

# Reflections on Nishida Studies

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THE HISTORY OF "Nishida studies" (*Nishida kenkyū*) may be roughly divided into three periods: his lifetime (until 1945), post-1945, and the current period. Detailed studies have been done on the topic.<sup>1</sup> The aim of this brief article is to trace trends in Nishida studies past and present and to offer some speculations as to why Nishida studies has taken the course it has.

## 1. *Nishida studies, pre-1945*

Nishida Kitarō's philosophical endeavors already made him a legend during his lifetime. Even before the publication of his first book, *A Study of the Good*,<sup>2</sup> his article, "The Real" (*Jitsuzaī*), that appeared in the *Philosophy Journal*<sup>3</sup> in 1907, drew keen attention within the circle of philosophy students, though Nishida's name was before then virtually unknown to most university-trained philosophers, Nishida not having gone through the regular degree program at the University of Tokyo. He attended the University, but only as a limited status student. After his "graduation," Nishida spent over ten years in Yamaguchi and Kanazawa as a high school professor, and it was during this period that he took up Zen practice, found the place for scholarship to hold within his life, and assiduously engaged in philosophizing. The 1907 article had the impact of an unknown star suddenly appearing in the sky. Kihira Tadayoshi was Nishida's former student at the Fourth High School in Kanazawa.

\* The author would like to acknowledge the editorial help of her colleague, Edward Kaplan.

<sup>1</sup> Fujita Masakatsu, "Nihon ni okeru kenkyū-shi no gaikan to genjō" (Outline and the Present-day Situation of the History of [Nishida] Studies in Japan), in Kayano Yoshio and Ōhashi Ryōsuke, eds., *Nishida tetsugaku* (Nishida Philosophy) (Kyoto: Minerva Shobō, 1987), 110-144. On the Western side, see Lydia Brüll, Kitaoka Takeji, tr., "Ōbei ni okeru kenkyū-shi no gaikan to genjō" (Outline and the Present-day Situation of the History of [Nishida] Studies in Europe and America), *ibid.*, 145-166.

<sup>2</sup> *Zen no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōdōkan, 1911).

<sup>3</sup> *Tetsugaku zasshi* (hereafter *PJ*), 241.

He went onto the University of Tokyo, and then worked as editor of the *Philosophy Journal*, for which he wrote an introduction of Nishida's thought in the following issue. Kihira described Nishida as someone who was

widely read both in classics and contemporary works of East and West. He would order the most recent books [from abroad], but from time to time, he would completely put aside books and apply himself to *zazen* practice. He has concentrated on his philosophical reflection in this manner ever since he left the university over ten years ago. . . . The kind of work [that appeared in the last issue] cannot be achieved except by a serious scholar. . . . Many have asked me who Mr. Nishida is—he is professor at the Fourth High School in Kanazawa.<sup>4</sup>

When Nishida's *Zen no kenkyū* was published, its philosophical merit was immediately recognized.<sup>5</sup> Takahashi Satomi's extensive review article appeared in 1912. Takahashi began with acknowledgment of Nishida's work as something truly original:

If I had been asked whether or not there was a philosophical work written by the Japanese prior to the publication of *A Study of the Good*, I would have hesitated and given only an ambiguous answer to it. But after the publication of this book, I can confidently answer the question without hesitation: yes, we do. That this book is truly a philosophical work is self-evident to me.<sup>6</sup>

By the time Nishida's *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness* (*Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei*) appeared in 1917, his reputation was well-established among the academic circle. Upon Nishida's publication of the essays, "That which Acts,"<sup>7</sup> and "Topos,"<sup>8</sup> Sōda Kiichirō, recognizing the originality of Nishida's thought, blessed it with the appellation of "Nishida philosophy" (*Nishida tetsugaku*).<sup>9</sup> From around 1921, Nishida's popular reputation had begun to soar, largely thanks to the enthusiastic endorsement of his

<sup>4</sup> *PJ* 242, 115–116.

<sup>5</sup> *PJ* 290 (1911), 114–116.

<sup>6</sup> *Takahashi Satomi Zenshū* (hereafter *TSZ*) (Tokyo: Fukumaru Shuppan, 1973), 4.153. This article originally appeared in *PJ* 303, 304, March & April 1912.

<sup>7</sup> *Hataraku mono*, in *Tetsugaku kenkyū* (Journal of Philosophical Studies; hereafter *JPS*) 115, October 1925.

<sup>8</sup> *Basho*, in *JPS* 123, June 1926.

<sup>9</sup> *JPS* 127, October 1926, p. 2.

*A Study of the Good* by Kurata Hyakuzō, an author widely read among the younger generation. Under the mandatory retirement rule, Nishida retired in 1928 from the University of Kyoto, which gave him time to concentrate on his philosophical writings. Around this time, his former students began to comment on their teacher's philosophical thought. Miki Kiyoshi's "Dr. Nishida Kitarō" appeared in *Keizō* in 1929.<sup>10</sup> Miki was then teaching at Hōsei University in Tokyo and actively involved with the publication planning of the Iwanami Bookstore. Miki arranged several interviews of Nishida by major magazines and newspapers, and conducted many of them himself. There is no denying that Miki's journalistic talent did much to bring Nishida's thought to public notice.<sup>11</sup>

It is true that Nishida was almost a legend in his own time, but it is important to note that from the beginning his thought was met with not only praise but criticism. The intellectual milieu was such that philosophical criticisms were freely raised, and Nishida not only welcomed them but made them the occasion for further development of his thought. Takahashi Satomi and Sōda Kūchirō raised questions in their writings mentioned above. It was Tanabe Hajime, who launched a sharp criticism of Nishida's thought in 1930. Tanabe's move surprised many, except Nishida himself, for Tanabe was at one time Nishida's closest disciple and later his colleague. Tosaka Jun noted in his "Philosophy of the Kyoto School,"<sup>12</sup> that "a school of thought" was emerging, going beyond Nishida's personal philosophical endeavor. By the "Kyoto school" (*Kyōto gakuha*), Tosaka meant the existence of a social phenomenon. He traced its rise to Tanabe's coming into his own and breaking away from Nishida's influence.<sup>13</sup> Tosaka also raised questions regarding Nishida's philosophical method in his article on Nishida in 1933: "Is 'the Logic of Nothingness' Logic?"<sup>14</sup> In January 1936, a special issue of *Shisō*<sup>15</sup> devoted to Nishida's thought appeared. Among the contributors were Takahashi

<sup>10</sup> "Nishida Kitarō hakase," compiled in *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* (hereafter MKZ) (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1968), 17.189-191.

<sup>11</sup> His interview of Nishida in 1935 was "On the Characteristics of Japanese Culture" (*Nihon bunka no tokushitsu*), and in 1936: "The Contemporary Significance of Humanism" (*Hyūmanizumu no gendaiteki igi*).

<sup>12</sup> *Kyōto gakuha no tetsugaku* appeared in *Keizai Ōrai*, September 1932, compiled in *Tosaka Jun Zenshū* (hereafter TJZ) (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1966), 3.171-176.

<sup>13</sup> TJZ, 3.175.

<sup>14</sup> "'Mu no ronri' wa ronri de aruka—Nishida tetsugaku no hōhō ni tsuite," in TJZ 2.340-348.

<sup>15</sup> *Shisō*, no. 164. *Shisō* is a monthly journal published by Iwanami.

Satomi,<sup>16</sup> Mutai Risaku, Miki Kiyoshi,<sup>17</sup> Kōsaka Masaaki, Honda Kenzō, Nishitani Keiji,<sup>18</sup> Shimomura Toratarō,<sup>19</sup> Kōyama Iwao and Takizawa Katsumi. The editor's column read:

It goes without saying that Dr. Nishida is not only the leading figure of the Japanese philosophical world but a world-class thinker of rare originality. Today, any advance in philosophy is impossible without some sort of serious confrontation with "Nishida philosophy." . . .

Our intention in bringing out this issue was to pay sincere tribute to Dr. Nishida for his steady philosophical work, and to give proper "philosophical" salutation, not just a lyrical one, to him, by organizing a "symposium" in the true sense of the word, which can contribute actively to the enrichment of the Japanese intellectual world.<sup>20</sup>

While Nishida kept working to extend the reach of his philosophical system, attempts at interpreting Nishida's thought began to appear as well. In 1935, Kōyama Iwao, a former student of Nishida's and lecturer at the University of Kyoto, published *Nishida's Philosophy*,<sup>21</sup> which was followed by *Nishida's Philosophy Series Two*.<sup>22</sup> In September 1936, Takizawa Katsumi's *Fundamental Problems of Nishida's Philosophy* came out.<sup>23</sup> Takizawa was not a disciple of Nishida but was greatly inspired by his work. He freely interpreted Nishida's thought from a Christian theological point of view, opening up a new direction for Nishida studies. Yanagida Kenjūrō, another non-disciple of Nishida, published his *Nishida Philosophy as Practical Philosophy* in 1939.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "On Nishida Tetsugaku" (*Nishida tetsugaku ni tsuite*) was later compiled in TSZ 4.183-220.

<sup>17</sup> "On the Characteristics of Nishida's Philosophy" (*Nishida tetsugaku no seikaku ni tsuite*) was compiled in MKZ 10.410-434.

<sup>18</sup> "Points of Dispute concerning Nishida's Philosophy: An Overview of Criticisms raised by Drs. Yamanouchi, Takahashi and Tanabe" (*Nishida tetsugaku o meguru ron-ten—Yamanouchi, Takahashi, Tanabe shohakase ni yoru hihan no kōsatsu*) is translated into English. See "Questioning Nishida: Reflections on Three Critics," in Yamamoto Seisaku & James Heisig, trs., *Nishida Kitarō* (University of California Press, 1991), 192-229.

<sup>19</sup> "The Mathematical Form of the Dialectical World" (*Benshō-teki sekai no sū-gaku-teki keitai*) was later compiled in *Shimomura Toratarō Chosakushū* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1990), 12.189-202, under a slightly altered title.

<sup>20</sup> *Shisō*, 164, p. 262.

<sup>21</sup> *Nishida tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami).

<sup>22</sup> *Zoku Nishida tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1940).

<sup>23</sup> *Nishida tetsugaku no konpon mondai* (Tokyo: Tōe Shoin).

<sup>24</sup> *Jissen tetsugaku to shite no Nishida tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Kōbundō).



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These works show that "Nishida philosophy" had gone beyond the walls of the University of Kyoto.

Nishida's name was known to a few circles of scholars beyond Japan, especially in Germany, where his former students and other Japanese philosophy students went to "study abroad" (*ryūgaku*). Edmund Husserl and Nishida exchanged a few letters. Heinrich Rickert, flattered by the fact that Nishida's mention of his work, "Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins," made him a celebrity in Japan, dedicated this work, when reprinted in 1924 as part of the *Heidelberger Abhandlungen* series, to his Japanese colleagues,<sup>25</sup> and specifically acknowledged Nishida and Sōda Kiichirō for having brought his thought to the attention of Japanese scholars. Takahashi Fumi, Nishida's niece, went to Freiburg and attended Heidegger's seminars around the same time Nishitani Keiji was in Freiburg.<sup>26</sup> Heidegger already knew Nishida's name and about his work (although it appears that the subtleties of Nishida's thought escaped his understanding),<sup>27</sup> so Fumi's presence in the seminar must have delighted him, and perhaps aroused some curiosity in him about this Japanese philosopher.

<sup>25</sup> The dedication reads: "Meinen Fachgenossen und Schülern in Japan Zueignet," *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1924), p. v.

<sup>26</sup> She translated two of Nishida's essays into German: (1) "Die morgenländischen und abendländischen Kulturformen in alter Zeit vom metaphysischen Standpunkte aus gesehen" (*Keijijōgaku-teki tachiba kara mita tōzai kodai no bunka keitai*), in *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1939); (2) "Die Einheit des Wahren, des Schönen und des Guten" (*Shin zen bi no gōitsuten*), in *Journal of the Sendai International Cultural Society* (Sendai, 1940).

On the topic of Heidegger and Japanese philosophers see Graham Parkes, "Rising Sun over Black Forest: Heidegger's Japanese Connections," a preface to his translation of Reinhard May, *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East-Asian Influences on His Work* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>27</sup> Miyake Gōichi, "Whatever Comes to My Mind" (*Omoidasu mama*), in Shimomura Toratarō, ed., *Nishida Kitarō, Dōjidai no kiroku* (Contemporary Records of Nishida Kitarō) (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1972), p. 123. Miyake notes he translated, with Yuasa Seinosuke's help, Nishida's "Self-conscious Determination of the Universal" (*Ippansha no jikaku-teki gentei*), but there is no essay by Nishida with this title. Since Miyake went to Germany in 1929 and returned to Japan a few years later, the work he translated could well be "The Self-determination of the Universal" (*Ippansha no jiko gentei*), which Nishida published in September and October of 1929, or could be his "Summary" (*Sōsetsu*) that follows the "Self-determination of the Universal"; see *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū* (NKZ) (Nishida's Collected Works), 5.353-417 & 5.419-481.

Heidegger's reaction to Nishida's work was something like, "It sounds like Hegel," and that was all. Miyake was disappointed by Heidegger's brief comment.

It was over against the background of this kind of grass-roots interest in Nishida that Robert Schinzinger's German translation of Nishida's essays came out in 1943.<sup>28</sup> Paul Lüth's article, "Nishida und die Japanische Philosophie," also appeared in 1943.<sup>29</sup> Interest in Nishida's thought was starting to take off, but the war in Europe as well as in Asia was entering its final devastating stage, and cultural activities of this nature seem to have ceased spontaneously by 1945.

Nishida died on June 7, 1945, just two months before Japan declared its unconditional surrender to the Allied forces.

## 2. *Nishida studies, post-1945*

Criticisms raised against Nishida's thought of pre-1945 were largely philosophical (epistemological and methodological), and the overall tenor of commentary was one of sympathy and respect. In contrast, criticisms of Nishida's thought in the post-1945 period were very much mixed. For one, Nishida was no longer living to respond to criticisms and speak for himself. The pre-1945 legend was dismantled, and new myths were created around him—such as the canards that he was an ultranationalist, that he was being intimidated by the military, or that he had been blind to the evils of expansionism, and so forth.

The post-1945 Japanese intellectual world experienced an unprecedented shock from the defeat of Japan in the war. Nishida's thought, now without the living master behind it, was left alone, and for a time the new tides and winds threatened to sweep it away or tatter its substance. The changes came somewhat gradually in the beginning.

Interest in "Nishida philosophy" remained strong until 1948.<sup>30</sup> When Iwa-

<sup>28</sup> *Die Intelligible Welt* (Berlin). It was further translated into English under the title of *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*.

<sup>29</sup> *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Kulturphilosophie*, 9.2, 135-141.

<sup>30</sup> According to Yanagida Kenjūrō, his work, *The System of Nishida's Philosophy* (*Nishida Tetsugaku taikai*, 12 vols., Tokyo: Daitō Shuppan-sha, 1946-1948), published in twelve small volumes over the course of three years from 1946, initially sold about 20,000 copies per volume (Yanagida Kenjūrō, *My Intellectual Odyssey* [*Waga shisō no henrekī*], 1951, p. 163). Because this work was too technical for the general reader, Yanagida separately wrote an *Introduction to Nishida's Philosophy* (*Nishida tetsugaku nyūmon*) (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppan-sha, 1947). The second printing of this work came out only a month after the initial publication of the book, clearly indicating the popularity of Nishida's thought.

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nami published the first volume of the *Collected Works of Nishida Kitarō*<sup>31</sup> in July 1947, enthusiasm and expectation among the Japanese was so high that a line of people waiting to buy a copy formed in front of the store that eventually extended around the block. The war-weary Japanese, many of whom lost their homes and everything they owned, did not mind waiting overnight on the street just to get hold of Nishida's work. One can only conjecture that it must have offered its purchasers solace amidst the external devastation and internal confusion of the time. It must have been perceived as a kind of spiritual "oasis," one which many Japanese, perhaps unconsciously, were seeking.

Suddenly, however, the intellectual climate began to change, and the winds began to blow harshly on Nishida and the members of the Kyoto school. A factor that triggered this shift seems to have been the so-called purge, dismissal from public offices (*kōshoku tsuihō*) or teaching positions (*kyōshoku tsuihō*), of those of Nishida's former students who were then perceived to constitute the "Kyoto school."<sup>32</sup> Kōyama Iwao was immediately discharged from his position of assistant professor.<sup>33</sup> Nishitani Keiji, along with Suzuki Shigetaka and Matsumura Katsumi, was judged "unfit" to teach at the university.<sup>34</sup> The

<sup>31</sup> The first edition of *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū* was published from 1947 to 1953 in twelve volumes plus six additional volumes.

<sup>32</sup> The G.H.Q. ordered the radical dismantling of the traditional Japanese education system, and especially the removal of elements having anything to do with militarism and ultranationalism. In May 1946, the Ministry of Education ordered universities each to set up a committee, made up of its own faculty members, that would examine "questionable" colleagues.

The Faculty of Letters at the University of Kyoto formed a committee made up of ten faculty members, headed by Dean Ochiai Tarō, and held their first meeting on June 19, 1946. Until May 14, 1947, they met seventeen times, examined eighty-two cases, cleared seventy-nine of them, but left three "unfit," namely, Nishitani, Suzuki and Matsumura. See *Kyōto Daigaku Bungakubu Gojūnen-shi* [Fifty Years of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Kyoto] (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Bungakubu, 1956), 41–43.

<sup>33</sup> Kōyama was not even subjected to the screening process, for he was on the board of directors of Dainippon Genron Hōkoku-kai, which may be roughly translated as the "Great Japan Association of Intellectuals," and that fact alone was considered sufficient to label him "ultranationalist" and "reactionary."

<sup>34</sup> Nishitani was accused of having endorsed the philosophy of the "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere." He was ordered to take a leave of absence in December 1946, and in July 1947, he was given the verdict "unfit" for a professional position. Nishitani's students wrote letters of protest and petitions that the decision be repealed. Following the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty (and Japan's regaining its



Kyoto school, which had hitherto enjoyed the highest regard and had been looked up to as the beacon light of conscience in the dark days of the war, was suddenly dragged down to the earth, its mystique quickly faded, and its reputation tarnished. The ground was thereby prepared for accusations directed against Nishida himself, and not just the members of the Kyoto school, from any corner of Japan.

Another incident that may have cast a long shadow on the "Kyoto school" was the deaths in prison, in 1945, of Miki Kiyoshi and Tosaka Jun, both graduates of the Philosophy Department of the University of Kyoto, both promising critical, progressive minds, and both prolifically producing their works outside the walls of academia. They had become victims of the state thought police system towards the end of the war. This was truly a "tragedy" for the Kyoto school and the postwar Japanese intellectual world. Their family members and friends left behind had no place to vent their anger and sadness, except to blame the old system, the old Japan. Because university professors such as Nishida were perceived to be helpless to avert such dangers, they were, therefore, in essence perceived as part of the old regime. Miki's and Tosaka's tragic deaths may have given an extra push to the post-1945 assumption that if one were to be an intellectual, one was expected to hold a progressive political view or Marxist stance. In this milieu, Nishida's philosophy, which was one time labeled "bourgeois" by Tosaka, came to be held in suspicion. Nishida was viewed as part of the legacy of "old Japan," the Japan that was governed by the myth of the imperial family, the myth that had to be discarded, if Japan were to move into a new era.

The sentiment expressed by Takeuchi Yoshitomo,<sup>35</sup> who severely criticized Nishida only later to apologize for his act, seems to speak for the sentiment common among many intellectuals of his day. Takeuchi wrote:

In the postwar period, I could not help but negate the elements of *Nishida tetsugaku* that existed within me, and I initiated the criticism of it as I did. For me to criticize *Nishida tetsugaku* was for me to liberate myself from the yoke of things of the past. But I must admit my criticism was too rash.<sup>36</sup>

In a word, the intellectuals were "throwing out the baby with the bath

independent national status), Nishitani's case, along with others, was "reexamined," the previous decision was annulled in the summer of 1951, and his status was restored. Nishitani returned to the University of Kyoto as of February 1, 1952, and assumed the chair of professor of religion.

<sup>35</sup> Graduate of the Department of Philosophy, University of Kyoto, in 1941.

<sup>36</sup> Takeuchi Yoshitomo, *Nishida Kitarō* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1970), p. 2.



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water"—Nishida or his philosophy being the baby in this case.<sup>37</sup> There was also a trend among writers to rely upon hearsay and bold but unfounded assumptions, instead of reading Nishida's writings. Perhaps the price we had to pay in the postwar confusion and haste was that kind of free interpretation of Nishida being accepted as critical scholarship, which tendency was accentuated by recent studies by deconstructionists and postmodernists.

### 3. *Nishida studies, today and tomorrow*

I have dwelled upon the factors that came close to damaging the reputation of Nishida Kitarō or the Kyoto school, as this kind of negative "myth" still hovers around Nishida. Another possible contributing factor, this one coming from abroad, was what I call the "Heidegger factor." That philosopher's thought and his political behavior became subject, perhaps with some justice, to sharp criticism, and this was unjustly carried over to Nishida. It appears, however, that the postwar dust is finally settling, and a clearer picture of Nishida's philosophical contribution is emerging.<sup>38</sup> The debate over whether Nishida was "nationalist" or not, for instance, continues among scholars,<sup>39</sup> but the issue may have begun to be more or less aired out. Indeed, what is more urgent for us today is not what Nishida "could have" or "should have" done or not done, but rather to critically look at the contemporary situation we are in and ask if there is anything that we can learn from Nishida's thought, and if yes, what.

The fact is that half a century after Nishida's death, his person and thought still provoke lively discussions both at home and abroad. Presently, scholars

<sup>37</sup> See M. Yusa, "Amerika de Nishida kenkyū o kangaeru" (Reflections on Nishida Studies in America), in *Shisō*, 857 (November 1995), 221–235.

<sup>38</sup> Whether or not interest in Nishida's thought is on the rise can be gauged by the number of publications that have been published recently or are scheduled to be released in the near future. The pace of publication of Nishida-related works seems to be accelerating. In November 1995 a special issue of *Shisō* dedicated to Nishida's life and thought was issued. Also in the same month Iwanami published Ueda Shizuteru's work on Nishida's life: *Nishida Kitarō: Ningen no shōgai to iu koto* [Nishida Kitarō: What One's Life Entails]. As recently as February 1996, another Nishida-related work has been announced: *Nishida tetsugaku o manabu hito no tameni* [For Those who Study Nishida's Philosophy], ed. by Ōmine Akira (Kyoto: Sekai Shisō-sha), which contains sixteen essays, mostly by the upcoming generation of Nishida scholars, both Japanese and non-Japanese. For Western translations of Nishida's works, see "Nishida in Translation: Primary Sources in Western Languages" in this issue of the *EB*.

<sup>39</sup> For the most recent treatment of this subject, see J. Heisig & J. Maraldo, eds., *Rude Awakenings* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

and students interested in Nishida's thought may be found from Korea, Taiwan and Australia, and on the other side of the Pacific, Cuba to Mexico to the United States and Canada, and crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Greece. In the United States, several scholars of Japanese thought bring the topics of Nishida philosophy and the Kyoto school to the classroom, raising interest among students, some of whom go on to graduate school to further their study of this topic.<sup>40</sup>

Where do we go from here? And why does Nishida continue to fascinate researchers at all? I think everyone has different answers to these questions. My assessment, at least, is that we need to get back to Nishida's philosophy itself and try to truly understand his basic concepts, such as *topos*, the dialectical world and so forth. As an answer to the second questions, why Nishida continues to fascinate us, I can only give one answer: because of his spiritual depth and uncanny understanding of the human condition. If Nishida's thought lives on, I believe it is because of his profound *karuṇā* (compassion) and sincerity that were behind his philosophical rigorousness, which we encounter whenever we take up his writings.

One final word: there is a myth that Nishida's first foreign language was German, but that is not the case. It was English, and he had to learn German at a later date. In Nishida's own words we read: "When we were high school students, we didn't take much German at school; therefore, for the first year at the university, I mainly read German literature accompanied by an English translation or annotations."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> I can only give a brief list here, but in the United States T. Kasulis, J. Maraldo, G. Parkes, S. Odin, S. Nagatomo, N. Sakai and Wm. LaFleur are among those who offer courses on Japanese philosophy which deal with Nishida's thought.

<sup>41</sup> "The Limited Status Program at the Tokyo College of Humanities around 1891-1892" (*Meiji nijūshigo-nen goro no Tōkyō bunka daigaku senka*), in NKZ, 12.242.