

The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview

PART II

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CHAPTER THREE

SO FAR, I have discussed what the source and the foundation of religious awareness are and what religious questions are. Needless to say, religious questions are neither epistemological questions about the recognition of the object, nor are they moral questions directed to the volitional self about the moral obligation directed to the volitional self. They are rather concerned with the existence of the self and where it exists—with the very essence of the self and its whereabouts. It is because we are religiously aware that we struggle with these questions and strive to solve them. We do not struggle with what merely transcends us or what is simply external to us; only when the questions concern our own existence do we grapple with them. The more immediate the problem is for us, the more we are bothered by it. Granted, conscience transcends us; but because it transcends us from within, the pangs of conscience

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shake us from the ground of our being. Moral anguish reminds us that we cannot hide from our own conscience, but in moral anguish we are conscious of the presence of our self. Moreover, insofar as we exist as rational beings, we are tormented by conscience, since it is reason that is thought to render us autonomous.

I did consider the existence of self in terms of the predicative aspect. The activity of consciousness is established as the self-determination of the predicative aspect. And yet the self is not merely universal, predicative existence, but something thoroughly individual and volitional. It exists where the individual completely negates the universal and harbors the possibility of breaking the law. To proceed merely in the direction of the universal is to negate one's freedom. It amounts to losing oneself, by reducing the self to an entity of Euclidean geometry. But the self exists neither in the negation of reason nor in the negation of the universal. What is merely irrational is animal existence. The more we think about our self, the more self-contradictory it appears. Dostoyevsky dealt with these questions profoundly in his novels.

What makes the self the authentic self? What lends the self its true autonomy? We cannot help but raise these questions about the very foundation of our existence. Only from there can we proceed to scholarly pursuits and moral inquiry. Real values must be founded on the authentic existence of the self. Some may regard it as useless to ask such questions, considering it enough for human beings to act according to conscience; others may regard it as evil to raise doubts about the very foundation of morality. If such were the case, however, religious questions would not arise. Certainly, there is no reason why human beings have to be religious, particularly if one postulates social existence as the foundation of self-existence. One might also deal with the problem of life and death from the point of view of society. But is it not human existence that lies at the ground of society? Religious values are not ordinary "values" but their antipodes. They are, as it were, value-negating values. It is in transcending [these ordinary] values that one encounters the holy.

The Self-Transcending Ground of Self-Existence

[Rationally speaking,] what is self-contradictory cannot exist—"exist" in the sense of being a subject which becomes a predicate, or a

predicate that becomes a subject, that is, as a rational, intelligible existence. Rational existence can never contain self-contradictions in itself. And yet our self is a thoroughly self-contradictory existence. We are both subject and predicate insofar as we think about ourselves [that is, we regard ourselves as individuals—that which becomes subject and not predicate—and at the same time are aware of our existence as such and predicate certain things about ourselves]. We are both temporal and spatial insofar as we know our own activities. We have our self-existence in this self-contradiction. The more self-contradictory we are, the more fully do we become aware of ourselves. This is indeed a paradox, and it gives rise to a profound problem. Our self exists in self-negation; it has its existence in the absolute nothing which cannot be conceived either in terms of the predicate or the subject. In order for such a self-contradictory existence to be possible, there must be something that is absolutely contradictorily self-identical at the ground of the self. This something must be contradictorily self-identically creative as the negation which is affirmation and as the affirmation which is negation; it is absolutely nothing and yet self-determining; it is absolutely nothing and yet absolutely being. Thus it is said, “Give rise to the mind which dwells nowhere” [Diamond Sutra 10c]. When speaking of “the ground of the self,” some may think of a substantive ground or substratum in the direction of subject-oriented logic. But “at the ground of the self” according to the [logic of] contradictory self-identity has a totally different meaning—it is to be understood in terms of the affirmation of absolute negation. If we seek for the source of the self in the direction of the subject, the self vanishes, as shown in Spinoza’s notion of substance. On the other hand, if we seek for it in the direction of the predicate, it becomes absolutely rational, as demonstrated by the Fichtian development of Kant’s philosophy. Either way, the self is lost. The source that establishes the existence of the self-contradictory self cannot be found in either direction.

As the source of such existence, there must be something that enables our self-negation to make the self what it truly is. It should not simply mean that the self is negated, nor that our self becomes or approximates God or Buddha standing on the same ground [as Absolute Being]. Here the dynamism of what I call *inverse correlation* must be taken into account. Daitō Kokushi’s words, which I often quote, aptly express this relationship. This is why I maintain that the religious

world, as the self-determination of the absolutely contradictorily self-identical *topos*, can be considered only by the logic of *topos*. Various misconceptions regarding the relationship between God and human beings arise from the standpoint of objective logic. I do not abandon or exclude objective logic; indeed it must be present as a moment in the self-determination of concrete logic. Otherwise, however concrete the latter may be, it would not be logic. As Kant made clear, errors arise when one takes something that is objectively conceived for an actual, self-determining being, that is, when one substantivizes the concept.

The real self exists neither in the direction of the subject nor in the direction of the predicate, but where the self predicates itself in the contradictory self-identity of both directions. At the ground of the self there is something thoroughly self-expressive. Just as that which does not act is nothing, so our self is something that acts. But it does not act merely spatially as if it were mere matter; nor does it act merely non-spatially, i.e., temporally, as if it were spirit or consciousness. The self acts creatively as the self-determination of the absolute present in the contradictory self-identity of time and space. The self acts by transcending so-called time and space and by mirroring the world within itself—that is, it acts while knowing itself. At the depths of the self, there is something that thoroughly forms itself historically, and our self is born of it, acts in it, and dies to it. At the depths of our self, there is something that clearly transcends our conscious self. Moreover, this something is not anything external to us, but is that by which our conscious self is established and by virtue of which our self is thinkable. This something is nothing like the unconscious or instinct. Such an erroneous notion is brought about by objective logic.

Through the activity of “knowing,” the self transcends itself and stands outside itself. Conversely, the thing [the object of thinking] becomes the self and determines the self. The activity of knowing is established in the contradictory self-identity of the knower and the known. Be it “unconscious” or “instinct,” it already belongs to this kind of activity. What I mean by *action-intuition* is nothing other than this activity. At the depths of our self-awareness, there is something that thoroughly transcends us. This fact becomes more apparent as our self-awareness deepens. The true self acts from out of this point immanently-transcendentally and transcendentally-immanently, i.e., in a contradictorily self-identical way. Intuition is present at the depth of

our self-awareness. Action-intuition is the term I use for this dialectical process mediated by negation. This is where the absolutely negative dialectic has its place, transcending the so-called dialectic of judgment. Otherwise, a dialectic would be nothing more than a private phenomenon within an abstract, conscious self. Action-intuition is not a kind of Kantian intellectual intuition; for while aesthetic intuition sees the self objectively, action-intuition sees things from the standpoint of that self which transcends the self-conscious self.

There is something that thoroughly transcends the conscious self at the foundation of the self. This is the fact of self-awareness. Anyone reflecting deeply on the reality of one's own self-awareness inevitably comes to this recognition. D. T. Suzuki calls it "spiritual nature" (*reisei*) [cf. *Japanese Spirituality*, *SDZ VIII*: 1-223 (1944)]. Furthermore, he says that the will power of the spirit transcends itself by being sustained by spiritual nature. The reality of spiritual nature is religious but not mystical. To consider religion mystical is a mistake to begin with. In fact scientific knowledge is also grounded on this point; it does not come about simply from an abstract, conscious self, but is grounded on a self-awareness of the physical self (cf. my essay, "The World of Physics"). This religious consciousness, as the fundamental fact of our life, forms the basis for both scholarly inquiry and morality. Religious awareness is not the monopoly of an elite but lies hidden in the hearts of each and every one of us. One who does not recognize this cannot be a philosopher.

Religious Awareness and Faith

Religious awareness resides in everyone's heart but many are not aware of it. Even among those who are aware of it, not many embrace faith. What does it mean to embrace faith? What is religious faith? People often confuse religious faith with subjective beliefs; some go so far as to think that it is brought about by will power. But religious faith is an objective fact, an absolute fact of the self. It is what Suzuki Daisetz calls the "fact of spirituality." At the bottom of the self there is something that utterly transcends us, and this something is neither foreign nor external to us. Therein lies the self-contradiction of the self. This is why we are confused as to the whereabouts of the self. Religious faith comes about when the self discovers the real self in a

thoroughly contradictorily self-identical way. Subjectively put, faith is peace of mind; objectively put, it is salvation.

We usually think that the source of the self exists either externally [i.e., objectively] in the direction of the logical subject, or internally in the direction of the predicate. In the former, our self is considered to be characterized by desire, and in the latter by reason. As I said before, however, the source of the self is to be found in neither direction. In psychological terms, it is not found merely in the sensory or in the volitional, but in the absolutely contradictory self-identity of these two aspects. For this reason, in order for the self to embrace religious faith, there must be an absolute revolution in the position of the self. This is called conversion [*metanoia*]. Conversion is not a movement from one extreme to the other, as is commonly thought. Our self is neither beastly nor angelic, which is why we are lost. We discover a peaceful resting place in a single revolutionary movement in and through contradictory self-identity itself. This is not a simple linear reversal of direction, but a circular movement—something like the “crosswise leap” of which Shinran speaks. It is clear that objective logic cannot deal with religion.

In religious conversion or liberation, one does not leave behind a self-conscious self which is desirous in one respect and rational in another, nor does one become unconscious. One rather becomes more clearly conscious to the point of one's own self becoming intelligible. One never leaves the judging, conscious, discriminating self. Suzuki Daisetz calls this “non-discriminating discrimination.” Spiritual nature (*reisei*) is this non-discriminating discrimination. To regard it as mere unconsciousness not only betrays an ignorance about the nature of religious awareness, but also shows that one is conceiving the nature of religious consciousness only from the standpoint of objective logic.

In the previous chapter, I said that our self is established as the affirmation of the absolute self-negation of God, and that this is real creation. The absolute does not merely transcend the relative. If that were so, it would be merely negative, while in actuality it is relative. The true absolute faces its own absolute self-negation and embraces absolute negation within itself; it mediates itself in an absolutely contradictorily self-identical way through absolute negation—as the logic of *sokushi* as the Diamond Sutra has it. Our self is established through God's absolutely negating self-mediation; it exists at the outer limit of the self-negation of the absolute one into the individual many. Therein

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our self, the self-projecting point of the absolute one, is the image of God and absolutely volitional.

That we exist through absolute self-negation means that we have our existence in knowing our own death and that we are born only to die eternally. It is often said that one dies in order to live a greater life or that one lives through dying. (And yet what is dead enters nothingness for good; what has once died never comes back to life. An individual is unrepeatable; there are no two identical persons.) If, however, we consider life in this way [that is, that we must die to live eternal life], such life is not truly alive but biologically alive; it is a life considered as external to the self. Or it may be that one's own personal life is considered in merely rational terms. Many moralists hold this view. Since reason is not subject to birth and death, life rationally considered is something external to the self.

Again, what is merely born and dies transmigrates forever, and this actually means eternal death. Eternal life is found in the identity of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. The relationship between our self and God, the absolute, is best expressed by Daitō Kokushi's words which I often quote. It is the relationship of a thorough, absolutely inverse correlation. That *samsāra* is *nirvāṇa* is meaningful only in this context. We must seek for the ground of our eternal life here. To attain eternal life does not mean that we depart from this life and enter the world of no-birth, no-death, since originally there is no birth nor death. The now is eternal. As the Zen Master, Kanzan Egen [1277-1360, Daitō's successor] says: "There is no birth or death in my life." When we see the self as an objective existence according to objective logic, it appears to live and die endlessly and to transmigrate forever. This is the source of eternal delusion. But this is not to say that I consider objective logic a logic of delusion; in fact, when the *topos* determines itself in itself in a contradictorily self-identical way, it determines itself in accordance with the logic of objective logic. Delusion arises only in one's clinging to that which is objectively determined or mentally thought as reality. This holds true for the scientific pursuit of knowledge as well as for religion.

The self is authentic when it knows its own eternal death. Once we have grasped this fact, we find ourselves already existing in eternal life. Thus, for the self to discern and become one contradictorily self-identically with the source of itself is to embrace religious faith, to ex-

perience conversion. This could not happen to the self objectively conceived. Faith or conversion being the self-determination of the absolute itself, its attainment is made possible only by the power of God. Faith is grace, God's beckoning at the ground of our self. This is why I say that at the depths of the self there is something that transcends the self and yet gives it its existence. Hence, birth is not birth; life-and-death (*samsāra*) is eternity itself.

Religious Reality as the Everyday World

In my discussion of life, I said that the world of our life is established where it expresses itself within itself as the self-determination of the absolute present, and where, moving from the created to the creating, it endlessly forms itself spatio-temporally. Our life is established as the self-determination of the absolute present. In its spatial self-determination, it is thoroughly biological; in its temporal self-determination and expressive self-formation, it is conscious and spiritual. Ultimately, being the self-determination of the absolute present itself, the now of our self is the absolute present, as the *alpha* and *omega* of life [converge]. Our self thus determines itself by transcending time and space and by expressing in itself the world of the absolute present, the world of the eternal past and future. This is how we possess eternal life—life that is born and dies at every moment and yet is never born and never dies.

The world of the absolute, which contains absolute self-negation in itself and determines itself as absolute nothing, expresses itself within itself in a contradictorily self-identical way; it is the world of the absolute present that embraces whatever stands against it. Thus [the Diamond Sutra] says, "Give birth to the mind which dwells nowhere." Medieval thinkers compared God to an infinite sphere whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere. This illustrates precisely what I call the self-determination of the absolute present. If one were to interpret these sayings merely in terms of abstract logic without reference to the spiritual reality of the self, they would be nothing but meaningless, self-contradictory notions. The real absolute, however, does not transcend the relative. The world of absolute being is the world wherein everything relates to it inversely in a contradictorily self-identical way through the inverse determination of the one and the many. As the logic of *sokushi* has it, it is absolutely being because it

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is absolutely nothing; it is absolutely static because it is absolutely dynamic. Our self stands completely in this inverse determination and inverse correlation with the absolute One, God.

In regard to our life, to say that the now is the absolute present does not imply that the self transcends time abstractly. Each moment which does not pause even for a second stands in an inverse determination and inverse correlation with the eternal present. Hence, *samsāra* is *nirvāna*. To transcend oneself means to return to oneself and to realize the real self. Thus it is said that "all minds are no minds; therefore they are called minds" [Diamond Sutra 18b]. The meaning of the statement, "The mind is Buddha and the Buddha is the mind" [cf. Ōbaku], is also intelligible in this context—it is not that mind and Buddha are identical in terms of an objective logic. The logic of emptiness of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition cannot be grasped by occidental logic. But Buddhist scholars have yet to clarify this logic of *sokuhi*.

When we penetrate the depths of the self and go back to the absolute, we do not part with the world of actuality. Instead we touch the bedrock of historical reality. As the self-determination of the absolute present, we become thoroughly historical individuals. "Having thoroughly penetrated the Dharmakāya [the realm of absolute truth], I found that there was not any thing there, just this Makabe no Heishirō." Nansen says, "The ordinary mind, that is the Way" [*Mumonkan* 19]. Rinzai says: "The Buddhist truth requires no conscious effort. It is the activity of everyday life: relieving oneself, dressing, eating, drinking, and when tired, lying down" [*Rinzairoku, Jishū* 4]. It would be missing the mark if we were to interpret these remarks as expressions of an irresponsible indifference to life. Rather, they express the total involvement of oneself, a path so painful that no step is taken without bloodshed. Transcending the discriminating mind is not the same as becoming indiscriminate. It rather signifies that the self truly becomes empty. As Dōgen says: "To pursue Buddha's path is to pursue oneself. To pursue oneself is to forget oneself. To forget oneself is to be confirmed by all things" [*Shōbōgenzō, Genjōkōan*]. This is no different from the attitude adopted in the pursuit of scientific truth. To put this in other words; "I, becoming a thing, see; I, becoming a thing, hear." What is to be negated is the dogmatism of the abstractly conceived self; what is to be severed is attachment to the objectively conceived self.

The more religious we become, the more we must forget our own self; we must fully exercise reason and feel deeply. The strictures of formalism cause religion to decay; dogmatism is the blade that cuts the root of life. Luther says in his *Preface to Romans* that faith is God at work within us. As we read in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, faith changes us and allows us to be born anew of God. It kills the old Adam and thoroughly transforms our heart, our spirit, our thought, and all our other faculties. It brings the Holy Spirit into our company. In Zen one attains Buddhahood upon seeing into one's own nature [*kenshō jōbutsu*]. "Seeing" here does not denote seeing something externally and objectively or seeing oneself internally and introspectively. Just as the self cannot see itself, and as the eyeball cannot see itself, so there is no Buddha to be seen transcendently. Whatever one imagines to be a transcendental Buddha is nothing but a ghost. "Seeing" signifies the revolution of the self and is identical with the attainment of faith. There is no religion without this revolution or conversion of the self. For this reason, too, religion cannot be grasped in the philosophical domain but only by the logic of *topos*.

To say that the self returns to its root source, i.e., to the absolute, in a contradictorily self-identical manner, and that the self, as the self-determination of the absolute present, is thoroughly ordinary and rational in the sense of "this now is the absolute present," implies that the self is in some way eschatological as a historical individual. "The now is the absolute present" gives the self a freedom which transcends the cause and effect of the spatio-temporal world; this is the source of the activity of thinking. Even abstract cogitation is grounded on this. It also implies that our self, as the momentary self-determination of the absolute present, always stands in relation to the absolute being in an inverse correlation. The relationship that Tillich sets up between *kairos* and *logos* should be understood from this standpoint (cf. Paul Tillich, *Kairos and Logos*). Scholarly pursuits and morality are also founded on this standpoint.

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CHAPTER FOUR

"MAN IS BUT a reed," said Pascal, **"the weakest being in the natural world, but he is a thinking reed. The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him: a vapor, a drop of water, suffices to kill him. But, even if the universe were to crush him, man would still be nobler than what kills him, for he knows that he dies, and of the advantage which the universe has over him, the universe knows nothing"** [*Pensées*, Brunschvicg 347]. The reason for the dignity of human beings is also the reason for their misery. Herein lies the wretchedness of the human world. Human beings come into existence in the contradictory self-identity of time and space, from the world that moves from that which is created to that which creates. We are material and biological in our corporeality, and we are born historically and naturally. The world of life begins as the world expresses itself within itself and forms itself self-expressively in the contradictory self-identity of the many and the one. Time and space are but two opposite directions of this world. Even biological beings are already numerous individuals of the world and form themselves by expressing the world of the absolute present within themselves; they exist in accordance with the self-formation of the historical world. Animals are purposive and instinctive; and the more highly developed among them already possess desire. It is in this world of desires that joy and sorrow appear. Where the individual expresses in itself the whole, it becomes desirous. Animals, *qua* individuals, also have souls. Individuals constantly desire to become the whole, but in doing so cease to be individuals—to be what they themselves are. The individual is the individual by virtue of confronting another individual. The individual is thus thoroughly self-contradictory and always in contact with absolute negation; it is born to be negated.

Desire is never satisfied; what is satisfied passes away and is no longer desire. Desire produces desire. It has been said that we vacillate to and fro like a pendulum between desire and its satisfaction. Thus, as the proverb says, the human world is full of suffering. Physical pleasure and pain exist because we are organically expressed in the world. Animals are not yet real individuals in this sense, however, for

they are spatially universal, that is, material. Only human beings form themselves self-expressively in the contradictory self-identity of time and space. As the self-determination of the absolute present, as the self-expressing individuals of the self-expressive world, we form ourselves by transcending the world of spatial and temporal cause and effect. Thus we are cognitive, volitional, and conceptual. Moreover, we know our own action; our existence is stamped with the character of consciousness. This is why we consider our existence to be predicative, i.e., rational.

The world of human beings is not simply a world of pleasure and pain, but also of joy and sorrow, of suffering and agony. The reason for our dignity is precisely the reason for our wretchedness. As individuals born of the self-negation of Absolute Being, the more we become expressively self-forming, volitional, and personal, the more we face absolute negation, the Absolute One, in a contradictorily self-identical way; in other words, the more we touch God inverse-correlatively. Thus at life's very foundations we are ever in confrontation with the Absolute One, i.e., God. We stand at the crucial point where we can choose eternal life or death. Herein lies the eternal question of life or death. Barth says that faith is decision. At the same time, it is not human decision but objective reality, insofar as it is a human response to God's call. Revelation is God's gift given to human beings, and faith consists in human obedience to God's decision in the form of one's own decision (cf. K. Barth, *Credo*). As Paul says, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" [Gal. 2.20], those who convert and attain to faith gain eternal life, and those who do not are forever damned to the fires of hell. The confrontation between God's will and human will is always at work here, which is why religion becomes a question only for the thoroughly volitional and unique individual. Anyone who discusses religion should ponder this fact.

In authentic religion, one reaches faith by way of a sharply honed will, not out of mere sentiment. One embraces faith only having completely exhausted one's resources. As the Pure Land parable of "the white path between two rivers" [Zendō, 613-681; Taishō 37, 272-73] teaches, sooner or later one has to choose between faith and non-faith. It is a gross misunderstanding to see Mahāyāna Buddhism as pantheistic. "Aesthetic religion" is no less a misnomer. The word "intuition" may prompt a confusion between art and religion, but the two

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stand at opposite poles. Ancient Greek religion is said to be aesthetic, but in reality it never reached the stage of full-fledged religion. Thus the Greeks turned to philosophy, while the Indians, though of the same Aryan origin, turned to religion. The Greeks knew no real awakening of the self-consciousness of the individual. In Plato's philosophy there was no individual. Nor was the individual in Aristotle's philosophy volitional. Certainly, it may be contended that in Indian philosophy there was much less awareness of the individual and that the individual as such was far more ignored. But I see a real negation of the individual in Indian philosophy. It may sound rather paradoxical, but the individual is consciously recognized by the Indian mind as that which is to be negated, and the will is absolutely negated in Indian religion. This religious insight poses a radical contrast to the religiosity of the Israelites. Indian culture also offers a sharp contrast to modern European culture, and for this very reason may have some things to offer to the modern world.

Religion as Total Engagement of the Self

Our world, as the contradictory self-identity of time and space, is the world of endless cause and effect; it moves from what is created to what creates as the absolute present determines itself. Although we are individuals of this world, precisely because we know the world by transcending it, as Pascal says, we are more precious than the whole universe that presses us to death. We come into being in a contradictorily self-identical way as the self-negation of the absolute that determines itself self-expressively—that is, we come into being as the innumerable individuals of the Absolute One. This is why we are always in touch with the Absolute One in a self-negating, inversely correlative way. Hence, we live in eternal life in the manner of "life is death, death is life." We are religious.

I maintain that the religious question is the question of the volitional self, of the individual. But this is not to say, contrary to a commonly held notion, that religion has to do with the peace of mind of the individual. The peace of mind of a desiring self has nothing to do with the religious question; if it did, religion would not even amount to a moral question. A desiring self that fears pain and seeks pleasure is not a real individual, but a mere biological entity. If religion is to be called

“opium” for that reason, so be it. The self as the self-negation of the Absolute One faces this Absolute One in an utterly inversely correlative way. The more it becomes an individual, the more it faces the Absolute One, i.e., God. It faces God at the outer limit of individual existence. At the limit of the individual self-determination of the historical world, the self faces the extremity of the holistic One in a thoroughly contradictorily self-identical way. Thus each of us, while encompassing the eternal past and the eternal future, faces God as a representative of humankind. As the momentary determinations of the absolute present, we face the absolute present itself. In this we may be likened to the countless centers of the infinite sphere which has no circumference and yet whose center is everywhere.

When the Absolute determines itself as the absolutely contradictory self-identity of the many and the one, the world that has no ground of its own and is the self-determination of Absolute Nothing is volitional. To see the world as a holistic One assumes an absolute will confronted by the wills of innumerable individuals. In this way, the human world emerges from the world of *sokuhi* of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition. It is said: “Give birth to the mind which rests on nothing whatever” [Diamond Sutra 10c]. Baso’s successor, Banzan Hōjaku [8th century], says: “It is like wielding a sword in the air; whether the sword reaches the object or not is not the question. There is not even a trace of an empty circle drawn by the sword in the air, and the blade is untouched. If the mind is like this, it is not conscious of itself, it is utterly void of thought and imagination. The whole mind is Buddha, the whole Buddha is the person. That the person and Buddha are no different is the beginning of the Way.” [Taishō 5, 253b] If one were to wield a sword in the air, it would leave no trace in the air and the sword would not be damaged at all. Likewise, the whole mind is Buddha and whole Buddha is the person as the contradictory self-identity of self and world, of the individual and the whole. From the standpoint of objective logic, such a statement may appear pantheistic. But words of Zen masters should not be interpreted in that way, since they are thoroughly non-dualistic and contradictorily self-identical. The fullness of Buddha and the person are contradictorily—in the manner of *sokuhi*—one. A real individual person comes into being as the momentary self-determination of the absolute present. The phrase, “Give birth to the mind which rests on nothing whatever,” should be understood in this light.

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The will comes into being as the self-determination of Nothing. Our individual self, the volitional self, is neither subjective nor predicative existence, but arises in the contradictory self-identity of subject and predicate as the self-determination of *topos*. Therefore, just as a moment is said to be eternal, so we, thoroughly unique individuals, face the Absolute in an inversely determining way at every step we take. Rin-zai says: "In your body there is a real person of no fixed rank, who goes in and out through sense organs" [*Rinzairoku, Jōdo* 3]. To be "thoroughly an individual" is to stand at the extreme limit of being a human being; it is to stand as a representative of humankind. Shinran's confession, "As I contemplate on Amida's long-meditated vow, I come to realize that it was made for me, Shinran, alone" [*Tannishō, Concluding Section*] has to be understood in this sense and not as a confession of an egocentric individual. Morality is concerned with the general, religion with individuals, as Kierkegaard shows in distinguishing the knight of morality from the knight of faith. Agamemnon sacrificed Iphigenia and Abraham attempted to sacrifice Issac for two totally different reasons. Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* has best clarified this point. One early morning, when Abraham, taking Issac, departed for the land of Moriah, he faced God as a singular individual; he stood at the outer limit of being human. God called him, "Abraham," and Abraham responded, "Behold, here I am" [Gen. 22.1-11]. He also stood there as a representative of the whole of humankind. God said, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" [Gen 22.17-18].

In the world of religion, that one transcends oneself and takes refuge in God does not mean that one aims at attaining peace of mind. It means that the human being is liberated from humanity itself; one faces the reality of God's creation. In this God reveals himself, and the individual is confronted with the revelation. Thus it is said that to have faith means to obey God's decision with one's own decision. Faith does not mean subjective belief, but rather insight into the reality of how the historical world comes into being. The story of Adam's fall through eating of the tree of knowledge against God's command reveals that human beings came into existence as the self-negation of God. In Buddhist terms, this corresponds to the "sudden arising of

thought" (*The Awakening of Faith*). Human beings originally come into being self-contradictorily. And the more intellectual and volitional we become, the more this holds true. Human beings are marked by original sin. Morally speaking, it is absurd that the parents' sin is transmitted to the children. But this is the nature of human existence. To transcend original sin means to transcend humanity itself. This is impossible from the side of human beings; we are saved only by believing in the reality of Christ, the revelation of God's love. Thereby we return to the root of the self. We die in Adam and live in Christ. According to True Pure Land Buddhism, this world is through and through a world of action [*karma*], of utter ignorance [*avidyā*], and of life-and-death [*samsāra*]. Thanks to Amida's compassionate vow, we are saved solely by believing in the wonder of the Sacred Name of Amida Buddha. This means that we respond to the call of Absolute Being. When we fully adopt this standpoint, "life-and-death has no birth [nor death]," as Zen Master Bankei [1622-1693] says [cf. *Bankei Zenshi Goroku*]. In a contradictorily self-identical way, the totality of Buddha is humanity; humanity and Buddha are no different. It is like "wielding a sword in the air," or as the Master Jōshu says, "like throwing a ball on the rapids: the stream flows, never ceasing even for a moment" [*Hekiganshū* 80; *Jōshu Zenshi Goroku* II, 243].

*Two Types of Religious Relationship:
Judeo-Christian and Buddhist*

Religious relationship consists in the contradictory self-identity of what utterly transcends our self and establishes it (what is utterly transcendent and yet is the source of the self), and the utterly unique, individual, and volitional self. It consists in the contradictory self-identity of the thoroughly transcendent and the thoroughly immanent. This relationship cannot be considered simply from without, objectively, or from within, subjectively. It has to be apprehended in relation to the historical world, in relation to the self-determination of the absolute present. Every historical world has something religious at its ground. A historical world, in its contradictory self-identity of space and time, is a world that forms itself self-expressively from that which is created to that which creates. Each and every one of us innumerable

individuals in this world is both thoroughly created and yet creating. We are self-expressive, self-forming elements of the world.

In this world there are two different attitudes that one can assume in relation to Absolute Being—that of a spatial self-determination of the absolute present and that of a temporal self-determination of the absolute present. The historical world is usually considered simply as a world of spatial self-determination. But such a world is a world of nature, not of history. The world of history must contain human beings in it. It must be a world of the mutual determination and contradictory self-identity of subject and object. This means that the historical world is through and through the world of life, and that it expresses itself within itself and forms itself self-expressively.

In such a world we touch in an outward and spatial manner—in the so-called “objective” direction—that which expresses itself by transcending us, namely, the self-expression of Absolute Being. This is the direction to which Christianity has fundamentally adhered. Yahweh was originally the God of the Israelites. In the course of history, especially through the hardships they endured, the Israelites purified their idea of God and elevated it to the heights of Absolute Being. The prophets were seen as those who spoke the will of God—the “mouthpieces of God.” During the Babylonian captivity when even their king was lost, their religion was inwardly deepened and elevated transcendently by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Buddhism, on the other hand, maintains that the self transcends itself and faces the transcendent Absolute in the direction of the temporal self-determination of the world, that is, in the “subjective” direction. This inward transcendence is the mark of Buddhism.

The self-conscious self is not instinctive as a pure subject-term, i.e., as a merely spatial self-determination. Nor is it rational as a pure predicate-term, i.e., as a simply temporal self-determination. As the contradictory self-identity of space and time, it is both subjective and predicative, the individual determination and the universal determination. We are created and yet create, and as such we are history-forming, volitional existence. Being utterly unique, individual, and volitional, we face in an inversely correlative manner Absolute Being which transcends us both externally and internally. In the external direction, we face an absolute decree which is the self-expression of Ab-

solute Being; we must obey it by denying ourselves. If we obey it, we live; if we do not, we are forever damned to hell. In the internal direction, however, Absolute Being persistently follows and ever embraces us who turn against him and desert him. That is, Absolute Being is infinitely compassionate. Here again we face Absolute Being as unique, individual, and volitional beings. Just as love consists in the contradictorily self-identical relationship of persons who stand over against one another, so does absolute love endlessly embrace those who rebel against it. The volitional self, which is thoroughly self-contradictory existence, confronts faces at the ground of being that which establishes it contradictorily self-identically. There we touch an absolute love that embraces our very existence. Personal existence does not come into being through a mere conflict of individual wills. For this reason, in every religion God is love in some sense.

I have said above that Absolute Being does not transcend the relative, and that what stands opposed to the relative is not truly absolute. Truly Absolute Being negates itself and even manifests itself as devil. This is the meaning of religious *upāya*, "skill in means." In its exercise, Absolute Being sees itself even in the demonic. This is the basis for the doctrine of True Pure Land Buddhism that the wicked possess the necessary condition for salvation. Religion based on absolute love has its stronghold in such a teaching. Shinran said that Amida's compassionate vow was made "for me, Shinran, alone." The more we become unique, individual, and volitional, the more this confession holds true. Absolute Being through self-negation renders humanity truly human; and only in this way is it able to save human beings. The idea of *upāya* or the miracles to which religious people testify is understandable in terms of the absolute self-negation of Absolute Being. It is said that Buddha saves sentient beings even by manifesting himself as a devil. We can find in the Christian doctrine of Incarnation the same sense of divine self-negation. In Buddhist terms, this world is the world of Amida's compassionate vow, the world of *upāya*. Buddha saves human beings by assuming various forms.

Love, Creativity, and Religion

As I mentioned above, there are two contrasting modes of relationship between the self and the Absolute, on which two types of religion, the

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Christian and the Buddhist, are based. What is based abstractly on either one of these modes, however, is not religion in the true sense of the word. A merely transcendent God is not a real God. God must be love. Christianity maintains that God created the world out of love. This denotes the self-negation of the Absolute Being; it denotes God's love. Likewise, moral obligation arises from the bottom of our hearts as we are embraced by absolute love. Generally speaking, love is not really understood. It is not the same thing as instinct. What is instinctive is no more than self-centered desire. Genuine love is a contradictorily self-identical relationship between persons, between an "I" and a "Thou." Were absolute love not present behind absolute moral obligation, it would be purely legalistic. Kierkegaard calls Christian love the "ought." At the foundation of Kant's "kingdom of ends" there must be pure love; only then does the "person" come into being. The instinctive or impersonal notion of love rests on a way of thinking that takes human existence simply as the subject of judgment in objective logic. On the contrary I hold that (to put it in Buddhist terms) real moral obligation comes out of the world of Buddha's compassionate vow.

In the world of absolute love people do not judge one another; they create a world through their mutual respect and love, in the unity of self and others. From this perspective, all values are considered in the light of creativity. Creation must always stem from love. Without love there would be no creation. It is said that for the practitioners of *nembutsu* [devotional chanting], chanting is neither religious practice nor performance of good deeds because it entails letting go of self-reliance and confiding in Buddha's power [*Tannishō* 8]. "To be artless and one with the workings of dharma" (*jinen hōni*) [cf. Shinran, *Mattōshō*] is to be creative, in the sense that, as creative elements of the creative world, we act in accord with the self-determination of the absolute present. In Christian terms, we exist eschatologically and experience "God's decision as the human decision." In the words of Zen Master Munan [1603-1676], "While living/ Be a dead man,/ Be thoroughly dead/ And behave as you like,/ And all's well" [*Sokushinki*; tr. by D. T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, p. 102]. In this way, the self, as the self-determination of the absolute present, is truly creative of the historical world.

Mirroring its Indian origins, Buddhism offers a very profound

religious truth, but tends to be otherworldly. Even Mahāyāna Buddhism has not achieved a truly realistic outlook on reality. Perhaps in Japanese Buddhism we can see an awareness of “absolute negation which is affirmation” in accordance with the Japanese mentality for which “reality is immediately absolute” [cf. Suzuki, *Japanese Spirituality*, p. 100]. We see this for example in Shinran who says, “[In *nembutsu* one] takes what is beyond human discrimination as the principle” [*Tannishō* 10], and “being artless and one with the workings of *dharma*.” But this aspect of Japanese spirituality has not been given proper recognition. If anything, it has been interpreted as mere passivity or irrational non-discrimination. I hold that real absolute activity must be born of genuine absolute passivity. I also maintain that the judgment of judgments (that which transcends abstractly conscious judgments and embraces them and judges their appropriateness) or non-discriminating discrimination (which I call action-intuition) is a fundamental condition for the establishment of science. At the foundation of scientific knowledge, “we see, becoming a thing, and we hear, becoming a thing.” This standpoint is what Dōgen describes when he writes that “all *dharmas* authenticate the self” [*Shōbōgenzō*, *Genjōkōan*]. Here again, we, the self-determination of the absolute present, obey God’s decision with our own decision.

To be “non-discriminatingly discriminate” does not mean simply to become a subject-term and acquiesce to external constraints. Rather, it means that we obey that which transcends us and yet establishes our existence in the manner of the contradictory self-identity of subject and predicate, i.e., volitionally. Therefore, it is active-intuitive. Truly selfless action is active-intuitive. Moral action, which has the same basis, is also fundamentally religious. Those who are confined by the horizons of Kantian philosophy cannot see this. Truly other-reliant religion can be explained by the logic of *topos* alone; and once properly understood, this other-reliant religion which centers on the compassionate vow of Amida can become vitally relevant to contemporary scientific culture. For this reason, today’s *Zeitgeist* may call for a religion of the absolutely compassionate vow rather than one of the Lord of hosts. In this new historical period, Buddhists need to engage in critical self-reflection. (We are fighting the present World War only to reject world war and establish everlasting peace.)

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Expression: The Bridge between God and Human Beings

The relationship between God and human beings is obviously not one of power, nor is it, contrary to the common opinion, a teleological relationship. The mutual relationship between absolutely opposing things is *expressive*. Absolute Being does not transcend the relative, but it has its existence and sees itself through its absolute self-negation. What stands opposed to Absolute Being—its absolute self-negation—is the self-expression of Absolute Being itself. The relationship between God and human beings must be grasped in terms of the relationship between what expresses itself thoroughly self-negatingly [i.e., God] and what gets expressed by [God] and faces him self-expressively. This relationship is neither mechanical nor teleological, but it is an absolutely contradictorily self-identical relationship between what thoroughly forms itself self-expressively, i.e., that which is utterly creative, and what, being created, creates, i.e., that which is created and yet creates. This is how independent entities interrelate, and in this relationship the dimension of creating and being created are essential.

Understanding others is a kind of action. But this does not mean that we are moved by something without or within; it means that we create ourselves self-expressively. The same holds true when we move others through our self-expression. It is not that the self becomes the other nor that the other becomes the self, but that the other creates its own self self-expressively. A mutual understanding between persons is established in this fashion. The self-expressive world is the self-forming world; the self-forming world is the self-expressive world. In the world of the absolutely contradictory self-identity of the one and the many, the world is expressive in its self-negating aspect, where the individuals stand in mutual opposition. Again, the world as a holistic one is formative in its self-affirming aspect. There is no self-expressive world that is not self-forming in some way; likewise, there is no self-forming world that is not self-expressive in some way.

In the historically self-forming world, expression is power; it is the potential for a formative dynamic. Expression is not a simple “meaning” as phenomenologists or hermeneuticists typically suppose. For them expression is what has been abstracted from the formational dynamism of expression. What they call “meaning” I see as merely the content of the world, considered statically, at the outer limit of the self-

negation of the self-expressively self-forming world. Just as there is no sheer fact or activity in the historically forming world, neither is there sheer meaning. Whatever concretely exists forms itself self-expressively. Ultimately, our will exhibits this nature. The will has been considered abstractly in terms of the workings of consciousness; but if the will did not express the world within itself, there would be no volitional activity. That we, as the self-forming points of the world, express the world in ourselves and form the world in terms of the self-expression of the world—this is the will. Symbols have their own reality in this historical world; as self-expressions of the world, they have the power to form the historical world. What religious people call “the Word of God” must be understood in this sense. As Absolute Being sees itself in itself by negating itself, the human world—the historical world—comes into being. This is why it is said that God creates the world out of love.

The relationship between what thoroughly expresses itself and what expresses itself in being expressed must be regarded in terms of the relationship of expression, i.e., in the word. The word is the medium or the bridge between God and human beings. The relationship between God and human beings is not mechanical, teleological, or rational. God is present to us absolutely self-identically as absolute will; he expresses himself as the word that forms [the world]. This is revelation. The prophets of Judaism were those who conveyed God’s will to the people of Israel: “Thus saith Yahweh, Lord of Sabaoth, God of Israel.” They were called the “mouthpiece of God.” I once said that the historical world always has a task and that the world derives its self-identity therefrom. A truly historical task in each epoch bears something of the nature of the word of God. In Jewish antiquity the historical task was something transcendent, and it was said: “Yahweh’s word faces me and thus speaks.” But today the historical task must be thoroughly immanent; it must be a self-expression arising from the bottom of the self-forming, historical world; but it should not be simply immanent. The historical world as the self-determination of the absolute present is always immanently transcendent and transcendently immanent. A real philosopher is obliged to meditate deeply on the world as such and grasp its historical task.

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The Sacred Name of Buddha

In True Pure Land Buddhism, the Buddha is represented by his Sacred Name (*myōgō*). Human beings are saved by believing in the wonder of the Sacred Name. In order to realize the continuation of the discontinuity between Absolute Being, i.e., Buddha, and human beings—in other words, for a contradictorily self-identical means—we are to rely only on the expression, the word. Nothing but the Sacred Name expresses Amida's absolutely compassionate vow. The *Tannishō* records Shinran's words that "by the wonderful effect of the vow a name, which one could easily remember and chant, was carefully deliberated. Since there is the promise that 'whoever chants this name I shall receive,' first of all I believe that 'I shall free myself from life and death (*samsāra*) with the help of the wonderful power of Amida's great compassion and the great vow'; and when I think that 'It is the Tathāgata's careful deliberation that I can even chant the *nembutsu*,' there being no calculation on my own part, I attain to true paradise according to the promise of the vow. In my believing in the mystery of the vow as the essential message, the wonder of the Sacred Name accrues to it, and the mystery of Amida's vow and that of the Sacred Name are one and no different from each other" [*Tannishō* 11].

The thoroughly inversely-correlative relationship between Absolute Being and human beings has to depend on expression, such as the Sacred Name of Buddha. This relationship is not of a sense-perceptual or rational kind. Reason, ever immanent, is the human standpoint and not the way to enter into interaction with Absolute Being. As I said before, we face Absolute Being at the very limit of our individual will, and God also faces us as the absolute will (therefore the relationship between God and human beings is always one of inverse correlativity). The word (as realizing the contradictorily self-identical relationship) is the sole means to cast a bridge between *a* will and *the* will. The word as *logos* is rational; but what is supra-rational, or non-rational for that matter, can also be expressed by, and only by means of, the word. The will transcends reason and breaks away from it. What utterly transcends and yet faces our self is that which expresses itself in a thoroughly objective manner. Granted that art is an objective expression, it is sensuous and not volitional. A religious expression, in contrast, is absolutely volitional, and faces our self as a *person*.

Buddha is totally transcendent to the self and yet embraces it. This was aptly expressed by Shinran: "That I can even chant the *nembutsu* is already thanks to Tathāgata's deeply considerate deliberation." Herein lies the significance of Shinran's "crosswise leap" which relies on the wonder of the Sacred Name. For any authentic religion to speak of faith or salvation, the contradictorily self-identical logic of paradox between Absolute Being and human beings must be present. This logic is neither sensuous nor rational, but pertains to the word understood as the self-expression of Absolute Being, the creative word. In Christianity it is said, "In the beginning was the Word" [John 1.1]; and referring to Christ, "The Word assumed flesh and dwelled among us" [John 1.14]. So in Buddhism the Name is Buddha. The revelatory word, which is creative and salvific, and whose logic is one of paradox, is not merely irrational. It is the very self-expression of Absolute Being, which renders our self the real self, and reason real reason.

Shinran maintained that "what is beyond man's discrimination is the principle of *nembutsu*" [*Tannishō* 10]. This does not mean that we become unconscious; rather it means that non-discriminating discrimination is set in motion. What is creative acts as the contradictory self-identity of knowledge and action, as the self-determination of the absolute present. In Christianity, the word of God—revelation of the transcendent, personal God—implies that the absolute will cross-examine one. It is said that we are justified by faith. In contrast, the Sacred Name of Buddha, as the expression of Buddha's great compassion and love, embraces us and saves us. Such awareness culminates in a state of existence described as "being artless and one with the workings of *dharma*" (*jinen hōni*). The idea of "*jinen hōni*" should not be interpreted to mean "naturalism," as the ordinary sense of the word, *jinen* (nature) suggests. Because one is thoroughly embraced by the absolutely compassionate vow, religious experience cannot be treated by objective logic. Moreover, in religious experience, one does not become merely sentimental and indiscriminate. Great wisdom arises from great compassion and love. Otherwise, it would be no more than selfish dogmatism or the play of logic. Where we "becoming a thing, think, and becoming a thing, see," there is truth. To assume this standpoint radically is to be compassionate; it is to act as the affirmation of the self-negation of Absolute Being. In order to know a person truly, we must take the standpoint of "no-thinking, no-imagining" (*munen*

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musō). In the case of scientific truths as well, we attain the truth insofar as we are the self-determination of the absolute present and the self-expressive points of the self-expressive world. Here again, our attitude is one of "being artless and one with the workings of *dharma*."

Compassion is not the negation of the will; rather genuine will is born of it. We are neither subjective nor predicative beings, but topological beings—both subjectively predicative and predicatively subjective. This is why we are radically compassionate. Being in compassion means that mutually opposing things become one in a contradictorily self-identical way. Will emerges as the self-determination of such a topological being. The will is instinctive in the subject aspect and rational in the predicate aspect, but as the self-determination of *topos* itself, it is history-forming. There is sincerity where there is no trace of the "I" present, where the self is the pure determination of *topos* itself. Moreover, genuine sincerity must be grounded on great compassion and love. This is the foundation of practical reason. The Kantian idea of morality is civic, but morality that forms history must be based on the compassionate vow of Amida Buddha. Suzuki Daisetz says that this idea of the ever-embracing compassionate vow (*higan*) is absent in the foundations of Western culture. I suppose this is where oriental and occidental cultures fundamentally differ.

The Logic of Zen Buddhism

Regarding Zen Buddhism, which has exerted a great deal of influence on Japanese culture, I must defer to specialists. But I would like to say a word on a common misconception about Zen. Contrary to what many think, Zen is not mysticism. *Kenshō*, "to see one's original nature," means that one reaches down to the bottom, to the very roots of one's own self-existence. We come into being as the self-negation of the Absolute Being—as numerous individuals, we come into being through the self-negation of the absolute One. This is why our existence is fundamentally self-contradictory. The reality of self-consciousness—that the self knows itself—is already self-contradictory. We always have our existence in that which is transcendent of the self, and we affirm ourselves in our self-negation. The discernment and experiential grasp of this ground of the contradictory self-identity is what is meant by *kenshō*. Thereby one grasps the logic of paradox. The *kōan*

practice of Zen Buddhism is a device to facilitate this experience. Shūzan [926-993] once said, holding up a bamboo stick in his hand, "If you call this a bamboo stick, you already miss its reality; if you do not call it that, then you are wrong. What do you call it?" [*Mumonkan* 43].

The logic of paradox is not irrationality. It is, in Shinran's words, to take as the discriminating principle that which goes beyond discrimination. It embraces the contradictory self-identity of the principle (*ri*) and the phenomenal (*ji*), of knowledge (*chi*) and praxis (*gyō*). In fact, scientific knowledge also comes about in this way. My phrase, "from the created to the creating," stems from this standpoint, the standpoint of the self-determination of the historical world. Moreover, as the self-determination of the absolute present, it is an extremely ordinary standpoint [i.e., the horizon of everyday existence] (*byōjōtei*). Rinzai said: "The Buddhist teaching requires no conscious effort; it consists simply in the ordinary course of events and nothing special: relieving yourself, dressing, eating, drinking, and when tired, lying down to rest. Stupid people laugh at me, but the wise know what I mean" [*Rinzairoku, Jishū*, 4]. These words should not be misconstrued, however. The eschatological reality is precisely the "ordinary standpoint." Such a statement as "The mind is Buddha and Buddha is the Mind" [Baso's words; cf. *Mumonkan* 30] does not express a subjective or idealistic view of the world. Again, the saying, "All minds are originally no-minds, therefore they are called minds" [Diamond Sutra 18b] has to be understood in terms of the contradictory self-identity of the mind and the Buddha (the individual and the whole), in accordance with the logic of *sokuhi* of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition. All sorts of misunderstandings concerning Zen stem from the objective logical way of thinking. What Western philosophy since Plotinus has called "mysticism" comes quite close to Oriental Zen, but in my opinion has not fundamentally broken with the standpoint of objective logic. Actually, the One of Plotinus is diametrically opposed to Oriental Nothing, for it does not reach the ordinary standpoint. It is not that our mind exists and therefore that the world exists, nor is it simply that we look at the world from the standpoint of the individual self. Rather, the individual self is conceivable only in this historical world. The world of the conscious self, as I explained in my essay "Life," arises as the self-deter-

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mination of the temporal aspect of this historical world. The subjective standpoint of the abstractly conscious self darkens our vision.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHILE THOSE WHO have had a deep religious experience and committed themselves to religion are few, religion cannot be reduced to a psychological state peculiar to certain individuals. So long as we are historical beings who are born, act, and die in the historical world, our existence is necessarily religious, and that from the very foundations of the self. The Absolute Being who exists and moves by itself does not transcend the relative; what simply transcends the relative is not absolute. This historical world comes into being as the affirmation of the self-negation of true Absolute Being which contains within itself absolute negation, and as the self-determination of the absolute present in the thoroughly contradictory self-identity of the many and the one. Each of us, as those who make up the innumerable individuals of this world, expresses the world and forms the world as its self-expressive point. This is the stuff of our existence. Since we come into being as the affirmation of the self-negation of the Absolute One, we have our existence in self-negation and are fundamentally religious, and our every action is historical as well as eschatological in that it is the self-determination of the absolute present. We obey God's decision with our own decision. Truth is revelation. As the self-determination of the absolute present, it is known kairologically. Truth, as the content of the self-determination of the absolute present, is universal and eternal, transcending all particularity of time and space. A moment is eternity; *kairos* is *logos* and *logos* is *kairos*. Difficulties concerning the relationship between eternal truth and factual truths stem from an abstract conception of time. Time has to be understood as the self-determination of the absolute present.

The Ordinary Standpoint as the Locus of Freedom

That every action of ours is eschatological as the self-determination of the absolute present means that, in Rinzaï's words, our "whole being is in action" (*zentaïsayū*) [*Rinzairoku, Jishū* 10]. Conversely, it means that "the Buddhist teaching has no room for conscious calculation" [*Rinzairoku, Jishū* 4], and that the Buddhist path is the ordinary standpoint [*Rinzairoku, Jishū* 4, also 9]. It is clear from this that what I understand by eschatological is in a sense different from its Christian equivalent, as I do not consider it objectively and transcendently, but immanently and transcendently as the self-determination of the absolute present. At the depths of our self there is nothing; we are utterly nothing and respond inverse-correlatively to the Absolute One. That we transcend ourselves at the ground of our self-existence or at the extreme boundary of individuality, and respond to the Absolute One means that we transcend everything in that act. We transcend the historical world which is the self-determination of the absolute present; we transcend the past and the future. In so doing, we are absolutely free. This is the state that Banzan Hōjaku describes as "just like wielding a sword in the air." The standpoint of freedom which Dostoyevsky sought can only be this.

There is nothing at the base of the self that determines it. Nor is there anything instinctive in terms of the subject of judgment or anything rational in terms of the predicate. The self is completely devoid of any ground of its own. Therefore [as Rinzaï says], it is "simply the ordinary course of events," or what I call "the ordinary standpoint." Again, it is said, "If one realizes one's subjectivity, wherever one stands, one is authentic" [*Rinzairoku, Jishū* 4]. Here we see the contrast between the personal freedom espoused by Kant—the epitome of the Western tradition—and the absolute freedom of which Rinzaï speaks—the depths of the Eastern tradition. In the latter, everywhere the self becomes the self-expression of Absolute Being. We are not Nietzsche's Man-God but God's people, servants of the Lord. From the perspective of objective logic, the sayings of Zen masters may seem to be saying that one simply becomes nothing or loses one's distinct identity. But to say that the self transcends itself at its own depths does not mean that it becomes nothing; rather it becomes the self-expressing point of the world, the real individual, the real self. Real knowledge

and morality stem from this standpoint at which the human world emerges as the outer limit of the self-negation of Absolute Being; and we come into being as the "many"—brought about by the self-negation of the Absolute One. Thus we stand inverse-correlatively with the One. Shinran remarked that Amida's vow was made for him, Shinran, alone. The more individual we become, the more we have to express our religious awareness in this way. We have our existence in the One inverse-correlatively. According to absolute negation which is at the same time affirmation, the ordinary standpoint is always present for the self, without any ground of its own. It is the reality of the self-determination of the absolute present itself, and as such it is the locus of absolute freedom wherein every point is an Archimedean *pou stō*, so that "wherever one stands one is authentic." The more individual we become, the more we stand absolutely freely at this ordinary standpoint. So long as we are governed by instinct from without or by reason from within, we are not free. What I mean by freedom here is diametrically opposed to the modern Western idea of freedom. Human freedom is not a matter of Euclidean geometry.

From the standpoint of objective logic, my philosophical views might seem mystical. The logic of *topos*, however, is opposed to mystical philosophy insofar as it claims that the individual comes into being out of absolute negation and that this absolute negation is immediately the ordinary standpoint. This has yet to be cast in logical form, but I think that the unity of these two extreme opposites of absolute negation and the ordinary standpoint are present in the Japanese sensibility. The two aspects appear to be absolutely incompatible and yet one in the manner of "being artless and one with the workings of *dharma*." Mutai Risaku maintains that the quintessential Japanese spirit is found in the spirit of the poetry of the *Manyōshū* and in Shinran's absolute other-reliant religion. I suppose that the same spirit underlies the elusive beauty of *The Tale of Genji* or the simple elegance of Bashō's poetry and the like. The real meaning of this Japanese sensibility, however, has been distorted by an insular mentality and has remained at the level of a superficial everydayness; the Japanese have become self-complacent about it. In order to adopt a wider perspective of global history, Japanese sensibility needs today to assume a thoroughly eschatological quality and an earnestness that can embrace even Dostoyevsky's concerns. This marks the starting point of a new

global culture. Dostoyevsky depicted human beings at their "vanishing points," but his standpoint was detached from the ordinary standpoint. This, I suppose, is the difference between the Russian and Japanese attitudes. But unless one's concerns are connected with the ordinary standpoint, they are not realistic. They remain bound to an approach that leans toward the subject-term of judgment.

The Ordinary Standpoint, Common Sense, and Religion

The ordinary standpoint (*byōjōtei*) should not to be identified with common sense. Common sense is a historically created, social system of knowledge. It is a habit formed in accordance with human propensities. What I mean by the ordinary standpoint is a standpoint essential to our self-existence. It is indispensable for our personal existence, what makes a person a person. That is, it is the standpoint of real free will (although, as mentioned above, it stands in contrast to the Kantian notion of free will). The ordinary standpoint is the point at which we, who come into being as numerous individuals through the self-negation of the Absolute One, take our stand. It is the standpoint where we freely undergo a turnabout in a self-negation that is simultaneously a self-affirmation. It puts us in touch with the beginning and the end of the world. Put the other way, it is the *alpha* and the *omega* of our self. In a word, at the ordinary standpoint we are aware of the absolute present. If it is called deep, it is infinitely deep—it can reach down to the very depths of this world. Again, if it is called shallow, it is groundlessly, infinitely shallow—it touches no surface and yet encompasses everything. This is why I call this ordinary standpoint eschatological. Our historical consciousness, which always comes into being at this standpoint, is the awareness of the absolute present. This is why, from this standpoint, we can think of the past and the future without limits. History is not something that can be viewed from the standpoint of a merely abstractly conscious self; what is conceived from such a standpoint is simply autobiography. Because the ordinary standpoint is always eschatological, the world, in the contradictory self-identity of time and space and inside and outside [of one's consciousness], has the dynamism of "the created creating." In upholding abstract logic, Western philosophy recognizes the abstract standpoint of free will, but the idea expressed by the ordinary standpoint that I am proposing is

foreign to it. As I said, so-called common sense needs to be distinguished clearly from what I call the ordinary standpoint, but the two have something in common. Common sense is formed on the basis of what is the ordinary standpoint for the self. In this regard, my attention is drawn to what the French call *le bon sens* (see Montaigne's discussion of Socrates' attitude in "On Physiognomy," *Essays* III, 12).

The most concrete standpoint for us is the deepest and the shallowest, the maximum and the minimum standpoint—in other words, what I call the ordinary standpoint. It is the standpoint of Pascal's *roseau pensant* ("thinking reed"). The Kantians hold that knowledge takes shape as an intuitively given mediated by abstract logic; they also hold that science begins with the denial of common sense. But simply negating the given and moving away from the intuitive nature of knowledge by way of abstract logic, does not bring us to the truth. For any objective knowledge, the beginning and the end must always be connected. Kant himself, unlike his later followers, took seriously the connection between knowledge and the immediately given. The furthest and the nearest is the truest. Truth requires that the starting point not be lost, however far one may go, indeed that one actually return to it. This is precisely what I call action-intuition. Common sense is *doxa*, opinion, and as such needs to be roundly negated. But common sense also contains an element of the ordinary standpoint. This is why knowledge and morality are held to stem from common sense and return to it (although common sense is far from pure). What opposes against common sense is neither true nor good. Hence, what is to be negated is not intuition but *doxa*. When seen from the ordinary standpoint of human beings who create and are created, Newtonian physics, the foundation of remarkable developments in modern physics, was a kind of *doxa*. Theories of relativity and quantum mechanics in our own day amply testify to the fact. The absolute notions of time and space turned out in fact to be no more than concepts relative to the functions of measurement. Langevin says that quantum physics does not negate determinism but rather renders it precise in a more human and concrete way.

The standpoint of religion consists of a radical appropriation of the standpoint of the eternal past and the future of the historical world, the standpoint where the beginning and the end of human beings meet, the standpoint which is the deepest and the shallowest, the furthest and

the nearest, the maximum and the minimum—that is, the ordinary standpoint. To be religiously aware means that we human beings never lose sight of the source of human existence. The standpoint of religion has no fixed content of its own, because it is the standpoint of standpoints. If religion had a fixed content, it would be no more than superstition. Religious creeds need to be understood in a radically symbolic manner, as immediate self-expressions of our historical existence. Only in this way do symbols have religious significance. The real end of religion lies in grasping eternal life, a grasp that has no ground of its own. It consists of a total appropriation of the ordinary standpoint. To say, “[Religious reality] is but I, Makabe no Heishirō” is not only to negate all standpoints but also to establish them. It is the standpointless standpoint, the point from where infinitely great wisdom and great action emerge. It is said that “a drop of water from the deep source is inexhaustible.” The standpoints of truth, good, and beauty derive from the same source.

The Religious Origin of the Historical World

People often say religion is mystical. But there is no special consciousness corresponding to religion. It is said that there is no mystery in the true teaching (*dharma*). What is mystical is of no use to our practical life. If religion were a consciousness peculiar to some individuals, it would be but the idle pastime of a person of leisure. It is said that “The Way cannot be separated from us for a moment. What can be separated from us is not the Way” [*The Doctrine of the Middle*, 1.1]. And again, “Even in moments of haste, one acts according to the Way [of humanity]. Even in times of difficulty or confusion, one acts according to the Way” [*Analects* 4.5]. Religion does not exist apart from the “ordinary mind.” Nansen says: “The ordinary mind, that is the Way” [*Mumonkan* 19]. We must thoroughly pierce through the bottom of this “ordinary mind.” As the self-determination of the absolute present, we are always in touch with the Absolute One in an inversely correlative way. In each step we take, we are eschatologically connected with the beginning and the end of the world. Therefore, Nansen says: “If one tries to search for it, one departs from it.” When asked, “But if one does not try, how does one know the way?” he replied: “The

way does not belong to knowing or non-knowing" [*Mumonkan* 19; *Jōshu Goroku* 1]. This is religious awareness.

Religion is not something that takes place within the consciousness of an individual, but it is a matter of the self-awareness of historical life itself. This is why historically and socially speaking, any religion begins with folk belief. The founders of religions are those who succeed in bringing this belief to full articulation. They are the "mouthpieces of God," as the prophets of Israel were called. As the self-forming historical world expresses itself, historical society comes into being. Emile Durkheim said that there was something sacred (*sacré*) at the origins of society. A folk belief shares its vicissitudes with its people. State religions, such as that of the Greeks and the Romans, perished with their peoples. But a genuine religion is not something that exists for a particular state; on the contrary, the *raison d'être* of the state, as the self-expression of historical life, consists in its being religious. A genuine state exists where the people possess the world-principle within themselves and form themselves within and in accord with the historical world. The religion of Yahweh was originally a folk religion of the Israelites; but they took their belief beyond the level of folk belief, deepened it, and elevated it to the level of a world religion. During the time of the Babylonian captivity, they may have lost their land but they never lost their religion or their spiritual confidence in being a chosen people, a confidence that did not lie in military might or glory. Prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Second Isaiah deepened and refined their religion. Jeremiah was an uncompromising patriot; he considered Nebuchadnezzar a servant of Yahweh and admonished his subjects.

The historical world, as the self-determination of Absolute Being, comes into being in the absolute present. Now since what expresses itself and what is expressed are one, the historical world, as the self-expression of self-expressive Absolute Being, contains within itself its self-expression and forms itself self-expressively. Thus the historical world is at its root religious and metaphysical. Every race, as part of the historical world, comes into being in this manner, and this is what distinguishes a race as a historical species from a merely biological species. At the foundation of any realm of life, including biological life, the self-expression of the world is always present. As the blood of

a race comes to form itself in a self-expressive way, it becomes a historical species (cf. my discussion on "Life"). Moreover, as Ranke has pointed out, there is no such a thing as a singular race, which would be a mere abstraction. The world at its beginning is spatial—made up of various races, to be sure, but existing in juxtaposition to one another. The world of the absolute present which has not yet entered into a temporal interaction is not yet self-forming in itself, and is not yet the world of world history. But as the world becomes self-forming in the sense of the created creating, it becomes more concrete and begins to have a center of its own. The two-dimensional world unfolds into a three-dimensional world. In this the world is consciously apprehended for the first time—that is, the world becomes self-conscious.

The content of this self-formation of the historical world in the absolute present is culture, at whose ground there is always something religious at work. The global world transcends simple racial characteristics and achieves its self-identity in a world religion. Christianity, which grew out of the folk belief of Israel, played this role of world religion in Europe during the Middle Ages. In the East a global world in the Western sense of the word never took shape. Still, it seems to me that not only Buddhism but Confucianism can claim the character of a world religion. It is said that during the Spring and Autumn Period in China, the Chinese distinguished themselves from the barbarians by possessing the idea of propriety (Chin., *li*).

Modernity and Religion

When the historical world—the self-determination of the absolute present—transcends the racial stage and forms a global world, some may consider that the world loses all of its varying traditions and becomes characterless, abstract, universal, irreligious, and scientific. This is the direction modern European development has taken. As the self-negation which is simultaneously the affirmation of Absolute Being, such a negative aspect must of course be intrinsically present in the direction of the self-formation of the global world. The historical world contains an element that negates humanity. But the Absolute does not simply transcend the relative; the real Absolute thoroughly contains within itself its own self-negation. Accordingly, the relative entities are not

simply abstracted from the Absolute, but they signify the negation of the Absolute. They are the "many" that stand against the "one." Therefore, one aspect of the self-forming development of the historical world must be the dynamic of the world's losing itself. Precisely because the world contains such self-negation at core, it is considered an Absolute Reality that exists of itself and moves of itself. Sheer self-negation can hardly yield a reality that exists of itself.

The material world is something abstractly conceived. The scientific world, as the self-negating aspect of the historical world, is also conceived in relation to humanity. For this reason, science is a branch of culture. We human beings are scientific in that we have our existence in our self-negation. Religiously speaking, this implies that God sees himself in his self-negation. In this sense, the scientific world can be considered religious. Kepler's astronomy is said to have been something religious. God has his existence in his self-negation. In Hegelian terms, this is the world of the self-alienating Spirit.

At this point, I would like to clarify, from my own standpoint, the relationship between religion and culture. In one respect religion and culture are opposed to each other. Today's dialectical theology stresses this point as a reaction against former views. For my part, I do not consider a God who cannot enter into the realm of self-negation, a God who does not contain within himself his real self-negation, to be real Absolute Being. Such a God may be the judge of the world, but is not its absolute savior; he may be a transcendently sovereign God, but is not a fully immanent and absolutely loving God. Real culture is established as the affirmation of the self-negating Absolute Being. From our perspective as human beings, we discover the truly objective and eternal content of culture when we negate ourselves, assume a self-existence in what transcends us from within, and act as the self-forming dynamism of the historical world. As the self-determination of the absolute present, culture is the content of the self-forming form. In contrast to the dialectical theologians, I maintain accordingly that real culture must be established religiously and also that real religion must be cultural. What simply negates culture is not real religion, but transcendent and void of content, a religion that merely denies humanity. A religion that crowns God as sovereign has this tendency. While I am sympathetic to contemporary theology in its stress on the transcen-

dent character of religion over against the immanent and rational religion propounded by older theology, I cannot help but detect certain reactionary elements in it.

Although I maintain that real religion must be cultural, I do not mean to consider religion in terms of culture. I do not treat religion in a purely rational or immanent way. Religion cannot be simply immanent; it must be immanently transcendent and transcendently immanent. Because religion exists in the absolutely contradictory self-identity of immanence and transcendence, it eludes conventional logic that emphasizes the subject-term of judgment or objective logic. This is why religion inevitably appears mystical to those who approach it from those standpoints. Misunderstandings and insufficient knowledge of religion are all due to approaches based on abstract logic. The logic of religion, as formative of the historical world, is absolutely dialectical. Even Hegel's logic did not arrive at this point.

To approach religion rationally from the perspective of the immanent world of human beings is in effect to deny religion, a denial which amounts to the world's loss of itself, to humanity's loss of itself, and to the self's loss of its true identity. This denial misses the originally self-contradictory character of human existence. This is why I maintain that real culture must be religious and that real religion must be cultural. We find God hidden [*deus absconditus*; cf. Isaiah 45.15] behind real culture. But when human beings to adhere solely to the human standpoint without any recourse to religion, proceeding strictly in the direction of culture alone, the world ends up denying itself and we human beings losing ourselves. This has been the orientation of European culture since the Renaissance, which explains why some have come to lament the decline of Western culture. When the world loses itself and human beings forget God, humanity becomes wholly individualistic and self-interested. The world becomes only a stage for play or combat. All is in chaos. The direction of culture ultimately negates genuine culture. Of late, some of those who are apprehensive about the future of European culture have advocated a return to the Middle Ages (e.g., Dawson). Despite the careless claim that history repeats itself, in fact, it does not. History is a new creation at every step. Modernity has developed out of medieval culture through historical necessities, and it is not possible to go back to the standpoint of medieval culture, nor is this the way to save modern culture. A new

cultural direction needs to be sought today; a new humanity must be born.

Christianity, which formed the core of the self-understanding of the medieval world, was a religion characterized by objective transcendence. It was the religion of a sovereign God, which joined hands with the secular power so that Peter's successor becoming Caesar's successor as well. This kind of religion denies religion itself. What belongs to Caesar must be rendered entirely to Caesar. Religion cannot pose behind the sword of Caesar. This world, as the created, must of historical necessity move on to become the creating. Tillich says that Protestantism took nature as the locus of decision making. We must proceed in this direction, in the direction of finding God in his self-negation. To proceed only in the immanent direction, however, means that the world loses itself and that human beings deny humanity itself. We must rather transcend ourselves inwardly. This immanent transcendence is precisely that which opens the way to a new culture.

In this connection, I find Ivan Karamazov's prose poem interesting. Moved by the pleas of humanity, "Lord God, may Thou manifest Thyself to us," Christ reappears in the human world. The setting is Seville in Spain; the time, around the fifteenth century, the horrible time of the Inquisition when many were burned daily *ad majorem Dei gloriam*. The cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, sees Christ performing a miracle and his face darkens with fear. He orders soldiers to seize him and put him in jail. He accuses Christ: "Why art Thou come to hinder us? Thou hast no right to add anything to what Thou hast said of old. The freedom of people's faith was dearer to Thee than anything in those days fifteen hundred years ago. Didst Thou not often say then, 'I will make you free'? But now Thou hast seen these 'free' men. We have completed that work in Thy name. People are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom. Yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet. But that has been our doing. Was this what Thou didst? Was this Thy freedom?" That is, the inquisitors have vanquished freedom and have done so to make people happy. "For nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man than freedom. Christ rejected the only way of making people happy by saying that man did not live by bread alone. But fortunately, when Christ departed from this world, he turned over his task to the Roman Pope. How can you deprive us of that authority now? Why art Thou come to

hinder us? Tomorrow I shall burn Thee." In response, Christ remains silent, never uttering a word, as if a shadow. The next day when he is about to be released, Christ approaches the old man and kisses him without a word. The old man shudders [*The Brothers Karamazov*].

This Christ, silent from beginning to end like a shadow, is the Christ of what I call immanent transcendence. Of course, Dostoyevsky or any other Christian would not say this; it is my own interpretation. But a new Christian world may be opened up with the Christ viewed in terms of immanent transcendence; a return to the medieval world is anachronistic. In the manner of "being artless and one with the workings of *dharma*," we see the real God where there is no God. I wonder whether Buddhism, standing on the horizon of global history today, could contribute something to the new era. Certainly, the old conventional Buddhism is only an antique. Even if a religion is a universal religion, so long as it is formed in history, it bears certain particularities according to the time and the place of the people who give shape to it. Even though the essentials of religion may be preserved, it is inevitable that any religion exhibits demerits along with its merits. I merely propose that for the religion of the future, the direction of immanent transcendence is more promising than one of transcendent immanence.

(I am basically in agreement with the general orientation of Berdyaev's *Meaning of History*, even though his philosophy has not broken with Boehmean mysticism. The new age must be first and foremost scientific. Tillich's *Kairos and Logos* has something in common with my epistemology, but its logic is not clear. Today, these new currents of thought must be given a thoroughly logical foundation.)

The State and Religion

Regarding the relationship between the state (*kokka*) and religion, I have touched on this subject on various occasions since my *Philosophical Essays IV* [1940]. Each state is a world in itself, containing within itself the self-expression of Absolute Being. Hence, when a folk society harbors in itself the self-expression of the world, i.e., when it becomes rational, it becomes a state. This alone constitutes a state. In this sense, the state is religious. The historical world, which is religious at its ground of coming into being, forms itself so as to

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becomes the state. The historical world realizes itself in the form of states, but the state as such is not Absolute Being. It may be the source of morality, but not of religion. As the modality of the self-formation of Absolute Being, the state commands the conformity of our moral action, but it is not the savior of our soul. The real state must be religious at its roots. As a corollary, one who has undergone real religious conversion must naturally be a member of the state in his history-forming praxis. The standpoint of religion and that of the state must also be clearly distinguished. The alternative is a medieval view that would hinder the genuine development of both religion and the state. This is why modern states have recognized freedom of belief.

While the affinity between Christianity, the religion of a sovereign God, and the state is easy to see, Buddhism has sometimes been thought to have nothing to do with the state. But Suzuki Daisetz quotes from the *Daimuryōju-kyō*, ch. 41 [actually, ch. 39]: "The congregation of the 'four groups' [comprised of *bhiku*, a monk; *bhikuni*, a nun; *upāsaka*, a lay male devotee; and *upāsika*, a lay female devotee] look at the other shore and at the same time those of the other shore look at this shore; they are exactly the same"; and writes that just as the congregation centered around the Buddha on this shore sees the Pure Land, so this shore is seen by the congregation of the other shore. The world of human beings (*shaba*) reflects the Pure Land (*jōdo*), and the Pure Land reflects the world of humanity. Clear mirrors mirror each other. This suggests the intrinsic continuity or the identity of the Pure Land and the human world (cf. Suzuki Daisetz, *Jōdokei Shisōron*, p. 104, [SDZ VI 1-320]). It helps us to imagine the state in the spirit of True Pure Land Buddhism: the reflection of the Pure Land in this land.

TRANSLATED BY YUSA MICHIKO