

# The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview

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## CHAPTER ONE

THOUGH NOT EVERYONE is an artist, everyone can appreciate art to a certain degree. Though not everyone is a religionist, those who commit themselves to a religion being a rare few, everyone can understand religion to a certain extent. I imagine that no one can fail to be deeply moved when reading ardent confessional writings of great religious figures. Situations of extreme misfortune, moreover, are bound to awake religious awareness in everyone of us.

Religion is a spiritual fact. Philosophers may not invent religion on the basis of their own systems of thought; their task is rather to explain this already existing spiritual reality. In order to do so, they must have some understanding of what the religious mind is. Few can claim to have true religious experience; but just as a non-specialist can ap-

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\* "The Logic of *Topos* and the Religious Worldview" (*Basho-teki ronri to shūkyō-teki sekaikan*) was completed by Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) two months before his death in 1945. In it he summarizes his philosophical vision and further develops his philosophy of religion discussed in earlier writings. This installment, the first of a two-part translation, includes Chapters I and II of the essay, which appear in *The Collected Writings of Nishida Kitarō* (hereafter *NKZ*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979 edition), Vol. XI, pp. 371–412. Earlier translations of Chapter II have appeared in English and German: see David Dilworth, tr., "Religious Consciousness and the Logic of the *Prā-jñāpāramitā Sūtra*," *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 25, 1–2 (1970), pp. 203–216, and Yagi Seiichi, tr., "Was liegt dem Selbstsein zugrunde?" in *Gott in Japan* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1974), pp. 94–112. I am deeply indebted to Mr. Mark Unno, Professors Edward Kaplan, John Maraldo, James Heisig, and Joseph O'Leary for their assistance in the preparation of this translation.—*Trans.*

preciate art, so can a non-religionist understand religion.

Few would confess to having no conscience. To do so is merely to disparage oneself. But some admit to having no eye for art, and many claim to have no understanding of religion or to have no religious mind. Some scholars, indeed, take pride in this lack, dismissing religion as unscientific, illogical, and at best a matter of mystical intuition. Some say it is not God who made human beings in his image but human beings who made God in theirs. Others claim that religion is the opium of the masses. Just as we cannot discuss color with the blind nor sound with the deaf, so we cannot discuss religion with those who have no inkling of what it is. I am not one to preach religion, but I cannot accept anti-religious opinions based on the view that religion is unscientific or illogical. I wish to make this much clear at the outset.

What is religion? In order to deal with this question, we must first clarify what the religious mind is. Without God there is no religion. God is the fundamental concept of religion. Just as color appears to the eye and sound to the ear, so does God appear to the self as a spiritual fact. God can never be grasped simply intellectually. A merely intellectually conceived God is not God. This is not to say that God is only a subjective reality. Even in physics, although the senses are the starting point for the pursuit of truth, that which sees or hears is not the particular sense organ, but the mind itself.

Prior to the *Critique of Practical Reason* [1788], in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* [1785] Kant discussed the good from the standpoint of the moral reason based on common sense. I have no quarrel with his argument as far as it goes. Kant certainly had a clear awareness of what morality is and was able to articulate it from his philosophical standpoint. But how deep was his understanding of aesthetic consciousness? Just as a poet once said that the stars in the heavens were the most beautiful of objects precisely because they were not objects of our desire [Goethe], so Kant said that beauty was indifferent to our desires. I cannot help admiring this insight, as it aptly elucidates the essence of aesthetic consciousness. Yet I doubt if he understood by it anything more than formal beauty. When he came to religion, however, he viewed it only from the standpoint of moral consciousness. Although he discussed the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, these were for him only postulates of moral consciousness. For Kant, religion was meaningful only as a supplement to

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morality. I do not find any uniqueness accorded to religious consciousness in his thought, and I wonder if he was aware of any such uniqueness. Within the limits of mere reason, religion does not fit. To discuss religion one must be conscious of it as a fact of one's spiritual experience. Otherwise, even if one thinks one is discussing religion, one may actually be dealing with something entirely different.

### *The Self and the World*

What is this religious awareness, the religious mind? This question should be investigated in both its subjective and objective aspects. But I shall not take up this problem here. Suffice it to say that we cannot discuss religious reality from the standpoint of objective logic, and that religious questions cannot even emerge at this level.

The self is that which acts. Action arises in, and from, a mutual relationship between things. Action presupposes a relationship of mutual negation, wherein one negates the other and the other negates the first. This mutual negation is simultaneously a mutual affirmation. Each thing realizes its own uniqueness. That is, each thing becomes itself. That two things maintain their uniqueness as they stand opposed to each other and negate each other means that they are mutually conjoined and compose one form. Conversely, for the two to interrelate, to be conjoined and form one whole means that they maintain their mutual opposition and negate each other. It is according to this formula that we actually think about the mutual interaction of things, namely, the material world. Therein what I call the "logic of contradictory self-identity" is already at work. In order to think about that which truly acts, however, it is not enough to say that two things stand in opposition and that their mutual negation is simultaneously their mutual affirmation. A really acting thing is not one which is moved and acted upon by another, but one which of itself which moves the other and also initiates its own action. This is why in the material world there are no really active things, for there everything is relative and all forces are quantitative.

In order to conceive that which really acts, we must bring in the category of order or sequence, that is, the factor of irreversible *time*. In the material world time is considered reversible; but in the world of life it is irreversible. Life does not repeat itself; the dead do not come back

to life. The world, the contradictory self-identity of the many and the one, moves from that which is formed to that which forms. In this sense, the world is an infinite process. That which acts is that which forms. Such a world is purposive. In my essay "Life" I said that the world of life, differing from the world of matter, contains its self-expression within itself; it coordinates that which is inside itself with that outside and moves from the created to the creating by reflecting itself within itself [cf. *NKZ IX*: 289-370]. That is, it is a world that exists and moves of itself. Containing self-negation within itself and reflecting itself within itself, the world continues to form itself endlessly through the negation of negation, i.e., self-affirmation. This is the direction of time.

The contradictorily self-identical world contains its own focal point within itself and revolves around this dynamic axis as it endlessly determines itself. In such a world, when something new happens as an outcome of the mutual negation, it is simultaneously an affirmation of things. That is, when things are acting, this action is directed towards the self-formation of the world. All activities must have some direction. Time must have its own content. This direction is the end, *telos*. Certainly, time has its own property even in the material world, for there are no forces where time does not have its own property. In the material world, however, time negates itself and is grasped in spatial terms. The world of life on the other hand, biological though it may be, is already contradictorily self-identical, as I mentioned before, and as such it is the world of the self-determination of *topos* [i.e., the field of consciousness]. One's self is corporeally biological, and its activities are biologically purposive, but we unique individuals of the absolutely contradictorily self-identical historical world do not merely act purposively. We act *knowing* our ends. That is to say, we are self-conscious. We act in the true sense of the word, for our actions come from within. Not only the biological world but even the material world exists within the historical world. The biological world, however, though already contradictorily self-identical, is characterized by spatiality and remains close to the material world.

The absolutely contradictorily self-identical world that exists and moves of itself is thoroughly spatial and temporal. It is spatial in negating itself, expressing itself, and existing synchronically. But in its self-affirming aspect, as the negation of negation, the world is endlessly

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dynamic and temporal, moving from that which is determined to that which determines. Not only does time negate space, but space negates time. In the contradictory self-identity of time and space, the world without any ground of its own forms itself in its endless movement from the created to the creating. It is a creative world, and as such, I call it the world of the self-determination of the *absolute present*. Only in such a world can we conceive of that which truly moves of itself, i.e., that which is self-aware. That things mutually oppose one another and interact in this world through “mutual negation which is simultaneously affirmation” means that things relate in opposition to one another not as the subject-term [i.e., an individual abstractly considered] but as worlds. Each and every thing that acts is a world in itself and opposes another world. This is what I mean by “an individual faces another individual.” That we act consciously means that each of us—an expressive point of the world—forms the world by expressing it in our self: the world is subjectively appropriated by our self. This means that the world which stands over against us as something thoroughly objective is transformed into a world of signs within us, is grasped by us as a significative world. That is, the world expresses itself within us; each of us is the locus of the its self-formation. Thus the world assumes a temporal mode through its negation which is simultaneously affirmation (cf. “Life”).

As spatial worlds existing in time, we contradictorily self-identically form ourselves. This is the activity of consciousness. This temporal space, i.e., the space permeated by consciousness, reflects itself within itself contradictorily self-identically, and its focal point is what is for us our *self*. The world of consciousness as we know it is ordered around or centered on these dynamic focal points. The activity of consciousness always has temporal direction, and it determines itself self-expressively. It is always conscious of its ends as the self-determining activity of the world, wherein the present determines itself into past and future. To describe the world of our consciousness in this way is to say that our consciousness expresses the world within itself in the contradictory self-identity of time and space, and functions as one of the self-expressive, [self-]forming points of the world. By expression I mean the dynamism of the other being expressed in the self, and the self being expressed in the other. The self is this focal point of the world at which the world reflects itself. Self-consciousness does not

arise within a simply closed-off self; it arises only when the self transcends itself and faces the other. When we are aware of ourselves, our self already transcends itself. But this obvious fact is not recognized by those who substantify the self by objective logic.

That individual worlds stand in mutual opposition in the absolutely contradictorily self-identical world means that the focal points stand in mutual opposition in the way described above. In the absolutely contradictorily self-identical world, each of the numerous individuals is a focal point of the world and as such each bears something of the character of a world. As in the *Monadology* [of Leibniz], each monad expresses the world as well as constituting a particular perspective of the self-expression of the world. In such a world, individuals interact expressively, as if they were in Kant's "kingdom of ends."

The world is absolutely contradictorily self-identical. As the self-determination of the absolute present, it has its focal point within itself and forms itself with this dynamic point as its center. This gives the world its order. Each of us is one of numerous individuals in the world, and as its focal point each expresses the world in itself and has its own direction in accordance with the direction of the self-forming focal point of the world. This gives the world its moral order. To say that the self as a focal point of the world determines itself self-expressively is not the same as to consider the self necessary by objective logic. Rather, it is to say that the self assumes as center the absolute present which also encompasses the eternal past and future. This is why I regard the self as the momentary self-determination of the *absolute present*. Therefore, we are contradictory existence. We reflect the world within ourselves, and yet have our selfhood in the absolute other. We are born to die and die to be born. The moment disappears forever and yet forever comes into being. The moment is eternal. The world of the absolute present is like an infinite sphere which has no circumference and whose center is everywhere. This is the world of the freedom of necessity and the necessity of freedom. Only in this world is it possible to speak of the moral obligation of the self. This is not a subjective world but a historical world. As I have discussed in "The World of Physics," the so-called physical world is already an aspect of the historical world which is absolutely contradictorily self-identical [cf. *NKZ XI: 5-59*].

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### *The Self as a World of Self-Awareness*

Kant clarified the transcendental forms which are the constitutive conditions of knowledge. But just as content without form is blind, form without content is empty. Kant saw objective knowledge as consisting in the unity of form and intuitive content, and developed the notion of the thing-in-itself, which has shown itself to be highly problematic. As for the Neo-Kantians, they claim that to understand Kant is to go beyond him. They hold that there is an "ought" prior to "is," and that moral obligation cannot be derived from existence. But the "existence" to which they refer is limited to objects which conform to the forms of cognition. We cannot deal with that which cognizes or thinks from such a standpoint. But what is it that thinks? Is it nothing? "Nothing" can neither act nor think. Some might say that there is a self but that it is beyond thought. If it is beyond thought, how can one speak of it? One has already thought about it when one says that it is beyond thought. Thus, that we cannot think of the self suggests that the self cannot become an object of the self itself. This is in fact the case, yet we cannot clarify what the self is merely by defining it negatively. We think of the self when we objectify what is not an object. It may be supposed that the self exists in a higher dimension. But the self cannot be found at the limit of a sequential progression into higher dimensions; there comes a point where one must turn back. Therefore, logically speaking, the self must be grasped as a contradictory self-identity, as a negation which is also an affirmation.

What does it mean that something is? Aristotle defined the individual—that which is the subject-term and never the predicate-term—as the truly real. Leibniz would say that the subject-term includes an infinite number of predicates. But the self is not what exists in this way. It cannot be explained as *monad* or *entelecheia*. First and foremost, the self is that which becomes its own predicate, that which predicates itself. It expresses itself, it attains self-consciousness. That which is simply teleological, purposive, is never self-reflective nor self-conscious but always remains objectified. That which becomes self-conscious faces the absolute other. The mutual determination of absolutely opposing things is considered "expressive." When we think about something, while our thinking appears to be based on the categories of the objective world, in reality it operates from the standpoint of the

mutual expression of opposing things. Judgment is founded upon the contradictorily self-identical relationship between the expressing and the expressed. Consider a judgment involving A and B. Viewed from the standpoint of A, B is something expressed in A, or A expresses B in itself; A predicates on B as the subject, or judges B as the object of judgment. B is that which is expressed in A. We can equally say that A is expressed in B and that A is an aspect of the self-expression of B. This is why I maintain that we think and act through "becoming a thing": I stand in mutual opposition with a thing contradictorily self-identically. If an object is considered as merely that which opposes the self spatially, the self is no more than a thing, and a relationship of this sort is a relationship of things and constitutes mere activity.

"To know" is often considered simply an activity. The introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not entirely free from this assumption. From such a standpoint, however, we cannot really understand what knowing is, or any activity of consciousness for that matter. We may think of an activity as the unity of mutually negating things, but such a unity must presuppose a contradictorily self-identical medium [of field]. Viewed in terms of this medium, the mutually opposing and interacting things appear as two ends of the self-determination of the medium, and the result brought about through their mutual determination is the modification of the contradictorily self-identical medium itself. That is why physical phenomena are regarded as modifications of the field of forces. The contradictorily self-identical center of the self-determination of the field, which assumes itself as the many and the one, the one and the many, and which itself is that which changes and that which is changed, is what I call "topological being." Here, the self stands in opposition to itself; it is one with itself through its self-negation. That is, it is that which expresses itself. The relationship between two expressing things, such as I and thou, must be based on the fact of their self-expression, that is, on their self-consciousness. This contradictorily self-identical standpoint is the *sine qua non* for thinking about such relationships.

The endless self-determination of *topos* [i.e., the field of consciousness] which determines itself within itself designates the direction of the object. It is in this direction that objective logic sees the real, that is, that which acts. In contrast, according to the logic of judgment, this is the direction of the subject-term. Aristotle sought the real at the limit

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of this direction. But what is determined as object can only be conceived as the self-determination of the universal that mediates itself, and what is determined as the subject-term is to be conceived as the self-determination of the universal as the predicate aspect. From the standpoint of the logic of judgment, everything is an attribute of the one which is conceived as the subject-term, and from the standpoint of objective logic everything is an activity of the one which is objectively conceived. But both standpoints can also be reversed and viewed in terms of the self-determination of *topos*. Instead of being as subject, we can think about being as predicate. In my view, what Plato understood as being can be thus classified. Instead of objective being, we can think about topological being, that is, self-conscious being. It is possible to regard everything as the self-determination of *topos*. Our own existence is being in this sense. Our self is a contradictorily self-identical center of predicative *topos*. Self-reflection is nothing but this *topos* reflecting itself within itself. All activities of consciousness are based on this reality, are fundamentally the activity of self-consciousness, geared towards an "ought."

The world contains its self-expression within itself and forms itself self-expressively. This is the basis upon which the world of life is established. It moves from the created to the creating in the contradictory self-identity of time and space. Every interaction of mutually determining individuals in such a world is purposive. The relationship between individuals is not simply based on opposition, but is orderly. It is only herein that that which acts exists, or that form and matter can be conceived. The world of biological life, however, remains spatial and material; it is not yet an absolutely contradictorily self-identical world. In the world of truly concrete reality, that is, in the historical world which exists and moves of itself as an absolutely contradictory self-identity, time completely negates space and space completely negates time. This is the world of the absolutely contradictory self-identity of space and time, the one and the many, being and non-being; it moves from the created to the creating without any ground of its own, and is creative. By truly expressing itself, that is, by negating itself, the world forms itself self-affirmingly. It is always temporal and factual in its self-forming vector. On the other hand, in the direction of self-negation and self-expression, as the form which forms itself spatially, the world is the world of ideas, and is abstract and nomological.

Laws are nothing but the abstract form of the self-determination of the world as the contradictory self-identity of the one and the many. The world is factual in negating the ideal, and ideal in negating the factual. Moving from form to matter and from matter to form, the world is the contradictory self-identity of form and matter.

Whatever interacts in such a world contains a focal point of the world within itself. Each world determines itself self-expressively and stands in mutual opposition with others; through mutual negation each gives shape to the world as a whole. In other words, in and through mutual opposition and mutual determination, each as a corner of the world gives shape to the world as a whole. The concrete world, that is, the historical world which exists and moves of itself, contains its own focal point and forms itself centering around this dynamic focal point. Each self-determining individual harbors a focal point of the world and stands in opposition to others and interdetermines with these others along this pivotal axis, i.e., in historical, worldly time. That is to say, individuals interact. In relation to worldly time, the activity of the self as a microcosm is singular and factual; in terms of the self-negation or self-expression of the world, the activity of the self is abstract, concerned with ideas and values. Conversely, as the negation of negation (i.e., affirmation), what is ideal and concerned with value is real, self-forming and informed by the "ought." There is no value that is dissociated from moral obligation. Any action in such a world is in some sense always ideal and real, real and ideal.

The world of our self-conscious self is a world which contains in itself a focal point of the larger world and self-determines. As such it is a self-expressive facet of the historical world. It is temporal and mediational existence, which thoroughly contains the objective self-determination in itself and endlessly determines itself expressively. In terms of the logic of judgment, it is predicative being which thoroughly contains within itself the self-determination of the subject aspect. In contradistinction to the Aristotelian definition of being as always the subject-term and never the predicate-term, this is predicative being which is always the predicate-term and never the subject-term. What Kant meant by the "I" of the "I think" that accompanies every representation can be argued to be this predicative existence. As I discussed in my essay, "On Descartes' Philosophy," we can interpret Kant's position in this manner [cf. *NKZ XI*: 147-188].

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### *The Activity of Consciousness as Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity*

Some consider activity as a mutual determination of opposing things, and all phenomena, whether physical or mental, to be alike. But in order for a thing to act, the relationship between the individual and the whole has to come into play. (Lotze's metaphysics made this point very clear.) When we think of activity, we must consider the kinds of world, the kinds of loci, wherein activity takes place. As I mentioned above, the activity of our consciousness is nothing but the process of our individual self-determination: being the focal points of the world, we embrace such focal points within ourselves, and as a self-expression of the world, we form ourselves self-expressively.

Life begins with the world containing within itself its self-expression and forming itself. It is at first spatial, biological, and instinctive. It exists in self-negation. As it becomes concrete, temporal, and self-affirming, that is, as it becomes absolutely contradictorily self-identical, it becomes historical life. In historical life the negative and the affirmative aspects stand in opposition. The former is the material world, the latter the world of consciousness. In terms of the logic of judgment, the former is the subject-term, the latter the predicate-term. In terms of objective logic, the former is the world of objects and the latter the world of activity. Some psychologists regard the world of consciousness as the world of pure activity (see Wundt, *Grundriss*). Phenomenologists define the world of consciousness in terms of intentionality. This corresponds to the temporal self-determination of the contradictorily self-identical world.

The self-expressive determination of the world in its spatial aspect is instinctive for the self, which contains a focal point of the world. In its temporality, the same self-expressive determination of the world is the activity of consciousness. Moreover, the self-determination of the focal point of the world also pertains to the reality of self-consciousness. Thereby the world of freedom is established. The will is the temporal self-determination [of the self] as it centers on the focal point of the world. Reason is the temporal self-determination [of the self], the self which is the predicate-term but never the subject-term. This is why we are rational and embrace the logical subject, i.e., the object of thought, in the temporal, conscious and immanent way—that is, we

have our own purpose in ourselves. The self-determination of this rational world is the world of practical reason, Kant's moral world. In this world, the subject-term not only simply expresses itself, but is expressed significantly; it is the world of abstract form which maintains the formal contradictory self-identity of the one and the many, i.e., it is the world of pure laws. We are individuals who simply express the world, that is, we are simply cognitive, and as such we express the world formally. Each of us is a formal world, and forms him- or herself. That is, we are purely volitional. This is moral will. Thus the purpose of the moral will lies in respecting and obeying the law for its own sake; we are ever dutiful. This is the categorical imperative directed to us.

As the self-determination of the purely contradictorily self-identical form of the one and the many, to recognize the other as a person in the mode of the contradictory self-identity of the individuals, is for one to become a person, and the converse is also true. Kant said that a person should be treated as an end and not a means, whether referring to oneself or to others. The moral world is "the kingdom of ends" [cf. *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, ch. II]. This is the only conclusion that we can derive when we approach the world of objective action from the standpoint of a merely conscious self. This is the world of pure I, pure moral obligation. Herein lies the essence of Kant's philosophy. This world of pure ego is the world of pure knowledge when conceived spatially in terms of the subject-term. Consciousness-in-general is the focal point of this world. Kant placed more importance on the role of intuition than his followers, and considered the world accordingly.

If we take the contradictorily self-identical world in terms of the determination of the subjective aspect rather than that of the predicative aspect, and consider it as being determined by its own focal point, the world is the world of necessity, of nature. With its contradictorily self-identical focal point as its center, it is temporal as the one which is the self-negation of the many; and it is spatial as the many which is the negation of the one. Having its dynamic focal point as the central axis, it is schematic. The self-determination of this central axis taken in terms of conscious activity is imagination. In the domain of practical reason, what is schematic belongs to the predicative aspect as laws. The world of the thing-in-itself, according to my view, is the

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locus, the *topos* of the very existence of our self; it is the self-forming historical world, which is immediate to our self. In this way, my logic of *topos* can embrace Kant's philosophy. (A detailed account will have to wait for another day.)

### *The Logical Structure of the Historical World: A Further Explanation*

The historical world, in which the holistic one and the individual many are contradictorily self-identical, is thoroughly self-expressive; in its thorough self-negation it expresses itself significantly. As such, it belongs to the aspect of the predicate. In this world which expresses itself significantly and determines itself in judgment, the direction of its self-determination can be grasped as the subject-term, and the direction of its self-negating self-expression is the predicate-term. Viewed under the aspect of the subject, the predicate is subordinate to the subject; it is not independent of the subject but is merely predicated of it. The predicate is abstract and merely universal. But that which is not self-expressive in some way is not anything at all. Conversely, the subject-term, the individual, can be viewed as the self-determination of the universal. Whatever is thinkable as being according to the logic of judgment can be taken as a being that exists as the self-determination of the dialectical universal, i.e., of *topos* in the contradictory self-identity of the two directions of subject and predicate. I distinguish the subject aspect and the predicate aspect, for they stand without any ground of their own in a relation resembling that of the front and the back, the inside and the outside, as the self-determination of *topos* itself. But this is not to make either direction the only valid one. The contradictorily self-identical world, which expresses itself in self-negation and forms itself in self-affirmation, is spatial under the aspect of the many which is the self-negation of the holistic one, and it is temporal under the aspect of the one which is the self-negation of the individual many. (Time and space are not two independent modalities but are two directions of the self-determination of *topos*.) In this way, from the created to the creating, *topos* determines itself, and form forms itself.

The world that determines itself self-expressively is self-forming; the world that forms itself in time and space as the contradictory self-identity of the many and the one is self-expressive. The self-forming world

thoroughly determines itself through self-negation, i.e., it expresses itself. At the extreme limit of such self-negation, that is, from the standpoint of the self-determination [of the world] significantly, the forming dynamism turns into the activity of judgment. Therefore, from the standpoint of the self-formation of the world, the aspect of the predicate and that of the subject are in mutual opposition as the aspect of activity and that of the object [of consciousness] at the field of consciousness *topos* which determines itself in terms of the activity of judgment. "From the created to the creating," from the determined to the determining, at the standpoint of that which is fixed as that which is created, the standpoint of determined form, *topos* assumes the aspect of the object. Conversely, at the standpoint of thorough self-determination, *topos* assumes the aspect of activity. At the *topos* fixed as the aspect of the object, everything is determined individually and assumes the aspect of the logical subject. But from the point of view of the self-determination under the aspect of activity, everything determines itself without any ground of its own; that is, everything, as existing in and through its own self-determination, assumes the aspect of the predicate, the self-determining universal.

To approach the subject-term from the point of view of the predicate, that is, to take the activity of judgment as the self-determination of the universal, is to think in terms of the activity. That an activity *qua* pure activity has its existence in activity means that the temporal is without any ground of its own, that it is the self-determination of the universal, and that the universal has its existence in its self-determination. That the universal has its existence without any ground of its own in its self-determination means that it has its existence in its particularization—and ultimately in its individuation. It is not determined by the individual, the subject, but rather has its existence in negating what is individually determined, i.e., the universal possesses itself in the self-negation that negates its self-determination.

Thus self-determination under the aspect of activity, the incessant self-determination of *topos* is, as the holistic one in the self-negation of the numerous individuals, temporal self-determination. Any activity of our consciousness involves this temporal self-determination. Therefore, the world which forms itself self-expressively as the contradictory self-identity of the expressing and the expressed, is the world of Spinozan substance when seen in terms of the activity of judgment,

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as the subject-term, temporally determined; but it is the world of Kant's transcendental logic when seen in terms of the predicate, as the self-determination of the incessantly self-determining *topos*. The logical aspect is the self-determination of the predicate aspect, and the subject is considered the object [of thought] as the self-determination of the predicative universal. From such a standpoint the world is thoroughly rational; one's moral obligation is reality—"Thou canst, because thou ought."

In relation to the subject-aspect, as I said earlier, the self-determining universal has its existence in its self-negation. [The world] is synthetically unifying, for the self-negation of the individual is the self-affirmation of the universal; the world is that of consciousness-in-general (in the self-determination of *topos* both the subject and the predicate aspects have their existence in self-negation). Matter and form stand in opposition herein. What is given to the subject aspect is individual and material; what is given to the predicate aspect is synthetically unifying and formal. The self-determination of the predicate aspect/field is categorical as the form of the structure of knowledge.

In terms of judgment, the self-determination of the world thoroughly expressing itself significatively, the subject aspect opposes the predicate aspect, and the aspect of object opposes the aspect of activity. That which exists can be thought from either side; but that which exists of itself and moves of itself, i.e., real being, does not exist on either side. It exists in the contradictory self-identity of these two aspects. Thus, the self does not exist as merely predicative being according to the activity of judgment. Rather it exists contradictorily self-identically in such a way that "that which is created creates"—it exists as a volitional being which in forming itself gives shape to the self-forming historical world.

## CHAPTER TWO

IN THE LAST CHAPTER I discussed what the existence of our self is and what the activity of consciousness is. As self-expressive determination

of the contradictorily self-identical world, each of the innumerable individuals contains in itself the self-expressive point of the world and forms itself self-expressively. We exist in this way. The self comes into being by negating space—as the temporal self-determination of the world which forms itself in the contradictory self-identity of time and space. Again, it comes into being by negating the subject aspect—as the self-determination of the predicate aspect of the world which expresses itself in the contradictory self-identity of subject and predicate. Thus we exist as the self-determination of the universal which becomes predicate but not subject, and yet which determines itself thoroughly as subject. The activity of consciousness is none other than the process of this self-determination of the universal as such.

Under the aspect of the temporal, predicative self-determination of the world—the world being the contradictory self-identity of time and space, predicate and subject, inside and outside—we see the inside externally as outside, and we take ourselves as the subject-term. Herein, by reflecting the outside from the inside, we are endlessly desirous and fundamentally instinctive. As the self-determination of this universal, we act according to the *hypothetical* imperative. On the other hand, because we are fundamentally the self-determination of the predicative universal, we take the subject-term as our self-determination, and see it within ourselves. We see the external internally. Thereby by mirroring ourselves within ourselves, that is, by reflecting the inside from outside, we are in possession of the end, volitional and autonomous. As the self-determination of the universal, we are thoroughly rational. Hereby we act according to the *categorical* imperative. Under the former aspect, we are selfish and desirous; under the latter aspect, we are moral. Being the purely temporal self-determination [of the world] and of the universal which has its existence in self-negation, that is, in the self-negation of the many, we are infinitely morally obliged and our existence consists in absolute values. Such being our *raison d'être*, we have our eternal life hereby. Those who approach religion via morality, including Kant, hold this position. I maintain, however, that religion cannot be approached from such a perspective. Genuine religious awareness, the religious mind, does not arise from the standpoint of morality. Such a thing may be imagined but is not a real religious mind. It is commonly thought that religious awareness arises out of an interaction between the finite and the infinite, the relative and the ab-

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solute. But we truly recognize it for the first time when our own existence is called into question, when our very self becomes a question.

Whereas the material world is the self-determination of the subject-aspect, the world of consciousness is the self-determination of the predicate-aspect. As the self-determination of the universal itself, we are thoroughly rational. But our real self, the individual self, does not exist in this way. This is why an immanentist philosophy cannot deal with religion. The standpoint of morality—even the keenest moral conscience—cannot take up the existence of the self as a question. It is because however wickedly sinful one may feel oneself to be, morality presupposes the existence of the self. To deny one's existence amounts to denying morality itself. Many remain unaware of the essential distinction between the moral and religious standpoints.

### *Awareness of Death and Authenticity of the Self*

Under what conditions does a religious problem arise for us? Under what circumstances do we become aware of religious mind? The question of religion is not that of values. When we realize the profound self-contradictions lying at the foundation of our existence, our very existence becomes the problem. "The sorrows and self-contradictions of life" is a worn-out saying, and yet many fail to face them. When we seriously confront these contradictions, religious questions must inevitably arise (philosophical questions arise from the same source). We need not be told by a pessimistic philosopher of the contradictory nature of our desire. We are constantly tossed about by desires. Is morality, though considered autonomous, really self-sufficient? Morality ultimately consists in the negation of morality itself. The moral will contains within itself self-contradictions. This is why Greek philosophers wander in Limbo in Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

That we become aware of our own death is the fundamental self-contradiction of our existence. All living things die. Nothing lives forever. I also know that I am going to die. But death apprehended in this way is still based on the objectification of one's self as a thing, and is not yet a genuine awareness of death. Life viewed in this way is physical. Some say that a person may die physically but live spiritually, and that to live spiritually is to be rational and moral (in my terms, this corresponds to the self as the self-determination of the predicate-aspect). But what is

rational or universal is not what is alive. Reason cannot become truly conscious of death; what is not born has no death. What is alive is thoroughly self-sustaining; and as an individual it thoroughly negates the universal. Even animals, so long as they are alive, enjoy this kind of existence, irrational through and through. Our self is the ultimate limit of this kind of individual self-determination, but the real awareness of death does not arise out of this notion of existence, for therein we simply consider ourselves as the ultimate limit of the self-determination of the predicate (in Cartesian self-consciousness).

We truly become aware of our eternal death when we face the absolutely infinite, or Absolute Being. By facing absolute negation, we come to know our eternal death. But this does not yet touch the absolutely contradictory fact. To know our eternal death is the fundamental reason of our existence. For only one who knows his own eternal death truly knows that he is an individual. Only such a one is the true individual, the true person. What does not die is not singular existence; what repeats itself is not an individual. Only by facing the eternal negation, do we truly realize the singularity of our existence. It is not through self-reflection but by facing our eternal death that we become truly self-conscious. I have stated in my essay, "On Descartes' Philosophy," that we come to know ourselves in self-negation (and I made this the point of departure of my philosophical inquiry).

We thus truly become self-aware when we know our eternal death, our eternal nothingness. That we exist in knowing our non-existence is absolutely contradictory. Moreover, knowing my own death is different from judging myself as nothing, for there must be something that so judges in that act of judgment. What knows our eternal death is something that transcends death, something that lives eternally. What merely transcends death, however, is not even anything alive. What lives dies. This is indeed a contradiction, but such is the mode of our existence. What I alluded to when I said religion was a spiritual fact is precisely this point. This fact cannot be approached by philosophy nor is it postulated by morality; rather the relationship is the reverse: philosophy and morality are based on this spiritual fact, the fact of our existence itself.

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### *The Absolute and the Relative*

When relative entities face the absolute, they die. Upon facing God, we die. Upon seeing God, Isaiah said: "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts" [6.5]. The relative cannot stand over against the Absolute. Again, what stands over against the relative is not absolute, but relative. When the relative faces the Absolute, it is the death of the relative. It means that the relative become nothing. Only through death do we face God and enter into a relation of inverse correlation with God. According to objective logic, to speak of death or nothingness implies that there is no relative entity not any relativity. But death is not the same as mere nothingness. Certainly, the absolute transcends the relative, but that which merely transcends the relative is not anything but merely nothing. A God who does not create anything is a powerless God; he is not God. Certainly if the absolute stands in opposition to something in an objective way, it is relative and not absolute. But what simply transcends the relative is not absolute, either. This is the self-contradiction of the absolute.

In what sense is the absolute the real absolute? The absolute is truly absolute in facing nothing. By facing absolute nothing it is absolute being. Moreover, there is nothing whatsoever that stands against the self objectively, and that the self faces absolute nothing means that the self faces itself self-contradictorily. It is "contradictory self-identity." Sheer nothingness cannot even stand against the self. What stands against the self is that which negates the self; that which negates the self must share the same roots with the self. What is utterly unrelated to the self cannot negate it; in formal logic, too, as things share the same genus, they form a contrast and repel each other. So long as there is something external that negates the self, something that stands against the self, the self is not absolute. The absolute must contain absolute self-negation within itself. Moreover, this means the self becomes absolutely nothing. So long as the self is not absolutely nothing, there remains something that stands against it and negates it; the self does not yet embrace the absolute self-negation within itself. Therefore, that the self self-contradictorily stands against itself means that nothing stands over against nothing.

The real absolute is the absolutely contradictory self-identity. This is the only way we can describe God in a logical language. God faces himself inverse-correlatively as the absolute self-negation, and contains absolute self-negation within himself; he exists in and of himself, and precisely because he is absolutely nothing, he is absolute being. Being absolutely nothing and being, God is omnipotent and omniscient. Thus I say "Because there is Buddha, there are sentient beings, and because there are sentient beings, there is Buddha. The created world exists because God the Creator exists; God exists because the created world exists." This might be taken by some to resemble Barth's conception of God's absolutely transcendence, or to some Christians it might appear pantheistic. Such interpretations are based on approaches to God according to objective logic and do not represent my view.

As I often say, the absolute is not what lacks any opposition to itself, but rather it is that which contains absolute negation within itself. By the same token, the relative entities that stand against the absolute are not merely a portion or some deficiency of the absolute; otherwise, the absolute would have nothing to stand against, and as such it would not be absolute. The absolute always has its existence in its self-negation: the real absolute freely turns itself to the relative. The authentic one has its existence in the many, the numerous real individuals. God exists in this world thoroughly in his self-negation. In this sense God is thoroughly immanent. Thus, God does not exist anywhere in this world and yet there is nowhere where God does not exist.

Buddhism describes this paradox in the logic of *sokuhi* [simultaneous equation of affirmation and negation]. The Diamond Sutra says: "All phenomena are not phenomena, therefore they are called phenomena" [17.c]. Buddha is not a Buddha, therefore he is Buddha; sentient beings are not sentient beings, therefore they are sentient beings. A Zen master Daitō Kokushi said, "Separated by an eternity, yet not separated even an instant; face to face the whole day, yet not face to face even an instant." A God who is merely transcendent and self-sufficient is not a real God. He must be thoroughly characterized by *kenōsis* (self-emptying) in some way. The truly dialectical God is totally transcendent and immanent, immanent and transcendent. As such, he is the real absolute. It is said that God created the world out of love. God's absolute love must be essential to him as his absolute self-negation; it is not an *opus ad extra*. This view is

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not pantheistic but may be called panentheistic, though I do not think according to objective logic. My way of thinking is absolutely contradictorily self-identical and thoroughly dialectical. Hegel's dialectic did not depart from the standpoint of objective logic. That was why his thought was interpreted pantheistically by the Left Hegelians. In contrast, the Buddhist thought as found in the Prajñāpāramitā tradition is thoroughly dialectical. Contrary to the interpretation of Western scholars, Buddhism is not pantheistic [but dialectical].

### *Creativity and the Person*

The description of God as an absolutely contradictory self-identity may appear to those who adhere to objective logic a sort of mystical theology. But merely negative theology is not dialectical. Just as the absolute being of Spinoza is called a *caput mortuum* [by Hegel], so merely negative nothing is not anything at all. The absolutely contradictorily self-identical being, the real absolute, which contains absolute nothing and infinitely determines itself as nothing faces nothing, must be infinitely creative. It must be an historical reality through and through. I have discussed creative activity in the past (since the fifth volume of the *Philosophical Essays* [NKZ, X]). That being comes out of nothing is not a creative activity. That would be a mere matter of chance. Nor is it that being simply comes out of being. That would be a mere matter of necessity. Rather, creative activity refers to the self-expression and the infinite self-forming dynamism of the world, which moves from the created to the creating, without any ground of its own, the world which is the self-contradictory identity of the many and the one. The sovereign God, *Dominus*, who is conceived as the subject-term of judgment and transcendent, is not God the Creator. God the Creator must embrace self-negation within himself; otherwise, he would be a merely arbitrary God.

I would like to clarify the relationship between creative activity and the person in these terms. So far, the idea of the person has been treated strictly from the point of view of the self, which is merely conscious, abstract and individual; and the autonomous action of the self has been considered to be freedom. That the self is endowed with a determinate nature is presupposed here, for if the self were merely amorphous, there would be no autonomy. What exists must have some

nature. To act out of one's own essence, to follow one's essence, is considered freedom; mere arbitrariness is not freedom. Then I ask, what is this essence of the self? Where does it lie? If the essence lies in the subjective being of judgment, it is instinctive. There is no self there. Therefore, as I mentioned before, our existence must be found in the realm of the predicate. That the predicate aspect contains the subject in itself, and more concretely, that the temporal contains within itself the objectified things, and infinitely determines itself contradictorily self-identically is the operation of consciousness. Herein the essence of the self is rational. To observe the law for the sake of the law constitutes our autonomy. But the self as the self-determination of the universal as such could be anyone's self and in fact no one's self. It is merely abstract being which has no personality nor reality of its own. From such being, no activity nor fact arises. Nor is there any praxis; moral obligation is but an abstract notion. Most likely there is no decision making, either, for in such an act, the self-negation of the conscious self, that is, the self's standing outside itself, is involved.

Only when the activities of our consciousness bear the significance of events in the creative, historical world does praxis come into the picture. From this history-related perspective, even conscious thinking is an action. The practical self is not mere reason; the self exists where it possesses the possibility of breaking laws. Our volitional existence, the personal self, must be thoroughly self-contradictory existence. We exist as a self-determination of the predicate aspect through and through. That is, we determine ourselves within ourselves and are self-conscious. We are utterly rational. But the self considered in this way is not volitional nor active, for our will is found where subject breaks through predicate and determines itself in the realm of predicate. That which is only subject and not predicate is an individual as the object [of thinking]. When such an individual determines himself in the predicate aspect, i.e., when he functions consciously, he is instinctive and desirous. Insofar as he remains this way, he is neither free nor volitional.

Being thoroughly the self-determination of the predicate, the self contains the subject in itself. Moreover, when it determines itself both as predicate and subject, in the contradictory self-identity of the subject and the predicate, the self as a person, a truly self-determining, unique individual, exists. Even though the self moves consciously, it does

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not exist simply within consciousness, not to mention outside consciousness. We exist as free and intrinsically necessary persons, when we express the world in the contradictory self-identity of the inside and the outside, and determine ourselves as focal points of the world—that is, when we are creative. Persons exist only in the absolutely contradictorily self-identical world, which is absolute nothing and yet determines itself.

### *The Historical World as Divine and Demonic*

This absolutely contradictorily self-identical world expresses itself in itself through self-negation; and as the negation of negation, it forms itself in itself self-affirmingly, it is creative. This is what I call the *world*, which, moreover, is to be distinguished from the common notion of the world that stands against us. By the word world I designate *absolute topological being*. Therefore, it can also be called Absolute Being. (When I discussed mathematics, I called it the “contradictorily self-identical entity.”) The contradictorily self-identical world expresses itself within itself, and in so doing forms itself. In religious terms, the self-expression of this absolute being is God’s revelation, and its self-formation the will of God. The world of the absolute present, the absolutely contradictory self-identity, mirrors itself within itself; it has its focal point in itself, and forms itself while it revolves around this dynamic focal point. A trinitarian relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit may be found in this dynamism. Under the aspect of the individual many, each of us, as a unique individual who determines his own world, expresses the absolute One; again as the self-expression of the absolute One, each of us becomes its self-projecting point. We, creative elements of the creative world, form the creative world. In this way, one can see that we as persons are grounded on such a trinitarian relationship of the world. Therefore, the absolutely contradictorily self-identical world as topological being is not an emanative world nor is it a merely productive, generative world. Again, it is not the world of intellectual intuition, contrary to the claims of those who misconstrue my ideas. It is the world wherein individuals are thoroughly active. It moves from the created to the creating, and as such is the world of the persons, the world of absolute will. For this reason, it is also the world of absolute evil.

I said that real Absolute Being contains absolute self-negation; it is Absolute Being in the sense that absolute negation is absolute affirmation. This is why it is truly absolute. That God contains absolute self-negation and faces it does not mean that he simply faces the godless world, the so-called natural world. A merely natural world is an atheistic world. (Deists try to reduce God's creation to the natural order.) But the world that is the truly absolute self-negation of God must be a demonic world, which utterly negates a sovereign God, conceived as the propositional subject. This is a thoroughly rebellious world. The natural world is the world of the ultimate self-negation of God conceived as the propositional subject, the subject juxtaposed to its environment. It is the extreme determination of the historical world into an environment, in which the subject and the environment are mutually determined. Yet, this is not the world of the ultimate self-negation of the predicative, rational God.

It may sound extremely paradoxical, but the truly absolute God must be demonic in a certain respect. Only as such is God both omniscient and omnipotent. Yahweh is a God who demanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac (cf. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*). He demanded of Abraham the denial of his personhood itself. If God merely stands against evil and fights it, though he may conquer evil, he is a relative God. A God who is simply transcendent, supreme good is but an abstract notion. The absolute God must contain absolute negation in himself, and be able to descend to the most wicked; the God who saves the heinous is the truly absolute God. The highest form must inform the lowest matter. Absolute *agapē* must extend to the absolutely wicked. In an inversely correlative manner, God resides secretly even in the heart of the most wicked. A God who merely judges is not an absolute God. This, however, is not to do away with the distinction between good and evil. The idea of God as the most perfect one is not based on our spiritual experience; therein God is mentally conceived according to objective logic or syllogisms. Some may dismiss the spiritual fact as a merely subjective phenomenon. But as I mentioned above, truly absolute being must be contradictorily self-identical, even logically speaking. Genuine logic is the form of the self-expression of absolute being. Therefore, it must be dialectical. Moreover, any self-evident fact is by nature dialectical. What I mean by God is not anything like *Gottheit*; it is rather the absolutely contradictory self-

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identity that contains within itself its utter self-negation. The dialectic of *sokuhi* of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition demonstrates this point most clearly. From the standpoint of objective logic this [idea of God] may appear indiscriminate, but it is self-evident for those who have had the experience of it. Abstract, logical thinking stands in the way.

The absolute God is the absolutely contradictory self-identity in the sense described above, and each of us as its projection point is the contradictory self-identity of good and evil. Dmitri Karamazov said that beauty is hidden in Sodom, that beauty is not only terrifying but mysterious, that it is like a battle between the devil and God, and that the battlefield is the human heart [Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, III, 3]. Our heart is originally the battlefield of God and the devil. Moreover, this is where we truly exist as volitional beings, as persons. We truly exist when we are rational as the self-determination of the predicate aspect and yet negate rationality in the subject aspect—this is to say that we have our being in radical evil. Kant, from the moral standpoint, calls this the tendency towards evil. As I wrote in my essay “Life,” this is something that is ingrained in us. Our ingrained nature is contradictorily self-identical, void of any ground of its own.

I have often compared the absolutely contradictorily self-identical *topos*, the world of the absolute present, the historical space to an infinite sphere. It has no circumference and yet everywhere is its center. Being devoid of any ground of its own, this contradictorily self-identical sphere mirrors itself within itself. Its infinitely central direction is the transcendent God. Therein one sees the absolute subject of the historical world. Its circumferential direction, on the other hand, is infinitely negative and demonic. Therefore, such a world is filled with demonic elements through and through. As individuals of such a world, we are both demonic and divine. Theology of the logic of *topos* is neither theism nor deism, neither spiritualism nor naturalism. It is historical.

### *The Source of Religion*

In the above discussion perhaps I have managed to clarify why we are fundamentally religious and what the religious mind is. Religious questions are not concerned with what we ought to be as that which acts, or

how we should act. Rather, they deal with the nature and the mode of existence of the self. A religious relationship does not consist in the confrontation of the perfect and the imperfect, for however much distance there may be between them, they stand on the opposite ends of the same dynamic progression and share the same goal—they rest on one and the same straight line, as it were. Religious awareness does not rise from here. One often tries to give a foundation to our religious need based on the imperfection of the erring, deluded self. But religious mind does not arise from such a standpoint. Even a gambler errs, is deluded, and grieves over his inability. Religiously speaking, delusion signifies that one is deluded with regards to one's whereabouts and not with regards to one's goal.

One's feeling of inadequacy in face of moral good, which one objectively sets up out there, is not the religious mind. However earnest this feeling may be, so long as there is an implicit faith in one's own moral capacity, it is not the religious mind. Thus morally based repentance is not religious repentance. What is usually understood by "repentance" is but the feeling of remorse that follows some wrongdoing, and this still leaves room for self-reliance. Real repentance is accompanied by the sense of shame. To be ashamed of oneself means to face the other. In moral terms, to repent means to be ashamed of oneself in the face of oneself objectively placed, that is in the face of one's own moral conscience. In repentance one casts away one's self. In morality one casts away oneself to other people, that is, to society. In religious repentance, one casts away oneself to the source of the self, to God the Father, Buddha the Mother. One throws oneself to the root-source of the self; one is ashamed of one's existence. Thereby one comes in contact with the experience of the numinous of which Otto speaks [cf. *The Idea of the Holy* (1923)]. Subjectively speaking, repentance involves reflection on the root source of the self and contemplation of life and the self, as Buddhists would say. Contemplation here does not mean that one sees a Buddha externally as an object, but rather that one throws light on the source of oneself, and reflects on it. If in contemplation one saw God externally, that would be mere magic.

Why is the self fundamentally religious? Why is it that the deeper we reflect on the ground of the self—that is, the more we become self-aware—the more we feel that the need for religion arises from the depths of our being and our struggle with religious problems inten-

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sifies? It is because we are an absolutely contradictory existence, because this absolutely contradictory self-identity is our very *raison d'être*. Everything is in constant flux, transient, and impermanent. All living beings die, and there is no life without death. This is already a self-contradiction. But a biological being does not know its own death. What does not know its own death does not possess selfhood. What does not have selfhood knows no death. In this sense one can say that there is no death for biological beings. Death means that the self enters eternal nothing. This renders the self singular, unique and individual. Moreover, even though to know one's death is to go beyond it, what merely transcends death is nothing alive. To know one's own death means that one is nothing and being at the same time. To be simultaneously absolutely nothing and being—this is the height of contradiction. And yet therein exists the truly self-aware self. We come to know it [that we are being and non-being] by transcending our action. This is what is usually understood by "self-consciousness." But then, the self is universal, rational existence; it is not a singular, unique self, nor the self of genuine self-awareness. Therefore, at the foundation of the establishment of the individual, personal self, there must be the self-negation of Absolute Being. The truly Absolute Being does not simply transcend the relative; rather he thoroughly contains in himself his self-negation, and by standing over against his absolute self-negation, he determines himself in the way of absolute negation which is simultaneously absolute affirmation. The world of our self—that of the human beings—comes into being in and through this self-negation of Absolute Being. This absolute negation which is simultaneously affirmation signifies God's creation. Therefore, to put it in the Buddhist terms, where there is Buddha, there are sentient beings, and where there are sentient beings, there is Buddha. The relative entities which stand against the absolute are not mere imperfections but they bear the significance of negation [of the absolute]. The relationship between God and human beings viewed from the human perspective is aptly expressed by Daitō Kokushi's words, "Separated by an eternity, and yet not separated even for an instant; face to face the whole day, yet not face to face even an instant. This is the principle according to which human beings exist." These words touch upon the contradictorily self-identical relationship between God and human beings. The absolutely contradictorily self-identical world, where negation is

simultaneously affirmation, must be the world of a thoroughgoing inverse-determination, of inverse correlation. God and human beings stand in opposition in an inversely correlating manner. For this reason, our religious awareness does not arise from out of our self, but it is God's call, Buddha's call. It is the work of God or Buddha, and arises from the very ground where our self comes into being. At the beginning of the *Confessions* Augustine wrote: "For Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee" [1.1]. Ignoring this point, scholars discuss God or religion solely from the standpoint of the human world. They are not even aware of the obvious distinction between religious and moral problems. It is like shooting an arrow blindfolded.

Morality is undoubtedly the highest human value. But religion is not necessarily mediated or underscored by morality. In the religious relationship wherein our self stands against Absolute Being which is the source of our life, the wise and the foolish, the good and the bad, all stand on the same ground. It is said, "Even the good can attain salvation, how much more so the wicked" [Shinran, *Tannishō* 3]. In the fundamentally self-contradictory world of human beings, occasions leading us to religion are numerous. Religion is the absolute reversal of values. In this sense, one can say that for a self-righteous moralist to enter religion may be much more difficult than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle [cf. Matthew 19.24].

### *The Foundation of Religion*

Christianity, which holds personalistic values, ascribes the foundation of religion to the fall of human beings. It is held that the offspring of Adam who rebelled against God are all tainted by original sin; that we are all sinners by birth; that there is no way out of this predicament for us, except by the atonement of the only Son of God, who was sent to the human world by God's love; and that we are saved by our faith in the revelation through the person of Christ. From a moral point of view, it may seem extremely unreasonable that we are sinners by birth. But this view of human existence which is based on the fall is a very profound religious view of life, poignantly expressing the rudimentary conditions of our existence. Human beings come into being through God's absolute self-negation; and at the foundation of our existence we are destined to the flaming inferno.

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True Pure Land Buddhists also locate the foundation of human existence in sinfulness. They hold that sentient beings are deeply sinful and wicked, tormented by burning delusions, and that we are saved only by taking refuge in the Sacred Name of Amida Buddha [cf. Shinran, *Tannishō* 1]. Buddhism considers that at the ground of human existence lies delusion. Delusion, the source of sin, arises from our taking the objectified self for our self. The source of delusion lies in the mode of seeing characteristic of objective logic. Therefore, Mahayana Buddhism maintains that one is saved by *satori*, enlightenment. This word *satori* is generally misunderstood. It has nothing to do with seeing some object. If it taught us to see Buddha objectively out there, the Buddhist path would be mere magic. Rather, *satori* means that one clearly sees the ground of one's nothingness, the original source of sinfulness. Dōgen said, "to pursue Buddha's teaching is to pursue oneself, to pursue oneself is to forget oneself" [*Shōbōgenzō*, *Genjōkōan*]. This consists in a radically different perspective from that of objective logic.

Originally, religion of self-power or self-reliance would be impossible, for it is a contradiction in terms. Buddhists themselves are wrong on this point. Be it a path of self-power (*jiriki*) or Other-power (*tariki*), be it Zen or True Pure Land Buddhism, both Mahayana traditions stand on the same ground and ultimately they meet. In terms of the difficulty of entering into religion, the so-called "easy path" may actually be the harder one. Shinran said: "There is no one in pure faith, even though one can enter it easily." Every religion requires the effort at self-negation.

Once awakened to real religious awareness, one must strive to rescue oneself as if one's hair were caught on fire [cf. Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, *Gakudō Yōjin-shū*, 1]. The only question is, from what standpoint and in what direction should one endeavour. To set God or Buddha objectively in an unreachable utopia and strive after it through self-negation which is simultaneously self-affirmation is an approach typifying *jiriki*, reliance on one's power. It has nothing to do with religion; it is not the "crosswise leap" of which Shinran spoke, and it is untrue to the spirit of True Pure Land Buddhism.

TRANSLATED BY YUSA MICHIKO