the fact remains that Whitehead himself did not include the extensive continuum in his categoreal scheme.

Apart from the problem of his faithfulness to the texts of PR, Nobo's reading of Whitehead is extremely interesting to us, for it will certainly provide the key for the mutual understanding between process theologians and the Nishida School. The logic of "Basho (*topos* or *receptacle*)" was originally proposed by Nishida in order to overcome essential limitations of the "objective" logic which fails to function in the presence of the contradictions of self-transcending actualities. The logic of Whitehead's metaphysics is also characterized by the interaction between objectivity and subjectivity in the creative process which grounds self-transcending actualities. The difficult but fundamental problems which are common to Nishida and Whitehead necessitate our reinterpretation or reconstruction of both systems in such a way that it will result in a new synthesis of process theology and the philosophy of *topos* in Nishida's sense. The prospects for such



reconstruction are bright, because the textual analysis of PR guarantees our reading of Whitehead in the terminology of both process and *topos*. The first part of PR is a prolegomena of the whole system, the second part is the explication of "the philosophy of organism" in contrast to other philosophers, and the third and fourth parts are "the cosmological scheme developed in terms of its own categoreal notions without much regard to other systems of thoughts".<sup>(81)</sup> The third part, titled "The Theory of Prehensions", is the theory of process which contains "the genetic analysis" of an actual occasion. The fourth part, titled "The Theory of Extention", is the theory of *topos* which contains "the extensive analysis" of an actual entity in the "cell theory" of actuality.<sup>(82)</sup> These two parts may be characterized as the real internal constitution of Whitehead's metaphysics which provides the philosophical foundation for "process theology" as the final interpretation of the whole system. Therefore, the structure of PR itself helps us to understand that process theology does need the logic of *topos* already present in Whitehead's theory of the extensive continuum.

What is the metaphysical role of the extensive continuum, then? The notion of a "continuum" involves both the property of indefinite divisibility and the property of unbounded extension. There are always entities beyond entities, because nonentity is no boundary.<sup>(83)</sup> The infinite openness of the extensive continuum is the essential characteristic of our "being in the world (*in-der-Welt-sein*)". This openness within the world is referred to by Ueda as "the double structure of *topos*" in his explanation of the horizontal structure of experience. Ueda writes ;<sup>(84)</sup>

The horizon moves as we move, but there is no horizon that has no direction beyond wherever we may go. This is because the horizon itself is finite in its essence....People do not always pay due attention to the fact the "beyond the horizon" belongs within the horizontal structure itself. I would like to emphasize specifically this point when it comes to understanding Nishida's thinking. The double nature as such of the horizon and the "beyond the horizon" constitutes the horizon of experience. By this double nature is opened the depth dimension. We cannot comprehend the beyond, but when we understand that it is beyond our comprehension, this "incomprehensible" is an absolute limitation and yet at the same time constitutes in exactly such a manner an avenue leading to the infinite *topos*.

The depth dimension which Ueda refers to above is indispensable to our understanding Nishida's philosophy, because we realize the meanings of "the unity of opposites

(*coincidentia oppositorum*)" in this dimension of the logic of *topos*. The doctrine of the simultaneous interpenetration of all entities which Nishida inherits from Hua-Yen Buddhism would be meaningless if we fail to recognize the paradox of the infinite openness within the world. Whitehead certainly recognizes this paradox of being-in-the-world, and develops the doctrine of mutual immanence in his philosophy of organism. Although we do not stand in a position of grasping the whole world from without, we "*prehend*" the whole world from within in a limited sense. We can accept the Hua-Yen doctrine of mutual immanence on the basis of the theory of the extensive continuum. According to Whitehead, the extensive continuum expresses "the solidarity of all possible standpoints throughout the whole process of the world."<sup>(85)</sup> All actual entities are related to one another according to the determinations of this continuum; all possible actual entities in the future must exemplify these determinations in relation to the already actual world. The reality of the future is bound up with the reality of this continuum. This continuum may be called the *topos* of the creative advance of the actual world, i.e. the becoming, the perishing, and the objective immortality of actual entities. As regards the role of the extensive continuum as the ground of the mutual immanence of all actual entities, Whitehead writes:<sup>(86)</sup>

Every actual entity, in its relationship to other actual entities is somewhere in the continuum, and arises out of the data provided by this standpoint. But in another sense it is everywhere throughout the continuum; for its constitution includes the objectifications of the actual world and thereby includes the continuum; also the potential objectifications of itself contribute to the real potentialities whose solidarity the continuum expresses. Thus the continuum is present in each actual entity, and each actual entity pervades the continuum.(underlines are mine)

Most process theologians seem to overlook the metaphysical role of the extensive continuum in the above citation. They argue only the unilateral immanence of one actual entity in another, i.e. the immanence in the mode of causal objectification, and thereby do not understand that the philosophy of organism needs the mutual immanence of all actual entities. One of the most controversial problems discussed in the dialogue between process theologians and the Nishida School is whether the fundamental relation of the world is "reversible" or "irreversible". Process theologians often criticize the doctrine of mutual immanence or interpenetration in *Hua-Yen* Buddhism on the ground that the relation of causal inheritance is non-symmetrical in the sense that the past and the future are irreversible. On the other hand, the Nishida

School stresses the radically reversible relationality in the concept of *sūnyatā*, or *pratītyasamutpāda*. Both fail to grasp the significance of Whitehead's theory of the extensive continuum as a mediating link of the dialogue between them. Yoshinori Takeuchi, an exponent of the Nishida School, criticizes "process" thinkers such as Hartshorne on the basis of Nishida's logic of *topos*, when he comments on Nishida's notion of the eternal Now:

Bergson and more recently an American philosopher, Professor Charles Hartshorne, think that all events of the past are restored in a metaphysical remembrance. It seems that Nishida thought through the problem above more radically: not only events of the past, but also those of the future, are all present in the eternal Now.<sup>(87)</sup>

Citing the above passage, Steve Odin criticizes Nishida on the basis of the doctrine of cumulative penetration in process theology:

In a symmetric theory of causal relatedness as posited by Nishida, relations are closed or determinate at both ends so that there is virtually no place for creativeness, novelty and freedom in such a framework. Nishida fails to address the critical problem at issue here, but instead ambiguously conjoins the notions of total interrelation and interpenetration with those of creativeness and free self-determination, despite the inherent contradictions which accompany this conjunction.<sup>(88)</sup>

Odin's criticism would be fair if Nishida really said that the future events *qua concreta* are present in the eternal Now. In fact, Takeuchi's comments are misleading in so far as Nishida never says that the future and the past have symmetrical relations in the deterministic sense. What Nishida calls "Eternal Now" is neither an object of mystical intuition nor the non-temporal abstraction of determinism, but the very condition for the possibility of spatio-temporal relations. Temporal experience is always and necessarily connected with the direct presence of something eternal which Whitehead calls the extensive continuum and which Nishida calls "Eternal Now" in his logic of *topos*. The radically symmetrical or reversible relationality holds in this eternal continuum but not on the level of concrete actuality. It is not correct to regard the irreversibility of time as something like an axiom. Obviously we cannot go back in time, but the very possibility of asserting the impossibility of going back to the past shows that our past is directly present to us in the eternal continuum. If all we have is present images and if the past is not directly present to us, it would be impossible for us to tell what objects of the past these present images represent. Memory and anticipation would be impossible without

the communion of the moments of time in Eternal Now, which Whitehead characterizes as the direct presence of the extensive continuum on each occasion of experience. The point which I want to make is that the communion of the moments of time not only is compatible with the asymmetric structure of time, but also provides a necessary condition for the possibility of a linear temporal series of cumulative experience. On the other hand, the linear temporal series of cumulative experience supplements the elements of concreteness for the eternal continuum, for the concrete always has finiteness against the background of real infinite potentialities. If Whitehead sometimes goes so far in equating Creativity and God with the metaphysical receptacle of the extensive continuum as Nobo suggests, we could certainly make this trend materialize as a synthesis of process theology and the philosophy of *topos* in Nishida's sense. The extensive continuum presents the ground of the mutual immanence of actual occasions, i.e. finite temporal actual entities, but it cannot guarantee the communion of God and the world in so far as God is conceived as the non-temporal and omnipresent actual entity. The extensive continuum is conceived as "a complex of entities (i.e. eternal objects) united by the various allied relationships of whole to part, and of overlapping so as to possess common parts, and of contact, and of other relationships derived from these primary relationships".<sup>(89)</sup> The extensive continuum defined in this way may well be called "the *topos* of relative beings", which Nishida considered as the first of three degrees of the gradually deepening conceptions of *topos*. In process theology, the dipolar God has been conceived either as a non-temporal actual entity or as a personal society of divine occasions. According to the logic of *topos*, I would like to present an alternative idea of God as the *topos* of Relative Nothingness which is the transcendental ground of relative beings. The concept of God as the *topos* of the world is necessary to the Whiteheadian panentheism because "it is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World".<sup>(90)</sup> God is not only an actual entity but also the *topos* of both ideal (eternal) and actual entities. Accepting the ontological principle of seeking every reason in actualities, Whitehead postulates that the whole realm of unrealized disjunct potentialities should be in the primordial nature of God as an actual entity. The Whiteheadian God as "the unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects"<sup>(91)</sup> is the *topos* of eternal objects as pure potentialities: this *topos* must be more fundamental than the extensive continuum as the *topos* of *real* potentialities. Therefore, the dipolar God can be reinterpreted as the *topos* of Relative Nothingness, as God is both the ground of actuality (in God's Primordial Nature) and a chief exemplification of actuality (in God's Consequent Nature). Whitehead's

metaphysics, neither the extensive continuum as the *topos* of relative beings nor the dipolar God as the *Topos* of Relative Nothingness is the metaphysical ultimate (the universal of universals) Not the metaphysical ultimate (the universal of universals) which can include God and the world as the "contrasted opposites". This ultimate is termed by Whitehead "Creativity"<sup>(92)</sup>; even "God is its primordial, non temporal accident."

In Nishida's philosophy, the metaphysical ultimate is called the *Topos* of Absolute Nothingness, in the true awareness of which there is neither God nor the Ego."<sup>(93)</sup> Whitehead need not include the extensive continuum in his categorical scheme because Creativity and God are analogous to the *Topos* of Absolute Nothingness and that of Relative Nothingness in Nishida's later works. The mutual immanence of God and the World is characterized by the reciprocal dynamics of Creativity in such a way that what is done in the World is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the World. The solidarity of God and the world as *contrasted antistrophes*<sup>(94)</sup> is grounded in the *Topos* of Absolute Nothingness, the dynamics of which Whitehead calls "creativity". The fathomless ground of God's self turns out to be the ground of ourselves in the dynamic creative process of the "inverse correlationality" because of "the absolutely contradictory self-identity" of the God-World relation.

### Part III : Nothingness as the Principle of Creative Transformation in the Historical World:

#### 1. Subjectivity in the Historical World: Heidegger, Whitehead, and Tanabe

In Nishida's logic of *topos* transcendental subjectivity as pure activity is grounded on the *Topos* of Absolute Nothingness as the contradictory self-identity. As we have seen in Part II, this logic must be complemented by the dynamic creative principle of the historical world. In this respect the examination of Tanabe's philosophy is necessary, because Tanabe reformulates Nishida's concept of Nothingness from the temporalistic perspective of a human existence related essentially to the contemporary society in the historical world. In Tanabe's conception, transcendental subjectivity should be characterized as primordial temporality operating as the dynamic principle of self-transcendence, and then this transcendence should be transformed into the immanent principle of the historical world through the mediation of primordial temporality with spatiality. His arguments always start from the relative to the absolute as the Ideal that regulates a finite human being's practice, though always beyond his or her reach. Whereas Nishida starts from Absolute Nothingness as the universal *topos*, and then considers history as "a self-determination of the dialectical universal", Tanabe starts from the experience of an individual which is irreducibly temporal, and then tries to relate the individual self to the contemporary society in the dialectical historical world.

In this section I shall discuss Tanabe's treatise, titled *From the Schematism of Time to the Schematism of the World*, which in 1932 he wrote after he had returned from Germany. This treatise may be considered as a synthesis of Nishida's metaphysical topology and the temporalistic analysis of human existence propounded by the young Heidegger, whom Tanabe encountered at Freiburg in the early 1920s. Nishida has shown that an individual's subjectivity is not a substance but an event which occupies place in the universal *Topos* of Absolute Nothingness. Heidegger has reformulated the Kantian schematism of time and transcendental imagination in such a way that a human being's subjectivity is not due to the atemporal pure ego but an event of self-affection which takes time because transcendence is primordially temporal. Then, Tanabe's task may be characterized as showing that transcendental subjectivity should be redefined as inter-subjectivity in the sense that the self of an individual is essentially both existential and social, and that its subjectivity takes time and place in essentially

dialectical unity in the historical world. Another aspect of Tanabe's treatise is that his philosophy is, as the theme of Kant's *First Critique* was, both of science and of religion; he combines the existential analytic of Heidegger with the contemporary revolution of science, especially the new discoveries of relativity physics which break through the limit of Newtonian principles presupposed by Kant. Tanabe's philosophy is noteworthy in that it aims at synthesizing two mutually conflicting trends of modern philosophy, i.e., existential philosophy on the one hand and scientific philosophy on the other. In this respect Tanabe is very similar to Whitehead. In agreement with the philosophical spirit of *Science and the Modern World*, Tanabe himself cites Whitehead in the important context of his treatise on Heidegger. In *From the Schematism of Time to the Schematism of the World*, Tanabe discusses and criticizes Heidegger's revisionary reading and reformulation of Kant's theory of transcendental imagination and the Problem of Metaphysics.

Appreciating Whitehead's theory of relativity and his philosophy of nature, Tanabe replaces the Kantian theory of schematism of time by the schematism of space-time as the extensive continuum in relativity physics, thus criticizing Heidegger's concentration on transcendental imagination and primordial time which, according to Tanabe, essentially suffers from the remnants of subjective idealism.

In *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant proceeded from the thesis that "there are two sources of human knowledge which probably spring from a common, but to us unknown root, namely, sense and understanding."<sup>(95)</sup> He proposed to begin his transcendental inquiry only from the point at which the common root of our faculty of knowledge divides and throws out these two stems. But what is the origin of these two components of human knowledge? If sense and understanding have a common root, we could comprehend them only when we discover wherefrom they spring. Identifying this common root with the transcendental imagination implanted in primordial time, Heidegger concludes that time is not only the form of the objects of experience but also that of the experiencing self; and that temporality is not the mere characteristic of empirical objects but essentially the ground of the free transcendence of the subject. The pure finite self has in itself a temporal character, and the fundamental determination which Kant provides for transcendental apperception must, according to Heidegger, first become intelligible through this temporal character. "Time and *the I think* are no longer opposed to one another as unlike and incompatible: they are the same."<sup>(96)</sup> In the Kantian perspective, the ego is not "in time", though this does not mean that it is a-temporal. Rather, "the ego is so temporal that it is time itself and only as such in its very essence is it possible at

all." <sup>(97)</sup> Tanabe agrees with Heidegger that the ego is not "in time" just because it is time itself, or "projects" time, but objects that Heidegger does not understand Kant's argument against subjective idealism added in the second edition of CPR. Temporality without spatiality is an abstraction, and the laying of the foundation of the phenomenal world exclusively on the basis of primordial time tends to be idealistic in the subjectivist sense; there would be no such thing as the external world. The ego is not only temporal but also spatial in its dialectical unity, and Kant stressed in his refutation of idealism the fact that the temporal determination of myself is possible only through my knowledge of spatial (external) objects in the environment. In other words, the relation between time and space is more fundamental than that between time and myself as a spatial object. Temporality and spatiality constitute the extensive continuum as inseparable wholeness, though they are irreducible to each other. Time as pure self-affection is inseparable from external things in space. The relation between time and space must be dialectically reciprocal in such a way that both constitute space-time as the extensive continuum in which subjectivity of an individual self should be regressed as inter-subjectivity of the social self. The contemporary world, essentially spatially related to but causally independent of the self, is irreducible to the actual world temporally related to the self. The external but communal character of contemporary actual entities is constituted by the schematism of the extensive continuum, or what Tanabe calls *the schematism of the world*. Concerning the relation between the causally independent but communal contemporaries and the creative advance of the actual worlds, Tanabe cites Whitehead; <sup>(98)</sup>

When the events belong to the contemporary domain (*Zwischengebiet*), they constitutes the other worlds causally independent of me....

In Whitehead's philosophy of organism actuality is considered as process as the inner development of events which are monads of becoming as the synthetic unity between space and time. These events are independent as monads (in the contemporary domain) and at the same time new individuals temporally constituted by the creative advance of totality.

Kant was the philosopher who first, fully and explicitly, introduced into philosophy the conception of an act of experience as a constructive functioning, transforming subjectivity into objectivity. The purpose of *the schematism of the world* was to make this functioning reciprocal and more dynamic; for the subjective idealist the process whereby there is experience is a transition from subjectivity to apparent objectivity only; Tanabe complements this analysis with the inverse affectation of the world on an



individual and also explains the process as proceeding from objectivity to subjectivity as well, thus making the relation between an individual and the world completely dialectical.

Independent of Heidegger and Tanabe, Whitehead stresses both the epoch-making character of the temporary ego and the importance of its environmental world in this way:<sup>(99)</sup>

Descartes' "cogito ergo sum" is wrongly translated, "I think, therefore I am." It is never bare thought or bare existence that we are aware of. I find myself as essentially a unity of emotions, enjoyments, hopes, fears, regrets, valuations of alternatives, decisions--all of them subjective reactions to the environment as active in my nature. My unity—which is Descartes' "I am"—is my process of shaping this welter of material into a consistent pattern of feelings. The individual enjoyment is what I am in my role of a natural activity, as I shape the activities of the environment into a new creation, which is myself at this moment; and yet, as being myself, it is a continuation of the antecedent world.

Whitehead characterises the philosophy of organism as the inversion of Kant's philosophy. Whitehead "seeks to describe how objective data pass into subjective satisfaction, and how order in the objective data provides intensity in the subjective satisfaction; for Kant, the world emerges from the subject; for the philosophy of organism the subject emerges from the world--a superject rather than a subject".<sup>(100)</sup> The word "object" thus means an entity which is a potentiality for being a component of feeling; the word "subject" means the entity constituted by the process of feeling, and includes this feeling. This inversion of Kant would be meaningless unless the concept of transcendental subjectivity in the Kantian schematism of time is replaced by the Whiteheadian concept of *subject-superjectivity in the schematism of the world*, i.e., the extensive continuum.

The extensive continuum is a necessary prerequisite of Whitehead's concept of society as a spatio-temporal nexus of actual occasions: "a set of entities is a society in virtue of a defining characteristic shared by its members, and in virtue of the presence of the defining characteristic being due to the environment provided by the society itself."<sup>(101)</sup> The point here is that a society mediates temporal subjectivity with spatial objectivity in such a way that the nexus of actual occasions constitute "public matters of fact". In the same way *the schematism of the world* is closely related with *the logic of species* which Tanabe first launched in the celebrated paper, "The Logic of Species and the Schematism of the World". What Tanabe means by the logic of species is "the logic of social being"

which dialectically mediates individual existence and universal *topos*. The temporalistic analysis of the subjectivity of an individual existence should be combined with the topological synthesis of the *subject-superjectivity* of the same individual essentially as a social being.

## 2. Tanabe's Philosophy of Science after Metanoetics

Yoshiharu Hakari, one of the representative scholars of Non-Church Christianity in Japan, has propounded the thesis that grace cannot complete nature without abolishing it, thus overcoming both the Thomistic principle that *gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit* and the Kantian principle of the religion within the limit of mere reason.<sup>(102)</sup> This thesis may be considered as the retrieval of the leit motif of Tanabe's *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. The completion of nature through its annihilation is considered by Tanabe as the paradox of grace.<sup>(103)</sup> According to him this paradox is a fact in the transcendence of natural reason (*metanoesis*) as the self-power which, through the absolute repentance (*metanoia*) of guilt, has experienced death-resurrection by the grace of the "Other Power", i.e. *Nothingness-qua-Love*. The range of *metanoetics* is wide enough to include both Christianity and Pure Land Buddhism; *metanoetics* can be viewed not only as the modern version of Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* but also as "dialectics of Christian philosophy" because it is "the philosophy which is not a philosophy" having abolished the self-power of natural reason.<sup>(104)</sup> Metanoetics is neither dogmatic theology nor buddhology based on any established religious authority.

Keiji Nishitani points out that the unique characteristic of *metanoetics* consists in the absolutely critical use of "**reason resurrected from death by grace**", which does not come from the merely religious attitude of a penitent person.<sup>(105)</sup> *Metanoetics* has its own dialectics in order to "dig" to a deeper foundation which resurrects both religion and philosophy. Nishitani recommends us to read Tanabe's books on the philosophy of science written after *Metanoetics* if we are to understand the full scope of the dialectic of Tanabe's philosophy as *metanoetics*.<sup>(106)</sup>

Tanabe has written many treatises on the philosophy of science after he retreated to Karuizawa; "An Essay on the Philosophy of Dynamics", "The Development of Mathematical Philosophy from the Perspective of Historicism", "A New Methodology of Theoretical Physics", "The Dialectic of Relativity Physics", etc.. Although the titles of these works do not seem to have any relevance to the philosophy of religion, Tanabe himself considered them as "summing up his lifelong philosophical thoughts". In order to

understand the significance of these works, we must know what Tanabe means by "the philosophy of science". Just as the philosophy of religion should be distinguished from theology or a religious philosophy, in the analogous way the philosophy of science in Tanabe's sense should be distinguished from "scientific philosophy" which logical positivists advocated in the 1930s.

As Hans Reichenbach emphasized in *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* logical positivists reduced the task of philosophy to the logic of science and the linguistic analysis of moral language.<sup>(107)</sup> As theology and metaphysics were deprived of cognitive meanings, "scientific philosophy" in this sense tends to be *ancilla scientiae* which announces the end of philosophical speculations in the age of technology and science. Although the influence of logical positivism has declined, "the philosophy of science", even when distinguished from "scientific philosophy" turns to be a special branch of philosophy whose task is to analyse philosophical problems of a scientific inquiry; it is usually considered as a self-sufficient branch of philosophical study which is supposed to be quite independent of, and indifferent to the problems of "the philosophy of religion".

On the contrary, Tanabe assumed that the philosophy of science is complementary with the philosophy of religion in such a way that the former mediates science with religion and the latter religion with science.<sup>(108)</sup> Both science and religion would remain incomplete without our philosophical reflections on their common but unknown foundation.

In what way, then, should we seek this foundation after the Kantian critical philosophy has proven the existence of the inevitable paradoxes and antinomies involved in such trials? If we apply a scientific method to the problems of religion, or a religious criterion to the scientific discussions in the naive and unreflexive manner, then the result would be disastrous both to religion and science; it is a grave mistake to assume that science supercedes religion or religion anticipates science because they do not provide competing accounts of the same subject matter.

According to Tanabe, the common but unknown root of science and religion could be unearthed only when we are aware of the basic limitations of our faculties in both science and religion; he interprets the paradoxes and antinomies of "pure reason" in the Kantian sense not only as the limitations of a finite human reason, but also as that which shows the very path of historical practice through a radical self-denial of theoretical reason to the Real that mediates two incommensurables.

In the essay, titled "Science, Philosophy, and Religion", Tanabe writes: <sup>(109)</sup>

The critical spirit of philosophy cannot remain in a neutral standpoint concerning

the relation between science and religion. The coexistence of religion and science considered as independent of and indifferent to each other is not a satisfactory situation. Philosophy has to break through the "statics" of theoretical reason and to undertake its own ideal in a humble awareness of its own self-contradictions in the "dynamics" of historical praxis.... Reason must affirm its own destiny to walk the way of "action-faith-witness" after having been abolished theoretically but "ressurrected" practically in the depth of antinomies and paradoxes.... The task of philosophy is to mediate, i.e., to establish something like *analogia entis* between science and religion which do not admit any direct unification.

Tanabe compares the prime task of the philosophy of science with the solving of the *Kōans of science* in the same way that Zen practitioners concentrate themselves on solving "*Kōan*", which means the Truth manifested as a religious paradox. In *A Personal View of the Philosophy of Shōbōgenzo* Tanabe signifies by Kōan the universal Truth that cannot be manifest without paradoxes, which has been suggested by Dōgen's usage of Genjyo Kōan (Manifesting Truth through awakening)", thus including coincidentia oppositorum of science as well as religion.<sup>(110)</sup>

According to Tanabe *Philosophy as Metanoetics* is a response to the ethico-religious Kōan which he had to face at the time of Japan's defeat in 1945.<sup>(111)</sup> Anticipating the coming unconditional defeat of Japan, he asked Nishida to send his message to the ex-prime minister and member of the Imperial House, Konoe, who had been a student of Nishida at Kyoto University. In this message Tanabe tried to persuade the Imperial House to decide to give all its properties to the people for the reconstruction of the nation after the war at its own initiative rather than from the compulsion of the Allied Powers, so that the Imperial House might be the true symbol of the unity of the people by its self-negating decision."<sup>(112)</sup> Although his message was rejected by Nishida as unrealistic, this episode shows how Tanabe, having repented his tacit agreement to imperialistic policies, felt responsible for the disastrous results of the "holy" war, the war which he could not have prevented during the period of ultra-nationalism. The leitmotif of Tanabe's *Philosophy as Metanoetics* was to criticize radically the totalitarian ideology of the wartime Japan through *metanoia*(repentance) of its crimes. What makes Tanabe distinct among the Kyoto school is that he has thought through the problems of history and ethical practice from the standpoint of Nothingness. He criticizes and reformulates Nishida's philosophy of Absolute Nothingness so that he can reject clearly any monistic or totalitarian interpretation of this philosophy. According to Tanabe, philosophy cannot begin from a self-determination of wholeness because the totality of beings cannot be an

object of our intuition. Rather, we can only move from "the microscopic and local" analysis to "the macroscopic and universal" synthesis, from "the differential" equations to "the integral" solutions as Tanabe often characterizes his own methodology in terms of mathematical physics.<sup>(113)</sup> In his philosophy of science, Tanabe compares Nishida's conception of Absolute Nothingness as *topos* analogously with Lorentz's or Newton's idea of absolute space as something like *sensorium dei*. Tanabe prefers Einstein's "relative and local" approaches to Lorentz's "absolute and universal" because the latter remains to be a mere dogma whereas the former has a firm foundation in our experiments and observations.<sup>(114)</sup> Einstein's theory has its own concept of absolute existence, but this absolute is neither mere-space nor mere-time, but space-time as the four dimensional manifold which we can describe only through our experimental measurements, or what Tanabe calls "action-realization(行為的自覚)" although we cannot "intuit" the totality of space-time.<sup>(115)</sup> One of the important amendments which Tanabe has made concerning Nishida's logic of *topos* is that Tanabe has considered "the contradictory self-identity" as essentially temporally mediated rather than as the absolute principle of immediate intuition. Tanabe criticizes Nishida's metaphysical topology of Nothingness for its lack of dialectics of dynamic temporal activity: philosophy based on the unity of opposites without temporal mediation would remain to be a "speculative" mysticism without any positive principle of historical practice. *In the Logic of Species and the Schematism of the World*, Tanabe writes ;<sup>(116)</sup>

Although (Heidegger's fundamental) ontology of temporal existence needs synthesis with spatial elements if it is to become a concrete ontology of a social being through *the schematism of the world*, these spatial elements should not be considered as the spatial expression of the infinite *topos* of Nothingness, or the Eternal Now.... *Coincidentia oppositorum* in the *topos* of Nothingness conceived as the mere spatiality is nothing more than the static unity of mystical intuition and cannot be the dynamic unity between time and space; this unity would be possible through the mediation of a subject's practice rather than through an immediate intuition of the substratum.

Tanabe transforms the unity of contradictories in the logic of *topos* into the contrasted opposites in the historical process of becoming which involve novelty and a discontinuous jump in crisis.<sup>(117)</sup> For him history has become "the overall Kōan" in which the metaphysical topology of a static being is to be superseded by *the innovative principle of nothingness in the historical world*. Nothingness considered as mere spatiality which abstracts somewhat from a temporal becoming is the mere concept of

pure nothingness which Hegel has identified with the pure being in his dialectics; therefore this is not to be confused with Absolute Nothingness which Tanabe considers essentially as the creative principle of self-transformation."<sup>(118)</sup>

Nothingness as the transformative principle of mediation is a key to our understanding of *Philosophy as Metanoetics*; just as Pure Land Buddhists of Jyōdoshinshū, abandoning their own self-power, calls on the name of Amida Buddha as the savior and mediator of sentient beings for their attainment of Freedom(nirvāna), in the same way Tanabe, underscoring the essential finitude of human existence, recommends both *metanoia* (repentance) and *metanoesis* (transcendence of reason) as the necessary means by which we are permitted to attain freedom through dying to and being resurrected from the historical world by the grace of the Other Power. If we were able to observe history *sub specie aeternitatis*, repentance and hope would be meaningless because it would be a folly to care about what has been determined in the past or will necessarily be in the future, as Spinoza clearly states in his *Ethics*."<sup>(119)</sup> But we cannot really observe history as if it were an object of our intuition because our existence itself has a temporal "ecstatic" structure which is always going beyond or overcoming a previously determined self; it is a "thrown projection" as well as a "projected thrownness" that conforms to and mediates the determination of the past, a transformation of the determined into the determining, and therefore it has to be seen as "an opening up to nothingness." Concerning the relation between the historicity of human reason and *metanoesis*, Tanabe writes<sup>(120)</sup>

Human reason must be driven through the impasse of contradiction to its own death. And, there, mediated by the transformation of absolute nothingness, it must be restored to a middle way that belongs to neither pole of the contradiction but develops in a new theory as a synthesis of both. This is a circular movement of creativity, a "revolution-qua-restoration" that forms the basic structure of history...In *metanoesis* the past is not merely a "thrownness" that has passed away and is out of our control, but a present incessantly renewing its meaning and caught up in an unending circularity in accord with the future that mediates it. We might say that "thrown project" is transformed into a "projected thrownness". Whereas Heidegger considers death as the ultimate possibility for *Dasein*, representing the utmost horizon of its existential projection of future potentialities, Tanabe, complementing "thrown project" with "projected thrownness", provides a dialectical category for "the existential communion" which the mere existential analysis of *Dasein* does not recognize between the dead and the living. In this respect, Tanabe's dialectics of "thrown project" and "projected

thrownness" in the existential communion corresponds to the Whiteheadian concept of *subject-superject*, and, therefore, to the concept of *objective immortality* whereby what is divested of its own living immediacy becomes a real component in other living immediacies of becoming."<sup>(121)</sup> In *Either Ontology of Life Or Dialectic of Death* dedicated to Heidegger on his 70th birthday, Tanabe criticizes Heidegger's analysis of being-toward-death (*Sein zum Tode*) as a non-relational(*unbezügliche*) solipsistic singularity for its ignoring the essential relatedness of the living with the dead.

Tanabe underscores the existence of *communio sanctorum*<sup>(122)</sup> which the living hold with the dead. Whereas Heidegger dealt with death as a singular point of his ontology of life, Tanabe may be said to have resolved and redeemed this singularity into life in his dialectics of death. Just as Mahāyāna Buddhists transformed the Hīnayāna concept of nirvāṇa as absolute death into the saving principle of life in their conception of *aparatiṣṭhita-nirvāṇa* (the nirvāṇa that does not remain in absolute nirvāṇa on account of great compassion( *karuṇā*), Tanabe has transformed Heidegger's solipsistic concept of absolute death into an essentially communal one, thus expanding the context in which we can dialectically discuss both death and resurrected life.

### 3. Natural Theology based on *Analogia Nullius Entis*:

#### Big Bang Cosmology and the Concept of Nothingness in Modern Physics

Tanabe has recognized an analogy between two trends of modern thoughts: the development of existential philosophy after Heidegger and the growth of a scientific philosophy of a new cosmology after the discovery of relativistic quantum theory. The central theme of his latest works on the philosophy of science concerns the dialectic of relativity and quantum physics, viewed from the perspective of *Nothingness as the principle of creative transformation*. Thirty years after his death, modern physics seems to face the very *problematik* that Tanabe foresaw in these works.

In the last section of Part 1, I have discuss a new possibility of natural theology based on *analogia nullius entis*, in an effort to retrieve and develop Tanabe's philosophy of science in the light of the latest development of scientific cosmology in the 1980s.

Relativistic quantum cosmology is one of the most controversial frontiers of modern physics. The discovery of astronomical vestiges of the Big-Bang in the 1960s has made it possible for physicists to tackle metaphysical problems concerning the origin and the destiny of our universe.<sup>(123)</sup> In the Western Middle Ages, God's creation of heaven and

earth in seven days was a topic of great importance amongst Christian theologians. Today, it is the physicist Steven Weinberg's story of "the First Three Minutes" after the Big Bang about fourteen billion years ago which engages the minds of those concerned with the origin of the universe.<sup>(124)</sup> Some physicists, unsatisfied with merely describing the universe after the Big Bang, boldly set about resolving the Big-Bang-singularity itself. The dogma of *creatio ex nihilo*, which was considered as one of the incomprehensible mysteries in Christianity, is now discussed by physicists as a genuine theoretical possibility.<sup>(125)</sup> Leibniz summed up the fundamental problems of metaphysics in the question: "why are there beings rather than nothing at all?" His answer was based on the principle of sufficient reason, which ultimately appealed to God as the First Cause.<sup>(126)</sup> Heidegger restated the above question with capitalized "Nichts", and criticized onto-theology for its explication of Being.<sup>(127)</sup> Metaphysics is not sufficient for the solution of the *problematik* of Being because the "root" of beings is not a being at all. We find an analogous situation in the realm of natural science today, in the search of the ultimate ground of being. As quantum physics does not permit the unlimited use of the principle of sufficient reason, the creation of the universe from nothingness, which has been formulated as a fluctuation of the vacuum, might well be considered as a mere contingency in the sense suggested by Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty. Such a conception of nothingness seems necessarily to result in a kind of paradox because it explicitly contradicts one of the most fundamental principles of ontology: that nothing comes out of nothing, or everything comes out of something. I would like to discuss two interrelated problems which have some bearing on the transcendental dialectics of Kant's *First Critique*, and then to put forward "the overall Kōan" of the Big Bang cosmology; why are there beings rather than nothing at all?

The first problem to be considered concerns the "decidability" of the cosmological problems; is it possible for us to determine, empirically or speculatively, whether the whole universe is finite or infinite in space and time? As the universe qua the spatio-temporal totality of beings necessarily includes ourselves who ask the cosmological question, we cannot observe it from the outside in relation to space and time. Only able to inquire into the universe from the inside, we cannot in principle stipulate the spatio-temporal boundary conditions of the universe. How, then, can we apply the fundamental laws of physics to the whole universe without knowing its boundary conditions? And even if we can do without necessary boundary conditions on the purely theoretical level, how can the Big Bang cosmology claim empirical certainty concerning the origin of the universe when, according to the accepted theory, we human



beings, are only the latest products of the expanding universe?

The second problem to be considered concerns the modern version of the cosmological arguments for a God who imposes order on the universe; how has the universe achieved its organization in its history since the Big Bang? The second law of thermodynamics tells us that any closed system cannot evolve from chaos to order. If there is any system evolving from chaos to order, it must be open, and therefore capable of admitting new information through its interaction with the outside environment. Therefore, if we admit the creative evolution from the simple to the complex material structures of the universe, we would have to characterize the whole universe as an open system. But what is it to which the universe open? If it is something, then it must be included in the universe. On the other hand, if the universe is a self-sufficient closed system, how can we explain the creative evolution from the Big Bang to the present universe--a process which includes the creation of human beings who can ask the being of the universe? One may think that the impossibility of resolving the above cosmological problems had been established by Kant's *First Critique*. Certainly, Kant's stated intention was to prove that the a priori use of pure reason cannot determine whether the universe is finite or infinite because of the antinomy which that endeavour necessarily involved. I would like to stress, however, that the problem is more complex for us than it was for Kant. Due to the scientific revolution caused by the theory of relativity and quantum physics, Kant's cosmological arguments can no longer be acceptable without suitable modifications. Kant was able to assume the universal validity of Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics as *quid facti*, and to ask the *quid juris*. Thanks to Einstein we have come to believe that both Newtonian physics and Euclidian geometry are not universally valid, and that their validity should therefore be claimed only as a *posteriori* knowledge. Moreover, the status of the fundamental laws of physics which Kant considered as *synthetic a priori* has been drastically changed; for example, the conservative law of matter has been unified with that of energy, and the law of causal change has been reformulated on terms of probability theories.

As Tanabe has pointed out, Kant's argument of transcendental analytics proved to be insufficient for the explanation of the problems of modern physics.<sup>(128)</sup> This means that while Kant's laying of the foundation of empirical science in judgement *synthetic a priori* has become dubious, physicists today are beginning to consider cosmological problems that Kant rejected as unanswerable on purely rational grounds *a priori* in his arguments dealing with transcendental dialectics.

The finite-versus-infinite antinomy of the universe was resolved by Einstein in his

1917 paper, "Cosmological Considerations on the General Theory of Relativity".<sup>(129)</sup> In this celebrated paper, Einstein set out to resolve the paradoxical problem of how to describe the whole universe including ourselves from the inside—that is, how to apply the differential laws of relativity physics to the whole universe, and how to integrate them without the arbitrary specification of its boundary conditions. Einstein has shown that this paradox of impossible boundary conditions can be resolved if our universe proves to be a non-Euclidean, Riemannian space with a positive curvature on empirical grounds a posteriori. In this case, our universe is to be described as a spatially finite universe with no boundaries, and the condition of having no boundaries would serve as a boundary condition for the application of the universal laws of physics to the universe. Einstein's predilection with the eternity of the universe led him to introduce the "cosmological constant" in order to make his model of the universe temporally stable. In 1922 Einstein's static cosmology was modified by Friedmann in such a way that it could describe the unstable evolving universe; and this was verified by astronomical observations of Hubble's law.<sup>(130)</sup>

The problem of the eternity of the universe was empirically decided by Penzias and Wilson, whose 1964 discovery of background radiation as the remnant of the Big Bang earned them a Nobel Prize in 1978. The standard theory of the Big Bang is theologically important, for it tells us on empirical grounds that the universe is spatially finite though it has no boundaries; that the universe has a history spanning about fourteen billion years; and that the material structure of the universe has been formed in the process of its expansion.<sup>(131)</sup>

It is noteworthy that the method of relativistic cosmology is characterized by the idea that the topology of space-time is inseparable from the gravitational field. The universe as a whole must be taken into consideration because of the gravitational field which makes the idea of an isolated physical system untenable.

Moreover, the topological thinking of relativity physics demands that the concepts of spatial distance and temporal duration be modified in such a way that they become frame-independent measurable quantities, to be reconsidered in terms of four dimensional space-time. There is a sense in which we can say that Big Bang which occurred fourteen billion years ago is nearer to us than the events we read about in yesterday's newspaper—if, that is, we can define "nearness" in terms of the four-dimensional distances of relativistic cosmology. The fact that we can now observe the evidence of the Big Bang in Penzias and Wilson's background radiation means that the beginning of the universe can be located on the backward light cone at a zero

distance from the here-present event. We may say that the relativistic cosmology, through combining Riemann's idea of the non-Euclidean manifold of space-time with empirical evidences, has answered the first antinomy of Kant's transcendental dialectics in such a way that the universe has a temporal beginning, that it is spatially finite in spite of having no boundaries, and that it is now expanding itself in the cosmological history. Although we have evidences of the past singularity of the Big Bang, we cannot have such a direct evidence of the future singularity of the Big Crunch as the global "death" of the universe. Concerning the future of the universe, we have not empirical evidences enough to predict whether the universe has a temporal end or not. The "birth" problem of the universe, however, seems inseparable from the "death" problem because we can have empirical evidences of the black hole which can be considered as a local "death" of the universe. The existence of the black hole which relativistic cosmology theoretically predicts would give us essential information concerning the life-death problem of the universe.

Rejecting the idea of the eternal universe, modern physics has solved another paradox concerning the "heat death" of the universe. In 1865 Clausius predicted on the basis of the cosmological formulation of the two laws of thermodynamics; the entropy as the measure of disorder of the universe will increase to the maximum—thermodynamic equilibrium—, whereas its energy always remains constant.<sup>(132)</sup> This prediction was paradoxical. If the universe is eternal in the sense of the conservation law of mass and energy, why did it not reach to the state of maximum entropy long ago? And if the universe has a beginning in time, what or who "wound up the clock" of cosmic maximum complexity and order in the beginning? Such a concept of *deus ex machina* would be formidable both to scientists and theologians.

After the discovery of the Big Bang, physicists began to reconsider Clausius' cosmological formulation of thermodynamics. According to our best scientific understanding of the primeval universe, it does seem as though it began in the simplest state of all and that the currently observed complex structures and elaborate activity only appeared subsequently. Clausius thought that the evolution of the universe from simplicity to complexity would be impossible and the "heat death" would be an inevitable result. Certainly, the second law of thermodynamics requires that the order of any closed system should give way to disorder, so that complex structures tend to decay to a final state of disorganized simplicity. Therefore, if the universe as a whole is a closed system, the evolution of the universe from simplicity to complexity would be impossible and the "heat death" would be an inevitable result. The fact of creative evolution means that the

universe cannot be a closed system. As there is nothing outside of the universe, we must say that the universe as the totality of beings is open to nothingness. This paradox of "open wholeness", the apparent conflict of the creative evolution of the universe with the second law has only recently been solved. According to Paul Davies, Fan Li Zhi, and other physicists, the coupling of thermodynamics and the cumulative effects of universal gravity opens the way to the injection of order into cosmic material by the cosmological gravitational field.<sup>(133)</sup> The expanding universe can generate order in the cosmic material itself, thus preventing thermodynamic equilibrium. Moreover, the expansion of the universe should be considered as a continuous creation of space rather than as its scattering of material beings into empty space as the ready-made framework. The universe as a whole can be an open system through its spontaneous generation of order in cosmic material during its dynamic expanding process.

Tanabe argued from philosophical reasons in his *Dialectics of Relativity Physics* that relativity physics contains contradictions which cannot be solved in its own terms unless it is integrated with quantum physics.<sup>(134)</sup> Both relativity and quantum theories can provide only partial descriptions of the universe; the former deals with the extremely macroscopic whereas the latter with the extremely microscopic aspects of the same universe. In 1970 Penrose and Hawking mathematically proved that the Big Bang as well as the black hole are inevitable results of Einstein's theory of general relativity. Relativistic cosmology is considered by them to be incomplete for the explanation of the life-death problem of the universe; it must be complemented by quantum physics because there seems to have been *the coincidence between maximum and minimum* both in the beginning and end of the universe. By a simple application of quantum mechanical principles, it is estimated that, at scales of  $10^{-33}$  cm and durations shorter than  $10^{-43}$  second, general relativity will have to be supplemented by a theory that correctly handles the quantum effects of the very early universe. It is in this domain of quantum cosmology that we seem to confront what may be called the ultimate Kōan of physics: why are there beings rather than nothing at all?

In 1982 the Russian physicist Alex Villenkin launched a relativistic quantum theory of *cosmogenitum ex nihilum* in his paper, titled "Creation of Universes from Nothing".<sup>(136)</sup> The American physicist Heinz Pagel commented on Vilenkin's idea of Nothingness as the earliest state of the universe<sup>(136)</sup>

The Nothingness "before" the creation of the universe is the most complete void that we can imagine--no space, time, or matter existed. It is a world without place, without duration or eternity...Yet this unthinkable void converts itself in the

plenum of existence --a necessary consequence of physical laws. Where are these laws written into the void? It would seem that even the void is subject to law, a logic that existed prior time and space.

Vilenkin's answer to the fundamental Kōan of physics might well be characterized as saying that there is something rather than nothingness because nothingness is creative. He used an analogy of nothingness between the creation of the universe from nothingness before its inflationary expanding stage on the one hand and the pair-creation of a particle and its anti-particle from nothingness on the other, the latter of which we can confirm as a "quantum tunneling effect" in experiments. Instead of "Nature abhors a vacuum", the view of the new physics suggests, "The vacuum is all of physics"; everything that ever existed or can exist is already potentially there in the vacuum as the place of nothingness. Physicists came to this remarkable view of the nothingness by way of a deeper understanding of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and the existence of anti-matter.<sup>(137)</sup> The *cosmogenitum ex nihilum* in relativistic quantum physics does not imply that there is any concept of time in which the universe did not exist before a certain instant and then came into being. Real time is defined only within the universe, and does not exist outside it. The creation of the universe from nothingness as a tunneling quantum effect at the minimum radius was described through an imaginary time, which the "no boundary proposal" for the quantum state postulates. As Stephen Hawking has emphasized, to ask what happened before the universe began is like asking for a point on the Earth at 91°; it is simply indefinable.<sup>(137)</sup>

In what way should we realize the creative nothingness of quantum relativistic cosmology? We cannot consider it as absolute nothingness because we must still grant the existence of a body of pre-existing laws of nature in order to explain the *cosmogenitum ex nihilum* in scientific terms. The topos of nothingness from which the universe is created, in which the expanding universe is open, must be more primordial than space-time. This *topos* cannot be space-time without matter because space-time as well as matter have been created in the beginning.

The Whiteheadian concept of the extensive continuum as the receptacle of creativity would give an important philosophical suggestion concerning how to realize this primordial place of nothingness. As we have seen in Part II, Whitehead characterizes the extensive continuum as below:<sup>(139)</sup>

The extensive continuum expresses the solidarity of all possible standpoints throughout the whole process of the world. It is not a fact prior to the world; it is the first determination of the order—that is, real potentiality--arising out of the general

character of the world. In its full generality beyond the present epoch, it does not involve shapes, dimensions, or measurability; these are additional determinations of real potentiality arising from our cosmic epoch.

The Big Bang cosmology which has recovered the solidarity of the whole universe needs the concept of nothingness both as the receptacle which is more fundamental than the four dimensional space-time manifold on the one hand, and as creative activity which makes the universe evolve in this receptacle on the other. Creativity in the *topos* of nothingness is the principle which makes it possible for the universe to exist as an "open wholeness."

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